

The Three Villages Magazine

COVERING GREAT AMWELL, ST MARGARETS AND STANSTEAD ABBOTTS



Building Community in Print and Online
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Issue 18

June 2026

IN THIS ISSUE...

- Find out about the important work of the charity, Pets As Therapy
- Discover the fascinating secret history of Briggens House
- Read how our local cricket club is inspiring future generations

**NOW
FREE!**

Summer Art Exhibition

A Celebration in Miniature



You're warmly invited to a special art exhibition and auction at
St Mary's Church, St Margaret
on Hoddesdon Road

Preview Evening (cheese & wine)
Friday 31st July, 7–9pm



Exhibition Days
Saturday 1st August, 2–5pm
Sunday 2nd August, 2–5pm



An exhibition with a difference...

Discover a collection of unique miniature artworks by local artists, then place your bids! Highest bidder takes home the artwork, with all proceeds going towards supporting the church.

Calling all Artists

Grab a canvas (A6 or smaller), get creative and be part of it!
£5 entry fee | Theme: 'Stanstead Abbots & St Margarets'

Interested in taking part or want to know more?
Get in touch: admin@3churches.net



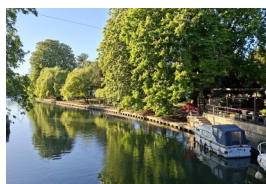
The Three Villages Magazine

COVERING GREAT AMWELL, ST MARGARETS AND STANSTEAD ABBOTTS

Issue 18

June 2026

From the Editor...



Cover: View from the bridge © Gary Forrest

Welcome to the June issue! 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.

In this issue, we have a special double-page feature uncovering the fascinating history of Briggens House; a Business Spotlight on much-loved local pub, The George IV; another delicious easy bake for you to try; and the next in our fantastic series, 'Glimpses into our Past'.

This issue's cover features a beautiful photograph by Gary Forrest, which he states is 'a view from the Stanstead Abbotts bridge that for me never gets old'. We offer our thanks to local photographer, Gary, for sharing this photograph with us. If you would like to submit a photograph, 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, the approximate deadlines for submissions are: 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 are also grateful for the support received from Stanstead Abbots Parish Council, Great Amwell Parish Council and St Margarets Parish Council.

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

Thank you for your continued support.

Anna Bond

Editor

THE THREE VILLAGES TEAM

Anna Bond
Julia Davies
Rev'd Dr Sarah Forrest
Rosemary Imroth

Clare Maynard
Mandy McCarthy
Lyn Paddon

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The Three Villages Magazine

FROM THE VICAR



'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...'

The opening words of the Bible begin a special relationship between people and the world we live in. As the first chapters of the book of Genesis unfold God tells the people that they are to care for the earth and everything in it, and so begins our call to stewardship of the earth.

But it is a two-way street, and I'm fascinated to hear more and more how nature looks after us; how even 20 minutes out walking in the trees and woods can boost our immune system and keep us healthy. At this time of year, with everything bursting out in vivid greens and fresh colour, we are particularly aware of how blessed we are in this part of the world.

But caring for it is complicated and if you're a gardener you know how hard it is too! The Vicarage garden seems particularly good at growing brambles and nettles. Then there are the churchyards... Churchyards are particularly complicated; they mean so much to people because their loved ones rest there. In our call to care for the earth, we walk a tightrope between keeping our churchyards tidy and accessible in all areas, and allowing the kind of wildness that supports nature to thrive.

Flowers are very important in the life and worship of the church: used to decorate the church through most of the year, and particularly during the big Festivals of Christmas, Easter and Pentecost, with whites, yellows and reds accenting the season. The General Synod of the Church of England (effectively the Parliament of the Church) discussed flowers and stewardship of the earth in their last session in February, after the tiny Parish of St Bartholomew's, Harpley, in Worcestershire put forward a motion calling for the whole Church of England to embrace the principles of the Sustainable Church Flowers movement. These are to promote the use of local, seasonal, biodegradable, or compostable flowers and foliage, preferably sourced locally rather than imported, and to eliminate the use of floral foam (oasis) made from plastic. They advocate rediscovering traditional and environmentally friendly methods of presentation and display. There were 16 speakers discussing the motion, which was overwhelmingly supported and carried.

Having read the report, I considered it the kind of coincidence that comes from God when I was contacted about an open day for florists by Nicola from the Sweet Briar Flower Farm in Hertford. What a great opportunity for our amazing church flower teams and other florists to take forward the challenge of going local and thinking seasonal!

Caring for the world that God created is complicated and challenging as it involves so many different changes in how we live, from sorting rubbish, rejecting packaging, going renewable and ditching oasis, to buying seasonal produce. But walking through our beautiful local countryside reminds us of the return on our investment, both now and for the future!



Rev'd Dr Sarah Forrest
Vicar of The 3 Churches Benefice

Florist's Day
at
Sweet Briar Flower Farm
Monday 15th June 2026
11 - 12.30pm
*Come and see what your
local flower farm has to
offer*

Foxholes Farm Park
Foxholes Farm
Hertford
London Road
SG13 7NT

Nicola Stuart O'Brien 07941 293967
sweetbriarflowerfarm.co.uk

St John the Baptist
Great Amwell

St Mary the Virgin
St Margarets

St Andrew
Stanstead Abbots

The 3 Churches Benefice

GLIMPSES INTO OUR PAST: HISTORICAL FLOODING IN STANSTEAD ABBOTTS

It's mid-summer now but can you recall those times in mid-winter when a message pinged its way to you saying, 'Alert, Danger – Flood Warning for the River Lea for Hertford, Ware and Stanstead Abbots'? Flooding has been a constant historical threat to Stanstead Abbots as this latest glimpse into our past reveals.

Over earlier centuries the River Lea underwent a series of modifications to improve it for the often-conflicting requirements of the millers, barge owners and those with fishing rights. Much of the work focussed on improving the river for navigation rather than flood prevention. This meant that flooding in Stanstead Abbots remained a regular event.

1408 saw a notable flood along the River Lea when fast flowing flood water covered much of the valley floor. This was part of a widespread flooding event over much of southeast England and became known as the 'Great Flood'. The town of Ware was particularly noted at the time due to the extensive damage caused there.

Subsequent notably deep floods along the Lea occurred in 1762, 1795 and 1882. On 25th October 1762, a severe flood occurred on the River Lea following a long period of heavy rain. The winter of 1794/5 was exceptional with an early onset of heavy rains and wintery temperatures in November. This was then followed by bitterly cold conditions beginning on Christmas Eve with the River Lea frozen over during much of January; the subsequent thaw led to flooding. 1882 was another event of deep fast flowing floods with standing water lasting for a couple of weeks.

The first major flood of the twentieth century occurred in June 1903, following an exceptionally wet start to the year, which was followed by another significant flood in 1928. The 1947 flood is most remembered by older locals, due to its duration and extent. The year started with exceptional heavy snowfall in late January and into February. On 10th March the snow began to melt due to a rise in temperatures and heavy rainfall. This led to widespread flooding in Stanstead Abbots from the 13th March with some of the houses having more than four feet of muddy water in the ground floor rooms. Most people managed to move temporarily upstairs along with their possessions they could take up the stairs. During the worst of the flood a boat was used to supply essential deliveries to those people stranded in their homes.



1903 Picture taken by Thomas Robinson with his shop at the junction of High St and Millers Lane (Image: SALHS)

The last serious flood in the village occurred in mid-September 1968, caused once again by heavy rainfall over a long period. During this flood the west bank of the Broadwater burst not far above Stanstead Lock causing a sudden rise in flood levels and a caused rush of additional water along Amwell Lane towards Station Road.



1958 mid-High St view with cars outside Burtons. Taken by K. W. Moye (Image: S. Moye)

A major flood alleviation scheme took place along the river in 1974/5. Some stretches of the riverbank saw the natural banks replaced by vertical steel sheeting capped with concrete. The scheme also included the provision of flood relief channels. The full cost was estimated at £4 million overall at 1975 prices. At the time it was claimed that the flood risk would be reduced from a one in ten-year chance to a one in a hundred-year event. Since this work was completed there have been several times that serious flood warning 'pings' have sounded and, indeed, water has sometimes flooded fields and gardens close to houses. Two occasions when this happened to a worrying extent were in 1975 and in January and February 2014.

However, thankfully, there has not been a repeat of the deep and widespread flooding that was such a feature of village life for many centuries. But always pay attention to those warning pings!

Rev'd Dr Bob Hunt and Stuart Moye

Based on Stuart's fuller article 'Flooding' in the Stanstead Abbots Local History Society (SALHS) website under Media Articles. SALHS meets in the Parish Hall, Roydon Rd on the 2nd Friday of each month at 7.30pm. Visit www.salhs.org.uk for more information.

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PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Great Amwell Parish Council

At its most recent meeting, the Parish Council agreed to make a grant award to the East Herts Citizens Advice Bureau.

At the time of writing, work on the restoration project for the War Memorial, funded by the Parish Council, is about to recommence.

The proposed Neighbourhood Plan for Stanstead Abbots and Stanstead Margarets (which also includes part of the parish of Great Amwell) was put to a referendum. The overwhelming majority of people who voted supported the proposed Plan.

Car Boot sales on land off the A1170 (Bridgeman's Field) have recommenced for the 2026 year. A total of 28 sales can be held in a calendar year. The site for the sales and associated car parking is clearly defined in the approved planning permission. The Parish Council will continue to monitor the use of this green belt land to ensure, hopefully, no breaches of planning control.

The Government formally consulted on proposals for local government reorganisation in Hertfordshire. The deadline for the submission of comments on the proposals was 26 March 2026. The Parish Council should support the four unitary authority option identified by the Government. A decision is expected from the Government in summer 2026.

Great Amwell Parish Council meets every second Thursday in each month (except in August) in the Parish Hall, Hillside Lane at 8.00pm.

Jeff Hughes

St Margarets Parish Council



St Margarets Parish Council have been seeking public opinion on whether the installation of an official flagpole in the parish would be welcomed. If supported locally and planning permission is granted, the flagpole would be sited at an appropriate location within St Margarets Parish (exact location to be determined) and used solely to fly the Union Jack providing a dignified focal point for the parish. The informal consultation closed on 20 April 2026 and the Parish Council are looking into next steps.

Residents have been raising their concerns over the misuse of the River Lea (and the surrounding area) by boaters, and the Parish Council have been liaising with the Canal & River Trust, Lea Valley Regional Park Authority, the Police and Lewis Cocking MP in order to find a way of resolving the issues.

Police Surgeries took place in the parish on 24 April and 15 May, with a further surgery planned on 5 June. These take place in the Nigel Copping Community Centre between 6–7.30pm and allow residents to pop in and raise any concerns that they have.

The Parish Council continues to liaise with Herts County Council Highways to resolve the flooding issues on Station Road/Lawrence Avenue with engineers continuing their investigations.

Cllr Jane Piesse was co-opted on to the Parish Council in April 2026 and all seats on the Council have now been filled.

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 Abbotts Parish Council

Local MP Lewis Cocking discusses planning concerns with Parish Councillors



In March, Lewis Cocking MP held a meeting with Councillors from Stanstead Abbotts Parish Council, St Margarets Parish Council and Great Amwell Parish Council to address worries about planned housing developments in the three parishes.

Lewis Cocking MP described how the new Planning and Infrastructure Bill is designed to simplify planning procedures, making it easier and faster to build housing throughout England. Parish Councillors raised concerns about the potential negative effects of increased housing projects in all three parishes if no extra infrastructure is provided.

The Parish Councillors expressed their gratitude to Lewis Cocking MP for offering to assist in elevating local concerns to a national platform and appreciated his time.

If you would like further information, please email clerk@stansteadabbottsparishcouncil.org.

Sarah Neighbour

FREE DIGITAL SKILLS GROUP

Are you looking to improve your digital skills in a friendly and welcoming environment? The Community Alliance – Broxbourne & East Herts offers a fantastic opportunity to do just that with their Digital Skills Group in Stanstead Abbotts.

This free, volunteer-led group is perfect for anyone who wants to get to grips with using a computer, tablet or smartphone. Whether you're new to technology or just want to build your confidence, their Digital Champions will help you learn how to:

- * Navigate your devices with ease
- * Shop online safely
- * Access virtual appointments
- * Stay connected with friends and family

Sessions take place monthly on Wednesdays from 2:30 to 4:00pm at the Nigel Copping Community Building (SG12 8GA). Dates for upcoming sessions: 10 June, 22 July, 23 September, 21 October, 11 November and 16 December.

Booking is essential! Call 0300 123 1034 to reserve your place.

Just bring your charged device and start your journey toward becoming more digitally confident!

Vanessa Lynch, Digital Skills Co-ordinator



Community Alliance
BROXBOURNE & EAST HERTS

Digital Skills Group in Stanstead Abbotts

Booking is essential!
Call 0300 123 1034 to join

Want to master your computer, tablet or phone?
Join our **FREE, friendly, and volunteer-led** group to build your digital skills today!

Our Digital Champions will teach you how to do simple things such as:

- Navigate your devices with ease
- Online shop
- Access virtual appointments
- Stay connected with friends & family

Location:
Nigel Copping Community Building, Stanstead Abbotts, SG12 8GA

Wednesdays Apart from January,
2:30pm to 4:00pm
*No session in August 2026
THURSDAY 22nd January,
11th February, 11th March,
22nd April, 20th May, 10th June,
22nd July, 23rd September,
21st October, 11th November &
16th December 2026



All you need is your charged device!



The Three Villages Magazine

BRIGGENS UNCOVERED: THE FORGOTTEN SPY FACTORY ON OUR DOORSTEP



Many grand houses were requisitioned by the government during the Second World War; Goodwood House became a hospital, Waddesdon Manor housed 75 evacuated children (for which Lord Rothschild was paid £1700 p.a.), Woburn Abbey became the head of the Political Warfare Executive, Luton Hoo trained the Women's Land Army. Then there was Bletchley Park and we all know what happened there. But what about Briggens House?

Briggens, right on the Essex–Hertfordshire borders and in the Blackmore family from 1740, was bought by the Gibbs family in 1908. In 1941 it was the home of Walter Gibbs, 4th Baron Aldenham, Chairman of Westminster Bank and it was then that the Government requisitioned it to become the Polish Agent Training Station.

Huts were erected on the lawns, assault courses built and the grander rooms taken over for administrative services. But Walter and his wife were lucky; they were allowed to remain in residence in a small flat at the top of the house, something not permitted for many of the owners. But the Poles were not just undertaking physical training in the landscaped grounds, modelled in 1720 by Charles Bridgman (the Kings gardener no less), Jerzy Meciejewski had obtained various printing presses, cameras and other apparatus, installed them in the basement and started to make forged documents for the Poles' guerilla activities back in the homeland. It is likely that this was the reason that the Special Operations Executive decided to set up its forgery unit at Briggens, becoming Section XIV of that organisation.

Morton Bisset, a very experienced and competent printer who had worked for many years for Waterlows, a large printing company, was dragged (somewhat reluctantly) to become the first commanding officer. He immediately appointed colleagues to key roles and expanded the technical side, with the purchase of Linotype machines to enable hot metal letterpress printing and offset lithographic presses. Key experts were recruited to expand the team, such as Arthur Gatward, an ex-policeman with expertise in handwriting, and Charles Roberts, who had worked for the de la Rue company making banknotes. The Poles (Maciejewski, Surala, Sobierajcyk and their commander Major Hartman) continued to play key roles, albeit the training school was later transferred to Audley End. Then there were graphic artists, chemists, paper experts, photographers, lithographic printers and advertising copywriters. All were given the rank of sergeant.

Not forgetting the crucial FANYs. The First Aid Nursing Yeomanry was set up during the first war to provide services to injured servicemen, but became much more prominent with the appointment of Lilian Franklin as commander in 1922. FANYs had a huge role in the war effort, often confined to menial roles (driving, making tea etc.), but also staffing key SOE units such as Hunsdon and Grendon (other country houses requisitioned by the war office) where they were trained in intercepting enemy morse code messages. Many FANYs worked at Bletchley as they did at Briggens. What their role was is less clear. Did they just undertake those menial tasks required to support the men doing the 'important' work? Or did they become more involved in the crucial fabrication of forged documents? Leo Marks, who led much of the cryptographic activity for SOE agents, tells how he trained teams of FANYs to decrypt indecipherable intercepts, critical and extremely demanding work. FANYs went through a rigorous selection process, and many were smarter than the men leading them. In my novel *Ipseity* I give Elizabeth, my fictional lead, a much bigger role: assisting in helping to produce, authenticate and age documents produced by the unit. For certain these tasks were needed, and I can't believe that these fine women didn't contribute.

Take the requirement to produce an identity card for a female SOE agent preparing to be dropped by parachute into enemy occupied France. First, you would need to secure the correct paper. We know that Bisset had contacts with Spicers and other paper mills in Kent, sometimes having to order over a ton of paper, even for a small job, to avoid suspicion. The correct watermark would have to be added or made to order. Then the correct design would have to be sourced (often from a network of collaborators in France). The original document would be photographed; the negative being manipulated to remove all the personalising data.



BRIGGENS UNCOVERED CONT.

Blank copies would be printed using the correct inks, then a photograph, signature and multiple official stamps added; these also being fabricated at Briggens. Often a postage stamp would be required, but these too were produced in house. Once completed the document would need to be aged, perhaps with scuffing and refolding, and maybe a stain or two using weak tea.

But it was not only ID cards that were being made. French and German food coupons, along with bank notes and propaganda material, were also created (the former in their thousands) to be dropped by the RAF over enemy territory. This was part of the 'Black Game', Ellic Howe's crucial campaign of deception; the forerunner of political spin and the current online campaigns of disinformation promulgated by hostile states. Dropping authentic food vouchers over Germany gave the population extra food, stressed the ration supply chains and enhanced the Allies in the eyes of the population.

As the war progressed the demand for material from Briggens increased with an estimate of a quarter of a million documents being produced. How crucial were these flimsy pieces of paper: literally an agent's life could depend on the authenticity of the paper being scrutinised at a check point.

Two things emerge while researching the history of Briggens. The first is how different it was from the typical military installation (or for that matter the boffins of Bletchley Park). Here were creative types who put on musicals, published an inhouse magazine and when Brigadier Gubbins their superior officer visited, cascades of fake five-pound notes with his image were dropped from the balcony. I believe that the atmosphere was relaxed and informal, but the work ethic, commitment to the war effort and total secrecy were still maintained.

The second being how sad that so little is known of the unit. Much of what I have gleaned comes from the work of Des Turner (*The Secrets of Station 14: Briggens House, SOE's Forgery and Polish Elite Agent Training Station*, published by The History Press, ISBN-13: 978-0750999830) who was able to interview Bisset and a couple of others before he died. But the remainder of the amazing team were demobilised, returned to civilian life and never told a soul. They largely remain anonymous. They took their signing of the Official Secrets Act seriously. They kept 'mum' and died with their secrets. While the gradual unpicking of the mysteries of Bletchley led to the release of staff from obligations of secrecy, this never happened for the heroes of Briggens. How sad that we don't have more personal accounts of the work of this extraordinary unit.

One link is accessible: the archive of Dennis Collins. A brilliant graphic artist, musician and cartoonist, who after the war left a box of mementoes to the Imperial War Museum. He later became the artist of The Perishers cartoon series published in the Daily Mirror. How I would have loved to talk to him about his experiences at Briggens.

Charles Pither

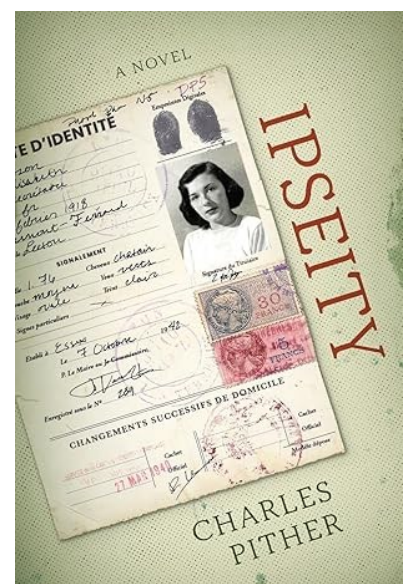
A review of *Ipseity* by Charles Pither

Briggens House was originally very grand, but is now virtually derelict. Charles Pither has brought to light some of the fascinating activities that happened at Briggens House during World War II with this story woven around actual events and real people. Much of what went on there was top secret and concealed by the participants who remained faithful to the Official Secrets Act and, in most cases, took their stories to the grave.

Ipseity has other mysteries at its core woven into the actual deceptions and covert activities that were concocted at Station XIV, which were probably more secret even than those at Bletchley Park. Most of the characters are genuine, as were their astonishing achievements. This is a work of fiction, but the truth is often stranger.

The sad decline of Briggens House as it quietly crumbles away brings a sharp contrast to the importance of the activities carried out there. This book is well researched, moving and shines a light on the darkness of those times, and is available to buy from Amazon or to order from Bookshops.

Rob Gifford



The Three Villages Magazine

FROM LOCAL FIELDS TO FAMOUS PINTS: THE JOURNEY OF OUR WINTER BARLEY



As the long, warm days of summer reach their peak approaching the solstice, there is a distinct shift in the rhythm of the landscape surrounding Ware, Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets.

At French & Jupps, early summer is a season of anticipation. Our eyes are fixed on the fields of winter barley that surround our community. As you walk along the River Lee Navigation or through the local bridleways, you'll notice the green fields are finally giving way to gold. At the maltings, we are now officially on the countdown to the July harvest.

This is a vital moment in our calendar. The quality of barley in East Anglia is considered the finest in the world, providing the foundation for the specialist roasted malts we've been producing in Stanstead Abbots since the 1860s.

You may have noticed the 'biscuity' or 'coffee-like' aromas drifting across the village. These are created during the production of our Crystal and Patent Roasted Malts. The 'cereal' and 'biscuity' notes come from Crystal Malts, which eventually find their way into Lagers, Golden Ales and IPAs. Meanwhile, the rich coffee aromas come from our Patent Malts, famed for adding character to Porters and Stouts, favoured by breweries ranging from New River in Hoddesdon to Fuller's in London.



Take a Step into British Malting Heritage

Following the popularity of our previous open days, we are delighted to offer another opportunity to see our roasting drums in action and discover how we've evolved from the seventeenth century to the modern day.

Summer Tour – FULLY BOOKED

Tuesday, July 28th | 11:00 am & 1:30 pm

Autumn Tour – SPACES STILL AVAILABLE

Thursday, November 19th | 11:00 am & 1:30 pm

Please visit our website or contact us directly at james.marinoss@frenchandjupps.co.uk to secure your spot. We wish our entire community and neighbours a wonderful summer and look forward to seeing some of you at the maltings in the coming months!

James Marinoss, Marketing and Sales Manager at French & Jupps

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

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



What a wonderful term we've had here at St Andrew's! Amongst our exciting learning, we celebrated Science Day, World Book Day and Easter.

Nursery class have had so much fun, chasing monsters in the garden and building sandcastles!

Reception class have been learning about Lunar New Year by decorating the home corner. They learnt how to use chopsticks to eat their snacks and composed some beautiful music to accompany our Lunar New Year celebrations using the glockenspiels.

Year 1 celebrated Science Day where we explored exciting 'Fizz, Bang, Pop' experiments with the wonderful Professor Crazy. The children loved watching the reactions, making predictions and thinking like real scientists as they observed bubbles, fizzing mixtures and surprising pops!

Year 2 had a wonderful trip to St Albans Cathedral. We had a workshop in the morning and made a clay tile, many of which had an Easter theme.



Year 5 conducted an experiment to explore how we can make bubbles last longer. The children discovered that when sugar and water is mixed with bubble mixture it makes the bubbles bounce!

Year 6 investigated how light travelled in straight lines before seeing which surfaces would be most reflective.

We hope you enjoy seeing and reading about just some of the fun we've had at St Andrew's this term!

Michael Speed, Headteacher

Telephone: 01920 870097

Email: admin@standrews323.herts.sch.uk

Website: standrews323.herts.sch.uk

*Mill Race, Stanstead Abbotts,
Ware, Hertfordshire,
SG12 8BZ*

The Three Villages Magazine

UPDATES FROM OUR LOCAL SCHOOLS



St John the Baptist CE VA Primary

The children have been enjoying getting out and about with some great trips to London. First, Years 1 and 2 headed to Tate Britain to be inspired for their art work: 'We looked at lots of amazing artworks but some of them made us laugh because they were a little bit rude. We had lunch straight away sitting outside on the steps. Darcy liked sitting like one of the sculptures. Rosie's favourite was a painting that looked like a portal to another world. Henry liked a sculpture of a man fighting a snake. Molly and Noah thought the painting called Ophelia was cool and had really brilliant colours. Florence, Erin, Mars and Bobby loved an artwork that was made out of lots of fabric, beads and string. Aurelia loved an artwork that had a big pyramid shape sticking out of it. We all loved laying in the gallery and drawing in our sketch books. We even walked down a staircase that had all the wall painted like a rainbow on fire. We had such an amazing trip to the museum, we did not want to leave.'



Year 5 are studying *Hamlet* and decided the best way to immerse themselves in this play was to head to the Globe: 'On Thursday 23rd April, Year 5 went to William Shakespeare's Globe in London. After we got off the coach, we had a snack break and saw some Egyptian Geese. Then we were given a tour where we were able to ask all of our questions, whilst the history was explained to us. Then we sat and watched a short scene from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which was the play that was being performed that night. We then had a drama workshop. We enjoyed our lunch and then got back on the coach.'



Baking skills were under scrutiny as our Year 3 children took part in a delightful Easter Bake Off as part of their homework, and the results were truly impressive! From colourful cupcakes to creative chocolate treats, the effort and imagination on display were fantastic. Once all the entries were in, the children had the exciting opportunity to taste and evaluate each bake, voting for their favourites based on both presentation and flavour. It was wonderful to see such enthusiasm, teamwork and thoughtful judging from everyone involved. The teachers even got to try each one.

In Year 4, the children have been really enjoying their guitar lessons – provided by the school budget. They are all growing in confidence and are developing their skills as musicians, learning how important practice is to helping them improve.



Year 6 have been busy developing as scientists as they investigated the solubility of different materials. We measured out equal amounts of granulated sweetener, caster sugar and icing sugar into small containers. Before adding drops of water, we predicted which would dissolve with the least amount of water and which would need more. Then, we added water a drop at a time until the solid had dissolved and recorded how many drops were needed. Some of our results surprised us so we calculated the average number of drops for the whole class.



Another busy term here at St John the Baptist. If you are looking for a school place for your child for September 2027, or have just moved into the village, do contact us on 01920 870135 or admin@sjbaptist.herts.sch.uk to book a tour.

Lydia Hunt, Headteacher

UPDATES FROM OUR LOCAL SCHOOLS



Amwell View School and Specialist Sports College

Dance Festival

Amwell View School, based in Stanstead Abbots, is a maintained special school for pupils with severe learning difficulties. Every year a group of pupils participate in the Hertford and Ware Dance Festival, which is held at Sele School in Hertford.

A group of five pupils from Amwell View Tonwell Satellite School took part in the Dance Festival on Monday 2nd March 2026. The Dance Festival brings together pupils from across the Hertford and Ware area to perform creative, curriculum-linked and extra-curricular dance pieces. Amwell View's pupils took to the stage with huge smiles, ready to perform a routine inspired by the magical world of Willy Wonka.



Dance can significantly enhance the wellbeing of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) by strengthening social-emotional skills, improving motor coordination, supporting cognitive development and offering a powerful outlet for self-expression. Research consistently shows that dance helps SEN learners feel more confident and connected. The Dance Festival gives children the opportunity to perform on stage and experience performing in front of an audience.

Amy Gregg, Dance and PE Teacher said, 'Their dance was full of imagination, playful movements and "chocotastic" moments that brought the audience straight into a candy-filled adventure. The group had spent weeks practising after school, working incredibly hard to perfect every step, spin and formation. When the music started, all their effort paid off as they performed with confidence and joy. By the end of the routine, it was clear they absolutely loved every second of their sweet, energetic performance.'

Janet Warrington, School Business Manager

Stanstead Abbots, Nr. Ware, Station Road, Hertfordshire SG12 8EH

T: 01920 870027

F: 01920 871664

E: admin@amwell.herts.sch.uk



Make Lunch Club

The 3 Churches Benefice's **Make Lunch Club** offers a chance for you and your school-aged children (and their younger siblings) to get together, share a meal and have some fun during the school holidays. 12–2pm, Mondays & Fridays at The Wilshire Hall, Cappell Lane.

If you would like to join us, please email makelunch@3churches.net

The Three Villages Magazine

PUZZLES

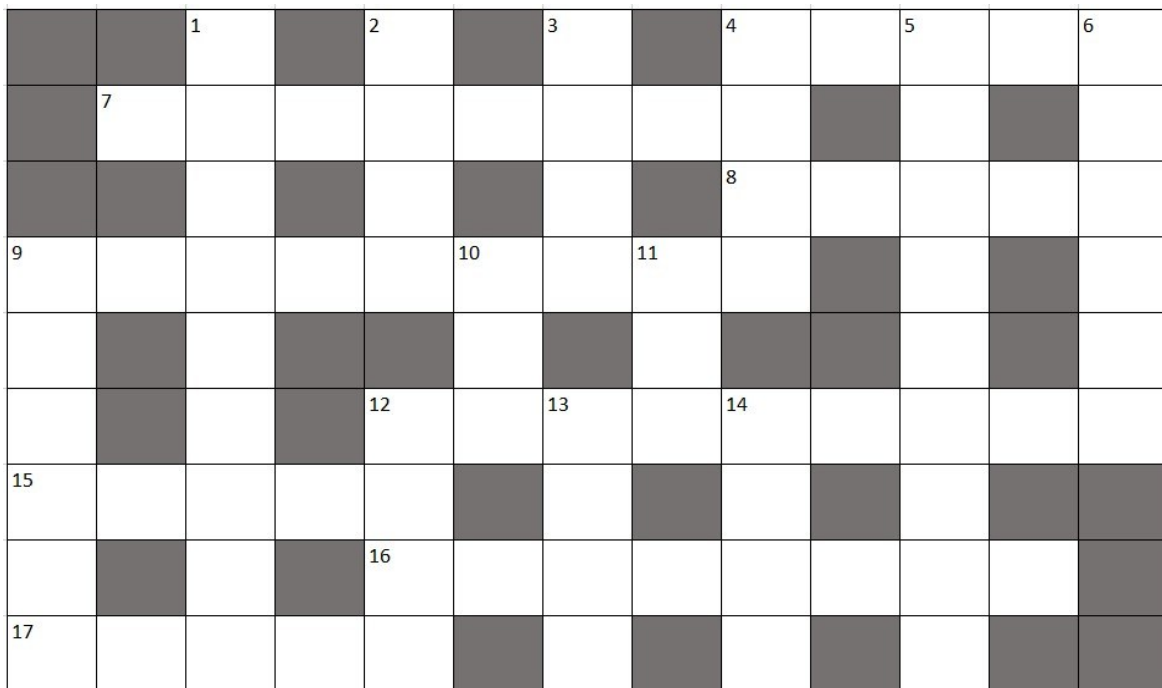
CROSSWORD

ACROSS

4. Attend to customers (5)
7. Capital of Hungary (8)
8. Fast sailing vessel (5)
9. Native American emblem (5, 4)
12. Jazz singer (4, 5)
15. Lively Bohemian dance (5)
16. Settled (8)
17. African antelope (5)

DOWN

1. Sydney's country (9)
2. Flat of the hand (4)
3. Mexican currency (4)
4. Eyelid swelling (4)
5. Enlisted (9)
6. Whole (6)
9. Become unsteady and fall (6)
10. Friend (3)
11. Sign of the Zodiac (3)
12. Thick stiff paper (4)
13. Sunrise direction (4)
14. Inflatable rubber mattress (4)



SUDOKU

6	9			4				5
	2			7				
		7		1			2	9
	1	3				6	5	
5		4				8		
8				3	7			
						4	1	
		6	2		1		9	
	3	5	6					8

NUMBER CRUNCHERS

Work out each answer by solving the sums in turn in the direction of the arrows.

EASY

43	→ Double it	-22	→ Halve it	÷8	↙
?	← +27	← x3	← ÷20	← +4	← x9

INTERMEDIATE

14	→ 2/7 of this	x2	→ 1/8 of this	Triple it	↙
?	← x9	← -41	← Square it	← ÷9	← +69

MEET A LOCAL: STEVE SCOTT



Steve Scott has lived in the High Street in Stanstead Abbots for about twenty years. Many people may have seen him about the village in the van he uses for his traditional tiling business, Tiled Perfection. He uses his van when meeting the tiling needs of people who mostly live in period houses in North London, especially in Crouch End. A perfectionist in his business, Steve likes to match his use of tiles with what is appropriate for the date of the house, but he also considers his clients' wishes, which may differ from what he personally thinks is best. Steve has always enjoyed tiling and learned his craft as a tiler for another tiling company before starting his own business. He has worked with many period properties and has also worked for the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

How long have you lived locally?

I first started coming to the village on fishing trips with a friend from Islington. I liked the fresh air and wanted to live somewhere where my children did not have to live with the pressures of growing up in London. I have worked as a warden in the Lea Valley Park for many years and am now the Head Warden of the Stanstead Innings fishery in Stanstead Abbots, one of the most sought-after fisheries in the area, with a team of twelve wardens working with me. I have three children, Daniel, Dennis and Leanne, and I am sure they have all benefitted from living here.

What is your favourite place to eat locally?

I like eating at the Taste of Raj in the High Street as I find the quality of the food and the level of service there is always excellent.

What is your favourite local shop?

I am going to cheat slightly and pick a shop in Hoddesdon as I am a keen angler and I find that the Johnson Ross fishing tackle shop meets all my needs in that respect.

What is your favourite book?

My favourite book without a shadow of a doubt is The Bible. Two people who used to live locally, Martin and Elizabeth Goldsmith, introduced me to the value of the stories in The Bible and I have found that reading it has helped me to develop my own faith, and at the same it has improved my own literacy.

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

This is a tricky one, but I would pick Martin Goldsmith, my neighbour Bob Hunt, Rev'd Sarah Forrest (Vicar of The 3 Churches Benefice) and Lynne Griffiths, a Reader and organist at St Andrew's Church. Bob was exceptionally helpful to me in my journey to becoming a Christian. He lives nearby and he knew that my life wasn't always on the right course in the past and I am grateful to him for his help in setting me on the straight path.

What do you love about your work?

I find an enormous satisfaction in taking a lot of trouble to get things right in my planning and in pleasing the customer. I am literally looking for tiled perfection! I put in a lot of preparatory work to try to ensure that the tiling absolutely matches the period from which the house dates. On the other hand, the customer is always right and if they want something that isn't really appropriate in my opinion, their decision will prevail!

What motivates you?

I used to worry about my work and whether there would always be enough of it to keep me going. Now, I know that if I keep my faith in the Church, my 'daily bread' will always be provided by God.

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

I am particularly proud of finding my faith and saying prayers for my children and myself. I am also particularly proud that my children have accepted the way in which my faith has changed my life around. Recently I gave each of them a Bible as their Christmas present and I felt particularly proud at that moment. I think they saw the point too!

What is your favourite thing about living in the villages?

I am proud of the fact that, whereas I was not always proud of the way I was living in the past, now I am an accepted member of village and am happy to talk to all kinds of new people I meet. I will not try to convert them, but I will tell them about my journey to faith. It feels great to be respected by my children and the other people I know. My biggest regret is that I did not know how to live with faith twenty years ago. However, I do believe that Jesus was always there, waiting for me. Look at this [at this point Steve opens his shirt and reveals a large tattoo of a cross]. I got this tattoo when I was seventeen and it shows something that means a lot to me. I think this proves that God was waiting for me and had been calling out to me. One night – it was in the middle of the night – I finally heard the call!

You can find out more about Tiled Perfection by contacting Steve on info@tiledperfection.com.

David Davies

The Three Villages Magazine

REGULAR CLUBS, GROUPS AND MEETINGS IN THE THREE VILLAGES

1st Stanstead Abbotts 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, Beavers: boys and girls aged 6–8 years, Cubs: boys and girls aged 8–10½ years, Scouts: boys and girls aged 10½–14 years. All groups meet at Scout HQ on London Road, Ware. For details visit www.greatamwellscouts.org.uk or call 01920 320142.

1st Stanstead Abbotts & St Margarets Scout Group: Age groups as above. All groups meet at Scout HQ on Marsh Lane, Stanstead Abbotts. 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. 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 Abbotts 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).

Hope in Action: a group concentrating on addiction in all forms, for concerned family members as well as addicts. Meeting in The Ashlea Room, Stanstead Abbotts Parish Hall, from 5–6.30pm.

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 stmargaretsbury@outlook.com/07958 636388.

Stanstead Abbotts 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. 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 Abbotts 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! Contact Pete (07429142525 or pmcook1@hotmail.co.uk).

St Andrew's Church Card-making Group: Meets in The Wilshere Hall at 1pm on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays every month. £4 per session covers materials used and two cards made each session. Refreshments are included. New members welcome. 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. Please contact Mary (maryhallett14@gmail.com / 07899 861297).

Bell Ringing at St John the Baptist, Great Amwell: Meeting every Thursday, 7.30–9.00pm. A new skill for all ages to stimulate the brain and keep you fit. Just come along or contact Frances Adams 07876496654/fmadams750@gmail.com.

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

Stanstead Abbotts & St Margarets Village Club: The perfect place to relax, socialise and have fun! Enjoy our Sports Bar with Snooker, Pool & Darts, a welcoming Family Bar, Live Music, Bingo, Community Events and a beautiful Riverside Garden. New members welcome. Contact 01920 870820/savc.comms@gmail.com.

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

All Sorts Dementia Group: Mondays & Thursdays at High Cross Village Hall and Wednesdays in Essendon Village Hall. Groups run for 4.5 hours with activities, entertainment and a hot lunch. Contact 01279 970474/allsortsdg@gmail.com.

GIRLGUIDING

We are now well into our summer term, and it has already been a busy and enjoyable few weeks for everyone. Recently, the girls had great fun making their own underarm fudge, which was a big hit! We also spent time outdoors in the woods, where the Brownies worked together to build small chairs using sticks and string. It was wonderful to see their creativity and teamwork in action, and they produced some fantastic little designs.

In the lead-up to Easter, we enjoyed a range of seasonal activities. The girls made beautiful roses as gifts for Mother's Day, putting a lot of care and effort into their creations. We also had the opportunity to perform the story of Noah's Ark for residents at Willowthorpe Care Home, which was a lovely experience for both the Brownies and the audience. Of course, we rounded off the term with our traditional Easter egg hunt, which is always a highlight and thoroughly enjoyed by all.



If you're looking for a new challenge and to be part of the community, why not volunteer with Girlguiding? Find local opportunities by scanning the QR code below or visit volunteer.girlguiding.org.uk.

Helen Payne
Leader



MADRIGAL CONCERT

WHEN: Friday 19th June 2026 at 9pm

WHERE: Great Amwell pools, Lower Road / Amwell Lane, Great Amwell

The concert at Great Amwell Pool began in 1940. A young Doctor living in River Cottage said 'the pool at Amwell was made for singing on a mid-summers night', so his wife, Betty Sewell, her sister and 15 friends stood on the bridge over the New River and sang.

In 1941 Haileybury took over the organisation of the singers with the help of friends. For the Queen's coronation the singers were allowed on the island and it has been performed there ever since, with permission from Thames Water.

This year will be the 84th performance of the Madrigal Concert, with donations going to the Isabel Hospice, a charity that has been providing free palliative care and support for patients and their families across eastern Hertfordshire since 1982. Isabel Hospice provides its services free of charge to those who need them, meaning they must raise £8 million every year to continue this vital support. We encourage everyone who comes along to the concert to donate – every little helps!

Please do come along and enjoy this wonderful musical event!

Martin Vaughan



The Three Villages Magazine

INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION: ST MARGARETSBURY CRICKET CLUB



St Margaretsbury Ladies 1st XI officially began in the 2020 season, when a long-standing standalone team, East Herts Ladies, made the move to the club to enjoy the fantastic facilities on offer and the backing of an established club. While that first season was patchy due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it marked the beginning of an exciting new chapter.

Since then, St Margaretsbury have made every effort to grow the women and girls' game. A major milestone came in 2023, when we entered our first girls' team into the local junior league following a huge effort from club volunteers to promote and develop the girls' game at junior level. That progress has continued, and in 2026 we now have two teams in the junior league, alongside a thriving girls' section with players as young as eight.

On the field, the ladies have enjoyed some wonderful success, winning both the league and the plate cup in 2024. In 2025, we moved into the Herts Women's Cricket League to align with the men's section and create a smaller travel circle for matches. Although the team faced some availability challenges and results didn't quite match the previous year, we are optimistic about regaining that success in the 2026 season and beyond.

We are always on the lookout for new players and welcome all ages and abilities. We aim to find a place for any woman or girl interested in joining the club. Girls aged 11–15 train on Monday evenings, while the women (13+) train on Wednesdays. Younger girls can get involved through our All Stars or Superstars programmes, which are mixed gender and take place on Sunday mornings. Girls' matches are played on various days during the week, with women's matches taking place on Sundays.

We are also running Summer Camps for children aged 7–13, which are perfect for beginners and those looking to improve their skills. The camps run from 10am to 4pm and are designed to be fun-filled, action-packed days where children can learn the game in a relaxed and supportive environment. With flexible booking options available, families can choose what works best across the holiday period. Our Summer Camps are a key part of our commitment to growing junior cricket at St Margaretsbury. Contact juniocricket@stmcc.org.uk if you would like to know more or to book.

The ladies' team are proudly sponsored by the Taste of Raj in Stanstead Abbots, whose logo is worn at all league games. Their support is a valued part of the club's wider community links, and the restaurant has also become a popular choice for end-of-season celebrations for both the ladies and men's teams.



For anyone who would like to come and support St Margaretsbury Cricket Club this summer, we would be delighted to welcome you to our beautiful ground. The men run four teams, with two playing at home most Saturdays from midday. The women play on Sundays starting at 1 pm, and you can also catch our friends, the Comilla Warriors, a T20 specialist team, in action on Sundays.

St Margaretsbury Cricket Club is proud of the progress made so far and looks forward to continuing to inspire the next generation of girls' cricketers for years to come. For more information or to get involved, please contact: info@stmcc.org.uk.

ST MARGRETSBURY CC
SUMMER CAMPS
Love cricket? Perfect. New to cricket? Even better!

Fun filled, action-packed
Perfect for beginners and rising stars!
Games, challenges and lots of laughs
Learn as you play

Dates
26th - 28th May
27th - 30th July
10th - 13th August

10am - 4pm

1 day - £35 / 2 days - £65 / 3 days - £85 / 4 days - £100

BOOK HERE



Or email juniocricket@stmcc.org.uk



BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: THE GEORGE IV PUB

Nestled in the picturesque village of Great Amwell, The George IV Pub is the perfect place to enjoy imaginative, freshly prepared dishes, including traditional pub classics, all served in a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere. Whether dining indoors or making the most of the fully heated terrace, guests can enjoy great food, friendly service and the charm of a true village pub.

A little about us

The George IV is more than just a pub – it's a place where people come together. Our menu focuses on freshly prepared dishes made with quality ingredients, alongside a well-chosen selection of beers, wines and spirits. From casual lunches and family meals to celebratory dinners, we aim to offer something for everyone.



The George IV is also an ideal venue for special occasions. From intimate weddings, birthday parties and anniversaries to baby showers and corporate events, we can cater for gatherings of all sizes. Our beautiful function room, combined with flexible dining options, allows us to host events for up to 150 guests, with a dedicated team on hand to help bring each occasion to life.

Our history

A longstanding part of Great Amwell village, The George IV has been welcoming locals and visitors for generations. Over the years, the pub has evolved to meet the needs of a changing community while retaining its traditional character and role as a village hub. Today, it blends classic pub hospitality with a modern approach to food, events and service.

Part of the local community

Being part of Great Amwell means everything to us. We are proud to be a place where neighbours meet, friendships are made and celebrations are shared. We regularly welcome local groups, families and businesses, and we love supporting village life by hosting community gatherings and special events throughout the year.

Looking ahead

As we move forward, our focus is on continuing to develop The George IV as a destination pub while staying true to its village roots. Plans include refreshing seasonal menus, expanding our events programme and making even better use of our terrace and function spaces. Above all, we remain committed to providing a warm welcome and memorable experiences for everyone who walks through our doors. Our events vary from Quiz Nights, Tapas Evening, Live Music with local artists and Music Bingo, plus more to be announced throughout the year.

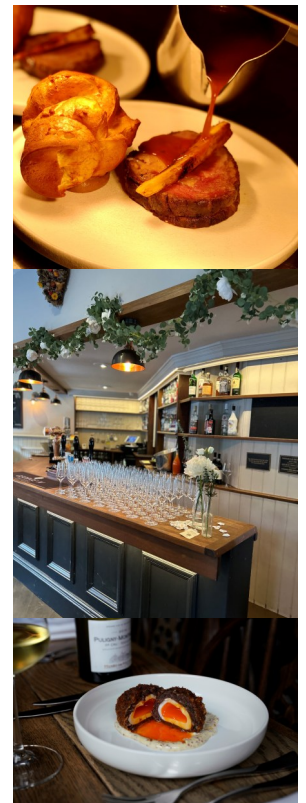
Special offers

We regularly run seasonal promotions, set menus and event packages. Keep an eye on our website and social media pages for the latest offers and upcoming events.

The George IV

📍 Great Amwell | 🌐 Website: www.georgeivpub.co.uk

✉ Email: info@georgeivpub.co.uk | ☎ Telephone: 01920 870039



The Three Villages Magazine

POEM BY ANON

FACEBOOK

What news today from the Facebook flock?
Are there swans in trouble?
Ducks stuck in some rubble?
Or the regular – 'the crossing is down'
Tales end with a frown,
What rotten luck!

Look, dozens of sheep around
More dead than alive,
Do we send for a vet?
It's the scariest yet
'He was lying down at five,
Completely flat on the ground.'

There are suspicious traders in sight,
Don't answer your door!
It's all a big scam
I'm worried, I really am.
My parcel was here, it was thrown on the floor
Please help – I need to tell you about my plight.

by Anon

If you have a poem you would like to see published, email us at print.threevillagesmagazine@gmail.com.

RECIPE: PIZZA MUFFINS

This is a really easy and delicious recipe. Perfect for a summer picnic/school lunchboxes! It's an easy one to adapt too. You could try cheese and ham or add spring onion if you'd like some greenery. We added an olive to the top of some of ours and it was a lovely addition.

INGREDIENTS

2 medium eggs	150ml milk
75g butter, melted	2 tbsp pizza sauce
150g grated cheddar cheese	75g pepperoni, chopped
1 tsp dried oregano	250g self-raising flour
12 olives (optional)	

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C and line a muffin tray with 12 muffin cases.
2. Add the egg, milk and melted butter to a large bowl. Whisk gently with a fork.
3. Add the pizza sauce, grated cheese, pepperoni and mix again.
4. Finally add the flour and oregano and mix just enough until all the ingredients have combined.
5. Divide the mixture between the 12 muffin cases. Press in an olive on the top of each (optional).
6. Bake the muffins in the oven for 20–25 minutes until a skewer stuck in the middle comes out dry.
7. Store in an air-tight container in the fridge for up to three days or freeze them!



Source: adapted from a recipe found on myfussyeater.com

CHARITY IN FOCUS: PETS AS THERAPY

For many of us, the simple presence of a friendly animal can bring comfort, companionship and a sense of calm. That belief lies at the heart of Pets As Therapy (PAT), a national charity that connects caring pet owners and their much-loved animals with people who may need a little extra support in their day-to-day lives.



PAT volunteers and their pets visit a wide range of community settings, including schools, hospitals, care homes and local groups. These visits may seem small, but their impact can be truly profound. A gentle stroke of a dog or cat, a quiet moment spent with a calm companion, or simply the joy of seeing a friendly face can brighten someone's entire day. For those who may feel isolated or anxious, these visits often help ease loneliness, encourage conversation and build confidence.

At its core, PAT is about creating meaningful human connections through the special bond we share with animals. Volunteers frequently witness the difference their visits make: smiles appearing where there were none before, conversations flowing more easily, and moments of genuine warmth and connection. These everyday interactions are what PAT describes as 'moments of magic' – small but powerful experiences that can leave a lasting impression.

The wellbeing of both people and pets is central to everything PAT does. The charity places great importance on ensuring that all visiting animals are happy, healthy and comfortable in their role. This careful approach helps create safe, positive experiences for everyone involved.

PAT also works hard to understand and demonstrate the difference it makes. Feedback from volunteers and the organisations they visit plays a key role, alongside real-life stories that highlight the positive changes brought about by therapy visits. In schools, for example, children may grow in confidence when reading aloud to a gentle, non-judgemental listener. In care homes, residents often become more engaged and communicative. Surveys and wellbeing assessments further help to show how these visits can reduce anxiety, improve mood and strengthen social connections.

For those who have a calm, friendly dog or cat and a little time to spare, volunteering with PAT can be an incredibly rewarding experience. It offers the chance to give something back to the community while sharing the joy that animals naturally bring. Volunteers are supported throughout their journey, starting with an initial enquiry and guidance from a local representative.

If you feel you and your pet could make a difference, you can find out more by contacting the PAT head office on 01865 671440 or visiting their website (petsastherapy.org). By joining this dedicated community, you could help bring comfort, companionship and a little extra happiness to someone who truly needs it.



Jess loves starting her day with her furry friend



Always good to spend time with Lilian



Let the Christmas fun begin

The Three Villages Magazine

OLIVES FARM: A VERY BRIEF ROMP THROUGH HISTORY

Miles Dymock recently gave a fascinating talk on the history of Olives Farm to Stanstead Abbots Local History Society, which gave a journey through centuries of local history, showing how one place has evolved through different eras. He kindly agreed to give us a summary.

350 million years ago to 145 million years ago

The UK first emerged from the seas with continental Europe as an algal swamp somewhere around the equator during the Carboniferous period. This Eurasian plate drifted North, building up layers of limestone from the bodies of countless dead diatoms in a sea filled with ammonites, plesiosaurs and other early reptiles.

58 million years ago

The Thames is thought to have started flowing, on varying routes through East Anglia carrying gravel as it headed out over Doggerland towards what is now the German Rhine. This gravel was ground out of the bedrock by slow moving glaciers over millions of years forcing earlier sediment south, which is why we have layers of London clay, sand and gravel everywhere across Hertfordshire.

900,000 years ago

Early man appears hunting herds of rhinos, elephant & auroch across the continent crossing what is now the UK Channel by foot. Heading back south as the climate became too cold.

10,000 years ago

The earliest evidence we have of people living around Cats Hill appears from this point. Cats Hill itself would have been a great place to spot prey and people as they moved inland. The hill itself was formed from the gravel of a terminal moraine (stuff pushed ahead of a glacier). This is what makes Tarmac interested in the farm as a potential quarry.

43AD

The Romans appeared as an invading force around this time heading up from Kent and the Catuvellauni Tribe of Hertfordshire, led by Togodumnus and Caractacus, led the British ill-fated resistance. Evidence of a large Roman farm settlement is all over Olives Farm and there would have been a main villa with numerous Roman homesteads in each field together with a pond. Somewhere on the site will be the Roman burial ground, though we've not found this yet.

1334

John Olive and his wife Avice were granted the land in Hertfordshire and the current farmhouse was built in 1441.

1527

Henry VIII purchased the farm for the water supply to feed his 12 acres of pike ponds, which run along the path of the Hunsdon Brook.

1858

The Calverts, a bankrupt brewing family, sell off Hunsdon and Eastwick at auction. The farm was purchased by the owners of Briggens Park and it remained in their hands until sold off to a pension fund by Lord Aldenham in 1986.

2026

Much of the land is now owned by City and Provincial – who having made a profit from selling the Village 7 site with planning permission to Taylor Wimpey, are now hoping to lease the remainder to Tarmac for 25 years or so to be converted into a sand and gravel quarry. This will of course obliterate any history that lies within the land and it will also lower the local water table meaning that those of us that live within the bounds will lose the springs that have feed the land and its settlers over millennia. We can only hope that the site will be restored to farmland, though who knows what mess we'll end up with once they're done with it.

As I sit at the top of the Lee Valley watching this fate approaching, I feel a bond with those that have done the same over the last 10,000 years. Let's hope we can at least give them a good fight when they finally appear.

Miles Dymock

DIRECTORY OF USEFUL NUMBERS

THE 3 CHURCHES BENEFICE

Vicar

Rev'd Dr Sarah Forrest 01920 870009/07488 914972

Lay Ministers

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

Churchwardens: Mr Peter Melrose 01920 422092

Mr John Woodward 07942 674994

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 Gerald King 07710 872218

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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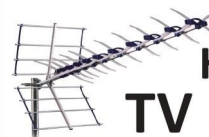
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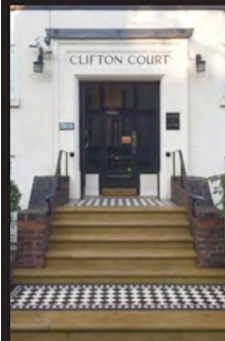
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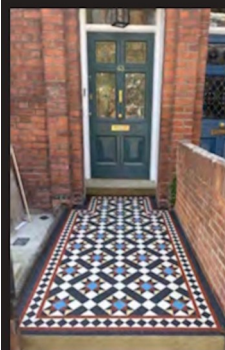
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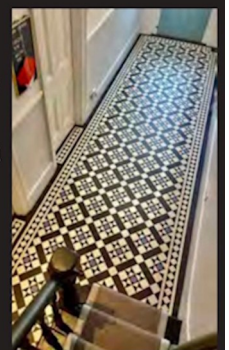


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❤️ Come as you are. Let's Make Church together. ❤️

Got questions? Message vicar@3churches.net



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- * SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY MAGAZINE *
- * REACH CUSTOMERS ACROSS THE LOCAL AREA *

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PUZZLE PAGE ANSWERS (from page 12)

SUDOKU

6	9	1	3	4	2	7	8	5
3	2	8	9	7	5	1	6	4
4	5	7	8	1	6	3	2	9
9	1	3	4	2	8	6	5	7
5	7	4	1	6	9	8	3	2
8	6	2	5	3	7	9	4	1
2	8	9	7	5	3	4	1	6
7	4	6	2	8	1	5	9	3
1	3	5	6	9	4	2	7	8

NUMBER CRUNCHERS

EASY: 33

INTERMEDIATE: 207

CROSSWORD

		A		P		P		S	E	R	V	E
	B	U	D	A	P	E	S	T		E		N
		S		L		S		Y	A	C	H	T
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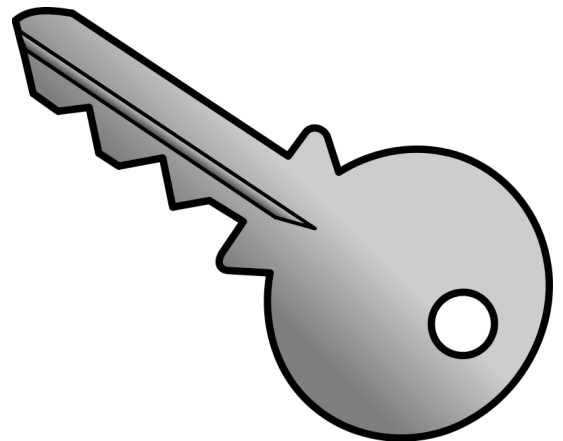


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