

# HARPENDIA

PEOPLE, CULTURE & NEWS

AUTUMN 09



*Baa Lamb Trees. Image courtesy of Frank Ledger of the Harpenden Photographic Society.*

## EXCLUSIVE ARTICLES and INTERVIEWS

- eBooks. Read all about the future! See page 11.
- “How I miss Richard and Judy”. See page 8.
- Interview with new author Amanda Thomas. See pages 4 & 5.
- Change your life with Pilates. See page 15.

**Exclusive Offer to  
HARPENDIA readers.**  
Save 15% on your first on  
line order at Candy Queen  
Designs.  
See page 22 for details.

**Fighting terrorism.**  
How a Harpenden  
business helps towards  
our safety. See page 17.

**Free Prize Draw**  
See Page 2 for details of  
the winner and  
photograph.  
**Free Subscription.**  
Send an e mail for your  
free copy of HARPENDIA  
to [info@harpendingia.com](mailto:info@harpendingia.com)

## From the Editor

### Autumn 2009



A warm welcome to the first ever Autumn edition of HARPENDIA, and if you are a new reader then I'm sure you will find plenty of interesting and varied articles.

I'm happy to report the ongoing success of the magazine and the web site with an ever increasing readership, a wider range of subject matter and more contributing writers. My thanks to all contributors, especially Amanda Thomas who has helped enormously with the focus on Literature. Amanda is also featured in her own right with an interview about the publication of her first book (see page 4).

Regular readers will notice the improved design and structure with a new front cover, the editor's page and a contents page. The web site will also see some modifications during the next week or so. Talking of which, the Free Prize Draw proved very popular with loads of entries, each hoping to win the oil painting "Through the liquid sun filling the sky" by local artist Haydn Dickenson.

The lucky winner, Sue Jarvis, is shown below being presented with the painting by Haydn. Sue is an artist, currently studying ceramics at Harrow (University of Westminster) having previously completed an HNC and HND in 3D ceramics at Barnfield College in Luton. She was thrilled to have won and says she is currently "enjoying the painting immensely".

Another free prize draw will be featured on the HARPENDIA web site soon, so log on every week to keep up to date with what is happening in Harpenden. [www.harpendia.com](http://www.harpendia.com)

If you have any comments or views about the magazine please send them to me at [info@harpendia.com](mailto:info@harpendia.com)

**Ron Taylor**  
Editor

**The Free Prize Draw  
presentation to Sue Jarvis  
by Haydn Dickenson**



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### STOP PRESS

**Did you know you could hire out the facilities at Harpenden's Roundwood Park School? Roundwood is most certainly Harpenden's undiscovered gem in these cost conscious times.**

**Currently Roundwood Park hires out the gym to fitness and martial arts clubs, the hall to ballroom dancing groups and religious groups, the IT suites to computer clubs and the playing fields to sports clubs. With ample car parking and toilets, we mean to extend these facilities to local business. Roundwood Park School has meeting rooms with seating for up to 30 with the use of interactive white boards and sound systems. There are also drama studios and art rooms with a working kiln - and tea and coffee are available at rates well below those given in the commercial sector.**

**As an introductory offer, any new groups booking for six uses will get a seventh hire for FREE. Our lettings team will be happy to discuss your requirements further. Call Cheryl Noakes or Tony Smith on 01582 765344 or email**

**[smitht@roundwoodpark.herts.sch.uk](mailto:smitht@roundwoodpark.herts.sch.uk) .**



# Family wiped out by Cholera. Why?

By The Editor

An interview with Amanda Thomas author of "The Lambeth Cholera Outbreak of 1848-1849: The Setting, Causes, Course and Aftermath of an Epidemic in London"

Amanda Thomas has become one of Harpenden's eminent group of authors following the publication of her first work by McFarland & Co Inc. (a major USA publisher of academic, technical and educational books). I met up with Amanda recently to find out more.

**I guess History must have been one of your favourite school subjects?**

No, it was French, but I have always been fascinated by the past. My father gave me the history bug as he enjoyed visiting old buildings and museums. I have particularly fond memories of my childhood in Rochester with him. At university, where I read Italian, I became interested in the history of language and how elements within the spoken word betray our early origins.



**How did you find out about the cholera outbreak?**

It started with a family history question from a distant cousin who had noticed a section of her family had been wiped out in Lambeth in 1849.

**What motivated you to investigate the background?**

We visited Lambeth Archives – for me the first of many visits – to investigate further. There wasn't a lot to go on but I started with the *District Sanitary Reports* which made shocking reading and I then wrote an article.

**Did you start the research with a book in mind?**

Not at all. The article was published in *The Clock Tower*, [www.foma-lsc.org/newsletter.html](http://www.foma-lsc.org/newsletter.html). The journal, which I edit, represents the interests of the Friends of Medway Archives and Local

Studies Centre in Rochester. I am passionate about Kentish history and had already done some work with the Victoria County History's England's Past for Everyone project about Industrial Revolution migration in Kent.

**How did you approach potential publishers?**

They approached me. I also write historical fiction with an old university friend from Boston called Don Hubbard. He writes books about the history of baseball for McFarland and he mentioned my work to them. They requested a copy of the *Clock Tower* article and then a full proposal for a book on the Lambeth story. Don's work with McFarland has led to work with other publishers and his latest book was featured on Live with Regis and Kelly the US breakfast show. I'm not sure my book would ever be on GMTV!

**INTERVIEW CONTINUES ON THE NEXT PAGE. PLEASE SCROLL DOWN TO VIEW.**

*Photo captions:*

*Above: Amanda Thomas*

*Left: Scanning electron microscope image of Vibrio cholerae bacteria (Dartmouth Electron Microscope Facility, Dartmouth College; Wikimedia Commons)*

## Amanda Thomas Interview continued...

**Were there any key elements in your pitch that secured the deal?**

McFarland is a highly respected publisher and my editor is always on the lookout for something different. I think my proposal appealed to him for that reason. It is an untold story and it re-writes some preconceived theories about nineteenth century London. I am also fanatical with my research and that was important.

**When did you begin the actual writing?**

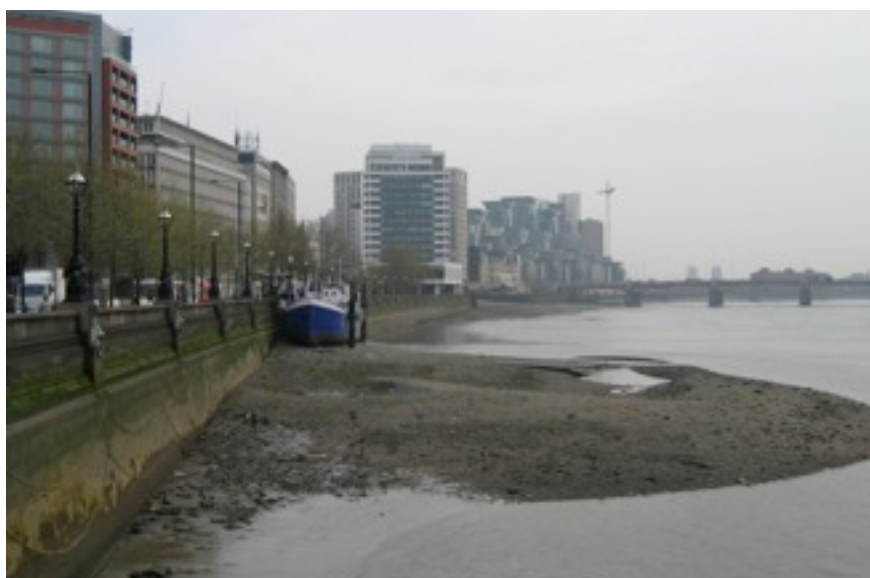
Only seven months before my deadline after 11 months of research.

**Did you suffer any doubts whilst writing?**

Yes, many. The scope of the book is huge and I could have done with more time!

**What were your thoughts on the cover design?**

The cover was initially a problem as it needed to be in colour. Luckily I tracked down a suitable painting thanks to one of the archivists at Lambeth.



**How about the promotions and publicity to launch the book?**

It is still early days but the wheels are in motion. Waterstone's in Gower Street were quite interested in a book signing, and I may do something in Harpenden.

**Can we buy it in Harpenden and why should we read it?**

The book can be ordered anywhere. Although it is about Lambeth and the cholera outbreak, there is a lot more to it and it is full of fantastic illustrations. The first part gives a political and economical overview, and anyone at all interested in the history of London and the working poor will love it. I was also aware of

the significance of the story to family historians and I have included the names of everyone mentioned in my original sources. Last, the book questions the long-standing belief that the cholera epidemics in London throughout the 1800s were isolated events. As far as I could tell, no one had ever bothered to compare first-hand accounts with recent scientific research. All the evidence points to the fact that during this period cholera was endemic in the River Thames, which is a very frightening thought. It has also somewhat dampened any enthusiasm I might have had for weekends on the boat with my sailing-mad husband, as I am now highly suspicious of marinas and estuaries!

### Photo captions:

*Left: Amanda Thomas researching data from the internet and many reference books.*

*Above: Lambeth today (Vauxhall Bridge is in the distance) and the site of the dock used by the Doulton pottery works. The waterfront area of Lambeth was devastated in the 1848-1849 cholera*

*epidemic and in the 1860s was razed to the ground to build the Albert Embankment. Of the 2,000 or more souls who perished in the vicinity, there are no gravestones, no memorial and to date no written account of their suffering.*

**Photograph by Amanda Thomas.**

# Literary Glitz at Aldwickbury

By Amanda Thomas

A packed Aldwickbury Golf Club in Harpenden was the setting in October for a glamorous literary evening with former Vogue model Sandra Howard, an event so popular, organisers the Hitchin and Harpenden Conservative Women's Organisation, had to turn people away.

Sandra was a favourite with the photographer Norman Parkinson, but it was a chance meeting with Sunday Express Editor John Junor which launched her writing career. At first she didn't consider attempting a book. It was only when a literary agent contacted her during the period that husband Michael Howard was leader of the Opposition that Sandra decided to make the leap from journalist to novelist. Her first book, *Glass Houses*, took around five years to complete, after a series of re-writes which she confesses were due to inexperience and insecurity.

Since that first book, Sandra has written a further two to complete a trilogy about the life of a female government minister. Whilst politics is a subject Sandra is well acquainted with, in the question and answer session following her talk, she confessed that none of her characters are based on real people, although she did have someone in mind with her first 'baddie'. In fact, she spends a huge amount of time researching her subjects to achieve accuracy and credibility. Her latest

book, *A Matter of Loyalty*, focuses on the current terrorist threat and for this Sandra particularly relished learning about forensic psychology. Much work also needed to be done to understand the Muslim way of life, though Sandra found it impossible to get answers to some of her more intimate questions. Thankfully a male friend serving in Afghanistan was able to ask the questions on her behalf.

Undoubtedly Sandra's successful modelling career and her marriage to an eminent politician has helped, though she admits that the only influence her husband has over her writing is an annoying habit of reading her drafts and changing commas to semi-colons. Sandra Howard assured her audience that anyone who had a burning desire to write a novel should have a go, though the best advice she could give would be to find a good literary agent and after that to be as charming as possible to one's editor. Indeed by the end of the evening it was clear that Sandra Howard's success is not merely down to her ability to write, but also to her delightfully charming manner.

*Glass Houses*, *Ursula's Story* and *A Matter of Loyalty* by Sandra Howard are available at all good booksellers and at Amazon. [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)

From left to right: Gail Lilley, wife of Peter Lilley M.P., Sandra Howard, Sue Chambers, Hitchin and Harpenden Conservative Women's Organisation Chairman

Sandra Howard at the book signing of her latest novel, *A Matter of Loyalty*.







## “Who’s the kick ass gorgeous crime fighter, saving the world from evil?”

By The Editor

Well it's certainly not one of Harpenden's police force, it is Jazmin Dawson the "Spy Girl" character created by Harpenden author Carol Hedges who is featured in “The Dark Side of Midnight”. This first book, published in 2006, was an instant success, creating a demand for more action packed thriller stories featuring the "Spy Girl" resulting in 3 further books. With large sales to it's female teenage fan base and critical acclaim Carol's work has never been so popular.

The concept, character development of Jazmin and her secret agent mother Assia come from Carol's love of detective novels, her knowledge of teenager behaviour and her insight into mother/daughter relationships.

The graphically strong covers and the bold typography on most pages are important in attracting the teen market, driving sales in a very competitive UK and International market.

Writing and reading has been "in her blood" since childhood when Carol loved to read and write compositions. Leaving school for the University of London she studied English Literature and Anglo Saxon Archeology, gaining a BA (Hons). This was followed by work in a children's library, a music library and, in her spare time,, writing stories for magazines.



40 was a pivotal moment for Carol who set herself a challenge "to write and get published." Using her knowledge of archeology and local history she wrote a "time traveller" concept with 2 chapters of a book to be called "Ring of Silver Lord of Time." These were submitted to the Scripture Union in 1992. Weeks later she received a request for the whole book. Following the successful publication she wrote 3 teenage novels between 1993-95 dealing with relationship and moral issues for Christians.

It was a tragic event that occurred at a school in Hemel Hempstead, while she was on teaching practice that triggered the story for her next book “Jigsaw” a novel dealing with teenage suicide. Oxford University Press were approached with a synopsis and 6 months later supplied with the whole manuscript. It was published and gained national distribution in all major book shops, later making the prestigious Carnegie longlist.. 2 further books were published by OUP "Red Velvet" in 2001 and "Bright Angel" in 2002.

Carol writes almost every day, directly onto her PC with a few hours in the morning and then again in the afternoon. Her favourite authors include Anne Tyler, Ian Rankin and Kate Atkinson with the classics and American Crime Fiction also on her agenda.

**A new novel is underway so watch this space!**

# “How I miss Richard and Judy”

**By The Editor**

A bold comment from Sue Norris, the Manager of Corbett's Book Shop in Harpenden. When I interviewed Sue recently she had plenty of things to say about the book trade including the demise of Richard and Judy's TV programme. “Not only did they give exposure to a number of new or unknown authors they also helped to generate massive awareness of many new books each month, thus stimulating sales for us and the trade in general”.

## **How big a range do you carry?**

“Not as big as WHS but certainly a broader range. The top 10 and other chart best sellers are a must, but we attempt to gauge what customers want in Harpenden, based on the average age ratings of local people and the high number of pupils in the very good schools”.

## **Are you specialists in any category?**

“Books by local authors, local history, country walks and local causes, like the ones we are selling in aid of the Luton Hoo Walled garden project. Our Children's section is also a major aspect for us, with picture books through to

teenage reads--a massive growth area since the publication of Harry Potter in 1997”

## **Do you guide customers on their choice of books?**

“With a lifetime in the business both Maureen Gurton and myself can offer unbeatable advice based on our own love of reading, customer feed back and our knowledge of the book business. We also read the important book reviews in the national press.”

## **Can you order books?**

“We can now offer a 24 hour turnaround, no deposit service for books stocked by our wholesaler plus an exciting new “out of print” service. This has proved very popular bringing many gems that would normally be unavailable.”

## **Exciting plans for Christmas**

**We will have our own Gift brochure with many popular recommended books and lots of unusual and inspired ideas. Discounts will be offered. Plus we will have 3 local authors coming to the shop in December to meet customers.**

*Photo captions: Top. Sue Norris, shop manager. Left. Maureen Gurton at the children's book stand. Right. Our personal recommendations.*  
**CORBETT'S BOOKSHOP,**  
 11 Bowers Parade, Harpenden.  
 AL5 2SH. 01582 715199



## **What about special offers?**

Obviously we are unable to compete with Supermarket and big chain offers but we give away our own vouchers to encourage return sales and where possible have signed copies

## **.How old is the business?**

We have been in Harpenden for 30 years. The business was previously owned by Nick Potts who had the Bookshop in Berkhamsted. Now it is a four strong group of independents all called Corbett's.

## **Why should customers buy from you?**

We offer a friendly and relaxed service, with advice, an ease of returning books, 24 hour order service and gift wrapping.







## Harpenden Library: Past and Future

By Amanda Thomas

Harpenden Library occupies a position next to one of Harpenden's oldest educational establishments in Victoria Road. The Harpenden British School opened in 1897, and eventually developed and expanded to become today's Sir John Lawes School. A full history can be read on the Sir John Lawes School website, [www.sjl.herts.sch.uk/school/history/](http://www.sjl.herts.sch.uk/school/history/).

The library is a modern addition to the site which has served various purposes over the years, most recently as the Oaklands Education Centre. When the Centre's popularity waned, it was put up for sale in July 2006, much to the consternation of local residents who feared it would be sold off for office space. County Councillor Iris Tarry battled tirelessly but sadly died before the site finally came into the ownership of the County Council in late 2008.

At the moment the County Council is aiming to redevelop the area under its strategy Libraries for the 21st Century. County Councillor Teresa Heritage picks



up the story: "Feasibility studies are being carried out to see how to get the most out of the site by expanding the library and also incorporating some of the site for community use. Both Bernard [County Councillor Bernard Lloyd] and I are emphasising to [council] officers that community usage must be available and therefore the plans are being developed to include a reserved area for youth and community. The difficulty, as always is funding, but rest assured when work does eventually start, every precaution will be taken not to disrupt the library service."

*Photo captions: A warm welcome awaits you at Harpenden Library [top left. Lorraine West (left) Linda Fryd (centre) and Lesley McCarthy (right)]*

*PC and internet services with many computers and advice on their use [top right. Linda Fryd and Simon Jones] Book ordering and information services [above. Coral Cox (left) and Simon Jones] A great team managed by Kerry Matthews.*

# A very literary Christmas

By Amanda Thomas

## Wonderful presents

A book is a wonderful present to give or receive, but how to choose can be a daunting task. This year the windows of bookshops in Harpenden and St Albans will be jammed packed full of ideas for that perfect gift. In the past few years online retailers have captured a sizeable chunk of the trade. However, even Amazon has its limitations, and a trip to Corbett's bookshop in Harpenden High Street on Christmas Eve could easily resolve the problem of what to buy for a last minute guest. Top candidate for the fastest-selling stocking filler of the year is Ozzy Osbourne's *I am Ozzy*, though Peter Kay (*Saturday Night Peter*), Chris Evans (*It's Not What you Think*) and Jeremy Clarkson (*Driven to Distraction*) might also bring a smile to Dad's face on Xmas Day.



All the leading retailers are expecting Dan Brown's, *The Lost Symbol*, to fly off the shelves, and many, like Waterstones, have reduced the price of this latest blockbuster to entice customers in to buy more. *Wolf Hall*, the winner of this year's Man Booker Prize, may also prove a popular choice. Hilary Mantel's 650-page novel on the life of Thomas Cromwell may not keep you laughing till Boxing Day, but it will certainly provoke some interesting conversations over the port and stilton. History buffs may also

enjoy Andrew Marr's *The Making of Modern Britain*.

## Childrens Books

For children there is plenty on offer. WH Smith will be piling high box sets by Enid Blyton and fun reading and writing sets (My Big 123 and My Big ABC) at competitive prices. But be warned, when the last dinosaur encyclopaedia has gone, that will be it. Smith's don't call their good value books for Christmas **wigigs** for nothing – "when it's gone, it's gone!"



Jacqueline Wilson has a new book out called *Hetty Feather*, a story set in the late nineteenth century about a baby girl abandoned at a foundling hospital. The latest in the *Horrid Henry series* (*Horrid Henry Wakes the Dead*) by Francesca Simon and Tony Ross is also likely to please fans. Another big seller this Christmas will undoubtedly be the latest offering of bizarre feats, the popular *Guinness World Records*. The 2010 edition is certain to be a favourite as it will include the top 100 records of the decade. Kids will no doubt enjoy reading who made the highest altitude balloon skywalk – and did you know that the most weight lost by a person was a man called Manuel Uribe? That's something most of us won't be doing over Christmas.

## Big Sellers

Other big sellers this year include Ant and Dec's *Ooh! What a lovely Pair*, Jamie's America from Jamie Oliver's latest television series, and *The Girl who Played with Fire*, a gripping mystery by the late Stieg Larsson.



## This year's hot tip

The hottest tip, however, for Christmas 2009 is a Sony Reader. More and more ebooks are now available to download and at competitive prices. At just under £200, the Sony Reader pocket edition holds around 350 titles and is a lot easier to use on a train or aeroplane. For about the same price, Amazon is marketing the Kindle, larger in size than the Sony, in fact similar to a paperback book, but a fraction of the weight and capable of holding around 1,500 books. So instead of giving one or two books this Christmas, why not give several hundred?

## Corbetts Bookshop,

11 Bower's Parade, High St., Harpenden, AL5 2SH; 01582 715199;

**WH Smith**, 29 High Street, Harpenden, AL5 2RU; 01582 460484;

**Waterstones Booksellers**, 8 St. Peters St., St. Albans, AL1 3LF, 01727 834966;

**Amazon:**

[www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)





*eReading SONY products inc the PRS-600 above, on display at Waterstones, St Albans*

## Change the way you read with eBooks

By The Editor

This year's 'must have' gadget, an eReader, is going to transform the way we read. Not just books but newspapers, magazines and emails.

Smaller than a laptop, but bigger than a Blackberry, they allow you to read on the move and with a wifi facility (not on all brands) you can download information direct. Some models have 'touch screen' technology so are simple to use and make turning pages very easy.

I called in to Waterstones in St Albans and spoke to their eReader expert Rob Draper who is happy to guide customers through the features and benefits of the SONY brands they stock. They have over 17,000 downloadable eBooks from Dan Brown's *The Lost Symbol* to all the Booker short list.

With a 6in touchscreen, the SONY E Ink reader (PRS-6000 above) makes reading seem very natural and flicker free. The facility to increase image size, and even add hand written notes via a small stylus is also a bonus.

Already many book publishers are making downloadable books available, usually at a cheaper price than their printed counterparts. This trend only accounts for a small market share at the moment, but will grow quickly as eReaders

become cheaper and more mainstream. Some publishers inc. Google Books have made thousands of older, out-of-copyright books available for free download to a PC.

Accessing books or other information varies subject to the brand. With the SONY you have to connect it to your PC via a USB to transfer the file. The Amazon Kindle, however, has its own ebook reader format that allows you to download books directly using wireless technology.

Prices vary according to which brand/model and where you buy. The SONY PRS-300 costs £159.99 from Waterstones and the Kindle from Amazon at £175. (prices as of 30th Oct.09)

**Find out more:**

**At Waterstones in St. Albans, or give Rob Draper a call on 01727 834966.**

**Or log on to the web sites:**

[www.waterstones.co.uk](http://www.waterstones.co.uk)

[www.sony.co.uk/hub/reader-ebook](http://www.sony.co.uk/hub/reader-ebook)

[www.amazon.com/kindle](http://www.amazon.com/kindle)



## From advertising deadlines to artistic peace

By The Editor

Going back a decade Steve Parkes was more focused with hitting deadlines than choosing the subject for his next painting. As a Creative Director for M & C Saatchi he was responsible for creative work on accounts worth £100 million, devising campaigns for Curry's, Dixons, PC World and The Link. Nowadays Steve can be found in front of an easel devoting time to his true love .....painting. I met up with Steve recently to find out more.

**Being an artist working in advertising must have been an advantage?** Definitely. Back in the 60's creative work was conceived by writer and artist group heads who used water colours to illustrate their ideas. So my skills helped enormously.

**What about the pressures of conceiving original ideas for client campaigns?** Ideas themselves were never a problem. Deadlines though were a different matter. In retailing, products and prices can change at the last minute, so there were many late night efforts supplying finished work to the media.

**Did your ethos as an artist conflict with the commercial exploitation of words and imagery?** There are many "precious" art people in the business. Not me though, I see client briefs as a problem needing a solution, and it was my job to find creative answers that would deliver results.

**Where did your talent come from and how was it developed?** I excelled in art at school but was unable to take up a course at Art School. Instead I went straight to an Ad. Agency thanks to an Uncle ( a typographic designer). Several years learning all aspects of the business enabled me to move up to a designer role then to Sharps Advertising as an Art Director working on brand advertising for petfoods and Courvoisier brandy. In 1988 he joined Saatchi and Saatchi before finally working at M&C Saatchi as Creative Director.

**In most of your work you have featured London imagery, why was that?** Working in central London, particularly on wet nights enabled me to "see" incredible subject matter of the real London not captured by other artists.

**I guess you are much more relaxed now?** Indeed! I involve myself with the occasional exhibition to retain a degree of excitement but I still miss the buzz of working to a deadline.

**Have you thought about Harpenden as a subject?** Following the heavy snow in February I was walking through the village late one afternoon when I became captivated by the dramatic imagery of the snow laden trees against the illuminated buildings. This inspired me to create two oil paintings of Harpenden.

**How can your work be offered to a wider audience?** As originals, once my paintings are sold they are gone. Modern digital technology has facilitated a way of re creating all the detail, colour and emotion of the original painting in a digital print. I scoured the country to find the best quality supplier, so now my work can be made available at a much reduced cost.

**What are your plans future paintings?** I'm looking for new subject matter all the time, something that captures my imagination!

See the paintings on [www.steveparkesprints.co.uk](http://www.steveparkesprints.co.uk)





# Free art exhibitions at the Herts Open Studios

What a shame to have missed seeing some of the best local artists in Hertfordshire. Judging by the feed back of many participants and seeing the number of comments in their report books only a very small percentage of local residents made the effort to visit studios during September and October despite all the publicity.

Over 500 artists exhibited their work which varied from oil and water colours to ceramics, jewellery, photography, printing and textiles. I called on 10 studios over 3 weekends and was welcomed by artists of all ages showing me their work, explaining techniques, inspiration and their aspirations. Here are just a few.

**Lucie Green's** exceptional prints are beautiful - her expert use of relief and intaglio are perfection. Harmony of colours are so important when printing so the subject matter does not become blurred. Lucie has accomplished her work with great skill.  
[luciegreen@btinternet.com](mailto:luciegreen@btinternet.com)

**Roger Reynolds** paints from living flowers and plants. I arrived to find roger sitting under an umbrella (a rare hot summers day) painting an iris - his work is botanical in style, resulting in a portrayal of form, texture and vibrant plant colours.  
[reynolds.reynolds@ntlworld.com](mailto:reynolds.reynolds@ntlworld.com)

**Francine Holland** loves the romantic age of black and white movies and their stars. Her paintings, watercolours and charcoal works bring back that golden age. Her life long obsession has resulted in an extensive collection of times gone by. [f.holland@talktalk.net](mailto:f.holland@talktalk.net)

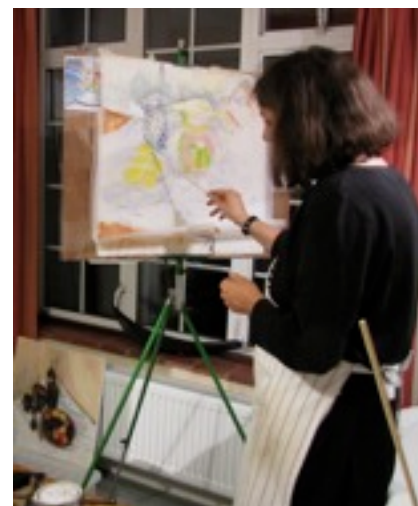
**Claudie Law's** three floored house was an Aladdins cave filled with paintings, collage and textiles, beautifully embroidered bedding spilled out of drawers and wardrobes. Paintings adorned the walls. Every room, including staircases, were filled with exceptional art - her unique art was a privilege to see.  
[robin.law@tesco.net](mailto:robin.law@tesco.net)

**Julie Maginn** (below) displayed a mixture of striking abstracts with layers of bright colours in contrast to monochrome life drawings, bold in execution but with subtle flowing curves. Her inspiration for abstracts comes during periods of insomnia when creative imagery is remembered and translated into a new painting.  
[juliemaginn@btinternet.com](mailto:juliemaginn@btinternet.com)



**Anneli Boon's** lyrical design approach to modernist semi-abstract paintings and collages in sumptuous colours transported you to exotic places - think Morocco, India and Mexico - her work filled you with happiness. [www.anneliboon.com](http://www.anneliboon.com)

**Jonathan Mitchell's** paintings and prints are exceptional works of art. His "working drawings" are beautiful in their own right. This observation and imagination is put into every piece of his work, resulting in professional and energising creations.  
[jon.mitchell@talktalk.net](mailto:jon.mitchell@talktalk.net)



**Sue Gay's** (above) varied collection of figurative artworks seem to capture a certain energy and vitality using vibrant colours to depict subject matter including nudes, landmarks and childscapes.  
[www.suegay.com](http://www.suegay.com)

**Chris Wilmott** loves moths - so much so he spent the night with a large white sheet and lights to encourage moths to fly onto it - this resulted in "logging" of many rare species. His exceptional cast iron work is mounted on the walls at Luton Hoo's walled garden. He regards his work as "mans interaction with nature" and has inspired a plethora of cast iron work of high calibre.  
[www.chriswilmott.com](http://www.chriswilmott.com)

**Joanna Mason's** workshop at Thrales End Farm had an inspired collection of hand made sterling silver and resin jewellery, glass art and sculpture.  
[www.thealbionarts.co.uk](http://www.thealbionarts.co.uk)

**Thanks to the HVAF and Linda Warminger for all their hard work organising the event.**

**Further information can be obtained from**  
[www.hvaf.org.uk](http://www.hvaf.org.uk)



## Krakow Calling

By Sally and Nick Griffiths

After a tough summer's work on the allotment we chose a weekend away in Poland with our friends Graham and Linnie. We arrived at Krakow airport and were greeted with glorious sunshine – excellent!

We stayed in a spotless hostel – Elephant on the Moon – situated on the outskirts of Krakow. A gargantuan breakfast awaited our arrival, complete with tinned Spam and Polish processed foods which the brave amongst us tried.

We walked into the centre of Krakow along the River Wisla which meanders around the city. Our first stop was a climb up to Wawel Hill, home to a grand castle, and cathedral that used to be the residence of Polish Kings for over 500 years. Rumour has it that Wawel Hill was once terrorised by a dragon!

Next stop, a beer in the main square – Rynek Główny – measuring 200m<sup>2</sup> it is the largest square in Poland, allegedly Europe. The square is the focal point of Krakow where tourists congregate and market stalls and buskers guarantee a vibrant atmosphere, surrounded by numerous café so it also makes an easy resting point.

An hourly tradition is the appearance of a bugler at the top of St Mary's Church, in the corner of the square. The bugling stops mid-bar to commemorate the memory of a 13th century watchman who was felled by an arrow in the middle of his bugling – oh dear.

Our evening meal was spent sampling Peirotki 'boiled dumplings' filled with meat, peasant's meat stew, lots of Sauerkraut and more dumplings!

Saturday was spent visiting Auschwitz, situated 1 hour away from Krakow. The tour included the smaller concentration camp, Auschwitz, mostly intact since the liberation of the camp in 1945, and the larger camp Birkenau – where some 1.5m people were exterminated. Viewing the evidence from the genocide, it was horrifying to imagine what the prisoners went through and their terrible fate, however sombre, the day trip is a definite must for anybody visiting Krakow.

We also sampled some of Krakow's nightlife – a club called Opium where locals (and us) enjoyed the delights of Sabrina's 'Boys Boys Boys' and Propaganda – a cool bar whose walls are adorned with abstract ornaments such as old record players.

Sunday was spent wandering around the flea markets of the Jewish quarter 'Kazimierz', back in the main square and in the former ghetto on the south of the river. It was not all hard work, we rested our weary legs atop a horse drawn carriage.

We enjoyed Krakow immensely, it's clean, fairly cheap, vibrant and it was sunny, and there is plenty to do - apparently the Ethnographical Museum and the Wieliczka Salt Mines are also worth a visit – enjoy!



# "I can change your life with Pilates"

By The Editor

A bold statement if ever I heard one, but one that Vicky Betts confidently justifies, thanks to her experiences teaching Pilates over the last 5 years. I went along to Angie Vaughan's studio at Thrales End Farm to see Vicky in a one to one class with a client (Jane Hyman). As you can see from the photographs a combination of exercises are practiced, some using specialist equipment and some matwork stretching techniques.

The key principles of Pilates are twofold. Firstly, to strengthen the core muscles (pelvic, abdominal and back) which increases flexibility and coordination, helping to prevent injury and secondly to develop the correct breathing technique. This oxygenates the muscles, aids concentration and helps to relieve stress and tension.

Vicky became a fan of Pilates many years ago feeling the physical and mental



benefits within weeks of starting. Wanting to spread the word to help others she trained to become a Pilates Matwork Instructor at the Pilates Institute in London and is now a member of REPS, with a successful practice in Harpenden.

Pilates is suitable for all ages from teens to pensioners, in fact one of her clients is a spritely 89. Whilst most clients are women, Vicky has noticed a growing popularity with men who find the treatment aiding

their general fitness and well being.

Before you join one of the classes Vicky will have an in depth discussion to assess your background and suitability before recommending the relevant course. One to one sessions can be booked for 30 minutes (£25) or one hour (£40) with group classes at £9 per hour. After ten sessions Vicky claims that not only will you feel better, you will look better and be full of new found confidence.



## More about Pilates

Pilates was created by Joseph Pilates during the First World War with the objective of improving the rehabilitation programme for the many returning veterans. He believed mental and physical health are essential to one another. He recommended a few precise movements, emphasizing control and form to aid injured soldiers in regaining their health by

strengthening, stretching and stabilizing key muscles. Pilates created "The Pilates Principles" to condition the entire body: proper alignment, centering, concentration, control, precision, breathing, and flowing movement.

Why not try a one off session to see if like the concept? Simply call Vicky Betts on 07779 110 475 or e mail [Victoria@fluidesign.co.uk](mailto:Victoria@fluidesign.co.uk)

## SUMMER MOT for HARPENDEN HOUSE MARTINS

By The Editor

**The specialist survey conducted at a colony of house martins in Harpenden this summer is in some ways equivalent to the annual MOT for your car.**

A team of volunteers under the leadership of Peter Wilkinson gather every year at dawn at the colony home and set up nets across their nests whilst the birds are still asleep. When the sun rises the birds fly out to start feeding and are caught (but not harmed) in the net. This is gently lowered to ground level where the birds are identified as adults or juveniles and placed into individual white bags for safety.

The birds are taken a short distance to the examination area where they are removed from the bags and checked over. Their sex, weight and wing length are recorded, as are the details on their ringed leg. The juvenile birds and those that are not ringed all have a ring attached which has a unique number and The British Museum address, so that if it is found elsewhere it can be



reported by the finder. The birds are then released and fly off quite happily to start feeding by catching insects on the wing.

The information is sent to The British Trust for Ornithology and recorded onto their data base. Analysis of which enables the Trust to monitor population trends and geographical distribution in the United Kingdom, as well as discovering how far they move and how long they live. This information is essential for conservation and depends in large part on members of the public reporting any ringed birds they find. 2009 marks 100 years since the first bird was ringed in the UK.

House martins migrate to sub Sahara Africa in late September and return again in late April. The adults usually come back to the same location but the

juveniles, may disperse to a different colony in the same general area. In a good season they can produce 2 or 3 broods a year with 3 or 4 chicks in each brood.

The team have been working together for several years and love working with such beautiful creatures. Peter Wilkinson, Roy Ingram, Caroline Brown and Vickie Thomson.

**For more information, and to report any ringed bird you might find, visit the British Trust for Ornithology.**  
[www.bto.org](http://www.bto.org)





# Harpenden honey bees fight “the war on terror”

By The Editor



Harpenden based **Inscentinel** is a biotechnology company that is developing unique vapour detection devices that use the bees incredibly sensitive sense of smell (how else do you think they find the best nectar in the myriad of flowers available in their quest to make honey?) to detect substances such as explosives. I spoke to Dr. Jenny Jacobs (Research and Development Scientist) to find out a little more about the system and its applications.

**Why honeybees?** They are inexpensive, easy to rear, have the ability to learn very quickly (the training takes a few minutes per bee) and can detect very low concentrations of vapour down to parts per trillion.

**Inscentinel’s** beekeepers produce a year round supply of bees from hives which can contain up to 60,000 bees. The bees are not harmed during their “sniffing work” and are returned to the hive after their “shift” where they live out the rest of their lives.

**How are the bees used?** **Inscentinel’s** scientists and engineers have produced a hand-held detector (VASOR136) full of computer technology which houses up to 36 bees. The bees detect explosives by doing what is natural in their search for food. In the wild, honeybees use a variety of scents and smells present in a complex background of odours as olfactory cues to help them locate food sources. When they find a source of nectar they remember the smell associated with it for subsequent foraging. Inscentinel exploits this learning ability. They train honeybees to associate an odour of interest with a food reward (Pavlovian conditioning). For example, the bees are trained to a particular explosive by rewarding them with sugared water. Once trained, bees extend their tongue (proboscis) as a reflex action when they encounter the explosive again. And they only take a few hours to train compared to 3 to 6 months for “sniffer” dogs.

**How does the VASOR136 work?** The VASOR136 holds 36 trained bees within individual bee holders housed in a sensor module. The detector samples the

air and passes it over the bees. If the bees detect something they have been trained to they extend their proboscis. Optical sensors within the VASOR136 translate the proboscis extension reflex into a simple electronic YES/NO result. The VASOR136 is small and lightweight and can be used as a mobile or a fixed unit.

**Is the VASOR136 manufactured on site?** The prototype VASOR136 was built off site by the engineering company Panchromos. We now intend to find partners and customers to start the commercial production of bespoke detectors.

**Are the detectors used worldwide?** Not yet, we are still finalising the design and development of the device but they could be used wherever there are beekeepers to provide a supply of bees.

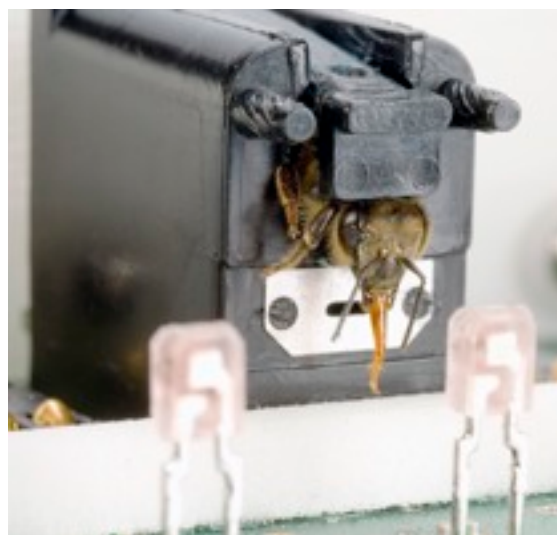
**How are they transported and how are the bees “fitted” into the box?** Honeybees would come from local beekeepers, so the bees would only need to be transported over short distances. When it’s time for their sniffing duty, the bees are placed into individual holders, and then into a cassette where they can be monitored by optical sensors, which is in turn placed into the VASOR136. (see picture below)

**Are there many other applications for the system?** Yes, the bees are able to learn many different odours, and our research has shown that they could be a useful tool in areas such as medical diagnostics e.g. detection of tuberculosis and cancer, the food industry e.g. detection of food spoilage, and for counterfeit or smuggled goods detection.

Readers can learn more about honeybees and even help them by taking up beekeeping by contacting their local beekeeping group. See: [www.hertsbees.org.uk](http://www.hertsbees.org.uk)

For more information on **Inscentinel**.

See: [www.inscentinel.com](http://www.inscentinel.com)





## Harpenden Barbershop Harmony Chorus

### A social animal...

By David Lumsdon. Roving Reporter

...it performs where people gather - and people gather where it performs. Its voice is pure, its repertoire unmistakable. Now, in autumn, it sings as sweetly as in winter, as lustily as in spring, as warmly as in summer. It changes colour with the seasons: as days grow short, the summery white chest of the strain found in Harpenden takes on a scarlet hue. Watch its movements. As it sings, it sways on three-dozen pairs of legs, invariably black, in this red-breasted north-Hertfordshire variety. It soon has your feet tapping! Recognise it? Yes, you are witnessing the year-round display of the domesticated Barbershop species, the one people hereabouts call The Kings of Herts Chorus.

Like traditional Barbershop singers everywhere, Harpenden's Kings of Herts Chorus is all male; there are female counterparts. Our four voices – bass, baritone, lead and tenor – sing without accompaniment. The leads lead the melody through a sonorous framework built by basses and baritones and topped-out by tenors. Together, we weave harmonies from spirituals and ditties from Victorian music-hall, through twenties' sway and forties swing, to the Beatlemania of the sixties and beyond.

The Kings grace public functions; in our finery, we sing for worthy charities; at family functions and, in 2010, as far apart as London and Harrogate. But to enjoy our harmony, don't wait so long or travel so far: The King of Herts Chorus are on-stage in Harpenden this autumn, singing and introducing other fine entertainment, to mark our twenty-fifth anniversary and in support of Macmillan and the MS Society. Check-out our poster, mark your diary, book your tickets, now! Among others, we'll sing The Beatles and Gene Pitney; and blend with the melodic ladies of Welwyn Harmony.

We're open to new members. If you are a male adult (today's members range from their thirties to infinity), would like to take your singing-in-the-shower to a new level and you know you'll look good in red, please contact us. And whichever sex, if you can demonstrate the skills to direct our company, week-in, week-out – now there's a challenge! - we'd like to hear from you, too.

Pictures by David Lumsdon

For further information log on to:

[www.kingsofherts.co.uk](http://www.kingsofherts.co.uk)





You can read my interview with Annett on the next page.

Ron Taylor  
Editor



## Introducing Annett Busse

### Classical pianist and piano teacher

Annett Busse is a gifted pianist who was born in East Germany where she developed her musical talent, qualifying with a Diploma in Music in 1996. After moving to the UK in the same year, she settled in Harpenden in 2000.

Performing regularly in public, she also teaches students from 6 to 60 years from her Harpenden home.

Pupils can book ongoing terms of 10 weekly half hour lessons, benefiting from Annett's impressive knowledge and virtuoso abilities. "I teach a wide range of pupils from beginners wishing to

explore the piano to those wanting to brush up on existing skills." To become a proficient pianist, as Annett will tell you, takes a long time and real dedication. "Like any professional I have to practice up to 4 hours a day to maintain my technique." You can read my interview with Annett on the next page.

You can contact Annett via email at [busseannett@aol.co.uk](mailto:busseannett@aol.co.uk) or on 01582 467911

# A rare talent, recognised by her Grandmother.

By Ron Taylor. Editor

I interviewed Annett Busse recently to find out what it takes to reach the heights of musical virtuosity and have the skills to teach aspiring musicians. "It's all down to my Grandmother, a gifted amateur pianist, and the cultural environment I grew up in back home in Chemnitz. From an early age I recall classical piano music as being a part of life, so when my Grandmother started giving me daily piano lessons from the age of 8, I was already enthusiastic and keen to learn more. At that time (early 80's) East German culture still considered Jazz, Blues and Pop music as "enemies of the communist people" so I was, by virtue of my upbringing, not exposed to those genres."

**When was it decided to develop your "gift for music"?**

"Around the age of 12 my Grandmother recommended that I went to a special music school for gifted children. 3 years later I joined the "Spezialschule fuer Musik" in Dresden where my passion was developed intensively, culminating in 1996 with a Diploma in Music. That meant at least 4 hours a day of learning, practising and playing the piano under the guidance of a senior professor, Winfried Apel."

**After all those years of hard study what was the next stage?**

"I attended Master Classes of some music greats....Edith Picht-Axenfeld and Anatol Ugorski., subsequently travelling to London to study with Peter Feuchtwanger, recognised as one of the legendary pedagogues of our time.

**How did your career as a concert pianist begin?**

"From 1994 onwards I was invited to play at venues throughout Europe. The crowning moment coming that same year, playing Liszt's Piano Concerto No. 1 to a full house at the Berlin Schauspielhaus, a nerve-wracking event given my preference for more intimate venues. On June 7th this year I performed in the ruins



of the 12th century church in Ayot St. Lawrence, Herts which was attended by over 400 visitors."

**Have you recorded a CD?**

"Yes, my debut CD was recorded 3 years ago. I was approached by Richard Carruthers, founder of the label Music Chamber.com who had heard me live, playing a rare work by Shostakovich, the Preludes op.34. The recording, completed in a single take, took place in a London Church by night to capture a particularly still ambience."

**Any plans for more CD's?**

"I'm hoping to record some baroque music by Couperin very soon."

**Finally, when you are not engaged with music what do you do to relax?**

"I'm passionate about gardening and growing fruit and vegetables, following organic methods to help protect the environment and provide healthy food for the family. I also regularly practice Ashtanga Yoga."

Thank you Annett.





## From Chemistry to Computers

By Frank Ledger, Harpenden Photographic Society

Harpenden Photographic Society provides a local meeting point for all who are interested in photography. It's a friendly club catering for all levels of photographic knowledge and skill. Beginners are welcomed and members are encouraged to share their know-how and help one another keep up with the latest technical developments and photographic techniques. In recent years there have been very significant developments

The society was founded in 1936 and since then has seen many changes in Harpenden, society in general and photography in particular. When the society was launched, photography was very different to its modern form. The darkroom and chemical/wet developing and printing were all that were available. Now we have the digital camera and computer processing and printing. Yet the basic ingredients of a successful photograph remain unchanged.

Many camera clubs and photographic societies found the transition to digital difficult. Some strongly resisted change and were reluctant to accept digital photographs in their competitions. Inevitably this led to an aging and falling membership and some clubs closed at this time. The Harpenden Photographic Society, however, has dealt happily with the change and has prospered. Membership has almost doubled in recent years.

The society's current programme is now fully focused on the new technology. It includes a variety of talks, external and internal competitions and teaching evenings. Photographic trips are also arranged.

The society is active in the local community. It has provided photographic services to the town council and photographs for the Harpenden Trust Calendar and



Community Meeting Point. The society holds a major annual exhibition – usually in the High Street

Methodist Church Hall in March – that is always well attended by the public. In addition smaller exhibitions are held in the library and the Harpenden Building Society and the Society exhibits at The Living Crafts Festival at Hatfield House in May each year.

The society's objectives, defined in its constitution, include improving the skills of its membership and providing a service to the local community. The members look forward to continuing to address these aims with all the challenges that their interesting hobby provides.

**Harpenden Photographic Society meets twice a month at the Harpenden Trust Hall from September to June. To learn more visit the web site:**

[www.hpsociety.co.uk](http://www.hpsociety.co.uk)

*Photo images supplied by the Harpenden Photographic Society members:*

*Hoopers Inlet, Otago Peninsula by Andrew Scoggins.*

*Old Old Friends by Peter Stevens*

*The Lacemaker by Maureen Dobkin*

# Bring your home to life the easy way!

By Karoline Mileham

If you are bored with bland old fashioned light switches and unimaginative cupboard knobs, then a simple solution is available from one of Harpenden's most imaginative product design companies. 'Candy Queen Designs' design and make a huge selection of fun and funky light switches and cupboard knobs, all produced locally. Our huge range of light switches and matching cupboard knobs are totally unique. The standard white light switch rotary knobs have been replaced so you can turn your lights on with an array of unusual objects, such as a toy dinosaur, frog, football, horse or a piece of real candy set in clear resin. With vibrant background prints and designs to suit all ages from baby to adult they will give your rooms a new



dimension.

## Great gifts for Xmas

In stylish packaging, the products make fantastic Christmas presents.

Handmade, unique gifts and unusual with a guaranteed 'WOW' factor. The light switches are CE stamped and are simple to fit.

## Sold around the world

Harpenden based business 'Candy Queen Designs' was established by Karoline Mileham in September 2003 and now sells to customers around the world. We have exhibited at international trade shows at Earls Court and Olympia in London as

well as retail shows like Grand Designs Live. Our next exhibition will be The Spirit of Christmas, November 4-7th at the Olympia exhibition centre in London.

## How to buy

As well as selling to customers online across the world through our website [www.candyqueendesigns.co.uk](http://www.candyqueendesigns.co.uk). We also sell through a fantastic local gift shop, 'Valentines' in Station Road where you can see a selection of 40 light switches out of the hundreds available and an array of matching cupboard knobs.



## Exclusive offer to HARPENDIA readers

**We are delighted to offer all readers of HARPENDIA --15 % OFF your first order.**  
Offer valid till Dec.14 2009.

Simply enter voucher code : HARPENDIA at the website checkout.

Karoline Mileham  
Candy Queen Designs  
0779 144 3010







## Loyalty Card scheme helps to save money

By Our Business Correspondent

**What's on St Albans** is a local listing and loyalty card website for the residents of St Albans and surrounding towns as well as visitors/tourists to this beautiful city.

Carl Willis, a local businessman who was born in Harpenden and now lives in St Albans also runs a successful graphic design agency based in St Albans spotted an opportunity in the market and set up the website.

The site is very easy to navigate and lists the following categories:

• **Restaurants• Pub/Bars• Takeaways• Shops & Services• Hotels, B&Bs• Night Clubs• Health & Fitness• Children's section • Events**

**What's on St Albans** is not just a business listing website; what makes it stand out is its loyalty card scheme. This enables shoppers to save money, especially important in these hard times and also, by shopping locally, it supports the local economy.

Carl created **whatsonstalbans.co.uk** as a way to get people back to shopping locally, too many shops have been closing due to not enough footfall. In these harsh times people are looking for bargains and discounts, and what better way to offer these to customers than having a loyalty card.

**Card holders are entitled to rewards that include substantial discounts, 2 for 1 deals, and reduced entrance into museums, days out etc...** the list is endless. Current savings include: Buy one meal and get the cheaper meal half price at the Garibaldi Pub and the Farmers Boy Pub, a 10% reduction on purchases from Riders Toys and 10% off any treatment at Eve & Adam beauty.

If you would like a card, the discounts and deals are listed in the website under the 'Loyalty Card Special Offers' page. **Membership is also open to Harpenden residents.**

A sticker and poster have been created for businesses to place in their window to show they are part of the scheme. This will make it easier for card holders to see where they can grab a bargain if they haven't had a chance to check out the updated 'Loyalty Card Special Offers' page. A limited number of free cards are available from [www.whatsonstalbans.co.uk](http://www.whatsonstalbans.co.uk) or from the St Albans Tourist and Information Centre, The Town Hall, Market Place, St Albans, Anastasia Greek Restaurant on St Peters Street, Riders Toys on London Road, Eve & Adam on Catherine Street and Andy Shoemiths in the Maltings.

As this is a local website, if you would like to see any new sections, or would like to add an event to the website then please do get in contact at [info@whatsonstalbans.co.uk](mailto:info@whatsonstalbans.co.uk). Also, if you own or work at a business in St Albans and it is not listed then please let us know.



# APPENDIUM



## **CHRISTMAS IDEAS EXTRA**

With so much going on in the run up to Christmas we thought it a good idea to make life easier by providing lots of exciting and interesting ideas to make your Christmas the best ever.

The HARPENDIA Christmas Extra will feature some of the following:

- Great wine
- Tasty food
- Interesting gifts
- Latest gadgets
- Places to eat
- Places to celebrate
- Music
- Holiday entertainment
- Special offers
- Party time
- How to relax

**Publishing on November 30th.**

## **HARPENDIA WINTER EDITION.**

Plans are already under way for our first ever Winter edition with lots of new articles and plenty of regular features.

**Publishing mid February 2010.**

## **HARPENDIA WEB SITE**

We are updating the site over the next few days, so log on soon to discover what's happening in Harpenden.

[www.harpendia.com](http://www.harpendia.com)