

THE CHRONICLE

ASTON ABBOTTS PARISH MAGAZINE ~ Issue 232 ~ March 2004



WILL THE CHURCH ROOM SURVIVE ???

Editorial

Fete 2004

This year's fete approaches. It's our major annual fund-raiser and very important to the village. The fete committee would love to hear from you if you could help out a little on the day. There will be a meeting to discuss the arrangements for this year and everybody is welcome. Please see the details on page 7.

The Church Room

The Church Room continues to provoke debate. Will the protracted legal wrangles ever get resolved? Will the refurbishment ever go ahead? Will the current Church Room have to be closed in October? Would it be better to build a new Village Centre? Where would we build it? Where would we get the money?

We have several items on the subject this month. There is a report on an initial meeting which discussed building a new Village Centre; there is the latest news on the refurbishment project; and there is a long but thorough article from Peter Shorrock in which he considers the arguments for and against the two different projects. You'll find all these article in the following pages and don't forget to write if you have something to say on this subject.

Broadband Internet Arrives

A year ago most of us were resigned to the fact that we would never get broadband internet in the village. BT would only entertain upgrading the Wing exchange if an impossibly large number of people—over 300—pre-registered for the service. Then suddenly, 3-4 months ago Simon Gresswell noticed that we were within reach of the magic figure and a concerted campaign to get people to sign up was mounted in the villages served by the Wing exchange. A little before Christmas we broke the threshold and BT gave a date of 28th January to convert the exchange.

Now the work has been done and already several people in Aston Abbots have had broadband installed. The 'always on' fast connection can be remarkably liberating. Its not just for when you want to surf the internet—I've been using it all the time whilst compiling this issue of The Chronicle. I've been able to catch up with several BBC radio programs that I missed and also have background music from American and specialist radio stations. So, broadband internet has finally arrived in Aston Abbots. Hooray!

Computer Woes

I've been suffering computer problems whilst compiling this issue of The Chronicle and, whilst typing this, I'm still not sure if I will be able to finish it. I apologise if any submissions have been lost as a result. Also, if you are not reading this, then please accept my apologies for the non-appearance of this month's Chronicle.

editor@aachronicle.co.uk



THE CHRONICLE
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~o~

A note to all would be advertisers -

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~o~

Copy date for the next issue is:

Friday 26th March 2004

Please pass items to Phil Spooner at The Birches in Wingrave Road or to a member of the Production Team as early as possible.

Printed at Waddesdon School and distributed free of charge to all Households in Aston Abbots, our local Doctor's Surgeries and to Wing Police House.

In This Issue

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- Church Room or New Build
- Countryside Diary

and much, much more.....

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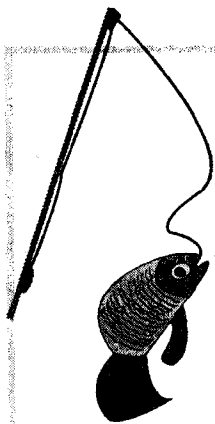
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In The Village

Gnomes In The Gnews

Last month's front cover featuring a bevy of naked Gnomes raised a few eyebrows as well as a few smiles. However it was great fun - everybody had a good laugh and then forgot about it. Forgot about it, that is, until I returned home from work a few days after the Chronicle hit the streets to find a rather worried-looking Carol Gnome. "You'd better listen to the message on the answering machine" she said rather glumly and with some trepidation. I played back the message. It was from a Bucks Herald reporter, to say that he had received their usual copy of The Chronicle and he wanted it to do an article about our stripping villagers.

After discussing the message with Clare Gnome, Carol telephoned the reporter the following day. He explained that he thought it made a nice story and he would like to run it in the Bucks Herald, but of course he could only reproduce the picture if everybody agreed to it.

Carol and Clare set to the task of contacting the other Gnomes. Some were rather apprehensive about appearing in the local newspaper, but others were up for it immediately. Eventually a consensus was reached, the go-ahead was given, and I emailed a copy of the cover photo to the paper. Tom Hodson, the reporter, talked to Clare Gnome, April Gnome, and Rita Gnome.

By the time the regular Tuesday evening gnomes meeting at the Royal Oak came around, on the eve of publication, the initial concern had turned to excitement and it was the hot topic of conversation. So the following day when the paper was published and found not to contain the article or picture most people were very disappointed. None so disappointed as myself, who had bought four copies.

A little post-mortem was held. Maybe they didn't like the picture as it was in black and white? Maybe they thought it was too strong for sensitive Bucks stomachs? Anyway, that was that.

The next week, much to everybody's great surprise, there was the picture on page 11 under the headline 'Friends Bare All For Valentines'.... So our gnomes finally had their moment of "glory" after all!

We should point out that there is no truth in the rumour that several Gnomes have been approached to pose for page three of the Saga magazine.

~ Phil Spooner

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A New Village Centre ?

In mid-February a small group met at the home of Neil Cheshier to discuss his suggestion (January's Chronicle) that we should build a new village centre instead of refurbishing the Church Room. The group consisted of people who were in favour of the idea and also people who favoured continuing with the current Church Room refurbishment plan.

Neil had put considerable thought into this meeting and made a presentation that outlined the issues. He didn't just concentrate on the practical issues of bricks, mortar and finance, etc - he also provoked discussion about the potential uses, the value of a hall or centre to the village and also discussion of the village community as a whole. There was some concern voiced that some people within the village might see current activities as centring on a clique or particular groups of friends and this prompted discussion about how such perceptions could be changed and the part that a new centre could play in making activities more inclusive. (It was recognised that many of the arguments applied equally to the Church room refurbishment.)

Andy Bystra played devil's advocate and wondered whether or not there was an argument for just doing nothing. He asked what the effect would be if we just let the Church room close and took our social activities to meeting places outside of the village. However, all agreed that would have a negative impact on social life within the village, as could already be demonstrated by problems with current events (no Burns supper this year and St George's night being held out of village due to lack of a suitable venue).

The meeting concluded that there should be a feasibility study into the proposal for a new village centre. This should cover both practical issues, such as location and finance, and also a look at the Centre's place within the social life of the village. It was felt that this should be done not in competition with the current Church Room refurbishment, but in preparation for the eventuality that the stagnating legal processes could finally fail. It was also felt that the work looking at the social aspects of a village centre would be valuable anyway and would not be wasted should Church Room refurbishment succeed.

This issue is being forced by the implementation of the final part of the Disability Discrimination Act that comes into force in October. Therefore it was agreed to look at the viability of making minimum temporary changes to the current Church Room to allow it to stay open beyond that date

The meeting closed after more than an hour and a half's debate, after which everybody went down the Royal Oak to, in Neil's words, "test our theories and annoy the Gnomes".

~ Phil Spooner

Friends of St. James

It's time to book your tickets for the Sausage and Mash Lunch being held in the Church Room from 12.00 till 2.00 on Saturday March 13th. Tickets cost £7.50 for adults, £5.00 for OAP's and £2.50 for children and included in the price is a glass of wine or soft drink. There will be a Bring and Buy Stall and a Cake Stall - all contributions gratefully received. So ring Clare Shorrock on 681260 now to book your tickets.



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Gnomes Are One

On Tuesday the 10th. February we celebrated the fact that the G.N.O.M.E.S have been meeting at The Royal Oak on Tuesday evenings for one year now. Fourteen of us enjoyed a meal and a few (OK - several) bottles of wine. Many thanks to Teri, Gary and the girls for that.

Anyone who is new to the village, or otherwise, as long as you are female, just come along at about 7.30, on a Tuesday evening for a drink and a chat. You do not have to come every week, we are a totally informal group, and as yet we have no membership rules or fees. Our first organised outing takes place in April. It is of course going to be a very cultural and educational affair (The Full Monty, preceded by a quick Italian!) thanks go to Kate for the organisation.

In the future we may become a little more structured, and hopefully organise more outings. But for now, I am just very pleased that it has become a regular social occasion, which people attend as and when they please. We may even become an enduring institution like the 6.30 club, we can match for them for non-stop talking and noise levels and maybe even out-do them! So give it a try, Tuesday nights from 7.30 at the Royal Oak, and here's to our next birthday!

~ Carol Spooner

Lawyers !!!

A lawyer bought a box of expensive cigars & insured them. After smoking them he submitted a claim to the insurance firm, stating they had been lost in a series of small fires. A lengthy legal battle ensued, with a judge ruling that although the claim was fictitious, it was technically correct. The insurance firm paid up, then decided to get even. Based on the court testimony, it made 24 complaints of arson against the lawyer - who was arrested, convicted of intentionally burning insured property, and imprisoned. ~from *The Coastal Gazette, Laherradura, Spain* - sent in by Dave Lewis

ASTON ABBOTTS FETE
FETE DAY - SATURDAY
24TH JULY 2004

FETE MEETING

TUESDAY 16TH MARCH

8.00 PM - CHURCH ROOM

It is once again time to start organising this year's village fete.

The village fete raises funds for various village interests and getting involved in the running of the fete is a good way of becoming involved in the village. We are, as always, very reliant on all of the usual volunteers, but ANY NEW VOLUNTEERS WOULD BE MADE EXTREMELY WELCOME!! THE VILLAGE FETE NEEDS YOU!!

If you are able to help in any way, either on the day of the fete or with the organisation, please either come along to the meeting on 16th March, or phone me on 681182.

JACKIE FARRANDS



Where does Bernard go when he shuts the shop? What does he do when he walks the dog? The picture says it all. Is this a new sideline? Furniture removers? Asylum seekers? Mobile home? Answers on a postcard please. ~ Submitted by Jackie Coates

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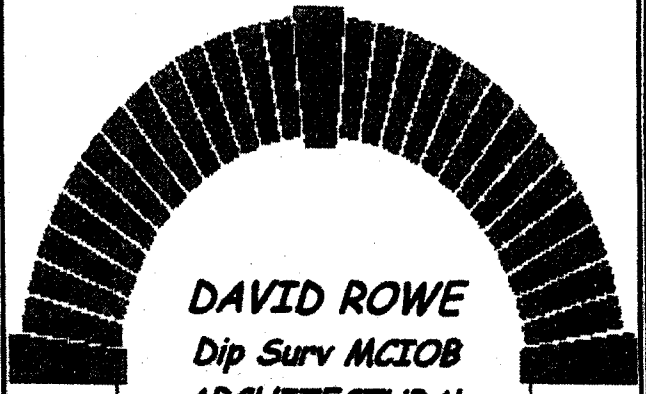
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Letters To The Editor

Phil,

When I opened the bundle which appeared to be The Chronicle I thought that I've somehow got onto the mailing list of one of those under-the-counter magazines. Then I saw that it really is The Chronicle. Has Hugh Hefner moved to Aston Abbots and taken over editing it? Has The Sun or The Star bought it out and installed a new editorial style? No its just gallant Phil being hijacked by the Gnomes and forced to submit to unspeakable indignities which would have reduced a lesser man to a gibbering wreck. The Gnomes should contribute to the "Phil's beer for a year" Fund, to help you recover from the ordeal.

~ John Hawkes, Wingrave

[Donations will be gratefully (and thirstily), received ~ Ed]

Phil,

I have read Bob Wilmott's letter in the February Chronicle and there are a couple of things that need to be said so that the village has a more balanced picture of the financial aspects of the situation.

In paragraph seven of Bob Wilmott's letter in the February Chronicle he writes on the subject of monies distributed from the proceeds of the Village Fete, in particular the funds allocated to the Church Room fund. In the late 1990's it became clear that the Church Room was in dire need of renovation and the church was either unwilling or unable to fund the necessary work. The village therefore called a meeting in January 2000 to discuss the best way forward to retain the Church Room. At this meeting Bob Willmott hinted that if the villagers were not prepared to fund the improvements, then the Church would probably sell the building. The villagers therefore decided to set up a Church Room Improvement Fund to pay for the renovation and in return the Church was asked to lease the premises to a group of village trustees.

In the period 1983 to 1999 the proceeds of the Village Fete were allocated principally to the Church, Church Room and the Methodist Chapel. The total funds allotted in this period were £6200 to the Church, £4319 to the Church Room and £2720 to the Chapel (until 1994 when the Chapel became redundant). These funds were presumably employed for the "routine maintenance" of the Church Room mentioned in the reference letter.

Since 2000, the Church has received a total of £4326 from the proceeds of the Village Fete and the Church Room Improvement Fund has received £5300 for the planned renovation. It is well worth mentioning here that Clare Shorrocks and her band of volunteers of the Friends of Saint James has raised over £2500 for the renovation of specific parts of the Church's infrastructure.

It is slightly unfair to complain that "funds have been siphoned off for the past few years into the Church Room Improvement Fund" when it is manifestly apparent that based on past performance the Church had no intention of using the cash for Church Room renovation.

The tardiness and procrastination of the legal representatives of the Church administrators continues at a solemn pace.

(Name and address supplied)

[There seems to be some little progress—please see Peter's news item on page 11 ~ Ed]

Paws from Portugal

To all my 4 footed fans and human things as well. Greeting from 'er indoors and me. I have put my literary skills to good use again. It has been rather a long time, but 2003 was not the best of years for my mum.

Hey ho though 2004 has to be better. I was foster dad to six 'orrible Andrex look alike labrador pups. They thought I was the other sex and kept nibbling my bits, bought tears to my eyes as you can imagine!! Their owner was in hospital for a time so 'PineTops' was a puppy sanctuary for some six weeks. They have all gone now - thank goodness.

Dare I say Euro 2004 Portugal. I am acting as agent for 'er indoors and suggested that she might earn a few euros doing B & B for you avid football supporters. Might even get a few extra treats for myself out of it. However if anyone is interested, please contact my mum (Jackie) on 00351 235 728450 (do not leave message on voice mail, there is a gremlin on it) or 00 351 961 189089.



In my earlier years I used to catch sticks and stones. Consequently I am a bit light on the tooth front. Mum took pity on me and bought me a set of dentures. I think they leave a lot to be desired.

Do not like to gloat but last week it was 20 degrees and mum did a bit of sunbathing - not a pretty sight, but I have to humour her. Belated Happy New Year to all of you in AA.

~ Jackie - woof woof!!

[My apologies to Jackie for missing his contribution out last month ~ Ed]

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Countryside Diary

10th February

Last week was that amazingly mild first week of February. The grass grew and went bright green and there was a lot of activity in the wildlife that I regularly see.

I was brought up to believe that birds "paired up" on Valentine's Day. An unlikely story, but interesting none the less. Some birds pair for life - eg swans, geese, and jackdaws - some for a season and some, of course, viciously polygamous like pheasant and mallard. Whatever this matrimonial state there was plenty of bird activity in that mild spell. Rooks have been on their nests - probably repairing damage caused by the recent gales. Given the strength of the wind it's rather amazing that rooks nests stay in place from one year to the next with only a little strengthening and upkeep each spring. On three successive mornings last week I saw two foxes "courting" in exactly the same place each morning. I suspect they "hunt around" each other for three days and doubt they even went to feed.

Another morning a site worthy of a David Attenborough film - hares running round and round a water deer - a wonderful sight!

Flowers are beginning to show here and there. Spring is coming as always. What fascinates me is that some flowers appear year after year within the same week. My five-year diary (second one now) tells me that yellow crocus always shows under the sycamore on the green in the second week of February year after year regardless of weather. Similarly winter aconites by our wood shed - 23rd to 25th January is when they appear. Other flowers vary enormously. There is a blackthorn in Les Smith's hedge which I always note - the variation in the blossom arriving is six weeks depending on the weather. Yes, six weeks!

What is, to me, even more thought-provoking is the fact that in that crocus corm, four inches underground in the green are a

"clock" and a "switch" - well something measures the passing seasons and something triggers the start of growth. Call it what you will it is, though commonplace, one of the wonders of the world.

I saw a buzzard again this week and wondered how it was faring, was food plentiful or rather scarce? After all, magpies, crow's, foxes, badgers are also competing for any carrion available - I suspect it's hard times.

February 14th also signifies the start of lambing for Alex and me. We are not expecting any ewes to lamb in February, most will come in the first half of March. Let's hope we have some dry days and some sun. A wet fortnight would be horrendous.

One last note. Sunday 8th February - cold but sunny. A tortoiseshell butterfly flying at Hulcot - I hope he too found a flower for some food. Only two months early!

Pete Knight



The Aston Abbotts & Cublington Ladies Club

Feb 5th

The Ladies Club met today in the church room and 21 members were present. Our Chairman, Jean Alexander opened the meeting and the minutes were read by Daphne Bissell and duly signed. The committee had held a meeting recently to discuss the Spring Lunch and Summer outing to Savill Gardens near Windsor in July.

Today's speaker was Mr. Richard Revels who had put together a collection of slides of animals, birds, moths and scenery of Scotland, Lake District, East Anglia and Bedfordshire. He was thanked by Carole Maurice. Tea Hostesses were Irene Lowden and Christine Scott.

~ Shirley Ford

A man goes into the doctor and says, "Doctor I think I'm a moth"

The Doctor replies, "you don't need a doctor, you need a psychiatrist."

The guy says, "Yes I know, but I was passing and your light was on"

Village Hall - Latest News

There is, as they say, good news and bad news. The good news is that the latest solicitor to be dealing with the matter on behalf of the Church is dealing with it properly, and without the delay and procrastination of his predecessors. The bad news is that he is seeking to make amendments to the form of the lease that had been agreed with the previous firm over a year ago. Some of the changes are fairly fundamental, including, at the moment an insistence that the village hall trustees should accept personal liability for their obligations under the lease, or provide some sort of assurance that these obligations will be met. (It is customary for trustees entering into a lease to limit their liability to the assets of the Trust, and none of the proposed trustees are prepared to accept liability going beyond this).

There are one or two possible solutions to the problem, which are being explored at the moment, and it is felt that a way forward will be found: but unhappily there will be some delay while these avenues are explored.

~ Our legal correspondent

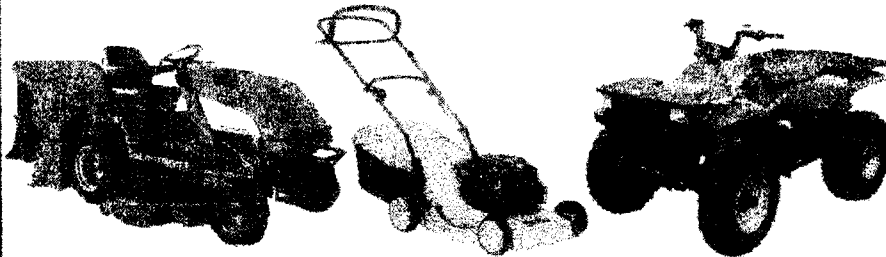
Q. Why do the French have only one egg for breakfast?

A. Because one egg is un oeuf.

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Village Hall: Church Room Or New-Build? A Personal View

As a result of quite understandable exasperation at the time it is taking to acquire a lease of the Church Room, it has been suggested that we should perhaps abandon our efforts to take this lease, and instead concentrate our efforts on building a new Village Hall. In this article I propose to examine the pros and cons of this.

1. Time

- 1.1 There is new legislation which is, we are told, to come into force in October of this year, regarding access for the disabled, w.c. facilities, etc., with which the Church Room will not comply. If it continues to be used after that date in its present form, I understand that action could be taken to prevent this. We therefore face the prospect that after this date we may not have a hall in which we can meet. There is still some chance (although it is gradually diminishing) of our being able to complete the lease of the Church Room by this date, and so using the money we have acquired (and any money we can get from grants) to do the necessary work. There is no chance whatever of our being able to build a new village hall by that date.
- 1.2 In order to build a new village hall, we will need to acquire the necessary land, obtain outline planning permission, have plans drawn up and agreed by the Parish Council or those organising it (and there may be demand for a village referendum on the matter), obtain detailed planning permission and building regulation consent, get estimates from various builders (I would have thought at least three), and decide which firm to appoint, wait while the building is constructed, and, last but not least, raise a vast amount of money to pay for it. (I imagine we would not want to start building until the majority of money was available). I do not know how long all this would take, but I have discovered that the Sports Facility which was recently built in Wingrave took about 5 years from start to finish. I think we should assume a similar timetable will apply here.
- 1.3 From a time point of view, therefore, I do not think there is any contest: the Church Room is the only viable way forward.

2. Cost

- 2.1 When we first started the project of taking a lease of the Church Room (back in the summer of 2000), the cost of the building work was reckoned to be in the region of £30,000. At the present time it is probably around £40,000.
- 2.2 I do not know what the cost of a new village hall would be, but the Sports Facility recently built in Wingrave cost about £305,000, plus a further £120,000 for fitting out, car parking, sports playing areas, floodlights, professional fees, etc. The site on which it was built was given free of charge. I imagine that our guideline figure should be around £300,000 – although the Wingrave building has been designed for rather different purposes, it is probably similar enough in size and style to what we would want. (I have assumed that, as happened in Wingrave, we will not have to pay anything for the site on which the new village hall is to be built). We would then also have to pay for fitting out the building, and my guess is that we should budget on a minimum of £50,000. At the moment we have about £14,000 “in the kitty” towards the cost of

upgrading the Church Room, and a further £6,000 is available through the Parish Council. (I imagine that most of the donors of money towards the work on the Church Room would be prepared to see the money spent on a new village hall if that were deemed a viable proposition, but one would have to check on this).

- 2.3 While I realise that the more expensive the project, the more one can expect to obtain through grants, I imagine that most of the bodies through whom grants are available will want to see a rather greater contribution being made by us. We should probably reckon on needing to raise at least 20% of the total cost, and possibly more. How many years would it take us to do this? (I understand that in Wingrave, the body that was formed to build the Sports Facility raised about £90,000 towards the cost (including £10,000 from one donor); and in addition the Parish Council was ordered to pay to that body one third of its total precept each year – amounting to just over £3,500 per year – for 5 years to help defray the cost. The balance over and above the grants included a loan of £30,000, and tax refunds & interest amounting to around £6,300)
- 2.4 Again, I think that from a cost point of view, the Church Room wins hands down.

3. Location

- 3.1 The Church Room is ideally situated to be a village hall, being in the centre of the village. Its main drawback is the lack of parking, but since it is so central, most people attending it come on foot, and there is enough parking space around the Green to cater for those who do not live close enough.
- 3.2 There are 2 possibilities for the location of a new village hall: one is to build it on part of the Recreation Ground; the other is to build it on some other, as yet unspecified site.
- 3.3 There are various objections to building on the Recreation Ground, namely:-
 - a. Villagers whose houses adjoin the Recreation Ground may be unhappy about it being used as the site of a village hall, with the extra noise and disturbance that this may cause, and the possibility of additional vehicular traffic.
 - b. I suspect that the planning authorities will insist on a fairly large car-parking area being constructed, so as to provide car parking for persons using the hall, without cars needing to park in adjoining streets; and possibly improved vehicular access to ensure that ambulances and fire service vehicles can get access to the new hall. This may leave an unacceptably small part of the Recreation Ground available for its original purpose.
 - c. When the Parish Council acquired the land for the Recreation Ground from the District Council, the District Council imposed a restrictive covenant that the Parish Council was:-

“Not to use or permit to be used the property except for the purposes of recreation only and at all times to keep the land and ensure that the same is kept as an

(Continued on page 15)



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(Continued from page 13)

open space”

It would therefore not be possible for the Recreation Ground to be used as the site of a village hall unless the District Council was prepared to lift this covenant, by a formal deed of release. (While I imagine they would be prepared to do so, for a worthy cause like a new village hall, we should not take this for granted).

- d. At the moment no alternative site for a new village hall has been identified, and I do not know if any is likely to become available. Unless and until one does, therefore this particular idea must remain academic. However it is likely that if the site is near any of the houses in the village, nearby residents will not be keen on the location.
- e. In the short term, therefore, I consider that the Church Room is the better option, although were it possible to build on the Recreation Ground, that would be equally convenient.

4. Size and Convenience

- 4.1 The Church Room is frequently too small for functions that take place in it, and I know that some functions are held outside the village in larger venues because of this. The plans prepared for the improvement of the hall include an entrance lobby, which can be separated from the main hall by folding or concertina doors, and these doors will be capable of being opened to include this area in the hall and increase its size somewhat. Apart from this there is not much we can do. (It might be possible to create some sort of gallery or mezzanine floor inside the present building; and in theory it would be possible to extend the front wall of the building to the railings in front of it. However, my guess is that there would be immense structural problems to overcome, and we would have difficulty in persuading both the Church - as Landlord - and the planning authority to agree). The kitchen and toilet facilities are clearly inadequate at the moment, as is access for disabled people. However these are problems that will be cured if and when the Church Trustees grant a lease of the Church Room, so that the money that has been raised can be spent on it. Ideally one would like a hall with better parking facilities, but nothing can be done about this.
- 4.2 Any new hall that is built could clearly be constructed (provided the land available were sufficient) to be as large as we need; and we can make sure that the kitchen, toilet & parking facilities are adequate.
- 4.3 It is probable that the village will grow bigger in the future, and if so, then the Church Room will become increasingly inadequate for our purposes; whereas a new hall could be built large enough
- 4.4 In this respect, therefore, a new, purpose-built hall is clearly preferable.

5. Feasibility

- 5.1 The Church Room is already on offer, subject only to our being able to agree terms with the solicitors acting for the Church. (The latest news is that the new solicitors are seeking to make amendments to the form of the lease that had been agreed with the previous solicitors).

- 5.2 One of the Trustees has spoken to the Village Hall Advisor at Bucks. Community Action, who has said that, in the present financial climate, it would be essential for the site for any new hall to be acquired free of charge (or, presumably for a nominal amount). Even then. It would be difficult to raise the funds needed to finance the construction of such a building.
- 5.3 It would also be necessary to demonstrate clearly a need for the facility, and that it would be widely used. (To get any grant from Bucks. Community Action, we will need to do the same thing in connection with the Church Room, but this will be easier in the context of the size of the hall, and the amount of the funds we will have to raise).
- 5.4 Again, it seems to be that despite its drawbacks, the Church Room is the better bet.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 In the short term, the existing Church Room is in my view, the only option. It is the only show in town. If we do not proceed with the proposed lease, we will have to face the prospect of the village being without a village hall from October onwards – probably for a number of years. For this reason, I think we should carry on with the proposed Church Room lease.
- 6.2 Provided that the village is happy to accept the absence of a village hall for a number of years, then in the long term, were it possible to raise the funds to build one, a new, purpose-built, hall would be a better solution than taking over the Church Room.
- 6.3 Nevertheless, I think it would be foolhardy to give up the chance of taking the proposed lease of the Church Room, unless we knew for a fact that we would be able to build a new hall, either on the Recreation Ground, or on some other site, which at the moment we do not. The bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.
- 6.4 It would in theory be possible to take a lease of the Church Room, and later to build a new hall. It should, however, also be borne in mind that if we take the Church Room lease, and spend the money needed to renovate and repair the building, we will have nothing left to put towards the construction of a new hall. This does not rule out the possibility of building a new hall at a later date, but we would have to start money-raising afresh.

~ Peter Shorrocks

Items for The Chronicle

Please would anybody delivering items for The Chronicle put it into the mailbox to the left of our front door. Unfortunately one of our dogs has started to eat our mail and he seems to find chronicle items particularly appetising. This is very important if you are delivering photographs or any item that you want to be returned. Thank you.

~ Phil

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Unintelligent Finance

Sally Palmer has been struggling with the bureaucratic processes of an internet finance company. Finally her frustration boiled over and she penned this sarcastic letter.

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The Vines
Church Farm (possibly???)
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5.2.04
Plan NO P0099999999789544332A
Plan Sec Code 681152
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Dear Sir

Application to open TESSA only ISA jar no Z34932019065

I have today discovered you have rejected my application as I have failed to provide the required documents to prove I live at The Vines, Cublington Road Aston Abbots Bucks HP22 4NB. I enclose a statement from Noddy Bank that I hope will establish this point. You have already accepted the WMD bill I originally sent.

You rejected the Iraqi Building Society statement because it had an extra line 'Church Farm' in the address. I stopped using this years ago because the 2 houses next to us are called Church Farm & Church Farm House so post was always going astray.

Unfortunately many companies use postcodes to find people's addresses so that quite often they have us on their records with the extra bit of 'Church Farm'. As a consequence I have documents showing both addresses, apparently a crime under the money laundering regulations, even if the postcode is always the same.

It occurs to me therefore that having cleared the name & address verification process you will still be unable to accept my deposit as the Tessa maturity certificate bears the longer address. If this is the case and to prevent any further delays I enclose another document (you have already seen the Iraqi Building Society Statement) to prove I live at The Vines, CHURCH FARM, Cublington Road, Aston Abbots, Bucks HP22 4NB. You have my permission to amend the Plan address to this address if necessary or indeed add "near Aylesbury" as we are indeed near there.

It strikes me that this episode is a triumph bureaucracy over common sense. I am well aware that your company (well part of it anyway) was heavily fined over failures in this matter but I believe it was because they were sending copies of important personal documents to the local tip! Clearly you are very diligent in all other respects. No doubt in the time it has taken to write this, and indeed wait on the phone to be advised of my unsatisfactory application, millions of pounds of money has been washed through the banking system. I look forward to receiving confirmation of the successful set up of my account in due course.

Yours sincerely
Osama Bin Laden

Did You Know...

1. No piece of paper can be folded in half more than 7 times.
2. It's physically impossible for you to lick your elbow.
3. Donkeys kill more people annually than plane crashes.
4. Venus is the only planet that rotates clockwise.
5. Apples, not caffeine, are more efficient at waking you up in the morning.
6. The liquid inside young coconuts can be used as substitute for blood plasma.
7. A duck's quack doesn't echo and no one knows why.
8. No word in the English language rhymes with "MONTH."
9. Almost everyone who reads this article will try to lick their elbow

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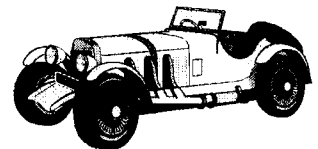
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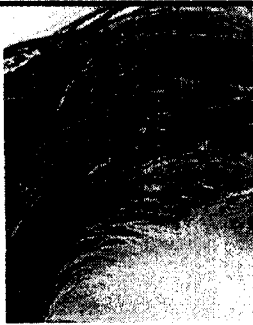
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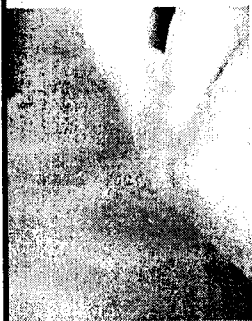
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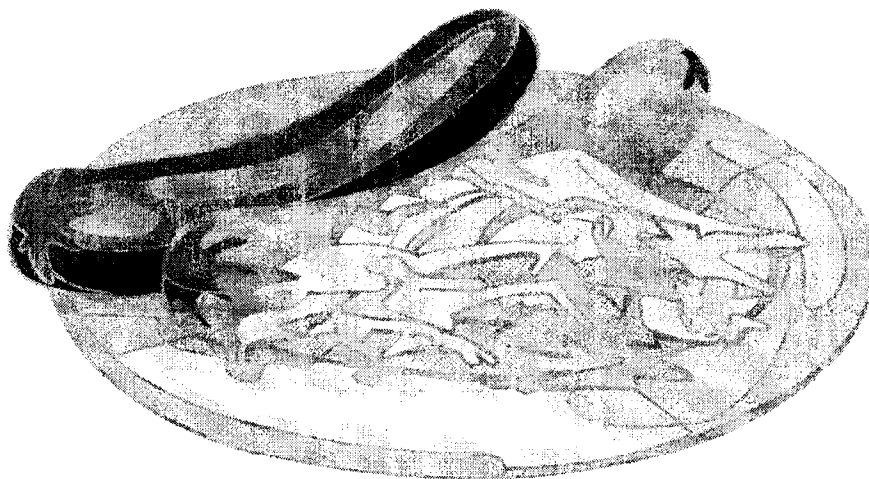
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Andrew Ford Marathon Sponsorship Form

Andy Ford is running in this year's London Marathon on Sunday April 18th. He is seeking sponsorship to raise money for Cancer Research and the church, so if you would like to sponsor him please fill in this form and drop it into Andy at 2 Ross Road—or if you don't want to cut your Chronicle you can phone him on 01296 681865 to pledge your sponsorship.

I would like to sponsor Andrew Ford for the total sum of £..... to complete the London Marathon 2004.

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Something To Say But No One Will Listen?

Would you like more confidence? Would you like to be heard when you have something to say? Being able to stand up in front of an audience and be heard and understood is becoming a necessity in many jobs these days. Find out how to get your ideas heard by coming along to a Vale Speakers club meeting

Meetings

A typical meeting will include three or four of the members giving prepared speeches to the rest of the club. These speeches are evaluated by the members for the benefit of all. "It is this atmosphere of mutual support and encouragement that leads all the members to increase their confidence and speaking skills enormously" said Penny Dablin, a member for many years. "We can all learn and improve because everybody's opinion is valid"

Other members agree that belonging to the club has certainly increased their confidence and skills. "I have found Vale Speakers invaluable in helping me overcome the nervousness I feel when giving presentations to small groups" said Chris Matthews from St Leonards.

Joining Vale Speaker's Club has really boosted my confidence and enabled me to become a Slimming World consultant, regularly addressing groups of people" remarked Diane Hands, now a very successful consultant.

Recent speeches

Because the members come from all walks of life with all sorts of different experience and interests to call on the presentations are always interesting and entertaining. Recent speeches have included But the badger was only wearing binoculars - a very amusing tale of hill walking in France; Learn to Juggle- with

whole audience participation using satsumas; Message in a Bottle- how to select a scent to suit you.

Leadership skills

In addition to speaking skills the Club also helps build leadership skills with members taking turns to host the evening and take other roles. This helps to develop skills of leadership, organisation and planning

Benefits

Speaking skills and leadership skills are extremely useful in the workplace. Possessing these skills could lead you to a better job or to gaining a promotion where you work With good presentation skills you could promote your business or become a better sales person. Improving your speaking skills could be the springboard to further self-development and much greater satisfaction with your life

Toastmasters International

Vale Speakers Club is affiliated to Toastmasters International and uses Communication and Leadership manuals to enhance the members speaking skills. Every member works through a basic manual where each project focuses on a different speaking skill such as using gestures and body language or using visual aids effectively. The projects build upon each other and at the end of the manual a speaker is competent and confident.

We meet at The Swan in Leighton Buzzard High Street on 1st and 3rd Wednesdays each month. You are welcome to come along and find out for yourself that speaking can be fun. More details from Penny Dablin on 01296 433763 or visit our website www.valespeakers.fsnet.co.uk



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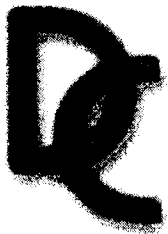
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Schools Promotions

Wingrave School continues to participate in a number of promotions schemes, helping to raise funds or to obtain free equipment for the benefit of the school.

- ◆ Nestle Box Tops for Education (ends 31 March 2004) where tokens are redeemed for cash.
- ◆ Tesco Computers for Schools (ends 2 May 2004) where vouchers are exchanged for computer equipment/accessories.
- ◆ Persil Get Creative (ends 30 June 2004) where tokens can be exchanged for art and craft materials.
- ◆ Leighton Buzzard Observer Target Stamps (ongoing) where stamps are exchanged for cash for specific items purchased.

If you have tokens relating to any of the above schemes, please donate them to Wingrave School. You can either hand them in to the school office or the Wingrave shop, pass them to a family who has a child at school, or contact Sondra Dickason on 682249.

Sondra Dickason and Caroline Daniels on behalf of Wingrave School

A couple goes on vacation to a fishing resort in northern Minnesota. The husband likes to fish at the crack of dawn. The wife likes to read. One morning the husband returns after several hours of fishing and decides to take a nap. Although not familiar with the lake, the wife decides to take the boat out. She motors out a short distance, anchors and continues to read her book.

Along comes a game warden in his boat. He pulls up alongside the woman and says, "Good morning, Ma'am. What are you doing?"

"Reading a book," she replies, thinking "isn't that obvious?"

"You're in a restricted fishing area," he informs her. "I'm sorry, officer, but I'm not fishing, I'm reading." "Yes, but you have all the equipment. For all I know you could start any moment. I'll have to take you in and write you up."

"If you do that, I'd have to charge you with sexual assault," says the woman. "But I haven't even touched you," says the game warden. "That's true, but you have all the equipment. For all I know you could start at any moment."

~ submitted by Dickie Dicken

1. The sport of choice for the urban poor is BASKETBALL.
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- Conclusion: The higher you are in the corporate structure, the smaller your balls become.

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Funny, I Don't Remember Being Absent Minded...

God grant me the senility to forget the people I never liked anyway, the good fortune to run into the ones I do, and the eyesight to tell the difference.

Now that I'm 'older' (but refuse to grow up), here's what I've discovered:

1. I started out with nothing, and I still have most of it.
2. My wild oats have turned into prunes and All Bran.
3. I finally got my head together; now my body is falling apart.
4. Funny, I don't remember being absent minded...
5. Funny, I don't remember being absent minded...
6. All reports are in; life is now officially unfair.
7. If all is not lost, where is it?
8. It is easier to get older than it is to get wiser.
9. Funny, I don't remember being absent minded...
10. Some days you're the dog; some days you're the hydrant.
11. I wish the buck stopped here; I sure could use a few...
12. Kids in the back seat cause accidents.
13. Accidents in the back seat cause kids.
14. Funny, I don't remember being absent minded...
15. It's hard to make a come back when you haven't been anywhere.
16. The only time the world beats a path to your door is when you're in the bathroom.
17. If God wanted me to touch my toes, he would have put them on my knees.
18. When I'm finally holding all the cards, why does everyone decide to play chess?
19. Funny, I don't remember being absent minded...
20. It's not hard to meet expenses... they're everywhere.
21. The only difference between a rut and a grave is the depth.
22. These days, I spend a lot of time thinking about the hereafter... I go somewhere to get something and then wonder what I'm here after.
23. Funny, I don't remember being absent minded...

~ submitted by Ted West

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Did you watch the Richard and Judy Programme on Friday 23rd January 2004?

If you did then you will know they were discussing the latest research on the potential links between breast cancer and the use of deodorants. Along with the Guardian newspaper health section recently, they recommended a fantastic product from the Forever Living Range,

ALOE EVERSHIELD DEODORANT STICK

I have been using this product for years, using it happily at least once daily, and I can wholeheartedly recommend it to everyone because:

- It contains no harmful aluminium salts;
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- You can use it immediately after shaving with no sting;
- It leaves no residue or stain on your clothing;
- It has a mild scent, so is suitable for men and women;
- It moisturises your skin;
- One stick last for a very long time, typically over 6 months.

On top of all that, it has a *full 60 day money back guarantee*, so you have nothing to lose!

The retail price is £5.26 per stick, and it should last you at least 6 months from my and other users' experience. If you would like to purchase any for yourself or friends and family, please ring me on 01296 681778 and let me know how many you would like.

A donation of 75p per stick will be made to Breast Cancer Research.

If you would like more information about this excellent product please call me on 01296 681778.

Jayne Brown

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Rectors Report

The news of the closure of Wingrave United Reformed Church probably came into the "to be expected" category rather than as a complete surprise.

It is a matter of great sadness, particularly for those who have been and are its members. The decision was made with great reluctance, and, even though my links with the URC are both recent and fairly tenuous, I share their pain.

I was somewhat taken aback by the way that Three Counties Radio and Central News tried to get me "on air" to explain what was going on. For I did not feel that I could say anything about the closure without confirming their suspicions that the Church is in decline.

For the past hundred and fifty years (at least), the Church has been focussing its activities around Church buildings. For there to be a Church, there had to be a Church building – and many of those buildings were never used to their full potential. Now that we are living in a radically different world from the early 1800s, the existence of those buildings, and their impracticability is becoming very evident.

It sounds like an excuse, a way to justify what is happening, but it isn't. The Church is moving forward into a period when many things will need to be re-evaluated. Church buildings

tend to be very expensive to maintain and frequently cannot be used efficiently. There was a time when the bills could be paid by "passing the plate round". Now we are looking at such large sums of money that it is not uncommon for appeals to be very widely focussed. Even our very ancient Churches, like Wing, need to be sensitively adapted for our changing world. It is a very scary thought that many communities can actually no longer afford to keep their Church building maintained.

Yet it is easy to become trapped by the constant need for the Church to be finding ever greater sums of money. For the Real Church is about recognising and responding to the overwhelming generosity of the God who created us. Our real need is to be suitably equipped so that we can share the good news of Jesus.

This means that we must have another think about how we use all the resources that we have, in Wing, in Wingrave, Rowsham, Aston Abbots and Cublington, and seeing the sense of doing some things together rather than separately. By concentrating too much time, energy and limited resources into the upkeep of buildings, we are in danger of failing in that primary task of proclaiming the Gospel.

~ Bob Willmott

Just Jokin'

Phone answering machine message - "...If you want to buy marijuana, press the hash key..."

A guy walks into the psychiatrist wearing only Clingfilm for shorts. The shrink says, "Well, I can clearly see you're nuts."

I went to buy some camouflage trousers the other day but I couldn't find any.

I went to the butchers the other day and I bet him 50 quid that he couldn't reach the meat off the top shelf. He said, "No, the steaks are too high."

My friend drowned in a bowl of muesli. A strong currant pulled him in...

I went to a seafood disco last week...and pulled a muscle.

My dog was barking at everyone the other day. Still, what can you expect from a cross-breed.

Two Eskimos sitting in a kayak were chilly. They lit a fire in the craft, it sank, proving once and for all that you can't have your kayak and heat it.

"Doc I can't stop singing The Green, Green Grass of Home."
"That sounds like Tom Jones syndrome." "Is it common?"
"Oh, It's not unusual."

A man takes his Rottweiler to the vet. "My dog's cross-eyed, is there anything you can do for him?" "Well," says the vet, "let's have a look at him" So he picks the dog up and examines his eyes, then checks his teeth. Finally, he says, "I'm going to have to put him down." "What? Because he's cross-eyed?" "No, because he's really heavy."

Guy goes into the doctor's. "Doc, I've got a cricket ball stuck up my backside." "How's that?" "Don't you start."

Two elephants walk off a cliff...boom, boom!

What do you call a fish with no eyes? A fsh.

So I was getting into my car, and this bloke says to me "Can you give me a lift?" I said "Sure, you look great, the world's

your oyster, go for it.'

Apparently, 1 in 5 people in the world are Chinese. There are 5 people in my family, so it must be one of them. It's either my mum or my dad. Or my older brother Colin. Or my younger brother Ho-Cha-Chu. But I think it's Colin.

Two overweight blokes in a pub, one says to the other "Your round." The other one says "So are you, you fat b*st**d!"

A man walked into the doctors, The doctor said "I haven't seen you in a long time" The man replied "I know I've been ill"

You know, somebody actually complimented me on my driving today. They left a little note on the windscreen. It said, 'Parking Fine.' So that was nice.

A man walked into the doctors, he said, "I've hurt my arm in several places" The doctor said, "Well don't go there any more"

Ireland's worst air disaster occurred early this morning when a small two-seater Cessna plane crashed into a cemetery. Irish search and rescue workers have recovered 1826 bodies so far and expect that number to climb as digging continues into the night.

So I went to the dentist. He said "Say Aaaaah." I said "Why?" He said "My dog's died."

So I got home, and the phone was ringing. I picked it up, and said "Who's speaking please?" And a voice said "You are."

So I rang up a local building firm, I said "I want a skip outside my house." He said "I'm not stopping you."

I had a ploughman's lunch the other day. He wasn't very happy.

I bought some HP sauce the other day. It's costing me 6p a month for the next 2 years.

~ submitted by Neil Cheshier

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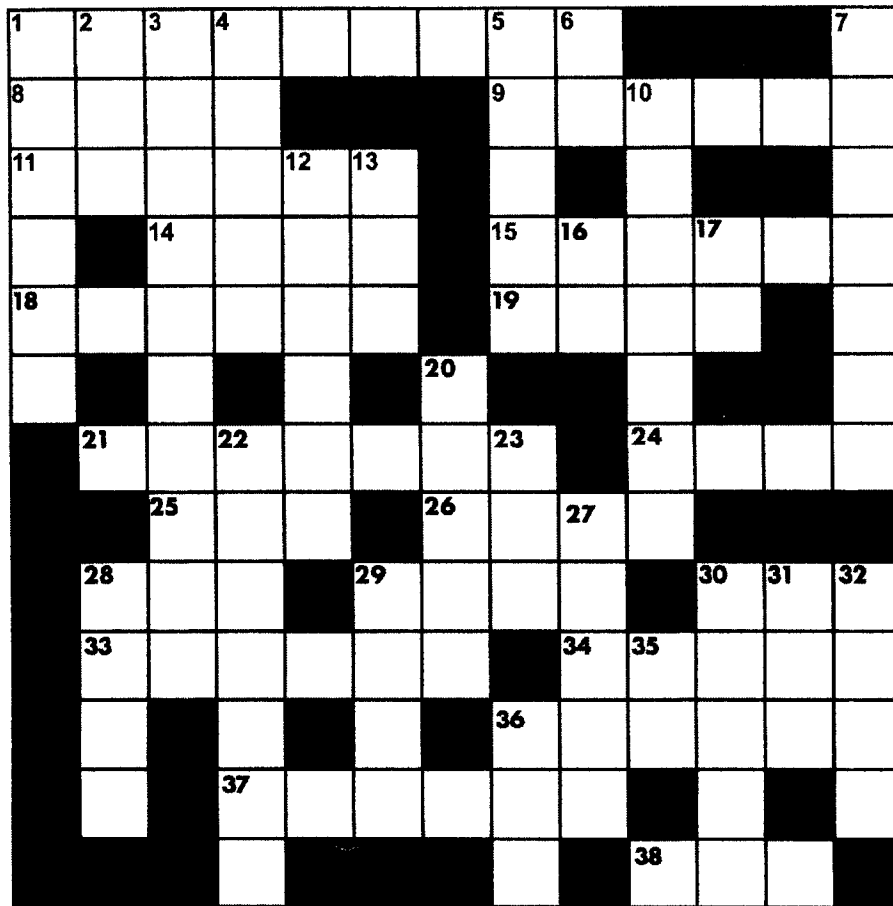
Monday
8 am to 5 pm

Tuesday—Friday
8 am to 1 pm & 2.30 pm to 5 pm

Saturday
8 am to 1 pm

The Chronicle Crossword

March 2004



February solution

Across 1 Commiserating 9 Lay 10 Lace
11 Orson 14 Eternal 17 Evince 18 Maul
19 Lat 20 Hints 21 Sifts 23 Anno
24 Inlay 27 Up 28 Uncoil 29 Lop 31 Nip
32 Clare 34 House 37 Eider 38 Antler
40 RT 41 Sic 42 Ides 43 Sea 44 Read

Down 1 Clocks 2 Oar 3 Myself
4 Electric chair 5 Rate 8 Ace 12 Ovate
13 Nits 15 Nanny 16 Auto 20 Halibut
22 Impolite 25 No 26 Hop 27 Ulcers
28 User 30 Pad 31 Need 33 Red
35 Once 36 Slid 39 Rep

ACROSS

- 1 Bliss (9)
- 8 Size (4)
- 9 --- Ocean (6)
- 11 Sketched again (6)
- 14 Volcano (4)
- 15 Trapped (6)
- 19 Items missing (6)
- 20 Rim (4)
- 21 Gun part (7) ???
- 24 Bitter, sharp (4)
- 25 Frosty (3)
- 26 Dries (4)
- 28 --- West (3)
- 29 Therefore (4)
- 30 ERA (an 3)
- 33 Away from sea (6)
- 34 Below (5)
- 36 Hairnets (6)
- 37 TENSED (an 6)
- 38 Number (3)

DOWN

- 1 Scarcely (6)
- 2 Same as 30 across (3)
- 3 Walker (10)
- 4 Parts (5)
- 5 After (5)
- 6 Element of tin (2)
- 7 Tied (7)
- 10 Boy's name (7)
- 12 Zest (6)
- 13 SAW (an 3)
- 16 Small advertisement (2)
- 17 Chemical element (2)
- 20 Growth (5)
- 22 Country (7)
- 23 Fix (3)
- 27 Circular (5)
- 28 Brain (4)
- 29 Finishes (4)
- 30 Decorate (5)
- 31 Colour (3)
- 32 Gaelic (4)
- 35 Negative (2)
- 36 Solidified (3)

Compiled by Don Bellingham

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St James Church

Church Services

7 th Mar	Wingrave	10.00	Parish Communion
	Cublington	10.00	Family Service
	Aston Abbots	11.15	Parish Communion
14 th	Cublington	08.45	Parish Communion
	Wingrave	10.00	Parish Communion
	Aston Abbots	18.00	Confirmation & Communion
21 st	Wingrave	08.00	Prayer Book style Communion
	Cublington	10.00	Family Service with Communion
	Wingrave	10.00	People's Praise
	Aston Abbots	11.15	Parish Communion
28 th	Cublington	08.45	Parish Communion
	Wingrave	10.00	Parish Communion
	Aston Abbots	11.15	Morning Service
4 th Apr	Wingrave	08.00	Prayer Book style Communion
		10.00	Three Parish Joint Palm Sunday Service (Wingrave Churches Together)

Sunday Readings

7 th Mar	Lent 2	Philippians 3.17-4.1; Luke 13.31-35
14 th	Lent 3	1 Corinthians 10.1-13; Luke 13.1-9
21 st	Mothering	2 Corinthians 5.16-21; Luke 15.1-3,11-32
28 th	Passion	Philippians 3.4-14; John 12.1-8

Church Flowers

No flowers during lent

Anyone who is interested in joining the Church Flower rota – please contact Colin on 681343

Church Sidesmen

7 th . March.	Mr. C. Higgs.
14 th . March	Mrs. S. Ford. Confirmation service 6pm.
21 st . March	Mr. G. Kemp.
28 th . March	Mr. A. Ford.

ST JAMES CHURCH ASTON ABBOTTS

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERS

Rev Bob Willmott	681623
Gordon Kemp	681763
Shirley Ford	681865
Ann Goodman	681763
Andrew Ford	681865



The Aston Abbotts Telephone List

100 Club	Colin Higgs	681343	LBO Reports	Colin Higgs	681343
630 Club	Andy Bystra	681690	Milkman	Ron Miller Dairies	482838
A418 Committee	Tom Manning	TBA	Mobile Library	Buckingham Library	01280 813229
Astonbury	Peter Shorrocks	681260	NHS Direct	24hr Medical Advice Line	0845 46 47
AVDC	Switchboard	585858	Parish Clerk	Kate Curry	681137
Bingo	Doris Scutchings	681243	Parish Council Leader	Tom Manning	TBA
Busses	Arriva	468730 or 423445	Police	Aylesbury	396000
Chronicle Advertising	Claire Gresswell	682949	Police	Wing Police Office	396163
Chronicle Distribution	Andy Bystra	681690	Railways	Chiltern	0870 516 5165
Chronicle Editorial	Phil Spooner	681544	Rambler's Club	Colin Higgs	681343
Church Mowing Rota	Gordon Kemp	681763	Rector	Reverend Bob Willmott	681623
Church Room Redevelopment	Tom Manning	TBA	Refuse Collection	Enquiries	585510
Church Room Hire	Doris Scutchings	681243	Roads & Transport	Colin Higgs	681343
Citizens Advice	Aylesbury	0870 126 4056	Royal Oak	Teri & Gary Moulton	681262
Coach Trips	Colin Higgs	681343	RSPCA	General Enquiries	08705 555 999
Council	Aylesbury Vale District	585858	Scouts	Julia Ellis	681118
Council	Bucks County Council	395000	Shop (Osborn's)	Bernard Osborn	681233
County Councillor	Brenda Jennings	01525 270610	Toddlers Group	Claire Gresswell	682949
District Councillor	Peter Cooper	681250	Wingrave Preschool	Claire Upton	681700
Fete Coordinator	Jackie Farrands	681182	Wingrave Post Office	(PO only)	681011
Floral Class	Colin Higgs	681343	Wingrave School	Office	681346
Friends of St James	Clare Shorrocks	681260	Wingrave Stores	Andy & Helen Hall	681696
Hospital	Stoke Mandeville	315000			
Ladies Club	Shirley Ford	681865			

Please let us know of any errors or omissions

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What's On In March

- Tuesday 2nd** Friends of St. James meet Royal Oak 8.30 pm
- Thursday 4th** Whist drive. Church room 7.30 pm
- Tuesday 9th** Mobile library. The Green, Wingrave Rd, Oxley farm.
Also Aylesbury Vale transport meeting 7.30 pm. Ireland room, County Hall, train/bus queries to Colin.
- Thursday 11th** Bingo. Church room. 7.30 pm.
- Friday 12th** Coach leaves Bull and Butcher for Weymouth weekend.
- Saturday 13th** Friends of St. James Sausage and Mash lunch in the Church Room. 12 until 2 pm. Tickets available form Clare Shorrocks – see pages 5 and 19.
- Tuesday 16th** Fete meeting. Church room. 8 pm. Please come along if you would like to help. See page 7.
- Thursday 18th** Whist drive. Church room. 7.30 pm.
- Tuesday 23rd** Mobile library. The Green, Wingrave Rd, Oxley farm
Also Floral class. Church room. 7.00 pm.
- Friday 26th** Deadline for the April issue of The Chronicle.
- Saturday 27th** **CLOCKS GO ON 1 HOUR.** British summer time begins.
- Tuesday 30th** Parish council meeting. Church room. 8.00 pm. Note change of day.
- Thurs 1st April** Whist drive. Church room. 8.00 pm.

Book These Dates

Wednesday 21st The **Annual Parish Meeting** will take place at the Church Room at 8.00 pm and we hope to see as many residents there as possible. This is a public forum and everybody is welcome. See panel below.

Sat/Sun/Mon May 29th/30th/31st.
Flower Festival St. James Church.
Teas On Sat/Sun. 2.30 – 4.30 pm, with a **Ploughman's Lunch.** On Monday between 11-1.30.

The 2004 **Aston Abbotts Festival and Fete** weekend is Saturday and Sunday the 24th and 25th of July

Please tell us about your birthdays, anniversaries, etc, so that we can send you a greeting in Alison's Gossip Column

Classified

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ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

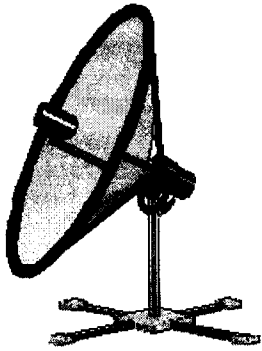
Please put Wednesday 21st April in your diary. The Annual Parish Meeting will take place at the Church Room at 8.00 pm and we hope to see as many residents there as possible. It is an opportunity to meet your District and County Councillors, hear news from local groups and to put your own views forward. It is the time to decide how money raised at the Fete will be spent, and even to offer your help if you are inclined to! Do join us!

Everybody is welcome

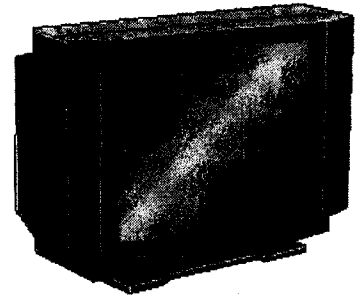
If you have any issues you would like to see discussed at this meeting, please contact the Clerk to the Parish Council, Kate Curry on 681137.

FLACKWELL ELECTRONICS

OF CHURCH FARM, ASTON ABBOTTS

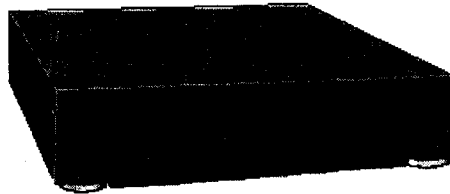


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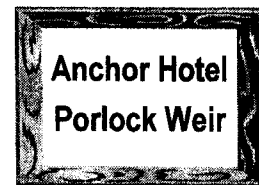
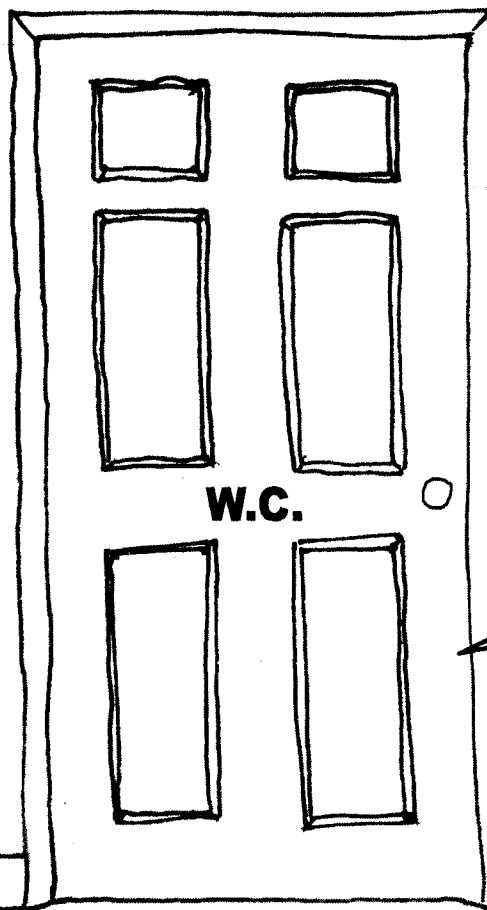


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WHERE'S DAVE?
I CAN'T FIND HIM
THIS MORNING

DUNNO—BUT HE
WAS PARTYING
HARD LAST
NIGHT

YEAH! HE WAS
RAVING
ALRIGHT



OH!
NEVER AGAIN!