

THE CHRONICLE

Aston Abbotts Parish Magazine – April 2014



PUBLIC MEETING

ASTON ABBOTTS ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

EVERYBODY WELCOME

The Village Hall — Wednesday 14th May at 8pm

Come to talk about your village. See the minutes of last year's meeting in this issue.

EDITORIAL

THE CHRONICLE

Issue 341

April 2014

At the time of writing this spring seems well on the way although after such a mild wet winter you can't help but wonder if there will be a sting in the tail. Yes a week later it has certainly changed.

This edition includes a couple of pieces by Peter Knight, one of which was received just a couple of hours too late to make the March issue, so apologies if some of the time references seem a little bit out of date. I don't know about anybody else but I always feel better informed and have a greater understanding of our Village and its environs after reading his articles. Keep them coming Peter.

Great news on the Fete in that Tracy, Vanessa and Louise have stepped in to ensure we have one this year, there will be more information in forthcoming Chronicles, but no doubt the usual volunteers!! will be called into action.

Seems a bumper edition this time with lots of submissions including our sometimes music and theatre correspondent (Chesh) also becoming our travel correspondent with tales of his travels through the Pacific.

Also good news about what is becoming a village tradition, albeit still in its infancy compared to the Fete, The Summer Ball, which this year will be held on July 12th, once again in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support, Frank is determined to beat last years donation of £2,340. So dust off your best frocks, black tie and more importantly wallets! More details and ticket information in the May Chronicle.

I'm pleased to say that letters continue to trickle in addressing village issues, but strangely none appear under the authors actual names.

The winner of the 2nd prize in this months 100 club has assured me that it will not change his lifestyle and has requested no begging letters please.

Phil Corrigan

Snippets & Miscellanea

Royal Oak News

March Guest beers

London Pride

Doom

Trelawney

Future events

St Georges Day Dinner (Apr
26th)

Details from the pub

Good to hear our occasional star of National radio, Simon Guy, back on the airwaves on five live this morning 22 March. I understand these appearances are carefully scripted! Is there a collection ready for future shows?

Church Flowers

5th no flowers

12th no flowers

19th Easter

26th Easter

CHURCH DUTIES

CLEANING

5th Caroline L & Colin

12th Ann & Gordon

19th Alex & Anita

26th Gay & Colin

MOWING

5th Phil

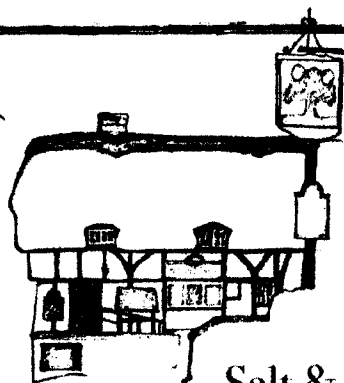
12th Nigel

19th Caroline L

26th Marcus

THE ROYAL OAK ASTON ABBOTTS

17th Century Thatched Inn



COME AND TRY THE NEW MENU

STARTERS

Salt & Petter chilli squid & dressed leaves

Smoked Haddock & spring onion fishcakes & homemade
tartare sauce

Goats cheese & caramelised onion tart

Feta & Olive salad

Field mushroom stuffed with goats cheese on garlic toast

Homemade soup of the day with crusty bread

MAINS

Ribeye steak garni

1kg Moules mariniere on wholegrain mustard mash with
pancetta & onion gravy

Oven roasted lamb rump served with dauphinoise
potatoes, mint jus

Tagliatelle with olives, sun dried tomatoes, pesto &
mozzarella served with garlic ciabatta

Pan roasted Gressingham duck breast, braised red cabbage
& apple, garlic saute potatoes & cider jus

Beer battered cod, hand cut chips & minted mushy peas
served with homemade tartare sauce

PHONE : 01296 681 262

What's on in April

Thursday 3rd	Coffee Shop	Village Hall	10 -12 noon
	Whist Drive	Village Hall	7.30pm
Sunday 6 th	Rambling Club	The Green	2pm
Wed 9 th	Parish Council	Village Hall	7.30pm
Thursday 10 th	Coffee Shop	Village Hall	10-12 noon
	Bingo	Village Hall	7.30pm
Sunday 13 th	Palm Sunday		
	Village Footpath Walk	The Green	2pm
Tues 15 th	Mobile Library	The Green	10.30 am
Thursday 17 th	Coffee Shop	Village Hall	10-12 noon
	Whist Drive	Village Hall	7.30pm
Friday 18 th	Good Friday Hot Cross Buns		
Sunday 20 th	Easter Day Communion	St James	10.30am
Monday 21 st	Easter Monday Bank Holiday		
Thursday 24 th	Coffee Shop	Village Hall	10-12 noon
Sat 26 th	OAP Buss Pass Trip to Oxford	10 am bus	
Tuesday 29 th	Parochial Church Council AGM	Village Hall	7.30pm
Thursday 1 st May	Coffee Shop	Village Hall	10-12 noon
	Whist Drive	Village Hall	7.30 pm

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A countryman's comment

I suppose, as a countryman, I must comment on the "topic of the day", rain and floods.

All I can say is that I have seen far worse flooding around this area than there has been this year and I have known the fields wetter, we are very lucky.

A lot of the water I have seen covering sections of the roads in the area and in our village has been due to poor maintenance of the drains and ditches, quite simple really, and very different from the problems experienced in the Thames Valley.

It has also been amazingly mild. How many frosts have we had this year?

There have been many strange reports in the National press, swallows seen in Sussex in January. I find that difficult to believe, what could they find to eat? Swallows can only feed on flying insects and despite the temperatures there are very few of those about in January.

Frogspawn has also been reported in January, all I will say is not in Aston Abbots or Wingrave yet. Our Bees have been working. On February bees were coming back to our hives with their pollen sacks full of bright yellow pollen and the bees have been seen visiting Crocus and Hellebores both flowering well. Snowdrops have been looking wonderful round the village but bees do not seem to visit them, perhaps Snowdrops are wind pollinated as, of course are the Hazel bushes with their bright yellow catkins and their tiny spiky red female flowers. Have you seen the female flowers? You have to look closely.

Snowdrops are tough, rain and wind seems to damage them not one iota.

Talking of small, Britain's smallest bird is the Goldcrest, as a boy I thought I would never see one, they were very rare. Here in Aston Abbots however are fairly common but difficult to spot being only about an inch long. Yesterday two males were fighting in our wild garden, they were at it hammer and tongs and took no notice of me standing 10 ft. away from the fight.

Hares are busy boxing in the fields now, curiously Hares are not plentiful in our Parish but on a friends farm towards Leighton Buzzard he and I have stood quietly and counted 12 Hares within an area of 10 acres. Lovely to see them. I still read of the "endangered Brown Hare". What rubbish, Hares are doing very well thank you over a large area of Southern England.

Now for this week's Star Prize. It goes to that great gardener and naturalist Mr David Lewis. I don't suppose he's noticed but in late January the grass outside his house was sparkling with wild daisies, now the Snowdrops are taking over, lovely.

Well done Dave, keep up the good work and perhaps this year your prize Gherkin will put Tony Hinds pumpkin to shame!

Peter Night

More of Peter's wisdom follows.

Easter, Spring and much, much more!

This April at The Unicorn means new menus, the first Bank Holidays of the year and warmer evenings to spend in our magical garden. Make sure you visit us to enjoy all The Unicorn has to offer, whether it's a wonderful Sunday roast, a pint of real ale, a fabulous afternoon tea or just relaxing with friends or family in our beautiful garden. On Good Friday we have the delightful Sophie Garner performing once again, and we look forward to welcoming you to the Unicorn whenever you walk in the door.

April

Monday 7th – Quiz

Tuesday 8th – Folk Music

Wednesday 9th – Bridge Club

Monday 14th – Quiz

Wednesday 16th – Bridge Club

Friday 18th Good Friday –

Live Music – Sophie Garner

Easter Sunday – Easter Egg Hunt 2pm

Monday 21st – Easter Monday Quiz

Wednesday 23rd – Bridge Club/St Georges Day

Friday 25th – Dinner & Jazz

Monday 28th – Quiz

Wednesday 30th – Bridge Club

2013-14

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What on earth must it be costing Anglian Water to have contracts in Aston Abbotts trying to mend the broken sewer? The hire cost of the equipment which stands on the Green to be used something like two hours a day every other day. Then there's the loo, in my opinion the fellows aren't here long enough to need a loo, at least that's what I thought until Alex pointed out that the time they spent drinking tea & coffee in their van would certainly warrant the hire of a loo.

We have now had a pump running continuously for seven days trying to dry out the excavation. What the pump is actually doing as lowering the water table at a rate of four inches per day. We know this because two years ago Alex and I searched out and cleaned our well thinking that, in a dry time, it would be useful to have a water supply for the garden.

Let's hope it's not a dry summer which it might well be, after all the average rainfall of 26 inches per year varies very little. So if we've had a long wet spell we tend to have a dry time to follow.

A month ago we had 53 inches of water in the well, the level now stands at 14 inches and going down. Now we could be going into a dry summer with the water table lower than usual could pose a problem for the trees on the green and quite a number of other things in the village, who knows?

Other than the noise of the pumps what a wonderful fortnight's weather we have had. We have a wonderful show of primroses in our wild garden and both our small ponds had frogspawn on 11th March. It took three years of bringing frogspawn from Wingrave before we had Aston frogs again. Years ago Aston Abbotts swarmed with frogs, so many were flattened crossing Moat Lane that village people mounted torchlight frog patrols to carry frogs across the road in buckets and help them into the moat. Frogs seem to have had a hard time and it's now several years since I saw a toad.

Again years ago most gardens had a resident toad working for the gardener by keeping the slug numbers down. I personally think that the damage done by the vast use of slug pellets in both agriculture and horticulture has been devastating to some wildlife. Frogs, toads, hedgehogs all eat slugs poisoned by pellets, as do thrushes.

Bees are good news at the present time. They survived the winter well and have used the warm sunny spells to gather pollen from early flowering hellebores and crocus.

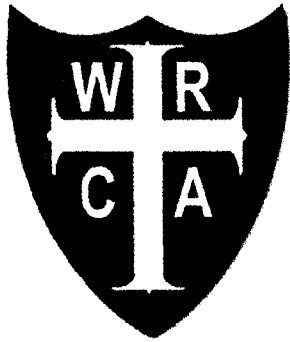
Pussy Willow is coming into flower now, look across from Lines Hill and you can see the occasional tree yellow with pollen.

We have also had four species of butterfly in our garden feeding on Primulas, Yellow Brimstone, the once rare Comma, Small Tortoiseshell something like a meadow brown. Lovely to see them, hear the Chaffinch singing away and watch the Bluetits trying to select a nest box for their family.

Curious that the grass on hasn't grown much yet, the grass fields are looking really well and most lawns have been mowed.

This month's star prize goes to Les and Val Smith, yes that Blackthorn again, one in their roadside hedge is always the earliest flowering in the parish, they've allowed it to grow up again and I think it's just beautiful. On the right as you drive over Lines Hill, but then perhaps it will all be over by the time this comes out in print.

P.S I expect eagle eye Tony Hinds, a fine observer of wildlife and the countryside, to tell me he has a toad under a stone in his garden. Keep the information coming Tony. Peter Knight.



Wingrave School PTFA Events

raising money for filming/studio equipment

Family Fun cross country 5K run/jog/walk back by popular demand!!

Sunday 18th May

Wingrave Sports Park
10:30 for 11:00 am start

bar, BBQ, stalls

£5 entry per family

join us for a family day out around our lovely village
for entry forms & map go to
www.wingraveschool.org
and visit the PTFA events page



CASINO NIGHT

Saturday 7th June

Wingrave Community Centre
7:30pm (gaming starts @ 8pm)

£20 per ticket

Early bird discount:

2 tickets for £35 until May 23rd

tickets from shop & school after Easter

Gaming tables & fun money, welcome drink, canapés, cocktail bar, disco, slot machines, raffle & grand prize for high roller of the night

Countryside Matters

As reported in the Mail on Sunday- March 2nd "Shoo before you shoot"

Britain's farmers must try to shoo away birds before they shoot, according to new plans drawn up by Natural England. Anyone caught breaking the rules could get six months in jail or a £5000.00 fine (That's more than you would get for battering the mother- in- law!). At present farmers have serious problems with thousands of wood pigeons eating oil seed rape plants, just walk the footpaths of the Ascott Estate to see that hundreds of crows and rooks eating maize cover and all along the Leighton Road the newly planted wheat fields. I have witnessed rooks pecking the eyes out of newly born lambs and crows taking ducklings from a pond. I have seen crows and magpies raid song bird's nests for eggs and chicks, witnessed rooks harassing mother partridge, both English and French, and flying off with their day old chicks. What about the theft of ground nesting bird's eggs, some of these are on the endangered list.

Therefore, who are these urban civil servants or quangoes who think up all this useless and stupid nonsense from their heated offices, compliments of the taxpayer. Do they ever venture to the brussel sprout fields of Cambridgeshire and Norfolk or the vining pea fields of Lincolnshire and see how much damage these pests can do. A good pigeon shooter, hidden in a hide using modern decoys, can account for 1-2 hundred pigeons a day, I have witnessed a bag of 300, and this can make quite a difference to pigeon numbers

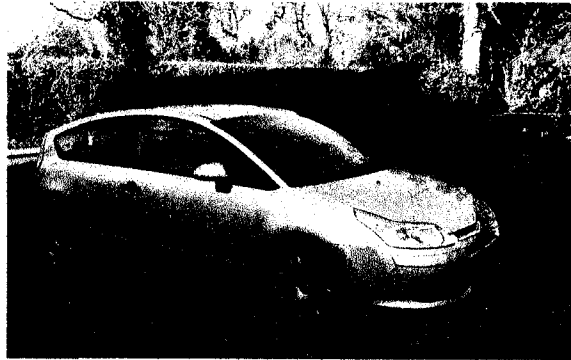
Frankly I think the whole world is going bonkers listening to this ill informed drivel, I wonder what on earth has happened to common sense. Shortly they shall come up with legislation to protect Magpie, Grey Squirrel and fox- you couldn't make it up!!

James



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630 CLUB'S ST GEORGE'S DAY CELEBRATIO AT THE ROYAL OAK



*Member, please note, a 630 Club, St. George's Day Dinner
is to be held at The Royal Oak on Sat 19th April 2014. The menu
will be Roast beef with Yorkshire pudding and a selection of
vegetables, followed by either Eton Mess or Cheese & biscuits and Coffee.*

*The price is £22.00 (inc. gratuity) and 'tickets' will be available from
Tony Hinds Tel;- 681454*

*Please let Tony know your preference for the 'sweet course'
when booking.*

And finally;-

*We hope the Club tradition of wearing a bow tie will be upheld by
members.*



+ASTON ABBOTTS - BADMINTON

Are there any badminton players who would like to join a local club and don't take it too seriously ?

We play at Green Park, Aston Clinton on a Thursday evening between 7.30 and 9.00. It costs £5.00 per session and we share transport whenever we can.

Players are from Aston Abbots and surrounding villages and we welcome players whether they've played before or not.

It's great fun. So why not come along for a little exercise and enjoy a social evening out?

For more information, please Ring Rita on 681690

ALLOTMENT DIARY- Peter Shorrock

Incredibly, for two successive Sundays in early March, we ate Sunday lunch in the garden, because it was so warm. There are many Sundays during the summer months when the weather is not good enough. While doing so, I saw numerous brimstone butterflies, and an unidentified brown job, which is extraordinarily early for them to appear. Even before that spell of unseasonably warm weather, I read that at the RHS garden at Wisley, they have measured the soil temperature in mid-February as being about 2 degrees Celsius (3.6F) warmer than is normal for that period.

Meanwhile, on the allotment the manure I spread on it has now been rotavated in by my son, Adam, and my allotment is now looking better than it will ever look again during the rest of the year: lots of beautiful brown earth and manure, with not a weed in sight. The only green one can see is the leeks I have not yet harvested. I have cut down my raspberry canes, and the bed urgently needs weeding; but unfortunately in my garden a large rose bush died over the winter, and had to be removed, and this enabled me to see for the first time the extent to which ivy was taking over that flower bed. I am therefore devoting much of my gardening time to trying to dig up all the roots of this – which is a time-consuming job, especially as it is growing beneath some other well-established shrubs. The raspberry bed will have to wait until I have done this (and also repaired my garden fence which suffered during the recent high winds). The other allotment news is that Gordon Kemp, who has the plot next to mine, is going to have to go into hospital for a hip operation like mine in the near future. In the meantime he is still busy doing what he can on his allotment. And on one of the other allotments bordering mine, Olly Butler, is erecting what may be the biggest poly-tunnel in the village. There is still, so far as I know, no further news about the continuing existence of the manure heap

Some interesting gardening news that I read recently: scientists in the Sainsbury laboratory at Norwich have produced a potato that is resistant to potato blight (the disease that caused wide-spread famine in Ireland in the 19th century). They have done this by borrowing genes from a wild, inedible relation of the potato that recognises the blight fungus, and scrambles the plant's immune protection systems against it. If this potato becomes successful commercially, it will remove the need to spray the commercial potato crop against the blight fungus – which it is estimated will save the UK farming industry as much as £72,000,000 a year. No doubt these potatoes will eventually become available for allotment gardeners and others to buy, and remove one of the risks attendant on potato growing. And, in a win-win situation, the yield from these genetically modified potatoes was about 25% greater than the non-GM crop.

Although we did not suffer as much as many other parts of the country from the winter rain, it came as no surprise to read that the winter was the wettest since 1766 (and possibly further back that then: there are insufficient records for earlier dates). In addition, as I have previously mentioned, it has been the mildest winter I can recall. So how are our gardens and allotments faring? My lawns – and, I suspect, yours - are riddled with moss; and one of my raspberry beds has a complete blanket of the stuff. I suspect this may be a bad year for garden pests, since, unless the little blighters drowned, there have been very few frosts to kill them off, and certainly no continuous cold spell. All my fruit trees – apple, pear, plum and cherry – are in bud, but at the time of writing (21st March) there is no blossom. I have heard from friends in the village that plants that normally die off if left outside in the winter, like geraniums and dahlias, have survived. Seeds are already germinating in the greenhouse, and if the present spell of fine weather continues, we should be in for a good growing season. Garden pests may be more of a problem than usual, but at least we should not have to worry about our reservoirs and aquifers drying up!

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Letters page

Dear Sirs,

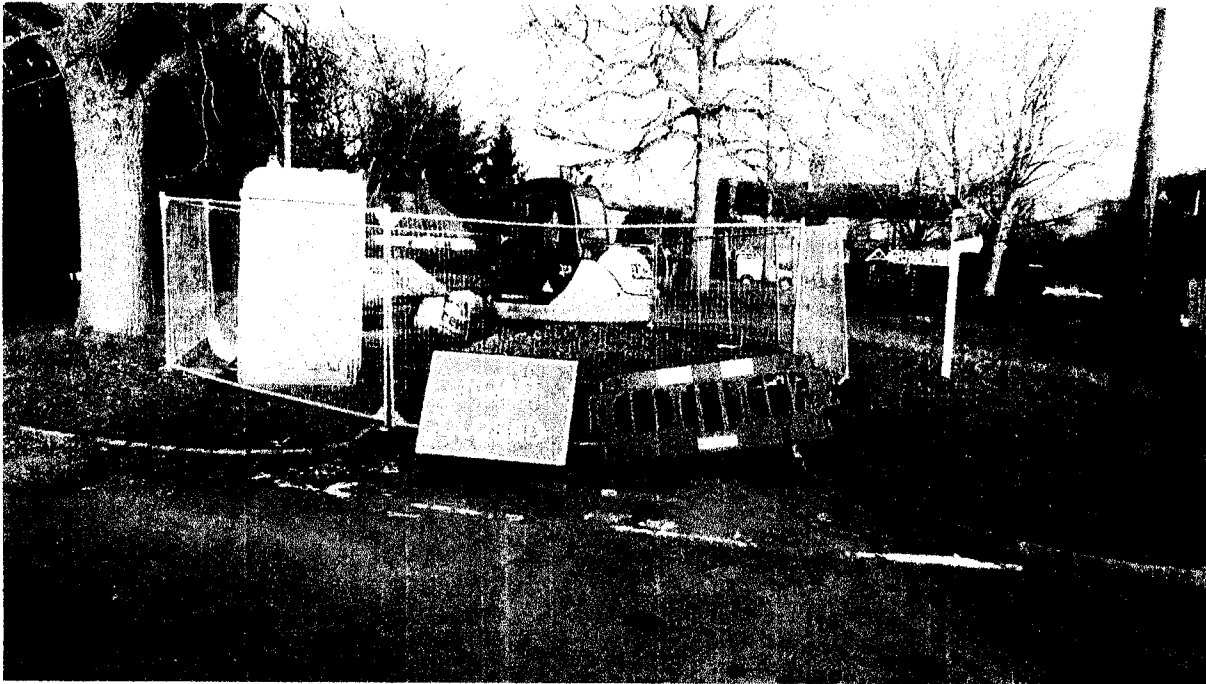
It seems the days of a simple 'men at work' sign are truly over.

With the present mains work going on, thank God for the proliferation of safety signage. If not for the 'road closed' sign who knows the damage that could be caused to cars trying to squeeze past...

We've even got two 'footpath closed' signs. Is this in case people are walking side by side?

Yours Sincerely

Ivor Phaullover
Aston Abbots Workplace Health & Safety Officer





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More letters

View from the saddle

Sir

I'd like to dispel a myth about the Aston Abbotts Cycling Club (AACC), there seems to be a general belief that this consists of several middle aged (and upwards Ed) overweight (I'm saying nothing Ed) men struggling to Cublington to consume thousands of calories of a full English breakfast. AACC is often subject to shouts of abuse referring to this myth, normally from our equestrian friends.

Yes some of our members may tend towards the rotund, but apart from our Xmas ride breakfast has not been taken for several years.

Just wanted to put the record straight.

Yours

A R S Saw KGB

Stop press: AACC have reported more abuse this morning, 22 March, again from an Equestrian. One member who doesn't want to be named (Dave Lewis) said he was more offended by the use of the term Old rather than git! Ed

The Final word on the dung heap?

Dear Sir

In reply to the founder member of STAMP (Save the Aston Abbotts Muck –heap in Perpetuity).

I too must declare an interest, the other day I had one foot in the muck heap and one in the orchard. On average I had no idea where I was so I feel able to comment.

Although I have lived all my life in the countryside I have occasionally visited towns and once with two friends I passed a Solicitors office. I believe I am therefore qualified to say what splendid people lawyers can be and how they can completely miss the point of any argument.

Yours Sincerely

Richard Head

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Minutes of the Aston Abbotts Annual Parish Meeting

8.00pm 8th May, 2013

Present: Mr Peter Shorrocks (Chairman, Parish Council), Mr Paul Bruton (acting secretary), Mrs Netta Glover (County Councillor), Mr Peter Cooper (District Councillor), Ms Paula Boston (PCSO, North Wing) and 24 parishioners.

1. Apologies: Mr Richard Clarke and Mr James Perkins
2. The Minutes to the meeting held 9th May, 2012 were approved and signed as a true record
3. No matters arising.
4. County Councillor Glover addressed the meeting giving a summary of the achievements of BCC over the past 4 years and these included.
 - BCC have increased the independence of Schools, we have seen the appointment of a Police and Crime Commissioner and the introduction of a Scrutiny Committee, it was hoped these would make a difference locally.
 - BCC had to cope with the reduction in Government funding and had frozen its share of Council tax for 3 years, reducing spending by £85m, there was potentially worse to come and they would be interacting with residents to obtain their spending priorities lay.
 - The quality of education was improving with an 83% rise in Level 4 English & Mathematics and 70% rise in students achieving 5* in physics, Aylesbury Technical College was working with sponsors promoting apprenticeships for 13 to 19 year olds.
 - Economic help to local businesses as BCC introduced 10 day payment terms instead of 30 days, support via Thames Valley Local Enterprise had enabled 60 Bucks. Based businesses to obtain contract on the 2012 Olympics with Dorney Lakes being voted best venue.
 - BCC are doing their best with roads with £300million of the current budget allocated, equal to 15% of Council tax. They are looking at energy efficient ways to reduce costs in the longer term.
 - The transfer of Libraries to operation by volunteers from the local community had been a success with training provided by existing staff who would become redundant on transfer. Performance related pay had been introduced and there had been a reduction of 1,500 jobs – equating to 23% of staff.

A question regarding the condition of some of the roads was raised as it was felt they were particularly dangerous for cyclists, the area around Wing and Cublington was of particular concern. Councillor Glover advised that all County representatives had been asked to prioritise the roads in their areas, selecting 5 roads for improvement and the Cublington to Wing road was at the top of her list.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Glover for her report.

Councillor Cooper, after congratulating County Councillor Glover on her recent election success, addressed the meeting with a number of updates to local issues affecting Aston Abbotts and the Aylesbury area in general.

- The development of the Waterside area around the new theatre continued with the Waitrose store scheduled to open in July 2013. The plans included a new Car Park as well as a hotel, the next stage was to hopefully introduce Restaurants in the area with land around the Canal basin although compensation with land owners had to be finalised. There was also the possibility of Sainsbury's store and petrol station located opposite the Council offices.

- Although compensation with land owners had to be finalised. There was also the possibility of Sainsbury's store and petrol station located opposite the Council offices.
- Planning – As mentioned last year the South East Plan was scrapped in April 2012 and a new Vale of Aylesbury Plan (VAP) was being completed. The initial document had been prepared and consultation was now in operation. The document proposed 14,000 new homes over 25 years compared to 25,000 in the SE Plan. Taking into account permissions already granted this left a net figure of 8,500 new approvals. The current problems created during the gap in the abolition of the SE Plan and the new VAP had resulted in 3 planning application for developments from opportunistic developers in Hampden Fields, Fleet Marsden and Watermead – 2 of these application had gone straight to the Government Planning Inspectorate with the other being considered within AVDC. The proposals were not welcome as they did not address infrastructure issues, locality and style. It was important the application were refused.
- AVDC were continuing to consider ways of dealing with the reduction in Local Government Finance from Central Government as grants were being reduced with a further £1.5 million reduction next year, it was felt that the aims were that by 2020 there would be no Central Government Grants. AVDC had therefore to look at finding savings or income generation to replace. One area that Councillor Cooper felt offered potential was the move to a Unitary Council reducing the number of District Councils from 5 to 1.
- The revised refuse collection and recycling scheme was working well and appeared popular, there had been teething problems , resulting in nearly 60% of refuse being recycled, resulting in savings. The food waste was being used to generate electricity.
- Rural broadband continued to be an issue for residents and a £14million grant from the EU had meant that we will see an improvement in Bucks. And Herts. Contracts for the installation were anticipated to be placed by the end of May with work to start immediately. The big question was where they would start as the project would take 3 years to complete. It was hoped the investment would start in North Bucks and the figures suggest it should as 60% don't have access to fast broadband.
- Bus service – The No 100 Bus service had been withdrawn by Aviva as it was uneconomical, they were indicating they would improve the timing and quality of the No 150 to compensate.
- East – West rail link – The propose rail link was going ahead with the opening scheduled for 2017. This would link Aylesbury to Milton Keynes, Oxford then Cambridge providing access to all services to the North and West.
- Travellers Sites – The Cublington site was currently empty and up for sale at £100,000, it was quite small and was contaminated, currently it has planning permission as a Caravan site however we could see a change of use application from any potential purchaser. Currently AVDC does not have enough traveller sites under the Government's guidelines and there will be a consultation with stakeholders and the public on where any sites should be located.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Cooper for his expansive and informative report.

- PCSO Boston advised that a review of the areas under the responsibility of Wing Station had resulted in an increase in size of area to be covered and some villages had changed areas, Aston Abbotts remained the responsibility of Wing North & South. However the increase in size had resulted in resources being stretched as they were now responsible for 20 villages. Currently Wing station had a new Inspector and Sergeant with 3 police officers and 5 PCSO's.

- Overall crime in the village continued to be low with 2011 -12 being 6 reported and for 2012-13 2 reported. These figures exclude domestic related incidents.
- PCSO Boston recommended signing up for the Thames Valley Alerts as this provided useful information on current crime activities and prevention opportunities. The meeting also mentioned that Dog Watch was another excellent site for crime awareness and it was surprising how many dogs were taken.
- A question from the floor concerned speeding in the village – PCSO Boston advised that the Parish Council could share the speed watch system with other smaller councils, volunteers would be required to operate the system and training is provided. Vehicles recorded as speeding would receive a letter from the police and action may be taken for repeat offenders. It was noted that in the past when the Parish Council had asked for volunteers for such a scheme the take up had been nil.

The Chairman thanked PCSO Boston for her report.

1. Parish Councils Chairman's Report, Mr Shorrocks summarised the work undertaken during the year;
 - The village plan had been completed and a presentation would follow his report.
 - The footpath to the Wingrave crossroads had been completed with funds from the Local Area Forum, Aston Abbots Summer Ball fund, The Fete and the Parish Council.
 - We were contributing to the improvements being carried out to the Bus shelter at the Wingrave Crossroads by Wingrave and Rowsham Parish Council.
 - An Oak tree had been planted in the Recreation Ground as part of the celebrations of the Queen's Jubilee.
 - VAHT had kindly donated a PA system for use of villagers and enquiries should be made to Councillor James Perkins.
2. A visual presentation of the village plan was located around the Church room and photocopies of the plan were available for those present. James Perkins acknowledged some photograph anomalies in the version on display and assured all that these would be rectified before formal publication. The plan provided a framework for the development of the village. Input from residents had been obtained from a number of consultations and the resulting action plan summarises what we will look at in the future. We will now look to form a Village Plan sub-committee to implement the plan and it is sincerely hoped villagers will want to be involved. The plan is an evolving document to be reviewed on an annual basis. Kate Curry and Peter Shorrocks had been involved from the start of the process and it is vital we get people involved as it is not intended that the Plan is the responsibility of the Parish Council. Sally Palmer congratulated all those involved in completing the Plan.

Peter Shorrocks gave a brief summary of the current views of the Parish Council in relation to the development of a Neighbourhood Plan, a power given to Parishes as a result of the Localism Act. We were currently awaiting the publication of the Vale of Aylesbury Plan before finalising our decision on whether to create a Plan, it will require the input of residents and ideally the committee developing the document will need to consist of residents



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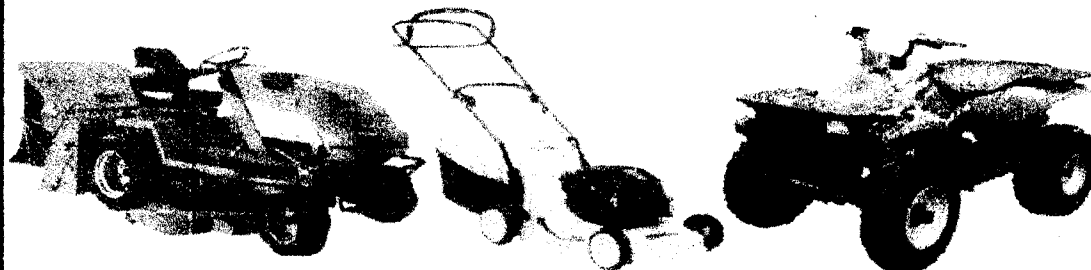
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- Andy Bystra reported on the activities of the 630 Club that was started in 1985 and meets at 6:30pm every Saturday night, originally at the Bull & Butcher Pub to enjoy a social gathering of conviviality and newcomers were welcome. On the closing of the original location the Club had relocated to the Royal Oak who had made them very welcome and over 40 people attend regularly. There were no plans to change although Wingrave were looking to form a similar club. The recent refurbishment of the Royal Oak gave the opportunity to hold some events at the pub and a St George's Day dinner was being planned for Saturday the 24th May 2014 and the Bean competition was scheduled for the 14th September 2013. The club would be 30 years old in 2015 and ideas for celebrating were under way.
 - April Curnow reported that the GNOMES (Girls night out men excluded) met every Tuesday night on a similar basis to the 630 Club with numbers varying between 5 and 20 – newcomers were always welcome. They organise a number of events during the year including an annual Christmas dinner, theatre visits, and even go karting.
 - Deirdre Whyte as Fete coordinator reported on the 2012 Fete that had been well attended and thanked everyone for their help. The Fete had the usual attractions and the dog show proved very popular, Neil Cheshire opened the Fete and visitors seemed to enjoy the traditional charm of the event. The day had raised just over £4,000 and this had been distributed to the Chronicle (£500), Footpath (£1,000) and the Church (£2,593). A thank you to April Curnow for her help and for taking in the role of treasurer, next year David Gray had kindly volunteered to take on this responsibility. The 2013 Fete was scheduled for the 27th July (Deirdre's birthday) and plans were under way with volunteers to run stalls needed, particularly the Bric a Brac. Peter Knight was standing down as Master of ceremonies after many years of excellent work, James Perkins kindly stepped forward to take up the challenge.
 - John Hardcastle reported on the Book club that was started in 2009 and now had 14 members (2 male) who meet once a month at one of the member's homes to discuss the book of the month (chosen by the host) and enjoy the odd glass of wine. The size of the club seemed to be just about right and if other people were interested then it may be an idea to start another club.
 - Shirley Ford reported that the Ladies Club had suffered recently and activities had been a bit reduced, however membership was picking up and they have resumed meeting once a month with more interesting and effective speakers and are planning Garden parties and outings, they meet in the Church room and the dates and times appear in the Chronicle.
 - John Hardcastle reported that Orchard had been a real success and on behalf of all thanked Peter Knight for all his work and efforts. There were currently 120 trees and plans were for a maximum of 160, although it may be possible to squeeze another 30 trees in. Currently we are looking to plant fruit trees that are part of the history of Bucks, so we are all busy trying to trace trees that meet the criteria. He also wanted to thank Wendy Bentley for her work in organising village events in the Orchard and mentioned that he was looking forward to winning this year's Sunflower competition.
3. Mr Shorrocks updated the meeting as to the status of the village acquiring a lease for the Church Room. It was noted that this purchase continues to present problems, mainly caused by the solicitors who had now advised that the file had been discarded by the Charity Commission and as a result had to start again. The matter is now with the Charity Commission for consent and will be actively progressed.
 4. editions he believed it was the right time for a change. At present nobody had stepped forward to take on the role and it was hoped either an individual or group of people would take up the role as it was felt by all that the magazine was a vital part of the village. The finances were in good shape and the usual donation from Fete Funds of £500 would be very well received to ensure the sustainability of the Chronicle. It was noted that volunteers for handling the distribution had stepped forward to take over from Andy Bystra. John passed on a vote of thanks to all helpers. Kate Curry on behalf of all residents thanked John Hardcastle for all his work as editor.
 5. The distribution of profits from the 2013 fete was discussed and a debate followed on the needs of the various village organisations. It was agreed that the profits from the fete would be distributed as follows - £500 to The Chronicle, the balance to be shared equally between The Church, The Church Room and The Recreation Gr

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AOB – Colin Higgs reminded residents that there was a Flower Festival and Craft Fair in the Church in the Sunday after the Fete.

Jo Perkins asked who owned the hedge running alongside the allotments down the road to the garages behind the houses along Wingrave Road as it was not being maintained by anyone and she wanted to thank David Gray for cutting it back. After discussion it was concluded that the Church owned the hedge and Colin Higgs would ensure that the hedge was maintained in the future.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.50pm

Don't forget the meeting on Wednesday 14th May 8pm in the Village Hall



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The Arty BitsBooks.....Music....Theatre & Travel

ASTON ABBOTTS BOOK CLUB

At our March meeting we discussed 'Blott on the Landscape' by Tom Sharpe. It recounts the self interest and opposition to the construction of a motorway through a delightful and much loved part of the country. The book was written in 1975 and includes the stereotypes of the time – the single minded German, the spineless Italian soldier, the conniving greedy politician, a selfish landowner and incompetent civil servant. Many of you may recall it was serialised by the BBC – Geraldine James famously played the part of the capacious Lady Maude.

This is an easy light read – for some the book has not stood the test of time. As one member said 'its like PG Wodehouse on acid'.

John Hardcastle

Dirty Rotten Scoundrels

'Dirty Rotten Scoundrels' opened in Manchester a couple of weeks ago and the week at the Waterside precluded it's opening in the West End on 10th March. The star of the show is Robert Lindsay who I fondly remember as Woolfy in Citizen Smith ('Power to the People!' and a Fulham supporter – and more recently as a dentist in 'Family'). He certainly slithered easily into the role of a suave and sophisticated conman who inhabits the fashionable resorts of the French Riviera.

The theatre was packed. My expectations were high – but. With the exception of Samantha Bond I felt the cast were not firing on all cylinders – the pace of the action was missing and the song and dance routines seemed to get in the way rather than help the plot line that was intriguing with a nice twist at the end.

Maybe I was suffering from the effects of having seen 'West Side Story' the week before; a show I thoroughly enjoyed.

The audience gave the show's finale generous applause and a few stood in appreciation. I hope that augers well for it's run in the West End.

John Hardcastle



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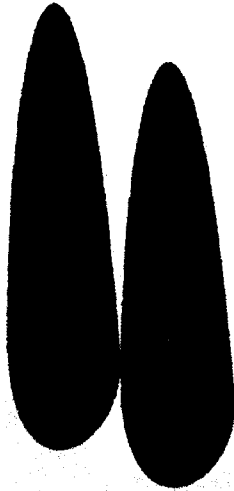
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TONIGHT'S THE NIGHT

The Rod Stewart Musical

Over 21 hit songs by Rod Stewart, cleverly intertwined with an amusing story and script written by Ben Elton, made our evening out to the Waterside Theatre on a wet Monday evening extremely enjoyable!

A super cast, all with fabulous voices, had worked the audience to the edge of their dancing seats just before the interval. On return, for the second half of the show, everyone was in full voice joining in with 'Maggie May' and swaying together with 'Sailing' at the end of the show. Then everyone was up on their feet for a megamix encore of Rod's hits to close the show - fantastic!

We have just got to mention, although all the cast were superb, that the character called 'Stoner' absolutely STOLE the show for us. Played with a Jaggeresque attitude, with a hint of Keith Richards and a cheeky grin, the actor/musician Michael McKell had us, and the rest of the audience, in absolute riotous stitches of rock 'n' roll laughter. He was also a very talented guitarist who played along with the fabulous band who were cleverly concealed above the action and revealed within the set during the second half of the show.

'Tonight's The Night' has something for everyone - hit songs, superb vocals, fabulous band, lots of laughter, great sets and lighting, along with lots of 'Hot Legs' and equally 'hot' dancing - there were quite a few surrounding eyes (on stalks), all absolutely glued to the stage!

The house was full - we had great seats - a complimentary programme - and a lovely glass of wine during the interval - perfect! A highly enjoyable show and evening.....if you get the chance go and see it!

Sue Wheatley & John Sutton

The Two Worlds of Charlie F

An amazing show. The result of the first UK theatre project for wounded, injured and sick service personnel, bringing together the two different worlds of theatre and the military, delivered in an entertaining, thought provoking and very moving way.

I came away knowing more about the extent of the injuries caused by Improvised Explosive Devices (not just losing a limb or part of a limb, but many more internal and external injuries that we just can't imagine) and some of the reasons why people join the army (for a bet, to avoid going to prison and to prove something to another family member), and what they are fighting for (usually for their best mate standing next to them). Brilliant. Go see it if you can.

Sally Turnham



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Fleetwood Mac Rumours

As the chronicle popped through the letterbox I thought I'd have a quick look at the back page to see what Mr Lewis had been up too, a bit disappointed really, he's actually been well behaved, must be a New Years resolution or just a lack of shindigs to go to, come on Dave give the editor something to write about! I need my fix.

Flicking quickly through as I was off to my brass rubbing class or maybe it was yoga for geriatrics, no silly me it was the golf driving range, waste of time, getting worse! Anyway, I came across the AA theatre goers page and saw that Fleetwood Mac Rumours was back and as I had missed it last time I thought it would be a good idea to try for the tickets, Tracy has always loved Fleetwood Mac so fingers crossed, same time hoping to win some brownie points, with some praying for divine intervention and St. John Hardcastle coming up trumps the tickets were ours.

We arrived at the Waterside, with plenty of time spare so we had our complimentary drinks, very nice indeed. As we walked into the auditorium I wasn't sure what to expect as I thought it may be some sort of Fleetwood Mac story with a few songs thrown in, I couldn't have been more wrong, as a lover of live bands I was delighted they were a seven piece band, who not only sounded like Fleetwood Mac but in my view with the help of today's technical wizardry even better.

We were blown away by the talent of these musicians. Having dabbled in a couple of bands myself I am always drawn to the drummer, who was absolutely outstanding, Mick Fleetwood would have been proud, also the lead guitarist could have easily been mistaken for Lyndsey Buckingham as he was faultless. The one thing that was the icing on the cake was the two girl singers, they were brilliant, the lead singer was a lady called Louise Rogan and if you were to close your eyes you would think Stevie Nicks was up there on the stage, she had an incredible voice.

The first half came and went in the blink of an eye and when the band came back out for the second half they were minus the girls, this only meant one thing, the boys could have some fun. They delved back into the archives to the Peter Green era when blues was a big influence of the band. They've come a long way since they made their live debut at the Windsor Jazz and Blues Festival in 1967, Black Magic Woman, Man of the World an Oh Well were excellent, and then came Albatross, the lead and rhythm guitarists complimented each other so well that you became hypnotised by their skills.

The girls came on, the atmosphere stepped up a gear and you only realise how many classic hits they've had over the years when you hear them all played over the course of a delightful evening, the highlight for me was when they played the Formula 1 intro theme, The Chain, it was absolutely brilliant, and the bass player never let us down with his solo, awesome, what a night, the crowd were brilliant, lots of happy faces, dancing and clapping along to all the favourites and because the majority of fans were of a certain age I think we did quite well, although I'm sure some of them would have a few aches and pains, like me, from over exuberance.

Thanks John for a fabulous night and Tracy came out with a smile on her face so points in the bag,

Cheers Lol

Some timely advice

‘As the warmer weather arrives, Aylesbury Vale residents are being reminded to nip garden crime in the bud and to secure their gardens and protect their sheds, garages and outbuildings plus their garden and power tools.

The Aylesbury Vale Community Safety Partnership has launched its spring garden security campaign to drive down thefts from sheds, gardens and garages. Historically, shed burglaries tend to rise in the spring and everyone is urged to take action to prevent becoming a victim of crime by remaining extra vigilant.

The campaign starts on 20 March with a road-show in Market Square, Buckingham, between 11am and 3pm.

Future dates include:

- Wednesday 26th March, World’s End Garden Centre, Wendover – 11am to 3pm
- Wednesday 2 April, Buckingham Garden Centre, Buckingham – 11am to 3pm
- Wednesday 9 April, Homebase, Aylesbury – 11am to 3pm
- Wednesday 16 April, B & Q Aylesbury – 11am to 3pm
- Wednesday 23 April, Haddenham Garden Centre – 11am to 3pm

Aylesbury Vale residents will be able to bring up to three tools from home or purchased that day from the road-show locations (one pedal cycle will also be marked if people wish to bring it along). A range of bolts, hasps and padlocks will be demonstrated and garden security advice provided and associated free literature will be available.

Councillor Pam Pearce, AVDC Cabinet Member for Community Matters, said: “Easy, simple, steps can be taken by everyone to help reduce garden crime and keep their belongings safe throughout the year. Thieves love insecure gardens and we need to work together to keep garden crime low and our gardens places we can relax safely throughout the spring and summer.”

The Community Safety Partnership has issued the following garden and shed security advice:

- Make access to gardens and areas where sheds and outbuildings are located as difficult as possible – lock all side and rear gates using a bolt and padlock or hasp and staple lock and make sure fencing/hedging is secure. Prickly plants can be used around the fence line to deter access.
- Install passive security lighting in gardens.
- Keep sheds, garage and outbuilding locked with good quality locks - padlock alarms are available from hardware shops that sound if any attempt is made to tamper with them.
- Consider putting bars on the windows of sheds etc. to prevent break-ins.
- Strengthen the security of sheds by reinforcing door hinges, fitting doors with non-returnable screws or coach bolts.
- Don’t leave tools and equipment in gardens but keep them locked away and consider securing these with cables and chains with robust padlocks

And Travel

Crossing the Pacific

I suppose I have had a fantasy about the Pacific all my life with stories of the Bounty, Captain Cook, the Kontiki and the whole process of discovery and exploration.

I had previously done a north to south trip across the Pacific, which whetted the appetite for more. So when I saw an opportunity to do an east to west crossing I jumped at it. It started in Valparaiso in Chile, an unprepossessing kickoff point. I told my chums I was going to a very cool place and none of them worked the clue out!

On the good ship Black Watch the journey began, heading first to Robinson Crusoe Island. This was renamed by the Chilean government and was where Alexander Selkirk was abandoned.

Daniel Defoe then heard his story and used it to create the Robinson Crusoe story.

Frankly when we got on shore it looked a wreck and a disappointment, only later did we find out it had been hit by a tsunami.

Onwards towards Easter Island. We had on board the ship Thor Heyerdall's grandson who lives on the Island, so he was able to give lots of background information. We were lucky to get ashore because of the swell and we were greeted by heavy cloud and rain. This cleared later as we went and looked at the hundreds of statues or Maoui over the island. They are not gods but family images and were so impressive and puzzling. Up near the volcano was the quarry, where there were still Maoui in the process of being carved and mysteriously stopped, frozen in time. The island had been totally deforested in the past so most of the landscape was quite barren.

It was one of those visits that will remain in the memory for quite some time.

The next island was Pitcairn, where the Bounty was scuttled and some of the crew remained on the island and their descendants are there still. Only 55 people live on the island now. Captain Bligh took the rest of the crew in an open boat to safety in a much lauded voyage. This is quite a forbidding and remote volcanic island. Wifi was not available here!

Tahiti was next. Images are redolent of palm trees, coconuts and dancing girls. It did not disappoint! However it was mountainous and had black sand, which was a surprise as was the amount of colour. The colour was riotous in the flowers, the headdresses and the market. What a lovely place and my O level French came in useful to get around.

Rarotonga or the Cook Islands also had high volcanic mountains clad in dense vegetation. I went slightly inland and marvelled at the greenness and the high waterfalls. In contrast this island had white sand. Later, on board we had a demonstration of drumming and polynesian dancing, in exotic costumes. Wow!

Every time we left an island we had a 'sailaway' party which was fun, quite dramatic and in some ways quite sad.

The Pacific was true to its name and was largely flat, with a little swell. In the 8000 miles of the trip we saw no ships at all until we got to a harbour. It just shows how big the ocean is, how remote and distant the islands are and what a fantastic job the early sailors and navigators did to discover these fantastic places only using the stars and certainly not GPS.

Then on to Auckland. This is a fantastic city and the boat ties up smack dab in the middle of it. It appeared to be really clean and tidy in contrast to the cess pit of London.

There was a two day festival going on so there were more people around than normal. I hired a car and drove to Rotorua, a beautiful place with geysers. As you drive you do notice how few people live outside the city.

There were hundred and hundreds of dairy cattle on the way there, which was a real surprise. Hobiton was one of the places on the way which is where the Hobbit film set was located.

Rotorua was gorgeous, based on a large lake and in the evening we went to a Maori village and where we were entertained to a fantastic show of dancing and singing, including the Haka.

Typically the journey back to Auckland took an hour longer than planned because the GPS took us all over the place through uninhabited countryside in the dark. We just had to have faith that we would get back to the ship in the end.

Bay of Islands. This was a serene area of beauty, and with a slightly old fashioned feel. It had none of the hustle and bustle of Auckland but was a mecca for backpackers.

Eventually we had to leave and make the three day voyage to Sydney.

From some way off you could see the outline of the Harbour Bridge over the loom of the land.

The outer entry to Sydney Harbour is flanked by cliffs and is known as the Heads.

Escorted in by the Pilot boat we made our way into Sydney, past Manley, up to the Opera House and then under the Sydney Harbour Bridge, which is also known as the CoatHanger.

That evening I took the opportunity of seeing the Magic Flute at the Opera House, whilst the boat was relocated directly opposite the Opera House alongside the Bridge. Such an iconic and splendid location.

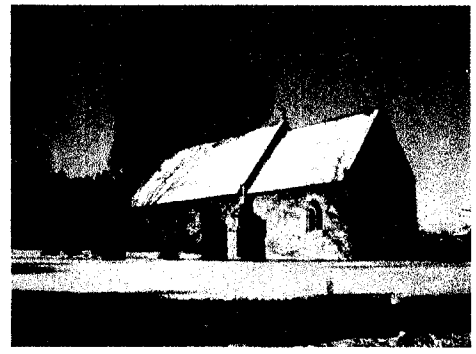
Sydney is very much a young person's city and increasingly oriental, there was a real buzz going on.

The next day we toured the highlights of Sydney, including both the Red Light district and Bondi Beach.

All too soon it was time to go to the Airport for the long homeward journey.

The trip ticked many of the travel location boxes for me, leaving me with a wish to return some of them. New Zealand has a particular appeal and I probably will try to plan a longer trip there.

Neil



**Services at
Saint James Church - Aston Abbotts**

March-April 2014

30th March	4.00pm	Mothering Sunday	Tea in Church Room
	4.30pm	Service	Rev. Philip Derbyshire
6th April	6.00pm	Evensong	Rev. Philip Derbyshire
13th April	10.30am	Communion	Rev. Peter Binns
		Palm Sunday	
20th April	10.30am	Communion	Rev. Roger Hale
		Easter Sunday	
27th April	10.30am	Communion	Rev. Roger Hale
4th May	6.00pm	Evensong	Rev. Philip Derbyshire

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ASTON ABBOTTS THEATREGOERS 2014

Listed are the pairs of 'press tickets' available for each of the shows shown below. The tickets are free. Usually you will be also offered a free programme and a free drink at half time.

If you would like to request tickets for any or all of these shows then let me know by emailing me at johnhardcastle@me.com or put a note through my door at Marloes, Lines Hill with a contact phone number.

The draw for tickets is made two weeks prior to the date of the show when I will let those who expressed interest know whether they have been successful or not.

John Hardcastle

WATERSIDE THEATRE	Date & Time
THE TWO WORLDS OF CHARLIE F	THU 13 MAR 7.30PM
THE JOHNNY CASH ROADSHOW	FRI 21 MAR 7.30PM
SING-A-LONG-A GREASE	SAT 22 MAR 7.30PM
FAME	MON 24 MAR 7.30PM
NINA KRISTOFFERSON'S BILLIE HOLIDAY STORY	TUE 1 APR 7.30PM
NABUCCO	FRI 4 APR 7.30PM
AN EVENING OF BURLESQUE	SAT 5 APR 8PM
DIAL M FOR MURDER	TUE 8 APR 7.30PM
HEAR THE PEOPLE SING	TUE 22 APR 7.30PM
BUDDY	MON 28 APR 7.30PM

Aston Abbotts Telephone List

100 Club	David Gray	07935 414495
630 Club	Andy Bystra	681690
AVDC	Switchboard	585858
Baby & Toddlers Group	Kim Gayler	681123
Bingo	Pam Dixon	681626
	Sondra Dickason	682249
Book Club	John Hardcastle	688070
Bus Enquiries	Travel line	0870 6082608
Buses	L & S	415468
Chronicle Advertising	Phil Corrigan	688191
Chronicle Distribution	Marisa Abel Smith	681411
	Zandy Ayres	682419
Chronicle Editorial	Phil Corrigan	
Church Mowing Rota	Gordon Kemp	681763
Church Room Hire	Tracy Hinds	688479
Citizens Advice	Aylesbury	0870 1264056
Bucks County Council	Switchboard	395000
County Councillor	Netta Glover	688357
Dial-A-Ride		330088
District Councillor	Peter Cooper	681250
Doctor - emergency	(out of hours)	331511
Fete Coordinator	Deirdre Whyte	681685
G.N.O.M.E.S.	Carol Spooner	681544
Hospital	Stoke Mandeville	315000
Ladies Club	Shirley Ford	681865
Member of Parliament	John Bercow MP	714240
Milkman	Ron Miller Dairies	482838
Mobile Library	Buckingham	01280 813229
NHS Direct	24 hr Advice Line	0845 4647
Parish Clerk	Paul Bruton	682322
Parish Council Leader	Peter Shorrocks	681260
Police Emergencies		999 or 112
Police Non-Emergency		0845 8505505
Police	Wing Police Station	396163/4
Railways	Chiltern Railways	0870 5165165
Ramblers Club	Colin Higgs	681343
Rector	Rev Philip Derbyshire	01525 240287
Refuse Collection	Enquiries	585510
Royal British Legion	Alan Jones	682366
Royal Oak	Teri & Gary Moulton	681262
RSPCA	Enquiries	08705 555999
Scouts	Nikki Reeve	681372
Whist	Colin Higgs	681343
Wingrave Pre School	Kelly Targell	681127
Wingrave Post Office	PO Only	682964
Wingrave Post Office	Stores	681696
Wingrave School	Office	681436

Please advise of any errors or omissions

The neighbourhood policing team works on issues identified by local residents and businesses.

To contact them call

101

This is a non-emergency number.

Alternatively, email them on:

WingNorthNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

WINGRAVE POST OFFICE AND STORES

21 Winslow Road, Wingrave

SHOP 681696 POST OFFICE 682964

Fresh food available to order: Fruit and Vegetables - order by Wednesday, collect on Friday/Saturday Bread baked fresh daily - Large White Split Tin, Small White Farmhouse, Large and Small Wholemeal, French Sticks and Baguettes Pastries on Saturday and Sunday - Croissants, Pain au Chocolat. Pain au Raisin

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£20 per hour for non-residents

(Plus metered electricity - a returnable deposit of
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Please note that an additional hour over and above
the period of the event must be booked to cover
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YOUR PARISH COUNCIL

Peter Shorrocks (Chairman)
Oak Farm House – 681260

Paul Bruton (Parish Clerk)
51 The Green – 682322

Colin Higgs (Vice Chairman)
6 Wingrave Road – 681343

Richard Clarke
Maplewood, The Green – 681007

Judy Hardcastle
Marloes, Lines Hill – 688070

Kate Curry
2 Norduck Cottages, Moat Lane – 681137

Bob Carvey
12 The Green – 681053

District Councillor
Peter Cooper
Brewhouse Lane, Rowsham – 681250

County Councillor
Netta Glover - 688357

Parochial Church Council

Rev. Philip Derbyshire 01525 240287

Caroline Abel Smith 681001

–Churchwarden

April Curnow 707833

- Churchwarden

Colin Higgs 681343

Ann Goodman 681763

Anita Parker 681325

Gordon Kemp 681763

Caroline Lane Sec 681373

David Gray 07935414495

- Treasurer

Gay Walker 688632

Some dates for the diary

May 24th/25th Flower Festival St James Church, and hopefully open gardens.

July 26th/27th Village Fete & Festival weekend

July 12th Summer Ball

If you would like to sponsor an element of the flower festival please contact Colin.

630 Club

Meets every Saturday in the Royal Oak at 6.30 pm. New members very welcome. Contact Andy Bystra if you need an introduction.

GNOMES

(Girls Night Out Men Excluded Sorry) meet, usually in the Royal Oak, every Tuesday 8 pm onwards - all Ladies very welcome - GNOMES specialise in intelligent conversation over a glass of something.

Baby sitters/dog sitters available

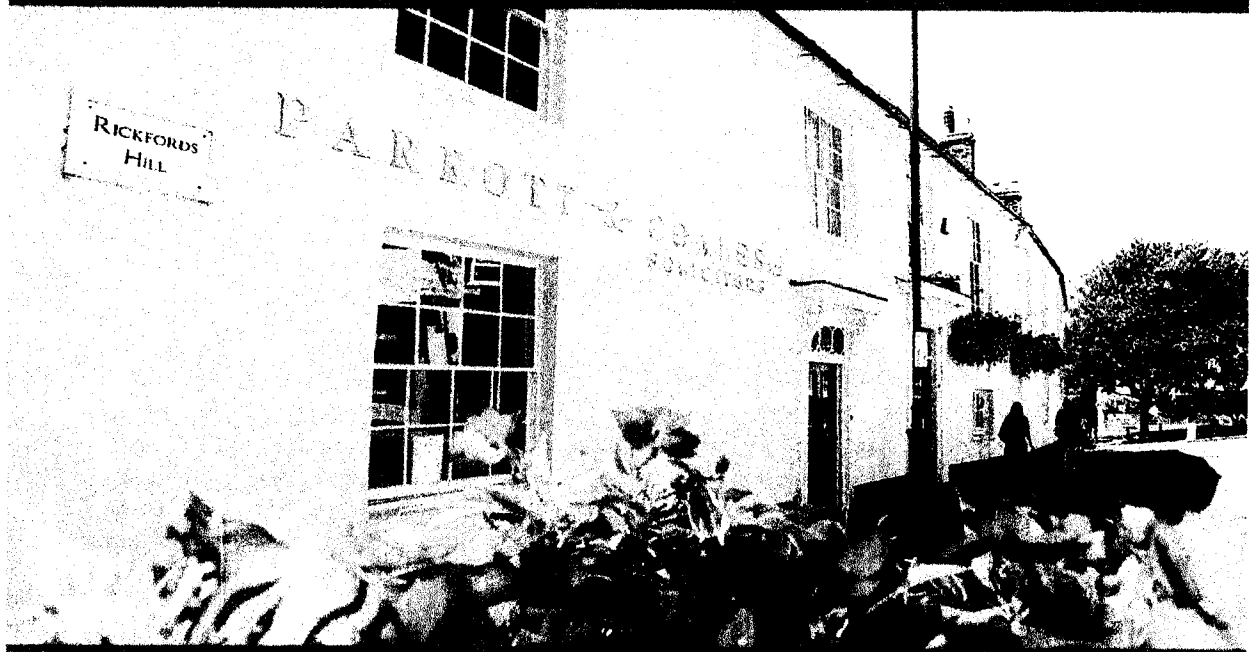
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ASTON ABBOTTS

WATCHTOWER

Hot Stuff

Congratulations to The Lissan restaurant at The Carpenters Arms in Stewkley. After several previous attempts they finally managed to defeat Dave Lewis.

Dave ordered his usual vegetable thaal "as hot as you can make it". When it arrived he took a big mouthful. There was a sudden silence. "That's hot!" gasped Dave, his eyes squinting. Within 30 seconds he had gone bright red. Grabbing his lager and lime he swallowed deeply. Manfully, he took another few mouthfuls. Sweat beaded on his forehead and he started coughing uncontrollably. Determined not to be beaten he stuffed half a Naan bread into his mouth.

Then in a fit a bravado he took yet another mouthful of the thaal. His face froze, a tear appeared in his eye, and he put down his spoon. The defeat was total, and it became apparent that Dave Lewis was no longer capable of speech.

Winner: The Lissan Restaurant, Stewkley

STOP PRESS - Is the Bypass Back?

Longer-term residents will remember that around the time the Bull and Butcher was sold a rumour went around that there was to be an Aston Abbots "bypass" - a road running up just East of the village 100 yards behind the Royal Oak and The Bull and Butcher. Everybody was very worried about developers trying to build infill between the new road and the existing houses.

Well, there are rumours that the idea is back and apparently the Council have seen a proposal. This could become a hot topic at the forthcoming Annual Parish Meeting. Obviously this is nowhere near a formal application stage, but we found a very brief overview of the developer's concept on the Council website at www.tinyurl.com/aabypass

What's In A Name?

After last month's back page rant about the naming of inanimate objects I was aghast to read in the same issue that Mr Phillips had named his shed 'Nathan'. What is going on? A Trig Point named 'Trevor'. A shed named Nathan. Whatever next in Aston Abbots? A church named Charlotte? Nooooo... please!

I am reminded that when I bought my first brand new car (a Mk1 Fiesta XR2, if you must know) I announced proudly on its maiden voyage that I thought I might call it 'Katie'. My wife immediately demanded to know why I had chosen a female name, the brittle icy edge to her voice conveying the certainty that I had just dug myself a hole from which there was little chance of escape.

This leads me to ponder the effect on Mr Phillips' domestic happiness should he have been less careful and not named his shed 'Nathan', but 'Natalie'? In my experience an innocent sunny Sunday afternoon's allotmenting being announced as, 'I am just popping down to Natalie for a while' could cause irreparable relationship damage!

It's a dangerous world out there! Be careful chaps.

How Observant Are You?

Hands up! Who failed to spot that I misspelt 'Watchtower' the last 3 months. Come on, my wife's not the only one, surely???

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