

# THE CHRONICLE

Aston Abbotts Parish Magazine – May 2014



## **ALPACAS AT ABBOTTS VIEW FARM OPEN DAY**



Don't forget!

### **ASTON ABBOTTS ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

The Village Hall — Wednesday 14th May at 8pm

# EDITORIAL

THE CHRONICLE

Issue 342

May 2014

Here we go again, sitting in front of a blank page and reaching for the Vin Rouge for a shot of inspiration.

Usual thanks to our customary contributors for their excellent contributions and some new ones, although as seems to be the fashion all operating under pseudonyms. But to all who read this, (does anybody read this?) If you have a view that you would like aired let me have, it can either be as its own article or included in our new feature from the June issue "Room 101" or "what raises your blood pressure" can be anonymous or attributed, let me have your pet hates.

Our travel correspondent Chesh, has a piece on a recent trip to France, he's fast becoming Aston Abbotts version of Alan Whicker! (Young readers ask your parents)

A good time to remind you all of what's coming up in what hopefully will be another busy village summer.

The fete on 26<sup>th</sup> July, The Village Ball on 12<sup>th</sup> July, which raised a fantastic £2,340 for Macmillan Cancer Support last year.

And of course a reminder of Chris Phillips excellent idea to plant poppies throughout the Village to commemorate the start of WW1, I know from a conversation with David that it's intended to do so in the Churchyard. I was driving in Portugal recently and the roadside wild poppies were amazing, let's hope we can replicate this, see the new Church Diary "Church Matters"

For my own part I'll be visiting some of the memorials in Northern France and Belgium en route to some classic motor racing at Spa Francorchamps. I have visited these sites in the past and they are extremely moving. Perhaps this is a good opportunity to revisit Simon Guys research of several years ago of those from the village that lost their lives in this conflict.

Phil Corrigan

## Snippets & Miscellanea

### **Royal Oak News**

#### **May Guest beers**

London Pride

Doom

Trelawney

Roast lunches every Sunday,  
recommended that you book.

I am thinking of running a trip on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup>  
November to the London – Brighton Old Crocks  
Race (I think they're called Veteran Ed)

If you are interested please let me know

Colin

### **Church Flowers**

3rd Colin

10<sup>th</sup> Colin

17<sup>th</sup> Ann

24<sup>th</sup> Ann

31<sup>st</sup> Donated

### **Dog Fouling**

Will the person who is allowing  
their dog to foul the grass verges  
outside the Church and Village  
Hall, please pick it up.

These areas are hand mown, the  
dog bin is on the Green.

Colin

### **CLEANING**

3rd Caroline L & Colin

10th Ann & Gordon

17th Alex & Anita

24th Gay & Colin

### **MOWING**

3rd Peter Curry

10th Adam

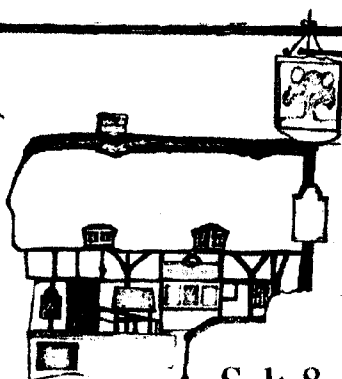
17th Chris Looker

24th Bob Bean

31<sup>st</sup> Gordon

# 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 May

Thursday 1st	Coffee Shop	Village Hall	10 -12 noon
	Whist Drive	Village Hall	7.30pm
Sunday 4th	Rambling Club	meet Apsley Guise	2pm
	Evensong	St James	6pm
Monday 5 <sup>th</sup> & 26 <sup>th</sup>	Bank Holiday		
	Bucks Rail Centre Quainton		
	Steam Gala & Model railway		
	College lake Marsworth reservoir walks		
	Leighton Buzzard Narrow Gauge Railway		
Thurs 8 <sup>th</sup>	Coffee Shop	Village Hall	10 – 12 noon
	Bingo		7.30pm
Sunday 11 <sup>th</sup>	Village Footpath Walk	The Green	2pm
Tues 13 <sup>th</sup>	Mobile Library	The Green	10.30 am
Wed 14 <sup>th</sup>	Annual Parish Meeting	Village Hall	8pm
Thurs 15 <sup>th</sup>	Coffee Shop	Village Hall	10 - 12 noon
	Whist Drive		7.30pm
Thurs 22 <sup>nd</sup>	European Elections	Village Hall	7am – 10pm
Wed 28 <sup>th</sup>	Parish Council	Village Hall	7.30pm
Sat 31 <sup>st</sup>	Bus Pass trip to Watford 10 am bus		
Sat 24 <sup>th</sup> & sun 25 <sup>th</sup>	Flower Festival / open gardens	St James	

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## EASTER TIME

What a spring, I only wished Alex & I could have enjoyed a season like this when we were lambing sheep. It really has been a perfect time, there has been grass to graze all winter keeping the ewes in good condition, followed by perfect lambing weather. This has been followed by early growth encouraging milk production in the ewes so keeping the lambs full of both milk and sunshine, the ideal combination.

I have just enjoyed four days in the West of Ireland with my two sons who live and work over there, one in Galway and one in Kerry. Although it is generally milder in climate the vegetation is behind us here in Aston Abbots. In Ireland the Blackthorn is only just in bloom and, as yet, the hawthorn and most trees are bare of leaves. However among many other interesting birds I saw lots of Sandmartins, some Swallows and House Martins. In Aston Abbots Swallows don't usually arrive until 22<sup>nd</sup> April so we are a week or so behind them.

Will we hear the cuckoo this year? I doubt it. The cuckoo used to be common here, arriving, again from Africa round about 28<sup>th</sup> April. It is several years now since I heard a cuckoo in Aston Abbots and I fear I shall never hear one again in Bucks. Friends of ours in Leicestershire also have experienced four or five years with no cuckoos. I find it very sad that an icon of spring and part of our folk law is no longer with us.

“The cuckoo comes in April  
He sings his song in May  
In the middle of June  
He changes his tune  
In July he flies away”

I was taught that by my mother, meaningless to children nowadays!

So arriving back home from Ireland what struck me, as usual, was how green we are here. The west of Ireland has thousands of acres of very poor land producing very little, one part is known as the wet desert, a few small sheep dotted over the barren hillside and very few trees on any worth. To me fertile land, well farmed, with flowers and blossom in all the villages is really beautiful.

So this month's star prize:-

- A withy pear tree at Burstons full of blossom seen against the blue sky.
- The gentle green of the Larch trees up Norduck drive just coming into leaf
- Cherry blossom everywhere
- The few cowslips in the village orchard at their very best just now, and they are increasing each year.
- One particular Magnolia at Wing.
- Even the roadside Dandelions look lovely.

You choose your own “Star Prize” I'll go for England in Spring.

Peter Knight

# Bank Holidays and BBQs in the garden!

This May at The Unicorn starts and ends with a Bank Holiday and also heralds the start of the BBQ season! Warmer, lighter evenings mean there's more time 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.

We look forward to welcoming you to the Unicorn whenever you visit.

## May

- Saturday 3rd - First BBQ
- 5th Bank Holiday Monday - Quiz
- Wednesday 7th - Bridge Club
- Friday 9th - Live Music Three Bar Fire
- Saturday 10th BBQ 6-9pm
- Monday 12th - Quiz
- Tuesday 13th - Folk Music
- Wednesday 14th - Bridge Club
- Saturday 17th BBQ 6-9pm
- Monday 19th - Quiz
- Wednesday 21st - Bridge Club
- Saturday 24th BBQ 6-9pm
- 26th Bank Holiday Monday - Quiz
- Wednesday 28th - Bridge Club
- Friday 30th - Dinner & Jazz
- Saturday 31st BBQ 6-9pm

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**Monday Night is Quiz night**  
The Unicorn Quiz 8pm - 10pm  
Why not bring a team?

**Wednesday Night is Bridge Night**  
Beginners welcome.

**Saturday Brunch -**  
Start the weekend with the newspapers  
and a Full English served from 10.30am

**Saturday BBQ 6-9pm**

**Sundays - Best of British Roasts**  
12pm - 4pm Booking strongly advised

**Bar Snacks** available always!

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**Please Note**  
We are currently closed between  
3-5pm, Monday -Thursday





## Village Orchard

Everyone associated with the Village Orchard would like to thank David Brandon and the Towle Twins for collecting the Trig Point from Stewkley and installing it perfectly in the Orchard.

We shall now repaint it.

## Peter Knight.

Seems an appropriate place for the following (Ed)

## The Village Green

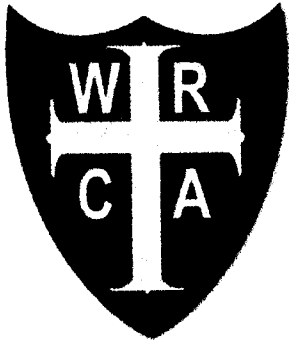
Some years ago there was a need of a volunteer to mow the Green. Up steps village hero and all round good countryman Peter Knight. He said he would do it for a fee, and that was an annual payment of One Old Penny.

The village accepted and typical of the ungrateful society that we live in Peter has never been paid for the last eighteen years nor has he had any public thanks.

So now is the time just to say thank you Peter, the Green is an essential part of the village and it is always kept in good condition.

So, if you see Peter around just say thanks to him, thanks for his perseverance and remind him that he can collect the 18 old pence, we as village owe him , from the Chairman of the Parish Council, Peter Shorrock.

Scoop, your village reporter



# 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.wingraiveschool.org](http://www.wingraiveschool.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

I very much hope that some of us watched the Princess Royal on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> April Countryfile programme on BBC1. The Princess has a reputation for plain speaking; she is also like her mother, the Queen, a country woman right down to her muddy gumboots. So her assessment on how to proceed with the battle against bovine T.B. although maybe lacking subtlety and diplomacy was smack on the button; and shall strike a chord with the farmers suffering under this appalling rural disaster. Here is a woman so well read and travelled that she can stand up in front of 400 farmers, as she did at this year's Oxford Farming Conference, and lectured common sense to all the delegates who listened intently. Good on her. Here is a woman that farms in her own right at Gatcombe, Gloucestershire and who has lost 14 almost irreplaceable White Park endangered cattle to T.B. in the last 2 years, equating to thirty percent of her herd. So when she suggests that we ought to change course and consider gassing badgers instead of shooting them, as was the practice up until a few years ago, people start to sit up and listen. While the decision not to rollout the badger cull any further, has more to do with politics than animal welfare; there's one significant question mark over the effectiveness of shooting, this gives weight to investigate other methods of control. Given the badgers are much more difficult to locate and cull when they are at large at night, than when they are in their setts during the day, using poisoned gas however distasteful to many people must be on the agenda.

Some estimates suggests T.B. hotspot areas like the South West are where one in three badgers are infected with bovine T.B. Vaccination may protect T.B. free badgers from contracting the disease, it will do nothing for those already infected. Then this hard working lady, Patron of 50 charities, went on to deal with appalling cruelty to horses. Unbelievably people dump horses to starve when they are of no further use. As in Bristol this winter a group of horses were rescued from one industrial site and their owners had moved on. Surprise Surprise, a pony can be bought for as little as £5, what a terrible situation. The Princess Royal suggested that as in France, if there was any value left in the carcass the animals would of course be better looked after. A contentious view but I am sure that many of us have eaten horse meat in France, probably without knowing. Just look at the price of scrap metal at today's high prices, you see very few abandoned cars these days?

Life on the farm for livestock farmers is not a walk in the park, birth and death are a daily occurrence, and not the Blue Peter image we are often fed.

Thank God for the excellent Adam Henson and the caring Kate Humble on 'Lambing Live'.

James

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# ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

## 2014

THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE ON  
WEDNESDAY 14<sup>th</sup> MAY AT 8PM IN THE VILLAGE HALL.

### AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. To approve minutes of meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2013
3. Matters arising
4. County Council, District Council and Police reports
5. Annual report from the Parish Council Chairman
6. Village Plan
7. Neighbourhood Plan Report
8. Village Activity Reports
9. Village Hall
10. The Chronicle
11. Fete 2013 and 2014 – Distribution of profits
12. A.O.B.

# *ASTON ABBOTTS*

FABULOUSLY BRITISH

## *SUMMER BALL*

IN AID OF  
MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT

*SATURDAY 12<sup>th</sup> JULY 2014*

*ENTERTAINMENT BY*

*Huggy Flares*

(BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND)

*PIMMS ON ARRIVAL*

*SUMMER BUFFET*

*BAR*

*CHARITY AUCTION*

*BLACK TIE*

*6:30 PM START*

*1:00 AM CARRIAGES*

*THE FIRS FIELD  
WINGRAVE ROAD  
ASTON ABBOTTS*

*TICKETS £55*

*CONTACT*

*FRANK MCMANUS 07771 882412*

*JOHN WHYTE 07988 001834*

## ALLOTMENT DIARY

As I write, the first weeds are beginning to prick the surface of my allotment, spoiling the uniformity of the tilled soil. However, the first potatoes and onions are also making their appearance; while in my greenhouse my leeks and tomatoes are doing well (but not yet any of my other seeds: I am still waiting for my courgettes, peppers, cucumbers and brassicas to get going).

I haven't been watching it, but a new programme has just started on the telly, called "the Big Allotment Challenge" – obviously hoping to cash in on the success of programmes like The Great British Bake-off and The Great British Sewing Bee. The contestants, I understand are a nicely matched group of eccentrics, including a yoga teacher who sings to her plants, another lady who uses llama dropping as manure, and a pair of blokes with magnificent beards. However, just as most people prefer to watch other people cooking on television to doing any themselves, it seems that the majority of British people are armchair gardeners. A survey commissioned by the German company, Kärcher, found that over 50% could not distinguish between a weed and a shrub, and two fifths failed to identify a tulip! Interestingly, it also found that gardening was age-related: the average age at which most people started to take an interest in gardening was 42. About 60% of gardens of those taking part in the survey were described as being "out of shape", and 37% admitted that they were terrible gardeners!

There is an old superstition that if a May-bush flowers before May, then a hard freeze will follow. I hope there is no basis for this: may has been flowering since early April! I suspect it was simply a cynical reflection on the vagaries of British weather.

I read a fascinating article in my paper this month, which I will share with you. It concerned Pythagoras and beans. It seems he was on the ball when it came to measuring right-angled triangles, but he was totally wrong when it came to beans. He and his followers did not eat beans because they thought that beans had souls! He even put forward the argument that human beings are made of the same material as beans, and therefore eating beans is the same as "eating the heads off ones parents"! Incredibly, it may even be the case that his death was linked to his views on beans: he was being pursued by would-be assassins when he came to the edge of a field of beans. Rather than cross the field he is alleged to have said he would rather die than do so, and was accordingly slain at the edge of the field!

One source of Pythagoras's views on beans was Aristotle, who wrote that beans looked like testicles or the gates of Hell. (No, I don't know how they can have looked like both, either!) He also alleged that beans smelled of human semen or blood spilled when someone was murdered. (Ditto). He also said that beans were of a "windy or breathy nature" – and here I can see where he is coming from.

The reason for these interesting reflections on the beliefs of the ancient Greeks was due to a recently published report in the Cambridge Journal, which showed that a daily serving of beans can cut bad cholesterol by about 5%, and so can be an important factor in reducing the likelihood of heart disease. Unsurprisingly, it was said that the British were not eating enough beans. The report even addressed the one issue that Pythagoras did get right about beans ; they stated that that the windiness associated with beans and, (as my paper put it), the "associated consequences" diminish the more regularly one eats beans.

Had this research been around in Pythagoras's time he might have lived more healthily – and longer!

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## Letters Page

### VILLAGE HALL WINDOW PAINTING - VOLUNTEERS WANTED

At the open meeting earlier this year several people said they would be happy to help with small jobs - well, here is one! I am going to paint the external windows and front door in the next few weeks, bookings and weather permitting - ideally before the church flower festival/village open gardens at the end of May. I'll have a look at our list, but if you weren't at the meeting and would like to help please email me or give me a ring. It will have to be done in stages - sanding, primer/undercoat and gloss finish, so you can do a little or a lot, as convenient. Paint and brushes supplied. Possibly also the railings, if a good wash doesn't improve matters. Thank you!

Caroline Lane  
[carolinelane@btinternet.com](mailto:carolinelane@btinternet.com)  
01296 681373

Sir

I am becoming increasingly frustrated at the letters page, does nobody submit letters under their own names? Are there not more important issues that affect the village than dung heaps and sheds called Fred! Surely it is time for a return to more serious debate and not hiding behind silly names.

Yours

Hugh Moreless

The Green



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## **Abbotts View Farm Open Day**

The first open day at Abbotts View Farm drew many visitors to see the alpacas, piglets, and miniature ponies.

Abbotts View Farm was constructed in 2012 on land next to Moat Farm with the intention of starting an alpaca farm. Alpacas, which come from South America and resemble small llamas, have been a familiar sight around Aston Abbotts for many years due to the previous farming and rearing activities by Liz Barlow and Ivan Greenaway.

Many children came along and they were clearly thrilled to see the animals and even offer a little feed to the alpacas.

Jo's Coffee Shop did a brisk trade with its drinks and home-made cakes, whilst several stalls offered crafts and gifts. Naturally there was an opportunity to buy some of the very soft and luxurious Alpaca wool.

If you missed the Open Day there will be a second one on Sunday 8th June between 11 am and 4 pm. The farm have some baby alpacas due in May so hopefully these may be on view then.

This month's Chronicle front cover was taken at the open day and you can see a couple more pictures on the News page at the Aston Abbotts website.

For more information about Abbotts View Farm see their website at [www.abbottsvialpacas.co.uk](http://www.abbottsvialpacas.co.uk)

## **Annual Parish Meeting Minutes**

Just a reminder that if you are planning on coming to the public Annual parish Meeting on May 14th you might want to read last year's minutes beforehand. These were printed in last month's Chronicle and they can also be found on the Aston Abbotts website - [www.aston-abbotts.co.uk](http://www.aston-abbotts.co.uk) - under the Community menu.

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More from Peter Knight

Sometimes it's quite a pleasure to be proved wrong. I am writing this paragraph two days after the main piece. It is Easter Monday 21<sup>st</sup> April, this morning Alex saw and heard a cuckoo flying over our garden. She called me and the cuckoo flew round the Vicarage over the Abbey and back to the Vicarage, calling regularly. It seemed to me to be saying "here I am look listen and learn". Incidentally a cuckoo looks very like a hawk in flight.

This afternoon a second pleasure, I saw a House Martin flying over our garden. Tomorrow, who knows, a Swallow?

Will I hear the cuckoo again this year? Will you hear it?

Change this months Star Prize, it's now that Easter Monday Cuckoo.

Peter

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# ASTON ABBOTTS THEATREGOERS

The Waterside Theatre has kindly offered Press Tickets for the shows listed below. The pairs of tickets are free. You may also be offered a programme and a drink during the interval.

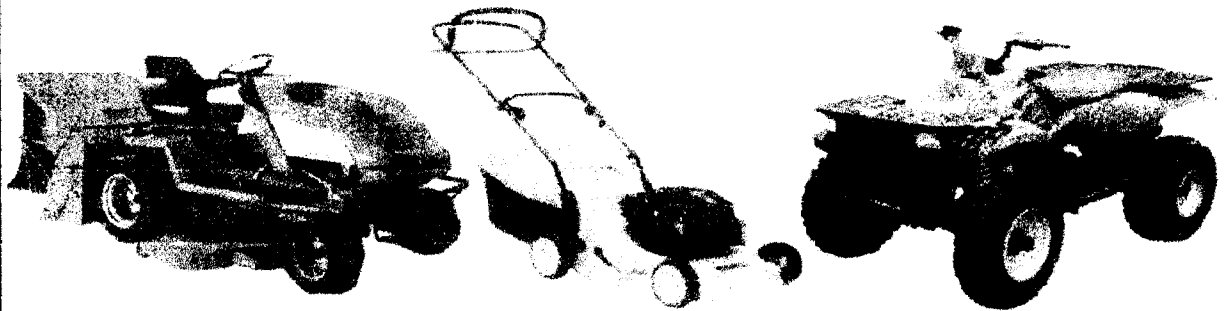
If you would like to enter the draw for tickets then email me at [johnhardcastle@me.com](mailto:johnhardcastle@me.com) or put a note through my door at Marloes, Lines Hill. The draw will take place two weeks prior to the performance. If you wish you can send the editor a short review to [editor@aachronicle.co.uk](mailto:editor@aachronicle.co.uk)

<b>Show</b>	<b>Date &amp; Time</b>
<b>TAP FACTORY</b>	WED 7 MAY 7.30PM
<b>LET'S HANG ON</b>	THU 8 MAY 7.30PM
<b>THE TWIST</b>	THU 22 MAY 7.30PM
<b>SCOOBY-DOO: THE MYSTERY OF THE PYRAMID</b>	THU 5 JUN 6.30PM
<b>THRILLER</b>	MON 16 JUN 7.30PM
<b>ROCK OF AGES</b>	MON 30 JUN 7.30PM
<b>ROY ORBISON AND FRIENDS</b>	FRI 11 JUL 7.30PM
<b>EVITA</b>	MON 14 JUL 7.30PM
<b>ANNIE GET YOUR GUN</b>	TUE 22 JUL 7.30PM
<b>APRIL IN PARIS</b>	TUE 5 AUG 7.30PM
<b>ONE MAN, TWO GUVNORS</b>	MON 11 AUG 7.30PM
<b>WHAT THE LADYBIRD HEARD</b>	TUE 26 AUG 2PM
<b>A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM</b>	WED 10 SEP 7.30PM
<b>BUGLE BOY</b>	SAT 27 SEP 7.30PM

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# The Arty Bits .....Books.....Music....Theatre & Travel

## Aston Abbotts Book Club

At our April meeting we discussed **The Kite Runner**, by Afghan-American author Khaled Hosseini. It tells the story of Amir, a young boy from Kabul whose closest friend is Hassan, his father's young Hazara servant. It is a sweeping story of family, love, and friendship, set against a backdrop of tumultuous events, from the fall of Afghanistan's monarchy through the Soviet military intervention, the exodus of refugees to Pakistan and the United States, and the rise of the Taliban regime. Themes of guilt and redemption feature prominently in the novel, with a pivotal scene depicting an act of violence against Hassan that Amir fails to prevent. The latter half of the book centres on Amir's attempts to atone for this transgression by rescuing Hassan's son over two decades later.

This book produced a lively discussion. Everyone had found it a gripping read, though there were mixed feelings about the central character, Amir, who eventually tried to atone for an act in childhood which had indirectly dictated the direction of the rest of his life.

It is interesting to note that 'kite running' is a real sport, sadly outlawed by the Taliban when they took control of Afghanistan. The kite flying string that is used to fly these kites is coated with powdered glass. Kite flyers entangle the string of their flying kites with each other and try to cut the string of the other. The winner's kite remains flying while the loser's kite is cut loose, drifting free with the wind until it falls to the ground. Kite running is the practice of running after these cut kites to try and capture them when they come down.



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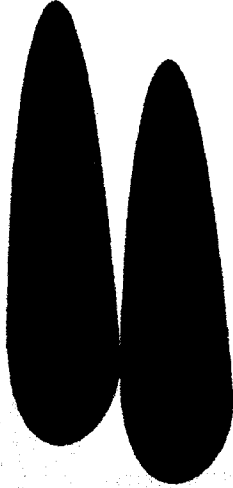
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## Theatre

### **An Evening of Burlesque**

We gratefully took up the prize of two tickets to the above at the Waterside Theatre on Saturday 5th April 2013.

It consisted of a series of light hearted risqué sketches which also included audience participation at a couple of stages.

The fact that it was not part of a story did nothing to spoil the entertainment

It was a pity that the theatre appeared only half full, but those who attended, including at least three hen parties, appeared to embrace the spirit.

Ian & Diana Leeming

### **Cats in Hats: Nina Kristofferson's Billie Holiday story**

Nina Kristofferson's 'Billie Holiday' at the Waterside on 1 April was a treat. Working with five cool musician-type 'cats' (she had the language) in suits and fedoras, she sang and twitched her way through two sets of classic jazz/blues, telling the story of Billie's life. Between songs we heard about a tough and deprived childhood, rape at age 10, abusive adult relationships and deepening addictions. From asking the audience for a light, she moved on to simulated swigs from a bottle, a line of coke and finally shooting up on stage – grim stuff and well portrayed. But we had the gardenia and the wonderful music. Creating a cabaret atmosphere at the Waterside would have been difficult even to a full house (which sadly it wasn't), but Nina gave it a good shot – coming down to dance with two sporting members of the audience for Lover Man, draping herself over the grand piano, some dry ice for the tobacco fumes. I'm not too familiar with original Holiday, but I loved Nina's delivery, from a belting All of Me to a shivering Strange Fruit. The band were terrific, led by a fatherly David Newton on piano, with great sounds also from double bass, percussion, sax and trumpet. Lovely. I bought the CD.

Caroline Lane



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## Dial M For Murder

When Sondra was lucky enough to win the ticket draw for Waterside Theatre to see Dial M for Murder, she generously asked if I'd like to join her and I was happy to accept as I had a vague memory of enjoying the film version many years ago but no clear memory of the story. After parking in the convenient carpark across from the theatre we arrived in good time to collect our tickets and free programme from the friendly staff. Our seats were in a good position in the stalls and we were surprised that the theatre was only about half full.

The stage set was styled in the 1950s, in the fashionable lounge of a ground floor flat, and the scenes were very simply changed by revolving the stage and moving a curtain around it. From the start we were drawn into a mood of tension and anticipation by the lighting, music and sound effects.

As the storyline evolved it held our attention to such an extent that we both commented later that we had neither of us noticed the first time when the stage turned to alter the set. The five actors in the play were well cast and the dialogue was so intense and enthralling it focused all our attention.

So who was the baddy and who the intended victim? This was quite quickly established, along with the motive and how the deed was to be done. It seemed the outcome was simple and inevitable. But, of course, things didn't go to plan and, with lighter moments of humour quickly changing to fear and uncertainty, the drama deepened and the tension heightened.

In the interval as we enjoyed our free drinks, we had the opportunity to discuss the story so far and try to work out how things would turn out. A friendly couple who had been sat beside us, said they were on their first visit to Waterside and were enjoying the play and also couldn't decide how it was going to end. I asked what they thought of the theatre, and they said they were pleasantly surprised with the modern style, the comfortable seating and the amount of leg room, and they were looking forward to coming again.

When the call came for the second half, we returned to our seats wondering what would be the outcome. The complex twists and turns kept us guessing right up to the end and both Sondra and I rated the production as a good 9 out of 10. Thanks to the Chronicle for a splendid evening out.

Sondra Dickason & Pam Dixon

## Fame

Annie and I were lucky enough to win the tickets in the draw to go and see Fame at The Waterside on Monday evening.

I wasn't sure what to expect given that I used to watch the television series of Fame in the 80s (for those that remember it with piano playing Bruno with his amazing hair!)

The story to the stage show follows students attending a Performing Arts School in New York - it was a modern, quite hard portrayal of life for the students, particularly Carmen, played by Jodie Steele who was absolutely superb.

The show was fantastic - the dancing truly amazing, Annie and I were transfixed.

Definitely worth a visit.

Jane and Annie

## Aston Abbotts Theatregoers

During February to the end of April this year the following took advantage of the 'Press Tickets' offered by the Waterside Theatre.

Bob Carvey, Lol Hines, Judy Hardcastle, Sue Wheatley, Sally Turnam, Linda O'Sullivan, Melanie Smith, Jane Copping, Caroline Lane, Kate Curry, Ian & Diana Leeming, Sondra Dickason & Pam Dixon.

I hope the Waterside continues with their kind offer.

*John Hardcastle*

## **I like going to France and I like using the Tunnel**

It is very quick and efficient, 35 minutes and you are in France.

So it was the other day for no other reason I booked the Tunnel to go for lunch and to buy a new coffee maker. Yes, I know....

The journey there was uneventful especially since there had been a fatal accident on the M26 the day before. Unusually the train left 8 minutes late and the safety announcements happened about ten minutes into the trip. Strange?

So, the day in France went well, a trip to Cite Europe and then the coast road to Boulogne. Lunch was taken in Wimmereux at a restaurant called Carnot. Splendid Fish stew and then the phone beeped saying there was a text message. All the message said was if you want to defer your trip please call this number. I had no idea who it had come from or what it meant.

Back on the road twenty minutes later there was another text urging me to defer my trip since the check in for the Tunnel was swamped due to an 'Incident I tried calling the number and was told it was an unattainable number. So, what the hell! I made my way back from the south to the Tunnel on the motorway and turned onto the access road only to be met by stationary traffic probably a mile away from the check in booths. In fact there was also another stream of traffic converging from the north as well.

So it was a matter of waiting and waiting. The game became guessing how many yards forward we would go next time. Gradually we got so we could see the message board which said there was a train stuck in the tunnel. Then 400 metres away from check in lanes we were shunted off to the right to a holding area. So far this had taken about 1 1/2 hours. At the holding area we were issued with food packs and water and there were toilets available.

After 1/2 hour in the holding area we then got to the check in lanes and 20 minutes later had got to the terminal building for another wait. Then we were called to the pre boarding waiting area and eventually went to the train. Unusually we were put on a train that normally took buses. The departure time arrived and went and half an hour later we moved at a quite slow pace. A further 35 minutes later then we shuddered to a halt and the lights and air conditioning went out. The emergency lights came on and we waited.

There was an announcement by a French lady that was so fast that the only words we could pick up were 'ordered to stop by control' Some waited , some people were getting anxious, I slept . Eventually after 1 hour the lights came back on and we started to move at a normal pace and arrived back in Blighty.

I still like the Tunnel as a way of getting to France but that was the longest trip ever

To add insult to injury when I was in the Tunnel I went onto Google to find out what was happening and did not notice the phone was on French Orange network and that cost me £22 in data charges

Neil



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

**May-June 2014**

<b>4<sup>th</sup> May</b>	<b>6.00pm</b>	<b>Evensong</b>	<b>Rev. Philip Derbyshire</b>
<b>11<sup>th</sup> May</b>	<b>10.30am</b>	<b>Communion</b>	<b>Rev. Peter Binns</b>
<b>18<sup>th</sup> May</b>	<b>10.30am</b>	<b>Communion</b>	<b>Rev. Robert Wright</b>
<b>25<sup>th</sup> May</b>	<b>10.30am</b>	<b>Communion</b>	<b>Rev. David Bronnert</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> June</b>	<b>6.00pm</b>	<b>Evensong</b>	<b>Rev. Philip Derbyshire</b>
<b>8<sup>th</sup> June</b>	<b>10.30am</b>	<b>Communion</b>	<b>Rev. Peter Binns</b>
<b>15<sup>th</sup> June</b>	<b>10.30am</b>	<b>Communion</b>	<b>Rev. David Hemsley</b>
<b>22<sup>nd</sup> June</b>	<b>10.30am</b>	<b>Communion</b>	<b>Rev. Roger Hale</b>
<b>29<sup>th</sup> June</b>	<b>10.30am</b>	<b>At Stewkley</b>	<b>Rev. Philip Derbyshire</b>

**100 Club Draw April 2014**

**1st Prize, £50: Ken Rhodie**

**2nd prize, £10: Jackie Oliver**



# Church Matters

The diary of St. James's



The first event of the year, the Beetle Drive, was its usual riot of fun. Barely controlled by our master of ceremonies Reverend Phil assisted by wife Joy. In fact the only time it was even near quiet was after the sausage, mash and onion gravy supper was served. The winner was the Church of course (thanks to our chefs, helpers and you the participants, we raised £265) but John Dixon achieved the highest score of the evening.

Like everyone else we got the mower out and gave the grass its first cut of the spring. Thanks to our team the churchyard was very neat and tidy for the wedding of Jo Walker and Jane Hardcastle on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> April but there was as much greenery inside the church as out, with trees being imported for the occasion. Of particular note were the pedal powered rickshaws used to deliver the VIPs to the service. There is a rumour that John is acquiring one of these to keep himself fit and get him round the village in his dotage.

We have been digging over the 'wild area' on the north side of the Churchyard in preparation for seeding with wild flowers, grasses and poppies (the later in commemoration of the first World War 1914-1918). So if you see PCC members with more of a stoop than usual you know why.

Like most old buildings the Church is high maintenance and we are getting estimates for various repairs to the fabric. The boundary wall is in need of refurbishment, particularly at the north end. We also need to get a stone mason to carry out repairs to mullions, quoins and coping stones (there are some lovely terms for bits of old masonry) and the electricians need to be re-certified. All this work is only possible through the generosity of the late Doris Scutchings.

The weathercock on top of the tower is protected by a lightning conductor and the six church bells are hung in an iron and steel frame inside the louvered windows just below the parapet. Our surveyor has suggested that to prevent the campanologists hair standing on end should the tower be struck by lightning we should connect the frame to the conductor. Come to think of it one or two of our bell ringers have not got enough hair to worry about, but this is another little job on our list.

Colin is planning the next big event, the flower festival over the spring bank holiday weekend (24<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> May). He also hopes to persuade some proud Aston Abbotts gardeners to open to the public.

June is the time of year when we ask you to renew your membership of the 100 club, so look out for the forms that will be put through your door at the end of May.

The next Parochial Church Council meeting is the annual review on 29<sup>th</sup> April. So it will be over by the time you read this Chronicle but I must stop now and get to work on my presentation so that's all for now folks. Hope you enjoyed our new column.

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Dear friends,

Throughout history a number of people have had a special relationship with God---most people assume they are always men and probably always foreign!

Well Julian of Norwich was a woman and English and she wrote a brilliant book in the 15th.century called "Revelations of Divine Love". It arose from a very dangerous illness she had which led her to believe she was dying.

The background to her life was perilous--civil war, plague and famine took many lives at the end of the 14th.century and this was the atmosphere in which she lived. The Lady Julian, as she is often called, was an anchorite (she lived in a little brick shed attached to a Church and lived off the food offerings of people who came to her for spiritual advice which she dispensed through a little 'window on the world')

She received communion from another window facing into the chancel of the Church. Julian's revelations included an understanding of God as both our Father but also as 'motherly' and this truly shocked some at the time---and since.

But probably her most famous quote is: "all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well". Displaying her total trust in her creator and His Son Jesus Christ.

A good positive philosophy in any century. Her feast day is 8th.May.

God bless, Philip.

**Reverend Philip Derbyshire**  
**The Vicarage**  
**2 High Street North**  
**Stewkley**  
**Leighton Buzzard**  
**Lu7 OHH**

# Aston Abbotts Telephone List

100 Club	David Gray	07935 414495
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AVDC	Switchboard	585858
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	Sondra Dickason	682249
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12 The Green – 681053

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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 24<sup>th</sup>/25<sup>th</sup> Flower Festival St James Church, and hopefully open gardens.

July 26<sup>th</sup>/27<sup>th</sup> Village Fete & Festival weekend

July 12<sup>th</sup> 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.

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ASTON ABBOTTS

## WATCHTOWER

### Miscreant Flees Overseas?

An incident in Hong Kong airport has led to fears that the miscreant who vaulted over the barrier at Euston station toilets (see The Chronicle, March 2014) has now fled abroad.

Although at the time the man was traced to the Church Farm area of Aston Abbots, Hong Kong airport police now say that a man matching the villain's description recently broke into a Perspex toilet roll holder in their airport. They say they have no clue as to the reason for the man's action, but they believe him to be desperate.

A half-day later Australian police say someone they believe to be the same man was seen acting oddly in the immigration queue at Sydney airport. Police say he stood motionless for over an hour just staring forwards and downwards. They are anxious to trace the passenger ahead of him in the queue, who they have described a young skinny Goth girl, with multiple piercings, wearing a tiny, tight pair of shorts. A pool of saliva found on the floor where the man was standing has been removed for DNA analysis.

If anybody can throw light upon the identity of this man please contact The Chronicle and we will forward the information to the relevant international authorities.

Interpol

### Church Notice

Would gentlemen attending formal family occasions in the Church please ensure that their flies are done up.

This request applies particularly to former Chronicle editors, as well as to normal people.

Thank you.

### Stuck!

A Welshman from Nash's Farm has informed The Chronicle that he became stuck in the Channel Tunnel for over two hours!

Several of his friends commented that given his rotundity they were not at all surprised.



**FLACKWELL ELECTRONICS — PURVEYORS OF PLASMA SCREENS TO THE GENTRY**