

THE CHRONICLE

Aston Abbotts Parish Magazine



EDITORIAL

THE CHRONICLE

Issue 344

September 2014

Well here we go again, where did that last year go? I hope you all enjoyed what has been a good summer, and some of the various village events, well done to the organisers of the Fete Ball, and Orchard Picnic and for the funds raised for various good causes.

Also well done to Simon Guy and Richard Clarke for researching, producing and distributing the booklet on those from Aston Abbots that gave their lives in the First World War, it seemed right to use a picture of the poppies in the churchyard for the cover of this Chronicle, Cover photo courtesy of Phil Spooner.

More thanks to Simon Guy (he must have taken a break from his radio appearances to do all this work) for the story of Sidney Smith a gardener from Aston Abbots.

If you're considering visiting the poppy display at The Tower of London, I'd urge you to do so, I visited a couple of weeks ago it was very impressive, even more so considering there was still some 700,000 poppies to be added to the installation. Also handy for the various bars and restaurants in St Katherines Dock.

Pleased to say some new contributors this time, including possibly one of the youngest at 4, I know there's more talent out there so get writing and send it in to me, can be about anything that concerns or irritates you.

Finally I hope everything that was submitted over the summer has made it in to this Chronicle, apologies for several omissions from the July August edition.

Phil Corrigan

Snippets & Miscellanea

Royal Oak News

Diary Dates

Runner bean comp Sat 13th Sep

Pumpkin comp Fri 31st Oct

Roast lunches every Sunday,
recommended that you book.

Quote of the month

“After a heavy night her face goes all
rubbery....like a muppet”

Church Flowers

Sep 6 th	Ann
Sep 13 th	Ann
Sep 20 th	Anita
Sep 27 th	Anita
Oct 4 th	Harvest Decorations

Church Cleaning

Sep 6 th	Colin/Caroline L
Sep 13 th	Gordon/Ann
Sep 20 th	Alex/Anita
Sep 27 th	Colin/Gay
Oct 4 th	Colin/Caroline L

Mowing

Phil
Caroline L
Nigel
Marcus
Adam

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 September

Tues 2nd	Mobile Library	The Green	10.30am
Thurs 4th	Coffee Shop	Village Hall	10-12 noon
Sunday 7th	Rambling Club	Marston Gate MK	2pm
	Evensong	St James Church	6pm
Tues 9th	Aylesbury Vale Transport Meeting	Buckingham	2pm
	Bus & Train queries to Colin		
Thursday 11th	Coffee Shop	Village Hall	10-12
	Bingo	Village Hall	7.30pm
Thursday 18th	Coffee Shop	Village Hall	10-12
	Bingo	Village Hall	7.30pm
Tues 23rd	PCC Meeting	Village Hall	7.30pm
Wed 24th	Parish Council Meeting	Village Hall	7.30pm

Future Dates

Sunday 5th October Harvest Festival St James Church 5pm followed by supper and sale of produce in Village Hall.

Sunday 2nd November Coach outing for London Brighton Old Crocks Race (good luck Colin, Ed)

Fare £19. Depart The Green 7.30am. Book with Colin

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20th AUGUST 2014

It must be Autumn. Why – because the greater part of harvest has been completed and Alex and I have been to a ploughing match. Ever since I have been in Bucks the hope has been to get harvest done by the Bucks Show – something not easily achievable and dependent almost entirely on the weather and the crops grown. It is a very good year if harvest is over by the end of the first week in September, but if Spring Beans are in the field it could be October before you are done. The black crop on Lines Hill is Spring Beans, and yes they are meant to look black at harvest time – black, dead and dry. Beans also have a problem in that they have a tendency for the pods to dry out, crack and then the beans are easily shaken out by wind. It's not unheard of for 50% of the beans to be on the ground by the time the combine gets into the field - wonderful for wild birds but exasperating for the farmer.

(Another lesson from Peter, I cycled past this field thinking that doesn't look very healthy, Ed)

Why grow beans – well spring sown beans are a great cleaning crop allowing time for weed kill before they are sown. Beans need no fertilizer as they make their own nitrogen, a lot of which is left in the soil for the following crop which is usually wheat.

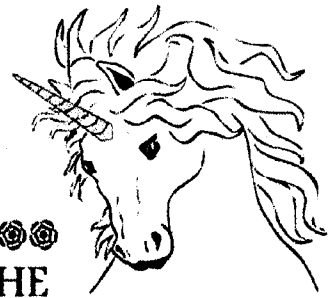
It's been a good harvest this year – yields of grain are very pleasing – the grain is plump and heavy but the price is terrible. It has gone down to £110 per ton for good quality wheat. Twenty five years ago I sold many tons of wheat for £120 – what a fickle business is farming. Nowadays the man who is lucky and sells his crop maybe 6 months before harvest, maybe longer and catches the top of the market makes more money than the man who grows the best crops but sells badly. You shouldn't have to gamble with your livelihood to that extent. Enough!

Now ploughing matches. I guess most of my 6 or 7 readers don't know what a ploughing match is. Well, quite simply it is about 50 old men with their old tractors and ploughs getting together and seeing who can do the best ploughing. However, there are various classes for differing tractors and ploughs. The one consistent essential is friendliness. Last Sunday the match was at Rousham, Oxfordshire – a beautiful place on a lovely day; 60 interesting tractors and ploughs; an old friend ploughing and other good friends to talk to – who could wish for more?

This month's star prize. It should have been last months but no Chronicle in August – a very well deserved rest for the Editor. So the star prize is or was the patch of poppies sown behind the church. I can only ask "Why not in front". They were lovely and thought provoking and deserved to be better seen.

Peter

3 great reasons to visit The Unicorn this summer



THE UNICORN at Cublington

1. Breakfast is, arguably, the most important meal of the day. So, from 9.30 till 11.30am on Saturdays, we kick off the weekend with a fabulous new Breakfast menu. (see website for full menus)

2. Saturday BBQs What could be better than basking in glorious sunshine in the charming Unicorn garden with a family BBQ and maybe a Pimms or two for Mum and Dad? Our new BBQ menu is designed for large and small appetites to suit everyone's taste and budget. Available between 5-9pm every Saturday from May till September. (see website for full menus)

3. Afternoon Tea Not many people know that you can pre-book for a rather special English afternoon tea on any weekday between 3-5pm at The Unicorn. So do come and try the delicious homemade, sandwiches, scones and cakes that our chefs prepare. As a special treat, during Wimbledon, (23 June-4 July) we will be serving Afternoon tea in the Unicorn clubroom and screening the tennis, each weekday...no need to book just turn up with friends and enjoy!



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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 Breakfast -
Start the weekend right - served from 9.30-11.30am

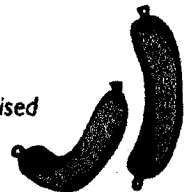
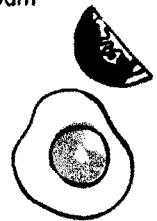
Saturday BBQ 6-9pm

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

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June

Monday 2nd - Quiz

Friday 6th - Three Bar Fire

Saturday 7th - BBQ 5-9pm

Monday 9th - Quiz

Tuesday 10th - Folk Music

TUGS meeting AVGC

Saturday 14th - BBQ 5-9pm

Sunday 15th - Fathers Day

Monday 16th - Quiz

Saturday 21st - BBQ 5-9pm

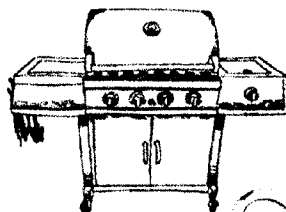
Monday 23rd - Quiz

Wimbledon/Cream Tea starts

Friday 27th - Dinner & Jazz

Saturday 28th - BBQ 5-9pm

Monday 30th - Quiz



@the_unicorn_pub

01296 681261

Booking always advisable!

The Unicorn, High Street, Cublington, Bucks, LU7 0LQ
Visit web site for full event details www.theunicornpub.co.uk



VIC SCOTT ORCHARD

Sunday 10th August will live in the memory of those of us who are involved with the village orchard for three main reasons.

1. The weather
2. The camaraderie and effort
3. The results

Despite the weather at 1.30 we were ready for the opening at 2.00. Thanks to John Hardcastle's foresight a group of us had erected John's splendid marquee on the Saturday when the weather was lovely. We were aware that winds were forecast so we lashed the whole contraption down with 8 extra guy ropes, both inside and out. It was a good moment on Sunday morning to find the whole marquee firmly in place. Confident that the weather would clear we erected Alex and Peter's exceptionally cheap and trashy gazebo in the fine rain and light winds.

The bouncy castle turned up on time and Alan Jones was busy laying on extension leads to his kitchen from where we intended to blow all his fuses by running both the bouncy castle and more importantly the tea urn. All the splendid cakes were in place on a table protected by the marquee, the tea urn was bubbling away, milk, sugar, cups, prizes – everything was in place - Pam Dixon, her Sister, Val Smith and Alex were in control and happy. John Hardcastle, after a hard morning's work nipped home to grab some lunch (a premonition?) John Dixon and Peter sat down to a quick sandwich and a longed for cup of coffee – we really were ready – only the tractors to bring and the games to lay out. Les and Val Smith arrived early to help as did Alex Abel-Smith. What a great bunch of people to have around if a disaster is about to strike

John Dixon said "it's looking a bit black over Bill's mother's! – those clouds are going the opposite way!"

Then chaos – a mini tornado struck. We grabbed the tent and managed to hold it down. Les, grabbed the smaller tent for the band and hung on manfully even though it was smashed beyond repair – no tent he had ever erected was going to fly to Wing and down came the rain. Over went tables and chairs but with 8 of us hanging on, the marquee stayed roughly where we had erected it, but it was a VERY close call. Ten minutes later it was past and the weather visibly improved turning out eventually to be a nice afternoon.

The Rowsham Band arrived. Dressed for the part in full waterproofs and strange hats the band set the tone for the rest of the afternoon. We are English and by golly no matter what the circumstances we are going to enjoy ourselves – and we did.

If you missed the Aston Abbots Orchard Picnic 2014 you missed something special. Ask anyone who was there.

Peter



John Hardcastle gallantly holding down the tent sheltering the band.





The Jewellery Lady

Dear Astonians,

'Holy Cow!! Home' are physical now! As well as being online, we have moved into rear of The Jewellery Lady shop.


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ALLOTMENT DIARY

I've never planted any raspberries on my allotment: I inherited the canes planted by a predecessor, and have simply weeded them (occasionally) and pruned them (ruthlessly, following the advice given to me years ago by Vic Scott). The raspberries are in the main autumn-cropping, and exclusively red. You can imagine my surprise, therefore, when I discovered a raspberry cane this year which was producing yellow raspberries! My first thought was that it was the result of a sucker that had come over from Gordon's allotment (he grows raspberries in his patch next-door to mine), but the yellow-fruiting cane was about as far from his plants as it was possible to get: and, so far as I can see, looking at his crop, he does not have any yellow raspberries either.

The conclusion I have reached is that it is the result of a bird having breakfasted on a yellow raspberry bush somewhere else in the village, and then, while enjoying lunch on my raspberries, had deposited the result of its breakfast on the ground alongside my plants, and one of the seeds germinated. While I knew the theory that plants were spread in this way, I have rarely seen such a dramatic demonstration of the process.

Life begins, according to a Chinese proverb, the day you start a garden. However, recent research by The Horticultural Trades Association has revealed that less and less people have the means to start one: about 1.5 million fewer people now have a garden or an allotment than in 2007. This is due to several factors: the huge drop in house ownership among those under 35 (and reluctance to spend time and money on a garden which would simply be improving the property for the benefit of the landlord); the number of people who now live in high-rise flats; the paving over of front gardens in order to provide hard-standing areas for cars; and possibly the large number of immigrants from countries where there is no tradition of gardening.

There are indications that either the recent fine summer, or perhaps global warming, may be having an effect on the crops being grown in the UK. Olives are being grown commercially at Tenterden in Kent (and being sold to local restaurants); tea is being grown commercially in Cornwall (and being sold to Harrods); there is now a burgeoning English apricot industry, largely based in Kent, which has done very well this year (and apparently our English climate, with a big change in temperature between night and day helps to give the fruit a red tinge, which customers like); and Scotland's first vintage wine is expected to be bottled in Fife this month. Even more extraordinarily, bananas have appeared on a banana plant in a garden in Somerset! The bananas were, when I read the story in mid-August, still green and only 2" long; but the owner of the garden is hoping that with a spell of hot weather they will ripen, which would be remarkable. Of more traditional English crops, blackberries and sloes are apparently ripening some 2 weeks or so earlier than usual, and the apple harvest has been huge and early.

From my own experience I can report a bumper crop of raspberries and Victoria plums, but the crops of apples and pears are well down on last year. However, I think that this may be due not to any problem with the weather, but due to the fact that fruit trees rarely produce large crops two years running: it's as though after producing a vast crop, they need to recharge their batteries before repeating the effort.

My other big success this year has been a French runner bean, which is purple in colour, called Blauhilde, which I had never grown before. The crop the plants produce was so huge that it snapped one of my bamboo canes in half, and I had to keep added more canes as props in order to prevent the structure from collapsing. And the beans themselves (which lose their purple colour during cooking) were delicious.

Finally, I am happy to report that my carrot-fly exclusion cage has been 100% successful: not one of my carrots has been attacked this year: whereas in all previous years the majority have been affected. If you grow carrots, I strongly recommend the idea to you.

Peter Shorrock

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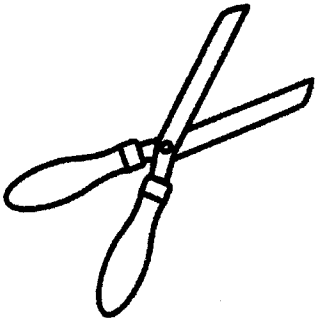
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ASTON ABBOTTS PARISH COUNCIL

These are some concerns recently voiced to the Parish Council by residents



Not everybody has the luxury of off-street parking, but please be considerate to others if you need to park on the road. Parking close to corners and bends creates a safety hazard, parking on the pavement forces pedestrians into the road, and parking on grass verges damages them.



If you have a hedge or tree that encroaches upon the footpath it creates a safety hazard as people have to walk in the road. This can be dangerous, especially along the main village roads. This hazard is particularly difficult for mothers with push-chairs and the elderly. Please keep hedges by footpaths well trimmed.



The majority of dog-owners pick up their dog's poo, but a few leave it for someone else to pick up. This is not fair. If your dog messes on the verge or pavement outside of a house, or outside of the Church or the Village Hall—*please* pick it up.



Cars speeding through the village upset many parishioners. Representations have been made to the police, who have agreed to carry out random checks in Aston Abbots. Police tell us that checks in other villages have shown that a significant number of the offenders are often local residents themselves!

THANK YOU

Church Ladies With Typewriters

They're Back! Those wonderful Church Bulletins! Thank Goodness for the church ladies with typewriters. These sentences actually appeared in church bulletins or were announced at church services:

The Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals.

Scouts are saving aluminium cans, bottles and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.

The sermon this morning: 'Jesus Walks on the Water.' The sermon tonight: 'Searching for Jesus.'

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.

Don't let worry kill you off - let the Church help.

Miss Charlene Mason sang 'I will not pass this way again,' giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.

Countryside Matters

On the evening of the last Saturday in June I received an urgent phone call at about 5pm and informed that hare coursers were located in the first grass field coming out of Wingrave, on the left along the Leighton Road. Two men and a boy had climbed the locked gate and thrown their lurcher dogs over the gate in full view of a hand full of people. They had immediately started coursing in the field belonging to the Ascott Estate. Two of the lurchers then killed a hare and the handler threw the carcass in the ditch. I watched all this from my driveway through binoculars. To my surprise they crossed a stile onto my grass fields and chased another couple of hares. The lurchers then went into the next field and hunted amongst the ewes and lambs, this scattered them everywhere in sheer fright. This did not bother the men who by now were being watched by three police officers. The exhausted hare ran under the gate where we were stood and I thought for one moment the lurchers were going to jump the gate in front of me but they stopped 5 yards short. Much to the astonishment of the police officers with whom I remonstrated that the countryside can be a more dangerous place than Friars Square on a Friday night! The men and dogs were last seen being escorted to their vehicle by the boys in blue; it was parked on the Leighton Road. I await the results of this encounter but I am not holding my breath.

On a serious note, these people are very dangerous and have dogs that kill and are also capable of ripping out the stomach of a full grown fallow deer, a large animal, they do it for fun and to gamble. The crops are coming off the fields as I write this message, so I ask if you are a dog walker or just walking out on one of these lovely days on the Ascott estate in particular always have your mobile phone and phone 999 if you see three men and their lurchers.

Lastly, very well done Tesco for selling discounted New Zealand lamb from 12,000 miles away, when beautiful July English lamb is plentiful and on the supermarket shelves, great to know Tesco are supporters of the British sheep industry!!

James



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More Countryside Matters

Around this time of year many years ago, I really could not wait to get back to boarding school and it had nothing to do with the start of the rugby term. The reason was quite simple, my father stuck me on the small trailed combine harvester, not driving the tractor that was the easy bit, no I landed with the dusty bit, bagging off the wheat at the back!! The B64 international bagger was a revolutionary bit of kit in those days. The bags were old Brazilian coffee bean bags; they were very short and fat and weighed 1 c.w.t. (112 lbs). When we did a six foot cut they would fill up very quickly, they had to be tied off and a new one put on. The bags once filled were sent down the chute to be picked up before it got dark. Sounds easy but I regularly managed to make a pig's ear of it, resulting in a smack around the head.

We had to pack up before dark and get the wheat bags in before night fall. Another lovely task of loading a 4 wheel trailer pulled by an old Fordson Major tractor, it used a combination of fuels, petrol or paraffin. It started with petrol and you flicked a switch to turn over to paraffin once the engine was hot enough. The 'Old' Man bought it during the Suez crisis so he could use the petrol ration coupons to run the car. A little fiddle he had at Wingrave Garage with Don Richards's father!! Not a patch on Warmington-on-Sea's Walker in Dad's Army though. The highlight was when it rained or the combine broke down. Then we had to put steel pipes in the bags to dry the corn with hot air, or take the wettest ones to Stevens Hadley Farm, to dry out on their ventilated floor.

These days I see these monstrous tracked combines with air conditioning, satellite navigation equipment to keep them straight and cutting complete swaths of nearly 40 feet. Totally dust free cabs and a place for your tea flask and passenger, even a holder for the mobile phone. I sit watching them in total envy remembering those imminent smacks on my head.

James

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The Astonians



A take on village life.

**Characters are totally fictional and do not represent any villager whatsoever*

The Astonians

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I had to feel sorry for Bert Cartwright the old bow backed guy who runs the allotment. He and his wife invited us for dinner last night. After eating a traditional English steak and kidney pie with trimmings, Mrs Cartwright, the kindly but nagging wife of Bert, left the table and went into the kitchen. We continued talking to Bert about good restaurants and he said, 'Last night we went out to a new restaurant and it was really good. I would recommend it very highly.' I asked keenly, 'What's the name of the restaurant?'

Bert thought but looked puzzled and finally said, 'What's the name of that flower you give to someone you love? You know.... the one that's red and has thorns.'

'Do you mean a rose?' I replied. 'Yes, that's the one,' replied Bert. He then turned towards the kitchen and yelled, 'Rose, what's the name of that restaurant we went to last night?'

Aston Abbotts Parish Council
Summary of Parish Council Meeting
Wednesday 28th May 2014

Present: - Cllr's P Shorrock (Chair), C Higgs, Mrs J Hardcastle, Mrs K Curry, P Spooner, R Clarke, B Carvey, P Bruton (Clerk), County Cllr. N Glover, District Cllr P Cooper and one member of the public.

County Councillor Glover County Councillor Glover N Glover presented her report that gave an overview of the current financial constraints the Council were working under, looking to save £15m this year on top of the £85m in the past 4 years. Some services may be affected and County were looking to devolve services to Town and Parish Councils. In response to a question from Council it was noted that there would be fewer grass cuts this year and they were concentrating on the main highways, Councillors expressed their concerns as to the potential safety hazard this policy could create.

District Councillor Cooper outlined the proposed application for a share of the New Homes Bonus scheme for a cycleway from the Wingrave crossroads to Aylesbury being co-ordinated by Wingrave Parish Council. Council were supportive of this application and would contact residents to see if interested people could volunteer to assist with the application. A meeting was scheduled for the 4th June at a venue to be advised.

Cllr. Cooper also advised that 2 planning applications had been received for 5 and 12 houses in Wingrave, outside the village envelope. He had concerns there would be more of this type of speculative development given the delay in the Vale of Aylesbury Plan. As a result he recommended Council review whether work should begin on developing a Neighbourhood Plan for the village. He advised we contact AVDC Planning to assist and speak to Wingrave and Chilton who were villages of a similar size to ourselves and their plans were in an advanced stage.

Neighbourhood Plan – Cllrs. Shorrock and Carvey would take responsibility to contact the persons recommended by Cllr. Cooper and the matter would be discussed in detail at the next Council meeting.

Community Right to Bid – Council discussed the Community Right to Bid and it was felt that it would be in the interest of the Parish to apply. Various sites were discussed and it was duly RESOLVED to obtain the relevant forms and lodge them with AVDC for the Village Hall, Royal Oak Public House, The Church, Allotments, Recreation Ground and The Orchard.

Abbotts View Farm – The Clerk reported that planning enforcement had visited the site and confirmed the new barn had not been constructed in accordance with the planning permission and the applicants had been advised to submit a retrospective planning application within 28 days.

Village Plan – Cllr. Shorrock reported the final amendments had been submitted to the printers and the plan should be in print by the next meeting. If possible it was proposed to distribute with next months Chronicle.

Rural Exception Scheme – It was noted that a representative of Community Action Bucks would be attending our next meeting to explain the process of the Scheme for Council to consider.

Letters Page

An Open Letter to the Parish Council – Cherry Tree and the twiggy Triffid in front of the Bungalows on The Green.



Being a mere child to this village of ours I have been filled in on the Cherry Tree outside my bungalow on The Green. When this cherry tree bears its fruit it begins to be a hazard to passers by whom, it is said, have slipped and fallen on the cherries dropped by the tree. My neighbour's and my car, parked on the drive, get more than their fare share of splattered rotten fruit.

Furthermore the 'Twiggy Triffid' outside 30 and 32 The Green is nothing but an eyesore. Who in their right mind chose such a tree for the roadside?

I have contacted the various agencies to see if anything can be done to cut the trees back significantly and have offered my muscle too. However all agencies have denied responsibility of the trees and have cautioned me not to touch them as they grow in a 'Conservation Area'. So we are now asking the Parish Council to make speedy and suitable arrangements to have the job done.

Pete Lucas

Dear Ed

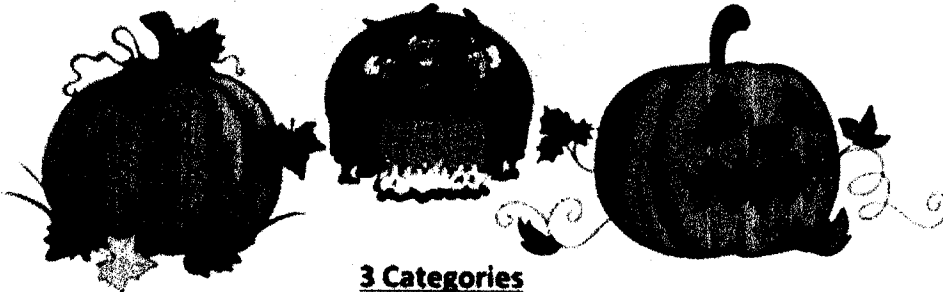
What a lovely sight the poppies have been in the church wild area this year. So a big thank you to all those who have been working hard on this area.

Sally Palmer

The Royal Oak Pumpkin Competition

Friday 31st October - Judging starts at 7:00 pm

**Children welcome to enter
(Covens welcome to attend)**



3 Categories

- **Heaviest Pumpkin**
- **Best Looking**
- **Best Decorated**

The Royal Oak Runner Bean Competition

Saturday 13th September

Judging starts at 7:00 pm

3 Categories

- **Longest Runner Bean**
The 'Ray Wilkinson
Trophy'
- **Best Cheat**
- **3 Best Runner Beans**
The 'Bystra Shield'



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Race Night

A very belated thank you to those who attended the race night I held in May to raise money towards the 1st Aylesbury Guide Centenary trip to Switzerland planned for late July this year. Nigel acted as the bookmaker and the ladies worked in pairs to guess what unlikely named old nag would finish first. It was probably a good thing we used toy money for our bets. Carolyn Guse and Judy Hardcastle proved the most successful gamblers. In total £135 was raised in donations.

The money was used to assist some girls with the full costs of the trip to the Guide World Centre at Abelboden in the Bernese Oberland and to fund all activities whilst there.

A report of the trip will hopefully be ready to accompany this short thank you in the same edition.

Sally Palmer

Before Christmas last year the subject of archery came up in one of our "in depth" discussion that is so much a feature of our monthly meetings. Several members expressed an interest in "having a go" with a bow and some arrows. A former colleague at Sir Henry Floyd School is a qualified coach. He was contacted and as a result Dave and his wife organised for us to attend an introductory evening to archery at the Westcott centre. Seven of us turned up and having had the health and safety talk we were advised as to which was our leading eye and then issued with an arm brace, a bow and some arrows. We started off quite close to the targets but by the end of the evening we were aiming at balloons and bursting some of them more than 20 metres away! There was a competitive edge to the whole event although most of us would not admit it. Some book club members had prior commitments so it hoped to run another "have a go" session in September/October.

Anita Parker

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An Unsung Hero

The story of Sidney Smith DCM

A gardener from Aston Abbotts

I hope that all of you in Aston Abbotts will have received the booklet that was produced to commemorate the centenary of the beginning of World War 1.

It was intended to honour the names of the fallen from Aston Abbotts who fought and died in both world wars.

One thing it didn't mention were the lads of Aston Abbotts who fought in WW1 and came home. These men, who should be equally honoured having fought for King and Country to enable us to enjoy the freedoms we have today, are listed at the end.

One in particular amongst those who fought and survived was Sidney Smith. He was the older brother of 'Willie' Walter Smith who was killed in action on the 20th September 1917 and is buried in Poelcappelle British Cemetery.

Willie was only 22 when he was killed during the Battle of the Menin Road Ridge, sometimes called "Battle of the Menin Road", which was the third British general attack of the Third Battle of Ypres in the First World War. The battle took place between the 20-25 September 1917, in the Ypres Salient in Flanders on the Western Front. He was serving in the 6th battalion of the Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry at the time, the same regiment as his brother Sidney.

Sidney was born in Aston Abbotts in January 1892. He was one of 10 children born to Joseph Thomas & Eliza Jane Smith (nee French) who were married in Wingrave on the 15th February 1876. Joseph (aged 53) is listed as being a Head Cowman.

Sidney, the 6th child born in the family, was 3 years older than Willie. He had 2 older brothers, Herbert Joe and Ernest Frederick and 6 sisters, 2 of whom were younger than him.

In 1911 he was living in Aston Abbotts with his parents and 2 brothers and 2 sisters aged 19 with his occupation listed as Under Gardener. (It doesn't say where but presumably either The Abbey or The Firs)

His Medal Index Card (MIC) shows that as he did not receive the 1914-1915 star (The medal was awarded for services rendered in the war between the 5th August, 1914 and the 31st December, 1915, both dates inclusive) so therefore he must have joined in early 1916 as his first regimental number was 3433, . The four figure number denoting the fact that he was in a Territorial Battalion. The TF was renumbered from very late 1916 and most battalions were complete by March 1917. Sidney's regimental number became 266230.

By 1917 he had been promoted to sergeant but it was this year that a double tragedy struck the family with the death in battle of his brother Willie as well as the death of his other brother Herbert's wife Emma Louisa only 28. They'd only been married for 7 years. Herbert re-married in 1918 to Alice Esther Orchard.

Sidney Smith was serving at the front with the Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry (2/4th Battalion) during this period and it was on the 22 October that an announcement was placed in the London Gazette. This came under a section headed:

“Third Supplement to the London Gazette of Friday, the 19th of October 1917”

War Office,

22nd October, 1917.

His Majesty The KING has been graciously pleased to award the Distinguished Conduct Medal to the undermentioned Warrant Officers, Non-commissioned Officers, and Men.

Awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

266230 Sjt. S. Smith, Oxf. & Bucks. L.I.

(Aston Abbots, Bucks).

Subsequently in the next issue the following was printed on the 25th January 1918

War Office,

26th January, 1918.

With reference to the award of the Distinguished Conduct Medal conferred as announced in the London Gazette dated 22nd October, 1917; the following are the statements of service for which the decoration was conferred:-

266230 Sjt. S. Smith, Oxf. & Bucks. L.I.

(Aston Abbots, Bucks.).

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty in an attack. When all the officers of his company were casualties he led the second wave forward until left with a party of only 15 men. He was surrounded by about 70 of the enemy, but rushing forward with a Lewis gun he scattered the enemy and continued the advance. He showed great gallantry and resource on this and many other occasions.

The Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM) was (until 1993) an extremely high level award for bravery. It was a second level military decoration awarded to other ranks of the British Army and formerly also to non-commissioned personnel of other Commonwealth countries.

The medal was instituted in 1854, during the Crimean War, to recognise gallantry within the other ranks, for which it was equivalent of the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) awarded for bravery to commissioned officers.

In the book "The Story of the 2/4th Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry", by G. K. Rose, Sidney Smith is mentioned as follows:

CHAPTER XVII
LAST BATTLES,
AUGUST TO DECEMBER, 1918

... TIME HAD WROUGHT CHANGES AMONG THE SERGEANT-MAJORS OF THE COMPANIES. AT THIS PERIOD IN CUNNINGHAM OF A, MUDD OF B, SMITH OF C, AND BROOKS OF D, WE HAD A QUARTET OF TRIED EXPERIENCE. THE RECURRENT CONFLICTS ABOUT 'STRENGTH'—A WORD WHICH IN EFFECT MEANT THE NUMBER OF MEN EMPLOYED WITH QUARTERMASTER'S STORES AND AT HEADQUARTERS—WERE NOW AT A HIGH PITCH. AFTER MUCH 'CAMOUFLAGE,' BY AID OF BICKNELL, OF THE REAL FACTS, WE HAD RELUCTANTLY TO CHOOSE BETWEEN THE 'RETURN TO DUTY' IN THE LINE OF EITHER BAND OR BUGLERS. THE CHOICE WAS HARD, BUT IN THE END WE KEPT THE BAND INTACT, FOR LOSS OF A FEW BANDSMEN AS CASUALTIES MIGHT LEAVE SUCH GAPS AS WOULD PREVENT THE BAND FROM PLAYING AT ALL."

Towards the end of the book the author lists the composition of the battalion at the Armistice. Under the heading 'Company Sergeant- Majors' Sidney is listed thus:

S. SMITH, D.C.M., C Company.

In March 1919 the 2/4th Battalion of the Oxford & Bucks LI sailed for Egypt and were still there at the end of that year.

Sometime after that Sidney would have been de-mobbed and returned to civilian life.

The task of tracking him further is difficult, not helped by the common surname. However, the following records do exist which look the most likely explanation.

In 1923 a Sidney Smith, then aged 31 married Dorothy Higgs. She was born in Aston Abbotts in 1890 so was herself relatively old to be married for the first time at 33 years of age. She was, in fact, the sister of John R. Higgs another casualty of WW1. John died aged 38, on the 8th October 1919. He is buried in Aston Abbotts (St. James) Churchyard

In 1925 a son, John Sidney Smith, was born.

Dorothy died on the 9th January 1963 aged 73 and her probate records show she was living in 'Walnuts' Cublington at the time. Probate was granted to Sidney Smith, Farmer. Her effects came to £1,600.

Two years later on the 19th August 1965 Sidney died aged 73. He was still living at 'Walnuts' Cublington. Probate was granted to Alfred Richard Parker, Farmer.



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Aston Abbots Fete 26th July

It was a glorious hot summer's day which ensured good sales of ice cream and PIMMS. Thanks to all of you who attended and to the many helpers who supported us with collections and on the day. Thanks for the early work by Dee Whyte and particularly to Tracy Hinds and Vanessa Worrall for stepping into the breach and master minding the preparations and proceedings on the day. Thanks to our MC Peter Knight who also mowed and manicured the green in preparation. Thanks for the generous donation from Elizabeth McManus and to Rob Hunter and the Cold Shoulder Gun Club Quainton, for sponsoring the Clay Pigeon Shoot.

Fete Finances

RECEIPTS			
		Draw	£718
		Donations	£100
		Teas	£367
	Stalls	PIMMS	£380
		Tombola	£335
		Cakes	£75
		Plants	£191
		Bric-a-Brac	£202
		Ice Cream	£129
		Gifts	£56
		Books	£81
		Barbecue	£664
		Charity Stall	£10
		Name the Teddy	£28
		Children's Game	£35
			£3,371
	Sideshow	Skittles & Stocks	£70
		Coconut Shy	£75
		Children's Rides	£72
	Dog Show		£52
	Clay Shoot		£105
	Church Plate		£23
			£397
GROSS PROCEEDS			£3,768
COSTS			
		Band	£160
		Morris Men	£120
		Draw Tickets	£105
		Gaming Licence	£21
		Drinks Licence	£20
		Communications	£70
			£496
NET PROCEEDS			£3,273

At the Annual Parish Meeting this year it was agreed to distribute the funds from the Fete as follows: £500 to the Chronicle and the remainder shared between the Village Hall, the Recreation Ground and St. James Church which this year amounts to £924 each.

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Book Club

This month we read '**Want You Dead**' a crime 'fiction' novel by **Peter James**. The book is one of a series about Sussex Police chief Roy Grace and his officers. This particular story was 'inspired' by the real life case in which Dr Alison Hewitt was stalked by a jilted boyfriend who eventually set fire to her family home in Aston Abbotts. However the villain in the book was a much more accomplished criminal being a murderer, escapologist and pyromaniac.

Apart from the local association there was little to recommend the book. The Police characters have been developed in previous books in the series and, although some of the plot has been taken from real life, the author gave no consideration for the real victims and required little imagination to write the story. The ethics of the Police, in revealing details of a case to a novelist, are questionable. Indeed the best we could find to say was that the book had nice type face and was light to carry around; having said that we exchanged our thoughts on the novel for over an hour, which may be a record for club meetings!

David Gray

I had a similar thought when reading the reviews of this Novel! Alison's own account of this "Stalked" was published last month by Pan Macmillan. Ed

Major Prendergast's Last Stand by Helen Simonson

The plot sounded promising: "Major Ernest Pettigrew is perfectly content to lead a quiet life in the sleepy village of Edgecombe St Mary, away from the meddling neighbours and his overbearing son. But when his brother dies, the Major finds his companionship deepening with village shopkeeper, Mrs. Ali. Drawn together by a love of books and the loss of their partners, they are soon forced to content with irate relatives and gossiping villagers. The perfect gentleman, but the most unlikely hero, the Major must ask himself what matters most: family obligations, gradation or love?"

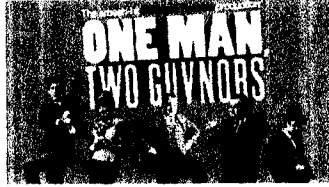
This was a first novel written by somebody who had been taught creative writing and who, in her acknowledgements, gives thanks to the person who "first taught me to appreciate the beauty of the sentence". It is this perception of the beauty of a sentence that caused some of us to find the book tedious! Some also considered the characters to be merely stereotypes and the plot cliché-ridden. However, there were also some who enjoyed the book and found it a pleasant, humorous holiday read – something to pick up and put down again without any fear of losing the plot.

In the words of one reviewer, this was "a romance for wrinklies". If this had been known before the book was chosen, it is most likely that it would have remained unread by the Aston Abbots Book Club!

Carolyn Guse

Quite a lucid review given the alleged Pimms intake! Ed

One Man, Two Guvnors – A Review.



Well I didn't know what I had let myself into when I took my seat at the Aylesbury Waterside Theatre to watch, 'One Man, Two Guvnors'. It isn't easy to describe. It was more like a pantomime than a play to me; certainly a sort of Carry-on, slapstick production with some swearing and sexual scenes thrown in for controversy. Not one for the kids!

I was disappointed by the slow uptake of this parade of *'The Servant of Two Masters'*. One Man, Two Guvnors was funny in bits especially when taking on audience participation.

The star of the show was Gavin Spokes, whose character was 'thick as two planks' Francis Henshall. He was the man with two 'guvnors'. Spokes was brilliant as he tried, with increasing difficulty, to keep his bosses apart. They unwittingly were lovers of Rachel Crabbe who was posing as her dead twin brother. Posh-boy Stanley Stubbers just happened to have murdered Rachel's twin brother. Confused yet?

Meanwhile, Rachel also had to contend with the fact that, as her twin brother, she was supposed to be marrying Pauline Clench, daughter of Charlie Clench, played by Shaun Williamson, (Barry from Eastenders) who wanted to marry 'camp as a non standard EU cucumber' actor Alan Dangle.

The sweating cast lurched from one chaotic scene to the next. The scenes had brief musical interludes from a skiffle and first class old fashioned pub band, 'The Craze'.

The show-stealers for me were when audience participation seemingly got out of control. (Seen to be believed) and Michael Dylan, who played a decrepit and agonisingly accident prone 87-year-old waiter called Alfie. Alfie is one of those characters who could stand on stage and say nothing but be very funny. Just brilliant!

A cast and production that had its audience in stitches for more than two hours did have me wondering at times if I had lost the plot or my love of old fashioned British humour but it was a full house, so good for them.

AstonPete

What the Ladybird Heard at Waterside Theatre

Based on a story by Julia Donaldson (who wrote the Gruffalo)

I went to this show with my Grandma. I liked the show that was about some robbers trying to steal the cow from a farm. The ladybird heard their plan and thought of a way to make the robbers go the wrong way. She did this by getting the animals to make the wrong noises. I liked the bit when the robbers ended up in the duck pond. The songs were good too and I joined in the actions. The animal puppets were good but I was disappointed there was no ladybird puppet. Also there was no break in the middle to get an ice cream. My friend Molly and her mum came too because the lady at the theatre said we could have 4 press tickets.

Amelie (4)



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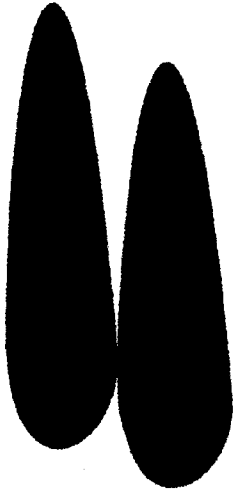
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Travel

1st Aylesbury Guide Centenary trip to Switzerland 2014

Helper Owl's (Sally Palmer) diary

Day 1

Alarm wakes me at 2.30 am, late to assembly point due to discovery of blister on toe- good start! We arrive at Heathrow before check-in opens. Jobs worthy supervisors delay us at check in and security – apparently unable to cope with a group of 39. Just make flight before boarding is closed what with buying water, toilet stop and monorail trip. Uneventful flight considering 6 guides had never flown before and our party includes the leader's 3 and 6 year old daughters. Eventually get on coach after delay caused by leader mislaying her family's passports. 2 girls sick on 3 hour trip from Geneva to Adelboden and it is raining heavily. Finally arrive to find we must walk 10 minutes up a steep hill in pouring rain to our chalet. Some girls have packed coats in cases so get drenched. Chalet spreads over 4 floors and is better than expected with great view though I end up sleeping on a top bunk. Evening meal, cooked with provided food, is packet minestrone soup, spaghetti Bolognese and yoghurt. My group of 6 already have very untidy room and unpacking has revealed vast horde of goodies in cases- rubbish everywhere and cannot find refuse bags. Rain finally eases and fabulous views of the valley and mountains revealed remembered why I volunteered to help on the trip.

Day 2 Sunday

Up early and partake of help yourself breakfast of cornflakes with UHT milk, bread, margarine and jam. Only seem to have tea to drink. Then make own sandwich and choose banana or apple for lunch. Help clear breakfast. Eventually ready to leave and set off on foot for visit to Our Chalet the Girlguiding International Centre built in 1932. The brainchild of American girl scout Helen Sorrow the site picked for its natural beauty and access to adventurous activities. It takes a good 1 1/2 hours to get up steep hill with many stops due to 2 girls suffering from knee problems. Weather is threatening to rain. Finally arrive for our tour and meet a group from America and later guides from Hong Kong. The girls enthusiastically swap badges with the latter. Didn't find the tour very thrilling but it is in a beautiful setting. We were presented with special badges to mark our visit. After our packed lunch we continue walking to visit the Magic Tree reputedly the oldest tree in the area and the only deciduous one in an evergreen wood. You are supposed to stand inside the hollow trunk and make a wish so we did before returning to the chalet for tea of packet soup, potato, baked beans and sausage. Half the group, including myself, had to go out again walking the same route as the morning for our sleeping in straw experience. Just passed Our Chalet an old barn is available for hire. The sleeping area consists of 2 large wooden rectangles filled with clean straw. Each rectangle can accommodate 8 people sleeping side by side. Old army style blankets are provided for warmth. We are given a cheese fondue supper by the owner in his small bistro nearby. Several participants don't like cheese so a lot is wasted. After this girls play charades before lights out at 10pm. Not a peep from anyone -must be all exhausted from the 7 miles we must have walked today. Blankets very scratchy and wish I'd worn my warm fleece hoodie. One person goes to the toilet the door is incredibly noisy!

Day 3 (the worst one) Monday

Woken by the barn door and decide to go to the toilet. Just as get out of straw alarm goes off- it is 5.50am. Breakfast in the bistro includes muesli that had been soaking in milk all night so it is like a cold porridge but is tasty. Coffee too! Frog march girls back to chalet in one hour – quite a feat. Weather nice looks like we might have sun. We have an hour to shower and get ready to go back down to the village for our cultural tour. We start in the church and a local man tells us about the history of the village and its development from an area of subsistence farming to major tourist centre. This proves quite interesting. It seems that allied air crew who crashed landed in Switzerland were interned here for fear of German reprisals but took up skiing and rather got the whole skiing holiday thing going. After our talk we are taken to the main feature of the village The Wall of Fame which has the imprint of one foot of all the winners of the World Cup ski race that takes place in the mountains above the village every year. Curiously also takes us to disused old sports centre. We then proceed to gondola station and go up to the main cable car station and proceed to the top of Sillerenbuhl mountain 1974 m high where we are supposed to be scootering on the unique Trottiland network of 45km of paths for scootering. As we go up the weather deteriorates markedly and it is again threatening rain. One girl has forgotten her sandwich so I offer my egg one. Apparently we are not scootering on the gentle track we can see from the cable car station but walking along the flower walk to a much more steep and windy track in the far distance. The flower walk is quite interesting but the girls do not find it so. Progress is slow as the knees are playing up and the buggy is proving difficult to push on the uneven uphill path. It takes well over an hour to complete the walk with the first aider and several adults behind with the stragglers. Spots of rain soon turn to a major storm with thunder and lightning, some girls again have come without their waterproofs- not surprised as lovely when we set out. I don't have waterproof bottoms. We all huddle under eaves while leader negotiates with non English speaking attendant. My group is the last to go and I am definite I will bring up the rear, mindful that the tour company advised against this activity due to high casualty rate, I intend to go a slowly as possible. Reluctantly select a scooter that has two largish wheels. You have to keep the brakes on all the way down and balance on it. Having not been on a bike in years I have trouble getting my balance. I am instantly soaked by torrential rain that is running in rivers down the path. My quick dry trousers start dripping water into my boots. Have no choice but to follow the rest. Gradually get my balance and make it down to cable car station where we find red light blocking our path. Enquiries ascertain that the public bus is due in 20 minutes and it is not safe to go down the path until it has passed. The cafe is closed so we admire the cable car station's alpine garden that includes edelweiss and gentian. By the time we set off the storm has passed and sun come out, the path here is not so steep so begin to enjoy the trip. Finally catch up with first aider with one girl who has fallen off. Final section not so good as more like mountain bike track and it is raining again. We all make it back safely only gondola ride and another hike back up hill to home. 30 odd sets of sopping wet clothes have to be dealt with and then we are off again to the POOL PARTY. I decide to wear full warm/wet weather gear but boots are soaked inside so opt for supposedly waterproof trainers. It is futile we are all soaked again by the time we get to pool. Most of the group get a table under cover- it you count a sun umbrella as cover. Get beef burger and small portion of chips for dinner as more groups arrive with nowhere to sit or shelter from the rain. They opt to swim as do most of our girls after eating. One girl cannot get her sopping skinny jeans off and we have trouble getting them back on again. After swimming in unheated pool girls have to dress again in wet clothes. At last we leave for home and another set of wet clothes plus swim gear to dry. Amazingly most seem to have enjoyed it- I have to admire their spirit.

To be continued



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Packed lunch session: daily, noon – 1pm

Contact: Kelly Targell – Pre-School Manager 01296 682217



ASTON ABBOTTS THEATREGOERS

The Waterside Theatre has again kindly offered a pair of 'press tickets' for each of the shows listed below. The tickets are free and you will usually also be offered a programme and a drink at half time. Tickets to be collected on the day from the box office or the Press Stand in the foyer.

If you would like to enter the draw for all or some of these shows then let me have an email (johnhardcastle@me.com) or a note through my door at Marloes, Lines Hill with a contact telephone number. The draw for each show will take place two weeks prior to the show date. *John Hardcastle*

Show	Date & Time
A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM	WED 10 SEP 7.30PM
BUGLE BOY	SAT 27 SEP 7.30PM
THE SONGS OF SISTER ACT	THU 2 OCT 7.30PM
THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST	MON 6 OCT 7.30PM
THE ILLEGAL EAGLES	THU 16 OCT 7.30PM
ELLEN KENT OPERA: RIGOLETTO	FRI 17 OCT 7.30PM
THE PERFECT MURDER	MON 20 OCT 7.30PM
VAMPIRES ROCK	SAT 1 NOV 7.30PM
MOSCOW CITY BALLET'S THE NUTCRACKER	THU 6 NOV 7.30PM
ALOHA FROM HAWAII	SAT 15 NOV 7.30PM
BOND AND BEYOND	FRI 21 NOV 7.30PM



**Services at
Saint James Church - Aston Abbotts
September – October 2014**

31st August	10.30am	Service at Stewkley	Rev. Philip Derbyshire
7th September	6.00pm	Evensong	Rev. Philip Derbyshire
14th September	10.30am	Communion	Rev. Peter Binns
21st September	10.30am	Communion	TBA
28th September	10.30am	Communion	Rev. Siv Tunnicliffe
5th October	5.00pm	Harvest Festival (*)	Rev. Philip Derbyshire
12th October	10.30am	Communion	Rev. Peter Binns

(*) Note that the Harvest Supper & Auction will not follow the service this year, details in next month's Chronicle

We look forward to seeing you

100 Club Draw

July

August

1st Prize, £50

Jill Wenble

Lynne Delooze

2nd prize, £10

Bob Prouting

Karen Smith

Dear friends,

Over the past few years we've seen the disintegration of Yugoslavia (there are some young people who won't even remember that country), the falling apart of the Soviet Union into its old ethnic groupings (Russians,,Latvians,,Georgians etc.) and the splitting of Sudan into north and south. Some of this is about wanting to renew identity, some of it is about not being able to get along with former countrymen.

After a period of holiday for millions and then the Commonwealth Games in Scotland there will be the vote on independence for Scotland on September 18th. It is an interesting vote because it is for anyone resident in Scotland irrespective of ethnicity or religious affiliation that's good. Many Scots of course don't live in Scotland and therefore will not get a vote. Some of the most passionate nationalists haven't lived 'at home' for decades for practical and personal reasons.

I can see no advantages for anyone at the break-up of the Union which was achieved after centuries of struggle and difficulties overcome. The state of the world at present shows us a need for greater cooperation and mutual support are of greater importance than ever. We and the Scots may rib each other about our social characteristics but on the whole this is good natured and even affectionate.

I fear a yes vote may raise issues which have been long dealt with and don't need resurrecting just to satisfy the vain ambitions of one or two politicians.

The Gospel tells us to seek brotherhood with our fellow human beings and to seek more creative ways to deal with our differences than war and separation: when will we ever hear?

God Bless and have a great break if you're going away.

Philip.

Reverend Philip Derbyshire
The Vicarage
2 High Street North
Stewkley
Leighton Buzzard
LU7 0HH

Church Matters

The diary of St. James's



On Sunday 13th July we had some unexpected visitors from America, about whom I will tell you later. The episode prompted me to tell you a little about the history of the bells of St. James.

In 1552 there were just 3 bells hung in the top of the tower but by 1714 we had 5.

Until the 17th century, few churches had more than four bells. These rarely formed a musical scale but this was of little consequence as each bell was used for a specific purpose, such as curfew, Sanctus (rung as part of the service) or tolling for the dead and little, if any, attempt was made to tune additional bells in step with existing ones. However in the mid-17th century, English change-ringing was beginning to develop and with it the demand for a greater numbers of bells in a tuned set.

In 1929, at St. James, four of the existing bells were rehung in a new steel frame, the fifth bell (the old treble) was recast and an additional new treble added to complete the present ring of 6 bells. The table below gives further details of each of the bells.

Bell	Weight cwt- qtr-lb	Diameter (inches)	Strike note	Date cast	Founder	Foundry location	Inscription
Treble (1)	3-2-17	25½	E#	1929	Taylor's	Loughborough	GIVEN BY H. PUTNAM OF HARTFORD U.S.A. IN MEMORY OF HIS ANCESTOR, JOHN PUTNAM OF ASTON ABBOTS AND SALEM MASS. ABOUT 1640
2	3-3-25	27¼	D#	1929	Taylor's	Loughborough	1652 CHANDLER MADE ME RECAST 1929
3	4-0-18	29	C#	1652	Anthony Chandler	Drayton Parslow	1652 CHANDLER MADE ME
4	4-2-16	30¼	B#	1739	Edward Hall	Drayton Parslow	EDWARD HALL MADE ME J739
5	5-3-1	32¾	A#	1652	Anthony Chandler	Drayton Parslow	1652 CHANDLER MADE ME
Tenor (6)	6-2-27	35½	G#	1740	Edward Hall	Drayton Parslow	EDWARD HALL MADE ME J740

The Chandler family cast bells at their blacksmith's shop from 1636 until 1726. Edward Hall took over in 1726 and died in 1756. All Chandler bells have the 'signature' of the N being cast in reverse. This foundry was located behind the Three Horse Shoes (Pub) in Drayton Parslow (7miles north of Aston Abbotts).

The weight of a bell is measured in the old imperial units of hundredweights (cwt), quarters (qtrs) and pounds (lbs), so the largest bell (No.6) is 6cwt x 112lb + 2qtr x 28lb + 27lb = 755lb (or 342.4kg) and the smallest (No.1) is 409lb (or 185.5kg).

Now back to the present day and our recent American visitors.

They had just docked at Southampton having completed a circumnavigation of the UK on the P & O cruise ship Oriana. With a day to spare before returning to the US (on Monday 14th July) they decided to come and have a look at Aston Abbotts with which they had a connection going back nearly 400 years, for the family were descendants of John Putnam, who left Aston Abbotts for Salem, Massachusetts around 1640 and in whose memory Mr William H Putnam of Hartford USA had donated the treble bell (No.1) in 1929 as part of a complete refurbishment of the belfry. This is recorded on a beautifully carved panel just inside the Church door on the left.

Our visitors had hired a taxi in Southampton and early on the Sunday morning they arrived in the village. As they walked up the path to the Church at 10.00am, to their great delight, as if in welcome the bells started ringing. They stayed for the service and afterwards we got them to toll the 'Putnam' treble in celebration of their visit. They then spent time with Shirley Ford learning more about the history of the Church and the Village.

Afterwards they emailed me to say that their visit to Aston Abbotts had been the highlight of their holiday and to thank everyone for the wonderful welcome they received.

Anyone interested in joining the bell ringers should contact Peter Knight who organises the practice sessions on a Thursday evening and the 'performances' for weddings etc. to order.

Otherwise it has been a quiet time over the School Holiday period. Weddings on 19th July and 2nd August managed to avoid the worst of the wind and rain and the Church was decked with flowers on both occasions.

Don't forget to put the Harvest Festival Service, 5pm Sunday 5th October, in your diary. This year we will be holding the Harvest Supper and auction later in the month, details will appear in the October Chronicle. The Remembrance Service, 10.45am Sunday 9th November, will have a particular poignancy this year as we commemorate the start of the First World War in 1914. Simon Guy's carefully researched account of the men of Aston Abbotts who fell in the World Wars also indicates how many of the families still live in the village.

The poppies in the Churchyard are now almost over but have been replaced by the numerous wildflowers which were sown earlier in the year following our work on the 'wild area'. We hope they will seed themselves so that the area will be a riot of colour each summer.

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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
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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

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.

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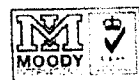
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WEDDING ANNIVERSARY TIP

Guys! Wedding anniversaries are a reminder of the best day of your lives, so you do need to make a real effort to make her feel special on such an important day.

My tips for aviators to ensure they have a very happy wedding anniversary:

1. Do not forget your wedding anniversary
2. When you do forget your anniversary, sneak out to Wing and buy a card in the early morning hours
3. When you get back home, *do not* write "Happy Birthday" inside the card!

MARRIAGE PROPOSAL TIP

Everybody loves a wedding—and the village has been filled with excitement over the news of impending nuptials between two of our long-standing singles!

Here is my hottest tips for bachelor Chronicle editors making spurious marriage proposals to eligible village ladies:

1. Make sure she is so drunk that she does not remember
2. Make sure you are so drunk that you do not remember
3. Make sure your friends are so drunk so that they do not remember and tell The Chronicle about it!

WELSH CHUNKEE TIP

Great news!

Three of Aston Abbotts' famous singing group The Chunkees are to appear in Fiddler On The Roof in Tring.

At rehearsal one of the group started making strange jerking movements. Fearing that he was suffering a seizure the other Chunkees rushed to his aid, but he explained he was just doing *Nantgarw* - the Welsh national dance.

My top tips for dancing Welsh Chunkees:

1. Don't!
2. Please don't!
3. STOP IT !!!!

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