

THE CHRONICLE

Aston Abbotts Parish Magazine



EDITORIAL

THE CHRONICLE

Issue 349

March 2015

I was hoping to call this the spring edition but given the most recent weather feel this may be a little premature, hopefully next time.

Was wondering whether to introduce an element of controversy in this edition, following the events in Paris earlier this year! However the Rev. Derbyshire has addressed this issue and while I may not entirely agree with all his sentiments I cannot disagree with his conclusion.

Talking of the Rev Derbyshire, given the timings of the post-Christmas issue we are fortunate to have a double dose from several of our regular contributors, including the aforementioned Rev and Peter Knight.

I'm pleased to say a healthy letters section this time, although a little light on food and travel.

A mention for the moody cover photo again courtesy of Phil Spooner. Hopefully I'll be able to continue producing colour covers, I hope you agree it adds to the Chronicle.

Finally the usual apology for any errors or omissions

Phil Corrigan

Snippets & Miscellanea

Royal Oak News

Roast lunches every Sunday,
recommended that you book.

Book early for Mother's Day

Guest beers:

London Pride

XT Brewery, a range of their excellent
beers from XT1 to a threatened XT 15

Obviously some serious tasting to be
done Ed, pleased to report tasting
going well.

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Future events – Village Hall

Date to be confirmed

A talk from Simon Guy on the vagaries and intricacies of the Midland Mainline
train timetable from Euston to Northampton between 1600 – 1700 hrs.

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 March

Sun 1 st	Rambling Club, meet Dunstable Downs		2pm
Thurs 5th	Coffee Shop	Village Hall	10-12 noon
	Whist Drive	Village Hall	7.30pm
Wed 11 th	Aylesbury Vale Transport Meeting	Buckingham	2pm
	Bus/train queries to Colin		
Thurs 12 th	Coffee Shop	Village Hall	10-12 noon
	Bingo	Village Hall	7.30pm
Sun 15 th	Mothering Sunday		
	Tea in Village Hall, 4pm followed by service & distribution of posies in Church 5pm.		
Tues 17th 10.30am	Mobile library	The Green	
Thurs 19th	Coffee Shop	Village Hall	10-12 noon
	Whist Drive		7.30pm
Thurs 26 TH	Coffee Shop	Village Hall	10 -12 noon
Fri 27th	Beetle Drive & Sausage & Mash supper	Village Hall	7.30pm
Sat 28th	British Summer Time remember to put your clocks on.		



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PARROTT BROS

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Whitchurch, Aylesbury, Bucks. HP22 4LG Tel: 01296 641207

Countryside Matters

Now what has the village pub, the village post office, village shop and a dairy farm got in common? Well they are all rapidly becoming an endangered species. Another sixty dairy farms have left the industry since October last year; this is a rural crisis happening in front of us on a monthly basis.

I feel that I am qualified to write about this subject having spent a large amount of my working life on dairy farms both large and small, making silage, spreading muck and baling straw. I know the hours these families work and how little time they have off, I know the dedication to their stock (unlike the rubbish talked by Liz Jones of the Mail on Sunday). I have witnessed, on council small holdings, a farmer's wife helping lay concrete and also provide me and my staff throughout the day with lashings of tea and homemade cake.

Offered a visit to the local pub, sometimes when the job was finished, but not if you had been wading in the slurry pit, trying to get the track back on the excavator!!

I accept that it is a rocky path that these farmers choose to tread, but no one foresaw the dairy produce sanctions against Russia coming. It was their involvement in the Ukraine crises, which partly brought about the fall in the sales of liquid milk and milk products in Europe, but then of course the supermarkets jump on the band wagon and kick an industry when it's down. To sell milk for less than the price of bottled water, is sheer greed. To give the smaller producers less than their costs of production is a death sentence to the industry. Milk cannot be stored; it has to go to the large Dairies on the same day, that's why it's called 'Fresh' milk. Milk is produced it is not manufactured.

The next thing the townies shall moan about is the arrival of the mega dairy on their door step, a thousand cows being milked under one roof, fed on grass brought into them (either silage or fresh grass) and concentrates. The muck going through a Bio digester produces the electricity to run the whole farm and export excess to the grid. This is already happening and I have to say the husbandry has to be tip top, but this is in the future. Please don't blame the small dairy farmer for the supermarkets greed.

You have been warned.

James.

— *invitation* —

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convenient appointment. Call **01296 398555** or visit **www.mortimersaylesbury.co.uk**

VILLAGE FETE 25th July 2015

Tradition dictates that the Aston Abbotts fete takes place on the
Saturday nearest to the Festival of St. James which is 25th July.
This year the 25th is a Saturday so the 2015 fete day is set.

So now is the time to get those diaries and calendars (paper or
electronic) that Santa so thoughtfully left you for Christmas and make a
note of the date.

If you are inclined to spring clean between now and then please put
those unwanted books or presents and surplus knick-knacks to one side
for us to collect before the fete.

If you can help, either on the day or with distribution of raffle tickets or
collecting stuff for the stalls in the weeks before the fete then give me a
call on 681952 or email ukdavidgray@gmail.com Thanks

ALLOTMENT DIARY

Well, my leeks are still doing well; and so, I notice are the moles. Otherwise, not much to report, allotmentwise. To save this being the shortest Allotment Diary ever, however, I have been scanning the newspapers to bring you the latest vegetable news.

The first item to catch my eye was the report that Henry VIII's gardening manual has been discovered, and is going on display at Buckingham Palace. It was called "*Ruralia Commoda*", and was written in Latin by a wealthy Italian lawyer called Petrus de Crescentiis. Henry acquired it on the death of its previous owner, his chaplain, Richard Rawson (who advised him on his divorce from Catherine of Arragon). It was the only book of its kind available during Henry's reign, and contains advice on, for example, how to grow giant leeks, produce cherries without pits, and how to graft black and white figs together.

Much of the advice is to modern eyes strange, or even bizarre: gardeners are advised to plant a seed each of lettuce, radish, nasturtium and colewort together in a ball of goat dung, so as to produce tasty lettuces above ground and radishes below. The nasturtium was presumably grown to keep aphids and whitefly away: I don't know about the colewort, but have read that it is a primitive form of cabbage, so perhaps it was also grown to be eaten. But the bizarre advice included the recommendation that olive oil should be placed near a cucumber plant to make the cucumbers bendy; because the cucumber allegedly "*fears olive oil such that, if you place oil near it, it will bend away just like a bow*"; and that one should take good care of one's cucumber plant during a storm, for "*whenever it thunders, it shakes with fear*". The book also recommended planting squash seeds in the ashes of human bones, to ensure prompt fruiting!

But did Henry himself ever use the book? We cannot know for certain, but it was clearly much thumbed-through, and annotated. And, to quote my favourite joke of the moment, we have to suspect he did use it, since he was very good at dead-heading!

I also read that a tomato has been developed by plant breeders in Britain and the USA the size of a football. The species has been called "*Gigantomo*", and the plants will grow 6 feet tall, and produce up to 11 fruit per plant, each weighing up to 3 lbs, and measuring as much as 10 inches in diameter. How the stems and trusses of the plants support fruit of this size and weight is a mystery to me: I imagine that each truss needs to be supported in some way – perhaps with a special frame. The variety is the result of 2 decades of research and development by breeders here and in the USA. The variety was originally developed by an American grower called Paul Thomas, who unhappily died before his tomatoes could be sold commercially; and was finished off by an Englishman called Simon Crawford.

The variety was launched last year in the USA under the name "*Steakhouse*", and was so successful that it is now being sold here under the name "*Gigantomo*". Seeds are only available from the Lincolnshire seed merchant, Van Meuwen: and (Tony Hinds and Simon Guy may be interested) the firm is offering £5,000 for anyone whom can grow a *Gigantomo* that breaks the current world record of 7lbs 12oz.

The day after typing this piece, I was watching a programme about Alaska on television, mainly because I had been there, and certainly not expecting to see anything which would be of interest to vegetable gardeners. To my astonishment, I discovered that during the short summer season, Alaska

has wall to-wall sunshine, and using greenhouses in particular, gardeners there are able to grow many spectacular vegetables. The programme concentrated on a gardener who was trying to grow the largest pumpkin ever grown in the state. In fact he missed the record by 4lbs, but his pumpkin weighed a staggering 1,283 lbs – over 91 stones, or 581 kilograms! It was so big he had to saw through some of the roofing trusses of his greenhouse and remove part of the roof to get it out; and he could only do this by hiring a large crane!

Peter Shorrocks

A pumpkin that size would give Guy & Bush some competition! Ed



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.

The shop has quirky handmade gifts and scents for your home and all occasion jewellery, handbags and scarves for you.

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March
2015

The Astonians Part 6 - Bill stuns the PCC

Contains some strong language Astonpete

All characters are fictional and hold no association to anyone

The toe tapping farmer, Boring Bill from Weedon Hill addressed the Parish Council a few days ago and made us all look up and listen. Usually when Boring Bill speaks we all mumble to each other, scratch our balls or start making our shopping lists etc. However Bill shook our attention by making an appeal to the Government, for local reasons, we have no idea.

“I am over 60 and the Armed Forces think I'm too old to track down terrorists. You can't be older than 42 to join the military. They've got the whole thing arse -backwards”, he said.

Instead of sending 18-year olds off to fight, they ought to take us old guys. You shouldn't be able to join a military unit until you're at least 55. Young guys haven't lived long enough to be cranky, and a cranky soldier is a dangerous soldier. 'My back hurts! I can't sleep, I'm tired and hungry.' We are normally bad-tempered and impatient, and maybe letting us kill some arsehole that desperately deserves it will make us feel better and shut us up for a while.

An 18-year-old doesn't even like to get up before 10am. Old guys always get up early to pee, so what the hell. Besides, like I said, I'm tired and can't sleep and since I'm already up, I may as well be up killing some fanatical son-of-a-bitch. If captured we couldn't spill the beans because we'd forget where we put them. In fact, name, rank, and serial number would be a real brainteaser.

Actually, the running part of training is a waste of energy; I've never seen anyone outrun a bullet. These are all great reasons to keep our kids at home to learn a little more about life before sending them off into harm's way.

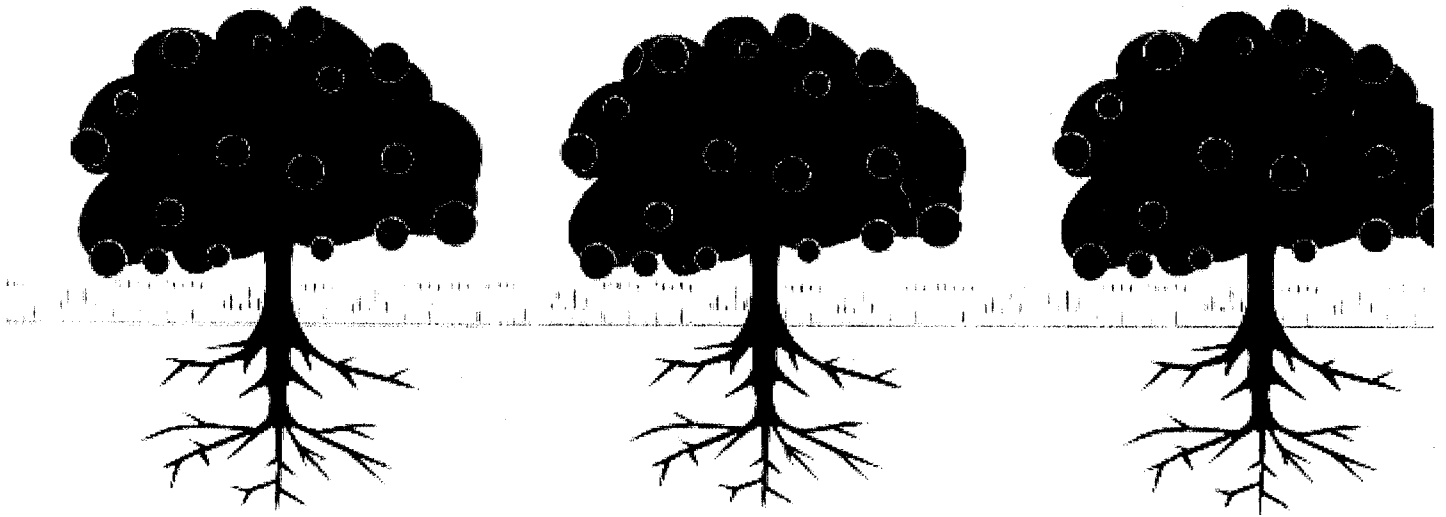
Let us old guys track down those terrorists. The last thing an enemy would want to see is a couple million pissed off old farts with bad attitudes and automatic weapons who know that their best years are already behind them.”

We were gob smacked. “Go Bill”. “Boring? Not Bill” They shouted.

And just then Mrs Montgomery spoke up and pontificated, “HEY!! How about recruiting Women over 50...in menopause?! You think MEN have attitudes?? If nothing else, put them on border patrol. They'll have it secured the first night!

The motion was carried.

Dog motions and poo bins were next on the agenda as Bill continued with his steam train jigsaw.



ASTON ABBOTTS VIC
SCOTT MEMORIAL ORCHARD

THE ORCHARD AGM

ON TUESDAY 17th MARCH
in the Village Hall
at 7pm

if you have sponsored a tree
if you would like to sponsor a
tree

if you are new to the village and
would like to hear about
your Village Orchard
then please do come along

The most remarkable wildlife encounter for me LAST month happened in London – no Neil, not the sort you are thinking of, but a close encounter with a rare bird – oh! There we go again! I was in London, with my eldest son, to support an international cyclist born 17 years ago in 57 The Green, Aston Abbots. At 17 years of age she is already in a National Women's team competing in the World Track Championships at the London Velodrome.

After leaving the cycle tract, James and I spent an hour or two exploring the Olympic Park and its surrounds, and fascinating we found it. Masses of space, very wide walk ways, top quality cafes, interesting plantings in borders and on banks, and not a scrap of litter anywhere! Through the park runs the river Lee – looking more like a canal – the grey water was often bounded by concrete walls. Thankfully, like the park, as a whole it was surprisingly free of rubbish. The park itself was actually spotlessly clean, full of fresh air and healthy young trees. There in the water were four cormorants, diving for food, so fish must be present. Then on that grey November afternoon a flash of azure blue like a neon laser – a Kingfisher. The bird shot to a small hole in the concrete river bank and we could just make out its red breast as it hid from us. We could hardly believe what we had seen. We walked down a slope to the towpath to try for a second look to confirm what we somehow doubted. Sure enough out came that most beautiful of all British birds and flew away up stream. It may be a common sight in “Docklands” for all we know, but I doubt it somehow. Perhaps after all the old song is correct and, after our emotional morning at the Velodrome a nightingale sang in Berkeley Square.

Back to the mundane - this month's star prize. Surely the giant white Christmas tree, viewable from Lines Hill over by the Bicester Road – only three branches though – never mind it will be taken down for twelfth night!

The above was written in December. I add the following in January.

January 18th and signs of Spring everywhere. I derive so much pleasure from watching the slow steady progress of the natural world towards March and spring itself. Snow drops are showing now as are a few yellow crocus – why are the yellow ones always earlier than the purple variety?

Birds are beginning to sing – particularly the Robin, the Rooks in the Abbey grounds are already spending time repairing and claiming their nest sites even though they won't lay eggs till March. In the shelter of the hedgerows keck or cow parsley is growing well. Years ago we used to collect it for feeding pet rabbits but no-one seems to do this now – it is so easy to buy rabbit food by the sack.

The other great harbinger of spring is the Hazel bush. Pristine yellow catkins are hanging in their twos and threes looking, to me, absolutely beautiful. Winter Box is flowering and soon the scent of this lovely bush will fill the air round our house when the sun shines. All these signs confirm that, as always, the better weather is coming – just be patient.

Peter

ORCHARD NEWS 16th FEBRUARY 2015

These notes will, hopefully, be read in March when the buds are swelling and signs of spring are all around. What then has happened over the winter months?

I reported before Christmas that I had been in contact with the suppliers of the dead trees, the Royal Horticultural Society and the Institute for the study of fruit trees at Brogdale in Kent. All tried to be as helpful as possible but, despite sending them samples of both roots and shoots, could come up with no definitive answer. This back end we bought two Victoria plums and two greengages to replace the single trees that had died. By replacing with two we could plant one at the original site of the dead tree and a second one further down the row in case there was something deadly in the soil at the original spot. These new trees also come with a guarantee and should one be replaced free of charge if they fail. One other tree died last year – an apple called Bucks Sheep's Nose. To replace this we had to specially order another one to be prepared and grafted for us – this has been done and it will be planted by the time you read these notes.

The great infestation of moles is looking more virulent than ever and really I suppose I should start trying to reduce their numbers to a sensible level. We shall have to harrow the grass to level the mole hills before starting the grass cutting.

We are hoping that 60 plus trees will blossom this year and that in the autumn we shall have a few specimens of fruit worth eating. Please don't get excited if you see beautiful Bullfinches in the orchard in late February/early March. Bullfinches eat the buds of fruit trees and used to be considered a serious threat to fruit production in Kent.

Lastly – in this copy of the Chronicle there should be a notice of the Orchard A.G.M. – date yet to be fixed. I ask as many villagers as possible to come along to that meeting. If you are new to the village let me assure you that the orchard is there for all villagers to enjoy. Come along to the A.G.M. and find out what we are trying to achieve in our village with this unusual orchard.

Peter

AROUND THE VILLAGE 16.2.15

Where have all the rabbits gone? Are there any rabbits left in the parish? This is the most noticeable change in the wildlife round the village in the last 6 months. A farmer from the Chilterns agrees with me – very few rabbits on his farm either.

Myxomatosis – a vile disease of rabbits, used to be the main problem faced by the rabbit population. I am not surprised that it's ages since I saw a 'myxy' rabbit – they would be easy prey to all the Kites and Buzzards one sees floating the village these days. In the past rabbits had a remarkable capacity to stage quite amazing come-backs - perhaps that will happen again.

I've recently been reading the R.S.P.B. list of the 10 most common birds in the U.K. It reads as follows:-

1. Wren
2. Robin
3. Chaffinch
4. Wood Pigeon
5. House Sparrow
6. Blackbird
7. Blue Tit
8. Great Tit
9. Hedge Sparrow
10. Willow Warbler

I am amazed to see Chaffinch so high up the list – I consider them relatively rare nowadays and as for Willow Warbler – I just don't believe it. More Willow Warblers than Starlings, Rooks, Jackdaws, Mallard, Gulls – amazing! I have no doubt that the most common birds are those that are regular visitors to feeders which make winter easy for birds. K However, I've never seen a Wren on a bird feeder but I suspect they can feed on the "waste" seeds that drop to the ground. Wrens, I always understood were insect feeders that used to find it difficult to survive a hard winter. Whatever the change, they certainly seem to be doing well now.

Snowdrops are in full bloom now and how lovely they look. I've been puzzled as to their method of pollination. Most of our native species of flower are pollinated by bees, some by wind, moths or other insects also do the job. But what pollinates snowdrops which are out so early when no insects are about and with flowers obviously not designed for wind pollination as are the catkins on the Hazel bushes. As you all know the answer to everything can now be found on the internet and that answer is foraging ants followed by bees when the weather improves. Well there you go – something else that is difficult to believe. Another question – with all the deer there are about now, why have I never come across the remains of a dead deer except on the road.

This month's star prize – the very first clump of Daffodils out in flower in the village. Where are they? Have you got them?

Peter

St. James' Church, Aston Abbotts

Mothering Sunday

15th March, 2015

Come and celebrate all those who nurture / have
nurtured you through life (Mum, Dad, Nan.....)



Tea at the Village
Hall at 4pm,

followed by joyful
service in Church

All are welcome

Together
we make a
Family

LETTER TO THE CHRONICLE

Simon Guy's writings in December's Chronicle have certainly proved food for thought for me. With reference to his "Village Poker" naming 'worthy' past residents of the village the following might be of interest.

When I first came to Aston Abbots in 1968 I was told by a villager that, before the last war, three – yes – three Olympic runners lived in this village. Now, Olympic may have been an exaggeration but even three National athletes would be amazing. One, I am sure, was Dickie Chapman's father, but I have forgotten the names of the other two. Can Shirley Ford, Colin Higgs or Tony Hinds help with recalling and recording the names. I keep wanting to say Horace Osborne was also one, but I am not at all sure.

For me today, I'm quite pleased to say that I live in a village with an ex England rugby international who played three times for his country.

Simon's other letter referred to William Vyncher who was slain at the Windmill and asks where was the windmill? May I suggest that it was most probably where Windmill Hill field is situated or does that seem rather too obvious? There is also an earthwork across the road from Red Barn Farm that looks rather like an old windmill site. Dear Vic Scott drew my attention to that many years ago.

Peter Knight

Dear Ed

When I went home at lunchtime I was very saddened to see yet another tree being cut down . No wonder we are seeing less and less birds around there will be no trees hedgerows or anything left for the wildlife to shelter in.

I hope this is not a sign that our village is going to become a concrete jungle. We are after all living in a village in the countryside.

Thank you
Lyn Clark

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More Letters!

Sir,

As a regular reader of your splendid Chronicle, may I congratulate you on both the front and back covers of this month's edition. The front cover was a superb photograph with beautiful colours – quite memorable, and the back – at last the truth about Man Flu. The sooner the disbelieving half of the population take on board the facts as presented in the Chronicle the sooner we together can conquer this evil disease which threatens our society.

Congratulations on printing the truth – please continue in your fearless portrait of the facts.

Yours

A villager

(Name & Address supplied – I have recovered from Man Flu at last)

Credit for both front cover photography and back cover humour should go to Phil Spooner, I just cut & paste! Ed

Dear Sir

I have just been looking and reading through your website with much interest and have found it to be a fascinating insight into a place that held a great affection for my late mother.

My mother was evacuated to your village in September 1939 to the home of Mr and Mrs Steele at The Firs. Peter Kent's recollection of his memories brought so many things to life for me, even more so as he mentions the two families that the Steele's kindly took in, the Cakebreads and the Wottons. My mother was Evelyn Wotton and was 10 years old when she was evacuated to Aston Abbots with her younger sister and brother. She spent in total 5 years with the Steele family, remaining in service with Mrs Steele after the war was over. The time she spent there was always talked about with great love, enthusiasm and always as though it was only yesterday. In fact I hardly know anything else about my mother's childhood, but the time spent in Aston Abbots is very clear!

On my mother's 80th birthday my husband and I surprised her with a "Mystery Tour" and took her back to the village. I can still remember it now, tears as we arrived, and then a nostalgic history tour of the village that left her feeling very emotional and also very very elated that she had visited the village for the first time in over 60 years.

I wonder if Peter Kent remembers my mother at all? Or Bernard Osborn? I know on the day we visited we had lunch at the pub and a lady told us that Bernard only lived a short distance away and perhaps we should pay a visit to see him. My mother I think was quite taken aback and we could not persuade her to make a trip to see him. It was as though the shy child of all those years ago had returned and felt embarrassed to see him again. Such a shame because I think it would have been wonderful.

I have quite a few stories that my mother has told me of and I was very privileged to have met Mrs Steele on a few occasions when she lived in London and to have met the Cakebreads who became like a second family to my mother during those difficult war years.

I have an old photo of The Firs which I am happy to e mail you a copy of for your history page and if there is any interest in hearing more information from me then please let me know.

Again, a wonderful trip down memory lane on the website and I hope to hear from you.

Kind regards,

Deborah Fisher

Should anybody remember Evelyn Wotton and wish to contact her daughter please do so through me.
Ed

Simon Guy, an apologyof sorts.

Some readers may feel that I have been unfair to occasional correspondent Simon Guy for pillorying his appearances on Danny Bakers Radio 5 show and his appalling treatment of his allotment partner Mike Bush on the same show.

Messrs Run Grabbit & Sue have asked me to point out that he is actually a pillar of the community and chronicler of village life. I am more than happy to make this correction but would point out this change of editorial position has nothing to do with the fact that Simon placing a bet at Towcester on my behalf, based on my lurching habits, earned me a wedge of ££££.

Ed

PS normal service will now be resumed.

PPS this should have been in the last edition, what chance has anybody got if I can't even put my own things in Ed.

CHILDREN NEED YOU - CAN YOU HELP?

What interests do you have?

What special skills do you have?

Would you be interested in using those interests and skills to help SAVE THE CHILDREN raise money to give children in this country and round the world a better life?

There are so many ways of doing this like using one hour to write an email or letter to an MP, helping to organise a fund raising event, joining a local group.

We are looking for people of all ages who want to use what they're good at and what interests them.

If you are interested, please contact me, Gill Flitney, Community Leader for Save the Children. Email me at gillflitney@gmail.com or phone 658944

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

Book Club

We met on 21st January to discuss "The President's Hat" by a French man called Antoine Laurain. It is a delightful tale of what happens to the Hat as it left in various locations and picked up by a variety of characters, both male and female. It was left in a restaurant by the wearer a Francois Mitterrand who was the President of France at that time.

The hat seems to have a magic quality that make the characters evaluate and change their lives. It tells how this Hat makes the characters gain in self confidence, overcome shyness and go for their goals in life.

I don't want to divulge too much of the story but to say it was a very enjoyable read, each chapter telling us about the wearer and their outcomes.

It is an optimistic message that made us happy to have read it.If you would like to read it please feel free to come and borrow it.

Brigitte

Theatre & Music

We thoroughly enjoyed "Anything Goes"an award-winning Cole Porter musical that depicts a hilarious love story set aboard an ocean liner in the glamorous 1930s. On 9 Feb, the opening night at the Aylesbury Waterside Theatre, there was a delayed start as the stage crew had worked flat out the whole day to reassemble the 1.5 tonne set but it was soon full steam ahead and was definitely worth the wait.

The sets themselves were colourful and highly varied with amazingly slick scene and costume changes. All the actors put in a highly spirited and energetic performance, albeit with a slightly shaky start to the first act. In all it was a dazzlingly energetic combination of both acting, singing and tap dancing. The actors were complemented by an very able band, which began initially on stage before supporting the rest of the performance from the orchestra pit.

The musical was originally written in 1930s, but the dialogue in the present version must have been updated as we're sure it would have been too risque to have been performed in that era! It certainly kept our attention throughout, was extremely funny and as with any good love story, everything worked out in the end. We're sure it will continue to entertain throughout the rest of its UK tour.

Gavin and Elvina

The Simon and Garfunkel Story:

On Friday, 9th January Sondra and I went to Waterside Theatre for the first night of a national touring performance of the Simon and Garfunkel Story.

The show was created by Dean Elliott, who also plays the part of Paul Simon. It tells how Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel meet as children in New York in 1953 and, through live performance of their songs and with a video backdrop of scenes and films from the 60s and 70s, gives an insight into how they became two of the most popular artists of the 1960s. Jonny Smart, plays a very recognisable Art Garfunkel, with a great voice and the trademark curly blond hair. They are backed by three very talented musicians on drums, guitars and keyboard.

Together they bring to life the lovely harmonies and music that made the duo so famous and gave them a string of hits including Homeward Bound, Scarborough Fair, Mrs Robinson, Bridge over Troubled Water, The Boxer and Cecilia - which reached number one in several charts worldwide.

Originally the duo called themselves 'Tom and Jerry' before becoming the Simon and Garfunkel we recognise and, although over the years they had disagreements which led to several splits and reunions, they famously got together again for 'The Concert in Central Park' in 1981, which, with an audience of 500,000 people, was one of the most attended concerts ever.

Thanks to Aston Abbots Theatre Goers for the opportunity to enjoy a nostalgic and well put together evening's entertainment.

Pam Dixon

Rumours of Fleetwood Mac

We were lucky enough to win the tickets for this concert at the Waterside Theatre, courtesy of our own correspondent (thank you John!). So on a cold Monday evening in early February we took our seats amongst a generally rather ageing audience, looking forward to a nostalgic evening of music from our mis-spent youth.

We certainly weren't disappointed by this great tribute band, who performed all the Fleetwood Mac classic hits, as well as blues, rock and pop numbers from the sixties, seventies, eighties and beyond, reflecting the changing eras and musical styles during which they enjoyed such amazing success. By the end we were all, of course, on our feet and clamouring for more. A nostalgic evening it certainly was, but also a display of really outstanding musicianship. Live music – you can't beat it!

Kate & Peter

The Waterside Theatre have again kindly offered two Press Tickets for each of the shows listed below. The tickets are free and you will usually also be offered a programme and a voucher for a drink during the interval or a drink at the Press Stand in the foyer. If you would like tickets for any or all of these shows then let me have an email to johnhardcastle@me.com or a note through my door at Marloes, Lines Hill with a contact telephone number.

The draw for the tickets to each event will take place two weeks before the day of the event.

Show	Date & Time
<i>DREAMBOATS AND MINISKIRTS</i>	MON 9 MAR 7.30PM
<i>THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME</i>	TUE 17 MAR 7.30PM
<i>ESSENCE OF IRELAND</i>	THU 26 MAR 7.30PM
<i>JOHNNY CASH ROADSHOW</i>	FRI 27 MAR 7.30PM
<i>RADIO CLASH & NEVILLE STAPLE BAND</i>	SUN 29 MAR 7.30PM
<i>JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT</i>	TUE 31 MAR 7.30PM
<i>THE SOOTY SHOW</i>	THU 9 APR 11AM
<i>THE RAT PACK VEGAS SPECTACULAR SHOW</i>	SAT 11 APR 7.30PM
<i>SPAMALOT</i>	MON 13 APR 7.30PM

John Hardcastle

Travel

Although not much travel again this month, I was hoping that our very own Alan Whicker (Chesh) was going to write about his dive into a muddy puddle in front of an attractive blonde during a recent walk, but he declined.

I have heard that our intrepid traveller and sometime correspondent Chesh is about to embark on a hazardous sea journey, assuming he survives you should be able to read all about it in the next Chronicle.

Food

It seems that our regular gourmand is laying low, presumably after an over indulgent festive period and need to shed a few pounds. No doubt we will hear from him again soon.

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ASTON ABBOTTS VILLAGE HALL 2015

The public meeting held in our village hall on Sunday 11th January was well attended. On display were the drawings that have been granted planning consent together with drawings that will form part of the submission to Building Control. It is hoped that Building Control's approval will be obtained by the end of this month.

This package of information will then be given to a Quantity Surveyor for detail costing. Subsequently building contractors will be invited to give quotations for the works.

The Trustees will be able to go to Funders with full information and establish what grants are available to help achieve the improvement of our village hall.

All of this is reliant of the continued support and enthusiasm of villagers. It will be necessary to raise money to contribute to the costs. It will be very beneficial if some of the refurbishment is carried out by volunteers. Their time also contributes to the match funding Funders will be looking for.

More information will be given through the Chronicle and at further public meetings.

John Hardcastle

VACANCY FOR CLERK TO THE PARISH COUNCIL

A vacancy has arisen for a Clerk to Aston Abbots Parish Council (due to the current Clerk wishing to retire).

This is a salaried position of 4 to 5 hrs work a week, and is home based, (although the successful applicant would have to attend the Parish Council meetings which are held approximately every 6 weeks).

Duties include amongst others: preparation of Agendas and Minute taking at Parish Council meetings and advising on procedure and legal matters, upkeep of Parish accounts, and dealing with day to day correspondence as required by the Council.

This is a very varied role, which will require you to have access to a computer and printer, basic computer skills, including word processing and spreadsheet maintenance; and most importantly a flexible attitude.

A full hand-over will be given and training (if necessary) will be provided to the successful applicant.

Please apply in writing to either: Paul Bruton, 51 The Green, Aston Abbots, HP22 4LY or Peter Shorrock, Oak Farm House, Wingrave Rd, Aston Abbots, HP22 4LU. Should you wish to discuss the role further please contact Paul by email: paulbruton@pbfs.co or by phoning: 01296 682322 OR Peter by email: petershorrock@gmail.com or by phoning: 01296 681260.



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THE FRIENDS OF WHITCHURCH SURGERY

AGM, 7TH FEBRUARY 2015

Excerpts from the CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Equipment and Services purchased during the past year included:-

1. Paediatric Pulse Oximeter
2. Patient blood pressure monitors
3. Data logger for the fridge
4. Waiting room blood pressure monitor for use by anyone
5. Examination lamp and stand
6. Gas lift stool
7. Desktop blood pressure monitors
8. A contribution towards annual maintenance costs for items purchased by The Friends

A further very significant expenditure has been approved by The Friends in the sum of £5,500.00 being the cost of Warfarin testing equipment and training plus a minor injuries clinical text book and a further nebuliser. In particular, the Warfarin Testing Programme is highly important to patients because it means that the testing can be carried out within the surgery environment without the need for attendance at hospital and all that that entails.

The Friends look forward to providing further support to the Surgery during the coming year. They would like to thank all the good people of Whitchurch and surrounding areas for their support by way of donations, legacies, prizes for raffle draws and contributions to the Surgery box.

John Leggett, Chairman



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Abbotts View Alpacas Feature

Jo and James Dell and their family not only have a thriving smallholding – they have built their own Eco house.

Jo and James, from Aston Abbots in Buckinghamshire, were looking for a new venture after James sold his business in 2010. They had ideas of renovating properties to rent or sell but couldn't find anything that grabbed their attention so considered moving to a place in the country where they could own a few horses for their daughter, Amy, and maybe run a small caravan site, preferably near to hill as James is a keen paraglider. They spent a year looking and couldn't find anything that suited their dream or their pocket. And then at the beginning of 2012 Jo was diagnosed with cancer. "At the age of 39 with no family history of cancer it was a big shock to all of us but I was extremely fortunate that the cancer had been caught early and was operable. I was even more fortunate not to need chemotherapy" says Jo. "Because James had sold his company it meant he was around to hold the fort and my mum and dad moved in to help look after us all. It was actually a very positive time – I felt very loved! And it gave us all time to pause and think about what we really wanted as a family. Moving away from our extended families no longer seemed like a good idea!"

James spent time browsing the internet and then came across some land for sale only 15 minutes from where they lived. Even better, it had full planning permission for a barn style house but came with an agricultural tie. James explains "We hadn't really thought of having a smallholding – but liked the idea of having some land and building our own house. We were aware of the requirements for fulfilling an agricultural tie as other properties we had looked at had them. We discussed how we could meet it and Jo wasn't keen to keep any animals we would eat! So we settled on Alpacas. We rang the agent who was thrilled to inform us that the lady selling the land owned alpacas and could provide us with a herd. It just seemed so right. We went to see the land just 3 weeks after Jo came out of hospital – her first visit out. It was a huge challenge to take on - 22 acres of grass with an existing steel framed barn – but just what we needed – something positive to focus on as we moved forward".

So in April 2012 they became the proud owners of Abbotts View Farm and 26 alpacas. Jo recalls "We had no idea how to tell each one apart as 24 out of 26 were white! We were informed, to our horror, that the shearer was arriving 4 days later to carry out their annual shear. The weather was appalling and we had no idea how to move these animals, handle them or herd them into the barn. Through sheer determination and a little bit of research we managed to create a temporary runway using bits of drain pipe, old fencing and cars to steer them into the barn. Once housed in the barn we felt sorry for them as they were wet through so laid down lots of dry hay for them. BIG mistake!! Their fleeces are like Velcro and were completely covered by the next morning! We also wanted to be able to match the sheared fleeces to the animal so we took a picture of each of them on the shearing table before they were sheared. Lesson number 2 – they look completely different with their fleeces on and their fleeces off!"

Shearing out of the way the next job was to find out a little more about these endearing animals so they booked and attended a weekend course at another alpaca owner's smallholding "Camelidynamics". James says "It was important to us to learn how to handle these animals in a calm but efficient manner. Brute force is not the way we choose to work with any of our animals on our farm and Camlidynamics is all about understanding the way camelids think and behave and working with it. It made a huge difference to the way we handled them and all the subsequent animals that have followed. And the change in the animals is remarkable. Two years on and they really seem to trust us and it makes working with them a delight, most of the time!"

The build was the next big adventure and although the plans were approved the planning permission ran out in August 2012 so time was short. James and Jo had renovated properties before but had never built so they called on the help of both their dads who had fortunately been involved in the building industry all their lives. James recalls “After bringing mains water to the site the next big job was electricity. We got quotes from the electricity board and by the time everything had been accounted for it was going to cost us £40,000 to connect to the grid. So the decision was made to go off grid.” James called upon a paragliding friend who runs a renewable energy business, Kew Solar, and they were happy to supply 50 solar panels mounted on the roof of the existing barn. Off Grid Europe gave advice and calculated the battery capacity required for the needs of the house and farm. The design of the house had to be tweaked to allow for the thermal store, log burner and back boiler and the house specification was increased to include triple glazing, a total air tight design with a high level of insulation in the ceiling, floor and walls to eliminate cold bridging. A heat recovery ventilation system also had to be incorporated.

Rainwater harvesters were sunk into the ground to provide water for the animals and to flush the toilets saving gallons of water a year. The foundations were laid just in time before the planning permission expired and the timber frame was erected in just 6 days! James recalls “It was very exciting to see the frame go up and the house was water tight within 6 days. But once the team had left the hard work really started! We had just 16 weeks before we had to move in, and we started building on October 17th 2012, just as winter approached! We had plumbers, electricians, bricklayers, plasterers, painters, kitchen fitters all working around one another which was stressful at times and we worked hard to keep the morale high!” Jo adds “Whilst the build was taking up so much time, we also had the animals to look after and were having paddocks fenced, installing water troughs, building field shelters and working on halter training the alpacas. We also brought 4 miniature ponies to join us at the farm who were lots of fun but lots of work!”

After an extremely busy 16 weeks and a very cold and snowy winter the family moved into their house on 28th January 2013. “The doors had been open so much for the workmen that the house was cold and warming it up proved to be a struggle! We have underfloor heating to every room but in the winter don’t generate enough electricity for a water heater so our log burner has to work very hard. We hardly had enough warm water to wash to start with and with three daughters and a wife that wasn’t much fun!” says James.

But with the build complete and Spring just around the corner the focus shifted to the farm. James and Jo attended an auction intending to add to their menagerie with 3 khaki campbell ducks and in addition bought a new stud alpaca. Having no way to transport him home they also had to bid on a cattle trailer! James says “I can’t believe the amount of machinery we have amounted already – horse boxes, cattle trailers, two tractors, various grass cutting and hay making instruments, quad bikes, poo hoovers! So much to run a smallholding!”.

After the ducks and the new alpaca had settled in 3 Pietrain cross Saddleback piglets were purchased as weaners. Despite not wanting to keep any animals that would be eaten Jo explains “When you live this kind of lifestyle it just makes sense. Our pigs have a half acre paddock to themselves. They make a complete mess of the ground but it’s important to me that their short lives are as enjoyable for them as possible. We did name our pigs, and taught them to sit! But once the October rains came and they started fighting it was actually quite easy to wave goodbye! And the meat was absolutely delicious. Even the butcher commented on how lean they were. We put that down to the football they played!”

The family also rescued a pony from the RSPCA who they say has been a delight and have recently been joined by a Berkshire sow who is expecting piglets as well as 5 indian runner ducklings. They also installed a polytunnel in their garden and are enjoying becoming self sufficient. Looking forward, the family are enjoying the good life and becoming busier and busier. They say “We hold a couple of open days a year at Easter and for Open Farm Sunday. We also offer alpaca experiences, alpaca walks, host educational visits, hospital visits and special need groups as well as birthday parties. For 2015 we are introducing Afternoon Tea for Mother’s Day and Afternoon Teas will be available to book on every Thursday afternoon in term time from April to October. We also have free range pork and lamb for sale at certain times through the year and these dates are listed on our website and facebook page. We have also just opened a Caravan Club Certificated Location. We can’t believe the interest and positive feedback we receive time and time again and are thrilled that our dream is paying off and people want to come here. We feel very very lucky”

For more information about their farm call Jo on 07989 063595, visit www.abbottsvieualpacas.co.uk or find them on facebook or twitter.



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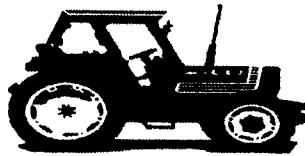
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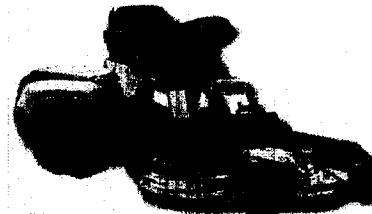
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GREAT BRICKHILL, WING AND IVINGHOE NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING TEAM

Over the past few months there has been an increase in theft from vans within our villages. The sole aim of the offenders seems to be to steal power tools. There have been vans broken into that have not had any contents of value but still the cost and inconvenience caused to the owner has been significant.

Please look at your vehicle security: Vans are valuable things - There's the intrinsic value of the van itself, the value of the tools or materials inside and the value to your business of the van as a working vehicle. All of this means that van security should be a top priority for everyone who owns or runs a van.

There's a lot you can do to boost a van's security beyond its basic specification. There's a thriving market in add-on security features for commercial vehicles that will suit the way different operators use their vehicles. Lockable toolboxes for valuable equipment and upgraded deadlocks or slamlocks for doors are amongst the most popular aftermarket options. From assessing the vehicles that have been broken into the main issue has been easy access by punching out the door locks - there are so many security specific locks and door plates for vans, well worth the initial cost to prevent being a victim of crime.

You don't need to spend a fortune on a new van packed with the latest security features - to protect your van against crime simple, affordable measures can make a big difference.

You can have the most advanced van security system in the world but it won't do you any good if you don't lock your van. It sounds obvious but forgetting to properly secure your vehicle, even if you only leave it for a minute, is an open invitation to criminals. Check that all the windows are shut and doors locked every time you leave your van.

The best way to stop valuable tools or equipment being stolen from your van is not to leave them there in the first place. Remove what you can from the vehicle and ensure anything you can't remove is kept safely out of sight secured.

If the worst comes to the worst and your van is broken into it's very useful to know exactly what's been taken. Keep a record of the items that you keep in the vehicle to help when making any insurance claims. It's also useful to have the receipts for expensive items to hand.

It's also worth thinking about adding security tags to any valuable equipment to improve your chances of it being recovered. Mark your tools so they are identifiable to you - mark them so they are less attractive to sell on if they are stolen.



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**Services at
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January 2015

1st March	6.00pm	Evensong	Rev. Philip Derbyshire
8th March	10.30am	Communion	Rev. Peter Binns
15th March	4.00pm	Mothering Sunday Afternoon tea followed by a short service in the Church.	
22nd March	10.30am	Communion	Rev. Siv Tunncliffe
29th March	10.30am	Communion Palm Sunday	Rev. Roger Hales
5th April	10.30am	Communion Easter Day	Rev. Roger Hales

We look forward to seeing you

**100 Club Draw
1st prize £50 Liz Barlow
2nd prize £10 Peter Knight**

Dear all, happy new year---here goes for Feb:

Dear friends,

Jesus got into a verbal stand-off with His detractors from time to time and naturally emotions ran high. But there was a general understanding that you did not insult the divine or belittle someone's deeply held beliefs unless you expected a fierce response!

This raises the question, should there be limits to free speech or should we be allowed to say or print anything we like no matter who it hurts or offends? The happenings in Paris in early January have made this a very real and indeed crucial question for us to address everywhere. If we are mature we should be able to cope with criticism and legitimate argument but should anyone really have to suffer foul, insulting and obscene comments and pictures deliberately aimed at inflaming people's tempers?

A 'satirical' magazine to one person is to another crude, immature and deliberately offensive. Whilst we all condemn the murders of the 17 victims of the outrages carried out on 7th. January surely the owners of the magazine could hardly be surprised to get a violent reaction considering all that has gone on since it was attacked in 2009.

The truth of the matter is that Charlie Ebdon is not neutral or satirical but a committed secularist paper anti all faith and it appears quite pornographic also. It is very sad when a world which has progressed so far in so many ways can degenerate to (at best) undergraduate levels of rudeness and extreme violence as a 'solution'.

We need to draw breath, step back, reconsider and find better ways of dealing with difference than either of those two deeply flawed approaches. Whatever or whoever we believe in we surely need to resolve and pray that this current insanity can be cured and we look at what unites us rather than what divides and try to find a creative way forward rather than degenerating into crudity and barbarism. May peace fill your heart, mind and spirit. Amen.
God Bless. Philip.

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Church Duties March

Cleaning

Flowers

Mar 7th Colin/ Caroline L

Mar 14th Alex / Anita

Mar 21st Ann / Gordon

Mar 28th Gay / Colin

No flowers during Lent

FLOWERS FOR EASTER SUNDAY

As in previous years, there will be an arrangement of lilies behind the altar dedicated to the memory of loved ones. If you would like to donate a lily, they will be £2.50 each. Please give cash and names to Caroline Abel Smith (681001) or put through The Old Vicarage letterbox by Palm Sunday (29th March).

The names of those to be remembered will be read out by the Revd Roger Hale at our Easter day Service on Sunday 5th April at 10.30am.

Dear all, here goes March!

Friends,

Lent is not exactly on the tip of everyone's tongue these days! However it's still good to at least think about periods of time set aside for reflection and maybe preparation for something important---in this case Easter. As Advent has been subsumed into the 'greater Christmas thing' so I guess Lent has been enveloped in Easter. After all we can buy Hot Cross Buns all through the year and I guess soon Easter eggs will gradually colonize the whole year. Why not Christmas carols in August? It's all part of the loss of a definite feel for certain seasons and celebrations throughout the year---a bit like all-year-round exotic fruit and veg. irrespective of when they are really 'appropriate'.

We need to return to a more focussed celebration of our festivals otherwise it might just as well 'be Christmas every day' with nothing special about the actual day itself.

Lent is a period of reflection, potentially readjustment of life and maybe sorting out charitable giving for those less fortunate than ourselves of which there are many hundreds of thousands in the UK as well as tens of millions worldwide.

Lent should focus our minds on the journey that Jesus made in obedience to His heavenly Father: a journey which was full of happenings and encounters as well as the cost of the cross on Good Friday, but which led to the great joyous victory of Easter Day when He rose from the dead.

Many seek to dismiss all this as some myth but as St. Paul wrote to the Church at Corinth without Jesus' rising from the dead your faith is in vain. Just another folk tale given faint inspiration and hope based on dodgy foundations. We may be called to be 'fools for Christ' but not stupid.....

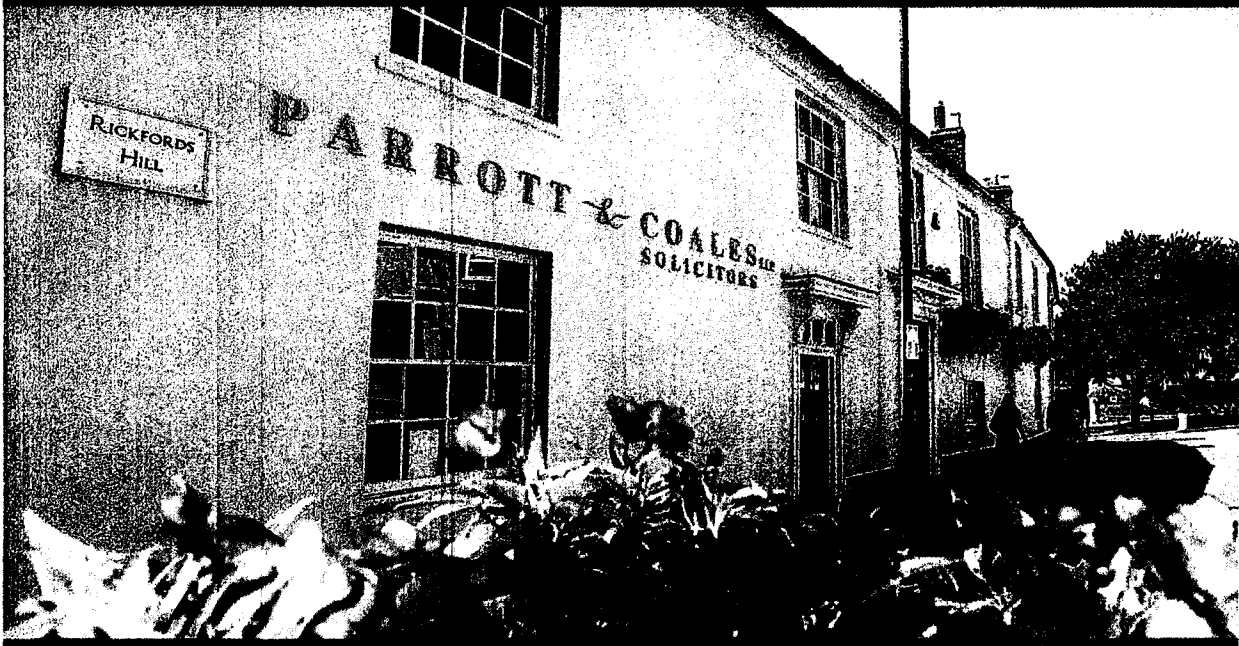
I pray you have a fruitful Lent.

God bless, Philip.

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Aston Abbotts Telephone List

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

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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YOUR PARISH COUNCIL

Peter Shorrocks (Chairman)
Oak Farm House – 681260

Paul Bruton (Parish Clerk)
51 The Green – 682322

Colin Higgs (Vice Chairman)
6 Wingrave Road – 681343

Richard Clarke
Maplewood, The Green – 681007

Judy Hardcastle
Marloes, Lines Hill – 688070

Kate Curry
2 Norduck Cottages, Moat Lane – 681137

Bob Carvey
12 The Green – 681053

District Councillor
Peter Cooper
Brewhouse Lane, Rowsham – 681250

County Councillor
Netta Glover - 688357

Address

Please note that all
Submissions for the
Chronicle should be sent to
Phil Corrigan
5 Nashs Farm, Aston Abbotts

Email submissions to:
editor@aachronicle.co.uk

Please don't forget to tell us of
any events that you would like
included in the What's On list

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Colin Higgs

Deputy Churchwarden 681343

Ann Goodman 681763

Anita Parker 681325

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ASTON ABBOTTS

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Epic Fail

The only Welshman in the village announced an alcohol-free January. He stuck to his guns... and we were impressed.

Then one Saturday at 6.30 Club he was proudly boasting that he had achieved it as he scoffed down a pint of Guinness. Except... there are 31 days in January Neil, not 30, and it was Saturday the 31st.

Failure!!! Sorry - do it again please Neil.

Dave's Apology

So Dave went in to the pub to apologise. Nothing unusual there, you say.

But wait! Normally Dave is sent to apologise when he cannot remember what he has done wrong. This time he remembered, he apologised, but nobody else knew what he had done, least of all the person to whom he was apologising. Very Strange!

Got it Covered

Charged with the task of producing a cover picture for The Chronicle yours truly grabbed his Instamatic and headed off into the garden one frosty morning.

Casting my eye around for inspiration a frost laden bloom caught my eye. Everything was right, with the angle of the sun causing the frost to effervesce over the dark red plant which stood out in sharp relief against the background.

Later, I proudly showed the perfect picture to my wife.

Forty-one years of blissful togetherness helped me instinctively realise that the hotly anticipated approbation was not going to be forthcoming.

"What's wrong?" I asked

"That's a *plastic* flower!" she said.

Well how was I supposed to know that plant wouldn't bloom in January? We can't all be Vic or Christine Scott you know!

Piste Off

Even the most experienced of skiers will have an accident some time. For some, coming home with strapping and bandages are a badge of honour - a sign of the extremes to which they will push themselves in the pursuit of sporting perfection.

But surely it's just a little bit embarrassing to have to admit the injury was caused not by a bad landing from a 200m ski jump, but by falling down the stairs at the ski resort!

Oh dear! We hope you get better soon Karen!

Quote of the Month

Dave Lewis: "Very little upsets me....."

In the Picture

Wow! So Stuart got to sit just six seats away from Bob Geldof at the recent Elbow gig in London.

But did Stuart really photo-bomb Bob's selfie???

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