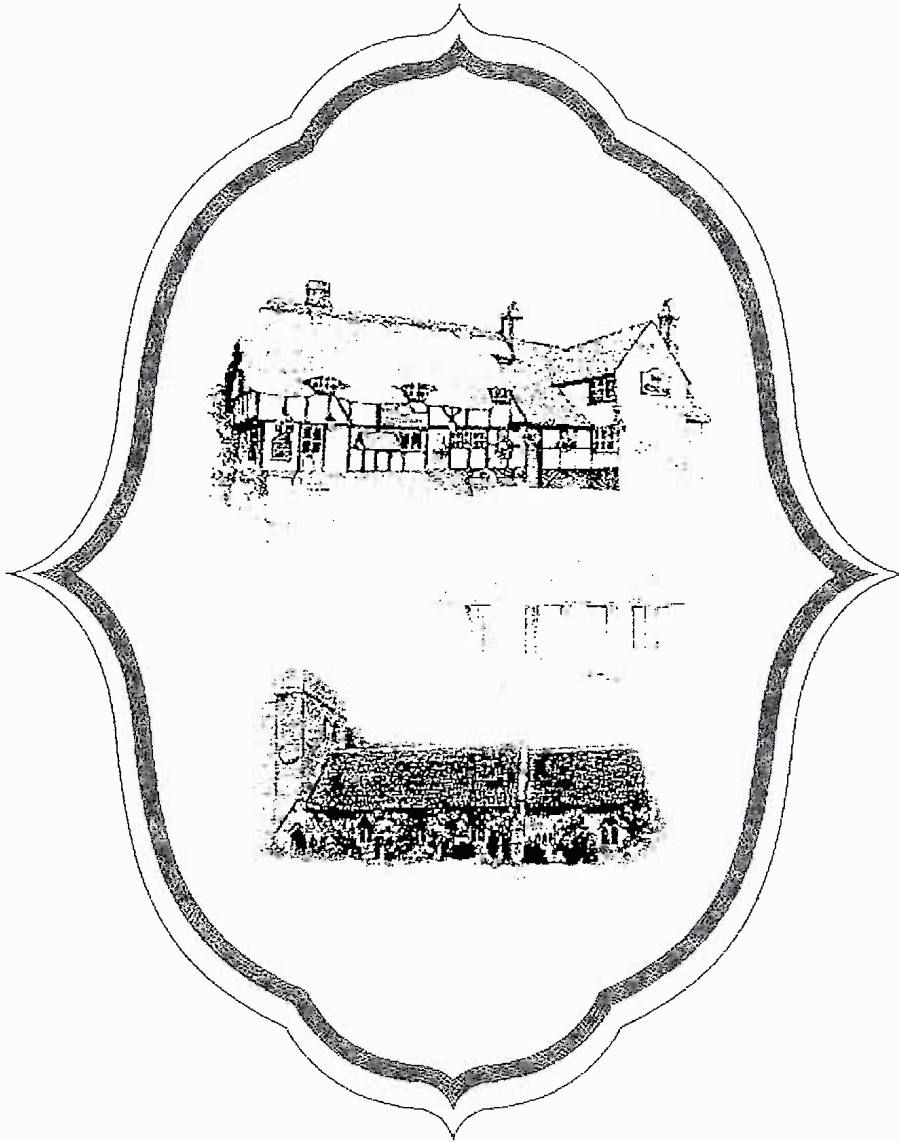


# THE CHRONICLE

Aston Abbotts Parish Magazine



**THE CHRONICLE**

**Issue 355**

**Oct 2015**

# EDITORIAL

If you regularly read this part you're probably wondering what changes was he talking about last time, apart from a few new typefaces can't see much difference! OK a slight misunderstanding during the printing of the September Chronicle. Hopefully this time you'll be holding the Chronicle in its new format.

I hope you like it, do let me have your thoughts.

I always regard the Goodwood Revival as the end of my summer, although we seem in the throes of an Indian summer as I type this. With the onset of autumn / winter hopefully we can look forward to the usual Village activities such as the Nov 5<sup>th</sup> fireworks.

I was lucky to be able to get tickets to the Battle of Britain tribute that flew from Goodwood on September 15<sup>th</sup>, having seen up to twelve of these iconic planes take the sky over the previous weekend was impressive enough, but to see almost forty take off and form up for their various flights was very moving.

Again I hope you like the new Format.

Phil Corrigan

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Dear Friends

## Round the Village

This month I thought I would write about HARVEST. This is a time which seems hardly significant to most people nowadays but was once, years ago, a time which fortold either a time of plenty or famine. Famine is of course still very common in the wider world but is completely alien today's British people who are spoilt to death (literally) by the staggering amount of food available to us.

Although I am now retired from all harvest work I did in fact work for 60 harvests starting from the age of eleven and, even before that, at the age of 7 or 8 I took part in the biblical practice of gleaning, (Ruth in the old testament was "in the fields gleaning). Some old varieties had a tendency to shed their heads when very ripe and fields could be covered after harvest with "ears" of wheat full of grain. The usual farming practice of the day was to take the chicken houses out into the cleared corn fields for the hens to feed on this lost grain. Occasionally the amount left on the ground was such that family, friends and children were called upon to collect this lost harvest into baskets and fill sacks with the proceeds which were then, at the end of the day, taken away by horse and cart back to the barn. As a child, to me the only highlights of the day were the meals – dinner and tea out in the fields under the shade of oak tree surrounded by family and friends.

At the age of 11 I think I started to be useful – the first grey Ferguson tractors were about and a good boy could move the tractor forward for the men who were engaged in loading sheaves onto the wagon. Prior to tractors a horse had done the job and as the horse moved on by word of command no one had to climb on and put it in gear. The fields in those days were cut by a binder into sheaves. Then gangs of us walked round picking up two sheaves, one under each arm and making stooks or shocks out of them. I loved this work – I could keep up with the men, my soft young arms were scratched red by the thistles in the sheaves and as I wore sandals my ankles bled from the scratching of the stubble, but I loved it all.

Before the tractor and binder came into the field my Uncle would scythe round the outside of the crop to "open up" for the tractor. I followed round with him collecting up the cut wheat and tying it into sheaves using a band of straw, then standing the sheaf in the hedge to leave a clear path for the tractor on the following day. This was medieval work. I did not enjoy this so much – it was slow and hard but I was working with a man doing a man's job – enough said.

The sheaves in their shocks had to hear the church bells 3 times – in other words the shocks stood in the field for just over 2 weeks to fully ripen the grain. These were then carted or led back to the farm yard and built into weatherproof stacks. For years after the demise of horses and carts, right into the 1990s we still referred to hay or straw being carted and the older men said led, after leading the horse. To build a stack the start was always make a shock or stook and build round it always keeping the middle high – when finished the stack was thatched with straw.

My memories are all good – tea in the harvest field, the companionship of the men, the joking and leg pulling, the bottle of orange squash standing in the water of the ditch to keep it cool, and riding back to the farm on top of the last load. Once the whole family went over to help out a relative who was behind with his harvest - about 20 of us all going into the farm house to sit round the table for dinner that day – tea in the field, of course. Harvest was healthy, robust, physical work but it had satisfaction and joy and importance – I was a very lucky boy.

## Countryside Matters

The National Crime Network, a coalition of 30 Police and Crime Commissioners have revealed the results of its first ever Major Rural Crime Survey. The survey of 17,000 people living and working in rural areas suggest that the cost of crime could exceed £800m. This figure is 21 times higher than the previous figures. With an average cost of those to the household at £2,500 (£200 to every household in the country side) and to businesses over £4100 per hit. 39% of Rural people are worried about becoming a victim of crime compared to 19% nationally. More worryingly, just 39% of rural people rate the police as good, compared to 63% nationally. On a brighter note, Rural communities are resilient and community spirit is strong, with 27% feeling that a sense of belonging has increased in the last 5 years. Also, 25% felt that their community pulled together to improve their neighbourhood.

Well, Harvest is almost finished (90% done) with one of the worst August weather on record. The cold

and wet persisted to Grade Milling wheat down to feed wheat with the loss of Protein and Hagbergs. You need at least 12% protein to qualify for bread making and a high Hagberg Falling Number (a measurement of grain with a low enzyme activity). The price of wheat has fallen sharply together with most of the cereals.

I am sure that the farming community are thrilled to bits that Comrade Corbyn has appointed Kerry McCarthy as Shadow Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. The Food and Farming Industry employs more than 3.8 million people and contributes nearly £10 Billion to the economy between 2008-2014. Her brief includes Dairy Farmers, Sheep farmers, Beef Farmers, Pig Farmers, Egg producers and the whole Poultry & Fishing Industry. To discover that she is a Vegan is quite something - you couldn't make it up!!

**James**

## ALLOTMENT DIARY

I've just returned from 3 weeks away, and am writing this before going down to the allotment to see the devastation that I suspect my absence will have produced: weeds never take a holiday!

Most of my crops have been dug up or picked by now, but I still have to get in my main-crop potatoes and autumn maturing brassicas from the allotment, and apples from the garden; and Adam has to pick his sweetcorn.

He tells me that he has deliberately left nettles to grow around the crop, in the hope that this will be further deterrent to the birds that attack the crop - and he clearly does not have much faith in the defensive qualities of my scarecrow!

One of the things I noticed last time I was on the allotment was how up-market we are becoming. When I first took on the allotment some 15 years ago, I can only recall a couple of sheds and two greenhouses (of which the one on my plot was one, and was missing much of its glass). Now there are 11 sheds, 4 greenhouses, and two polytunnels! I suppose this is a reflection of the fact that firstly allotments are no longer the preserve of people who needed to grow vegetables for reasons of economy, but instead are worked by people who love gardening as a hobby, or because they like eating organic food; and secondly the fact that we are all becoming wealthier, and can afford to spend money on our allotments/gardens.

There was an article in the press a month or so ago reporting that allotment gardening is becoming so popular today that in some parts of the country there is a waiting list for allotments which can mean that applicants do not get an allotment for years. In the worst area, the London borough of Camden, the waiting list is 40 years! There are 200 plots available, and 1,000 names on the waiting list! Some of you may remember my mentioning in an article a few years ago, that there is a standard size for an allotment, which is 10 rods (or poles, or perches). The rod, pole or perch is an old Anglo-Saxon measurement (which can be a measurement of length or, as here, of area) and 10 rods equates to about 250 square metres – or the size of a doubles tennis court. One solution which is being advocated by the likes of Alan Titchmarsh and Charlie Dimmock (and which has been employed with the newer allotments in Aston Abbotts) is to reduce the size of the allotments, so that more people can have them. Curiously the National Allotment Society is critical of this solution, on the – to my mind, spurious – argument that the standard sized allotment provides enough room to grow vegetables for a family of four. But how many allotment gardeners nowadays come from such a family? I think they are failing to move with the times.

One reason why people like vegetables produced on an allotment is that they often taste better. This is particularly the case with vegetables which have been grown abroad, and chilled for transit to the UK, to delay ripening before they go on sale. US scientists have suggested, after experiments that such produce – for example tomatoes – should be dunked in hot water before transit, in order to lock in the flavour – which sounds very similar to the advice given in most books on home freezing about blanching vegetables before putting them in the freezer. Whether producers of shop-bought tomatoes are following this advice I do not know, and growing your own is clearly the best solution!

Incidentally, I notice that Britain's biggest mail-order seed company, Thompson & Morgan is up for sale, and the firm engaged to value the business is understood to put a value of £15 million on it! It must sell an awful lot of seeds!

Peter Shorrocks

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## Village stuff:

### Aston Abbotts Village Hall

You are cordially invited to attend an 'exhibition and discussion' to be held in the Village Hall on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> November at 2pm to view the revised scheme that is currently being considered by AVDC planners.

You can view the planning application online on the AVDC website – the planning reference is 15/02863/APP.

The original scheme to extend the floor space of the Hall proved to be very expensive. The requirement to protect the tree roots from a neighbouring yew tree, that has a Tree Protection Order, meant raising the existing floor levels. The Trustees concluded that the costs reported by the quantity surveyor were too high and that it would not be possible to get the necessary funding to make the scheme viable.

The new planning application concentrates on refurbishing the existing Hall with the addition of facilities for the disabled as required by current legislation. The anticipated cost of this is judged to be in the order of £60,000. The Trustees are confident that a significant contribution from Funders towards the costs can be achieved.

The refurbishment will include the under-pinning of the end wall that has been undermined by a broken drain, re-flooring the hall and kitchen. Installing a new kitchen, re-wiring the building and redecoration. It is proposed to construct a new disabled toilet and a ramp to give wheelchair access to the front door. New lighting and heating will be installed. It would be good if the existing tables and chairs could be replaced.

The Trustees will encourage villagers to help with the refurbishment. Any offers of help by volunteers will greatly help our application to Funders.

*John Hardcastle*

## Allotments

There are three vacant plots, if interested please contact either Colin or David Gray

## HEART DEFIBRILLATOR

You may have noticed the green cabinet attached to the railings in front of the Village Hall. This contains a heart defibrillator, which is for use in cases where a person has suffered a heart attack. Early action is vital if this happens. This can include CPR (Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation) and the use of a defibrillator. What the defibrillator does is to deliver a therapeutic electrical shock to the heart which re-starts it, or if there is an irregular heart-beat, allows the normal rhythm to be restored.

In the middle of the door of the cabinet is a transparent perspex window, which needs to be broken off to get access to the key inside, needed to open the door of the cabinet. The defibrillator is contained in a carrying bag inside.

The device should be used when a suspected heart attack victim has an apparent lack of blood circulation, indicated by

- Unconsciousness
- Lack of normal breathing, and
- Absence of a pulse or signs of circulation.

Our thanks go to the local Freemasons' Lodge and the Aston Abbotts Show Fund, who donated the funds to enable the defibrillator and cabinet to be purchased.

We hope the defibrillator will never need to be used, but if someone is unfortunate enough to suffer a heart attack, then there is now something available in the village that could save his or her life.

### *Aston News & Gossip*

There is a new contact for our village news. Please email any birthdays,

Personal greetings, thank you's, congratulations or plain gossip to:

[Astonnewsandgossip1086@gmail.com](mailto:Astonnewsandgossip1086@gmail.com)

## AVDC's Recycling & Waste - Village freighter service ceases

Following the successful launch of AVDC's new bulky waste collection service, we have ceased to operate the village freighter service.

The service had reduced in popularity with parishes in recent years, with fewer parishes making bookings and those that do becoming less frequent, thus becoming unsustainable.

Now residents can apply for their bulky items taken away using our bulky waste collection service instead, where large items such as furniture or large kitchen appliances can be collected direct from their home. This means they can have collections at a time and place that is more convenient to them, rather than having to store items for long periods of time, and transporting them to the freighter on an increasingly infrequent basis.

AVDC recycles as much of the bulky waste we collect as possible, passing much to charities to be reused by families in need, whereas items collected in the village freighter service were taken straight into landfill, incurring landfill tax payments.

When collecting bulky waste, we'll also collect any bagged small electrical items or textiles from households for free at the same time.

To book a bulky waste collection, residents should go to our website and complete the online booking form [www.aylesburyvaldc.gov.uk/bulkyitem](http://www.aylesburyvaldc.gov.uk/bulkyitem)



# Whitchurch & District Royal British Legion

Has your local British Legion Branch just closed ?  
Have you been thinking about joining the RBL ?  
Would you like to support a local RBL Branch ?  
Can you help our services' heroes and veterans ?

If the answer is yes to any of the above – then please  
get in touch with us.

We are your local Royal British Legion and invite you to  
join us and become a member of our growing team.

You don't have to have been in the services or even  
have any connections to the services.

For more information, or a membership form, please  
contact:

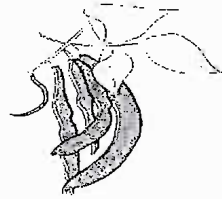
Mr Glyn Thomas – 01296 641435

Email – [glynrmthomas@btinternet.com](mailto:glynrmthomas@btinternet.com)

## What's on in October:

Thurs 1 <sup>st</sup>	Coffee Shop	Village Hall	10-12pm
	Whist Drive		7.30pm
Sunday 4 <sup>th</sup>	Rambling Club	Tring Town Centre	Car Park 2pm
	Harvest Festival	St James	4.30pm
	Followed by supper and sale in Village Hall		
Thurs 8 <sup>th</sup>	Coffee Shop	Village Hall	10-12pm
	Bingo		7.30pm
Thurs 15 <sup>th</sup>	Coffee Shop	Village Hall	10-12pm
	Whist Drive		7.30pm
Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup>	Village Footpath Walk the Green		2pm
Thurs 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Coffee Shop	Village Hall	10-12pm
Tues 27 <sup>th</sup>	Mobile Library	the Green	10.30am
	More customers needed use it or lose it		
Weds 28 <sup>th</sup>	Parish Council	Village Hall	7.30pm
Sat 31 <sup>st</sup>	Rambling Club	Royal Oak	7pm
	Halloween walk followed by Sausage & Mask supper		
Sun 1 <sup>st</sup> Nov	Rambling Club	Tring Reservoir	2pm
	Evensong	St James	6pm

## ASTON ABBOTTS ANNUAL RUNNER BEAN COMPETITION



ROYAL OAK 12<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2015.

As a regular customer of the Royal Oak and a new allotmentee, I was given the great responsibility of judging the annual runner bean competition. Being a novice gardener I obviously had to 'Google it' to ensure I knew what the professionals judges do to ensure that I gave the entries fair trial!

The following categories' were awarded -

### Longest bean

1<sup>st</sup> place - Awarded to Tony Hinds - massive 19 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches!

2<sup>nd</sup> place - Awarded to Margaret Hinds - 19 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> inches

3<sup>rd</sup> place - Awarded to Richard Clark -19 inches.

### Best Three Beans

1<sup>st</sup> place - Awarded to Colin Higgs

2<sup>nd</sup> Place - Awarded to Margaret Hinds.

### Cheats trophy

No entries were made in this category ..... However, it was later brought to my attention that the winner of the longest bean Mr Tony Hinds had fiddled with his wife's entry and whilst she had gone out for the afternoon, he snapped a <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> of an inch off the tail of her bean !!. Although <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> of an inch wouldn't have awarded her the first prize I feel now that I have reasonable justification to award the cheats trophy to Tony for his deliberate sabotage !!!!!

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The Arty Bits .....Books.....Music....Theatre...Travel & Food....  
and the bits I'm not sure where to put!

## Books

Seemingly not much reading done of late, no doubt we'll be inundated next month Ed



## *The Astonians Part 12*

*Fight breaks out at the village hall*

Astonpete

*All characters are fictional and hold no association to anyone*

A good time was had by most at the village hall Candle Light Dinner last night. As I say for most. I had to feel sorry for Bert Cartwright the old bow backed guy who runs the allotment. He and his wife Mrs Cartwright the kindly but nagging wife of Bert was sat at a table with the whacky farmer boring Bill from Weedon Hill and Hugo First the gobshite from down the road and his rather robust bi sexual girlfriend.

The Dinner was excellent but beer and wine was unfortunately plentiful. Hugo the gobshite and his girlfriend had far too much to drink and started heckling boring Bill during his long dull speech thanking the Aston Abbots WI and sewing club for laying on such a wonderful dinner and the crowd raising the grand total of £75, (the tight fisted bastards. I donated £50 of that) for the repair of the sewing club's second sewing machine.

"Is it because you squeeze the tits of your cows twice a day that makes them 'mad cows'?" heckled Hugo at Boring Bill.

Just then Hugo was pushed by his fat friend and fell on Bert Cartwright knocking his red wine all over his new suit and falling back and making him hit the floor. Mrs Cartright turned round, thought Bert was the cause of the fall, assumed he was drunk and kicked the poor sod in the rib cage causing a secondary moan from Bert. As boring Bill continued arrogantly with his speech, Hugo composed himself only to smack his fat bi bird straight between the eyes sending her flat out. Well, seeing our opportunity to give Hugo a well over due bloody good hiding, most of us stepped in to defend the fat bird and Bert. There was spit, blood and beer everywhere for a while before everyone broke up and left the hall empty and quiet except for Hugo's friend, who caused part of the problem in the first place, still on the floor snoring like a great fat saddle back pig!

What a great night. Looking forward to the Village Clay Pigeon Shoot next week!

## Theatre

### JERSEY BOYS

Slick, energetic, memorable, dynamic, well-staged, joyous.

All labels for a most excellent show, The Jersey Boys. Again the Waterside hosted one of the top West End shows.

One of my chums said it took him right back to his late teens when all these songs were part of his life.

Two Silhouettes, Walk like a man, Rag Doll, Can't take my eyes off you, Big Girls don't cry, Walking my way back to you, all the songs kept coming, woven into a 20 plus year plot of Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons.

The script was sharp, funny, and poignant, although it could have done without the F'ing and the blinding.

The lead singer was outstanding, being able to pitch his falsetto with ease. The rest of the mostly young cast added to the whole atmosphere and one fellow who kept popping up reminded me of a young Louis Armstrong, very funny.

The music was very solid and drove the whole show. Staging was super slick with fast scene changes and at one point had the action positioned in a TV studio with us seeing what would be on TV. The end of the first half was a brightly lit view towards the supposed audience with us viewing the performance from behind the stage.

As you can guess I thought the show was terrific and I even enjoyed the band rave up at the end when the orchestra got their chance to do their stuff.

The free tickets did not get a drinks voucher but instead the theatre ran a little interval bar for those with press tickets.

Now if only John Whyte could sing like that!

Neil

## YOUR CHANCE TO WIN THEATRE TICKETS.

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](mailto: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
<b>ABBA MANIA</b>	THU 19 NOV 7.30PM
<b>WESTCOAST – THE BEACH BOYS</b>	FRI 20 NOV 7.30PM
<b>THE FULL MONTY</b>	MON 23 NOV 7.30PM
<b>SAINT PETERSBURG CLASSIC BALLET: GISELLE</b>	MON 30 NOV 7.30PM
<b>DICK WHITTINGTON</b> Starring SAM BAILEY (Up to 4 tickets available)	MON 14 DEC 7PM (pre-reception from 6pm)

*John Hardcastle*

## Letters Page

Sir,

Last months Chronicle ref Floral Display.

Following on from the effusive remarks about the riot of colour in my garden, it was of course referring to the flowers.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my sponsors and family. Also Jeff, who delivers the well-rotted horse manure; Phil, who did indeed water the plants for two weeks; Paul Drysdale for not trampling on the plants when he nicked my ladders (Still want them back Paul!); the owners of that mangy brownny grey cat that seems to crap everywhere; Chiltern View Nurseries for selling me Nicotiana plants that they said would be only 50 cm high whereas the ones they gave me grew to 1.5 meters and finally the late Harold Pugh ,who as Head Gardener at Hampton Court Castle , taught me the very little I know about gardening.

I thank you.

Neil

Ed

I would like to thank everyone who donated towards a fund raising cycle ride for HEADWAY AYLESBURY VALE.

Mick Symonds, the cyclist, raised approximately £5,300. We are very grateful.

Mark White

ED

Sorry to be a nuisance but I feel I must mention the speed of the traffic through our village. There is no doubt that since the Berryfields to Buckingham Park road opened the volume of traffic through Aston Abbotts has doubled try walking up Moat Lane any morning and you can't help but notice how much more traffic there is.

> Why is it most motorists seem to take no notice of the 30 mph signs and tear through like Lewis Hamilton on the grand prix circuit.

There is going to be a such a nasty accident soon, drivers don't seem to care that there are vehicles parked along the main part of the green and that only 1 car can pass they all want to get there first. The bend by the phone box is so dangerous cars coming from both Moat Lane and the main road tear round there not giving a thought to traffic coming from the other direction or that there may be vehicles parked along the side of the road.

The bend by the Royal Oak is just as dangerous as vehicles come at such A speed they are halfway on the other side of the road and the bend by the allotment.

There is also an increase in HGV vehicles coming through I have noticed many Arla juggernauts and tankers cutting through whether the sat navs are directing off the A413 and through the village I can think of no other reason for them to use our village lanes.

Now that the school are back we now have to endure the bottleneck at the cross roads with so many vehicles waiting to go across and up Wingrave that those of us wanting to go to Leighton Buzzard or Aylesbury stand no chance as there are now so many vehicles coming from Aylesbury up Wingrave that there is now really bad congestion but as we know the highways department have no intention of doing anything about easing the situation.

Is there anything we can do to slow down the speeding traffic?

Thank you

Lyn

## Travel

Yes he's back AA's version of Alan Whicker and his account of a recent trip.

### Walking the Ridge Way

As I walked along the Ridge Way I recalled annoying conversations I used to have with my father." "Where are you going, Dad?" "There and back" he would say "Why, Dad?" I would ask and he would always reply "To see how far it is"

No wonder I was a confused youngster.

Anyway, the same thought occurred to me as I made my way along the Ridgeway from Ivinghoe Beacon to Overton Hill in Wiltshire. I did the whole thing in segments, driving to a previous end location then doing up to 7 miles out and then the same back to the car. So in fact I did the Ridgeway twice! My average speed was about 2.5 miles per hour, allowing for stops. I used a very handy APP called Walkmeter, which measured not only how far I walked but the speed, the change of elevation and how many calories I had used.

This was coupled with a very knowledgeable guide book, by Nick

Hill, which detailed everything including B&B's and bus timetables, if you needed them.

The Chiltern end of the Ridgeway was the prettiest through gorgeous woodlands, whereas the western end was over chalk downs, which were open and exposed to the elements.

The compensation for that was outstanding 360 degree views that stretched for miles and miles.

One of the big surprises was the acreage being farmed with cereal crops. The fields were huge and harvesting seemed to be an endless process, then suddenly the fields were sown again and the whole cycle repeated.

Mostly the path is stone based farm track and in a moment of whimsy it did occur to me that this was how the roads were when we still had stage coaches, horse borne transport and highway men.

## TO Hanoi and Back

### VIETNAM

This is revisiting the past for me but never the less part of the foreign corresponding.

A mysterious email arrived in my then operating base in Auckland one morning.

Unexpected to say the least as I have moved away from that part of Asia some time before.

This correspondence eventually developed into potential for a bit of business as well as the need to offer on the ground advice to the client in Hanoi.

So arrangements were made. There was the chance of flying from Bangkok to Hanoi by Vietnam Airways – I didn't take it, I flew Thai Airways. I felt justified because as we landed there beside the runway was the debris of a crashed passenger plane a Boeing 737. It had been there for some time and obviously had been bulldozed off the runway. A good clean up job! I am sure I saw some scrub beginning to grow out of it.

I was met at the airport by the two "Government" men. I had been communicating with one of them arranging this visit. They apparently were to see me checked into "The Sunway Hotel" and then delivered to a Brigadier who was the head of the Vietnamese security service. So we collected my bag and departed in a civilized manner– a large BMW limousine with air-conditioning (very few of these in Vietnam) – outside temperature was climbing to 39 degrees Centigrade. The drive into the Sunway Hotel was interesting, acres and acres of rice

paddies; one had to guess only the tip of the riceberg!

Overall impression so far a very run down country.

The hotel was a small oasis of air conditioned western tranquility. I had been upgraded to a suit which was impressive (possibly something to do with my contacts) – The whole stay (4 nights) cost US\$192 inclusive of 10% GST and that included a few beers. (All paid for me!)

Hanoi itself is a very run down city, the southern outskirts having been heavily bombed by you know who. That area is struggling to rebuild but very slowly however making headway.

The French Colonial (80 years only) Architecture was fascinating and for 100 years old town houses quite narrow with three floor each with balconies and proper masonry balustrades very impressive and one can imagine what the narrow tree lined streets would have been like in their heyday.

Most of these buildings were residential and are congregated around the periphery of the center part of the town, the older part, but the closer into the center the houses and buildings became larger, and some of these very large almost Chateau size, and would have been very beautiful in their heyday. Well maintained and with gardens perfectly manicured. Now all these houses and other colonial buildings were built with thick walls and facing back and front to prevailing breezes. This all went to keep them cool in an era when the ubiquitous air conditioning units were unforeseen.

I did have time that first evening to walk around the streets surrounding the hotel. Narrow, some partially cobbled and all with potholes (not bomb craters).

With the recent partial opening up of the country to western markets a few of these old colonial houses had been refurbished and turned into offices and as in my case the Sunway Hotel.

The three or four of this type of building I went into had the most magnificent wide teak winding staircases and floors all polished to perfection and still supporting traffic after all this time inclusive of the period of dereliction during the war.

Other buildings of the same construction I entered had had had little attention and were dusty, dirty and plaster was falling off the walls. Externally as I passed through you could glimpse bushes, small trees and orchids growing out of cracks in the walls.

I can't say why I visited these unkempt examples of the past French colonial era I had only time to glance as I passed through in haste. It was useful to have experienced the layout of the better kept buildings as it helped with swift passage!

All these houses, inclusive of the bigger ones had what in their day would have been beautiful central courtyards with wonderful tiles, small trees giving shade

and fountains adding to the coolness. Some are attended and others are still there but totally unkempt, overgrown, and dirty – but still proud and hanging onto the past waiting for a bit of love and care to turn the century back.

Communist officials now occupy all these grand houses in their dirty unloved state.

There are a few temples of uncertain heritage and age, but as I was told there are no great monuments as the country has been fighting feudal wars for centuries and then of course the French influence followed by communism and finally the American effect.

The war would have cost the government almost everything they had. Hence the slow rebuilding of the infrastructure.

However out of all this the Catholic churches and Cathedral are magnificent buildings and if the tree and shrub roots etc. were removed and the buildings repainted they would be out of this world. The cathedral I visited nearly equalling those of Spain but without the gold. Catholicism is practiced in the North part of the country whilst Protestants are of greater numbers in the south..... to be continued.

Cap'n Jens





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## St James Church

### Church Duties

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10 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Ann & Gordon	Harvest	Peter
17 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Alex & Anita	Donated	Phil
24 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Colin & Gay	Colin	Gordon
3 <sup>1st</sup> Oct	Colin	Colin	Caroline L

Dear friends,

"Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me"-----so the old saying goes.

But I beg to differ! We see on an almost daily basis what cruel, often lying, words can do to people's lives via

Facebook, twitter etc. etc. There is nothing wrong with so called 'social media' per se but there is no doubt

that a few well-honed and well-aimed words can do a whole lot of damage to someone's self-esteem

and haunt them for years to come. Indeed they can scar for life just like a burn or a knife wound do.

Inadvertent hurt or upset is one thing but deliberate and vicious negativity is something else altogether

and is never justified.

Sometimes we do have to say hard and difficult to hear things but even they can usually be couched in

a civilized way to avoid hurt. In the Epistle of James in the New Testament the writer says: "the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts.

Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person".

Jesus Himself said it was what came out of a person which corrupts rather than what goes in, which is the

opposite of what we might usually think.

Maybe we all, from politicians and the media outwards, need to be a little more careful with what we say

and how we say it

God Bless, Philip.

Reverend Philip Derbyshire

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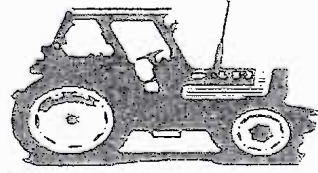
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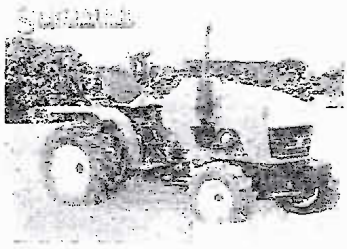
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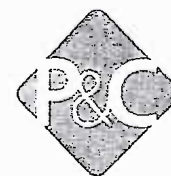
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To contact them call

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Alternatively, email them on:

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