



**Aston
Abbotts
enters
Best Kept
Villages
2022.**

**Let's try and
retain our
trophy.**

Aston Abbotts enters Bucks Best Kept Village 2022

Chris Phillips

After the disruption presented by Covid and the lockdowns we all collectively endured, Bucks Best Kept Villages is being held this year – and Aston Abbotts is competing to retain our trophy and signage!

After the success of 2019, the Best Kept Village sign has stood, pride of place, on the village's green and we are a defending champion we are entered into the Tindall Cup – the Cup Winners Cup, if you like – and we will be up against

Stewkley, Winslow, Hedgerley, Burnham and Chalfont St Giles.

With the judging taking place between 1st June and 14th July, we have ample time to coordinate our village to put on a great show, but we'll need to be ready! The visit will be unannounced, but if we rise to the challenge like we did three years ago we're in with a very good chance. The whole village will be judged so we can all do our little bit.

How you can help

This is very much a community effort and one of the things that made our entry stand out in 2019 was how villagers put attractive hanging baskets and pots around the village – the judges recognised we were proud of our environment. **Such a community effort is recognised in the scoring by the judges, which also features (total score available = 200):**

Cemetery, graveyard (separate or attached to a place of worship) 20

Green, playing field, children's play area, nature conservation area 40

Floral Displays (hanging baskets, tubs, planters) 10



Village hall, community centre, church hall 20

General environmental features (hedges, verges, ditches, pond, stream, pump) 20

Areas around shops & pub 20



Bus stops, bus shelters and notice boards 20

War memorial 20

Overall appearance, lack of litter & evidence of community effort 30

It was amazing seeing how many villagers got involved in 2019 and we were rewarded with the BKV totem and trophy, and that gorgeous sun-kissed day in September 2019 will live long in the memory!

However, we want more success as I know the village feels a great deal of pride from competing, and with a fair wind, maybe winning (again).

If you want to pot up some planters to leave on display or help with tidying up the village your support will be hugely appreciated.



Can we do this? Of course we can!

From the Editor

With the evil actions taking place in Ukraine, the call went out to the people of the UK to help the Ukrainians in any way we could. Aston Abbotts stepped up and donated so much, from nappies to pet food. So many residents contributed and Linda Wheaton ensured our contributions were given to the good people whose task it was to deliver it and much more to the refugees in Poland.



I often see a young lad and his dad litter picking the village. On behalf of the village I would like to thank you both.

Remember it's the annual village Litter Blitz on 9th April at 10.00 where we all have a chance to help clear the trash lorries and passers by seem to throw on Aston Abbotts.

And that takes me to the state of our tarmac paths on The Green.

Still in a terrible state and in part dangerous. Again we can all do our part by writing and calling 'Highways' at Buckinghamshire Council:

<https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/transport-and-roads/report-a-highway-s-problem/>

01296 585858

And to our political councillors too. April sees Paul and Viki Drysdale leaving Aston Abbotts after 44 years. We wish them all the best for the future.

News In & around Aston Abbotts

Crash on The Green Aston Abbotts involving truck and car. It's reported that the car was coming round the bend too fast with the truck in the opposite direction towards Wingrave Road. The truck was forced to crash into a skip full of rubble, positioned on the road, pushing it some 12 feet forward and causing damage to the truck. The car narrowly missed the bus shelter.

If children or walkers were on the pavement at the time, the situation could have been far worse. This surely must strengthen the need for real traffic calming measures to be introduced on The Green.

School Bus fire Wingrave

Early on March 2nd, a mini bus carrying children from a school in Wingrave caught fire.

Firefighters used two breathing apparatus and two hose reel jets. All persons were accounted for.

The Highways Agency and Thames Valley Police were in attendance and the road was closed due to approx. 60 litres of spilled oil and fuel. The fire scorched the road.

Driver, Sakhy Badshah, was able to act fast and ensure the safety of pupils on his bus. No one was hurt.

Janet Lee, Assistant Head Teacher at Wingrave Church of England School, commented: "We're so grateful for Sakhy's swift and calm action that ensured the safety of the children on the bus."

No to waste plant expansion

A controversial recommendation to increase vehicle movements and working hours at a Cublington waste site, as reported in last month's Chronicle, has been voted against.

The scheme threatened to increase the amount of heavy goods vehicles through Aston Abbots by up to 250%.

Councillors voted 7-3 in objection to the plans. Opponents to the

proposals hailed the decision as being the result of a concentrated campaign in Cublington and neighbouring areas like Wing, Aston Abbots and Whitchurch.

Thanks goes to councillors who voted against the plans especially, Diana Blamires (Con, Wing), who campaigned strongly.

The Dove in Wing is falling into disrepair.

The state of the building certainly contravenes best practice for buildings in conservation areas – boarded-up doors and windows, damp, decay. It is said that the pub/restaurant is one of 700 owned by the Reuben brothers, billionaires with a superyacht and a share of Newcastle United. The pub is part of their Wellington Pubs group. They're not advertising the tenancy, nor is it on their For Sale list. Sitting, as it does, on a 0.4 acre site, you wonder what the owners might have in mind.



Mentmore Towers Burglary



Two people have been arrested in connection with a burglary investigation in Mentmore Towers, Buckinghamshire following an incident on Sunday 13th March.

A 22-year-old man and a 24-year-old man both from Leicester were arrested on suspicion of burglary.

They've been released on bail.

IN ORDER TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT, HE FIRST HAD TO UPDATE HIS OPERATING SYSTEM, DOWNLOAD AN APP, GET A USERNAME, CHOOSE A PASSWORD, LOG IN TO A HEALTH PORTAL, NAVIGATE TO MESSAGES AND WRITE HIS DOCTOR...BY THEN IT WAS TOO LATE.



Your Emails

Easter Lilies

Dear Pete

I will, as usual, be doing an arrangement of Lilies behind the altar for Easter and if anyone would like to purchase one in memory of a loved one they will cost £3 each this year I am afraid.

Please leave the money, and name/s to be remembered, in an envelope in The Old Vicarage letter box on the pillar just inside the gate by Thursday 7th April so that I know how many to order. Alternatively give me a ring on 01296 681001 if it is easier.

Thank you. Caroline

Hi Pete - please could you squeeze in the information that there is **NO CAFE on Thursday 7 April**, because this is the day of the postponed Christmas lunch?

Thanks, Caroline

Dear Pete

All through the winter even on the coldest mornings I had the pleasure of a precious little blue tit garden bird that would sit on my garden fence and occasionally when I would talk to it through the window it would come and sit on my window ledge.

I felt so sorry for it as I know we are not allowed to feed the wildlife and birds because of the rodent

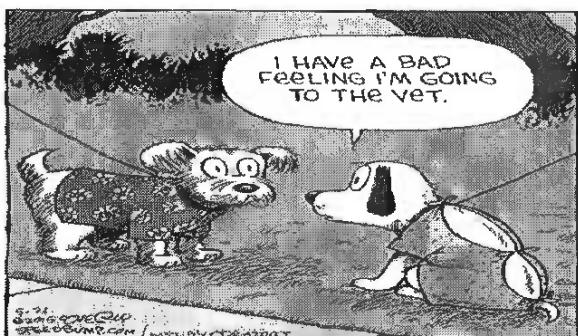
problem. This little bird brightened up many a cold miserable morning. Sadly this morning I came along our communal back pathway and laid on the path was my little bird, obviously killed by one of the cats. I have buried him or her under my rose bush named Scent From Heaven . I couldn't just leave it on the path after all the mornings it had brightened up for me.

I am going to buy plants that deter cats and plant in my garden so that hopefully my garden will be a cat free safe haven for our precious garden birds.

Thankyou **Lyn**

Dear Editor, As a reminder to dog walkers, when walking on footpaths across fields, please keep dogs very well under control. Many fields now have sheep with Lambs. There are also ground nesting birds. Also, as we are entering the Best Kept Village Competition again, please ensure your gardens are neat, hedges are well cut, clean bus shelters and beautiful hanging baskets are everywhere.

Colin Higgs



ASTON ABBOTTS

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AND QUESTIONNAIRE



The Parish Council has kicked off the process to develop a Neighbourhood Plan. This will enable our community to define a vision for the parish for the next 10-15 years and influence any future development. The Neighbourhood Plan:

- Has legal weight in planning decisions
- Must be supported by the majority of the community
- Is only concerned with land use matters

It is extremely important that the wider community is on board from the start. This makes it easier to achieve the support that is needed to successfully take a Neighbourhood Plan throughout the process.

The first step is to gather information from the residents in the parish. **This will be done using a questionnaire which you will all be receiving shortly.** You are urged to complete the questionnaire as it will be your opportunity to influence the initial steps.

What a Neighbourhood Plan can and cannot do?

A Neighbourhood Plan can...

- It can direct appropriate growth to appropriate locations
- It can protect local assets such as important green spaces and local facilities
- It can ensure that new development is sensitively designed
- It can be used to set out a 'wish list' for improvements or new facilities e.g. play facilities
- Include policies, for example, design standards that are more detailed than policies in the Local Plan

A Neighbourhood Plan cannot...

- It can't prevent new development that is included in the Local Plan
- It can't be in direct conflict with Aylesbury Vale's Local Plan
- It can't be in conflict with Government Planning Policy and Guidance

Who is involved in producing the Neighbourhood Plan?

Everyone can be involved; it is a plan for the whole community.

The Parish Council will lead the process and oversee the formation of a Steering Group which will develop the Neighbourhood Plan with the aid of volunteers. Any

person can volunteer to be on the steering group.

During the process, the steering group will seek opinions from the whole community. Residents, business owners, landowners, interest groups and developers will be asked for their views regularly.

We will be looking for people who have an interest in planning the future of the Parish and we would welcome help with various aspects of producing the neighbourhood plan including communications and publicity, project management, IT skills, organisational skills and general help such as delivering leaflets.

If you would like to be involved or have skills you think might be useful, please contact the Clerk of the Parish Council:

clerk@astonabbotts-pc.gov.uk

How are Neighbourhood Plans developed?

Usually, the process can take between 2 and 4 years and includes an independent examination and a referendum. The following principles are adopted:

- It is a 'neighbourhood' led process.
- The community decide on the content.
- It is produced by the Parish Council, on behalf of the community.

- It needs to be flexible to address different needs and expectations.
- They are tailored to the neighbourhood so no two plans will be the same.

What happens once the Neighbourhood Plan is adopted?

- The Neighbourhood Plan is a formal planning document and carries real legal weight.
- Planning applications will be assessed against the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Appeals against planning decisions will take them into account.

What is the Local Council's role?

Every local Council has a duty to support Parish Councils in producing Neighbourhood Plans. They carry out and fund the formal parts of the process including examination and referendum.

Who will pay to produce the Neighbourhood Plan?

A government grant is available for every Parish Council.

More information can be found at:

https://neighbourhoodplanning_org/

PLATINUM JUBILEE LUNCH CELEBRATION (SUNDAY 5/6/2022) UPDATE



Following a nice turnout at the initial meeting, just a quick update on what's been discussed so far..

THE LUNCH: (Please be advised that this is strictly for villagers and their friends and family)

Due to COVID we will not be arranging the traditional long tables ordinarily organised, but ask that anyone/families wanting to attend/be involved, bring their own tables, chairs, gazebos (hopefully won't be needed), food and drink. If you want to bring a Gazebo, please do NOT put the sides on as we want everyone to interact and get wonderful photos of the day.



ON THE GREEN:

Due to the space, can anyone who would like to join in, please let us know, in order that we can monitor

numbers expected and organise accordingly (please email jubilee@aston-abbotts.co.uk, or let either Richard or Emma know)

SET UP/CLEAR UP:

Set up: (including closing The Green with hay bales, as per the Fete from 11.30am

LUNCH: 1 – 4 pm

Toast to Her Majesty: 1.30pm
(suggestions as to who should do this)

Clear up 4.30pm (bales removed)

(Bin Liners will be provided around The Green, but can all look to do their thing and clear up after their 'jolly')

DECORATIONS/BUNTING:

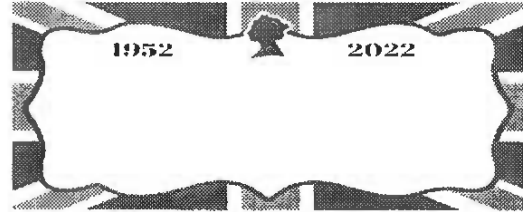
As it will be held on The Green, we are asking all attending, to bring as much 'regalia'/ bunting or flags, etc, as this will be a wonderful and historical memory for the event, the village and to have pictures on the AA website / FB page for years to come.



It's been agreed that we'll have 'music through Her Majesty's years' so could we have some ideas for the playlist (please email jubilee@aston-abbotts.co.uk, or let Richard or Emma know) We are also asking for a volunteer to put this together/manage it on the day! If you

are the person, could you help us make it a wonderful afternoon??!!

DRAWING OF THE QUEEN (for the children):



We would love younger members of the community to draw a 'portrait' of the Queen or anything that she has represented over the past 70 years of her reign.

This could be anything from her love of horses or her beloved Corgis. Or it could be a special moment that will stick in the mind of the 'artist', especially if they have met Her Majesty.

No rules apply, just imagination required!! (It is NOT a competition ~ just for fun)

Further details to be provided next month



Definition of a pudding, PER Her Majesty's own competition:

Boiled and steamed puddings, Baked puddings, Bread puddings, Milk puddings, Jellies.

Categories being judged:

Ladies

Gents

Children (14 and under)

Please think about:

It's fit for Her Majesty The Queen!!

ESSENTIAL

All ingredients must be noted on an attachment/a note for allergen implications

(Further details next month)

LET OTHER VILLAGERS KNOW

If you have a neighbour/ know/ are related to someone in the village who doesn't read the Chronicle/ read postie on email or is not on Facebook, can you please have a chat with them to see if they are interested in joining us all for the day.

If they have any ideas, and or if we can simply help them enjoy it with the rest of us! (You may have an elderly neighbour who doesn't see what is being arranged but would like to join us on the day).

Many thanks. Emma

Aston Abbotts Parish Council March 2022



The Parish Council meets again on 10th May at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

Since the last PC meeting and until the next we have a few things to note:

Lockharts Recycling A recent planning application to upscale the level of commercial activity resulted in a consolidation of local Parishes to present a strong case against approving the application. Lead by Unitary Councillor Diana Blamires, constructive objections and valid concerns were raised at the planning hearing. Alongside supporting neighbouring parishes who would be affected by noise levels and increased traffic, our main concerns were focused on an excess of HGV's using the village as a cut through. We are delighted to say that the planning has been refused.

Streetlighting This has been an issue for a few months following the retirement of our contractor. We have a replacement company

on board and are now considering the best way forward on two counts i) managing the ever increasing energy prices ii) LED replacements. Progress is slow but heading in the right direction as we await the outcome of a bid for funding to support an upgrade, from HS2.

Annual Parish Meeting – after a 2 year break (Covid) we are organising the Annual Parish Meeting for Tuesday 26th April and look forward to seeing you there.

Annual Meeting of the Parish Council – this will be held on Tuesday 10th May, it is a slightly more formal meeting than the regular meetings, councillors will elect officers and assign responsibilities. It is a great opportunity for residents to come along and learn a little more about the role of a councillor - again we hope many of you will be able to make it. In the meantime

A summary of what your Parish Council actually does:

The Parish Council Precept enables the PC to manage & administer facilities that benefit the village as a whole. These include the Recreation Ground and Play Area, Streetlighting, Dog Waste Management, Road sweeping and

Hedge cutting. Councillors (all volunteers) and the Clerk invest considerable time lobbying the Unitary Council for road and pavement repair and maintenance – gully clearance, pot hole and surface repair, maintenance of signage, white lining and traffic calming. We also complete bid applications to help fund much of the aforementioned.

The Devolved Service initiative that filtered down from Buckinghamshire Council a few years ago gives the PC responsibility, and some limited funding, for hedge and verge cutting within the 30mph zones. Stretches of highway that fall outside of the 30mph zones, but remain within the Parish are very much the responsibility of Bucks Council & Transport for Bucks. The PC can and does report works outstanding on such areas.

Finally, the PC supports residents as best it can; whether that is by adding weight to requests that go to Bucks Council, donating to village committee led events, providing a conduit through which the village can help secure its future – Planning applications, Neighbourhood Plan, Government Consultations are just a few examples.

The life of a Parish Councillor is varied, interesting, challenging and rewarding – please do come and talk to us to find out more.

For a full set of minutes from each Parish Council meeting please visit the website

<https://astonabbotts-pc.gov.uk/>

And if you would like to contact us please do so through the Clerk clerk@astonabbotts-pc.gov.uk

ASTON ABBOTTS ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2022

To be held at the Village Hall, 26th April, 2022 at 7.30 pm.

AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. To approve minutes of meeting held on 24th April 2019
3. Matters arising from the minutes
4. Unitary Council report
5. Annual report from the Parish Council Chairman
6. Neighbourhood Plan Presentation
7. Village Hall Report
8. Chronicle Report
9. Village Orchard Report
- 10 Village Fete Report
- 11 Firework Night Report
- 12 A.O.B.

REFRESHMENTS WILL BE PROVIDED. WE HOPE YOU WILL BE ABLE TO JOIN US.

FUN, FREE EASTER HOLIDAY CLUBS ON OFFER TO BUCKINGHAMSHIRE CHILDREN

Buckinghamshire Council, local businesses, organisations and charity groups have teamed up to provide thousands of places for eligible school-aged children and young people, in Reception to Year 11, to enjoy a variety of exciting and interesting holiday clubs in their local area throughout the Easter holidays – for free!

Whether your child is interested in sport, photography, drama, music or something else, there is a holiday club for every age and interest. While some children and young people may be exploring a developing hobby, others may be able to try something new that they've not had the opportunity to try before.

The places have been made available as part of Buckinghamshire Council's Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme, which is funded by the Department for Education. Available to children and young people who receive benefits-related free school meals, each HAF club session includes a healthy hot meal, as well as the opportunity to develop new skills, grow in confidence and make new friends.

Details of the full range of activities that are available and how to secure a place can be found on Buckinghamshire Council's website. Take up is expected to be high and advice for eligible families is to book as early as possible. New activities are being added on a regular basis so do keep checking back to see what is on offer.

There are holiday clubs running right across Buckinghamshire over Easter. use your HAF booking code from your child's school to book your child on as soon as you can so you don't miss out! Find out more about the council's HAF programme at: www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/haf

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Great Train Robbery story continued

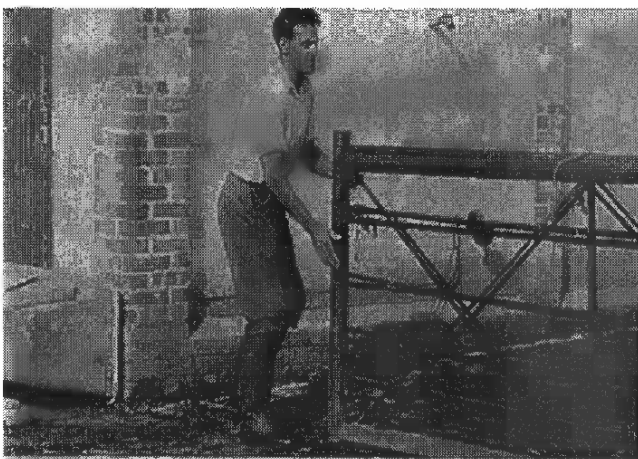
Following on from last month's article of the Great Train Robbery which took place near Ledburn on the 8th August 1963, Ro Knight wrote to the Chronicle with this piece.

I would like to add something to the article last month on the Great Train Robbery. The person who tipped off the police about the strange movements at the Leatherslade Farm was my friend John Maris. John was a herdsman working on an adjacent farm in Oakley, Bucks. He told us many stories about the events and how it changed his life.

Because of the careful detail in the evidence he gave at the trial, he was subjected to an attempt to frame him on a charge of perjury. He was sent threatening messages in the post, with his wife Grace receiving a letter which had a

drawing of a coffin with her husband's name on it. The fear lasted for years and he was always looking over his shoulder. He had to take precautions at work in the hope of preventing an attack whilst working alone. The situation became so bad that John began to carry around a wooden truncheon for protection.

John recorded all this in a book, but his wife wouldn't let him publish it, because she continued to be frightened. So after Grace died he eventually had it published and it is called 'My encounter with the Great Train Robbery and How I became a marked man'. John was a great man and a good friend. Unfortunately John died earlier this year at the age of 92 and we celebrated his life in a thanksgiving service last month. He will always be remembered for his courage and honesty. He was a great man of faith and he will be missed by all those who knew him.



MR. JOHN MARIS, THE FARMHAND WHOSE TELEPHONE CALL BROUGHT THE POLICE SWEEPING ONTO THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HIDEOUT OF THE GANG.

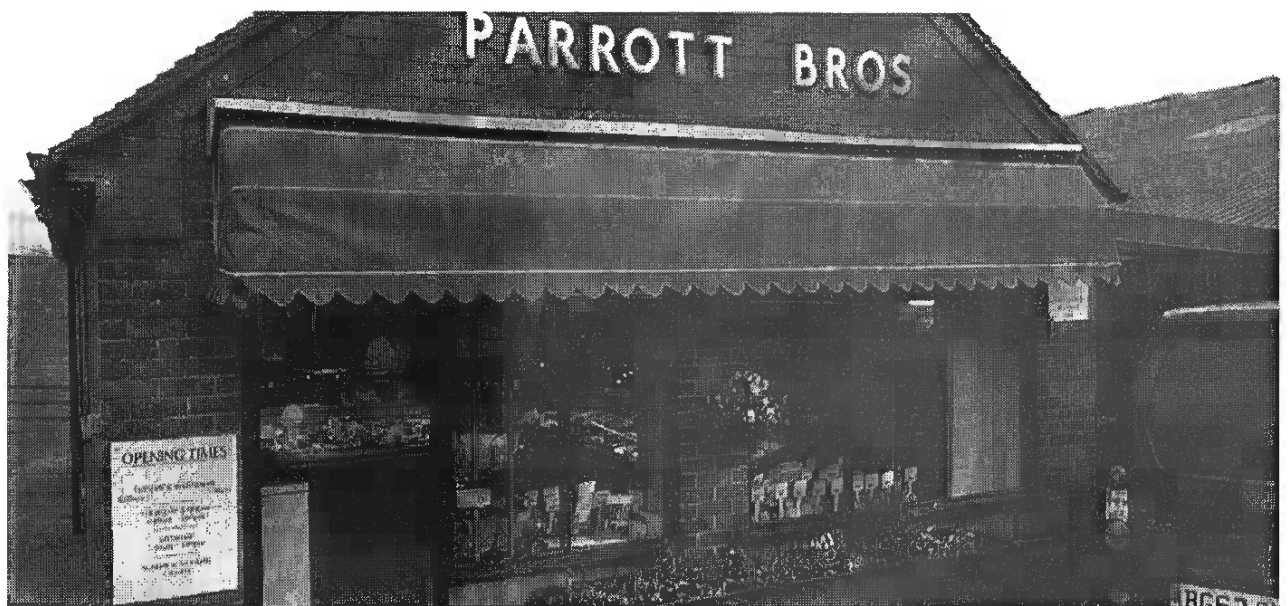


LEATHERSLADE FARM, OAKLEY, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE, WITH THE HOLE INTO WHICH IT WAS BELIEVED THAT THE GANG INTENDED TO BURY THE MAILBAGS.

What's on in Aston Abbotts for April

What	Where	When
Thursday Morning Cafe NOT 7th	Village Hall	Thursday 14/21/28. 10.00 - 11.30
Footpath Walk	The Green	Sunday 10th. 14.00
Whist Drive. (New players welcome)	Village Hall	Thursday 7th/21st 19.30
Village Litter Blitz	Village Hall	Saturday 9th April 10.00 Sacks & pickers supplied. Please wear yellow safety jackets
Bingo	Village Hall	Thursday 14th 7pm
Good Friday	15th	
Easter Day	17th	
Easter Bank Holiday	18th	
Yoga	Village Hall	Every Wednesday 16.30 -18.00
Annual Parish Meeting	Village Hall	Tuesday 26th April 19.30
Bus Journey	09.08 Bus to L/B	Friday 29th 09.08 bus to L/B

For Village Hall Hire please call Nigel & Sally on 01296 681152.



Parrott Brothers Butchers Whitchurch.

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Opens 7AM Tuesday to Saturday

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Things to do in Buckinghamshire for less than £10 at Easter

You don't have to spend an obscene amount of money to have a good time.



Go on a refreshing walk this Easter.

Easter is just around the corner and with a four-day weekend coming up, there will be plenty of time for activities. Whether you are spending time with your kids, grandkids or just yourself.

It isn't very often that a long weekend comes along so you have to make the most of it. Finding a cheap family activity is also very hard to come by so finding a good deal feels like a win.

We have compiled a small list of things you can do with the kids for under a tenner which won't break the bank. Not everything fun has to cost a ton of money, it's just about looking hard enough.

The activity you end up doing may be subject to what the weather forecast is like on the day you

want to go out. This is why we've suggested a range of things from indoors to outdoors.

1. Walks

Buckinghamshire is full of beautiful views and countryside which is waiting to be explored. The best part about it is that it is completely free.

Although if you fancy exploring somewhere you've never been before and need to drive there, it's always handy to keep some change with you. From a walk along the Grand Union Canal to having an adventure around the gardens of Hughenden Manor, there's no better way to spend some time than out in the open.

2. Discover Bucks Museum

A museum located in the heart of Aylesbury with plenty to explore from the embroidery gallery for the artistic-type or the Roald Dahl children's gallery for the kids. Brand new galleries that will take you back in time will also be opening just in time for Easter.

The museum is full of artefacts, history and stories from 200 million years ago up until the present day. Tickets are also free for anyone aged under 14 years and will only cost £5.50 for an adult.

3. Play Train Activity Centre

The activity centre can be found on the Cressex Industrial Estate in High Wycombe and will only cost you a small amount of money.

Peak times, such as Easter, prices do rise but are still affordable with an adult costing £2, a child under 1 for £2.60, a child aged 1 £5.35, ages 2 to 4 will cost £7.30 and children between 5 and 8 will cost £8.10.

The fun is endless with so much to do including: Soft Play Frame, Role Play Village High Street, Under 3s Area, Under 4's Mini Frame, Shop, Party Rooms, Great Cafe, Barista Coffee and Italian Scoop Ice Cream.

4. Inflatable Family Fun

A large inflatable outdoor play area is coming to Milton Keynes for the Easter holidays. It will be located at the Milton Keynes Rugby Club from

the 15th to the 18th April running from 10.30am to 2pm.

It is a pay at the gate event but will only cost you £8 per child with adults and car parking for free. There will be a total wipeout and bungee trampolines that will be an extra cost but otherwise there will be plenty of slides and obstacle courses.

5. Cinema

A cinema can be quite expensive, especially in Bucks, but we have found some Vue cinemas that are only a short trip from Buckinghamshire, depending where you are based. Vue's nearby are in Bedford, Oxford and Northampton.

Vue cinema does a deal for parents with kids labelled 'mini mornings'. They are run every Saturday and Sunday from 10am, where you can bag tickets starting from £2.49. The child's ticket isn't the only one that costs £2.49, the adult one does too.

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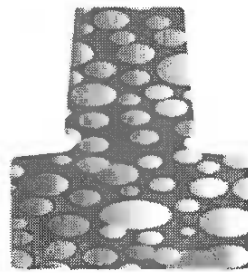
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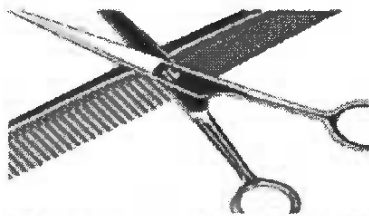
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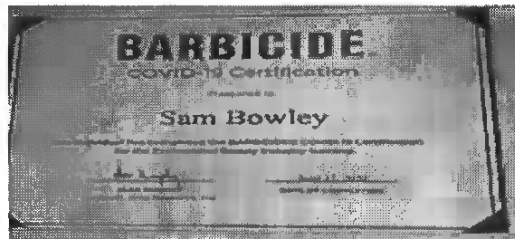


Aston Abbotts Mobile Hairdresser

COVID-19 SAFE



MOBILE HAIR DRESSER



Covid-19 SAFE

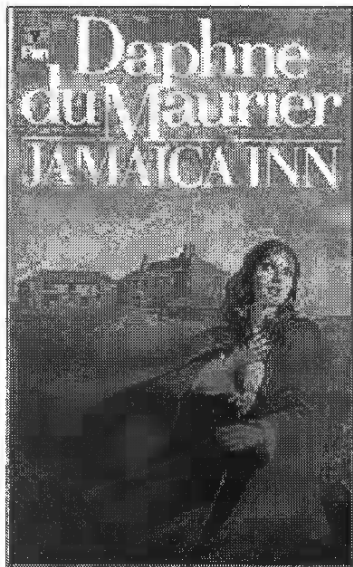
Hi, I'm Sam and have lived in the village for 5 years. I am a freelance hairdresser (He & She) and have been in the business for over 20 years.

If you are looking for a change or can't get to a salon, please contact me on 07800743856 or email:

bowleysamanthat@gmail.com

ASTON ABBOTTS BOOK CLUB

For the February meeting my choice was Jamaica Inn by Daphne du Maurier.



I chose it because last July I was given two days notice to prepare for a week in Cornwall. We have been going to Cornwall for a number of years to play golf, walk and sightsee, always staying at the same place.

On our way to Bodmin Moor we turned off the main road and parked in the car park of Jamaica Inn. At that point I was handed a very ancient, second or third hand copy of Jamaica Inn by Daphne du Maurier. We were to stay the night here.

Jamaica Inn was written in 1935 but tells the gothic story of Cornish people in the 1820s. Mary Yellan

lived with her mother in southern Cornwall on a farm. Her mother died but her dying wish was that Mary would give up the farm and go and live with her Aunt Patience and her husband. Reluctantly Mary promised to go and live in Jamaica Inn with her aunt and uncle.

Jamaica Inn was far from Mary's expectations. The Inn was dark, cold and seemingly had no customers. It had been built in 1750 and had been a coaching inn and an important staging place. Joss Marlyn, her uncle and the landlord, was a heavy drinking bully who made his wife Patience into a feeble, submissive individual.

Mary gradually realises that Joss is part of the "wreckers" group who cause ships to run aground and then plunder the cargo and store it in Jamaica Inn.

The author's description of the countryside in Cornwall is beautiful, the cold windswept moor, the tors, the bracken, miles of emptiness and the misty skies. The descriptions of all the characters are equally good, with a touch of romance at the end.

Everyone seemed to enjoy the book and a number of us indicated that we will choose another of Daphne du Maurier's 38 books.

Anita Parker



Aston Abbotts Village Fete

Saturday 23rd July 2022 1.00pm – 4.00pm

I am pleased to say that the Fete will be taking place as usual. We have a group of 8 co-ordinators who are all coordinating a specific part of the Fete. (Janet, Heather, Jane, Kate, Karen, Annabelle, Ben and Martyn).

We have already had volunteers for the following stalls:

- **Bric-a-brac - Plants - Produce (home grown fruit and vegetables)**
- **Treasure Hunt - Ice creams**
- **Wing Library**

We will be having:

- **Dog show - Raffle**
- **Refreshments in the Village Hall (scones, tea, coffee, juice, Prosecco).**
- **Morris dancers - Jazz band**
- **B-B-Q - Children's activities**

This year we are hoping to open up the Fete to a few artisan independent stall-holders, if we can find anyone interested in attending.



Peter Knight has agreed to be Compere again (many thanks Peter), and we are in the process of finding someone to open the Fete – we are following up on a couple of suggestions.

We will need the usual “Band of Brothers” (and Sisters!) to move the tables on the morning of the Fete. We will also need volunteers to sort out the bric-a-brac over a couple of evenings of the week leading up to the Fete. David has kindly agreed to let us use his barn again.

Please save your Bric-a-Brac. We will have a team to go round collecting it, probably at the same time as selling raffle tickets.

Best wishes, **Janet Walker,**
Coordinator.

What is the Vic Scott Memorial Orchard?



The orchard was started in 2011 with the aim of providing a village space that would be enjoyed by villagers and be of general benefit to the environment. For those who do not know its history, a short account can be found on the village webpage, at

<http://www.aston-abbotts.co.uk/villageorchardpage.htm>

This page also has a link to a listing of trees in the orchard. A fuller, newly updated, account of trees and their sponsors can be found in the shed in the corner of the orchard. Anyone from the village is welcome to visit. Some village groups have held meetings or social events in the orchard.

A number of new trees have been planted over the winter and some posts replaced. New and replacement tree labels should be available by the end of March and

in place shortly afterwards.

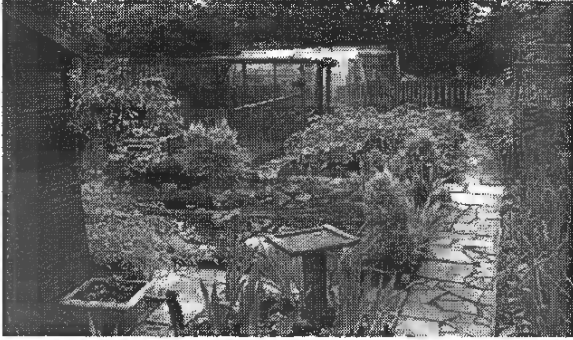


Please visit the orchard during April! As I write this (23 March) some very promising buds are starting to open up, particularly on pear trees, and from now on there will be almost daily changes in leaf and blossom to be seen. Anyone who would like to know more about the orchard do please contact me at gordon.smith53@btinternet.com.



"Hey, don't look at me, lady. I'm strictly 'fetch only.'"

ALLOTMENT DIARY



I have been happy to welcome back to the allotments two of my allotment neighbours, who have both been hors de combat for the last few months. Brian, one of the few allotment holders from outside the village, was afflicted with a very bad back last autumn, and was totally unable to do any gardening. He even had to use a stick to hobble round the house; and it was not until this February that he was able for the first time for many months, to raise his arms above his shoulders, without excruciating pain. However, he has now started gardening again, and has successfully rotavated his plot, without any problems.

My allotment neighbour on the other side, Simon Guy, as many of you will know, blacked out while digging on the allotment some months ago, and in the ensuing fall, managed to break his arm. He started some gentle work on his allotment in February, working one-handed; but is now able to use both hands, as long as he does not put too much pressure on the arm that was broken.

I have now dug up everything on my allotment that needed digging up, apart from a few leeks, which will

have gone by the time you read this. To my surprise I found evidence of a number of parsnips growing, which we had not dug up in the autumn, and which I have harvested. I can only surmise that for some reason the foliage had died away when we were harvesting our parsnips in the autumn, and so we did not spot them. We will be having some of them roasted this Sunday, and I am keeping my fingers crossed that they will not be "woody". They certainly look OK.

Regular readers of this Diary (if there be any) may remember that I have been pursuing the policy of leaving my main-crop potatoes in the ground over the winter, and only digging them up when needed. I have regrettably come to the conclusion that this is not a good idea. It does stop the potatoes from being affected by frost, which was the reason for doing it; but I have found that a number of the potatoes have had holes drilled in them by some garden pest, so that parts of them have to be cut out and thrown away. In future I shall dig my potatoes up in the autumn, like everyone else, and try to store them in containers which are frost-proof. (If the frost does get to potatoes, they become mushy, and have to be thrown away).

I am at the moment engaged in the Herculean task of transporting the compost from my garden to the allotment, one barrowload at a time. I have so far barrowed 20 loads down, and have another 30 or so to go! But I tell myself its good for me!

Finally, sad news about Doug, the contender for the world's largest

potato, about which I have written in past months. You may remember that before it could be listed in the Guinness Book of Records, it was necessary to prove that Doug was a potato; and accordingly, a sliver of Doug was sent to the Department of Science & Advice for Agriculture in Scotland, for DNA testing. They have just reported to Doug's owners that Doug is not a potato, but the tuber of a gourd. This means that the world's largest potato remains that grown by an English specialist in growing large vegetables, Peter Glazebrook: a 4.98p kg specimen grown in 2011.

Peter Shorrock.

Officials inspect Batman Begins mansion Mentmore Towers in hopes of restoring derelict building

The rotting building has been showcased in major Hollywood blockbusters

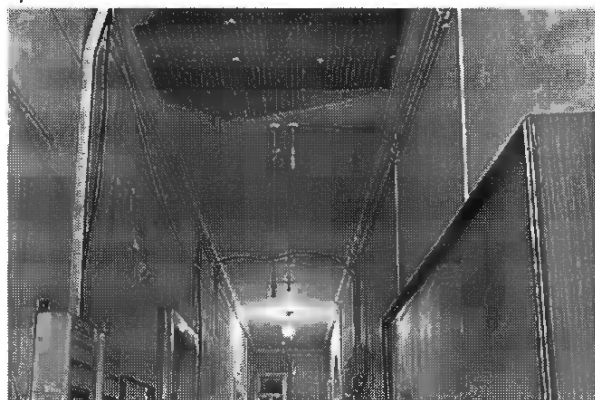
Mentmore Towers, an iconic building which was immortalised in Hollywood favourites Eyes Wide Shut and Batman Begins, now sits derelict.



1st March, Bucks Council and Historic England officials used a police escort to inspect the current state of the formerly idyllic home.

A Historic England spokesman said: "We are working closely with the owners and Bucks Council to ensure a positive future for Mentmore Towers and parkland. Historic England staff visited the property on Tuesday with heritage and planning officers from the council to review the general condition of the Grade I listed building and Grade II* landscape, both of which are on the Heritage at Risk Register. Our staff were shown around the house and grounds. The police attended to ensure access.

"Mentmore is the first of the grand Rothschild mansions built in Aylesbury Vale. It was designed by Sir Joseph Paxton, best known for designing the Crystal Palace, and was one of the earliest houses to have the home comforts of an inbuilt hot water and central heating system."



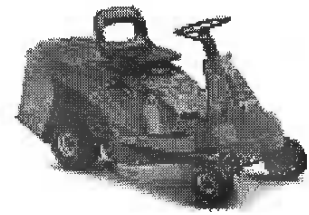
The rotting interior of Mentmore Towers, photo from @places_forgotten

Issues maintaining the building are linked back to its sale in 1997 to property tycoon Simon Halabi. The property developer hoped to turn the famous mansion into a 171-suite, five-star hotel.

A Daily Mail report suggests that Halabi's plans for the mansion were scuppered by the 2008 financial crisis. Simon, declared bankruptcy in 2010, as a direct result of the plummeting financial market. In previous years, a judicial challenge, which the tycoon won in 2007, had previously halted his plans to do business at the mansion.



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Cooperation and transformation

Andrew Krauss

The Season of Lent, which we are still in until mid-April, is sandwiched between two Sundays that emphasise transformation. The first of these is the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, which always takes the famous biblical account of the Transfiguration of Christ on the mountainside as its theme. The second is, of course, Easter Sunday, emphasising the Resurrection. Resurrection and Transfiguration are considered to be inseparable themes, the one requiring and implying the other. The Greek word translated as 'transfiguration' in two of the biblical accounts is a word we have taken directly into English – namely, metamorphosis. This is very fitting since the idea of transfiguration is about new life and new creation (as is Easter), and to have a word to describe this that emphasises the biological world and the transformations that can occur there is very important if we are to appreciate this in the most helpful way.

Transformation in the biological world, especially metamorphosis, normally involves development into some fully fledged adult form, and in some cases changes in behaviour and source of nourishment. All of these three changes find some form of parallel or analogy in the biblical texts, but perhaps most important of all is that different cell types must be able to

work, grow and transform in conjunction with each other, which in turn requires proper communication and cooperation between them. We are still learning about the ways in which this communication happens to this day, and the analogy with life on a collective, human level is worth noting in this case if we are to look for a positive transformation in our own day.

It is always tricky to write about something a few weeks in advance of publication which changes as quickly as today's news, but I think it is still safe to say that it is only through proper channels of communication and cooperation among groups, nations and organisations that we could realistically expect anything transformative in a positive sense to emerge from the present situation of tension and conflict – at least in the longer term. That must realistically be our prayer, our Easter hope, and wherever possible our active role as promoters and keepers of peace both in the lessons of history and the new and emerging possibilities of the present.

With fervent prayers for a positive transformation in which we can all in some small way play our part, and best wishes for the approaching Eastertide.



Church Matters.



As Mothering Sunday was coming up, the breakfast on the 20th March was prepared by the men of the congregation. After breakfast in the Village Hall, we retired to the Church to be entertained by a modern enactment of the parable of the lost sheep in which the helicopter borne sheep rescue service failed

The diary of St. James's

to find the lost sheep but the shepherd finally found her hiding in the pews and led her back to the fold.

April sees the usual range of Easter week services. All the details can be found elsewhere in this month's Chronicle. At St. James we will be holding a Lay-Led service at St. James on Easter Sunday followed by Easter Egg rolling in the Churchyard.

David Gray. PCC Aston Abbotts

St James Aston Abbotts Church Services April

3rd	6.00pm	Evensong
10 th	10.30	Parish Communion
17 th	09.30	Easter Sunday -Lay led, Followed by Egg Rolling in the Church yard
24 th	10.30	Parish Communion

Church Duties March

Date	Cleaning	Flowers
1/2	David/Colin	No
8/9	Alex/Anita	No
15/16	Carolyn L/Ann	Easter
22/23	Colin/Gay	Rota
30/1	Colin/David	Rota

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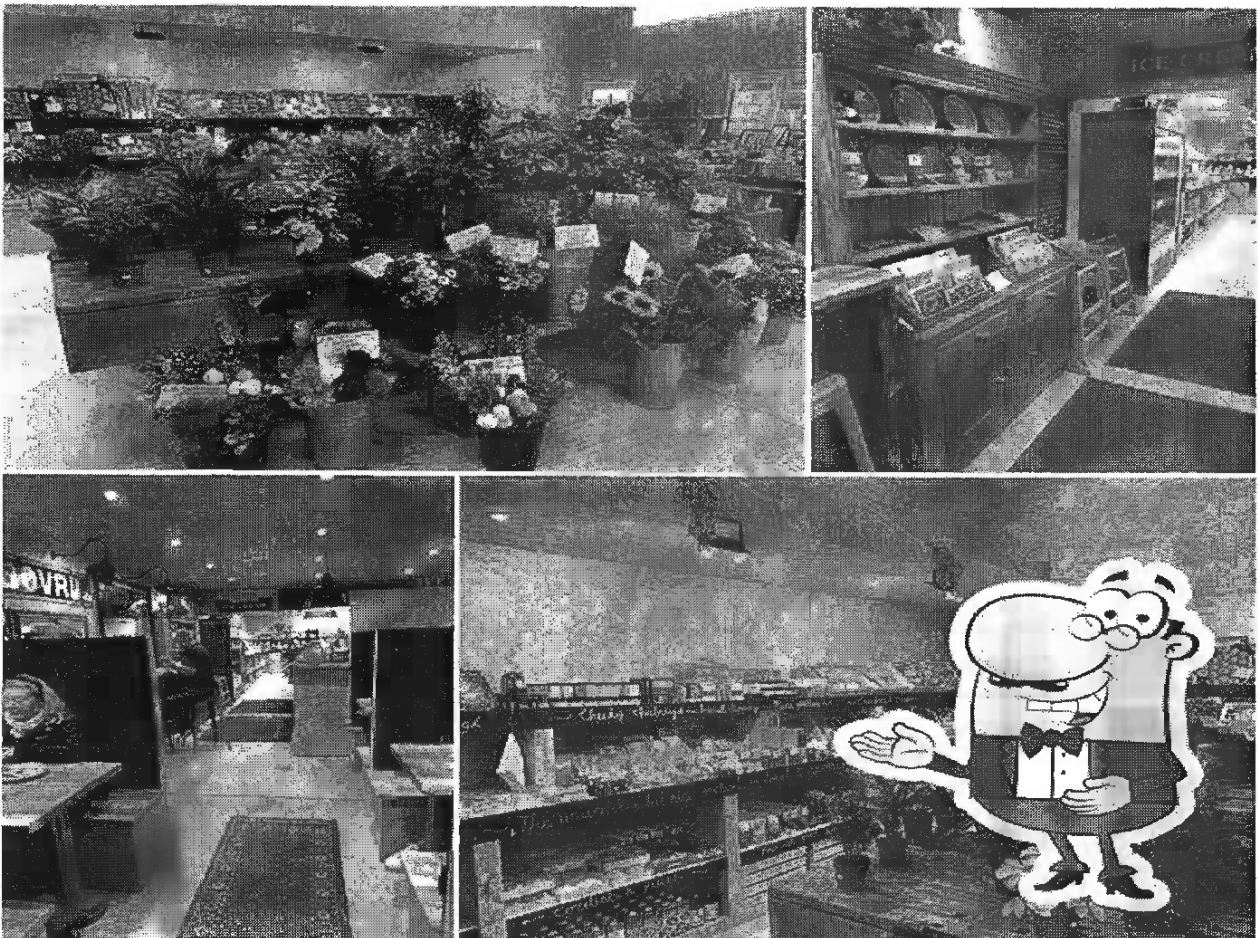
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Please visit
www.annerobsontrust.org.uk/help-line-service to find out more.

Buckinghamshire’s Famous Writers

Buckinghamshire is home to beautiful countryside, natural features and a number of talented people.

In honour of World Book Day (March 3), which is celebrated every year, BuckinghamshireLive took a look at just a few of the notable writers that have been born, raised or resided in the county.

It includes those who were born in the county and moved out later on, and those influenced by a Buckinghamshire village.

Many writers you may not have known grew up in the county include the Fifty Shades author and the story editor for the famous series Doctor Who.

E. L. James

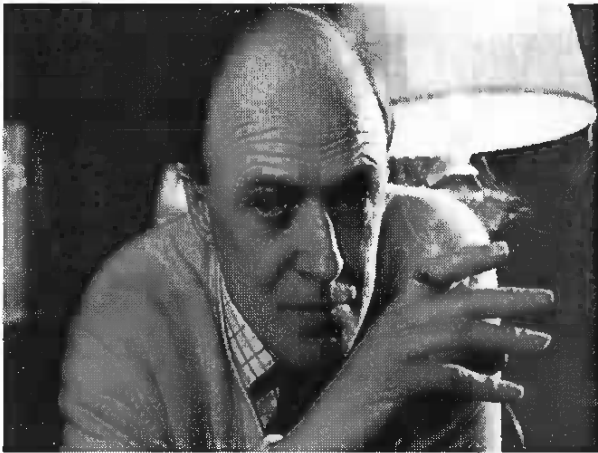
Erika Mitchell, better known as her pen name, E. L. James, is a British author who was actually raised in Buckinghamshire.

Known for her best-selling erotic romance trilogy of Fifty Shades of Grey, Fifty Shade Darker and Fifty Shades Freed, many are probably unaware of her upbringing in the county.

She was educated at Wycombe High School, a state grammar school for girls in High Wycombe town.

Not only did she attend Buckinghamshire schools, after university became a studio manager's assistant at the National Film and Television School in Beaconsfield.

Roald Dahl



British children's author Roald Dahl (1916 - 1995) Everyone will have heard of Roald Dahl as he is considered one of the best children's writers ever.

What you may not be aware of is that he actually spent many of his years writing those books in the village of Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire where he lived.

His classics include Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, The BFG, Matilda and Fantastic Mr Fox.

After living in the county for 36 years before his death, there's no

surprise that the area influenced many ideas in his books.

There is now a museum in Great Missenden named The Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre to remember him.

Susan Cooper



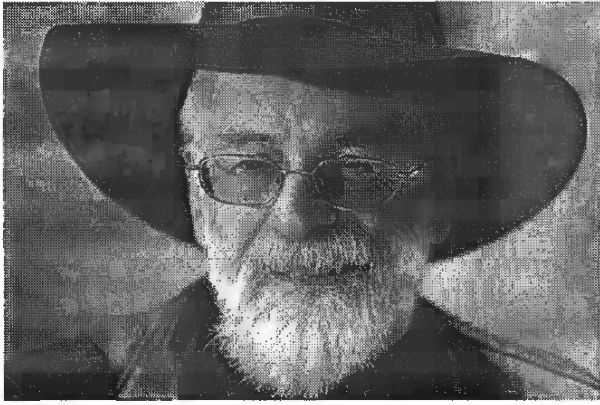
Susan Mary Cooper is an English author who writes children's books. She is best-known for The Dark is Rising, a contemporary fantasy series.

She was born in Burnham, Buckinghamshire where she lived until she was 21-years-old. Her father also pursued a career in the offices of the Great Western Railway.

The 86-year-old kicked off her writing career after studying English at the University of Oxford by working as a reporter for The Sunday Times under Ian Fleming.

In 2012 she won the lifetime Margaret A. Edwards Award from the American Library Association due to her The Dark is Rising series.

Terry Pratchett



Sir Terence David John Pratchett OBE was an English humorist, satirist and author of fantasy novels, mainly writing comical works.

He is best known for his Discworld series in which he wrote 41 novels. He was the UK's best-selling author in the 1990s.

Pratchett was born in Beaconsfield but his family moved to Bridgwater briefly when he was nine-years-old.

After passing his eleven plus exam, he earned a place at High Wycombe Technical High School where he wrote stories for the school magazine. In his Who's Who entry he even credited his education to the Beaconsfield Public Library.

He published his first short story in the High Wycombe Technical School magazine in 1962.

For a time he even picked up a career in journalism and started an apprenticeship with the editor of the Bucks Free Press in 1965.

Derrick Sherwin

Derrick George Sherwin was an English television producer, writer, story editor and actor. He began his career in theatre and became an actor before moving on to becoming a writer.

He was born in High Wycombe and later became the story editor on the infamous Doctor Who and later became the producer of the series in 1969.

Sherwin also oversaw the transition from black-and-white to colour by producing Patrick Troughton's final story and Jon Pertwee's first.

Other works he has worked on include contributing scripts to series such as Crossroads and Z-Cars.



The Buckinghamshire star who's tipped as the next James Bond

British actor Theo James has come a long way from his early life in High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire. He is known as a heartthrob in Hollywood films and has become a reputable actor, having starred in several popular movies throughout the years.

The 37-year-old actor is tipped as the next Bond in the latest odds of 40-1. All odds are correct as of Tuesday (March 22, 2022).



Looks more like he could reinvent Captain Scarlet. Please excuse my nostalgia. Ed!



However, if the Buckinghamshire-born star is to bag the role, he could face a number of competitors, including

individuals such as Idris Elba, Henry Cavill and Tom Hardy, to name a few.

According to reports, Theo has a whopping net worth of approximately \$30 million. This is the equivalent of more than £22.6 million. This is thanks to his dedication to performances on-screen. Whilst Theo is known for his versatile roles, there are certain films that fans best recognise him for.

It's safe to say that Theo has come a long way from his days in South East England. Originally born in December 1984, James is the son of business consultant Philip Taptiklis and National Health Service worker Jane Martin.

Theo James and Shailene Woodley in the film, *Divergent* (Image: PA Photo/Entertainment One)

He is probably best known to many for playing the role of Tobias 'Four' Eaton in the *Divergent* film series, alongside co-star, Shailene Woodley. He actively played the role throughout all three films between 2014 and 2016.

In addition, he is highly recognised for playing James in 2011's *The Inbetweeners* movie. If the name 'James' doesn't ring a bell, then you might recognise him for ending up with something unfortunate on the end of his nose towards the end of the movie.

His roles on-screen also include *Downton Abbey*, *The Witcher*, *Bedlam*, and *Sanditon*, just to name a few. However, a certain British spy could soon be added to his portfolio of performances.

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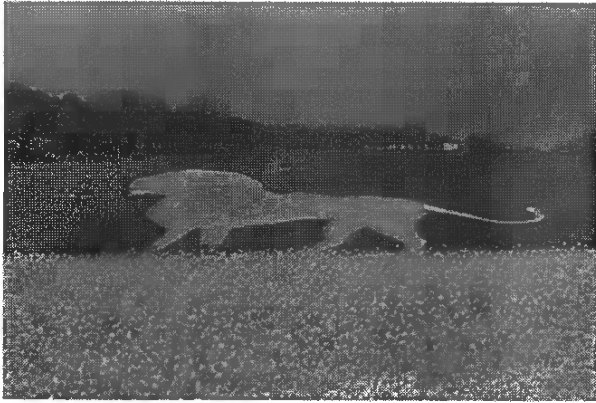
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Whipsnade White Lion



By Jenna

The Whipsnade White Lion, also known as The Lion Point, sits in Bedfordshire just across the border from Buckinghamshire. The chalk lion faces west on a gentle slope below ZSL Whipsnade Zoo which can be seen from the village of Edlesborough, Buckinghamshire.

The tourist attraction can also be found only a mile away from another small Buckinghamshire village known as Dagnall. The lion could potentially be seen from this village too depending which point you look from and how high you could get to see it. As the lion is on a gentle slope it may be difficult to view from close quarters.

Whilst the White Lion lives in Bedfordshire, it is actually a part of the Chiltern Hills as well as the Berkshire downs. It was created in 1933 to indicate the position of Whipsnade zoo and has remained a symbol ever since.

Edlesborough is a village within the [Aylesbury Vale](#) district and is home

to a 14th century bell tower which has become a local landmark. The tower is part of St Mary the Virgin church which has been made redundant since 1975. Dagnall is a village within the parish of Edlesborough which happens to be in the Chiltern Hills.

Dagnall is also in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty making it an admirable to house buyers as well as it is immediately south to the tripoint of Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire. Whipsnade Zoo is on the hill just above the village and has been a location for a number of films and TV shows including Dinotopia and First Knight.

Why is the lion there?

Designed by R.B. Brook-Greaves, work began to create the Whipsnade White Lion in November 1931 soon after the Zoo opened in May 1931. A 147 metre-long rough outline of the lion was visible and Ivinghoe Beacon in Buckinghamshire was often used as a vantage point to check the accuracy of the lion.

The lion was finished in the spring of 1933 after almost two acres of land was cleared for the chalk. The lion was covered during World War II with netting, turf and paint to prevent it being destroyed or used as a navigation point by enemy aircraft. For the ZSL Whipsnade Zoo's 50th anniversary, the lion was lit up with 750 light bulbs in May 1981.

The iconic landmark was resurfaced with 50 lorry loads of chalk in September 2017 recreating the bright white shape making it stand out once again. The lion was created to mark the creation of Whipsnade Zoo, formerly known as Whipsnade Wild Animal Park, and remains a tourist attraction to this day.

While it can be seen from Edlesborough and possibly Dagnall, the best place to see it - as long as it

Wingrave Social Diary APRIL

Fri 1 Pantomime Community Centre

Sat 2 1000 Croquet Club open day and start of season Recreation Ground

Sat 2 Pantomime, matinee and evening Community Centre

Sat 2-3 Wingrave Singers at Portsmouth Cathedral

Wed 6 1000 WI: Talk on Hughenden Manor Methodist Church

Wed 6 1200 Last of the Summer Ukuleles Rose and Crown

Fri 8 School term ends

Sat 9 0845 Men's Breakfast Talk: The future of British farming Methodist Church

Mon 11 0930 Weekday Walking Group ramble, contact: Jan 07813 085211

Tue 12 1930 Parish Council meeting Community Centre

is not a foggy day - is on the top of Buckinghamshire's Ivinghoe Beacon, a prominent hill and landmark in the Chiltern Hills. The Beacon is an ancient signal point which was used in times of crisis to send messages across long distances and is now managed by the National Trust.

Wed 13 1200 Over 60s' Lunch Club Rose and Crown

Fri 15 NO Social evening Community Centre

Sun 17 Easter Day

Wed 20 1200 Last of the Summer Ukuleles Rose & Crown

Thu 21 1900 Quiz Night Rose & Crown

Fri 22 1930 Family Bingo Community Centre

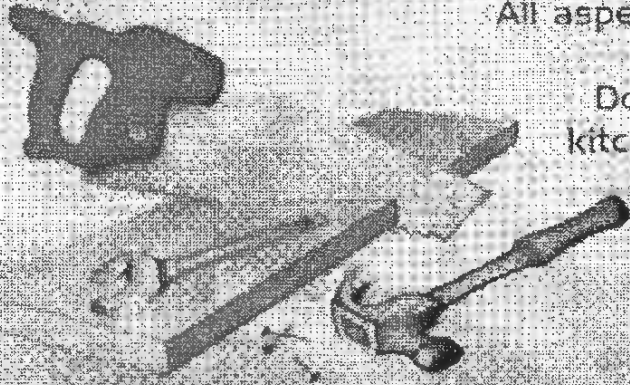
Sun 24 0930 Local ramble 4-5 miles Nup End Lane

Mon 25 School term begins

Tue 26 1930 Parish Council planning meeting Community Centre

Sat 30-2 My Scarecrow Festival: Disney

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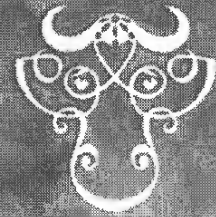
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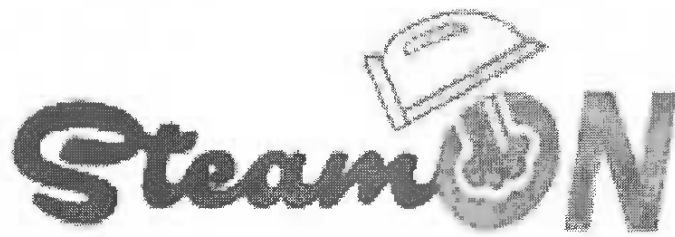
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Saturday 1000 - 1200

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World Autism Awareness Day 2nd April

Unicorn Day 9th April

Earth Day 22nd April

Shakespeare Day 23rd April

St Georges Day 23rd April

World Penguin Day 25th April

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Breathtaking bluebell walks to try this spring

The Watlington Hill walk is abundant with the vibrant purple flowers in spring

Bluebells are one of the most delightful features of spring

We are now well and truly into spring. The days are getting warmer, and we are beginning to say goodbye to chilly crisp winter days. It means this month we will be welcoming woodlands transformed with an enchanting carpet of vibrant purple flowers.

Luckily for us, there are plenty of walks and beauty spots to visit to enjoy the sights, and there are two magical bluebell walks on the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Hertfordshire borders that are perfect for spotting the carpets of flowers.

The bluebells on these walks are expected to be blossoming in numbers from mid April to mid-May.

This walk is a seven mile route which takes you across the National Trust's Watling Hill site. It then drops down onto the Oxfordshire Plain where it follows the ancient Icknield Way. The route then ascends the Chiltern

escarpment through the National Trust woodland at Greenfield Copse. It's here you will see a breathtaking view of a spectacular display of bluebells.



The display would make a perfect backdrop for a romantic photo or for capturing a great family moment. It might even be worth pitching up with a picnic basket and blanket to soak in the view whilst enjoying some sandwiches.

The walk then continues across several small valleys on the dip slope of the Chilterns from where you may see distant views towards the Thames Valley and beyond. It then comes to an end by returning to Christmas Common and to Watlington Hill via an ancient Saxon lane that was once the spinal route of a Chiltern strip parish. The walk is dog friendly, and takes three hours and 30 minutes in total. Set your sat nav for Watlington Hill car park, Hill Road, Watlington, Oxfordshire. OX49 5HS.

My favourite is the Ashridge Estate, Moneybury Hill Ringshall, Berkhamsted HP41LT. A truly beautiful Estate managed by the National Trust. The Bluebell season is Mid-April to May. There's many walks to explore at Ashridge but for the bluebells, go for Dockey Wood which is splendid during May.



During bluebell season please follow temporary instructions about the use of footpaths as the estate are trying to reduce the impact footfall has on this very popular area of the estate. There is adequate parking but the road is busy so be careful if walking along it.



Whilst at Ashridge, attempt to observe the deer especially at twilight by the Ashridge House & management college where you can also enjoy cream teas and light lunches.



How's this for a photo? It's the Milky Way! Rising above Ashridge House!

Isn't it amazing to think of the billions of stars that grace our skies?

Thanks to @hertsdeepspace who took this mesmerising photograph - You've captured the magnificence of the house beneath the midnight sky.