

THE CHRONICLE

Aston Abbotts Parish Magazine



So just who is this Aston Abbotts' resident celebrating St Patrick's day ???

Issue 361—April 2016

EDITORIAL

THE CHRONICLE

Issue 361

April 2016

Almost a bumper issue this time, many thanks to the various contributors for getting for getting it all to me in a timely way to meet the school printing deadline.

Unfortunately a couple of items I have had to leave out due to late formatting and space problems, I will carry them over to the next issue.

There may be one or two blank pages, these are intentional. Hope you all enjoy a good Easter and support the many forthcoming village events. Also a mention for Emma who is running the London Marathon for a very good cause, Parkinsons, details of her fund raising is on the letters page.

Finally, who is that man on the front cover? Any guesses.

Phil

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Dear Friends

Peter Knight

Last month I wrote a little of the beauty of wildlife around the village, this month to-day I will say a little of the savagery of one species - MINK. I am sure you all know that mink are similar to grey squirrels, in that they share their origins with both being introductions from North America. Like squirrels, mink are quite attractive to look at, they are basically black and about twice as big as a ferret; they are great swimmers and can devastate wildlife along riversides. The sad demise of water voles is almost entirely due to predation by mink. Mink are killers stupidly released from fur farms by animal rights activists.

Why my concern for mink? Well, one squeezed under our chicken house door and killed all nine of our chickens. The culprit ate about one quarter of one chicken leaving the other eight untouched except for the fatal neck bite. What a shocking sight to be greeted with one morning.

Frogspawn is interesting this spring - our first was laid on the last day of February but so far none has appeared in our smaller hidden pond. BUT to-day a frog has taken up temporary residence - hopefully another will turn up. Talking of ponds, about a month ago we cleared out our larger pond as it was totally full of aquatic vegetation with little free water left for tadpoles, dragon flies, etc. Of course, being Aston Abbots, we disturbed crested newts in full breeding plumage - a greater crime than disturbing a Badger Sett and worthy of a serious jail sentence. Please don't tell the secret police.

Bluetits have sorted out their family homes - the usual nest boxes being used again. They spend ages making small alterations inside and can be heard pecking away like woodpeckers - I wish I could see inside and discover what they are actually doing to the interior design, and NO we haven't got a nest box with a built in camera, but I do know someone who has! This spring I fixed a bird feeder in my father's garden so he could watch the occasional bird from his chair. One evening at dusk I saw something feeding on the peanuts and realised it was a mouse - clever little fellow - my goodness he looked sleek and fat!

Have you heard the great Spotted Woodpecker drumming on the trees round the Grove - what a beautiful bird with his bright red rump but what strength he must have in both his beak and neck muscles to produce that noise and all that effort to attract a mate - presumably it must be well worth it!

Another couple of weeks, assuming we get some warmth and this cold east wind stops and it will be turn-out time. One of the highlights of the livestock farmers year - that glorious day when out go the cattle to graze beautiful spring grass. Years ago we all watched each other - "Has Bill turned out yet?"; "Them at Norduck are on dry ground, they're always first"; "I don't know I reckon Arthur at Cublington had a few out at the weekend". But, those were the old days!

Peter

ALLOTMENT DIARY

It has struck me that one of the greatest pleasures in being a vegetable gardener - even a rank amateur like me - is perusing catalogues, both on-line and in paper form, in order to decide what to order for the forthcoming season. The only problem is that each variety of each vegetable sounds absolutely wonderful, and it is a big difficulty working out what NOT to buy.

One has to read between the lines. Take potatoes, for example. If the description concentrates on the size of the crop, or the drought or blight resistance, there is a good chance that the potato will be the sort that turns to mush if you boil it too long. If it mentions the waxy flesh, or the weed-smothering foliage, or the storage potential, it is likely that the crop size will be disappointing; and so on. Luckily the seed suppliers do normally indicate what each potato should be used for; and is not a bad idea to grow different potatoes for different uses - roast, chips, boiled baked, salad, etc. - with perhaps one "general purpose" potato which is not

particularly good for anything, but can be used for any type of cooking - and to try to use the potatoes for their specialist use.

Every year I vow that I will not grow brassicas again, since it is such a pain protecting them from pigeons and caterpillars: however, this year my younger son and his fiancée gave me some brassica seeds as part of my Christmas present, so I will have to try to grow them again for one more year!

The International Research Institute, or IRI, has recently done a research project on a vegetable we cannot aspire to grow on the allotments, the avocado: and, remarkably, there has been a 31% increase in consumption during 2015, compared with the previous year. Britons splashed out £145 million on them, compared with £111 million the previous year. No doubt the British buying public do not know (any more than I did, until I read an article on the subject recently) that the word "Avocado" has nothing to do with lawyers, but is derived from the Aztec word "*ahuacatl*" meaning testicle! I have also read that when it was first imported by Sainsbury's in the 1960s, because it was called an "avocado pear", customers first tried eating it as a desert with custard!

I have just read an article in my paper which was good news for gardeners: a study in the USA has concluded that the mild physical activity which gardening provides can cut the risk of getting Alzheimer's Disease. Apparently it can noticeably increase brain volume in old age, and so reduce the likelihood of getting Alzheimer's Disease by 50%.

The results were published in the Journal of Alzheimer's Disease, and had involved almost 900 elderly Americans, who had been enrolled in a 30-year heart health study. Scans looked at the volume of different regions of the brain. Those who did greater physical activity were shown to have expanded brain volumes, including in the hippocampus, an important formation that shrinks in Alzheimer's patients.

The editor of the Journal said that the study was particularly important because at the moment there was no cure for Alzheimer's; and any way of preventing or slowing down the incidence of the disease was of fundamental importance.

If any villager is particularly concerned, and would like to do some digging or weeding in order to keep Alzheimer's at bay, I would be very happy to hire out my allotment for this purpose!

Peter Shorrocks

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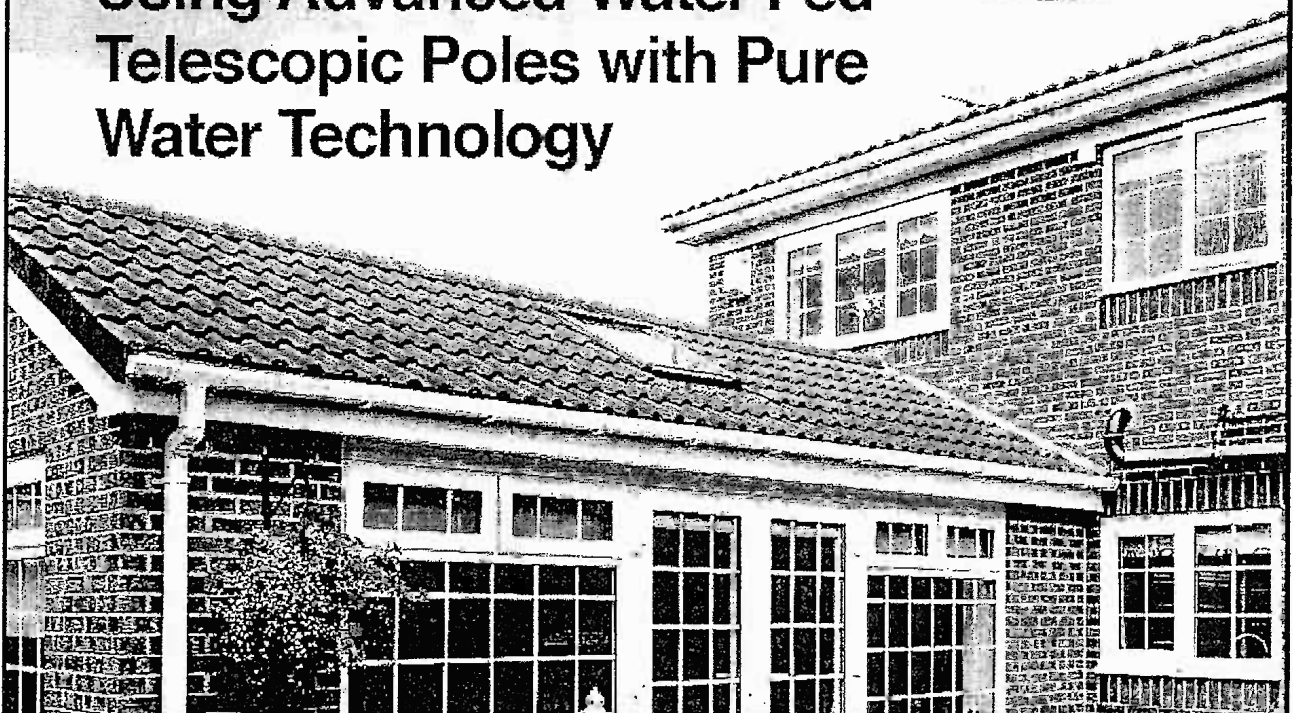
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Speedwatch

Speeding is one of the factors that most affects the quality of life in communities. Last year, Zandy our hard working Parish Clerk was asked by the Parish Council to investigate the use of speed monitoring equipment to discourage speeding within the 30mph restriction zone of the Village.

Community SpeedWatch is a traffic monitoring scheme coordinated by Thames Valley Police. A group of Aston Abbots volunteers was shown the 'Speedwatch' equipment last October and we are now in a position to borrow the kit and do some monitoring of traffic on the three approach roads to the village.

We will be very conspicuous with our high viz jackets and warning signs but speeding motorists will be recorded and the information sent to the Police. So please observe the speed restrictions at all times.

David Gray, Aston Abbots Speedwatch co-ordinator.



At The Royal Oak April 23rd

Starters

Stilton Soup with Parmesan Croutons

Prawns in Rose Marie Sauce

Fish Trio with Homemade Tartar Sauce

Mains

Shepherds Pie served with Traditional Vegetables

Toad in the Hole served with Baby Roasted Potatoes

Fish Pie served with vegetables

Pudding

Jam Roly Poly

Bakewell Tart

Minutes of the Aston Abbots Annual Parish Meeting

8.00pm 20th May, 2015

Present: Mr C Higgs (Vice Chairman, Parish Council), Mr Paul Bruton (acting secretary), Mr Peter Cooper (District Councillor), Mrs N Glover (County Councillor) Ms P Boston (PCSO, North Wing) and 20 parishioners.

1. Apologies: Mr P Shorrocks, Mrs K Curry, Mrs J Hardcastle, Mr B Carvey, Mr S Markwell, Mrs V Smith and Mr L Smith.
2. The Minutes to the meeting held 14th May, 2014 were approved and signed as a true record
3. No matters arising.
4. **County Councillor Glover** advised that her monthly reports included within the minutes of the Parish meetings had hopefully kept residents up to date with current developments within Bucks CC. A question from the floor was asked whether the A418 bypass would ever be built. This was not planned and as a result concern was expressed regarding the junction with the A418 that was extremely hazardous and dangerous. Given the anticipated increase in use of the A418, County Cllr Glover was requested to raise the matter on behalf of residents with the appropriate department. County Cllr Glover agreed and would keep residents updated via the Parish Clerk.

District Councillor Cooper addressed the meeting with a number of updates to local issues affecting Aston Abbots and the Aylesbury area in general although as the election had only just been held and as the new Council had yet to meet, precise plans were not agreed.

- The upgrade to Broadband is due to have the cabinet that serves Aston Abbots & Rowsham switched on in June. There was an issue with the power supply that has delayed the anticipated date and this has now been resolved. The possibility of a cycle path to Aylesbury was still being explored and a feasibility study had been commissioned with funding from the Local Area Forum. It was hoped an application for funding the project from the New Homes Bonus would be made next year. The cycle path would run from the crossroads to Bierton where the plans for development of Aylesbury East included a cycle path into the Town Centre.

Areas that the new Council had to address included the following:

- The development of the Local Plan was forecast for 2017 and Cllr Cooper felt this was too long and Council should be putting more resource and effort into developing the plan sooner. Our neighbours Wingrave had developed a Neighbourhood Plan as a way to control development in their village as developers had identified 21 sites. Although Aston Abbots is smaller and there are no developer sites at present, the current situation regarding the Local Plan did mean we were exposed given our proximity to the A418.
- The development of Aylesbury town centre was continuing with plans for the Old Police station to be demolished to create a Cultural area to include a new piazza with new restaurants and shops. The open air car park will be affected during the build.
- The new Council will have to continue to make cost savings as cuts to the Central Gov't Grant continue with the potential for no grant within the next 5 years - a saving of £10m - £12m, or alternatively continue to look for ways of generating income. They will also look to change the structure of Local Councils reducing the number from 5 to 1 or more likely 2, a consultation has been commissioned.
- Answering questions from the residents Cllr. Cooper confirmed residents fears that the A418 would get busier as the new Dunstable by pass is built and Aylesbury grows. A recent bid by BCC for funding a by pass had been thrown out and there were currently no plans to improve the situation. There was also a question concerning grass cutting and this was the responsibility of BCC who were only planning 2 cuts this year as the cost savings continue to affect certain services.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Cooper for his report and making the effort to attend given the other meetings he was committed to attend this evening.

- PCSO Boston reported that over the past 12 months there have been 3 reported crimes within our Parish, these have all been theft from vehicles. This has been the main issue in our Area with power tools being the main aim. There have been targeted operations carried out and arrests made but we felt there are different groups carrying out these offences. Crime prevention is a key message, we all have a responsibility to make ourselves and our property as secure as possible.

- There were 36 calls to Thames Valley Police to report incidents in addition to crime and these included calls regarding abandoned vehicles, parking issues, road hazard, noise complaints and suspicious persons activity.
- WE are in the process of implementing priority based budgeting, this is to ensure that monies are spent to tackle the main crime issues that affect communities and resources are directed where it is needed. It is important residents report crimes when they happen so a true reflection of what is happening in rural areas.
- Wing police office is at full resourcing with 3 PCs and 5 PCSOs with full support from the Aylesbury and Buckingham response teams, we also have dog units that book on at Wing Station who although covering all of the Thames Valley area have been fundamental in assisting within the rural area.
- Many villages are up and running with Community Speedwatch and sharing the use of MVAS - this has been positive with villagers taking action in educating motorists in adhering to the speed limit and when there is evidence of a persistent speeder information is passed onto to Thames Valley Police to intervene.
- Thames Valley Police website is worth a look to gather varied information and signing to alerts keeps you in the picture on what is happening within our policing area.

The Chairman thanked PCSO Boston for her report.

5. Parish Councils Chairman's Report, In Mr Shorrocks absence Cllr Higgs read his report and this summarised the work undertaken during the year; Council had been considering whether to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan, a formal document that sets out the planning policies for an area and will have legal weight in any planning decision. A Neighbourhood Plan is supposed to be ancillary to a master plan prepared by the Local Council, but the AVDC Local Plan was rejected by Government, and it will not be completed until 2017 leaving the area open to speculative planning applications from Developers. The cost of developing these plans can be in excess of £10,000 and although it may be possible to get a grant towards these costs we would still have to find several thousand pounds out of its own resources. For

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6 Village Activity reports:

- Phil Corrigan updated the meeting on the current position of the Chronicle and advised that from September a new version would be launched that hopefully would help to reduce production costs. Currently we had around £1,800 of income from adverts - costs were £3,200 at present with the difference being made up with donations from the Fete and village funds. The new production method should reduce costs however any additional funding from the Fete would be gratefully received. A vote of thanks was recorded to Phil for taking on the Chronicle that all agreed was appreciated by residents.
- Phil Spooner reported that during the year the Village Postie had been launched. The website although not official was due a facelift and any ideas for content and layout would be welcomed. We could offer a link to local businesses, please contact him if interested. The Village postie had been started by S Burgess, S Markwell and himself after Steve Markwell raised the idea, and currently we have 90 email addresses and we are hoping to get more at this years Fete. Emails are vetted for suitability and generally passed, there are some commercial but these must have a village connection. A lot of items have been circulated and include notices of forthcoming events and meetings. Comments on any posts are not circulated to ensure control. Those present all agreed it was a great addition to keep residents up to date with local activities and a vote of thanks was recorded for all involved.
- Colin Higgs reported the Good Samaritan Bingo takes place on the 2nd Thursday of each month in the Village Hall and it is a fun game for all ages, children included. There are cash prizes for the winners of the main games, an accumulating Snowball, plus raffle. It is a light hearted, very friendly evening. Donations were made to the following charities. Whitby RNLI, British Heart Foundation, Florence Nightingale Hospice, Motor Neurone Support, Air Ambulance etc. Thanks to all the loyal regulars and all those who have made prize donations. Colin Higgs also advised there was a Whist drive every 1st, 3rd, & 5th Thursdays of each month and all were welcome, the Ramblers also meet on the 3rd Sunday every month meeting at 2pm on the Green to explore local public walks.

Sally Palmer reported that the GNOMES (Girls night out men excluded) met every Tuesday night - new lady members were

- always welcome. They had organised a number of events during the year including an evening of Boules, games night and a race night raising funds for Charity.
- John Hardcastle reported that the Village Orchard now has 111 fruit trees of 84 different varieties. There will be a stall on behalf of the Village orchard at the Fete kindly run by Brigitte Gutierrez. Peter Knight has recently mowed the Orchard and it is a good time to walk around and see all the trees. Gordon Smith has updated the Orchard Book, this lists all the trees and the family connections associated with each tree. Copies of the book are available in the shed if you would like to use one whilst visiting the Orchard. Finally a thank you to Peter and Ale for all their hard work.
- John Hardcastle reported on the Aston Abbots Theatregoers - tickets for the summer season are printed in the Chronicle and cover the period to the end of September. About 25 people regularly express an interest and the tickets are free and you are offered a programme and a drink during the interval. It would be good for other villagers to enter the draw for each show.
- John Hardcastle reported on the Book club that was started in 2009 and now had 14 members (2 male) who meet once a month at one of the member's homes to discuss the book of the month (chosen by the host) and enjoy the odd glass of wine., now on their 66th book. The size of the club seemed to be just about right and if other people were interested then he would be happy to start another club, Cheddington has three.
- John Hardcastle reported to the meeting that planning consent has been received and Building Control have approved the drawings for the development of the Village Hall. The Trustees have appointed a Quantity Surveyor who will be able to report on the anticipated costs and have prepared the documents potential contractors will use to provide quotations. It will soon be possible for applications to be made to potential funders, the most likely one being WREN. Support from the village will be needed. The Trustees are very keen that all interest groups in the village are represented. If you would like to join the Committee please let me know, your input would be very welcome. Trustees have now received a Defibrillator from the British Heart Foundation that will be located at the Village Hall.

7. The meeting was asked if there were any volunteers to help with the implementation of the Village Plan Actions, unfortunately none were forthcoming.

8. The Distribution of the profits from the 2015 Fete was discussed and it was agreed that the profits from the fete would be distributed in equal proportion between The Chronicle, The Church, The Village Hall and The Recreation Ground.

9. AOB - Residents from Brickhill raised concerns over the tree cuttings that had been deposited on the Recreation Ground creating an eyesore for them and visitors to the area, they enquired how long the cuttings were anticipated to be there. Cllr Clarke explained that the cuttings were as a result of addressing another residents concerns over a dead cherry tree and various Safety issues. It was anticipated they would be removed/disposed of within the next 3 weeks weather and wind conditions permitting.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.15pm

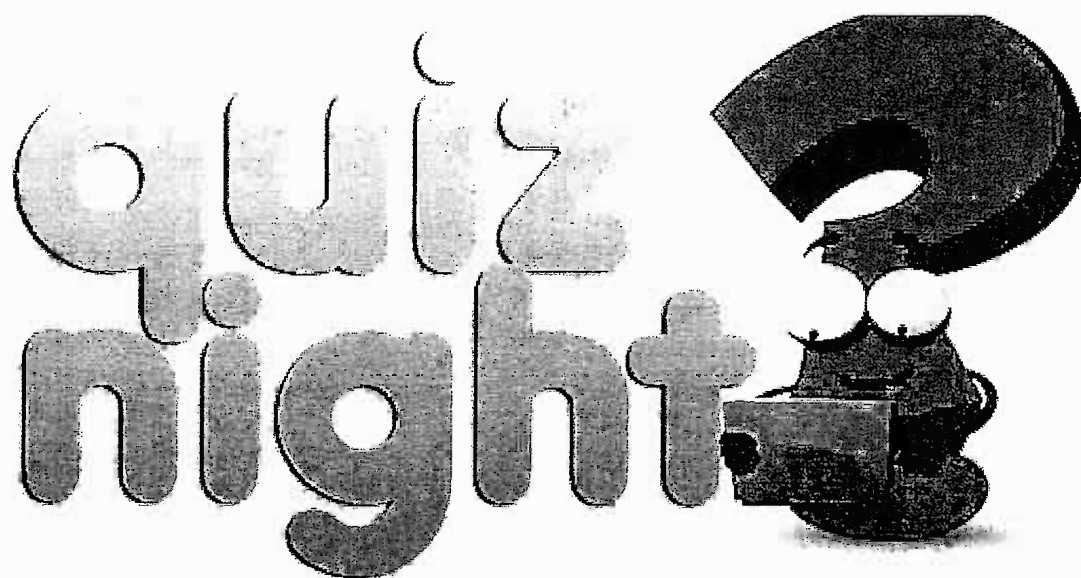
Village Meeting 2016

Wednesday 13th April Village Hall 8 pm

Do come along to find out what's going on in your Village, express your views, your chance to question local, District & County Councillors.

Find out more about village activities.

Royal Oak Aston Abbotts



Sunday 17th April 7.30pm

In aid of Parkinson's Research

Come and enjoy the prizes, fun and frolics.
Food available

ASTON ABBOTTS

FABULOUSLY BRITISH

SUMMER BALL

IN AID OF

MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT

SATURDAY 9th JULY 2016

Stewkley Singers 10th Anniversary

Saturday 7 May 2016 7.30pm
at All Saints Church, Leighton Buzzard

Carmina Burana - Carl Orff
Extracts from "Candide" - Bernstein
Blest Pair of Sirens - Parry

Tickets £12 and £6 (under 18)
Call Julia 01525 240671 or Jean 01525 240570
or Room No 9, Leighton Buzzard

Church Duties April

| | Cleaning | Flowers | Mowing |
|------------------|--------------------|---------|------------|
| 2nd | Colin & Caroline L | Colin | Mark |
| 9 th | Gordon & Ann | Colin | Peter |
| 16 th | Alex & Anita | Donated | Caroline L |
| 23rd | Colin & Gay | Donated | Nigel |
| 30 th | Colin & Caroline L | TBA | Gordon |



CUBLINGT N
TENNIS CLUB

OPEN DAY
SUNDAY 24TH APRIL
FROM 1PM

Anyone for tennis?

Join your local tennis club at very reasonable rates and get fit! Go on, you know you want to! All levels of tennis available from beginner through to competitive league. Friendly club tournaments and social tennis available.

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My thanks to those who gave up their time to discuss this year's Fete on March 15th. We were able to do some early planning of the event and look for ways of improving the organisation. The secret is to get as many people as possible to help in the month before and particularly on the day. Thanks to all those who have already pledged their support but we can always do with more and thus spread the load.

For newcomers to the village the Fete is held on the Saturday closest to the Festival of Saint James the great (25th July). So this year it will be on Saturday 23rd July. The proceeds go towards good causes in the village, the distribution being decided at the Annual Parish Meeting (this year on Wednesday April 13th). The object is not just to raise money but to continue a tradition that goes back decades, of staging a social event for friends and family of residents past and present.

Stalls will include Bric-a-brac, books, cakes, PIMMS, BBQ, plants, bottle tombola, ice cream and gifts. Amusements will be Skittles, coconut shy, and kids stuff. We will have the Band, Morris men and tractors. The Village Hall will provide teas and the Dog Show will be held in Abbey fields as usual.

Generally I have organisers for these but there is plenty of opportunity for newcomers to learn the ropes by helping out during the afternoon. We are also on the look-out for new activities - how about someone volunteering to do face painting?

Even if you are not going to volunteer to help run a stall, those with green fingers could pot up some plants now to be ready to sell on the day. When you are spring cleaning put aside those books and knick-knacks for collection by the local co-ordinators in July and if you could bake a cake or two for sale at the Fete then please put a note in your diary for mid July.

The local co-ordinators cover around 20 households in their area selling raffle tickets and collecting things for the various stalls. We need two or three more co-ordinators so please consider volunteering to cover your neighbourhood.

Finally if anyone knows or is associated with, an organisation that might sponsor a Fete raffle prize then please let me know.

David Gray, Fete co-ordinator, 681952, ukdavidgray@gmail.com

What's on in April:

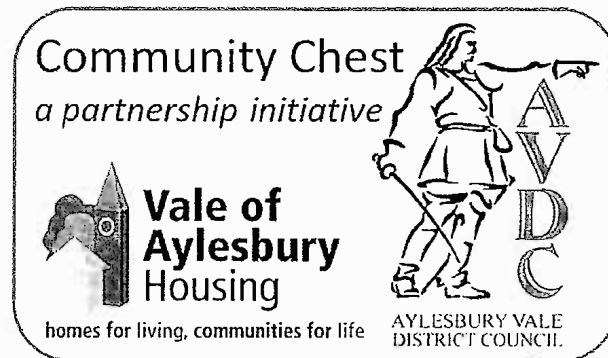
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|------------------------|--|--------------|----------|
| Sun 3 rd | Rambling Club meet Dunstable Downs | | 2pm |
| Thurs 7 th | Coffee Shop | Village Hall | 10 - 12 |
| | Whist Drive | Village Hall | 7.30 pm |
| Tues 12 th | Mobile Library | The Green | 10.30 am |
| Thurs 14 th | Coffee Shop | Village Hall | 10 -12 |
| | Bingo | Village Hall | 7.30 pm |
| Sun 17 th | Breakfast service | Village Hall | 9.30 am |
| | Village Footpath walk | The Green | 2pm |
| Tues 19 th | OAP Bus trip 9.08 bus L Buzzard- MK- Bedford | | |
| Thurs 21 st | Coffee Shop | Village Hall | 10 - 12 |
| | Whist Drive | Village Hall | 7.30 pm |
| Sat 23 rd | St Georges Day | | |
| Sun 24 th | Long Crendon Open Gardens | | 2 - 6pm |
| | West End House Cheddington | | 2 - 5pm |
| Thurs 28 th | Coffee Shop | Village Hall | 10-12pm |

- Evensong will be held on Sun 17th 6pm



Aston Abbotts Village Hall news – April 2016

Grant from Community Chest!



We're delighted to say that we've been offered £14,000 from the **Community Chest**, a grants scheme for community projects run jointly by AVDC and VAHT (Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust). This is payable when our major funding application is confirmed (we're hoping this will be end April). It's great to have this support from outside the village!

Every little helps, though - if you are playing the online **Vale lottery**, please buy your tickets from our page and we get 50%:

www.valelottery.co.uk/support/aston-abbotts-village-hall-trust

As reported last month, we are planning to work with the Church and others to celebrate the Queen's birthday weekend 11-12 June - we will organize a display of photographs and items relating to the last 90 years in Aston Abbotts. Please let us know if you have anything you could lend us to display.

We'll be attending the **Annual Parish Meeting** on 13 April, so come along then if you want to hear more from us and other village groups.

Caroline Lane - Aston Abbotts Village Hall trustees

If you would like more information about the grants available from the Community Chest, please call the Community Chest Grants Officer, Sarah Rothwell, on 01296 585634

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2016

THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE ON
WEDNESDAY 13th APRIL AT 8PM IN THE VILLAGE HALL.

AGENDA

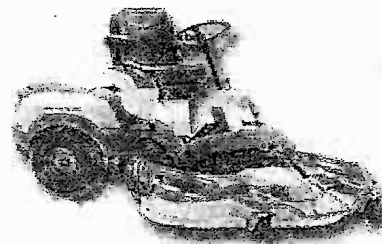
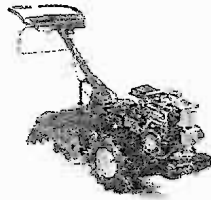
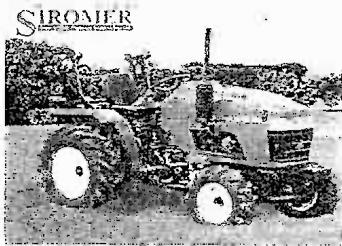
1. Apologies
2. To approve minutes of meeting held on 20th May 2015
3. Matters arising
4. County Council, District Council and Police reports
5. Annual report from the Parish Council Chairman
6. Village Activity Reports
7. Village Plan – Action Plan Committee
8. CRTBO – Steering Committee report
9. Fete 2015 report, Fete 2016 – Distribution of profits.
10. A.O.B.

WE HOPE YOU WILL BE ABLE TO JOIN US.

RGC

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

BOOK CLUB

My choice of book for February was 'Burial Rites' by Hannah Kent. The novel is set in Iceland in the 19th Century and is based on real events.

The main character, Agnes Magnúsdóttir, is convicted of the murder of her lover and sentenced to be executed and, after a few weeks of incarceration under appalling conditions, is sent to stay with the family of the District Officer. She is to be instructed by an priest of her choice (a young assistant priest called Toti) who is responsible for leading her to repent for her sin.

The family are appalled and resent her presence but Agnes is honest and a hard worker and they gradually warm to her and grow to trust her. As Agnes talks to Toti and her story comes to be known, she gains the sympathy of both the priest and the family.

Hannah Kent paints a fascinating picture of Iceland and how the people lived there in the 19th Century. We learn how incredibly hard the life was in those times, particularly that of a vulnerable woman without the protection of a family.

The book is well written and the author is very clever in revealing the story bit by bit, making it difficult to put the book down. Most of us enjoyed this book immensely though some found it somewhat depressing. It is, perhaps, a woman's book.

Gay Walker

Letter (s)

Quiz night at the Royal Oak on Sunday 13th March was buzzing with fun and frolics. The Rat Club won the day and the champers. £200 was raised for Diabetes research which I thank all the teams for. You were just perfect fun. Next Royal Oak Quiz Night is on Sunday 17th April at 7.30pm and will be supporting Parkinson Disease research. Look forward to seeing even more villages come and join the fun. Food available.

astonpete

ED

I'm running the London marathon on the 24th April for Parkinson's UK, (ultimately for my wonderful dad who was diagnosed with the disease 3 years ago- see my story on my just giving page), if you can't make the Aston Abbots Royal Oak quiz night (which is a cracking night) and would like to donate for my cause then please please donate by the link below.

You can help me raise money for this great cause by donating directly to my fundraising page - <https://www.justgiving.com/Emma-Tomlinson6>. JustGiving sends your donation straight to Parkinson's UK and automatically reclaims Gift Aid if you are a UK taxpayer, so your donation is worth even more. Thank you for your support!

Emma

ASTON ABBOTTS THEATREGOERS

Aylesbury Waterside Theatre – Spring 2016

I'm pleased to advise that the Waterside Theatre is continuing to offer pairs of Press Tickets for the following shows. The tickets are free and you will usually be offered a programme and a drink during the interval. If you would like to enter the draw for any or all of the shows then send me an email to johnhardcastle@me.com. The draws will take place two weeks prior to the show date.

| Show | Date & Time |
|--|----------------------|
| Ellen Kent Opera <i>DIE FLEDERMAUS</i> | FRI 1 APR 7.30PM |
| <i>TOM: A Story of Tom Jones. The Musical</i> | TUE 5 APR 7.30PM |
| <i>GOODNIGHT MISTER TOM</i> | TUE 12 APR 7.30PM |
| <i>Richard O'Brien's ROCKY HORROR SHOW</i> | MON 18 APR 8PM |
| <i>BARRY STEELE & FRIENDS</i> | THU 28 APR 7.30PM |
| <i>ILLEGAL EAGLES</i> | FRI 29 APR 7.30PM |
| <i>LET IT BE</i> | MON 2 MAY 7.30PM |
| <i>AN EVENING OF BURLESQUE</i> | THU 12 MAY 7.30PM |
| <i>THE SOUND OF MUSIC</i> | WED 18 MAY 7.30PM |

Annie

We were lucky enough to win the tickets for Annie at the Waterside Theatre on 14th of March through the Aston Abbotts Theatregoers. We had a great evening at this well-known musical.

The Theatre was buzzing when we arrived just after 7pm with lots of children attending. Many of the girls were dressed in smart clothes - party dresses and glitzy shoes! And very excited to be at the theatre, some for the first time.

When we entered the theatre, the curtain was open and after a moment we realised that there were children in the 7 beds on stage! It was the dormitory at the Orphanage and a great way to attract the audiences' attention before the start of the show.

There are 3 teams of "orphans" including 3 "Annies" - we saw team "Tiffany" and what a fantastic team of young actresses they were - aged between about 8 and 12 they were very professional, accomplished performers. Annie had a wonderful voice and an exceedingly expressive face.

The whole cast were great, including Amber the 2 year old Labradoodle that played Sandy, who was perfectly behaved! Miss Hannigan, the woman in charge of the Orphanage was played by Lesley Joseph (70), famous for her portrayal of Dorian Green in 100+ episodes of Birds of a Feather. She was well cast in this role and her energy was equal to the much younger cast members.

We thoroughly enjoyed the more "real" less "saccharine" version of the musical; the set was a huge jigsaw, a metaphor for Annie's life in New York and the homeless scene portrayed the desperation of the early 30's era. We were treated to live music from a 7 piece orchestra and a wide variety of costumes, from Orphans rags to dinner suites and ball gowns.

It was a great evening and the audience were all enthusiastic as we left. We are so lucky to have live theatre only 7 miles away - we've booked for two more performances already!

Liz Barlow

Private Lives

We attended a production of Noel Coward's *Private Lives* at the Aylesbury Waterside on 7 March. This is a comedy from the 1930s based on the story of a divorced couple who each remarry and go on honeymoon only to find they are staying in adjacent hotel rooms. The plot unfolds around their realisation that they are both still in love with their former spouses and the ensuing trials and tribulations. Whilst it may be tame by today's standards, it was certainly considered risky subject material when originally written.

The play is split into three acts, two before the interval and one after. With only two sets of scenery and four main characters, the audience is captivated by the dialogue and drama between the opposing couples. The best known of the four (certainly to us) was Tom Chambers, of *Strictly Come Dancing* fame, his dancing skills were put to good use in this production. Overall the individual performances were impressive in themselves but we were left feeling a little underwhelmed, perhaps this demonstrates how modern day life is now so full of drama.

The interval gave us opportunity to see the newly launched Ambassador Lounge, in which you can drink and snack in luxurious and private surroundings before the performance and in the interval. However we wonder how many people will partake given the additional fee attached and limited time available during the interval.

Gavin and Elvina

END OF THE RAINBOW

Sondra Dickason and I went to see End Of The Rainbow starring Lisa Maxwell as Judy Garland, Gary Wilmot as Anthony her devoted accompanist, and Sam Attwater as Mickey her new young fiancé, on Thursday 3rd March.

We received a warm welcome in the foyer from Alison, the Press & Marketing Assistant, who gave us our tickets and free programme and invited us to come back to her in the interval for free drinks too. Alison had advised us that the show included some strong language which some folk might find offensive, so we took our excellent seats in the back row of the front stalls unsure quite what to expect.

The play was set in the year 1968, and told the story of Judy Garland, the once-glittering Hollywood child-star, when she came to London in a bid to make a comeback in her career. It portrayed Judy in later life, when she still has the voice and sharp wit for which she was famous, but she was also battling her addiction to pills and booze.

From the first scene we were given a graphic introduction to Judy's volatile personality. It showed her interaction and the fierce battles she had with her new young fiancé, Mickey, who had put everything on the line to promote her and revive her career, and was constantly trying to please her and keep her on an even keel. With strong language, and occasionally raunchy scenes, the performance was lifted with really funny, laugh out loud moments, and you felt you were seeing the real Judy, and the unreal world she live in.

Lisa's strong portrayal of Judy was excellent and she sang several of the songs which made Judy famous. With her argumentative and demanding nature, Judy came across as brilliant but a nightmare to live with and with all her problems we were kept on the edge of our seats wondering if she could conquer her demons, find the security she was searching for, and reclaim her place among the musical elite.

The show gave an insight into an unglamorous side of the industry and as the play progressed we came to understand how Judy became the person we saw later in life. From a very young child the Film Studios made her perform ridiculously long daily work schedules starting at 4am, and gave her pills to keep her going when she was exhausted, with more pills when she couldn't sleep, in order to produce their films. With her mother also constantly pushing her on and giving her pills, we start to understand how she became a damaged person, relying on booze and pills as an escape.

Gary Wilmot and Sam Attwater were excellent in their supporting roles and along with Lisa produced a rollercoaster of a show with drama, laughter and poignant moments.

April 2016

Thank you for the opportunity to enjoy an evening out at Waterside. Pam Dixon

The Astonians

Never get caught with your trousers down! © astonpete.

All characters are fictional and hold no association to anyone

I was greatly surprised by the party the Landlord and lady had arranged for me at the Oak for my birthday. I was so touched to see so many Astonians, the lovely although somewhat interbred residents, come and bid me happy returns. Included were Mr Brocklebank-Fowler and his family from The Manor, Mr and Mrs. Cartwright, the allotment freaks, Hugo First, the gobshite from up the road, Mrs KirkPatrick, the whacky widow from Warwickshire, Boring Bill from Weedon Hill and Mincey Bumgardner, the 54 year old slut from Aston Avenue. And it's with her that my 53rd birthday will be a scar on my life for a long time.

You see since moving to Aston I've tried to ignore all her advances, even the time when I went back to hers from the village barbeque, rat arsed and horny. She coerced me into continue drinking and took advantage of me as I relaxed on her leather three seater. She was full of flattering compliments including telling me that I had the longest, thickest penis she had ever felt. I knew she was pulling my leg!

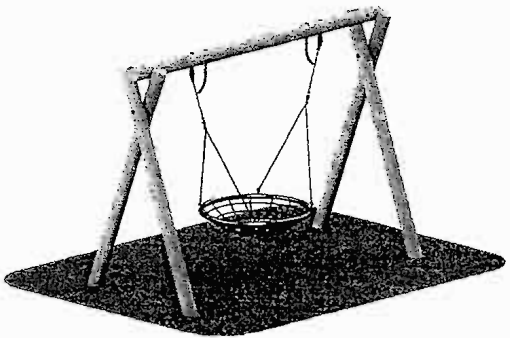
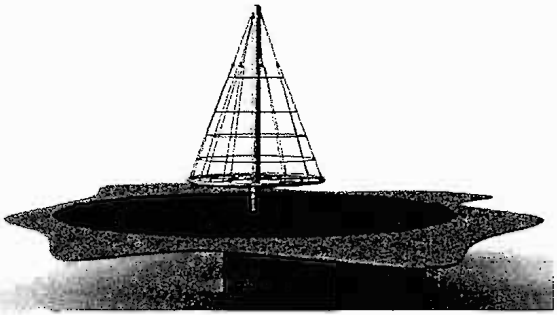

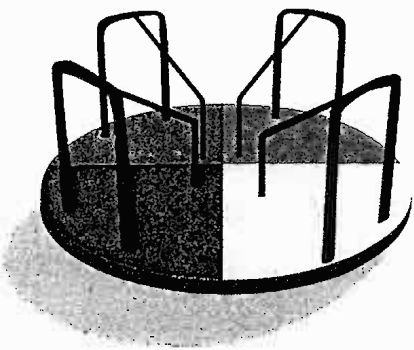
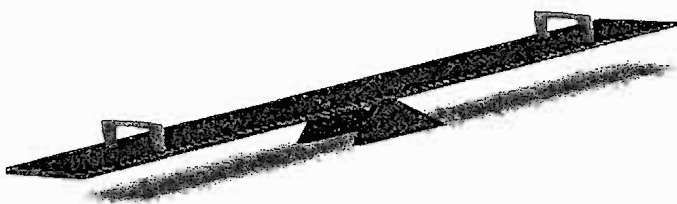
Anyway during my surprise party she flirted with just about everyone including Bert Cartwright. He's 81 for goodness sake. By the end of the evening, I was in a similar state that I was after the barbeque, and she asked me if I would like to come back to hers for coffee and see her newly decorated lounge. Well it didn't take me long to decide as the 86 year old Mrs Spilling had asked me to call in and share with her some Leonard Cohen sounds if her light was still on. Not my ideal end to a good night.

So I went back to Mincey's place and the same process began. More flattering compliments and innuendoes were flowing and before I know it my shirt was off and trouser belt touching my ankles. She moved very close to my ear with her warm alcoholic breath filtering up my nose. "Have you ever had a mother and daughter experience?" She whispered. I replied that I had never experienced anything like that before and that I didn't know her daughter had moved back in with her. She replied, "She hasn't" and then shouted up the stairs; "Mum come on down."

Children's Play Area

Calling all Aston Abbots Children and Grandchildren – what would you like to see in the playground?

The Parish Council would like to purchase a new item of play equipment for the playground. We would like to know what you would like to play with. Please number these pictures in order of preference (1 being your favourite to 5 being your least favourite), write your age and any other ideas in the boxes provided and post this sheet back to the Parish Clerk.

| Age: | Any other ideas: |
|---|---|
| <p>Nest Swing</p>  | <p>Cone Climber</p>  |
| <p>Climbing Wall/ Traverse Wall</p>  | <p>Roundabout</p>  |
| <p>Seesaw</p>  | |

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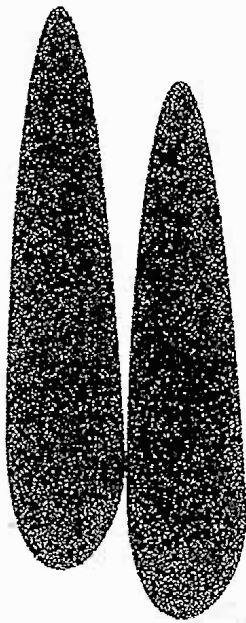
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**Services at
Saint James Church - Aston Abbotts
April 2016**

| | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|--|--------------------------------|
| 3rd April. | 10.00am | Parish Communion | Revd. Philip Derbyshire |
| | | | |
| 10th April | 10.30am | Parish Communion | Revd. Peter Binns |
| | | | |
| 17th April | 9.30am | Breakfast in the Village Hall followed by a short service | |
| | | | |
| 17th April | 6.00pm | Evensong | Revd. Philip Derbyshire |
| | | | |
| 24th April | 10.30am | Parish Communion | Revd. Roger Hale |
| | | | |

The Revd Philip Derbyshire, Team Rector and Priest in charge of Aston Abbotts, is able to take a Communion Service here on the first Sunday of the month at 10am. In order to maintain Evensong which a small, but important number of the congregation appreciate, this will be held on the third Sunday at 6pm as well as the Breakfast Service earlier the same day. This change will be for a trial period during April, May and June. Caroline and members of the PCC would be grateful for your comments on this change.

We look forward to seeing you

100 Club Draw March 2016

1st Prize, £50: Richard Plested

2nd prize, £10: Philip Wilkinson

ChurchMatters



The diary of St. James's

We are keen to dispel the image of the Church as a weekly club for O.A.Ps and return it to its rightful place as a centre of Village life. In order to widen the demographics of the Church congregation we have been reviewing the format of our services in order to appeal to a wider audience. Last year's initiative to introduce a monthly breakfast in the village hall followed by a short informal family service in the Church, has been a great success and this month sees another experiment with Evensong being held on the same Sunday as the Family Service. We will judge the success by the attendance but please let us know your thoughts.

With everything growing fast as a result of the mild winter Andy Bystra and Gordon Kemp gave the grass in the graveyard an early cut, weeks before the summer rota is due to start.

Mothering Sunday/Family Breakfast on 5th March brought three or four generations out to join in this family occasion. Our thanks to April and everyone who helped to dish up a hot breakfast for all and provide posies of spring flowers for Mum's to take home with them.

The Village Hall was packed for the Race Night on 11th March, organised by April and hosted by John Whyte and Tony Hinds. Net proceeds came to £375 so our thanks to all who helped and those who came to join in the fun.

It was good to see Reverend Roger Hale back in the pulpit after his emergency gall bladder operation. A big fellow with a big heart, he has been a regular contributor to the life of St. James Church for many years.

The most solemn week in the Christian year, Holy Week begins with **Palm Sunday** (this year on 20th March). Palm Sunday commemorates Christ's triumphant arrival in Jerusalem to the cheers of the crowd. They took palm branches and went out to meet him shouting "Hosanna, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, Blessed is the King of Israel" But later in that week many of the people in that cheering crowd would be among those shouting that Jesus should be executed.

Maundy Thursday is the Thursday before Easter. Christians remember it as the day of the **Last Supper**, when Jesus washed the feet of his disciples and established the ceremony known as the Eucharist. The night of **Maundy Thursday** is the night on which Jesus was betrayed by Judas in the Garden of Gethsemane. In Britain, the sovereign takes part in the Ceremony of the Royal Maundy. This ceremony, held at a great cathedral, involves the distribution of Maundy money to deserving senior citizens (one man and one woman for each year of the sovereign's age), usually chosen for having done service to their community. They receive ceremonial red and white purses which contain coins made especially for the occasion. The white purse contains one coin for each year of the monarch's reign.

April 2016



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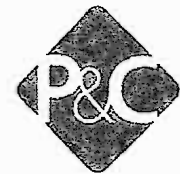


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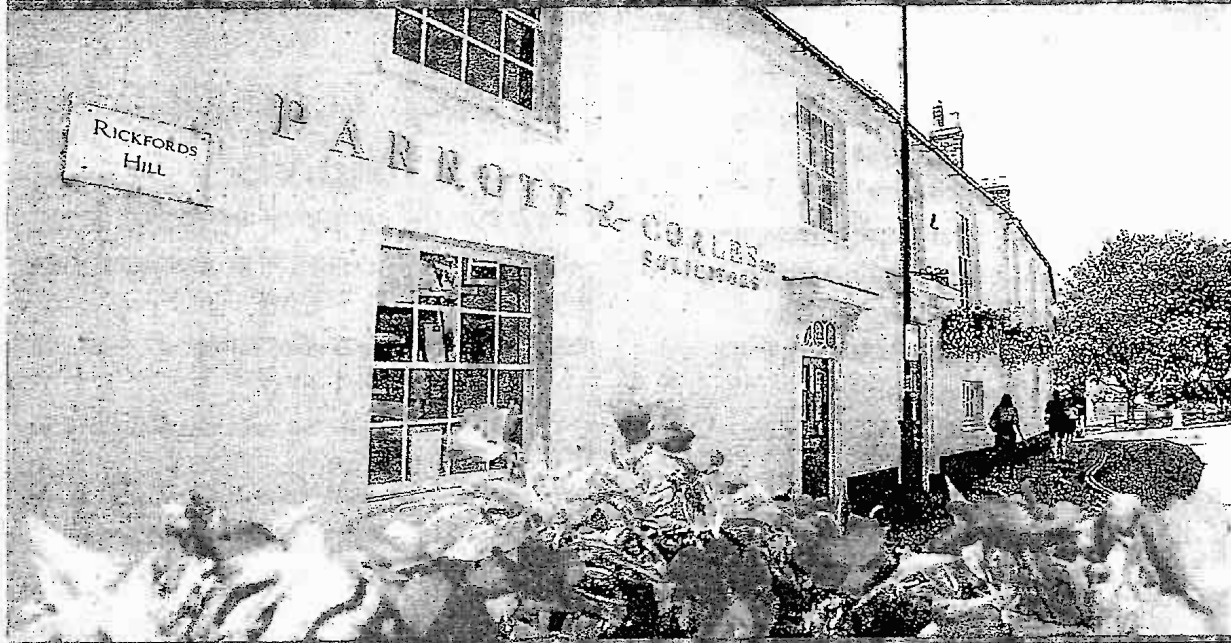
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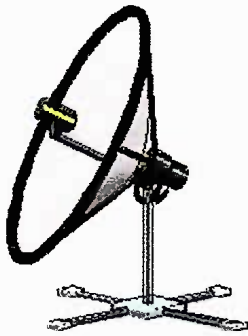
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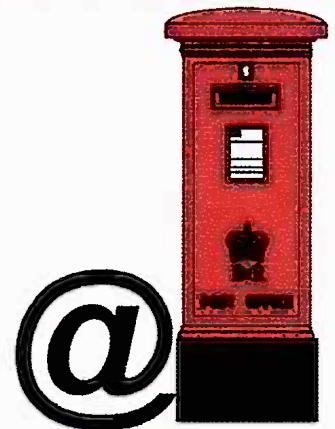
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