

The Chronicle

Autumn October 2019

399

Crowd cheers as Aston Abbotts crowned winner in Bucks Best Kept Village



Saturday, 14th September was a beautiful day – especially in the Buckinghamshire village of Aston Abbotts.

At 11.45am, a large congregation made up of villagers welcomed

the Buckinghamshire Best Kept Village committee including Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher, Lord Lieutenant and President of the Competition, Bill Chapple, to present the village with the trophy for winning the Gurney

Cup, a category for villages with a population of 500 or under.

In an uplifting presentation, the village was delighted to welcome the many dignitaries who expressed their pleasure at seeing so many people for the awarding – the most they had seen at such a presentation.

Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher and Bill Chapple both addressed the crowd. In his address, Sir Henry referenced some outstanding feedback from the judging panel including remarking how the churchyard, war memorial and village hall were beautifully and sensitively maintained and how there had been a real effort throughout the village, and it is evident that the community takes a real pride in the village. Overall Aston Abbots is very deserving of its high mark and is a worthy winner.

Jane Baylis, Chair of the Parish Council, commented “This was a real community effort and we are thrilled to receive this prestigious award. Chris Phillips championed our entry and, as one, we rose to the challenge – we’re so pleased with the high

mark we received and the comments from the judging panel.”

As holders of the Gurney Cup, Aston Abbots will now be entered into the 2020 Tindall Cup. This Cup brings together all the Cup Winners together to see who the ultimate champion is! That means the village will take on Winslow, Burnham, Stewkley amongst others.



The village and the Best Kept Village Committee celebrates Aston Abbots' achievement. Picture credit: Michael Gould

For further information, please contact **Chris Phillips**

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What's on in October

Rambling Club	Sunday 6th 14.00	Studham
Evensong	Sunday 6th 18.00	Church
Quiz Night	Sunday 6th 19.30	Royal Oak
Pilates	Every Tues 09.30	Village Hall
Parish Council	Tuesday 3rd 19.30	Village Hall
Yoga	Every Wed 17.45	Village Hall
Chip Van	Weds from 20.15	Various
Morning Cafe	Every Thurs 10-12	Village Hall
Whist Drive	Thurs 03/17/31 19.30	Village Hall
Bingo	Thurs 10th 19.30	Village Hall
Bus Trip	Friday 18th 10.00	09.08 bus to L/Buzzard
Breakfast Service followed by a short Church Service	Sunday 20th 09.30	Village Hall.
Village Footpath Walk	Sunday 27th 14.00	The Green
Torch Light Ramble followed by Sausage & Mash Supper	Friday 1st November 18.30	Meet Royal Oak

Notes from the Parish Council – October 2019

At the last Parish Council meeting our District Councillor Peter Cooper provided a little more information about the plans for localism in the areas of planning and transport when the new county-wide unitary authority comes into being next year. He also mentioned the difficulty created by harmonising the different rates of council tax currently used by the four existing authorities.

The Parish Council sought support from County Councillor Netta Glover over possible traffic calming measures in Moat Lane. Netta agreed that she could give support when concrete proposals are ready, but warned that Transport for Bucks would be unlikely to entertain any major road changes (e.g. chicanes).

Netta also advised that problems with roads and pavements can be reported by any member of the public at

<https://www.fixmystreet.buckscc.gov.uk/>.

The shed on the recreation ground has now had much of its contents removed, with both the staging and the many 8x4 sheets of wood going to villagers. A considerable amount of rubbish remains to be disposed of before the shed is demolished, probably in the spring.

The defibrillator outside of the Village Hall has been tested to ensure that it is functioning and that the batteries are still in good condition. Training sessions will probably be offered sometime in November when all concerned have finished with their holidays and other commitments.

The next Parish Council meeting is on Tuesday October 29th.

This is an informal note of some matters discussed by Aston Abbots Parish Council. To read the official meeting minutes please go to <http://www.aston-abbotts.co.uk/pcdocuments.htm>

Sunday 6th October 7.30pm

Royal Oak Aston Abbotts



Full cash price. Free Dinner for 2 Draw

Food available

Come join the banter, fun & frolics

1st Sunday of every month

The Astonians - astonpete

Just a snippet of news as the kids returned to school.

Alfie Brocklebank-Fowler is a bright kid, unlike his older brother Hugo.

Alfie went on a school trip to the local police station where they saw pictures of the 10 most wanted criminals pinned to a noticeboard.

One of the youngsters pointed to a picture and asked if it really was the photo of a wanted person. 'Yes,' said the policeman. 'The detectives want to capture him especially.'

Alfie asked, "Why didn't you keep him when you took his picture?"



Good Samaritans Bingo! £100 raised in September for:



Join us on Thursday 10th October, Aston Abbots Village Hall,
7.30pm In aid of: **RNLI**

Part 2 of Nigel and Sally Palmer's Georgia journey.

More wine, mountains and history



After Tbilisi we travelled North to Kazbegi along the Russian built Military Highway stopping at various churches located in beautiful positions. This is the main route to Russia and so many large lorries were on it. Near to the border they are held up for days waiting for paperwork. Around here there were thick yellow pipes despoiling the landscape, apparently it is a pipeline taking oil from Russia to Armenia.

Here the lower mountains tend to be lightly wooded and rolling and

covered in low vegetation so they look like they are covered in green baize. We stayed here in a converted Soviet era holiday apartment block and enjoyed beautiful views of the second Highest mountain in Georgia.

During our stay we walked up to a church picturesquely perched on top of a hill below the mountain and went for lunch in a local house tasting among many dishes Borscht soup (in Georgia this is a thick vegetable soup) aubergine and walnut paste, and khachapuri the

ubiquitous cheese dish best described as like a stuffed cheese pizza except the dough has no yeast in it. This one was my favourite of the whole trip as it was filled with cheese and potato.



From Kazbegi we went to the somewhat unexciting town of Kutaisi by way of Gori and the Stalin museum that included his personal railway carriage. Incidentally Kutaisi was the place where Ann Lister died whose life was dramatized in the recent BBC series Gentleman Jack.

We also visited a restored chateau and wine estate enroute. Here we learnt how the Soviets had decided Georgia drank too much and had filled the large underground cellars with earth that took months to dig out. We also learned about traditional wine production (clay pots containing wine have been

dated back to 5th century BC making Georgia the oldest known centre of wine making). The grape juice is fermented in large terracotta pots buried in the ground.

One snag to this method was cleaning the pots, a man is lowered into the empty Kvevri it but others stand around outside in case the man inside is overcome with alcoholic fumes and has to be pulled out! This process makes white wine a rich amber colour and the reds have more tannins. The restored Mukhrani estate now makes traditional and European style wine that was of excellent quality.

From here we travelled north again heading for the town of Mestia in the Svaneti region along a fairly recently upgraded mountain road that weaved its way up and round a deep valley enclosed by heavily wooded mountain sides and passing many groups of bee hives placed there for the bees to enjoy the wild flowers. Alongside stood stalls selling different types of honey in a bewildering assortment of jars and bottles. We were offered some in an old coca cola

bottle. The town itself was undergoing extensive development for tourism but our destination, after a night's rest, was a further 1.5 hours 4wd journey away at Ushguli. Ushguli is a Unesco World heritage site lying below Mount Shkhara Georgia's highest peak. At 2100m above sea level it claims to be Europe's highest permanent settlement. Cut off by thick snow for much of the year this has only recently been opened up to visitors.

It is a lovely - if challenging - hiking area in the summer with lovely wildflower meadows and millions of white butterflies all over the area. Until recently it was a wild and lawless area inhabited by diminishing groups of independent, tough, and feuding families who lived in tall stone towers dating back many centuries. Such a remote area was

used during the centuries of invasion by the church to store important and valuable assets and was itself the centre for the making of religious icons with their own distinctive styles. I think this was one of my favourite places though I would not like to be there in the winter.

From here we travelled to the rapidly expanding Black Sea resort of Batumi which had the most European feel of anywhere we visited. With a long boulevard behind the pebble beach, gardens, flowers, fountains and modern hotels along with an old part containing some beautiful Belle Epoch era buildings.

On returning to Tbilisi we enjoyed a final trip to the main wine growing area before heading home.

Your Letters

Hi there, I'd just like to make everyone aware a lawn mower was stolen from a locked shed down Moat Lane in September.

Sophi

Dear Ed, The Gin Competition is back at the Royal Oak in December

Colin Higgs

Dear Ed, Simon Guy and I are writing about all the people of the village who served in WW2 and hopefully hold an exhibition of any wartime items.

You may have caps, badges etc. Also the ARP Landgirls etc. If you have anything on these items, would you please let either of us know?

Colin Higgs

Dear Ed, If anyone is interested in joining a Domino Drive, please contact me? **Colin Higgs. 681343**

Proposed Merger of Wing, Whitchurch and Norden House Surgery Winslow

Whitchurch, Wing and Norden House Surgeries are proposing to merge on 1 April 2020. The partnership between these surgeries will be known as 3W Health, however the existing surgeries names will remain the same.

All three surgeries have been performing well and have had 'good' recent Care Quality Commission ratings. By uniting as one like-minded team we can continue to provide this high quality care in a way that allows us to thrive in the future, making best use of available resources, developing new services and providing seamless care for all of our patients. We will become more resilient, have a larger pool of staff to draw from, and can work towards bringing services from hospital into the community for the convenience of patients.

Our doctors, practice nurses and other staff will continue to be available to patients under the proposed new arrangements in the same way and in the same premises as they are at present.

We understand that you may have questions and comments about the proposal to merge and have answered some of these in a list of FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) which can be found on all 3 websites:

www.nordenhousesurgery.co.uk,
www.wingsurgery.co.uk,
www.whitchurchsurgery.co.uk

We will also be holding drop-in mornings on the following Saturdays:

5th October Wing, 12th October
Norden House, 26th October
Whitchurch

If you have any specific queries or concerns please write to Noel Ratcliffe at Norden House Surgery,

Avenue Rd, Winslow, Bucks, MK18 3DW, or email
3w.merger@nhs.net

The Chronicle Annual Advertising rates

Full Page Inside	£90
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Quarter	£10

Send copy and cheque payable to 'The Chronicle' to John Whyte 14 Bricstock, Aston Abbots Bucks HP224LP.

100 Club Draw September 2019

1st prize, £50 Jane Baylis

2nd prize, £10 Jill Wenble



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Church Matters

The diary of St. James's



Congratulations to Chris Phillips and all the villagers who helped to get Aston Abbots so neat and tidy for the Best Kept village scrutineers. Also, our thanks to the mowing team and the gardeners that tend the flowers in the beds and manage the wild area in the churchyard at St. James. We are proud to have got an 'honourable mention' in the judge's review. The PCC will have to give some consideration to our 'scruffy' notice board at the Church gate if we are to successfully defend our title next year!

The next family service will be on 20th October when the St. James thespians will enact another of

Jesus's miracles. The theme for September was the turning of water into wine at the wedding in Cana in Galilee.

David Gray

Date	Cleaning	Flowers	Mowing
5th	Colin David	Caroline A/S	Peter Curry
12th	Caroline Ann	Caroline A/S	Caroline Lane
19th	Alex Anita	Anita	Phil Spooner
26th	Colin Gay	Anita	Adam Shorrock

Mowing

As we see the leaves change colour from green to brown, we also are drawing towards the end of the summers Church mowing rota, where our team of 8 each do roughly four or five sessions on the Church grounds. It is great to have the group committed and dedicated to making the Church grounds look amazing and many thanks to the group for their time and efforts. Special thanks go to each one of the group for given up roughly 3 hours per

shift of their weekend. I hope, as a whole our residents can see how these efforts benefit our Village in many ways.

So a huge pat on the back to everyone involved, being, Caroline, Andy, Adam, Phil, Peter and Andrew for their time, as well as David for making sure their is always petrol for the mowers and making sure the mower maintenance happens not to mention the mowing too!

Core Beliefs

Dear friends,

About four years ago the Most Revd. Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote scathingly about 'commitment phobia'. He wasn't speaking about any one area of life over another just a general observation about how an increasing number of people seem to be happy to drift from one thing to another without any apparent problem or reason for doing so.

I hope you all winter well, and if you are reading this and feel the urge to join the group, please email me at mark.davison@hotmail.co.uk. I will be drawing up the 2020 vision rota in approx March next year, so I will be getting in touch with the group then for availabilities/unavailabilities before then! Many thanks all! Mark

We've seen a lot of it lately with individuals crossing the floor of the House of Commons at an alarming rate: I'm amazed we haven't had any mid-air collisions!

Often there seems to be no clear reasoning or principle upon which the move(s) has/have been made.

Just recently I came across an article in a national newspaper where an American Presbyterian Minister has 'slimmed down' the belief base of his Church in

Rutgers, New York, in order to attract more [people](#). So, once there was belief in the divine nature of Jesus and the authority of God and now it's ok to do without if you like.....What of course is missing is the understanding that if you dump fundamentals you are no longer what you claim to be---you do not 'do what it says on the tin'.

As one of his disgruntled parishioners said, "If you have no core belief system you have a social club".

If that is all there is there is no faith just fashion.

God bless at this wonderful Harvest season. **Revd.Philip.**

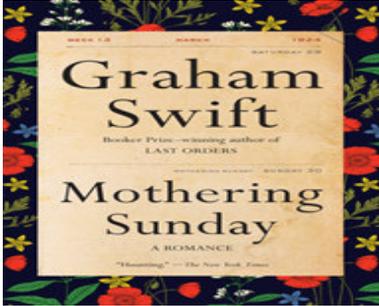
Services at Saint James Church - Aston Abbotts

<i>6th October</i>	<i>6.00pm</i>	<i>Evensong</i>	<i>Revd. Philip Derbyshire</i>
<i>13th October</i>	<i>10.30am</i>	<i>Parish Communion</i>	<i>Revd. Peter Binns</i>
<i>20th October</i>	<i>9.30am</i>	<i>Breakfast in the Village Hall, followed by a short service</i>	
<i>27th October</i>	<i>10.30am</i>	<i>Parish Communion</i>	<i>Revd. Roger Hale</i>

Village Hall Diary

October 2019						
Sun 29	Mon 30	Tue 1	Wed 2	Thu 3	Fri 4	Sat 5
		9:15 Pilates	17:45 NO YOGA CLASS	9:30 Coffee Morning 19:30 Whist		12 E M Farrell
6	7	8 9:15 Pilates	9 17:45 YOGA CLASS	10 9:30 Coffee Morning 18:30 Bingo	11	12 13:30 Bellringers Event
13	14 19:30 PCC Meeting	15 9:15 Pilates	16 17:45 YOGA CLASS	17 9:30 Coffee Morning 14 Ladies Club 19:30 Whist	18	19
20 9 Breakfast service	21	22 9:15 Pilates	23 17:45 YOGA CLASS	24 9:30 Coffee Morning	25	26
27	28	29 9:15 Pilates 19:30 Parish Council	30 17:45 YOGA CLASS	31 9:30 Coffee Morning 19:30 Whist	1	2 12:30 Em Farrell

Summer book Club



The book club met in July to discuss *Mothering Sunday* by Graham Swift. This was a very popular book by a Booker Prize winning author.

It is a short book centred around the events of one day in the 1920s when an orphaned servant has a day off to visit her mother. Having no mother what is she to do? Fortunately, she has been having an affair with Paul, the son of her employer's friends and neighbours, and he grabs the opportunity to invite her to his house as his parents and her employer are out having lunch prior to his marriage to a suitably wealthy but incompatible woman. The day is to prove a turning point in Jane's life though we learn the seeds of that change have been sown in the previous few years.

The book is beautifully written as the events of the day slowly unfold and Jane thinks about her life up to this

point. We had a good discussion about it.

In August we met to discuss *The Catcher in the Rye* by J D Salinger. Included in the list of Modern Classics and written in 1946 some of you may have read it at school as did several book club members.

It is a short book told by 16 year old Holden Caulfield about a weekend spent alone in New York following expulsion from an expensive private school for failing to do any work. It is a tale of what might today be called Teenage angst. It is thought the book has a strong autobiographical element. It is about Holden's reluctance to become an adult because he sees adults as mostly "phony", by which he seems to mean no longer genuine, two faced and willing to compromise principles for financial gain.

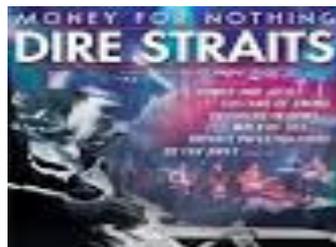
The title comes from Holden's ambition, stated in the book to be the catcher in the rye catching children about to run blindly into adulthood. The book contains many good quotes which may be why it has been used as an exam text. However, it was banned in many schools, especially in America, right up until the 1970s due to its

swearing (too many Christ'ssakes apparently), criticism of religion and references to sex. Views were mixed on this one, some people found it difficult to get into but it was a thought- provoking book as it examined the workings of a

confused teenager's mind. Given the recent debate about teenage mental health it was certainly an interesting read.

Sally Palmer

MONEY FOR NOTHING



As a huge Mark Knopfler and Dire Straits fan (I've seen Mark Knopfler 3 times in the past 2 years), I was delighted to get tickets for "Money for Nothing" at the Waterside Theatre.

Formed in 2000 this Dire Straits tribute band were really good. The quality of the music was great – with up to 9 artists on stage for some of the numbers the sound was excellent. They played lots of the hits; Brothers in Arms, Sultans of Swing, Romeo and Juliet,

Tunnel of love, and of course Money for Nothing plus many more.

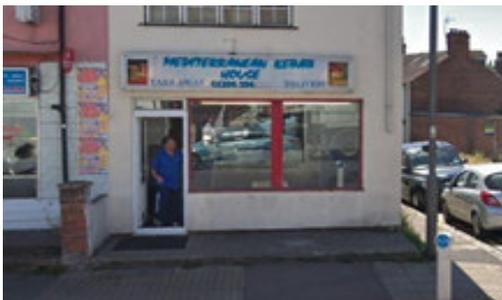
Mark Knopfler has a distinctive voice and lead singer Aled Williams made a great job of the vocals and the quality of the musicians was excellent.

They are in Stevenage and St Albans in 2020 and so if you get a chance, it's well worth the effort to see them.

Local Restaurant & TakeAway Hygiene Ratings

According to the Bucks Herald website, these are the restaurants and takeaways in Aylesbury Vale that have been given a one or two star food hygiene rating by the Food Standards Agency. A one star rating means "major improvement necessary, and a two star rating means "some improvement is necessary".

Mediterranean Kebab House. Rated 2 on 25-Mar-2019. 175 Cambridge Street, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP20 1BQ.



KFC. Rated 2 on 8-Jun-2019. 35 Buckingham Street, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP20 2NQ.



Desire Restaurant. Rated 2 on 5-Mar-2019. 40 Kingsbury, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP20 2JE.



Temple Street Wine Bar. Rated 2 on 21-Feb-2019. Ground Floor 7 - 11 Temple Street, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP20 2RN.

Peri-Peri Original. Rated 1 on 30-Apr-2018. 33 Cambridge Street, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP20 1RP.

Sam's Of Aylesbury. Rated 1 on 24-Jul-2018. 103 Cambridge Street, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP20 1BT.



Wings Fish & Chip Shop. Rated 1 on 7-Aug-2018. 14 Stewkley Road, Wing, Buckinghamshire, LU7 0NE.

Gi Ges. Rated 1 on 13-Dec-2018. 23 Kingsbury, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP20 2JA.



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- 3 Pass the horse wide and slow (at least a car's width)
- 4 Drive slowly away

Thank you for driving
safely around horses.

bhs.org.uk/deadslow   

Cannot confirm this but it did make me giggle

VISA-MasterCard

CANCEL YOUR CREDIT CARD BEFORE YOU DIE

Reported in the Newcastle Evening Chronicle U.K.

Be sure and cancel your credit cards before you die! This is easy to see happening - customer service being what it is today!

A lady died in September and the Visa bank billed her for their annual service charges on her credit card.

In December they added late fees and interest on the monthly charge.

The balance that had been £0.00, is now somewhere around £60.00.

A family member placed a call to the Visa Bank:

Family Member: 'I am calling to tell you that my grandma died in September.'

VISA: 'But the account was never closed and so the late fees and charges still apply.'

Family Member: 'Maybe, you should turn it over to your collections section.'

VISA: 'Since it is two months over due, it already has been.'

Family Member: 'So, what will they do when they find out she is dead?'

VISA: 'Either report her account to the Frauds Department, or report her to The Credit Bureau, maybe both!'

Family Member: 'Do you think God will be mad at her?'

VISA: 'Excuse me?'

Family Member: 'Did you just get what I was telling you . . The part about her being dead?'

VISA: 'Sir, you'll have to speak to my supervisor.' Supervisor gets on the phone:

Family Member: 'I'm calling to tell you, she died in September.'

VISA: 'But the account was never closed and the late fees and charges still apply.'

Family Member: 'You mean you want to collect from her estate?'

VISA: (Stammer) 'Are you her solicitor?'

Family Member: 'No, I'm her grandson'

VISA: 'Could you fax us a death certificate?'

Family Member: 'Sure.' (fax number is given)

After they get the fax:

VISA: 'Our system just isn't set up for death. I don't know what more I can do to help.'

Family Member: 'Well, if you figure it out, great! If not, you could just keep billing her. I don't think she will care.'

VISA: 'Well, the late fees and charges will still apply.'

Family Member: 'Would you like her new billing address?'

VISA: 'That would help.'

Family Member: ' Plot 1049.' Heaton Cemetery, Heaton Road , Newcastle upon Tyne

VISA: 'But, that's a cemetery!'

Family Member: 'Well, what do you do with dead people on your planet?'

VISA were not available for comment; - when a reporter from the Newcastle Evening Chronicle rang them.

September's Horticultural Show Results

Runner Bean, Beetroot, Potatoes, soft fruit & onions - Simon Guy

Marrow, Jar Jelly, & Pot Plant - Colin Higgs

**Coffee Walnut Cake, Jar Jelly & marmalade & Photo around Aston Abbots -
Caroline**

Cup Winner - Simon Guy

2nd - Colin Higgs

3rd - Caroline L and Nigel Palmer

Colin Higgs commented, "It was a good effort but disappointing that there were no child entries

Wingrave Diary

Tue 1-4 Wingrave Ramblers' walking holiday

Tue 1 1930 Wingrave Art Club Methodist Church

Wed 2 1000 WI: West Wycombe Park and the Dashwoods Methodist Church

Fri 4 1800 WCA Village Family Evening Community Centre

Sat 5 1930 Harvest supper Methodist Church

Sun 6 0945 Harvest Festival Celebratory Service Parish Church

Sun 6 1400 Swingrave tea dance Community Centre

Tue 8 1200 Nup End Café Methodist Church

Sat 12 0845 Men's Breakfast Talk: Can we now trust Banks? Methodist Church

Mon 14 0930 Weekday Walkers' walk The Green

Tue 15 1930 Wingrave Art Club Methodist Church

Wed 16 1200 Last of the Summer Ukuleles Rose & Crown

Fri 18 1930 WCA Village bingo Community Centre

Sat 19 1st Birthday Party! Rose & Crown

Sun 20 0930 Local ramble Nup End Lane

Tue 22 1200 Nup End Café Methodist Church

Thu 24 1600 Fillable pop-up shop Community Centre

Thu 24 1800 Copy date for Communiqué

Fri 25 1930 WWRHA meeting: "Rabbits and Genealogy" Community Centre

Sat 26-27 Wingrave Singers at Blackburn Cathedral

Sun 27 0200 British Summer Time ends

Mon 28-1 No School half term holiday

Wed 30 1200 Pub Lunch Club Rose & Crown

Thu 31 Children's Halloween party Rose & Crown

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Saturday mens (6.30) Club

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Community Library

Opening Times

Mon CLOSED
Tue 14:00 - 19:00
Wed 10:00 - 13:00
Thu CLOSED
Fri 14:00 - 17:00
Sat 10:00 - 13:00

Tea and coffee
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www.buckscommunitylibraries.org/wing/

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available with your Library membership card

Most can be accessed at home e.g. Naxos Music Library; Encyclopaedia Britannica;

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In the Library you can also access Ancestry, Which?

and Academic Research articles

We have two public access computers in the library



Lego Club - Friday 25 October 15:30 - 16:30



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ALLOTMENT DIARY

As well as growing vegetables on my allotment, I also grow fruit in my garden – plums, gooseberries, apples and pears. My plum and gooseberry crops have been fine, and although the pears are not yet ready for picking, they are also doing well.

However, when I came to pick my apples, I was astonished to discover that the crop was disastrous: undoubtedly the smallest crop of apples I have ever had, in the 20-odd years we have lived in the village – I would estimate about a twentieth of the crop I had last year. The reduction in crop size applied to all the varieties of apples I grow. I have four different varieties: two eaters and two cookers. I do not know what the varieties are, since the apple trees were there when we arrived, but I suspect that one of the cookers is a Bramley. This latter tree was one of the worst affected: I only picked eleven apples off the tree, and there

were no windfalls. Last year I picked pounds of apples off this tree.

I have obviously been wondering why. I think that there are probably two causes: the first is that I suspect there was a late frost, after the apple blossom had appeared, and this killed off the majority of the blossom. A factor which supports this theory is that there were virtually no apples near the top of the trees – where the blossom would have been most affected by the frost. The second is that we have had a number of squirrels in the garden recently, and I suspect that they will have been helping themselves to the reduced crop of apples there was available. Most of the trees had so much foliage that I had no idea how many apples were growing, but one of the eating apple trees had so few leaves, because of disease or old age, that I could see how many apples were growing; and at one time there were far more than the three apples I

picked – which suggests that squirrels may have been the culprits

Another curious thing was the extraordinary number of apples which were going bad while growing on the tree: I cannot explain this, except that in some cases the rot was due to birds having pecked at the apples.

My pear crop is unaffected: does pear blossom appear later than apple blossom? I shall be interested to hear if other villagers have had a similar problem with their apple trees.

In my last article I mentioned that I had a courgette plant which had three spurs producing fruit: I have now discovered (a bit late in the day) that it has four spurs! The fourth spur, which I had not seen, had produced three courgettes which had turned into marrows by the time I discovered them, because they were concealed at the bottom of the plant, below a canopy of leaves.

This year I grew some beetroot which were white and yellowy-orange as well as the usual purple colour. I don't care for beetroot much, but my son Adam, for whom I grow them, tells me that the white and yellow varieties do not taste as good as the purple variety.

A success story this year has been our sweet-corn crop, which has been very successful, and has hardly been affected by predatory animals and birds. Speaking to a fellow allotmenteer, Simon Guy, I found he has had the same experience. My son, Adam's, theory is that in previous years the cobs were initially being attacked by a particular bird, which has now died, without passing on the secret of opening up sweet corn to its progeny. (Once the initial incision into the cob has been made, exposing the kernels of corn inside, I suspect that this would be exploited by numerous other birds /animals: but some smart bird had the make the first breakthrough).

Peter Shorrocks

Sunflowers reach for the sky!

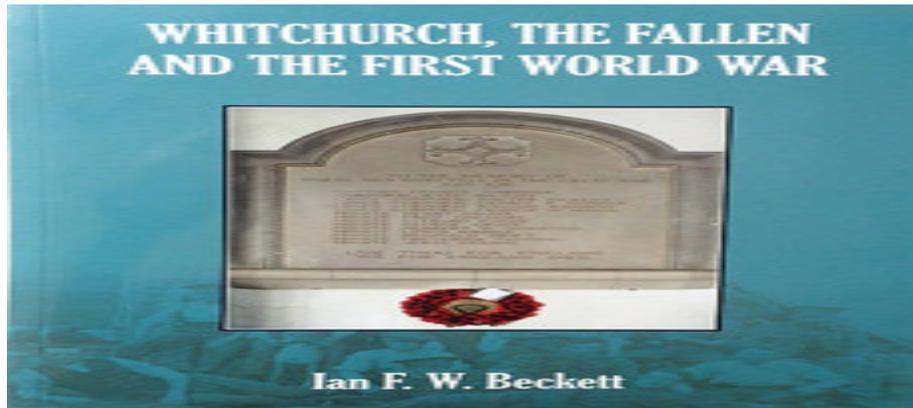


Thank you to everyone who took part in the 2019 Aston Abbots Sunflower Competition. Jane Baylis, Tom Phillips, Isobel Phillips and Chris Phillips walked around the village in August to decide on a winner. Thankfully, many sunflowers survived the recent windy weather!

It was such a tight competition, but there could only be one winner. Congratulations to Marissa, Alex and Archie whose sunflower was just 4cm taller than Val and Leslie Smith's. Wow – it was a close competition.

Well done to everyone who entered.

The Royal British Legion Whitchurch & District Branch



**Tuesday 8th October 2019 At the Church Hall,
Whitchurch at 7.30 p.m.**

A launch, organised by the Legion, of his book entitled by Professor Ian Beckett. Refreshments will be available as will signed copies. Professor Beckett was born in Whitchurch and educated at Aylesbury Grammar School and the Universities of Lancaster and London. A Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, he retired as Professor of Military History at the University of Kent in 2015.



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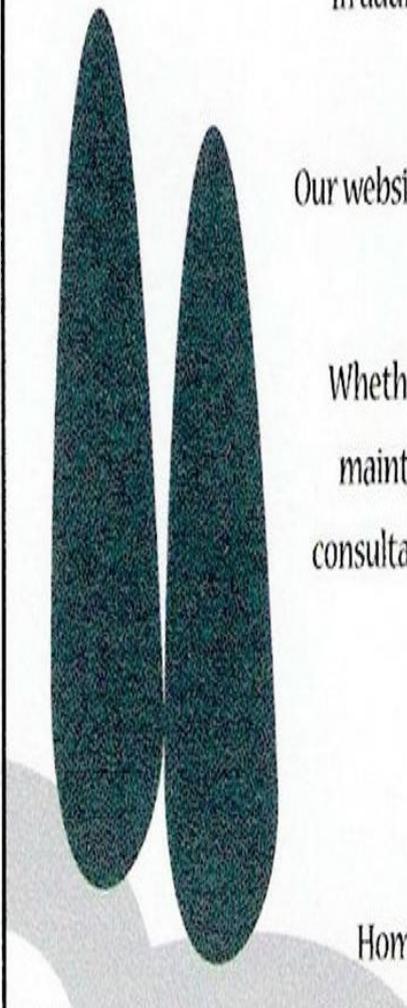
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