

The Chronicle

March 2020. Issue 404



Normal service will continue in April but due to lack of resources with me in Australia, from where I'm writing this month's magazine, this edition looks very 'wordy' and somewhat unprofessional.

If I miss anyone's article or ad, I can only apologise for now.

We are entering the Best Kept Village again so please keep hedges trimmed, pick up litter and no dog fouling.

Pete. Editor



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Astonbury Revisited

Neil Cheshire

When I came to the village in 1982 there was already a thriving Christmas pantomime and it was the hot ticket. It ran for 3 nights and was well loved.

Already people like John and Diedre Whyte, Bridget Brandon, Margaret Kent, the Ford family, The Watts sisters and many others were involved.

There were loads of kids in the cast. Clearly there was a lot of talent around.

I got involved in the following years. More and more people were involved as we became more sophisticated. Scenery was painted by Andy Bystra (memorably the great Dick Whittington set), lights were added, microphones and live music.

The final Pantomime was a Star Trek theme complete with an asteroid storm helped by tennis rackets.

At around the same time the Chronicle had started but was desperate for funds. So a Chronicle Dinner and Cabaret was created. For the first one the food was by

Fran, Music included the last night of the Proms.

I once played banjo and got the audience to sing a song in 8 different languages.

Again this became more slicker and brought in others such as Gordon Smith, Nigel and Anthony, Rachel Sutton and featured various sketches. We also had an awards session similar to the BAFTA, where worthy village people were given 'Collins'.

The talent was all round us, with really excellent performers who never had an opportunity to do it on a proper stage. John Brancker had a rare talent for comedy and later on Peter Knight brought the house down.

One of the problems was that the Church Room could only hold 46 people. Such was the reputation of the show that a lot of the audience came from outside the village thus denying villagers the chance to be entertained.

In the Bull and Butcher I often used to muse that it would be great to do a free concert on the Green.

After one such conversation Anne Dicken said her back garden could be used at Norduck Farm.

So a team of us got together to see how to do it. Dave Lewis looked after all the power and cabling. Bob Bean looked after the stage, I did music, Corrigan scrounged things, Whyte looked after tickets and money.

Rehearsals were held in my spare bedroom. Andi Swain was compere for the first 4 shows and came up with the name 'Astonbury'. The name has been copied by others but we were the first.

We calculated it needed 2 1/2 hours of material. Anthony did a drum solo. Haley Wilkinson, Tony Rhys, Lynne Manning, Gerry and the A'Tricks (later to become the Chunkees!), Briddgett, Pat Daniels, John Whyte, Christina Tomlin, a young band from Burston Hill Farm with Jackie as vocalist all performed. Nigel played keyboards. In truth a right old mixture!

The sound was just about ok, the lights came from Franks building kit. It started to rain and all the electrical connections were wrapped in polythene bags. It was remarkable who turned out to help, it was even more remarkable when 125 people turned up for the show.

After the success we repeated the show three more times at Norduck, getting better all the time and with larger audiences. We were also getting a reputation and people were asking if they could perform. It was great to see the task we had set ourselves of giving local talent a chance to perform to a large audience working.

Shows 3 and 4 featured a complete professional stage, lights and sound thanks to Andy Stevancyk and Andi Swain. More acts appeared, Dave Lewis made a final appearance playing bass guitar on Shazam. John Whyte sang his heart out.



Astonbury had outgrown Norduck. So we called it quits.

It took about two years when, again down the pub, there was a wave of enthusiasm to do more.

The enhanced team (it was always a team effort) got together and decided to do the next Astonbury on the Rec. but it would be much bigger and needed much bigger everything. We obtained permission from the

Parish Council, paid the Performing Rights Licence, and insurance.

It was decided to have a scaffold built stage some 7m wide and 5m deep, fortunately Dave knew Shillingford Scaffolding (brother in law of Diana) so he blagged a free build. They kindly did this for 6 shows.

Phil Spooner suggested pretesting the sound systems and this was done in Dave's garden but nothing was powerful or good enough.

Dave (again) had a pal called Jerry who worked for Martin Audio, who provided the sound kit for Glastonbury. So they loaned us the kit from the Pyramid stage complete with mud, free! Needless to say the sound quality was awesome, but Spooner only had one position on the volume knob and that was 11!

Lights were bought (to be seen in the village hall), as well as a mixing desk and smoke machines. Corrigan, the ace scrounger, provided lights from the theatre in St Albans shopping centre, produced the many Astonbury banners, the Astonbury wrist bands and even carpet for the stage.

For the first show power was supplied on a long cable from Liz and Ivan's house. This got very hot and the voltage drop caused the sound

system to die at the wrong time. In subsequent shows we hired a generator to overcome this issue. As Dave would say 'It's for one night only, Neil.'

The other issue was acts. 3 1/2 hours of material was now needed. The Chunkees always got two sets!

So an advert was placed in the Chronicle. To our surprise we got a Gospel group from Aylesbury. Bob Marley never sounded so good.

At the time there were no backing tracks available so I was taking Midifiles, electronically re-orchestrating them for a large arena, changing both tempo and key as necessary.

New people came forward such as Simon Gresswell with Chunkfunster, Carole Barnes, Rachel Sutton and her band, and Simon Longman.

Rehearsals were still held in my bedroom. Complete with a 4 microphone setup.

Anthony Palmer could always be relied upon to bring along some weird and strange music. His success was the West African Drum band, who appeared twice. Nigel Palmer always opened the show with a big keyboard number such as Theme for the Common Man.

It was a delight when other young people, such as Nikita and her pal Jade, as well as Amber and Rosie volunteered.

6 shows were performed on the Rec and there was an increasing queue of bands and performers on the show so it had to be extended from 6.30 to 11 pm. Every show ended with fireworks courtesy of Dave, again!

Getting acts on and off the stage was always the issue. Nigel's job was to get the next act stage side before the one on stage had finished.

The weather was always an issue and many times it rained during the day only to be dry-ish on the night. For the final show John Whyte hit Ebay and bought a tarpaulin roof and even after torrential rain during set up it was ok on the night. Set up was on the day and I was always banned from being at sound checks. No idea why.

The show was never advertised but still the audiences grew and grew. It was great seeing the performers having the time of their lives even if they were only on for one or two numbers. It was even better seeing the audience appreciating what the performers were doing....

In fact our success, as a team, outgrew us. We ran no security and

were getting increasingly concerned about 'off the ball' incidents and the vulnerability of young audience members, plus we were getting older.

The final audience was huge.

Astonbury did create a buzz in the village, people would talk about it and there was a strong sense of unity. Gone now!,,....

The final song in Show 10 was 'Thank you for the Music' performed by the now 'world famous Chunkees.'



So after 10 Shows over 12 years we decided to hand over to another generation.

Sadly, after one musically excellent but expensive attempt it hasn't come to pass.

What did I get from it? Fun, joy and the ability, with others, to sing, perform, play a variety of instruments and feel the love!

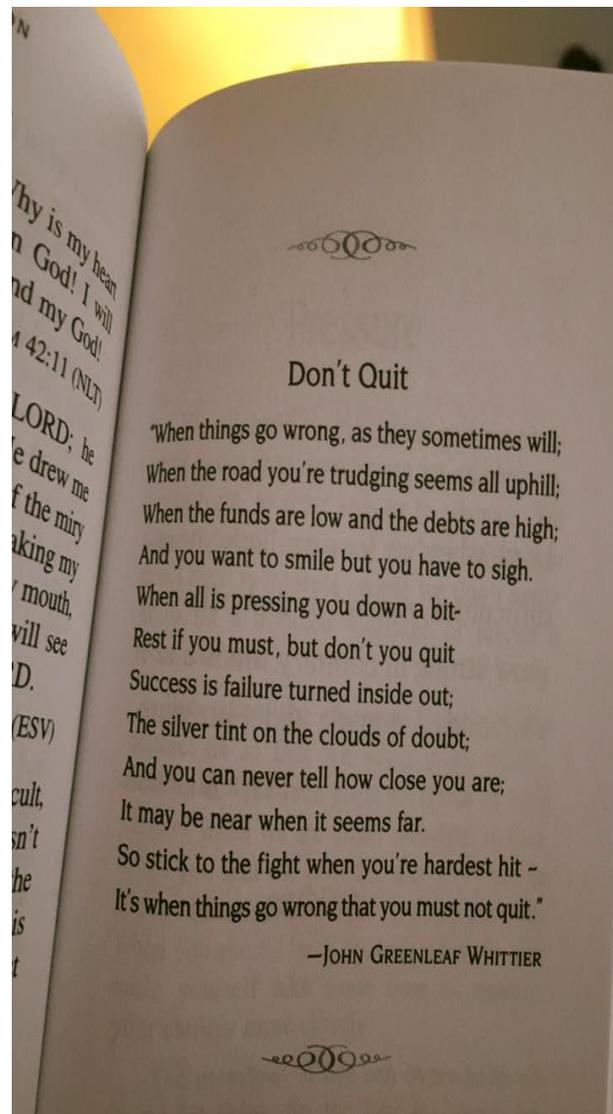
It used to consume 3 months of my life but it was worth every second.

What's left? To start the team, after all this time we are still close friends. All the kit we bought is located around the village and available to any group who wants to put on a show in the village.

Oh and we, the team, made a gift of £10,000 towards the refurbishment of the village hall.

Check on the village web site for more.

Ps if I have missed any names I apologize but thank you for being there.



NEW PILATES CLASS FOR ALL > Tuesday 6.15 p.m. > Friday 6.45 p.m. > Beginners and improvers > No block booking. £8 per hour. Aston Abbotts Village Hall

What's On In March

Sunday 1st Rambling Club Meet Leighton Buzzard Tesco 2pm

Sunday 1st Evensong St James Church 6pm

Tuesday 10th Aylesbury Vale Transport Meeting Buckingham 11am

Every Wednesday Fish & Chip Van Various stops from 8.15pm

Thursday 5th and 19th Whist Drive Village Hall 7.30pm

Thursday 12th Bingo Village Hall 7.30pm

Saturday 8th Clocks go on 1 hour

QUIZ NIGHT REVISED DATE SUNDAY 15TH MARCH 7.30PM. ROYAL OAK



Your Emails

Dear Editor

In the last edition you mentioned the litter picker seen working around the village...it is Amy James from Chapmans Lea, doing volunteer work for her Gold Duke of Edinburgh award. As she will be doing this for the rest of the year – and since I'm sure she would rather be with friends (who have sadly declined the invitation to help!) – any encouragement would be very welcome. It does

Dear Ed.

Mary Watts and family would like to thank everyone for the cards and kind messages of sympathy on the death of David who passed

Just wanted to say thank you to Teri and the team for all their efforts for the Valentine dinner. Much time had been spent decorating for the occasion, right down to the heart shaped napkins. Candles, red roses, and chocolates were on the tables, and there was a glass of Bucks Fizz for each person. The 3 course set meal was

make all the difference knowing what she is doing is appreciated. (And if anyone knows the serious vodka drinkers who dump an amazing amount of empty bottles on our verges, please tell them to take their rubbish home!)

Thank you

Tony _____

Pete,

Our Beetle Drive on 24th April at the Village Hall. **David Gray**

away on the 6th January. David was 91 years old and had lived in the village for 52 years

Thank you **Ruth Meardon (daughter of David)**

very nice and plenty of it! The Royal Oak is a good choice when going out for Valentines as other places can be overpriced with poor and/or slow service.

A lovely evening all in all, thank you.

C.

BEETLE DRIVE Village Hall, Friday 24th April, 7pm
Adults £10.00, Children (under 12) £7, Family
(2+2) £27 Including a Sausage & Mash supper
Please bring your own drinks. Tickets from David
Gray (681952), ukdavidgray@gmail.com

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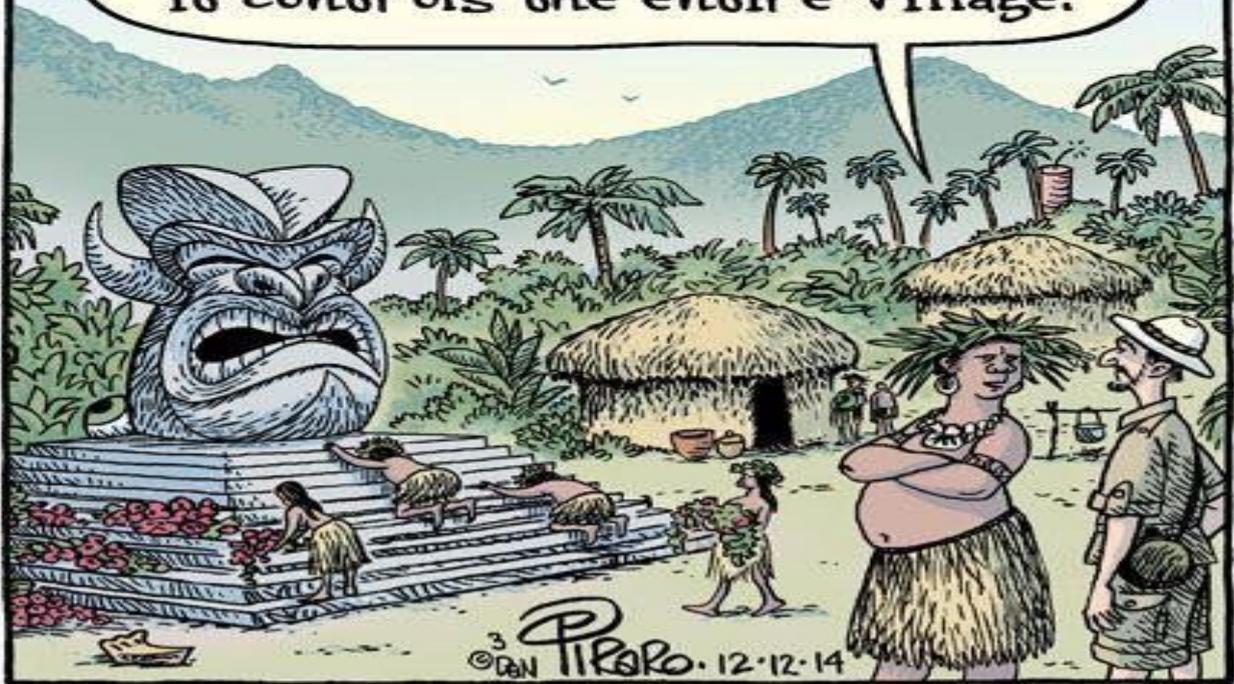
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My grandfather carved that thing to scare kids away from playing on his lawn, and now it controls the entire village.

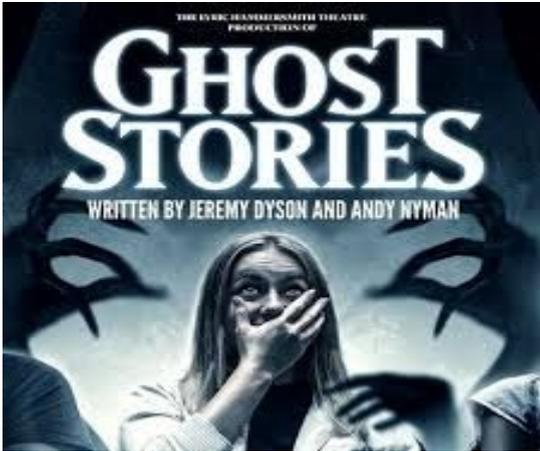


Kurt Melander © 1999



UHHM... MARK THAT ONE VERY SENSITIVE TO HOT OR COLD

REVIEW OF GHOST STORIES AT WATERSIDE THEATRE (Fright Night)



I was lucky enough to be offered complimentary tickets for this show so felt obliged to submit a review although the show's programme advised the audience to share the experience without telling the story.

I am not sure if I am giving too much away if I tell you that it starts as an apparent lecture about the history of ghost stories then goes on to show three different stories and then on from there with a clever and unexpected twist at the end. There was no intermission (more about that later) just 90 minutes straight through forcing some of the audience, no names mentioned, to buy their ice creams before the show began!

I certainly enjoyed the evening, even though horror isn't really my

thing. I personally didn't find it particularly frightening despite the best efforts of the sound engineers with creepy music and the special effects department. I will admit it did make me jump a couple of times. The reactions of the two ladies sitting next to me certainly increased the entertainment level while the persistent coughing of one member of the audience certainly did not. In their defence, there was an announcement that if you left the auditorium you would not be readmitted which I'm not sure was true, possibly it was just designed to ramp up the tension. If it was, I think it was a bit over the top and frankly out of order. It may have prevented our cougher from leaving and, while it is irritating if people get up to go to the toilet in the middle of a production, it seems a rather strange way to treat people who have paid to see a production.

There was a very small cast of 5 men (perhaps we should have a gripe about diversity here!) In the main the acting was good but I found Gus Gordon who played the victim of one ghostly experience very difficult to hear. He was a young actor making his professional stage debut after attending the Italia Conti Academy. I often wonder what

drama schools teach these days? Voice projection does not seem to be emphasised as I notice many younger actors suffer from this problem. I think it is assumed that modern microphones are so good they don't have to bother to speak up. As I will be sending a copy of this review to the Waterside Theatre (taking over this job from Judy Hardcastle) I will add here a general observation regarding the sound quality of many productions at the Waterside. It is not the first

production I have come away from wondering if it is really worth going to the theatre at all because I have been unable to hear the dialogue sufficiently well to get the jokes or even follow the plot. Please bear in mind that a significant proportion of the population have some form of hearing loss.

Sally Palmer

VILLAGE FETE 25th July 2020

A date for your new 2020 diaries is the Village Fete on Saturday 25th July. I am holding a meeting on Wednesday 4th March (7.30pm in the Village Hall).

If you are interested in finding out more about what you could do to help with preparations or assisting on the day then please come along.

If you are doing any spring cleaning in the next few weeks please put aside books, bottles and anything that might sell on our famous bric-a-brac stall. We will collect them in the week before the Fete as usual. Thanks.

David Gray

(ukdavidgray@gmail.com or 681952)



Church Duties

	Cleaning	Flowers	Mowing
29th Feb/1st March	David	No	As
7th March	Colin & David	flowers	per
14th March	Caroline & Ann	in	Mark's
21st March	Anita & Alex	lent	rota
28th March	Colin & Gay		

Services at Saint James Church - Aston Abbotts March 2020

1st March 06.00pm Evensong Revd. Ian Ogilvie

8th March 10.30am Parish Communion Revd. Peter Binns

15th March 4.30pm Teatime Service in Church followed by tea & cakes

**22nd March 10.30am Parish Communion Revd. Roger Hale and Mothering
Sunday**

29th March 10.30am Parish Communion Revd. Ian Ogilvie

100 Club Draw.

February 2020

1st prize, £50 Amanda Price

2nd prize, £10 Rebecca Rangeley

BEETLE DRIVE Village Hall, Friday 24th April, 7pm

Adults £10.00, Children (under 12) £7, Family

(2+2) £27 Including a Sausage & Mash supper

Please bring your own drinks. Tickets from David

Gray (681952), ukdavidgray@gmail.com

Church Matters The diary of St. James's

Our breakfast services have seen a reduction in numbers recently. This may be due to the wide range of activities available to young people. My own grandsons go to rugby practice (weather permitting) on a Sunday morning. We are therefore experimenting with a late afternoon Sunday service at 4.30pm once a month (see Services elsewhere in the Chronicle). Sports injuries will not be accepted as an excuse as you can tell us all about your bumps and bruises over tea and cakes following the informal service!

ALLOTMENT DIARY



Still nothing interesting happening on the allotments, so again I bring you a selection of bits of gardening news.

As the closing date for applications to fill the post of team rector draws near, we pray that suitable candidates come forward for interview. In the mean-time, during the interregnum, the pressures on our hard-working churchwardens in the benefice, are considerable.

All the allotment rents for the year have been paid. Thank you all for your prompt response to my request.

Our popular Beetle Drive is planned for 24th April (see advert elsewhere in this month's Chronicle).

David.

First a link to last month's piece on slugs, another slug related item. Matthew Appleby, the deputy editor of Horticulture Week – a vegan - has written a book in which he states his belief that it is better to let plants and vegetables die, rather than kill slugs or insect pests. In a clearly provocative line in his book, he says "I am saying that we should metaphorically 'hug a slug'". Elsewhere in his book he recommends using composting lavatories to convert human excrement into manure to

use on gardens and allotments; and he accuses people who put bird feeders and bird-baths in their gardens of “sentimentalising” them. (I can see the logic in the first idea, although it is clearly impractical for most people: but his views on bird feeders are to my mind bloody stupid! (If you’ll pardon my language). Even with bird feeders, the way in which most garden birds – such as sparrows, starlings, thrushes, finches, tits, etc. - have declined in my lifetime, despite the introduction of bird feeders, is alarming).

Next, an item from the House of Commons Victorian website, which reports that two MPs have been killed in turnip related incidents. In 1861 a Tory MP, Sir William Payne-Galloway, tripped while crossing a turnip field and suffered severe internal injuries. Worse, in 1833, a Whig MP, Lewis Fenton plunged to his death after standing on a chair at an upstairs window, to get a better view of his turnip patch! The moral (for MPs, at any rate) is to stick to parsnips or beetroot! Meanwhile, in America, horticultural scientists have produced an apple, called

the Cosmic Crisp, which it is claimed will remain fresh in a fridge for up to a year! The fruit is very attractive, with a burgundy skin flecked with yellow dots (which supposedly resemble stars – hence the name). It is being backed with a \$10 million launch. It is being grown in the state of Washington, and the apple-growers there, who have financed the development, have planted 12 million Cosmic Crisp trees. The apple has its own website, and trade-marked slogans: “The Apple of Big Dreams” and “Imagine the Possibilities” Oh yes, and it is also supposed to be good to eat: it is said to combine a crisp texture with an explosive , juicy, sweetness combined with an alluring tartness – and delicious raw, or baked or juiced. No doubt we shall see: if it is any good, it will undoubtedly arrive over here in due course.

I hope I will have some real allotment news next month.

Peter Shorrocks

Good Samaritans Bingo

£117 raised in February for Parkinsons UK

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Village Hall Diary

< > March 2020

Sun 1	Mon 2	Tue 3	Wed 4	Thu 5	Fri 6	Sat 7
	19 ALPHA COURSE	9:30 Pilates	17:45 Yoga	9 Coffee Morning	18:45 Pilates	12:30 Em Farrell
		18:15 Pilates	19:30 Fete Planning meeting	19:30 Whist		
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
12 Private Function	19 ALPHA COURSE	9:30 Pilates	17:45 Yoga	9 Coffee Morning	18:45 Pilates	
		18:15 Pilates		19:30 Bingo		
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
9 Breakfast service	19 ALPHA COURSE	St Patrick's Day	17:45 Yoga	9 Coffee Morning	18:45 Pilates	
		9:30 Pilates		19:30 Whist		
		18:15 Pilates				
		20 Band Practice				
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	19 ALPHA COURSE	9:30 Pilates	17:45 Yoga	9 Coffee Morning	18:45 Pilates	
		18:15 Pilates	19:30 AAVHT meeting			
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
	19 ALPHA COURSE	9:30 Pilates	17:45 Yoga	9 Coffee Morning	18:45 Pilates	12:30 Em Farrell
		18:15 Pilates		19:30 Whist		
		20 Band Practise				



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**Reminder of deadline for Chronicle contributions. Deadline is
24th of each month for the following month unless otherwise
stated. Send to articles to: editor@aachronicle.co.uk**

Wingrave

Entertainment Diary

MARCH 2020 Sun 1 1400
Swingrave tea dance Community
Centre

Sun 15 1930 Quiz night Royal Oak, Aston Abbots

Tue 3 1200 Nup End Café
Methodist Church Tue 3 1930
Wingrave Art Club Methodist
Church Wed 4 1000 WI: Tia
Chi-Cathy Methodist Church Fri 6
Croquet Club AGM and supper

Community Centre Sat 7 1600 Six
Nations Rugby England v Wales
Community Centre Sat 7 2100
Band night 'Tess and the
Durbervilles' Rose & Crown Mon 9
0930 Weekday Walking Group
walk The Green Fri 13 1930 WCA
Village bingo Community Centre
Sat 14 0845 Men's Breakfast Talk:
Do you believe your personal
journey in life has a purpose?
Methodist Church Sat 14 1415 Six
Nations Rugby super Saturday
Community Centre Sun 15 0930
Local ramble Nup End Lane Tue 17
1200 Nup End Café Methodist
Church Tue 17 1930 Wingrave Art
Club Methodist Church Wed 18

1200 Last of the Summer Ukuleles
 Rose & Crown Thu 19 1800 Copy
 date for Communiqué Thu 19
 1930 Quiz night Rose & Crown Fri
 20 2000 Twinning AGM Wine and
 Cheese evening Community
 Centre Sat 21 1400 Twinning
 Jumble Sale Community Centre Sat
 21 1500 Tea, cake and choirs
 fundraiser for charity Parish
 Church Tue 24 Parish Council
 planning meeting Community
 Centre Wed 25 1200 Pub Lunch
 Club Rose & Crown Thu 26 1600
 Pop-up Refill Shop Community
 Centre Fri 27 1930 WWRHA talk:
 Coaching Inns of Bucks
 Community Centre Sun 29 0200
 British summer time begins Sun 29
 1030 Annual Parochial Church
 Council Meeting Parish Church Sun
 29 1230 Second Great Wingraave
 Litter Pick Methodist Church Mon
 30 2000 Friday Fiddlers Rose &
 Crown Tue 31 1200 Nup End Café



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Councillor & Street Lighting Highways & Transport Colin Higgs 681343
Councillor Recreation Ground Phil' Spooner 681544
Councillor Heather Langdon 688946
Councillor Jane Plested
Parish Council Clerk Frank Post 668206
County Councillor Netta Glover 688357
Vicar Philip Derbyshire 01525240287
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Rambling Club & Whist Drive Colin Higgs 681343
Baby & Toddler Group Kim Gayler 681123
Royal Oak Pub & Restaurant Teri Moulton 681262
Milkman Alan 07791885612
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NHS Direct 24hr Advice 111
Doctor Out of hours Surgeries 331511
Stoke Mandeville Hospital 315000
Police Non-Emergency 101
AVDC 01296 585858 Bucks County Council 01296 395000
Citizens Advice 08701264056
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