

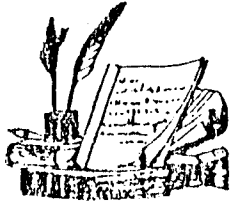
OSS ROAD

# The Chronicle.

ASTON ABBOTTS PARISH MAGAZINE

APRIL 89

ISSUE 67



## Editorial

The letter from Margaret Chesher [page 9] makes the point well. Yes, it is ridiculous that taking your turn in the mowing rota has become part and parcel of the duties of being a member of the Parish Council. It is even more ridiculous that we should be losing a valued councillor because he feels he can no longer undertake that duty. There should be no obligation, actual or moral, on any councillor to be part of the mowing rota. Councillors devote enough of their own time as it is and should not be expected to be a part of the Keep Aston Abbots beautiful brigade. But of course we do need the Keep Aston Abbots beautiful brigade. We all take pride at the way in which the village is kept but the work is done by the few for the benefit of the many .... so can I persuade any one out there to volunteer to help with the mowing this summer. The more of us that volunteer the less often any one individual has to do it. Can you find the time? If so either let me know or one of your Parish Councillors.

Talking of volunteers .... how about the Chronicle? Three more issues after this and that's it unless someone comes forward to take over.

*Graham Parker*

DEADLINE FOR THE MAY ISSUE IS APRIL 22nd PLEASE

HOW TO PASS ON ARTICLES/INFORMATION FOR "THE CHRONICLE"

1. By telephone to Graham on Aylesbury 681325.
2. By dropping a note through his door - The Cloisters.
3. Leave a note in the Village Shop or at the Post Office.

Published by Graham Parker.

Printed by THE SQUIRREL PRESS, Waddesdon School, WADDESDON.

Distributed free to all households in the Parish of Aston Abbots. If you would like extra copies please inform the Editor.

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# INFO

## WHAT'S ON IN APRIL

- SUNDAY 2nd : RAMBLING CLUB MEMBERS MEET AT TRING STATION 11a.m.
- SUNDAY 16th: RAMBLING CLUB MEMBERS MEET AT QUAINTON GREEN AT 2 p.m.
- WEDNESDAYS : MOBILE LIBRARY - The Green 2p.m  
12th & 26th: Longmoor 2.35.
- THURSDAYS  
6th & 20th: BINGO: CHURCH ROOM 7.30 p.m.
- THURSDAYS  
13th & 27th: WHIST : CHURCH ROOM 7.30 p.m.
- SATURDAY 22nd : COACH TOUR - BUCKS CHURCHES  
Depart The Green 1 p.m. Book with Colin 681343 (Nether Winchendon, Wotton, Brill, Chetwode) £2.40 Return. Stop for tea.

NOTE : Bus Surveys will be carried out in April, make sure you use the bus or lose it.

### BOOK THESE DATES:

- SATURDAY/SUNDAY 22nd/23rd JULY : VILLAGE FESTIVAL WEEKEND.
- SATURDAY 30th SEPTEMBER : COACH TRIP TO PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL FLOWER FESTIVAL OR SHOPPING.

[Colin Higgs]

\*\*\*\*\*



## LITTER BLITZ : SATURDAY 29th APRIL

PLEASE COME ALONG AND HELP CLEAN UP THE VILLAGE AS PART OF A COUNTY WIDE CAMPAIGN ON SATURDAY 29th APRIL - MEET AT THE GREEN AT 10.00 a.m.

\*\*\*\*\*

## LADIES CLUB NOTES

The Ladies Club 'Spring Lunch' was well supported by members and friends who enjoyed a cold buffet lunch plus wine and soft drinks provided by members.

### April Meetings

- 6th April :Peggy o Dell and friends - Garden talk.
- 20th April :Lesley Holgate will talk about cake icing.
- Please Note - Not so Young Tea and Outing will be on 18th May.

\*\*\*\*\*

### YOUR PARISH COUNCILLORS

- Colin Higgs,[Chairman & Acting Clerk]  
6 Wingrave Road. Tel:681343.
- John Whyte, 14 Bricstock. Tel:681685.
- John Ford, 2 Ross Road. Tel:681865.
- Richard Speakman, 79 The Green. Tel:681042.
- Bryan Round, 11 Nup End Lane, Wingrave,  
Tel: 681621.

\*\*\*\*\*

### GARDENING PROBLEMS ?

THEN CONSULT NORMAN TAPPING, 14 MILL LANE, WINGRAVE TO REMOVE WEEDS FROM YOUR GARDEN. A BARGAIN AT £1 PER HOUR.

\*\*\*\*\*

### THE SUNDAY CLUB

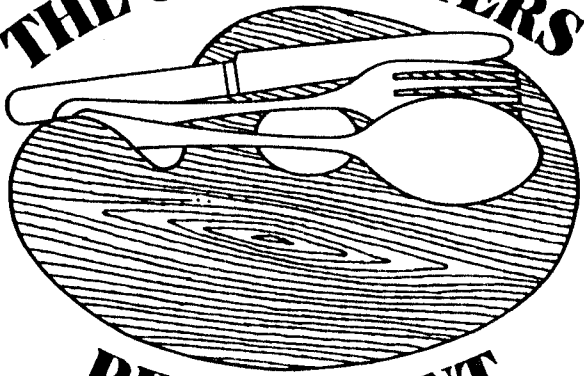
The Sunday Club is held at the Methodist Chapel at 10 a.m. on Sunday mornings. We are also involved in a Family service in the Church once a month. The Sunday Club is for children aged 3 upwards, all are welcome.

\*\*\*\*\*

The woodcut opposite is by Denys Watkins-Pitchford and appears in L.T.C.Rolt's 'Narrow Boat' published by Methuen.

\*\*\*\*\*

# THE OLD MASTERS



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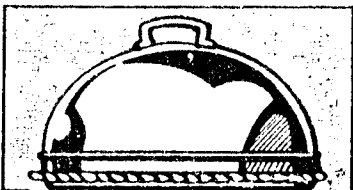
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# TIME TO SPARE?

WHY NOT VOLUNTEER?

Ring Aylesbury 81666

Aylesbury Vale Volunteer Bureau  
Walton Parish Hall, Walton Street,  
Aylesbury, Bucks. HP21 7GX

# People

OUR MONTHLY COLUMN ABOUT VILLAGE PEOPLE  
Edited by Bridget Brandon.

## BIRTHDAYS

KAREN BRANDON ..... 7th APRIL  
MARC BRANDON ..... 25th APRIL  
DIANA PICKING ..... 28th APRIL

## BELATED CONGRATULATIONS

To Stella and Martin Cross of Longmoor Farm Cottages on the birth of their daughter SARAH on February 11th.

## ALL CHANGE

Goodbye to Dave & Tonia Parsons who recently left the Bull & Butcher and welcome to Barry and Denise Ward, who have taken it over.

WE HAVE ... two plates, one Pyrex dish, a square tray and a bottle of bubbly Chateau D'or (raffle prize) left over from the Cabaret night on February 25th. Will the owners please phone 681425 to claim them.

WELL DONE ... to 'The Group' (village lads) who played some fantastic music in the Bull & Butcher on March 11th. Lets hope we see more of them.

\* \* \* \* \*

March 1989

The Bull and Butcher  
85 The Green  
Aston Abbots

To the residents of Aston Abbots,

It's goodbye from us at the Bull and Butcher after 10 memorable months in the village, and it is not without some sadness that we find it necessary to leave you all.

As a parting gesture we would like to extend our thanks to just a few of the people who made sure our time here was a pleasant one. Firstly thank you to Pauline Fletcher for her unfailing service; to Tony Hinds for his organisation of the dart and pool teams (and patience with us when we never seemed to know where they were supposed to be!); to Ray ("Milk") for making sure Dave didn't drink the entire stock of Skols himself, and for always making time to listen; to Dave and Linda Wheaton for impromptu bar services, and by no means least our trusty bar staff, Julie and Lorna.

Lastly, and of course, by no means least, thank you to all the Bull and Butcher regulars for their continued custom and support.

We wish Barry and Denise Ward every good wish for their future at the B & B.

There's a distinct danger of us turning up again for a visit at some stage, if only to return the bottle of lemonade we still owe Grayburn and collect that half a lettuce off him!

Best wishes to you all,

David, Tonia and Mark Parsons.

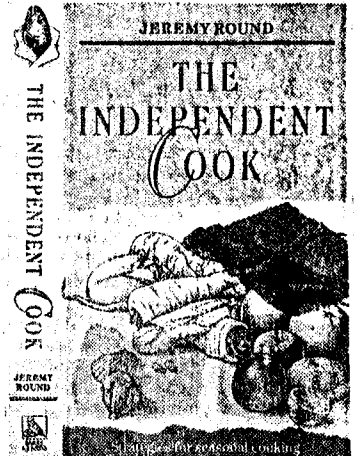
P.S. Despite the rumours we think it is unlikely at this stage that planning permission allowing the use of the bus shelter as a function room for the B & B is to be granted, due to severe overcrowding on a recent Saturday evening!

## UPDATE

### Booked out

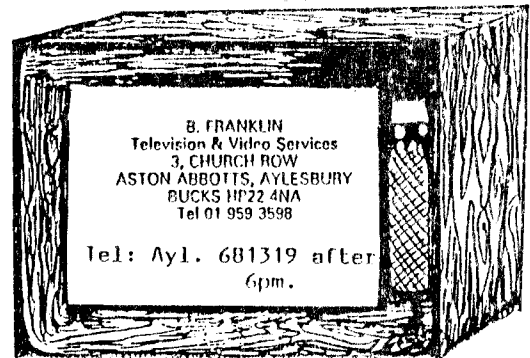
JEREMY ROUND's book, *The Independent Cook*, was published by Barrie and Jenkins last November and has proved so popular that it is already into its second binding.

The book was helped initially by the enthusiastic way in which it was received by fellow food writers: Derek Cooper in *The Listener* wrote: "You will have to buy two copies of this book — one to keep; it's far too good to give away... witty, serious, outspoken and engagingly honest." Philippa Davenport, who writes for the *Financial Times* and *County Living*, said, "a wonderful book... jam-packed with good sense."



'A wonderful book' by Jeremy Round

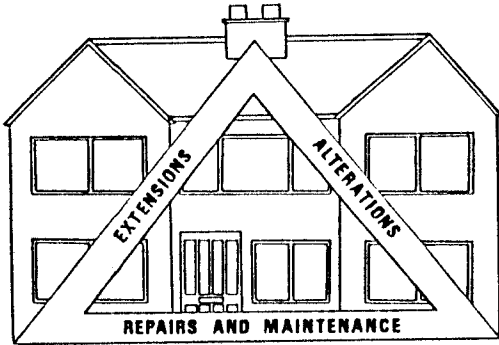
Jeremy Round is the son of our District and Parish Councillor Bryan Round.



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# UPDATE



## THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

### FATAL INDIFFERENCE

Reporting on last years fete John Ford spoke strongly about the lack of interest and support in the village for the annual fete. The burden fell on too few shoulders and perhaps the time had come to drop the whole idea. Others felt that ever since the Church and Chapel had stopped being responsible for the Festival it had "gone downhill". This view was vigorously challenged. John Whyte acknowledged that the load had increasingly fallen on too few and was willing to go back on the committee to help keep the Festival alive. The meeting agreed that an appeal for support should be made in the Chronicle. Shirley and John Ford, John Whyte and Richard Speakman agreed to be on the committee, and if four more committed people could be found then the Festival would go ahead on the weekend of 23-24 July.

### HELP ... HELP ... HELP

THE VILLAGE NEEDS YOUR HELP TO ORGANISE THIS YEARS FESTIVAL .... CAN YOU HELP ? IF YOU CAN PLEASE CONTACT JOHN WHYTE AT 14 BRICSTOCK (681685) OR JOHN FORD AT 2 ROSS ROAD (681865). THE FESTIVAL COMMITTEES FIRST MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE CHAPEL ON FRIDAY 7th APRIL at 8.30 p.m. AT THIS MEETING THOSE IN ATTENDANCE WILL DECIDE IF THE FESTIVAL IS TO TAKE PLACE THIS YEAR.

### PLEASE HELP IF YOU CAN

The meeting then discussed how the proceeds from the Festival (should it take place) should be allocated and it was agreed that 30% should go to the PCC; 20% to the Chapel; 20% to the Church Room Management Committee; 15% to the Recreation Ground Committee and 10% to the Chronicle with 5% held for any claims made by other village organisations.

The Church Room Management Committee reported that the heaters had been installed and proved a great asset but progress on improvements had been stalled since the departure of John Heffer. It was agreed that the present committee continue and that the Vice Chairman contact the Church to see what the constitutional position was.

## PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

At the Parish Council meeting that followed the Annual Parish Meeting Councillor Bryan Round was welcomed back after his recent illness.

The meeting confirmed that requests for grants for environmental improvements had been forwarded seeking £100 for trees and bulbs on the Green, a further £100 for similar improvement at Bricstock and £250 to repair the village pump in Church Row.

The meeting also learnt that the Council had been active in supporting the formation of the A 418 Action Group and would continue to press the need for improvements. The Council argues that the congestion on the A 418 is causing drivers to seek alternative routes through villages like Aston Abbots. To check if village traffic has increased there will be an official count on Moat Lane sometime in April.

Planning came in for lengthy discussion with the Council informing the public that it had opposed a one unit industrial unit development at Longmmor but agreed to a four small unit development anticipating that such a development would encourage light industry rather than heavy industry that might have resulted in unacceptable noise and traffic. Application for a farm house at Badgers Oak had also been opposed on the grounds of the total unsuitability of the proposed building while the application for a mobile home at Willow or Badgers Brook Farm had also been opposed. A dwelling on Wingrave Road, below the Royal Oak had not been opposed by the Parish Council but was turned down by the District and was now going to appeal.

Skips : 16-18 June on the Green  
9-11 February 1990 at Bricstock.

### A CUTTING PROBLEM

At the end of the Parish Council meeting John Whyte announced his intention to resign as from the annual meeting of the Council in May. With increased family and work commitments John felt he was unable to give of his time as generously as in the past. This would mean that he could not fulfil the mowing duties expected of each councillor, and it would be unfair, he felt to increase the burden for other councillors. This was much regret at John's decision.

# **BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

## **COUNCIL FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE**

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Charity Reg. No. 270206

President: Cdr. The Hon J.T. Fremantle, RN (ret)

Chairman Mrs. M. Thackray

Director: Miss C.Z. Graham

BCVS/SJ/HGT

27th February 1989

[SEE ENCLOSED LEAFLET FOR MORE DETAILS]

To: Village Newsletters

### BUCKINGHAMSHIRE VILLAGE VENTURES COMPETITION 1989

This month sees the launch of Buckinghamshire's fifth Village Ventures Competition. The purpose of the Competition is to encourage new voluntary activity of all varieties in the rural areas of the county. £2,000 can be won in cash prizes, and the winning entries will be widely publicised as an example to other communities of what can be achieved through voluntary effort.

We would be very grateful if you could give some publicity to the Competition in the next edition of your newsletter. All types of voluntary work can be entered, providing that:

- a) the initiative is a new one i.e. started since the closing date of the last Competition (August 1987). It need not be completed;
- b) it is being undertaken in a village community i.e. with a total population not exceeding 6,000. Don't forget that there may be several eligible villages in your area even if the main community is too large.

We hope you will take this opportunity to ensure that the voluntary work being undertaken in your village receives recognition - and perhaps a cash prize. Entry forms can be obtained, together with any additional information, from Buckinghamshire CVS at the above address.

Thank you,

*Sarah Jackson*

Sarah Jackson  
Field Officer

[EXPLANATORY LEAFLET AS INSERT  
TO THIS MONTHS MAGAZINE]

The Rural Community Council for Buckinghamshire



# UPDATE



[A CUTTING PROBLEM .... Continued]

ion and no little concern amongst the public of the implication that mowing was an obligatory duty of an Aston Abbotts Parish Councillor. Many felt that we could ill afford to lose a valued councillor for such a reason.

## A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Graham

Having attended the recent Annual Parish Meeting, I was appalled to hear a valued member of the Parish Council tender his resignation, giving as his reason that increased family commitments meant he could no longer 'take his turn at mowing the Green'.

Since when has it been compulsory for a Parish Counsellor to mow the village grass? Does it form part of the Constitution? I think not. Whilst I am not denying that the village looks much better with nicely mown grass, is it not expecting too much of our Parish Counsellors to insist that they mow it as a condition of becoming a member of the Council? In a village that finds it difficult to recruit new members of the Parish Council, I wonder how many other villagers have been deterred because they too would be expected to take a 'turn mowing the grass'?

I suggest it is time for a re-think of the whole business. Could not some of the money raised at the Village Fete be used to pay for the grass to be mown? If no member of the village is willing to undertake the work, perhaps Aylesbury Vale District Council could arrange for the grass to be cut by contractors, as I understand happened in Bricstock last year.

I am sure you will agree with me that it is more important for the village to have an active, well-supported Parish Council than for it to look like a picture on a box of chocolates.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Chesher

## SECRET SESSION

At the end of the Parish Council meeting the council went into 'secret session' to discuss the position of Clerk for which, it is understood, there have been two applications. Well done to those who have applied ... we must find work for both !

20 The Green  
Aston Abbotts

18 March 1989

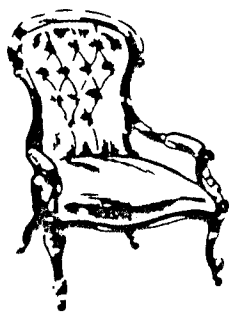
[

[ See Editorial for further comment.]

F.A.J. Megram  
**Traditional & Modern Upholstery**

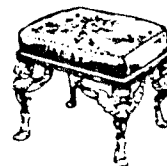
*Thatched Cottage  
 Nup End Lane  
 Wingrave  
 Nr Aylesbury  
 Bucks*

*Aylesbury 681464*



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**WEEKEND WALK**

The sharp sunlight of winter gives buildings a luminous clarity and the countryside itself the quality of a rumpled carpet in which every minor irregularity is picked out. This light is particularly revealing of earthworks and evidence of earlier land use.

Pastoral landscape best reveals these qualities and this particular walk in the fields of mid-Buckinghamshire is rewarding for those who enjoy seeing bygone societies below more recent hedges and fields.

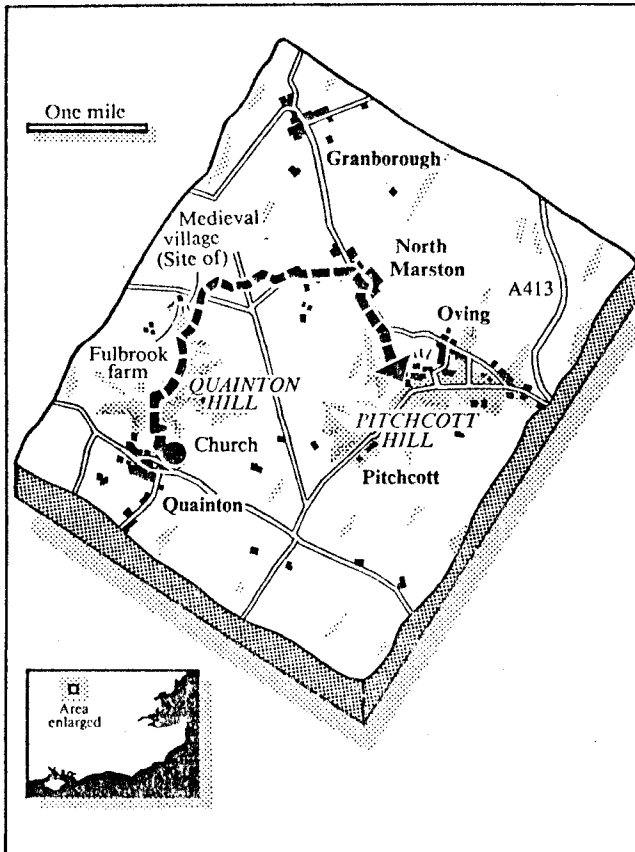
Start in Quainton village, first visiting the church with its outstanding monuments, then heading west along Church Street. Turn right onto the footpath before the tower windmill, currently almost restored, and climb out of the village onto Quainton Hill. Over the top, drop down past the ruined water conduit house to Fulbrook where on either side of the road are the earthworks of a deserted medieval village.

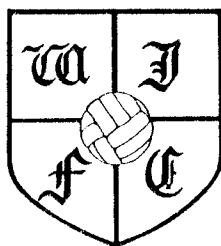
All round are the medieval ridge-and-furrow of long abandoned ploughland under the pastures: Head east, either along the road or more directly on the footpath. These coalesce west of the village of North Marston.

Reaching the High Street, follow it south turning up left to Church Street and the superb parish church where a 14th century vicar, John Schorne, was reputed to have captured the Devil in a boot. The church was restored by Queen Victoria, embarrassed by a massive bequest from a local eccentric and miser. Note the monument with a hand pointing down and the inscription: "He lies duste downe there".

Back down Church Street turn left into Schorne Way, noting the curative well of John Schorne, before heading south across the ridge-and-furrow, across the main road and up the hill to Oving village where with good timing the Black Boy Inn will refresh you and the village charm you.

**Martin Andrew**





## CUP FINAL FOR UNDER 12s

### RECORD FOURTEEN GAMES WITHOUT DEFEAT

Today, 19th March, the Under 12's reached the Clubs third Cup Final in recent years and extended their Club record run of matches without defeat to fourteen. In a thrilling game they defeated the fancied Arrows side by 3-1 to win the place in the final to be played at Leighton Town Football Club on Sunday 23rd April. Their opponents will be Wing and kick off time is 10.30 a.m. If you have a free Sunday morning please come along and support the youngsters who have proved to be the surprise team of the year.

### UNDER 12 RESULTS FOR FEBRUARY & MARCH

5th FEBRUARY : WINGRAVE 5 CORINTHIANS 5 [Group A Cup Match]

## Ten-goal tingler

CUP football at its best and most exciting was produced in the Under-12 competition where Wingrave met Corinthians and the two teams produced ten goals in a nerve-tingling encounter.

Wingrave levelled at 5-5 in the last 30 sec-

onds their goals having come from James Marsh with two, Darren Springett with two and Alistair Duncan with one. For Corinthians Richard Cutter hit three, Barry Garner and Matthew Green one each.

12th FEBRUARY : CORINTHIANS 0 WINGRAVE 4 [League]  
L.Bracey-Wright;D.Springett 2,J.Marsh.

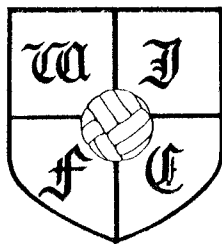
26th FEBRUARY : PITSTONE 0 WINGRAVE 2 [Group A Cup Match]  
D.Springett, M.Pope.

5th MARCH : PITSTONE 1 WINGRAVE 2 [League]  
K.Pretty, D.Springett.

12th MARCH : WING 2 WINGRAVE 2 [League]  
K.Pretty, D.Springett

19th MARCH : WINGRAVE 3 ARROWS 1 [Cup Semi-Final]  
L.Bracey-Wright, M.Hewitt, D.Springett.

There are of course no matches on Easter Sunday and the following week the squad will be in France for the annual match against La Bouexiere. At the moment the Under 12's are joint leaders in the League with 22pts from 15 games; Pitstone have the same points but from 14 games while Wing are in third place with 21pts but with only 13 games, of the 16, played. Our only League game outstanding is against 999 and then its the Cup Final against probable League champions Wing. What a match that will be!



UNDER 14's RESULTS FOR FEBRUARY & MARCH

The wet weather and consequent heavy pitches have meant that the Under 14's have only had three games in the two months. This leaves them with a backlog of fixtures - six League games still to play as well as a Cup Semi-Final against Wing on the 9th April [at Wing k.o. 2.15 p.m.].

5th FEBRUARY : PITSTONE 0 WINGRAVE 17 [Group B Cup]  
S.Banks 2, A.Bishop 6, D.Perry 4, P.Garrett 3,  
G.Sorace and E.Kitchener.

19th FEBRUARY : WINGRAVE 1 STOCKLAKE 2  
S.Banks.

13th MARCH : PITSTONE 0 WINGRAVE 9 [League]  
D.Perry 3, C.Arnold 3, A.Bishop, P.Garrett and an o.g.

UNDER 16's RESULTS FOR FEBRUARY & MARCH

The Under 16 fixtures have also been badly hit by the weather and after a four week 'rest' the return to competitive football was too much at Steeple Claydon where they were eventually overwhelmed by a very good side. However the draw at Tring was an excellent result with the Wingrave lads having the best of the encounter in terms of chances.

5th FEBRUARY : WINGRAVE 7 WING 0

This local derby was not as one-sided as the score suggests, but Wingrave proved better at taking their chances, particularly Richard Hickson who hit a first half hat-trick and got a fourth after the break. Simon Megram hit two penalties and Mark Brown was also on the mark. Jan Wuezke scored the Wing goal from a Michael Cheval cross.

12th MARCH : STEEPLE CLAYDON 5 WINGRAVE 0 [Cup]

19th MARCH : TRING TOWN COLTS 0 WINGRAVE 0

RAFFLE SUCCESS

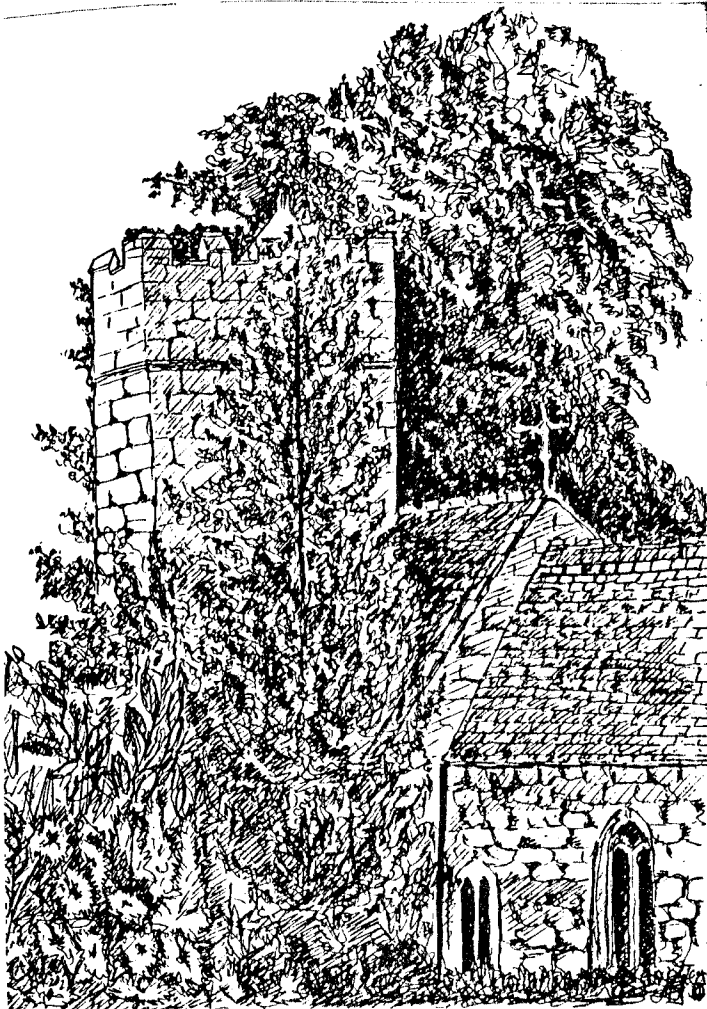
Many thanks to players, parents and friends [The Bell and the Rose especially] for their efforts in selling. The final sum raised was £235, which added to the near £800 from the Quiz evening means that we have more than covered our expenses for the French trip.

LA BOUEXIERE WEEKEND 31st MARCH - 3 APRIL

Forty footballers and 'coaches' will be departing from The Bell at about 5.30 a.m. on the 31st for the annual exchange. Our French host have really 'dun us proud' not only by finding families who can host such a large number but by laying on three matches for the lads as well as a visits to Rennes for swimming and to watch a French football league match.

# CHURCH NEWS

It is so soon after writing the last notes that it gives me the chance to repeat my invitation to join us on Easter Sunday at 11.15 a.m. and at the Family Service also at 11.15 a.m. on April 2nd, when there will be one, maybe two, baptisms. No doubt the Church will be beautifully decorated on both occasions which will add to the joy. Joy there was too at Rith and Roberts's wedding on March 4th. After a dreary start to the day the sun shone and the bells rang and the singing was magnificent. As Rev. Peter Binns, who conducted the service, said "to witness the formation of a new family is



always an occasion for rejoicing". What a superb setting the church makes for the wedding photographs. Perhaps we can persuade Robert to join this year's rota for keeping it all in good trim! No doubt it's good for cows to have a flush of grass already but it seems mighty early to start mowing.

Doris tells me that the fund to provide a seat in the churchyard is coming along nicely. However we do wish to provide something worthy so further contributions will be very welcome indeed.

The Family service on May 7th will be in the Methodist Chapel and we look forward to that.

Peter Dines.

## HELP LINE

In an emergency (a prescription needs collecting; hospital visit has to be made; form needs filling; a pipe has burst or whatever) please ring any of the following numbers for help:

Les Smith, 'Gatesgarth', Lines Hill (Tel:681368)  
 Peter Dines, 87 The Green. (Tel:681459)  
 Colin Higgs, 6, Wingrave Road. (Tel:681343)  
 John Whyte, 14 Bricstock. (Tel:681685)  
 Graham Parker, The Cloisters, Church Row (681325)  
 David Watts, 'White Wheels' (681376)  
 Rosemary Franklin, 3 Church Row. (681319).

Can we add your name to our Help Line list? If so just contact any of the above.

## CHURCH SERVICES

			<u>Sidesman</u>
26th MARCH	: EASTER SUNDAY HOLY COMMUNION	11.15 a.m.	Churchwardens
	1 Corinthians 15(12-20) 576	John 20(1-10)	
2nd APRIL	: FAMILY SERVICE with Baptism	11.15 a.m.	Alison Hewitt
	Easter 1. Peter 1(3-9) 603	John 20(19-29)	
9th APRIL	: HOLY COMMUNION	11.15 a.m.	Alison Ford
	Easter 2. Rev.19(6-9) 608	Luke 24(13-35)	
16th APRIL	: HOLY COMMUNION	11.15 a.m.	Colin Higgs
	Easter 3. Cor.15(1-11) 614	John 21(1-14)	
23rd APRIL	: HOLY COMMUNION	11.15 a.m.	Tony Hewitt
	Easter 4. Rev.3.14 - end 618	John 21(15-22)	
30th APRIL	: HOLY COMMUNION	11.15 a.m.	John Ford
	Easter 5. 1 Cor. 5(21-28) 623	John 16(25-end)	

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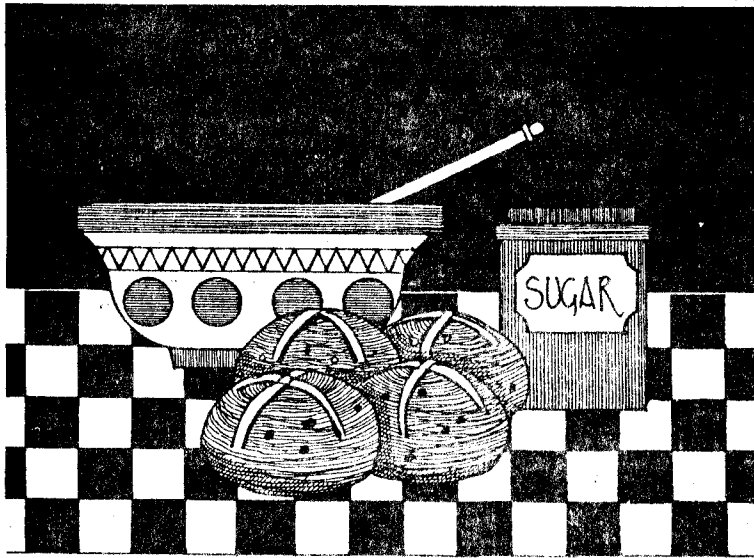
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## ... hot cross buns

By Ralph Whitlock

A GRAND-DAUGHTER of mine, who has chosen to make a career of baking (of all things!), has been busily making hot-cross buns since the middle of February. "What are you doing — stock-piling them?" I enquired. "No, there's already a steady demand for them," she assured me.

When I was a boy such matters were left till Good Friday morning, when the village baker was up before three o'clock so that the old fellow with the handcart could deliver hot-cross buns in time for breakfast. I remember that old and decrepit delivery-man mumbling, as he trudged along the street, the traditional chant which we children knew well.

*"Hot Cross buns! Hot Cross buns!  
One-a-penny, two-a-penny,  
Hot Cross buns!  
If you have no daughters, give them  
to your sons;  
One-a-penny, two-a-penny,  
Hot Cross buns!"*

I doubt whether I would now appreciate those curranly, cinnamon-flavoured buns for breakfast, but they tasted good then.

Although I don't remember ever putting the matter to the test, we were told that cakes or bread baked on Good Friday would last fresh all the year. It would never go mouldy and, when crumbled and powdered could be used for curing indigestion! Good Friday loaves were marked with a cross not only because of their religious

associations but to prevent them from being eaten prematurely by mistake. If kept for a whole year they were moistened and eaten for tea on Easter Day.

Significantly, all the early spring festivals — Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Easter — have associations with food. No doubt this was because Easter marks the end of the austere season of Lent, when food of all kinds used to be in short supply at the end of winter.

On Palm Sunday it was the custom for the people of Avebury, in north Wiltshire, to march in procession to the top of Silbury Hill, that colossal and mysterious mound of earth that has archaeologists baffled, there to eat fig cakes and sugar water. In the same county the villagers of Maiden Bradley used to climb steep-sided Bidcombe Hill and sit around a grassy depression near the top, eating "furmety", which apparently is a kind of wheat porridge. The depression is still known as "The Furmety Hole". No doubt because of similar associations Palm Sunday used to be called Fig Pudding Day in the Cotswolds.

The special sweetmeat for Easter Day was Easter cakes, which were flat, biscuit-like, scalloped-edged confections, studded with currants and sprinkled with sugar. I believe they can still be bought, but ours were home made.

Great-grandmother Elizabeth

used to make hers with wafer irons, which were long tongs with two flat plates at the end. She had her own recipe, which has now been lost. As she lived next door to the blacksmith she used to take the tongs and the batter down to the smithy, get the smith to make the tongs very hot in the forge fire, and then squeeze the mixture tight between the two plates.

She used to colour the cakes or biscuits bright yellow with meadow saffron, of which a thriving colony of plants existed in a meadow down the lane. Unfortunately, by order of the War Agricultural Committee, the meadow was ploughed up during the 1939/45 war.

Hot Cross buns, Good Friday bread and wafer biscuits were all valued apart from their culinary attractions. Stored in an airtight tin and hung up over the hearth, they were reckoned a good luck talisman and also a protection against the house catching fire.

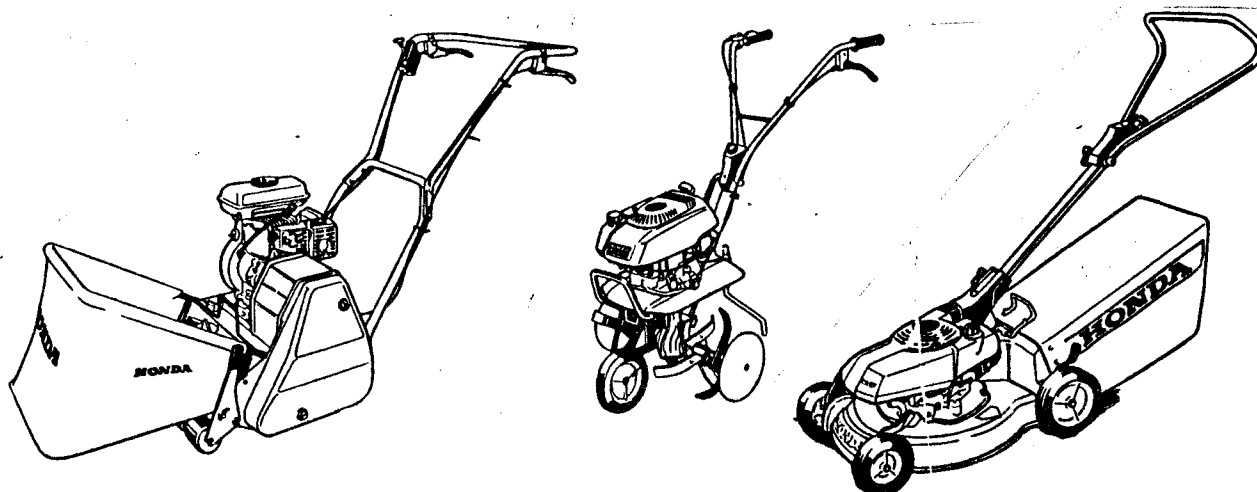
When at one time in the Scottish Highlands at this season, I was told that the Good Friday traditions there tended to be associated with Maundy Thursday, which is also St. Columba's Day. A flat loaf or bannock was made on the previous day and baked over a wood fire. One tradition said the fire had to be of one or more of the sacred trees — rowan, oak or yew. On Maundy Thursday the bannock was cut into several pieces, according to the number of children in the household, and the child who found a coin in its slice was duly rewarded.

The associations of Good Friday are also with the growing of food as well as the eating of it. Good Friday is the "day ordained for the planting of taties," according to the reply, now become almost proverbial, alleged to have been given by a devoted gardener to a parson.

As potatoes have been commonly grown in Britain for less than two centuries the tradition would seem to be fairly recent, but perhaps it was adapted from something similar but much older. A thought about mediaeval practice, whereby saints' days were holidays but Saturdays were not, helps us to appreciate that Good Friday did offer a providential opportunity for sowing garden seeds.

It puzzles me, though, to reconcile this with the widespread belief, which has been discussed earlier in this column, that seeds in general must be sown when the moon is waxing. As Easter Sunday is the first Sunday after the first full moon after March 20th, Good Friday is bound to coincide with a waning moon. Perhaps potatoes are considered an exception to the general rule, like peas and beans which, for some unfathomed reason, must be sown when the moon is waning.

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