

The Gossip

H O R N T O N

ISSUE 128

FEBRUARY 2023



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Another Burn's night triumph for the Dun Cow in January, when Chef Rob produced a superlative five-course meal for the appreciative guests. Each course was cooked to the highest standards and the skill and presentation was truly amazing. Accompanied, of course by the pipes and Ian Harris addressing the haggis, once again this was a night to remember. See also, Your Letters...



On the 28th of January a breakfast was served from 09.00 at the Pavilion. Partakers were greeted at the door by Andrew Overton in a chequered apron, with the room laid out like a commercial hotel diner.

The Pavilion quickly filled and by 10.30 the 'nippies' were busy taking orders and bringing out the breakfasts. Nothing was left to chance and all the beverages and accoutrements were laid out as per a good buffet breakfast.

In the kitchen Jan and Graham Hall, ably assisted by helpers, quickly fulfilled the orders for their hungry clientele. Well done all - an excellent breakfast, and I must say, an equally good 'drop of tay'! The team served sixty-four breakfasts and raised £296 for Pavilion funds.

Church 100 Club

The Church 100 Club has had another successful year. For those of you who are not familiar with this, it is residents of the village paying roughly £1 per week on a quarterly basis and then we return one third of the money in prizes for those who are drawn from the hat, so to speak, every 3 months.

So to join the Club, which helps the church to meet its costs, all you need to do is contact the Treasurer, Andrew Overton, (details below) who will furnish you with a standing order form and you can join the draw. Prizes for 1st 2nd and 3rd range from £110 to £35.

Winners in this last 12 months have been, Steve Tilling, Maggie Higgins, Pauline Hart, Felix Francis, Jane Martin, Linda Cross (twice), Simon Woolf, Sarah Knight, Tom Gibbs, Gavin White and Laurie Furneaux.

Our Church, which dates back to Norman times, is a jewel in the village crown, but it does need constant care and looking after so you would be helping us do that with a good chance of a fun pay back from time to time.

Andrew's details are aoverton64@gmail.com; 01295 678920 at Trinity Cottage Church Lane.

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Editorial

Greetings Horntonians!

In this, my final issue as editor of *The Gossip*, may I thank all those that have contributed to this magazine, and in particular Jane Martin, who takes my various texts and photographs and makes a beautiful spread of it, and Cindy Koberl who did such a good job of Advertising and Distribution.

For those who have lived in this village for more than a few years, my successor, Anne Joyner needs no introduction. To our recent arrivals may I point out that Anne has been a mainspring of this village for many a year. The Progressive Dinner, the various Drama Productions, elements of May Day, contributions to this magazine and fund-raising galas have all benefitted, amongst many other events, from Anne's conscientious work. I leave *The Gossip* in no more capable hands.

Firstly two subjects, one good, one bad that have come to the fore.

The bad is speeding. Before Covid, the main culprits, particularly down Millers Lane into the village, were some of the school parents (I was there when our speed monitoring kit clocked one at 47mph!) and delivery vans. Unfortunately it now seems more general and if anything speeds have increased since the unofficial 'Twenty's Plenty' sign was installed. As I noted in my first issue, there are seven hidden exits (one pedestrian) that debouch straight onto Miller's Lane, which has no footways for all except the lower 100 metres. This is a lane used by local pedestrians, dog-walkers, horse riders and Duke of Edinburgh

Award hikers, especially in summer. It ain't a hill-climb that has to be mastered in top gear!

And on to the good news – our Chimes may be coming back! Since 2017 (that year again!) our church clock has ceased to function and we missed our local chimes on the hour. Or as one local wag put it, "You always knew when it was five-to!" Now the Church Committee has identified the problem, and the estimated cost of repair. I'm sure the village will dig deep to contribute towards this. I for one, if waking in the early hours, was always comforted by the sound of the hour being struck. Let's hope we don't have too long to wait!

On a separate note, with the departure of Tim Hewlett, Martin Jones has now applied to join the Parish Council as a replacement. Various positions within the Hornton community require fresh blood from time to time, and it is of course essential that people come forward as the burden tends to fall on fewer and fewer shoulders, with too many hats being worn by too few. So, if you feel you'd like to contribute to village life, why not participate in one of the many roles that make the village tick? There's always something you can do to help.

Looking ahead into March, as we don't have Punxutawney Phil to give us a binary choice on the weather, the latest your departing editor has heard is that roundabout the 24th of February we may be getting a Snort From The North, so get that firewood stocked up and your emergency torches ready for a white-out! And on that cheery note I will sign off as editor!

Roger Bellamy, February 2023

Your Letters...

Dear Editor,

*"Some hae meat and canna eat, and some wad eat that want it;
but we hae meat, and we can eat, sae let the Lord be thankit,"*

I would like to say a public thank you to Steve, Rebecca, and Rob for providing what was an absolutely stunning Burns Night. The menu and quality of the food served was outstanding and better than many a meal I have been given elsewhere for three times the price. Any chef that can turn out 30 portions of scallops at the same time, perfectly, knows how to cook. And that was just one of the many, impressive courses Rob and The Dun Cow served us.

Steve and Rebecca took on a pub that was dying. They have invested energy, money, imagination, and love. And despite the unprecedented challenges thrown at them are still here, serving amazing food and hosting fabulous evenings.

We are lucky to have them. And we must each use them as often as we can. Pubs that do not get used enough, don't survive. The village would be a much poorer place without them and our beloved Dun Cow.

Cath Bellamy, Norland House, Millers Lane



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Ringed by Iron

Our District's Other Stone Industry

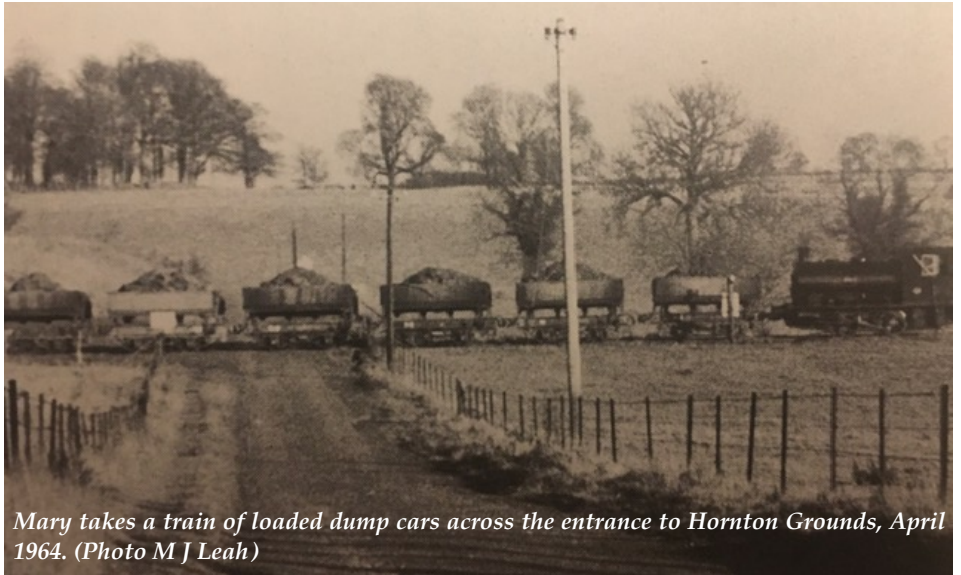
Ringed by Iron – Hornton is justly famous for its ancient stone, in particular the sought-after chocolate and blue-grey ashlar. However, whilst ironstone had probably been quarried since the Iron Age, it was the demand for steel in World War I when imports were being sunk at sea, that sparked an industry that would ring our parish for the next seventy years.

At the beginning of 1917, the Earl of Dudley, with land around Edgehill and shareholdings in Black Country steelworks, approached the Ministry of Munitions to excavate ironstone on the Edge itself. This was approved, and whilst a railway was being planned, another interested party, representing steelworks in the Black Country and South Wales, shrewdly estimated that a better option would be the area around Wroxton, with a rail link from Banbury.

The two schemes then progressed, the Edgehill line as a Light Railway with a cable-incline up the ridge, and the Wroxton scheme via a crossing of the Southam Road, up Pinhill where the Highlands estate now is, under the Warwick Road by the second roundabout towards Banbury, to Wroxton.

In the event, the Wroxton scheme, now the Oxfordshire Ironstone, started production in January 1919, with two very large mechanical diggers at what became the company headquarters (now the Apollo Business Park). The Edge Hill scheme, however, struggled on with limited production, and proposed extensions to Epwell and Horley Fields were shelved early on. Thus, both to north and south of Hornton open-cast quarrying for ironstone became the main local industry.

As the turbulent twenties progressed the Edgehill scheme foundered but the 'O.I.' as it was locally known, began to spread both north and westward, with new quarries in Balscott replacing the worked-out Friar's Hill. Much of this land was leased from Oxford Colleges and Lord North, and the early locomotives carried names of his Lordship and College officials.



Gradually, during the nineteen-thirties the excavations grew closer to Hornton parish and the O.I.'s parent owners began purchasing property in Hornton itself. Perhaps the only influence preventing a closer relationship was the needs of Hornton Quarries' house stone and the worked-out quarry faces close to Hornton itself?

By the middle of World War II, the network grew further, with more locomotives travelling further on a greater extent of trackage. The main railway was extended across Wroxton Heath, travelling under Dyke Lane by a concrete underbridge, still there today. Drift Road which branches off from the Balscott direction, was rebuilt to one side, to access the ironstone beneath.

With four quarries in operation, the various branches fed into a crushing plant at the company headquarters, and the

sifted ore transferred to main line railway wagons and taken down the double-tracked line to sidings at Banbury by more powerful (and better braked) locomotives. A new policy began around this time of giving the smaller quarry engines, girls' names, and the larger 'down the hill' locos, boys!

By the end of the war quarrying had moved on and new quarries at Alkerton and Hornton Grounds were opened up and production continued to expand. In 1944 the parent companies bought the Home Farm Estate and various properties and land around Hornton. It seemed that the quarries, now less than a mile distant, might yet engulf Hornton.

At this time, in the early nineteen-fifties, the quarries and their rail network were working over twelve hours a day in midsummer, and trains were constantly leaving the main line Banbury sidings for





British Railways ironstone wagon that would have travelled between Wroxton and Banbury. Currently on display on the site of Wroxton Yard. (Apollo Business Park)

South Wales and the Black Country. The same steel shortage that gave birth to the EEC required all the ironstone it could get as Europe's reconstruction continued apace. Tom Gibb's, Hornton's ironfounder and fabricator reflected upon summer evenings as a child, "I remember watching the locomotives pushing their trains of empty wagons over the bridge above the house as I lay in bed attempting to sleep!"

By 1956, though it wasn't noted at the time, the demand for steel was slackening and foreign ore began to arrive by sea close to many of the customer steelworks. Other Oxfordshire quarries, Hook Norton and Bloxham closed, and gradually the orders diminished till in 1959 three-day working began.

Transport costs from Banbury began to rise during the early sixties and the O.I. began to enforce economies. No new quarries were opened up and diesel locomotives requiring less manpower to operate and maintain, gradually replaced the steam engines by 1965. Yet still the names placed onto the new diesel equivalents reflected division by sex, so 'Allan' or 'Graham' would be taking the loaded BR wagons down to Banbury whilst Maud or Joan would work between quarry and crusher! That year also saw the demise of the Byfield and Charwelton quarries, yet production continued to plummet as orders dried up and transport costs increased. A workforce that had been 190 in the mid-fifties was down to 52, on a two-day week in the final year of operation, 1967.

And so the O.I. ceased operation, and was taken up for scrap, quarrying for ironstone, taken away by road, continued in the locality until the 1980's, before that too ceased. Looking today at the bridges beneath the Stratford Road and Dyke Lane, visiting Grounds Farm which once sat as an unexcavated island, surrounded by extraction, it is hard to image the draglines ripping up the ironstone beds and the trains of dump cars that took the stone to the crushers.

How times change!

Planning

As ever, amongst the many threats to our beautiful village, Planning once again rears its ugly head. This time it's that old favourite, the MotoCross track. For those recent residents may I explain that it started off quite innocently about thirty years ago as a dirt-bike track in one of the old quarry sites near Hornton Grounds Farm.

The bikes were small, the users local and was of benefit to the younger generation. Certain Saturdays you'd hear the buzz like distant bees or chainsaws and nobody minded very much. It operated without a permanent track and could be used for grazing when not in use.

However, during 2017 this all changed, the noise was louder, the traffic entering the site was greater and now comprised motorhomes and caravans. The roar as ever-greater numbers of bikes started was akin to C130 Hercules aircraft taking-off together (I'm not exaggerating, I have heard both), and the Saturdays became weekends. Clearly something had changed.

As indeed it had. Without applying for Planning Permission, the owners of the track and Wroxton MotoX Club had now made a permanent track and were now advertising International Standard events and sub-letting the track to clubs from right across the U.K.. I was then a Parish Councillor, and Norman Britton, a former Concorde pilot, (and well accustomed to loud noise) complained about the noise to me. I agreed that it suddenly had grown markedly and put this to the next Parish Council meeting.

Our Council chairman then contacted the owner and was promised all sorts of action but none came. The P.C. then contacted the club and then Cherwell District Council, and it transpired that no planning alteration had been applied for or given. The events became louder, by now up to 40 bikes of full race-going standard would be racing together, and the start time became earlier, from 09.00 on a Saturday or Sunday. Even previous supporters were noticing, it was no longer just parts of the village that were affected.

By the beginning of 2020 the organisers were boasting of a new 'Winter Timetable', clearly we were going to get year-round operations. Cherwell's response, in my opinion, was frankly inadequate, when even their Sports & Leisure Planner pointed out there was no local need for such a track as the District was already amply provided with an International-Standard track at Bicester, just 28 miles away.

Then Covid intervened, and whilst operations ceased during the first lockdown, they resumed in a desultory fashion before the second, where a CDC official turned up to monitor the noise level at a location shielded by the topography and seemingly unaware that the race hadn't started and it was a warm-up lap for junior small bikes!

Our Parish Council, ably assisted by one or two tenacious villagers, eventually managed to convene a remote District Council meeting in the summer of 2021 that was a complete shambles but nonetheless laid a few ground rules for continued use of the facility. Since then, not a lot has happened until the District Council (which has repeatedly promised to keep Hornton informed of any developments), suddenly announced that the 'mitigation requirements' for restarted racing were being met.

Only, it appears they haven't been. Once again requirements that had been 'cast in stone' were either watered-down, forgotten or had no requirement for firm and effective management. The current Planners' response does not specify many variables and certain suggestions of operation clearly break the spirit of restricted operation voted for by the District Councillors at the 2021 meeting. Freedom of Information requests have been made to CDC, regarding their methodology and dealings with the owners and promoters, and each time excuses have been made for non-compliance and more promises of delivery given.

In short, this is our District Council seemingly unable to control a commercial business that causes a blight on the district during operation and brings little or no commercial or leisure benefits, except to track owners and club. Anyone who is new to this can see the very many comments from villagers in the district (almost wholly against), and the comments from distant parts (usually, but not always) in support on the Cherwell District Council's Planning portal. 21/00517/F and then go to 'supporting docs' and scroll down.

HORNTON

MAY DAY

1st May 2023

Our May Day celebrations and fete will once again return to the streets of Hornton.

Whether you've previously run a stall on May Day or would like to do so this time, please get in contact with us before the end of February to let us know your plans for this year.

We're looking forward to bringing the village to life with our traditional May Day celebration and we hope you will support the village causes by joining in the fun.

Thank you

The May Day team: Jane Wain - Sally Spencer - Pete Lemon

Email: Horntonmayday@gmail.com

New thatch for the Dun Cow



Late January saw scaffolding erected and work starting on replacing the Dun Cow's thatched roof. This was last replaced some thirty years ago, and the story goes that the thatcher (highly-regarded in the district) was approached by a chap and asked if he could put a thatched roof on his eight-bedroom house.

"I could....where would your house be...?"

"Erm... Beverly Hills..."

"Beverly Hills?" the thatcher scratched his head, "Don't know it... is it in Northamptonshire...?"

The upshot was the last thatcher of the Dun Cow wound up in California with a very lucrative and very unique line of work!

Back to the Dun Cow, and following on from the many sympathetic repairs to the buildings (a completely new, exact copy of the front door has been commissioned to satisfy the exacting statutory requirements), this four hundred-year old listed building is being readied for another quarter-century as Hornton's best and oldest niterie.

The building itself was a butchery before it was a pub and there are also intriguing features in the outbuildings that suggest other uses. Was the circular wall of one of the outbuildings an exterior circular staircase to a vanished upper storey, or perhaps a donkey-powered grinding bed for those times when the windmills couldn't function? What is known is that the bar was once a mere hatchway to the right-hand side of the current bar and the entrance door over in the further corner. Centuries of wear by hob-nailed boots has left a distinct groove in the floor between the two.

When Martha Treadwell was fatally wounded up the Holloway, it was to the Dun Cow that she was brought, whilst her murderer gave himself up in what was then the Bell Inn, on Bell Street. He apparently shot her as she was flinging rocks at him, one of which was found, still clutched in her dying hand. Spared from a hanging by impassioned pleas from many in the village, her assailant died from disease awaiting transportation to Australia.

Whilst the Bell Inn and the two other Hornton pubs (the Rock Tavern near the old quarries on Quarry Lane, and the Red Lion halfway up Millers Lane) have closed, the Dun Cow continues as Hornton's pub. May it have another four hundred years of prosperous life!



Eddie and the Gold Tops

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY
KATE BRAMLEY

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SONY AWARD WINNER
JEZ LOWE

DESIGN BY
CHARLIE CRIDLAN



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Hornton History Group Appeal for images

Following recent interest on the village Facebook group in some old images of the village, we thought it would be a good idea to capture, collate, categorise, and organise as many images of the village as we can and make them accessible online for anyone to view and use.



We're interested in any images, photographs, paintings, sketches... anything! If you have something of interest which you'd be happy to share, please contact me on Pete.Lemon@gmail.com.

We will look after your property carefully and scan or photograph it and return it to you. We will store the digital image with any reference information you have about it.

History starts today, so anything before now is worthy of adding to the collection. For example: images of roads, properties, structures, fields, woodland, paths are all of interest. Perhaps significant events such as May Day, jubilee or school, church, chapel and pub celebrations. Images which show significant changes in the village are always interesting where new or renovated buildings have changed an area or view. People are of interest too, please. Those at work and play in the village and area over the years or celebrating the arrival, marriage and even and departing of villagers.

It will take some while to gather and collate and, in the future, I hope that we can produce a book to capture how our village has evolved... so far.



Lost Buildings of Hornton - No 2 *Cottages on Bell Street*



These two cottages, opposite Home Farm on Bell Street, were never, as far as remembered, named - they certainly weren't numbered!

Back in the day, cottages were generally known by their occupants; in many cases the same family may have lived there for many years. As late as the nineteen-fifties, one old boy, when admitted to the Horton was asked where he lived:

"Miller's Lane, Hornton", he replied.

"Where on Miller's Lane? What number?"

"Oh, there is no number..."

"Well, what name is it, then?"

"It doesn't have a name, either..."

"So how does anybody know where you live, then?"

"Oh, everybody knows where I live!"

So it was with these cottages. The Andrews family lived in the left-hand cottage, with access from the road, and the Uptons lived in the upper cottage with

their six children. Mr Upton was the village shoe repairer and the entrance to their cottage was at right-angles to the road.

These cottages were pulled down in the nineteen-fifties, and the bungalows were built on the site. It is hard to fathom now, but right up to the nineteen-seventies ancient cottages were being demolished in favour of modern brick and tile buildings. Maybe this was because the majority of village houses were ancient thatched properties and the loss of several didn't seem to matter. I have spoken to one old lady who came back to Hornton, where her husband was renting a house. She expressed her shock in her new marital life, having to bathe in front of the fire and hope it didn't rain as the roof leaked!



Bombardier Morgan Barwick married Sergeant Danny Campbell-Watson at St John the Baptist, Hornton, on Christmas Eve 2022. The bridesmaids were Molly and Chloe Yates.

Hornton Open Gardens 2023?

I have recently been approached by Katherine House Hospice, asking whether Hornton is prepared to run an Open Gardens event this year.

I have organised it in the past but I think it's time to pass the baton on to someone else, so is there someone in the village who would be willing to take it over for this year?

The staff at Katherine House Hospice are really helpful: they provide publicity to get visitors in from outside the village, they help us with signs and publicity and, as in previous years, proceeds would be shared between the hospice and village causes.

If you are interested in helping to organise Hornton Open Gardens 2023, please get in touch with me at lynnjcorke@aol.com or on 670673. And please get in touch if you might be prepared to open your garden: it doesn't have to be large or pristine. Valuable funds are raised for good causes and everyone has a lovely afternoon!

Lynn Corke

Arrivals & Departures

Over the last year we have seen a number of departures and arrivals. Firstly, a very belated welcome to Dr Sanjeev Gogna – whom we know as Sij – and Thomas and Agata, with their daughter Amelia, who all reside on Bell Street.

Another Amelia is the daughter of Chris and Suzanne White, who moved into *The Claverings* on Millers Lane, following the departure of David and Kate Fletcher. Also on Millers Lane, we welcome Tilo and Barbara from the Isle of Man.

We also saw the departure of the Sawford-Storrys from Holloway Cottages, we wish them both every success in their future endeavours.

The Gossip

The copy deadline for the next issue of *The Gossip* is Friday 5 May 2023.

To advertise in the next issue, or submit your ideas and articles, please e-mail the Editor: ajoyner@mac.com.

Whilst every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of information printed in this newsletter, the editorial team cannot accept responsibility for the consequences of any errors that might occur, particularly in respect of advertisers not meeting customer expectations. The opinions published in this paper are not necessarily those of the team.

Baked Mediterranean Orzo Pasta



This is a vegetarian dish which is like a risotto but needs less attention. You might need to add a little more water/stock if the mixture starts to look dry. Good served with a green salad. Orzo is now available in Tesco and Waitrose, sometimes on offer.

Serves 6

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 1 large aubergine, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 3 peppers, de-seeded and sliced
- 3 tbsp tomato puree
- 1 vegetable stock cube
- 300g orzo pasta
- 4 vine tomatoes, cut into wedges
- Fresh parsley, finely chopped
- 100g feta cheese, crumbled
- 1 lemon, cut into wedges, to serve

METHOD

- Pre heat the oven to 220 degrees (fan 200). Whisk the olive oil, garlic and oregano together in a small bowl. Tip the onion, aubergine and peppers into a roasting tin about 30cmsx40cms-5cms deep. Drizzle over the oil mixture, mix well and season. Roast for about 20 minutes until lightly golden.
- While the vegetables are roasting, whisk the tomato puree, stock cube and 600ml of boiling water together in a jug until the cube has dissolved.
- Tip the orzo pasta and tomatoes into the vegetables and mix well. Pour over the stock, mix again and bake, uncovered, for 25-30 minutes until the orzo is tender and the stock has been absorbed.
- Cover with foil and leave to rest for five minutes if the orzo still has a bit of bite in the centre.
- Before serving, stir half the parsley and feta through the orzo and top with the remaining.
- Serve with lemon wedges for squeezing over.

Enjoy!

Lynn Corke

What's On...

Sunday Church Services

United Service on first & third Sundays – Chapel, 11am

Second & fourth Sundays – Church, 11am

Every Monday

Pilates - Pavilion, 5pm and 6pm, contact Liz on 07881 468282 for details.

Every Tuesday

Keep Fit - Pavilion, 6.30pm, contact Alex Birch on 07740 438162 for details.

Every Wednesday

Cribbage – Dun Cow, 7.30pm

Every Thursday

Yoga – Chapel, contact Jo Bell, jogalovesyoga@gmail.com, for details

Every Friday

Coffee Morning – Chapel, 10:30am

Once a Month

Chapel Lunch - Chapel, 1.00pm on the first Monday of the month. Come and enjoy a two-course meal for just £7. If you would like to come, please call Julie Stanley on 670507, or e-mail julieharrystan@aol.com.

3H's Gardening Club - Pavilion, 7.30pm on the second Tuesday of the month

Women's Institute - Chapel, 7.30pm on the first Thursday of the month

History Club - Dun Cow, 7.00pm on the second Thursday of the month

Useful Times

The Dun Cow

Monday	Closed
Tuesday	6pm – 9pm Beverages only - no food
Wednesday	6pm – 11pm Food available until 9pm
Thursday	6pm – 11pm Food available until 9pm
Friday	5pm – 11pm Food available until 9pm
Saturday	12pm – 11pm Food available 12 - 3pm and 6 - 9pm
Sunday	12pm – 9pm Food available until 3pm

Special events may have altered timings.

Alkerton Tip

Monday	8am – 5pm
Tuesday	8am – 5pm
Wednesday	8am – 5pm
Thursday	8am – 5pm
Friday	8am – 5pm
Saturday	8am – 5pm
Sunday	8am – 5pm

Bank Holidays – normal opening hours except for Christmas and New Year.

Please note, there is a small charge for non-household waste (DIY).