





A message from the Astbury May Day Committee Co-chairs

Welcome to Astbury May Day 2025!

Firstly, to introduce ourselves. We have both been involved with the organisation of Astbury May Day for many years and this year we are excited and privileged to take on the role of co-chairs. We are taking over this role from Claire who has supported and led as chair since 2018. We want to take this opportunity to thank Claire for her hard work and dedication over the last seven years as she continues to support as a member of the Astbury May Day committee.

Without the help and support from all the committee members, school parents, school teachers, volunteers and sponsors, Astbury May Day wouldn't be the incredible event it is today, and we thank you all. You know who you are!

As with previous years, this year promises to be a fantastic day filled with exciting activities and entertainment for all ages. We will be starting the day in style with the bells ringing at St Mary's church, followed by familiar favourites, a full programme of performances from local singers and dance acts, the annual dog show, the crowning of Astbury May King and Queen 2025 followed by traditional maypole dancing and the grand prize draw with many fantastic prizes to be won. Please find further information within this programme.

We have a large variety of local stalls attending, selling handmade gifts, crafts and treats as well as a variety of games (new and old), giant inflatables and plenty of options to keep you fed and watered throughout the day, with our bar, BBQ and refreshment marquee. Our May Day activities continue past 5pm this year with live entertainment at the Egerton Arms from 6pm. We hope to see you there!

The May Day celebrations are part of the history of Astbury village and creates the opportunity to raise money for local community needs and charities and we thank you for your support.

We hope that everyone has an amazing day, and we look forward to seeing you all again next year!

Many thanks,
Fay and Jenna



Astbury May Day 2025 Programme

11am - Astbury May Day Opens

11.15am - Entertainment by Jo-Anne Bailey School of Dance

11.30am - Entertainment by All on Stage Congleton

12 midday - Vocalist by BB's Entertainment

12.45pm - Dog show (£2 to enter and register upon arrival)

1.15pm - Procession of children from Astbury St Mary's Primary School and visiting King and Queen from nearby villages led by Rode Hall Silver Band

1.30pm - Service in Astbury St Mary's Church led by the Revd Heather Morrey-Carter

2.15pm - Crowning of the Astbury May King and Queen 2025 followed by Traditional Maypole Dancing

3pm - Sheena Shine Vocalist

3.50pm - Astbury St Mary's Primary School Choir: Tribute to VE Day

4pm - Astbury May Day Grand Draw

4.20pm - Entertainment by Shaftesbury Dance

4.35pm - Entertainment by Tiny Toes Ballet

5pm - Astbury May Day Closes until 2026

Thank you and we hope you have a wonderful day!

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Astbury May Queen 2025

Winning the draw was a pleasant surprise and a beautiful opportunity for me to represent this stunning school.

Thank you everyone for coming and thank you attendants for sharing this incredible experience with me.

I am very excited to be a part of this wonderful event this year.

Olivia, Y5 Astbury May Queen 2025.



Astbury May King 2025

I was really surprised that my name got called out of the hat



but I am so excited to be Astbury May King. I am looking forward to representing the school and raising money. I would like to thank Alisha, Isabelle and Henry for their role as my crown, sceptre and sword bearers. I am hoping the sun shines on May Day.

Jacob,
Y5 King of Newbold Astbury 2025.

May Day 2025

May Queen of Newbold Astbury and Retinue



May Queen:	Olivia Slavina
King of Newbold Astbury:	Jacob Bourke
Attendants:	Lily Lou Reece and Sofia Wrench
Little Maids:	Eliza Belcher, Sophia Bell, Autumn Buckley, Myah Clarke, Tilly Hogan, Evelyn Johnson, Ella Lawson, Daisy Wardle Penny Purvis-Turton,
Retiring Queen:	Florence Luckin
Retiring attendants:	Seren Bibbey and Kendal Johnson
Retiring Little Maids:	Charlotte Clark and Isabelle Winstanley
Crown Bearer:	Alisha Ajibade
Sceptre Bearer:	Henry McDermott
Sword Bearer:	Isabelle Adams-Davies

Astbury May Queen 2024

I have absolutely loved being Astbury May Queen this year, it has been a great experience for me.

I have attended many fetes representing Astbury as May Queen, alongside my attendants Seren & Kendal.

We especially enjoyed Goostrey May Day where we decorated a van and dressed up for a Mad Hatter's tea party and won first prize!

I have worked hard organising events to raise money for the school including a bonfire bonanza, spreading love and positivity for valentines and selling Christmas cards and gifts.

I would like to thank my supportive attendants, Seren & Kendal for all their help and I hope that Olivia enjoys her day and year as May Queen as much as I have.

Flo, *Astbury May Queen 2024*



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The children and staff at Astbury St Mary's Primary School have been working hard to practice for today. Each new May Day year starts on the last Friday in January. The old top hat in a box comes down from the loft and there is great excitement and anticipation in the School Hall. Names are drawn from the hat by the retiring Queen and King and those selected for this year start to take their places. This year Olivia and Jacob in Year Five were drawn from the hat.

The children's costumes are sorted, repaired and fitted by a team of volunteers – and ironed by proud parents! Endless dresses and jackets are tried on by the incoming retinue until they decide on a colour and style for their year of reign – this year has a focus on VE day and also Ukraine, Olivia's home nation. Designing the front cover for the programme you have in your hand is the next stage of the May Day year. This year's winner is Elsie Gosling, age six. Her colourful and simple design caught the eye of the selectors. There are lots of runners up and their designs are also included in the programme.

At the start of the Summer Term, the dancing practicing starts with earnest. Ribbons in a tangle, dancers out of time and forgetting the next move – it's all part of the learning process. I hope all goes well today, but whatever happens, the children will try their best, and I'm sure you'll just love it.

Thank you for attending today. I hope you and your family are having a fabulous day.

Miss P. Blythe
Head teacher

Astbury St Mary's C of E Primary School

'Walk in love as Christ loves you,' Ephesians 5:2

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Mr Grumpy – May Day 2025

‘Escape’ : definition (noun) – *‘a form of temporary distraction from reality / routine*

I very much believe in ‘buying local’ : we’ve used the same milkman for 25 years and haven’t got a clue how much I pay him vs Tesco and I’d much rather eat bacon from a cow I’ve previously said “mooo!” to on a weekend walk. I use local pubs / eateries (all I ask in return is that they light the fire / turn the heating on : I refuse to pay to shiver) and only use ‘Amazon’ as a last resort or if I need a 33” x 17mm reverse thread titanium bolt for the door hinge of the Apollo 12 command module overnight and ‘The Handy Cabin’ are out of stock.



On that basis, I must confess I’m not writing this at home in Astbury, but down at a hotel at Grumpy PLC HQ, which is some 180 miles ‘darn sarf’. It somehow feels I’m cheating, and what I’m writing isn’t ‘authentic’ – I should be sat under the tree on the village green, writing with a feather quill. Please look up at the church spire and forgive me : I mean well, and I’m thinking of ‘home’ and May Day as I type – the sounds, smells & ‘feeling’ are hard to forget after all these years.

Last night, I wrote my weekly column for ‘The Chronicle’ and it reflected my ‘down’ mood : the day had been full of corporate nonsense & numbers, not to mention terminology & idioms like “Deep Dive / let’s circle back on that / move the needle” and “think outside the box” which is particularly offensive. The radiogram in the car driving to my hotel and then the news on the telly as I typed was just depressing : Trumpypants upsetting everyone, Europe (remember that? Did you vote to ‘leave’? – shame on you!) squabbling and following Mr Grecian 2000 around like lapdogs but firing insults behind his back while countries lobbing bombs at each other over the fence. Kids stabbing each other and ‘growing up’ to shoot even more.

And I suspect I just got another speeding ticket – was I too keen to escape it all?

But that’s the appeal of May Day : all animals are equal, there’s never a cross word and if you dropped a fiver, someone would hand it in, the Rector would bless it before Russel Watson grabbed the microphone & sang “Has anyone here dropped a fiver?” to the tune of “Has anyone here seen Kelly” (1908, bit hit for Florrie Ford who – by sheer coincidence is buried here in the graveyard*)

I still think of my kids dancing around that Maypole (surely it’s not the same one?) and the Bigglesworth & Nepal Brass Band getting mixed up, with half of them playing ‘The Spiders Web’ and the rest playing Robbie Williams ‘Angels’ while the conductor had a fight with the headteacher about the free cake & biscuits. And the refreshment marquee is always legendary : the ladies (can I say that?) start baking / cutting up butties a month in advance and I can remember my mum enviously eating the lemon drizzle and comparing it with her own.

I miss ‘Nana’ being there and squabbling with the other Nana about who pushed the pram (grandad timed it, typically keeping the peace) and my dad never got to see any of it.

But I know they are still there (forgive me while I pause typing....)

Whatever goes on in the world – or, increasingly, maybe because of it - we all need an ‘escape’ from time to time. Maybe it’s a holiday, but maybe it’s easier, cheaper & more accessible to stand where you are today – typing this here, alone, I wish I was there now...

Because it doesn’t get much better, more innocent, more pure, more wholesome, reassuring, kinder and more of an escape than this....

*this is actually a lie, but fitted in nicely

Read ‘Mr Grumpy’ every week in ‘The Chronicle’

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A message from the Rector

Hi, I am Heather Carter, the new Rector of St Mary's Church. I have been asked to write a little something about me, although many of you will have read some of my bio either in the Parish magazine or in the Congleton Chronicle!

So I just want to add a quote from Brooke Hampton: "I am pieces of all the places I have been, and all the people I have loved. I've been stitched together by song lyrics, book quotes, adventure, late night conversations, moonlight, and the smell of coffee."

I'm looking forward to my first experience of Astbury May Day! I look forward to welcoming you into St Mary's either at the May Day Service or at another time.

Please do come and say Hello!





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Cover Runners up



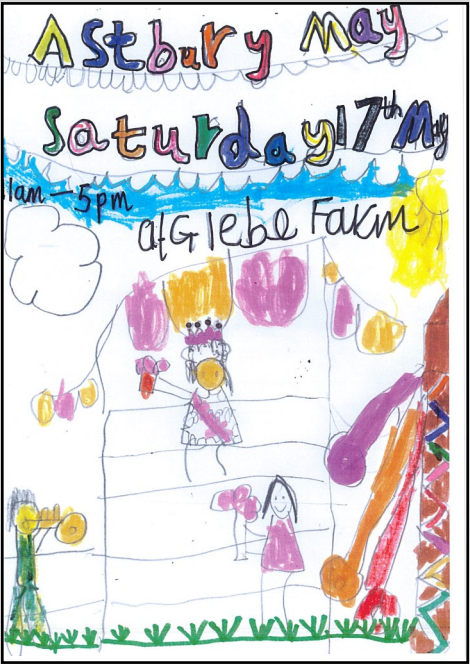
Flo Y6



Grayson Y2

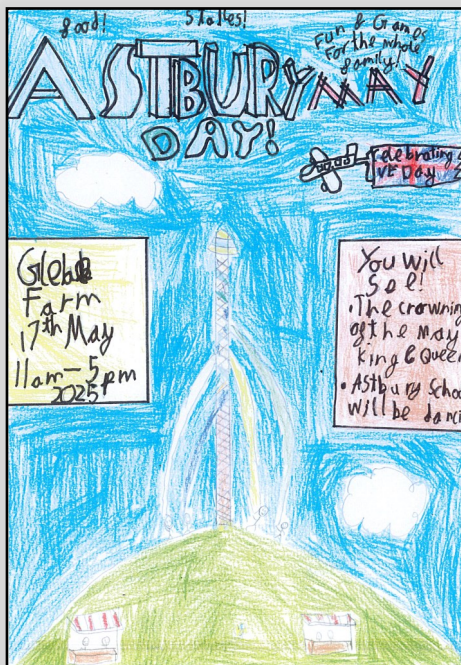


Jenson Y2



Johnny Y2

More Runners up



Joseph Y4



Tilly Y4



Molly Y4

Special Thank You!

- **Robert and Lesley Lomas** at Glebe Farm for the use of their paddock for May Day and fields for car parking
- **Biddulph and Congleton Rotary along with Cheshire Marshalls** for helping us safely run the car parking, May Day procession and road crossings
- **Reverend Heather Carter and Reverend Steph Morris** with support from **Professor Denise Morrey** for a wonderful church service and crowning of Astbury May King and Queen 2025
- **Rode Hall Silver Band** for leading us in the procession and playing our traditional May Pole Dancing songs
- **Astbury May Day Committee** who have worked extremely hard alongside their day jobs to bring you today's fabulous event
- **All the volunteer helpers in the BBQ**, including Glebe Farm **BBQ Cavern**
- **Astbury Women's Institute** for kindly donating their time and creativity to deliver tea, cakes and strawberries and cream with a smile in our refreshments tent
- **The staff of Astbury St Mary's Primary School** for their organisation preparing the children for the May Day Dancing
- **All the family, friends and children of Astbury St Mary's Primary School** who have helped prepare for today
- Our entertainment provided by **All on Stage Congleton, BB entertainment, Jo-Anne Bayley School of Dance, Astbury St Mary's School Choir, Sheena Shine, Tiny Toes Ballet and Shaftesbury Dance**
- Our 2025 Astbury May Day sponsors, **Stephenson Browne, Bill and Ben Skip Hire and Cheshire View**
- **Posh Pugs** for running our annual dog show
- **Kate Naylor** from Astbury W.I. who has volunteered to officiate our 'VE 80th Anniversary Bake Off' as well as **Astbury Mere Care Home** for kindly donating the prizes for this event
- **Andrew Bevington** and **Steph Tall** for compering during the day as well as **Steven Stoker** for the generous loan of his PA system
- **The Egerton Arms Astbury** for providing us with overflow car parking facility on their field
- **Astbury St Mary's Church Wardens, Astbury Parochial Church Council, Astbury Ladies Fellowship, Astbury Women's Institute, Congleton Lions, Congleton Chronicle, Amberon, Event Fire and Medical, Stu's Loos and all the other groups and individuals who have helped to make it a great Astbury May Day 2025.**