

# FOCAL POYNTZ



Iron Acton

SPRING 1997

ENMA

## DIARY OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### On the Village Green

Mon 5th May

Village Day

### In the Village hall

Every Monday, Thursday

Every Wednesday

2nd Monday in the month

3rd Monday in the month

4th Monday in the month

3rd Thursday in the month

Sat 19th April

Fri 2nd May

Sat 24th May

Sat 21st June

Nursery School	9.00 am
Elizabethans	2.00 pm
Junior Actonians	6.00 pm
Actonians	7.30 pm
Women's Institute	7.30 pm
Parish Council	7.30 pm
Whist Drive	7.30 pm
Knitting Group	1.30 pm
Northavon Auctions	
Race Night	
Northavon Auctions	
Northavon Auctions	

### In the Parish Church

Sat 5th April

Tue 8th April

Plant Sale at Rectory	2.30 pm
Church Annual Meeting	7.45 pm

### At Algars Manor and Mill

Sun 20th April

Sun 25th May

Mon 26th May

Open Gardens	2.30 pm
Open Gardens	2.30 pm
Open Gardens	2.30 pm

### At the Rose & Crown

1st Thursday in the month

Acton Aid - 8.00 p.m.

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**FOCAL POYNTZ** is produced three times a year, usually at the end of March, July and November and is distributed to every house in the Parish. Contributions for publication are always welcome and can be sent to Mr John Percy, Primrose Cottage, High Street, Iron Acton. Advice will be given if required. Items ought to be submitted about four weeks before date of issue.

Advertisers wishing to take space in **FOCAL POYNTZ** should contact Mr L. Alsop (228400).

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# Spring

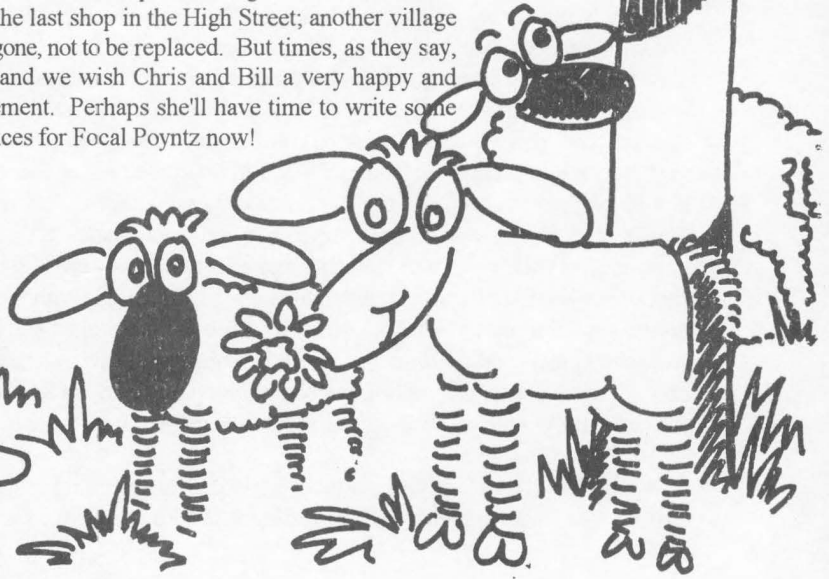
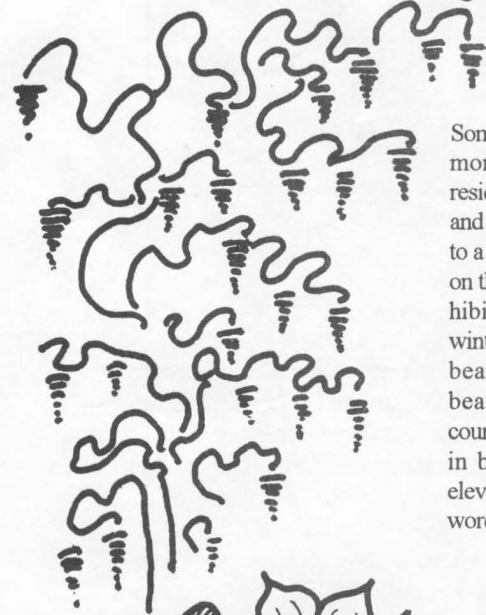
ISSUE NO. 44

EDITORIAL - MARCH 1997

Some in the village will remember when there were half a dozen or more shops. I, as a relative newcomer (a short twenty two years' residence), only knew three - Fursmans, May Beasley's Post Office and of course Colquhouns, with bikes parked outside, or a dog tied to a drain pipe and, magnificent in late summer, the blue hydrangea on the forecourt. The flower theme repeated in the window display - hibiscus, jasmine or geranium, grocery shelves always full. In the winter, boxes of firewood and Mr Kipling cakes; in summer runner beans and on the counter a pile of glossy home grown tomatoes; beautiful greetings cards, an array of stationery. At the sweet counter, so many children, solemnly absorbed in prudent investment in banana chews or snakes or licorice whirls, or a total outlay of eleven pence ... always treated with so much patience. Those gentle words: "I'll just serve Mrs .... while you're making up your mind ..."

For those of us who send mail to odd corners of the globe, there was always interesting discussion. The customs officers of some countries, I understood, disliked books. Others looked with suspicion on chocolate or toiletries. Writing the green stickers, I chose my words with care. There might be delays in delivery in countries such as Bosnia or the Middle East. I learned the financial advantages of Small Packet as opposed to Parcel rates, Sealed versus Tied with String. Chris always had the right reference work to uncover the complexities of the international postage systems. Posting from Yate was never so interesting!

But now it's time for Colquhouns to go. It's sad to see the closing of the last shop in the High Street; another village institution gone, not to be replaced. But times, as they say, move on, and we wish Chris and Bill a very happy and long retirement. Perhaps she'll have time to write some reminiscences for Focal Poyntz now!



## Further News From Besisahar in the Anapurna Range, Nepal

20th November - We are finally settled in the Area Welfare Centre in the Lamjung district. The AWC is an oasis perched on the hillside overlooking the village, the river and the opposite hill side (when I say hill think of Scotland rather than the Cotswolds) - the village road, well track, follows the Massing river through the Village then peters out and the Annapurna Circuit begins. Our favourite time to walk through the village is at 4 p.m. when darkness is falling and the fire starts and kerosene lamps are lit and the kids play in the shadows. The red mud walls reflect the orange lights to give each hut a warm glow. Or maybe its early in the morning when we sit in the AWC with hot sweet "Chita" watching the mule trains move out heading north. Bizarrely the village is supplied with wires, switches and fittings but electricity powered by a hydro-electric plant has not yet arrived. In fact the plant has not even been built!



22nd November - As I write this it is 4.40 p.m. and the smoke is beginning to curl from houses preparing evening Bhat (the staple meal of rice and lentils, Dave and I included). There are two buffalo coupled together ploughing paddy fields for a crop of potatoes after the last rice harvest - after potatoes they will grow maize - three crops a year!! Dhoko, loads of dung, have been dumped onto the fields to be ploughed in, brought up from the buffalo shed next to the house. There are still oranges in the trees in the Army Welfare Centre grounds but they are diseased this year and small and dry. As during every daylight hour, the air is filled with the sounds of children, a mule train is entering the village going south probably loaded with rice or millet - and the moon is beginning to do battle with the sun for a place in the sky. Sounds poetic? well it is and it is easy to see why people say "nothing can prepare you for Nepal". It would be a totally different view if we were tourists but we really are becoming part of the community. I am under no illusion that at various stages during the next six months I will be disillusioned and wanting to get out but why think about that now when I can enjoy absorbing this amazing place! Life is simple and as yet we want for nothing.

I would do anything to transport Auntie Sue to the school where the basic reading books she gave me (redundant stock from her school) are touched and looked at in wonderment by the teachers let alone the children - I spent the best part of an hour looking at a book on "vegetables we eat" with the teachers and the big brown eyes of our hundred children, set in round smiling faces.

5th December - On Tuesday night we were invited to a funeral - it had been going on since 10 a.m. - part Hindu, Part Buddhist, part Gurung village with chanting "Priests" who looked like witch doctors and professional wailing women. We witnessed the ritual of slaughtering a cock followed by a goat. Its a big thing to slaughter animals with one swift blow and therefore takes a great deal of preparation - needless to say everything went according to plan and the suffering was minimised aided by an increased pitch of wailing. We had been taken to view all this by an important neighbour and had front row seats squatting on piles of rice straw. We left shortly after 9.0 a.m, way past our 7.30 bedtime but we listened to the chanting from our 4 x 5 ft. board bed under the rafters above a cowshed belonging to the mother in law of our host. Eventually the mourners dispersed and we shivered off to sleep. One can begin to understand why missionaries would be so eager to rush in and sort these pagans out. However, we had a good guide and translator who having spent forty years in the army and a lot of time in the UK is quite westernised in his thinking. We were not shocked or horrified but could understand why these people with their simple village ways found this was their way of grieving and letting go of their loved ones. We feel privileged and humble to have been invited, we felt as though we were sitting in a good documentary, or had just been spirited into this event to observe and leave. Again, it was shown how open, friendly and accepting the Nepali people are - complete strangers were accepted into this very personal and sad occasion, people shuffled up and room was made for us, we were greeted with smiles which then returned to grief.

At 4 a.m. the village "Dickie" starts up - this is a rice grinding tool powered by women to grind the hard husks off the rice. At 4 a.m. a good moon appears and it takes a long time to clean enough rice for a large family for their 10 o'clock Bhat!

29th January - as I am writing this I am sitting on a rice paddy terrace in a T-shirt whilst overseeing my fourteen diggers!! The pipe laying is going well despite the large rocks that these guys keep having to dig through with picks with home-made handles, two rams and a shovel. I now have most of the vocabulary I need to get by on a labour site where there are no builders bums or tea breaks. These men can really dig, they would in fact be good applicants for a re-make of The Great Escape. Dave is also having fun, he is now into a series of great concrete pours which take all day. About fifty women hand chip stone, sand and water from the river and the end product is a reinforced roof slab about 4 m x 5 m.

We have been invited to another wedding. Dave is too busy to go so I'm going with Pashram. It takes one day to get to the village, two days for the wedding and one day to walk back.

I'm just going to pluck up courage to have a shower. The water doesn't heat up very well at the moment, but spring is definitely here as yellow flowers like primroses are appearing. Yesterday I saw a huge beautiful butterfly and a tree full of brightly coloured parakeets!

We are both so excited by the prospect of your visit, there are so many things that we want to show you and share with you .... The weather is hot and sunny during the day but chilly at night, hence you will need a shorts and thermals mix. If you feel inclined we would love the following - cheese, chocolate, sausages, bacon and any other goodies which we have forgotten about!! .....

Extracts from letter sent by

Catherine and David Kirby - volunteer workers with the Gurkha Army Welfare Trust (daughter and son-in-law of Di and Chris Heal).

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### Acton Aid - Annual Report 1996

This was a very busy year both from the social side and fund raising efforts of Acton Aid; the main stay remains the meeting of anyone interested on the first Thursday of end month in the "Rose & Crown" at 8 p.m.

The major thrust has been to raise money in support of Project 2000 to modernise the village hall, almost £3,000 being donated.

Other projects supported have been Christmas gifts to the senior citizens of the parish, donations to help purchase and erect the flagpole on the church, and to Iron Acton Primary School.

Many members worked hard throughout the year to organise such events as the Barn Dance, German Night, Canal Trip and seafood evening of Dr & Mrs T. Spare, all of which were very successful, but the main event was the Summer Ball, as usual well attended, and our gratitude goes to John and Marilyn Wright.

The annual dinner was held at the Lamb Inn, thirty eight people attending, where grateful thanks were expressed to Robert Bourns, our retiring and hard working Chairman.

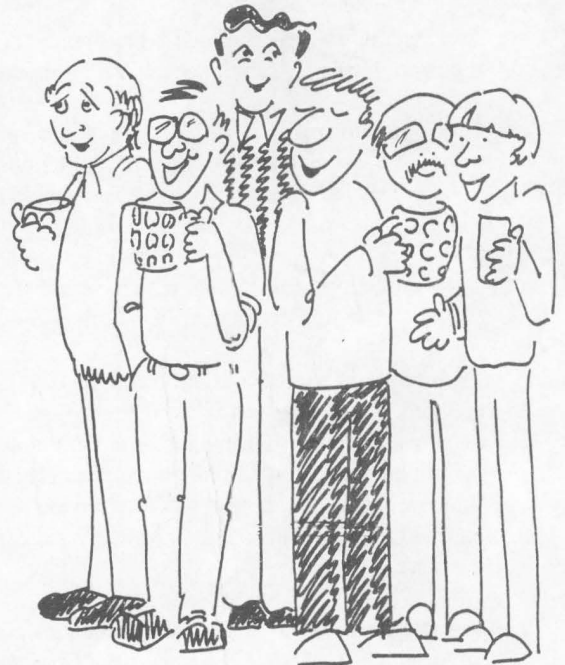
Our new Chairman is David Hatherall with Tony Cawley as Vice Chairman and Andy Garside as Secretary.

Projected projects are a Steel Band in April, Barbeques in the summer and a race night in November.

Thank you all for your support which we hope you will continue to give.

D.M.

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...SERIOUS FUND RAISING TALK...

## TESTING, TESTING, TESTING!

The Captain of the aircraft sits in the left seat, the First Officer (Co Pilot) in the right. When I was a First Officer, visitors to the flight deck always seemed to know which one of us was the Captain, as they would address their questions to the chap on the left, occasionally turning to me and saying things like "And what is your job, dear?", "Do they ever allow you to fly the aircraft?", "Are you a pilot as well?", "I didn't know they allowed women up here!", and many other similar remarks.

When I became a Captain the visitors seemed less informed because they would address their questions to the fellow sitting in the right seat, apparently oblivious to the fact that I wear epaulettes with four stripes and the other chap has two or three.

I have been a Captain for many years and things don't change, inspite of education, equality, and even television. Passengers are always surprised, shocked, terrified and sometimes delighted when they hear my dulcet tones welcoming them on board.

There are still very few women pilots. Our company, Airtours, reflects the national average and out of three hundred pilots we have just four females. Until two months ago I was the only female Captain. There is no discrimination. I know this for a fact. Our Chief Pilot, whose training I did recently, is keen to have more women (in spite of me!). I really don't know why there are so few of us, but I suspect it is because the vast majority of our population still believes that flying is a man's job, and that it requires some secret male ability and great strength - some people look at me and say "You are surely not big enough to fly those huge aircraft!".

Modern aircraft (especially the type I currently fly) are very sophisticated. When one moves the control column (joy stick!), to manoeuvre the aircraft, the flying surfaces are re-positioned via hydraulic jacks and actuators, thus the force required from the pilot is minimal. The only time that any force is required is in the event of an engine failure and I am pleased to say that these days engines are extremely reliable and a failure is rare - except in the simulator and I will talk about that later.

Two years ago I was privileged to be appointed as a Training Captain (I must have been doing something right), whose job is obviously to train other pilots. Trainees fall into various categories:-

1. Abo initio. Pilots who have just joined the Company and have limited experience. They may be from the Services and have flown fighters, transport or even helicopters or may be from smaller passenger turbo-prop aircraft. The majority of these people have never flown large jet aircraft and have probably never been south of Dover!
2. Conversion. Pilots who have transferred from another commercial jet aircraft and are "experienced". They may be Captains or First Officers and have three or thirty years flying behind them.

Both types of trainees are required, by law, to complete a set course of training. It begins with two or three weeks' ground school followed by a written exam. The second stage is simulator - approximately forty hours of intensive training and practice in handling the aircraft in all situations, followed by another test. The third stage is "line training", done in the aircraft, with passengers, on normal flights, under the supervision of a Training Captain. A set number of "training flights" must be completed to a certain standard after which a further test has to be passed. The pilot is then qualified. The whole training programme may take as long as three months depending on the experience and ability of the pilot.

Training and testing never stops. We are the only profession who is tested on a regular basis. Every six months we are all required to return to the simulator, for two four-hour sessions where we practise and are tested in handling the aircraft in all abnormal and emergency situations. It can be very gruelling and tiring. Handling, controlling and safely getting the aircraft on to the runway with an engine fire in bad weather requires good co-ordination, calm thought and team work between the pilots.

Every pilot, from the most junior the Chief Pilot has to go through this. A high standard must be achieved; if not the pilot faces at best, re-training and at worst dismissal. Every twelve months a "line check" must be passed. This again is mandatory for every pilot and is conducted on a routine flight. The pilot must demonstrate his or her ability to handle, not just the aircraft but all aspects of daily running a safe and efficient flight. Once again a high standard must be achieved to pass.

Every six months we must pass a medical - failure means loss of licence and job. We all have "loss of licence" insurance, provided by the Company, but it is never enough to compensate for total loss of income. I know of some pilots who, sadly, have lost their licence through a medical problem, which would not have caused a loss of job in any other profession.

First Officers, considered competent to become Captains face a long period of assessment, training and testing. Captains, good enough to become Training Captains, must achieve a higher standard and are tested in their ability to assess, teach and test other pilots.

As a Training Captain I sit in either seat depending whether I have a Captain or First Officer under training. Visitors to the flight deck always assume the other fellow is in command, I think they will never learn - I wonder if its because of my sex. My colleagues get more upset by their fickle remarks than me. I just smile and accept the fact that I will be blamed for any turbulence or rough landing! One thing I must emphasise - I have never encountered any discrimination from any of my colleagues in some twenty five years of flying ..... or maybe it is that I give as good as I get and keep managing to fool the examiners!

Next time you get on an aeroplane remember all the training and testing the "chaps" up front go through and be assured that they are extremely competent, and if the landing appears to be rough, don't judge them too harshly ..... they may be under training.

Pam McCoy



*...always gets the blame for turbulence...*

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## Neighbourhood Watch



Several changes will take place in our Police District from the 1st April 1997. The boundaries of all eleven policing districts which form the Avon and Somerset Constabulary have been re-drawn in line with the new local authority boundaries and we will come within the South Gloucester District.

The headquarters of this new area will be at Staple Hill which will be open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Our nearest Police Station will be Chipping Sodbury which will be open 16 hours per day, 7 days per week which will be a great improvement over previous arrangements.

There appears to have been no significant change in overall crime levels during the last quarter of 1996 with an average of 220 crimes a month in our Police district (this covers an area from Winterbourne to Charfield and includes Yate). The good news, however, is that detection rates are up about 24%

The Police are currently running a crime prevention campaign called Operation Eagle Eye. A variety of initiatives being employed including covert operations, high visibility patrols and an increased effort to raise public awareness of preventative measures. As part of this campaign all Neighbourhood Watch Members have been given an information pack containing general and car crime prevention brochures and various other useful information leaflets.

If you feel the need to have your say about local policing matters why not go to the next local Police and Community Consultative Group meeting which will be held on June 24th at 7.30 p.m. in the Armstrong Hall, Thornbury.

Peter Wedgwood - Chairman.

## The Old Bat in the Belfrey

This column starts off on an unusually sombre note. I've been asked by the Thomas family to say thank you for all the kindness shown to them and for the letters and cards that have been received following Mrs Daisy Thomas's death. The Thomas and Curtis families (Mrs Thomas was Miss Curtis before she married) have always, and still are, playing an active role in village life and they have appreciated everyone's thoughtfulness.

News greets me that my dear old tower is in for a somewhat noisier Saturday night than I usually have as Brian Angell, much put upon Bell Captain, is arranging an evening of frolicsome entertainment to raise some much needed coppers for part of the work needed on the bells. To this end an evening provisionally entitled "Ringers 'n Singers" is being organised on Saturday, 17th May at 7.30 p.m. in the Church. Further details will be available from the copious posters that will be highly visible all around the Village but so far 3 hand-bell ringing teams, a choir and 3 soloists are already arranged. An evening not to be missed!

It's good to be able to report that Hopalong Didcott, alleged landlord of the Rose and Crown and hater of all things to do with washing up, is doing very nicely following his recent cartilage operation. Much confusion was reported in the bar when Gail was overheard to report that "it's fine as long as he doesn't stand on it, but if he does it all swells up" ..... perhaps no further comments should be made other than to confirm, yes, she was talking about his leg!

There's got to be something in the water in the High Street as yet more preoccupation with legs occurred during the recent meeting the Parochial Church Council had with the Archdeacon of Bristol, the Venerable David Banfield. During a suitably serious moment in the discussions, Lynne, the much harassed PCC Secretary, felt someone grabbing her leg. Not wishing to cause upset, but clearly very bemused as this isn't the usual sort of thing that befalls her at these meetings (usually it's Howard telling her she's forgotten to minute something), she decided not to say anything. After all, what would the Archdeacon think? Suddenly David McCoy was heard to say "Lynne, is that your leg I'm grabbing?" Lynn replied with a very understated "Yes, I think so" ..... to which came, not the expected apology, but a much relieved David saying "Thank God for that, I thought it was my leg and I'd lost all sensation in it." Needless to say the PCC fell about with laughter with the Archdeacon joining in.

It's not often that the WI makes it on to the front page of the Mail on Sunday's You Magazine, but they did in January with the bold announcement that Elizabeth Hurley (who did for safety pins what Marilyn Munroe did for drain covers) thought it would be wonderful to be a WI member. Much eyebrow raising later it transpired that Ms Hurley thought it would be super to be one of those ladies who has the time to do all sorts of things domestic! Dream on lady! Maybe one of those safety pins pierced a brain cell? If you really want to have the time, as stated in the magazine, to do your housework, take things to the dry cleaners or cook instead of having to pay someone to do it it's very simple! Stop making those dreadful films and become a house-person! The rose tinted spectacles will soon wear very thin and you can leave the WI to continue with all those computer and business studies courses at their very own college in Oxfordshire!

Finally, and it happens so rarely that it really should be commented upon, I hear the Blanchard brain has for once gone into overdrive and come up with a slightly sensible idea. Following the question mark hanging over the continuation of our Post Office, and knowing that the villages of Rangeworthy, Tytherington and Cromhall have all lost their village shops, wouldn't it be a good idea for a mobile Post Office, rather like mobile libraries but preferably more frequently, to visit our villages. This would enable the elderly and mums without transport to collect their dues and would definitely provide a much needed service.

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*An attractive young girl trying to reach the Far East stowed away on board ship.*

*After a fortnight or so she was discovered and taken before the captain.*

*He was surprised to find her well fed and well turned-out, and asked who amongst the crew had befriended her. She demurred, but when pressed finally admitted that she had been to the second officer's cabin every day for a bath and a meal.*

*"And what did he want in return?" was the question.*

*"I suppose you might say he took advantage of me," was her murmured reply.*

*"I'll say he did," retorted the captain. "You're on the Liverpool to Birkenhead ferry."*



## Iron Acton School

It would be nice not to have to include in my report the Focal Poyntz magazine any mention of the school master's house project. In fact this hopefully will be my last, except to say that any future developments within its walls will be communicated to you. The building is now finished - hurray!, apart from some furnishings and the odd fitting or two. Mrs Hatt has eagerly awaited a time when she can get to grips with the library and turn it into that resource she has always dreamed of. With the help of other staff and parents this is now actually happening.

The children have been excited with the development and have been in the house on the ground floor for part of their lessons, to watch the television or to cook using the new low level kitchen. Many of the school's resources which used to surround the school hall have now been moved, so creating a clearer and tidier environment.

Much of the credit for completion of the work must be given to Mr Christopher Heal, a member of the school's governing body, who has done a marvellous job liaising with all of the concerned personnel. We intend to open the building officially at the beginning of the summer term, when we shall be inviting all who have contributed to the project over the years to attend. However, there will be sad omission from this event. The Rev. Antony Waker, as you may know was a strong supporter of this project. During our celebrations we shall remember his dedication to the school over many years and rejoice in the knowledge that his wish for the accommodation to be used for the children and staff at the school has come true.



The annual Governors' meeting for parents, coupled with The Friends of Iron Acton School AGM will be held this year on the 19th March commencing at 7.00 p.m. At this meeting there will be an opportunity to look around the school house and to view the equipment and resources the Friends of the School have purchased for us.

The children have been out to visit the Ridings High School to see a drama production and Mrs Hatt's class (Ash) have attended Cirencester Museum in connection with their Roman topic. During this term you may see the older children on visits around Iron Acton at work on their topic of settlement and the local environment.

In the forthcoming months, the children will be participating in the tournaments for football and netball and arrangements for the cluster sports are now in hand.

This year there will be no visit to the Isle of Wight as our present year 6 children attended as year 5's.

The school will be attending the parish church for a service to celebrate Easter on the 19th March. The Rev. David Sutch will be conducting the service and the classes will be contributing some readings.

R.H. Larter - Headteacher

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## Ten Years Ago - Extracts from FOCUS 1986

ENGLISH HERITAGE has agreed to buy the dilapidated Acton Court, the early Renaissance house near Bristol. The purchase and basic repairs will cost £350,000.00. What happens after that is unclear. It could be restored and opened to the public or re-sold!

## BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION

Well done, Iron Acton, winners of the Cup Winners' Shield. This was a great effort by a great number of people, who, by their individual example spurred the rest of us on ..... The Shield is on display in the Post Office window.

## The Parish Church

Many people have been concerned about the future of the Parish Church following the death of the Rector.

It is unlikely that any decision about the future pattern of the ministry in Iron Acton will be taken for some time and certainly not before careful consideration has been given to the needs and wishes of the people of the Parish. Discussions will take place at Deanery and Diocesan levels and the views of everyone in the Parish will be sought before any proposals regarding the future are placed before the Parochial Church Council.

At a meeting on 27th January 1997 the Archdeacon of Bristol visited the Parochial Church Council when he explained to us that we could no longer expect to have a full time priest in St. James the Less. This will come as no surprise to most people in view of the shortage of priests in the Church of England and the most likely solution will probably involve a scheme for sharing with another parish or parishes.

There is no question of the Church being closed. During the interregnum we have continued to worship regularly thanks to a number of priests and lay readers led by the Rural Dean who have given us tremendous support. Of course Church members have had to share some of the additional responsibilities formerly shouldered by the Rector but we are pleased to do this in an effort to keep the life of the Church ticking over as smoothly as possible.

We would love to be able to share the load and would welcome anyone in the Parish who feels they might become more closely involved in the work of the Church. One way in which your view about the future of the Church in Iron Acton can be expressed would be to attend the Annual Parish Meeting in the Church on 8th April 1997. This meeting is open to all. As well as offering an opportunity for asking questions and expressing personal views, the new Parochial Church Council is elected at this meeting. We are anxious to increase the number of people who serve on the PCC. Anyone whose name appears on the electoral roll may be nominated. If you would like to know more about the electoral roll or the PCC please contact one of the Church Wardens, John Park or Howard Aplin, or any member of the PCC. **REMEMBER, IF THE CHURCH IN IRON ACTON IS IMPORTANT TO YOU, YOUR VIEWS ON ITS FUTURE ARE IMPORTANT TO THE CHURCH!!!**

Hazel Dron.

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### PRESS RELEASE

#### SILVEY SUPPORT FOR PROJECT 2000

Local oil distributors, Thomas Silvey Limited, have recently announced that for every litre of heating oil purchased from them for delivery into the Parish of Iron Acton they will donate 0.2 pence to PROJECT 2000, the fund to extend and refurbish Iron Acton Village Hall. This equates to £2.40 on an average delivery of 1200 litres, so over a year could lead to significant funding.

The scheme will commence on 1st March 1997, and payments will be made quarterly to the PROJECT 2000 treasurer.

Oil users wishing to support this should contact Silvey on 0345-125313.

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*What's funny about a pair of legs?  
The bottom's at the top.*

# May Day '97

**Monday 5th May 1997**

**STARTS 11.00 a.m. with May Queen procession to the Village Green.**

**Maypole and Country Dancing**

**Steam Train and Steam Engine**

**Puffing Billy rides**

**Gun Dog Display**

**Brass Band**

**Tug-of-War Competitions**

**Face Painting**

**Bouncy Castle**

**Tombola**

**Vintage Vehicles**

**Car Boot Sale**

**Army Cadet Force Display**

**Various Stalls and side shows**

**Burgers - Hot dogs- Sandwiches**

**Beer tent**

**Proceeds in aid of Project 2000 - the extension and  
refurbishment of the Village Hall.**

## Iron Acton Wi Report

We finished off 1996 with our Annual General Meeting and promptly saw a 66.6% change in officers! Judy Park is now our President, Jean Kethro kindly stepped into the breach to once again to become our Treasurer when no-one else was prepared to do it, and I'm still our Secretary.

Before I go any further it's only right that I should express our thanks to Pauline Hill, our retiring President, who stepped into the "hot seat" when Dusty relocated with her job (and who wasn't allowed to step back out again) and to Viv Parker who had the awesome responsibility of organising our Speakers Programme. Both ladies were on the Committee for a number of years and we shall miss their expertise, sense of humour and company.

1997 started off with a talk on Water Aid, a charity which has links with our local water company and provides the knowledge and manpower for water projects in the third world - although I did tease Viv when I first heard the name and wanted to know if it was something to do with incontinence and were we going to be inundated with rubber sheets - a natural follow on, you might say, to last year's topic of Beauty for the Mature Woman!

February saw the return of Mr Angell who was still trying to convince us how easy it is to take the most incredible photographs with an ordinary compact camera - having tried and failed abysmally all I can suggest, especially with a name like he's got, is that he gets some divine intervention (and not the Hugh Grant sort either!!).

March is a little more serious with a talk on St. Peter's Hospice. It's always good to hear about the developments they've made - especially when some of us have first hand experience of the help that can be given. Their achievements are particularly inspiring when you remember that their progress has been solely due to voluntary contributions; they do not receive any national/central funding.

We've tried to get into summer mode and think about where we can go on our outings but in the depths of cold and darkness it's very difficult to try and think of sunshine and several fewer layers of wool and thermalactic so we've put off any decisions until the spring.

A group of us also had a natter about the WI that made national press headlines when they came out in agreement with the stag/striptease nights being held in their local Village Hall Committee! This started a very lively debate which culminated in the view that we would have the courage to disagree with our partners if their actions were unacceptable. Sharing a bed does not mean sharing identical thoughts (independent and free spirited as we are) ..... but, then, maybe it's easy for us to say this as none of us goes to bed with the Chairman of the Village Hall Committee, or any other Committee for that matter and with this thought I'll leave you until the next edition.

Lynne Blanchard

PS. Just in case you should think otherwise, we're not open to offers either!

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We are sad to record the death of Mrs Daisy ~~Rogina~~ Thomas, a familiar figure in Iron Acton for over eighty years. The eldest of three children, Mrs Thomas was a school teacher until, with her marriage to James, she became a farmer's wife working in partnership with her husband on the farm and in the dairy and raising her family. Throughout her long life she was active in the community especially in all events and festivals of the Church. She was a founder of the Girl Guide Company in Iron Acton and always took great pleasure in the company of young people. In recent years, troubled by arthritis, Mrs Thomas was unable to enjoy her accustomed active participation in village life but she welcomed visitors to her home where they were sure of an interesting chat and fascinating stories of life in Iron Acton in the early years of the century.

In spite of increasing immobility, it was very unusual not to find Mrs Thomas in the garden attacking the weeds or planting vegetables whenever the weather allowed. This spring her familiar figure will be missed by the people who stopped to chat and wave as she worked away at her plot.

## Actonians News

### Golden Egg Hunt - Easter Monday March 31st 1997

On Easter Monday you can join an Egg Hunt starting at 2.30 p.m. outside the Village Hall. Cost is £2 per adult, with children free. Follow the clues on a gentle walk around Yate to gather details of the hiding place, in Iron Acton, of golden eggs - some of which may lead to a cash prize. The clues are fairly easy - even for the younger members of the village - and it is expected that clues can be gathered within two hours. On your return to the village there will be cream teas available, at a modest cost, whilst we wait to find out who the winners are.



To book tickets please phone Bob Allen 0117 9761976 or Donna Worrall 228458

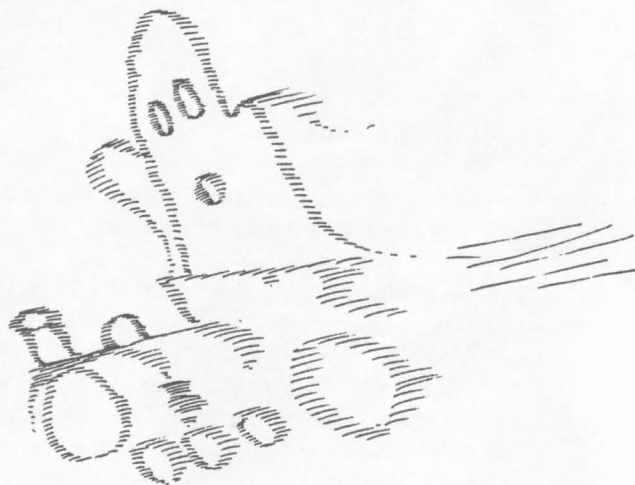
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### Director's Nightmare!

My planned production of "The Tempest" has had to be postponed due to "technical difficulties"; the leading actor was due for a major operation, the scenery couldn't be built in time and we needed more time to rehearse - other than our usual twelve weeks. As this was to be the first Actonian Shakespeare production it just had to be right. So next Autumn we will unleash a very exciting, funny production of Shakespeare onto the village. Right - decision made. Shelve it!

Of course that didn't solve the problem of what to perform in May. The hall was booked, the group geared up to act and a gap in our calendar. Many years ago, when I last saw "The Ghost Train" I remember thinking what a good play it was and how well Actonians could perform it. So there was a possible solution. Written in 1925 by a then aspiring actor - Arnold Ridley (Private Godfrey in "Dad's Army") it has been a stalwart for many amateur groups ever since. Actonians have a good track (forgive the pun!) record for period productions so perhaps we should give it a try. A speedy audition (and some arm twisting) and we had a cast, a technical crew and twelve weeks to rehearse.

The play centres around a group of seven passengers stranded on a bleak railway station on a branch line in Cornwall. Soon they discover that the station is haunted by the ghost of a train that crashed and killed people years before. Would they see the "Great Train" or was it all a figment of the imagination. This possibility mixed with a gang of arms smugglers, in disguise, leads to a lot of problems, in a very fast moving, often funny period drama. With a little luck, a lot of ingenuity and some good acting - who knows - the "Ghost Train" may appear on a stage near your home. Come along and see for yourselves.



The "Ghost Train" runs for three nights, May 15th, 16th and 17th.

Bob Allen

\*\*\*\*\*

### Festival Plays

Congratulations to the Actonians on the success of their One Act plays entered in the local festivals. The Junior Actonians produced Camping Gaz, a play written and produced by their director, Sarah McMahon. This was great fun and had some super parts for several children which the actors seized with aplomb. The seniors produced Green Forms by Alan Bennett, a very true-to-life picture of a Civil Service office in the 1970s. The producer was James Sinkinson, and the stars were Lyn Bowden and Di Buck. This play was runner-up in the Avon Festival, and goes through to the regional final. Lyn Bowden won the Best Actress cup - well done, everybody. At the Malmesbury Festival, James Sinkinson won the Best Supporting Actor award for his non-speaking role!

## Elizabethan Club

It doesn't seem like four months ago that I was writing my last Focal Poyntz report!

Our Christmas lunch at the rose and Crown at Rangeworthy was a great success when twenty friends joined us for a superb meal which was coupled with a lovely, warm welcome from Yvonne and Martin.



We enjoyed a visit to Leyhill for their Pantomime in December and followed this up with a visit to the Pantomime at Bath in January and we hope our theatrical visits will continue when we return to Leyhill to see their next play in April.

We are already looking forward to our outings throughout the summer. Our first will be to Oxford on St. George's Day, 23rd April. The coach is already full but sometimes we do get a late cancellation so names are always welcome on our waiting list.

The May Day festivities on the Village Green will see us contributing our usual raffle, with a home baked, beautifully iced cake as the first prize.

Throughout March our meetings are held every two weeks. We return to a weekly meeting from the beginning of April. So, if you are a pensioner you are most welcome to join us each Wednesday at 2.30 p.m. in the Village Hall.

Elsie Blanchard.

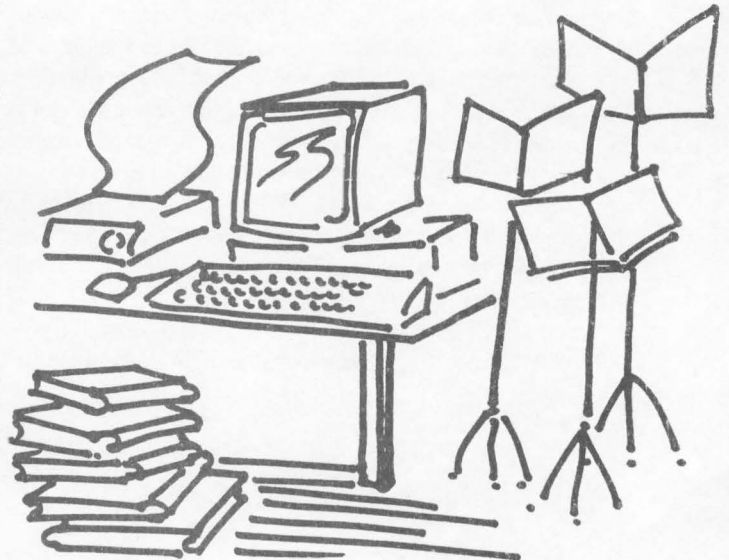
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## From the Friends

As I begin my second year as Chairman, I thought it would be a good time to reflect on all the hard work the Friends of Iron Acton School have done over the past year.

Fundraising is hard at the best of times but with local support and of course support from families and teachers we have managed to compile a very impressive list of items purchased for the school. Our main purchase this year has been another computer system including printer. This will add to the one which we bought last year. Amongst the other items we have bought are drying racks for art work, music stands, reading packs and helped towards the cost of sending the years 5 and 6 to go on their trip to the Isle of Wight last summer.

As for future fundraising - the Summer Fayre will be our next big event, but as yet a date has not been set. You can be assured that as in previous years it will be in the early part of July. Look out for posters and flyers around the village and school. We look forward to seeing you there and hope you have an enjoyable day.



Mrs I. Wilson-Tancock (Chairman of The Friends of Iron Acton School)

\*\*\*\*\*

*At a marketing conference dinner the talk was about the difficulty of language and communications in international trade. The director of an engineering firm said that his export director was astonished to receive an order from Russia for a thousand water sheep. A representative was dispatched to investigate. The actual requirement was for hydraulic rams.*

## Iron Acton Parish Council

The Parish Council is very aware of the traffic problems in and around the village which continue to be a major concern to many people and it has been pressing South Gloucestershire Council to install traffic lights at the Wotton Road junction. However, there is a funding problem at the moment but we will continue to monitor the situation and press our case for as long as it takes. Work to create a turn left lane from the Rangeworthy direction towards Yate has been agreed and it is hoped that this will go some way to easing part of the problem at that junction and also that of the traffic currently using North Road in order to avoid the Wotton Road/Bypass junction.

As was reported in the last issue new play equipment has been installed in the Parish Meadows and we hope that it meets with the approval of the younger members of our parish. The fencing off of this area will be finished in the spring when the weather improves. The stone wall on the northern boundary has now been repaired. The Council have put in a planning application to demolish approximately 4 feet of wall at the Park Street entrance to the Parish Meadows. The entrance needs to be widened to enable the large vehicles necessary to complete the landscaping of the play area to gain access. We are also concerned about the emergency services being unable to gain entry. This concern was justified in February when the stable was set alight and fire engines were not able to get into the Parish Meadows.

As you may have already seen the Council is looking for an Assistant Parish Clerk to help Mr Carter with his numerous duties. Further details are to be found in this issue.

The Parish Council is once again supporting the Village Day on May 5th and we hope that you will all lend your support by attending the various activities on The Green.

Carolyn Baker

\*\*\*\*\*

## ADVERT

### ASSISTANT PARISH CLERK

The Parish Council is seeking an Assistant/Trainee Clerk to work alongside Mr Carter.

Initially the post will involve general help in such a way that provides an overall background knowledge of a Parish Clerk's duties with the aim, in due course, of taking on the full responsibility.

No previous experience is necessary; however, an interest in Parish work is desirable and keyboard skills will be required.

The salary and hours will be subject to discussion; however, it is felt that about eight hours a month will be necessary.

Initial enquiries to Mr N. Carter - Tel No. 228563.

\*\*\*\*\*



### Parish Handyman

Iron Acton Parish Council is considering the employment of a part time "Parish Handyman" and would welcome expressions of interest from suitable candidates.

The terms and conditions will be agreed by negotiation and subject to review in the light of experience. No specific qualifications would be required, but a willingness to undertake a wide variety of minor tasks around the Parish on an as and when required basis will be necessary. The Council envisage that the job would suit someone who wishes a few hours a week employment, but bearing in mind that the requirements would be very flexible and probably seasonal.

Anyone interested in the possibility of fulfilling this job should contact the Clerk to the Parish Council, Mr Norman Carter, 9, Chilwood Close, Iron Acton, Bristol BS17 1US, telephone 01454 228673 by 16th May.

\*\*\*\*\*

*There was once an aged charwoman who was describing to a circle of her cronies her husband's last moments.  
"And wot were 'is last words, Mrs Jones?"  
"E didn't 'ave no last words. Oi was with 'im till the end."*

## A Day in the Life of An Anaesthetist

Pam McCoy's interesting account of a Day in the Life of an Airline Captain led me to recall the often quoted similarities between the work of an anaesthetist and the work of an airline pilot. Pam's article reinforced the similarities.

Both pilots and anaesthetists start their work by checking the safety of their machines - whether it be the aircraft or the anaesthetic machine. Neither wish to have something go wrong when they are at 30,000 ft. or half-way through the operation as the case may be. Whereas a pilot has to cope with short haul and/or long haul flights, so anaesthetists have to manage short or long operative procedures - anything from a few minutes to twelve hours or more.

Pam says her report time is one hour before departure and, similarly, anaesthetists need to be in the operating theatre about an hour before the scheduled operation start time - equivalent to take-off time. Whilst anaesthetists do not have a co-pilot or navigator, we often have a trainee anaesthetist and an anaesthetic nurse both of whom fulfill a not dissimilar role, checking and double-checking that we have the right patient for the right side etc. etc. I was particularly impressed by Pam's account of the three critical speeds of the aircraft for these are largely matched by the three critical moments at the start of an anaesthetic.

VI, the speed at which an aircraft can stop is matched by "M1", the moment in the anaesthetic room before the first anaesthetic injection is given and when it is possible to "hold everything" and cancel the procedure.

VR was the speed at which the aircraft can get airborne and this is matched by "M2", the moment when the anaesthetic drug has been injected into the patient and unconsciousness will follow within seconds. The patient can then be said to be "in flight". This is a period of maximum concentration for both the anaesthetist and, I am sure, the pilot.

V2 was the speed at which, should an engine fail, the aircraft can safely climb away and is matched by "M3", the moment when anaesthesia is fully established, all monitoring systems are attached and working and the patient ready to be positioned on the operating table.

At this point, as Pam says, everything is checked, the passengers board, the doors are closed and "off we go". Similarly, in the operating theatre, everything is checked, the surgical team get ready, the doors are closed, and "off we go"!

Once the operation has started, although anaesthetists do not have an autopilot (yet), the anaesthetic is largely automated although it remains under the minute to minute control of the anaesthetist for the rest of the operation. Both pilots and anaesthetists, in Pam's words, "have to be ready to act quickly and efficiently with any problem". And just as with modern aircraft, problems are few and far between, so with modern anaesthesia, problems are few and far between. Although, whereas Pam (I hope!) can count on her aircraft being modern, fully functioning and well-serviced, the anaesthetist cannot always count on his patient being in the same tip-top condition!

For pilots, time spent in the cruise is generally more relaxed and for anaesthetists, time during the actual surgery is also usually more relaxed. We too are fed and watered by the theatre staff (depending on the length of the procedure). Drinks for anaesthetists during the procedure are also non-alcoholic! Not that we don't make up for it when off duty!!

At the end of the flight, the pilot gets very busy planning the arrival. Similarly, at the end of the operation, the anaesthetist gets very busy planning the end of the anaesthetic. The patient's vital systems all have to be checked, the various monitors need to be disconnected and, as the aircraft has to be landed safely, so does the patient have to be safely transported to the Recovery Room. But similarities don't end there. Pam tells us that, occasionally, she has to deal with bad weather, cloud, rain and strong wind. And, although the work of the anaesthetist is less affected by the weather, he may have to deal with immediate postoperative problems - and these may even include a strong wind on occasions!!

Pam writes that, on occasions, she has to deal with difficult passengers. But then anaesthetists occasionally have to deal with difficult surgeons. Unfortunately, anaesthetists don't have a First Officer we can send to speak to them. This is an innovation to which serious consideration should be given! Perhaps David McCoy would like to volunteer for the job!

But both pilots and anaesthetists end their flight, or the operation, by completing paper work, checking the equipment they have used and preparing to start all over again.

Despite the similarities, I would not have wished to change places. I have loved my job and believe firmly that my place is on terra firma. But those who have read Pam's article will, I am sure, feel that much safer when next they fly. And now, perhaps, they will also feel safer when next they have an anaesthetic.





## WHO WANTS A MILLION?

I had a number of uncles when I was much younger; one an Uncle Sam, lived in Downend. He was not rich but considered by many to be careful with his money. He apparently didn't spend too much, just sufficient to bring up and care for his family and keep his home in good order. He seemed to live a sober life without any serious vices. His one little bit of enjoyment was his weekly attempt at forecasting the soccer results and completing and checking his football pools coupon.

Now in those days the prize to win was the Treble chance which if your forecasts had been good could give you a prize of £75,000.

So much had my uncle dwelt on the possibility of winning this amount that he had carefully measured the thickness of a new one pound note with a micrometer and discovered it was 0.004 of an inch thick (four thousands of an inch).

From this he calculated that by winning the Treble Chance and receiving his prize in new one pound notes, he would, if they were stacked carefully one upon the other have a pile of 25 feet high. Something for him to visualise every day.

Of course today £75,000 is not a great deal and payments from £1m to £10m seem almost an everyday occurrence, or at least twice a week.

So let's suppose you are the lucky person who wins £1m on the lottery and decided you would like to have your prize paid to you in £1 coins.

With this in mind I measured carefully the thickness of a new coin. Now being metricated it measured 3 mm, almost on eighth of an inch. Thus, I calculated that if each coin was placed one above the other you would end up with a column which reaches 3,000 metres high. This is equal to 3 Km or nearly 1¾ miles. Of course common sense tells you such a column of coins would be totally unstable so it would be necessary to store it in much shorter stacks.

My experiments proved that with care you may get a stack of 100 coins to stay upright, particularly on a firm base. So it means having a large number of smaller columns.

Now the diameter of a £1 coin is 22 mm about  $\frac{7}{8}$  of an inch so a column of 100 coins would take up a floor space of 22 mm by 22 mm. To stack up your £1m winnings in such a way would mean having 10,000 columns of coin. This would take up a floor area of 4.84 square metres or about 52 square feet, the size of a small bedroom. However, imagine your delight upon opening the bedroom door and viewing the entire floor area covered with piles of gold coins. To make full use of the bedroom floor area you may have to reverse the door so that it opens outwards.



You may decide to spend your winnings and every morning visit your store and take with you for the day's events one stack of coin. So spending it £100 per day your winnings should last you just over 27 years.

It is possible you may win on a roll over week; you just think about it.

Myself I'd be more than pleased with £75,000.

Incidentally, my uncle Sam's largest win was £900.11s.6d.

L.A.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Coroner to Witness: "The collision occurred at the junction of High Street and Church Road; how far away were you?"*

*Witness: "54 yards, 2 feet, 6 inches."*

*Coroner: "You are very precise. Did you Measure it?"*

*Witness: "Yes."*

*Coroner: "Why?"*

*Witness: "I knew some idiot would ask me."*

## **Project 2000**

This is the first of what I hope is a regular newsletter keeping the parishioners of Iron Acton up to date with our activities. I apologise for the lack of feedback to date but I aim to put this right in the months to come. I hope that the following will answer all your questions about what we are trying to achieve.

### **What is PROJECT 2000?**

The Project 2000 committee, for those of you who have not heard of us, is comprised of a number of people from the village, whose aim it is to extend, refurbish and improve the facilities that the village hall can offer.

The committee was formed in March 1994 after village charity Acton Aid approached the Village Hall committee offering their assistance in raising money for a worthy cause. Acton Aid as you will probably know has raised money for local needs over the years, but felt it needed a larger project to focus its efforts on.

The Village Hall committee does an excellent job in running the hall; however it was recognised that it was becoming more and more difficult to maintain what is now an out of date building. Major work was required especially on the roof.

The Village Hall committee and Acton Aid agreed that to refurbish the hall was a worthy project which would benefit all who lived in Iron Acton and that it would enhance the appearance of our village.

Project 2000 was created and the aim was to finish work by The Millennium.

### **What progress has been made so far?**

We have been very busy raising money through various social activities and so far have completed Stage 1 of the project.

This involved re-roofing the stage area, a new back door, new double glazed mahogany windows on the right side of the hall and insulating the said wall. The works are now complete for a total expenditure in excess of £10,000. We have received grants from the former North Avon District Council and from our local Parish Council. We have also received tremendous support from local organisations such as Acton Aid, The Actonians, The Village Hall to name but a few and of course from all the villagers attending our events. To everyone we would like to pass on our thanks.

### **Where do we go from here?**

The next phase Stage 2 is a major one. The aim is to extend the hall and replace the roof with a new double apex one instead of the current flat construction. It is essential that when this stage is undertaken the hall remains open, so we will need to fit it out at the same time.

This, as I am sure you can imagine, will take a great deal of money which we estimate will be in the region of £100,000. This may seem an unachievable target, but if you include grants which have been promised by the Parish Council and hopefully a grant from other organisations such as the Lottery, we are looking to raise approximately £25,000 by May 1998, our target date for commencement of works. Unfortunately, South Gloucester do not have a budget as did North Avon and we do not anticipate any assistance from this source.

### **How can we raise the money?**

Events will be taking place as before; however we need to increase our income by bringing money from outside the village. We do not expect the same people in the village to constantly be putting their hands into their pockets.

We plan to hold a Village Festival in May concluding with the usual May Day activities on Bank Holiday Monday. We hope to raise in excess of £5,000 with the same amount raised in May 1998. Although this will help greatly towards our target of £25,000, we need to raise the balance by other means. Perhaps you may have some ideas!!!

### **How can you help?**

We need help from everyone in the village if we are to reach our goal.

You could:-

- Buy tickets for our social events
- Bring friends from outside the village to our "do's"
- Help us by volunteering your time to organise and run events
- Make a donation!!!

If you can help in any way please don't be slow in coming forward - after all it is **your** village hall. Please contact anyone on the committee. We need **your** help!

**COMMITTEE**

Chris Wiggins     Chairman  
 Tony Pullen        Treasurer  
 Sue Pullen         Secretary  
 Mike Wills         Hall Manager  
 Bob Sheppard  
 Roger Hughes  
 Rob Taylor  
 Andy Garside

**STOP PRESS** Action Aid are considering running a village lottery, where for a contribution of £5.00 per month collected by direct debit, you have a chance once a month to win a substantial prize. Further details to follow.

\* \* \* \* \*

*If, in quieter moments, you have ever pondered on your position in life perhaps the following will help you determine your seniority at work.*

	<b>SENIOR MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>MIDDLE MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>JUNIOR MANAGEMENT</b>
<b>PARKING</b>	<i>Are driven in company cars and are unconcerned with parking.</i>	<i>Have reserved parking spaces.</i>	<i>Get parking tickets.</i>
<b>IDEAS</b>	<i>Have them and write memos that are read and acted upon.</i>	<i>Have them and write memos that are read and ignored.</i>	<i>Have ideas, but the fact is irrelevant.</i>
<b>COFFEE</b>	<i>Someone pours it for them using a clean cup and saucer.</i>	<i>Have coffee delivered to their offices in flasks and use mugs that they rinse out weekly.</i>	<i>Make their own and use mugs which they wash out annually.</i>
<b>EATING</b>	<i>Eat by themselves.</i>	<i>Eat with others, and get served first.</i>	<i>Are always eating.</i>
<b>PERSONAL COMPUTERS</b>	<i>Have a company purchased one, that someone dusts for them.</i>	<i>Have a company purchased one, that they dust themselves.</i>	<i>Can actually use one, but do not get one.</i>
<b>LETTERS</b>	<i>Dictate intelligent, witty ones to expert secretaries.</i>	<i>Write boring ones in longhand.</i>	<i>Would rather go to the dentist than write one.</i>
<b>BRIEFCASES</b>	<i>Someone carries theirs for them.</i>	<i>Carry their own.</i>	<i>Do not own a brief case and use a plastic bag.</i>
<b>ACCOUNT-ABILITY</b>	<i>Hold others accountable.</i>	<i>Get held accountable.</i>	<i>Foul up, and watch others get held accountable.</i>
<b>GOSSIP</b>	<i>Gossip about other Senior Management</i>	<i>Feel privileged to overhear gossip about senior managers</i>	<i>Couldn't care less</i>

## **TWO GREAT WAYS TO HELP US**

### **Silvey Oils - Every Litre of Heating Oil you buy helps our fund-raising.**

You may well have heard of Silvey Oils who are a Bristol based oil company. They offer heating oil at very competitive prices. We are lucky to have David Hatherall who works for Silveys living in the village, who has negotiated a very special deal to help us raise money for the New Village Hall. For every litre of oil we buy from Silveys, they will donate 0.2p to our cause. This means for an average load of 1200 litres a donation of £2.40, this means you get competitively priced oil whilst helping your village.

When you are ordering please can you confirm that you live in the parish of Iron Acton, to ensure we get our donation.

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### **Berkeley Associates - Independent Financial Advice Simon Cross & Associates - Independent Financial Advice**

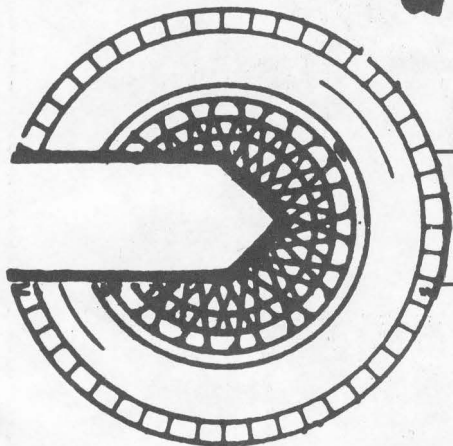
Berkeley Associates are based at 86 Station Road, Yate and are a highly respected firm of Independent Financial Advisors. One of the partners, Mike Sutton, lives in the village and is keen to help raise money for our cause.

Simon Cross & Associates are a highly respected firm of Independent Financial Advisors and are based in Bristol. Simon Cross lives in the village and is also keen to help raise money for this worthy cause.

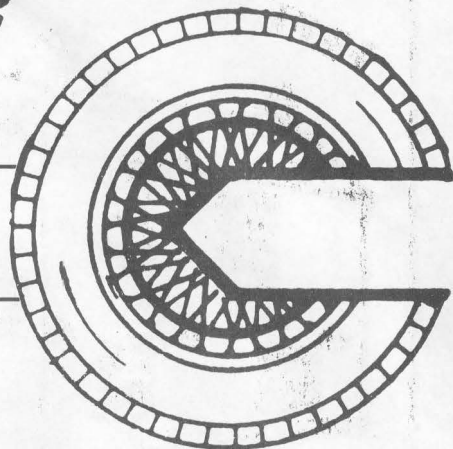
Both are prepared to make a sizeable donation to the hall fund, from the commission they would have made from selling insurance, pension or investment based products to anyone in the Parish of Iron Acton. They have guaranteed that they will only keep an amount to cover their expenses.

**If you would like any further details please do not hesitate to give Mike Sutton a call on 01454-228551 or Simon Cross a call on 0117 9466886.**

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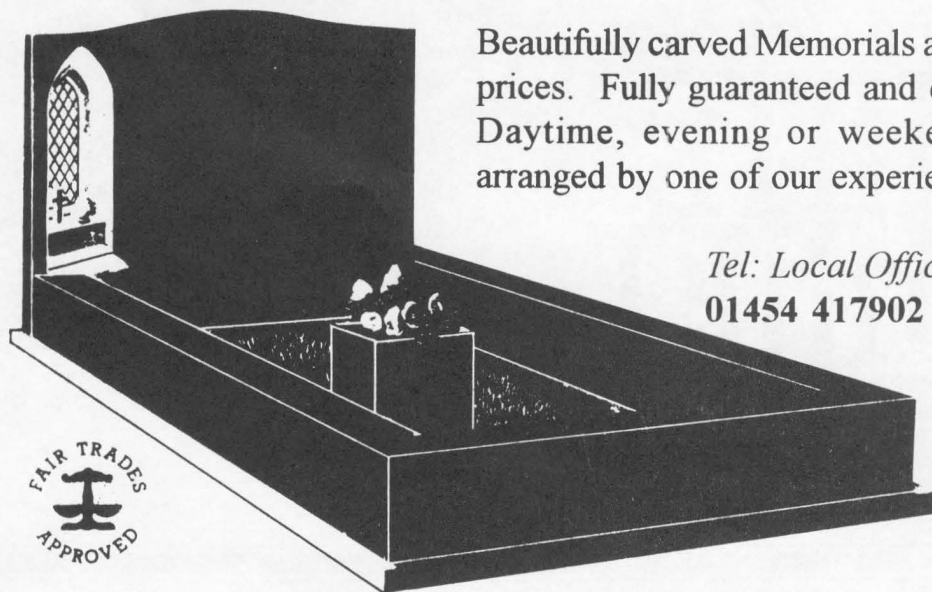
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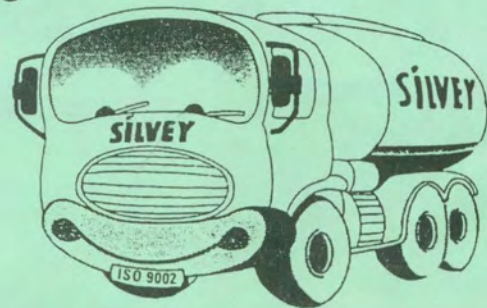




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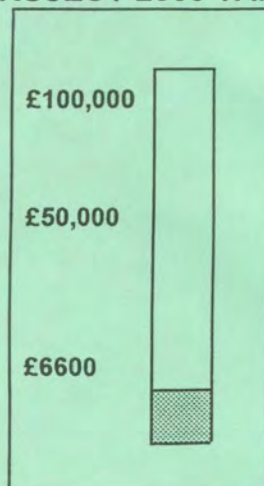


 **0345-125313** 



## STOP PRESS

PROJECT 2000 TARGET



## **SILVEY** SUPPORT PROJECT 2000

(Fund to extend Iron Acton Village Hall)

- For every Litre of Heating Oil purchased from Silvey for delivery into the Parish of Iron Acton we will donate 0.2pence to PROJECT 2000 - that's £2.40 on an average delivery of 1200 Litres!