

57

# Focal Point

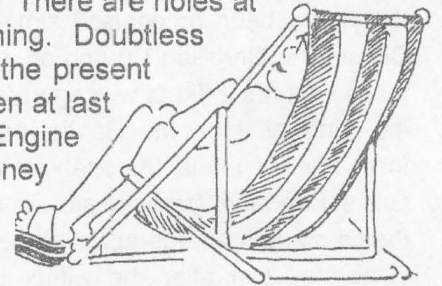


A Magazine for Iron Actors

# SUMMER 1999

Issue No 51

Summer set in with its usual severity but now the sound of the house martin is in the air – and mowers and trimmers and strimmers and the roar of the bypass. There are holes at the Wotton Road junction. So it seems the traffic lights are coming. Doubtless there'll soon be some more big and shiny road signs to add to the present impressive collection around the Parish of Iron Acton – sixty-seven at last count. In Yate there are now giant signs directing lorries to Engine Common. Why? How much is it all costing us? Is spending money on road signs the only thing the Highways Department does really well?



Meanwhile back in the fragile tranquillity of the garden, has anyone sighted a ladybird? At the time of writing, 11<sup>th</sup> July, I have not seen one in the garden this year. I hope someone else has got them. It would be reassuring to hear news of a glut somewhere in the village. Meanwhile the green flies continue to party.

Penny Percy is leaving the Focal Poyntz Team to give more time to other commitments. We'd like to thank her for her help and support of the last year.

John and Barbara Naish donated the proceeds of the teas, following the last Open Garden days at Algars Manor. We're very appreciative of their continuing support of the magazine with both financial and literary contributions.

Last edition, owing to a slip – the piece of paper slipped under a pile of other papers – we omitted to welcome some newcomers to the village. We apologise to them and welcome them anew:



Judith and Ashley Mee & family: Church House.

Simon and Sarah Penn: Bean Cottage.

Jackie, Paul, Lydia and Miles Tucker: Wisteria Cottage.

A happy summer to everyone. Please continue to give us your contributions and comments. Positive or negative, they are always welcomed. We'd particularly like to hear from anyone with an interesting hobby.

Jo Voss  
☎ 228674

Jean Dickes  
☎ 228609

William Climpson  
☎ 228672

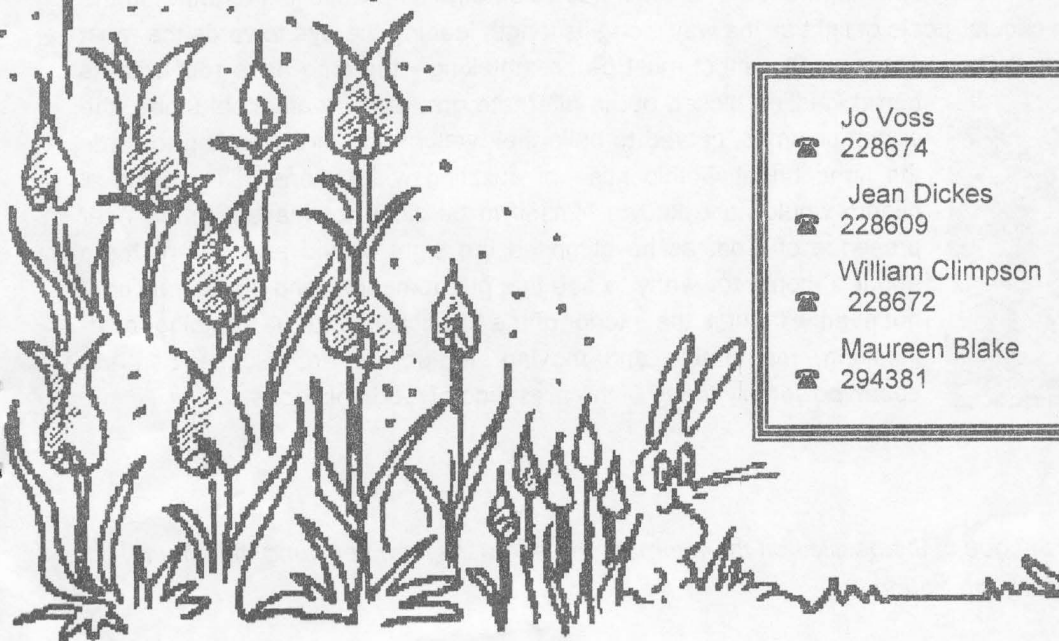
Maureen Blake  
☎ 294381

Lynne Blanchard  
☎ 228566

Rona & Barrie Wright  
☎ 228247

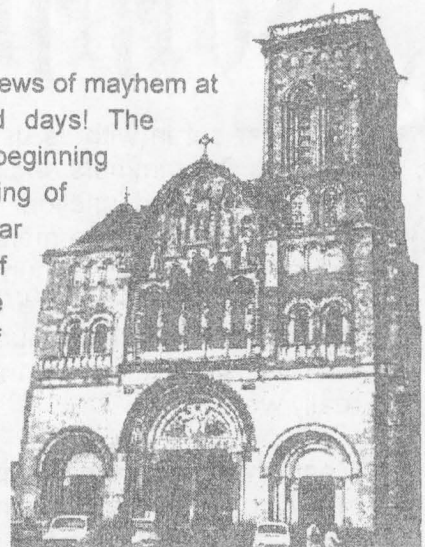
Hazel Dron  
☎ 228509

Gill Thompson  
☎ 228954



## VÉZELAY - LIGHT AND DARKNESS

I am writing this on the day of the summer solstice, when there has been news of mayhem at Stonehenge, solstice-celebrators versus the Police - just like the old days! The significance of this watershed day between the dawning of the light and its beginning to die has been recognised almost universally from long before the coming of Christ. The Christian Church adopted from the pagans this time of the year for its own (as it did other pagan festivals as well) by observing the Feast of the Birth of John the Baptist on 24th June. John the Baptist was the forerunner of Jesus, the one who was to bring to the dark world the light of God's love and forgiveness, so the already existing darkness and light theme made it an appropriate time for his feast day. The birth of Jesus is celebrated just after the winter solstice - again significant in Christian thought of light dawning in the darkness.

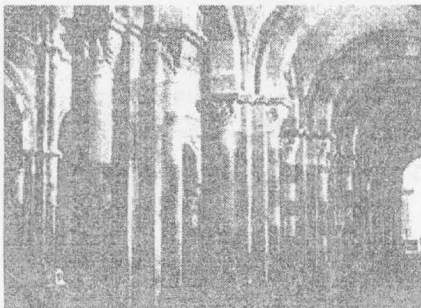


When I listened to the news commentator this morning reminding us that at dawn today the rays of the rising sun fell exactly on the central stone of the circle at Stonehenge, I went straight back in my mind to Vézelay and a lump came into my throat. David and I 'found' Vézelay and the Basilica of Sainte Madeleine only recently, and fell in love with it. It is in Burgundy, sort of in-between Auxerre and Dijon.

You walk to the church up a steep narrow village street, past upmarket tourist shops, with the pilgrim theme very prominent, appropriately enough, for in its heyday, Ste. Madeleine was the assembly point for the pilgrims to Santiago de Compostela travelling from the North and the West. The basilica is perched right on top of the hill, part of a once fortified and once important Benedictine monastery, its fame and fortune guaranteed by its possession of the holy relics of St. Mary Magdalene herself - that is, until a nearby establishment got an even more important relic, and overshadowed Vézelay in popularity as a pilgrim destination.

One of the many glories of the basilica is its Romanesque carvings - over the doorways and at the tops of the pillars - and a real joy they are, too, though they do make your neck ache rather a lot.

But what sent my memories of it rushing back today of all days is the way that the light is used in its design. For just like Stonehenge, the builders of the basilica at Vézelay in the early 12th century were both theologians and astronomers. They calculated and took into account the movement of the earth around the sun, silently commenting on the relationship between the cosmos and its Creator. 'The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament proclaims his handiwork' (Psalm 19). Moreover, they used the stone of the building to enclose and direct the light in such a way that at midday it illuminates a different part of the pillars each day as the year goes round, falling exactly on the carved capitals at the winter solstice. And at the summer solstice, the shafts of sunlight coming from the upper windows on both side walls join together in the centre of the nave to make circular pools of light all the way along its length leading the eye towards the most sacred place, the high altar in the sanctuary. The effect must be breathtaking - the long nave roof with its

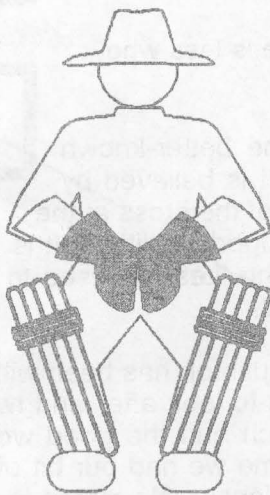


barrel vaulting picked out in alternate grey and cream local stone, the cream columns, carved to belie their weight and girth, leading towards the light, bright Gothic apse of dazzling white stone. The medieval pilgrim would have known himself to be close to heaven, in the near presence of God, as he glimpsed the sight. David and I were there about a month too early to see this phenomenon (and it was raining!), but even without it, the interior of the basilica was for us stunning, awe-inspiring, memorable and moving. If sublime architecture can still speak powerfully today of the presence of God, this does.

Sue Rushton

*NB There are some lovely images of the basilica on the Internet - the addresses are very long, but I found them by searching for 'Vézelay' on Yahoo.*

# IRON ACTON CRICKET CLUB



With the cricket season now half-way through and the memory of England's disappointing performance in the World Cup beginning to recede, it is nice to report that the IACC is having a hugely successful season.

We began the season with a comprehensive defeat of local rivals, Wickwar CC, who turned out most of their first team stars, and have since defeated Tortworth (twice) and won our two Pratt Cup games, to put us in a very strong position in that competition.

Our only defeat has been in a very social game against the Drinking Fellows Union from Cheltenham when, perhaps, our collective mind was on the post-match celebrations!

The under eleven's have continued to improve under Chris Bradley's excellent coaching, and if any youngsters would like to participate, please join us on the primary school field on Thursdays, 6.00 - 7.00 p.m.

We also have the backbone of a promising under-16 team for whom we are arranging fixtures at present. We could do with three or four more players, so if any promising youths would like to join in, please contact Steve Neill on 228385.

Simon Cross - Chairman

## IRON ACTON SCHOOL AND FRIENDS REPORT

Having been 6 years as Headteacher of Iron Acton CEVC Primary School I believe that the present summer term is one of the busiest on record. As I write to you we await the arrival of teachers from our partner school in Sweden. They are visiting the school for the first time after corresponding frequently during the last 6 years. Those of you who attended our concert at Christmas may remember the wonderful paintings/murals we had on display around the school.

Our visitors will be warmly welcomed and they have pledged to show the children some of their traditional handicrafts and tell of their lives in the rural lakelands of Sweden some 150 miles north of Stockholm. In the school's next Focal Poyntz article I will endeavour to let you know how their visit went.

At the beginning of July, the school joined forces with schools from Hawkesbury and Old Sodbury to attend a Tudor Day to be held at Acton Court. As you know, Henry VIII used the court, while travelling within the shire and the children joined parents, teachers and professional actors to re-create this day in the life of Acton Court.

The children were asked to dress according to their allotted station or craft and even disguise their lunch boxes to cover the modern images. During the day, the King gave his blessing to a wedding and there were traditional

period games, maypole dancing, exchange of crafts, exhibition of wares as well as time to picnic.

During the last half term the Cluster School Football and Netball Tournament have taken place; both of which were a success, and for the first time later in the term Iron Acton School will be participating in a new 'Kwik Cricket' tournament to be held and run by Thornbury Cricket Club.

At the beginning of July the school held its annual fete. All the money raised furthers considerably the opportunities the children have throughout their education.

The Friends of Iron Acton School have also organised an end of term disco following the successful family disco held in January.



This time last year saw the staff begin to grapple with the introduction of the government's Literacy Strategy. The school has, with help from the community and friends, made a great success of this initiative to raise standards of achievement still further. We now have the Numeracy Strategy looming which will be occupying teachers' thoughts and efforts. However, the school will continue to maintain the end of term concerts but in a somewhat reduced format.

Richard Larter

## IRON ACTON CHURCH

The church is dedicated to St. James the Less. St. James the who? - and if he is less who is more or greater?

James and his younger brother, John, the sons of Zebedee, are two of the better-known Apostles but James, the son of Alphaeus was also named as an Apostle. It is believed by many that he is named as James the Less (Mark c15, 40) as being at the foot of the cross at the Crucifixion. The word in Latin means 'less' but the Greek version means 'younger', or 'little'. It is also believed that he was the first Bishop of Jerusalem. Be that as it may, the 'Less' is used to distinguish him from Zebedee's son who is sometimes referred to as the 'Great'.

It has been quite an exciting year at St. James the Less. The Reverend Sue Rushton has been with us for just over a year. With a new priest, even though she has two parishes to look after and two PCCs and two lots of Churchwardens, a new energy has come to the church and the good work done in the past can be the basis for further expansion. Even before Sue came we had our bit of fun when the ceiling above the organ, dating from the 14th century, started to collapse. No blame to Sue but not the best of greetings. As you all know, an appeal has been launched for repairs.

The appeal referred to above had a flying start. It is often thought the church is wealthy. It may have property, as Iron Acton does, which is insured for a million or two. That, however, does not produce wealth but reflects the cost of rebuilding a Grade 1 medieval building. We have a substantial churchyard trust but the income can only be used for the upkeep and maintenance of the churchyard. The tombs are supposed to be the responsibility of families, but where are the families who could be responsible for tombs over two hundred years old? Some of the table tombs are also listed. Thus the appeal.

Iron Acton has responded well to this call. The appeal started with a concert, all costs of which were donated and all performers gave their services without cost. A barn dance was recently held at Latteridge, there is a runner in the Bristol half marathon who wishes to run for the church (sponsors please), and a local artist has made a drawing of the church to become a limited print edition. Acton Aid held a special event at the end of July and another concert is planned. Many personal donations have been made and grants have been received from the Parish Council and from the Gloucestershire Historic Churches Preservation Trust. The total is now £18,500. There is still a long way to go but with everyone's continued support we will be able to justify further grants from other sources.

THANK YOU IRON ACTON (and please continue the good work)  
Howard Aplin, Churchwarden

### THE ELIZABETHAN CLUB

We continue to meet every other week at 2.30 pm in the Village Hall.

We are now halfway through our programme of summer outings. The coaches for our trips to Bournemouth on 23 June and to Teignmouth on 21 July were full and we now look forward to going to Poole in August and Weymouth in September.

If anyone is interested in going on the trips to Poole



or Weymouth could they please contact me on 228175.

Unfortunately, it is with great regret that I have to report the deaths of 2 of our

members; Mrs Fifield (who was a founder member) and Mrs Janes (who had been a member for many years).

We celebrated our forty-sixth birthday in July and hope to continue for many more years in the future. Our outings will keep us occupied for the next few months and we'll then have to start planning for our Christmas Dinner and our Party afternoon.

If anyone is interested in becoming a member of the Elizabethan Club they will be welcomed with open arms and if anyone would like further details before "taking the plunge" then I would be more than happy to give any information that was needed.

Ivy Worsley

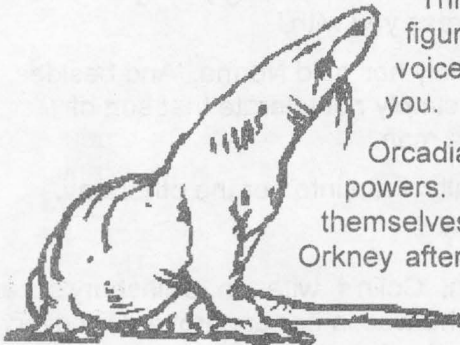
## Song of the Seal \*

Sing to me  
of oceans deep  
and velvet voices  
as they speak  
from sacred streams  
and pools that seep  
with liquid rhythms  
as I sleep.

\*This poem was inspired by my frequent visits to Orkney where seals figure largely in local folklore. Seals appear to be fascinated by the human voice and it is well known that if you sing to a seal, it will certainly follow you.

Orkadians call them *selkies* and many believe that they possess magical powers. After dark they swim ashore and shed their skins, transforming themselves into seductive young women. I have often walked the shore of Orkney after dark and have seen many a fair Orkney lass strolling on the beach. But I have yet to be seduced by one.

**William Climpson**



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The number of regular attendees at the monthly meetings in the lounge bar of the Rose and Crown on the first Thursday of each month continues to grow slowly but nevertheless steadily. New members are always welcome; please feel free to join us and sit in on a meeting without obligation.

Several members assisted with fund raising activities at the May Day Celebrations, with an enthusiastic band, led by Rob Taylor, burning burgers and sacrificing sausages for consumption by equally enthusiastic customers, raising over £500 towards the Project 2000 funds.

The latest event to be organised by Acton Aid took place on 31<sup>st</sup> July in Tim and Jane Spare's garden. It was a fund raising evening

in the form of a 60's Summer Spectacular with live music and seafood buffet, all funds raised in support of the Church Tower Restoration Appeal.

Events planned for later in the year include a "German evening" in late October/early November; further details of this event are still being finalised and will be published later, as will details of other events still under discussion.

**Colin Smith**

### Reflexology

Reflexology is a non-invasive therapy that has been used for 4,000 to 5,000 years.

It is mainly concerned with the stimulation of the reflex points on the feet that mirror the rest of the body.

It is a detailed study of these connections that enable the practitioners to diagnose and treat various problems in the body and so clear blockages that accumulate, relieving stress and pain. It is a releasing therapy that helps the body to function better and so enable us to live life more fully.

Jane Giddings from Just Jane's Beauty Rooms is a qualified practitioner of Reflexology. Ring her on 228393 for more details.

**MFF**

## FUMES OVER TOLATON

It was a muggy Wednesday evening in August and the members of The Clean Health and Environment Group had assembled in the village hall. The weekly seminars were very popular and this evening's subject, *The Smoking Menace - A Threat to Society*, had drawn an audience close to double figures.

Christopher Lawrence Oliver Titmarsh, personnel manager of Grindley Engineering and the only employer of any size near the dormitory village of Tolaton, sat in the front row with his wife, Norma. Then to an impassioned round of applause, leader of the parish council, Cynthia Frickley-Smythe, took the platform.

'We are facing the greatest threat to our health since the Black Death,' she asked them reasonably enough to believe

And with rapt and horrified attention, Christopher Lawrence Oliver and Norma listened and did believe. And had this lugubrious Cassandra added that smoking and the smoker were the most serious menace since Attila the Hun, or the worst environmental disaster since the Flood, then that too would Christopher Lawrence Oliver and Norma have surely believed.

'It is time for action,' said Christopher Lawrence Oliver to Norma afterwards. 'The workers of Grindley's have suffered too long. I will introduce a no smoking policy. At once.'

Old Arthur Grindley was stuffing his briar with St Bruno and reading *The Sporting Life* when his personnel manager arrived for their appointment. He listened attentively to CLOT, (as Christopher Lawrence Oliver was known throughout the firm) but then switched off his hearing aid and returned to the runners in the two-thirty at Kempton Park.

Having made his selections, Arthur looked up and was surprised to see that Christopher Lawrence Oliver was still standing there and apparently talking to himself. The old man replaced his hearing aid and then striking his Swan Vesta with purpose, said: 'bugger off.'

'Not at all like his grandson, that nice Mr Colin' said Christopher Lawrence Oliver to Norma that evening over their vegetable roast.

'No,' said Norma sadly. 'Changed a lot has young Colin since his father died of lung cancer.'

'Passive smoking,' said Christopher Lawrence Oliver. 'Only explanation, since he never touched them himself. You heard what Cynthia said at the meeting.'

'Yes, Chrissy. And it's not just the smoking. Look at the way Old Grindley behaved at the firm's Christmas dinner dance. Vulgar old goat.'

Christopher Lawrence Oliver remembered the incident well. And so did more than a few of the other wives who were there. But with quite different sentiments to Norma's.

'Er, yes,' said Christopher Lawrence Oliver, noticing that his wife could still blush over the matter, 'not the sort of thing young Mr Colin would embarrass you with.'

'Certainly not' said Norma. 'And besides, Alison would simply not tolerate that sort of behaviour in a man.'

'Actually, I ran into her the other day.'

'What?'

'Alison, Colin's wife. In Sainsbury's car park. There she was in her Landrover Discovery, diesel powered, of course, with a neat stack of boxes filled with old newspapers and magazines. She had other boxes too: an assortment of tin cans; wine bottles, carefully segregated for colour, of course, and even a box of the children's cast off clothing.'

'Yes, of course' said Norma, 'I meant to tell you. Alison has one of those special refuse collators you know. Bought it at IKEA. So nothing goes in the wrong bin. Kids love it, she says. Can't teach them too young, eh?'

'Must get one. At once,' said Christopher Lawrence Oliver.

Now Christopher Lawrence Oliver was not a man to be dissuaded with bad language and insults. After all, humiliation is the very life-blood of the evangelist and Christopher Lawrence Oliver was determined that his gospel would be heard.

So, within a fortnight, he was back in the old man's office, this time armed with a sheaf of statistics supplied by those nice people at ASH and which even the most inveterate of smokers could simply not ignore.

'What is it this time?' the old man grunted. 'Replace the steak and kidney pie in the canteen with pasta and salad? Or perhaps you value your life so little that you want to get rid of the jam roly poly?'

Christopher Lawrence Oliver thought that both suggestions had some merit to them and made a mental note to scrutinise the canteen menu.

'No, it's the smoking again, sir,' said Christopher Lawrence Oliver. 'The experts are quite clear about the matter. In fact, I have a few figures here, sir, which...'

Old Arthur Grindley yawned. He had met a few experts in his time and the conclusion which he had inescapably arrived at was that they seemed to know more and more about less and less.

And so, before he allowed himself to suffer another head-aching drone, he picked up a die-cast model of Red Rum from his desk and like the favourite in trap one at Walthamstow, Christopher Lawrence Oliver raced for the door as the effigy of the great steeplechaser hurtled through the air towards him.

It was six months later, at the annual works outing to Chepstow, that Fate struck a decisive blow for Christopher Lawrence Oliver.

As usual, old man Grindley travelled on the coach with the lads from the shop floor. He provided the usual crates of beer and also a pub lunch on the way. By the time the first race was off, most of the men, including old man Grindley himself, were in a happy state of inebriation. Everyone agreed afterwards that they had never seen the old man enjoy himself more.

It was on the way back that it happened. Arthur was on his fifth bottle of Newcastle Brown and had just lit his pipe when he felt the pains in his chest. Ten minutes later, the old man was dead. It was his eighty-ninth birthday.

His grandson, Colin, took over the firm immediately and soon afterwards, Christopher Lawrence Oliver found himself on the board of directors. He had never felt better and strode into his new office suite that morning with more than his usual swagger.

'Have you smelt that extra edge of sweetness to the air this morning, Deborah?' he said to his secretary.

'Can't say I have Mr Titmarsh,' said Deborah, still putting the final touches to her nails.

'But you must have done Deborah,' he insisted. 'It's unmistakable.'

Debs, as old man Grindley had called her, ostentatiously sniffed the air.

'No,' she said. 'Unless it's a new brand of Old Spice what Mrs Titmarsh got you down at Boots.'


'No, not my after-shave, Deborah,' he hissed through clenched teeth. 'I am referring to our new, smoke-free atmosphere.'

'Oh, that.'

'Yes Deborah, that. And please remove that ashtray from your desk. At once!'

It was then that Christopher Lawrence Oliver looked out of the window and saw the picket line at the factory gates. Deborah had seen it too. She took out her packet of Silk Cut and lit up.

Like old man Grindley, she could spot a loser when she saw one.

 William Climpson



## FUND RAISING APPEAL FOR THE CHURCH

The Fund Raising Committee thought you would like to know that the amount raised currently stands at £18,500. **We would like to say a very sincere "Thank You" to all those who have helped us to get this far.**

The largest grant we have received has been £2,500 from the Gloucester Churches Trust, and the only other grants have been one for £1,000 and two for £1,500 – so you can see that most of our money has been raised through the events that have been held and through the covenanting scheme.

We are very grateful to Acton Aid for donating the profits from their Summer Event (held at Tim and Jane Spare's home at the end of July) to the Appeal. There seems to be a lot of fund raising going on in the village at the moment and to have an organisation prepared to help us was wonderful. The Fund Raising Committee would like to publicly acknowledge our gratitude to Acton Aid.

The next event on the calendar is the Bristol Half Marathon in September when Keith Gillard will be running and has agreed to donate his sponsorship money to our Appeal (if you can sponsor Keith please contact Howard (228243), Mike (228544), Chris (228498) or Lynne (228566) and this will be followed by another concert organised by Marilyn Wright. The tentative date is Saturday, 23 October. Marilyn's aiming for a programme that's not quite so classically biased as last time - look out for posters around the village from September.

The other way that serious help can be given is to consider the covenanting scheme. We're concerned that people may think we're only interested in gigantic amounts being covenanted. If any family or person could consider covenanting £5 per month (the only rule is that you have to be a taxpayer) we would be very grateful. Please contact John Park on 318235 for further details without any obligation.

Lynne Blanchard (Secretary to the FRAC)



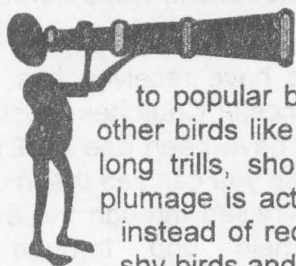
## OWED TO A NIGHT IN JAIL !

Chris Boyce

When people find out I am interested in birds, it usually brings one of two responses, either the "Oh yeah - wink wink!" or "We had a bird in our garden, it was this big and coloured like a rainbow. What is it?" Occasionally they say they think they have a nightingale singing outside their bedroom window in February. When I suggest it was a robin or a song thrush they suddenly become experts and disagree with me. Nightingales for one thing are summer visitors who only ever sing in April, May and June and they live in damp woodland copses and thickets or coppiced woodlands.



If you really want to hear or see them there is only one place to recommend in South Gloucestershire and that's Inglestone Common in May. On reaching the common from Wickwar, turn right up the gravel track opposite the big farm. Park at the top of the lane by the sole house and then walk up the remainder of the gravel track to the sharp left hand bend. From here on up the rest of the track, which is two hundred yards long, you should hear two or three cock birds, the best time being dusk. Alternatively, from the same place you park the car, go through the five bar gate next to the house and walk along the wide grass track for about half a mile. When you come to a crossroad formed by two grass tracks take the second opening on the left through a very muddy grass track into the woods where you can then walk a circuitous route and usually hear four or five cocks singing. Remember to take wellies even in dry weather as the water lingers.



What about the birds themselves? Well, they arrive in April from Southern Africa and start singing to establish a territory and attract a mate. Contrary to popular belief they sing throughout the day, not just the night but because of all the other birds like blackcap, garden warbler and thrush, it can be confusing. Listen out for the long trills, short whistles and a 'choc, choc, choc', a bit like a well tuned canary! The plumage is actually quite plain like that of a longer slender robin with a beige fawn chest instead of red. But don't hold out much hope of seeing them as they are very secretive, shy birds and you have to get in amongst the undergrowth to see them.

Even when you are sat in the undergrowth, the cock birds will sing around you and somehow always manage to keep out of view just behind a leaf or a branch and nearly always farther away than you think! They can be attracted closer by mimicking their call note which is a short soft high pitched whistle followed by clucking your tongue (like the click when you want a horse to move). The nest, very similar to a robin's, is located on or near the ground in dense cover and even when the adults are feeding the young, is very difficult to locate as the young do not call and the adults are silent at the nest but if you hear a harsh 'rrrh' sound, like rolling your tongue against the root of your mouth, you are near a nest, but unless you know what you are doing you should not investigate.

Having said how secretive and shy the birds are and difficult to see, it is to me a rather special bird and the experience of hearing nightingales sing is something I look forward to every year, although for how much longer I don't know because in the last five years the numbers have dropped from twenty singing males to half a dozen.

Take the opportunity next year to visit the common, not just for nightingales but for a pleasant afternoon or evening in a very quiet wood which will not only provide good bird watching but will get you close to nature with glimpses of deer, adder and the like. But remember, take care when creeping through the woods and undergrowth in the half light in case people get the wrong idea - you could end up with a night in jail!!



### YOUR PARISH COUNCIL

<b>Chairman</b>	Bob Sheppard	01454 228515
<b>Vice Chairman</b>	Peter Wedgwood	01454 228532
<b>Councillors</b>	Carolyn Baker	01454 228240
	Peter Bellis	01454 228065
	Sue Gawler	01454 228519
	Chris Heal	01454 228498
	Bob Lomas	01454 228327
	Jackie Ross	-
	David White	01454 228005

<b>Clerk</b>	Rachel Weldrake	01454 321362
<b>Assist. to Clerk</b>	Norman Carter	01454 228563

Your South Gloucestershire Councillor is  
**Jean Capstick**  
and she can be contacted on  
**01454 228236.**

## DIARY OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### In The Village Hall

Every Tuesday	War Hammer Club (War Games)	7.30pm
Every Wednesday	Nursery School	9.00am
	Junior Actonians	6.00pm
	Actonians	7.30pm
Every Thursday	Line Dancing	7.30pm
Wednesdays (fortnightly)	Elizabethan Club	2.30pm
1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday	Village Hall Committee	7.30pm
2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday	Women's Institute	7.30pm
3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday	Parish Council	7.30pm
7 <sup>th</sup> August	Northavon Auctions	
4 <sup>th</sup> September		
2 <sup>nd</sup> October		

### Church Service Times

1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sundays	Sung Eucharist	9.00am
2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Sundays	Holy Communion (said)	9.00am
5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday	When these occur, joint service with St Peter's Church, Frampton Cotterell, alternating between churches	
Every Wednesday	Holy Communion (said)	10.30am

### Elsewhere In The Village

1 <sup>st</sup> Thursday	Acton Aid meets at the Rose & Crown	8.00pm
Every Friday	Parent & Toddlers' Group, Marshall Room	10.30am – midday
Wednesdays	Cricket Club, general practice at Rangeworthy	6.30pm
Thursdays	Cricket Club, under 11's, practice at Primary School field	6.00 – 7.00pm

**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 Jean Dickes at The Keepings, High Street, Iron Acton or any other Editorial Team member. Advice will be given if required. Items ought to be submitted about four weeks before the date of issue.

Advertisers wishing to take space in **FOCAL POYNTZ** should contact Barrie Wright (228247).



# RANGEWORTHY W.I. 38th ANNUAL FLOWER SHOW



SATURDAY 11<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 1999  
RANGEWORTHY MEMORIAL HALL

**ENTRIES OPEN TO ALL**

Entries from 9.00-10.30am

Classes: Adults - 10p per entry Children - 5p per entry

Prizes 1<sup>st</sup> - 50p, 2<sup>nd</sup> - 30p, 3<sup>rd</sup> - 20p

**OPEN TO PUBLIC 2.30 pm**

PRIZE GIVING & RAFFLE - 3.45pm AUCTION - 4.00pm

1<sup>st</sup> prize - Meal at Rangeworthy Court Hotel



**SPONSORED BY**  
Rangeworthy Court Hotel                      GMH Transport  
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Schedules from:- Sue Gawler (01454 228519)  
Rose & Crown, Rangeworthy                      North Road P.O.

## IRON ACTON WI

We've had rather a schizophrenic bunch of speakers since the last edition of FP! Anyone trying to analyse the WI would rapidly come to the conclusion that we're totally illogical (something our partners and families know only too well).

In April we trooped to the Village Hall clutching our prized antiques only to be told, in most cases, by Philip Taubenheim that it wasn't quite time to give up work and live on the proceeds; and in May we struggled through resolutions on a variety of topics for the annual national WI meeting.

Then in July we made the acquaintance of Canon Mike Peters, who is the Chaplain at Horfield Prison (as well as being the Chaplain Manager for a whole series of prisons in the South West of England). As a Christian, I get an enormous feeling of foreboding prior to a talk by another Christian - you dread the thought that they're going to be a member of the holier than thou, hanging and flogging brigade - these people do exist and they make me pretty annoyed as I hope I'm not perceived (or am) like that and they do far more harm than good (to put it mildly!). Mike Peters was definitely

NOT in this category. We all came away mightily impressed, not only with his compassion, but with his utter grip on reality. He refuses to read newspapers because reports are usually biased and when he gets to meet people he doesn't want to have formed any preconceived ideas, he's well aware that not everyone wants to change their ways but for those prisoners who do have consciences and find life very difficult to deal with he came across as being the ideal chaplain. The final thing that appealed was how discreet he was. It's a very accomplished art being able to give examples of situations so we all had a clear picture but were none the wiser about specific cases.

In July we had a guided tour of the University of Bristol's Botanic Gardens in Leigh Woods. Odd-bods (husbands and partners) could come too. It was a glorious summer's evening with a very knowledgeable guide who also managed to make things fun. You don't have to look very far to find the idiot who clutches a bunch of Deadly Nightshade because she thought they were very pretty - and, contrary to Barrie Wright's urgings, no I



didn't suck my fingers! As per usual, from what I gather, the majority of the party ended up in a variety of hostelrys spread over quite a wide area. It was a lovely way to round off the WI's year up to our summer break in August.



Back to the fray in September with some very brave person trying to enthuse and train us to do some "Needlecraft for Christmas" – otherwise entitled a thousand and one things to do with a fir cone! October's topic is much more to my liking. We've got a talk and tasting by the Tetbury House of Cheese. It's an open meeting – this means you can come too! It takes place on

Monday, 11 October at 7.45 pm in the Village Hall. If you haven't got anything more urgent in the diary than to attack your in-growing toenails why don't you come along? The more the merrier – further details from our intrepid President (Judy Park) on 318235 or long suffering Secretary (Anna Tillotson) on 228216). Further liquid nourishment will follow in November with our Birthday Party and then we've got the Annual Meeting in December when all the officers try to resign, but we don't let them!

Lynne Blanchard

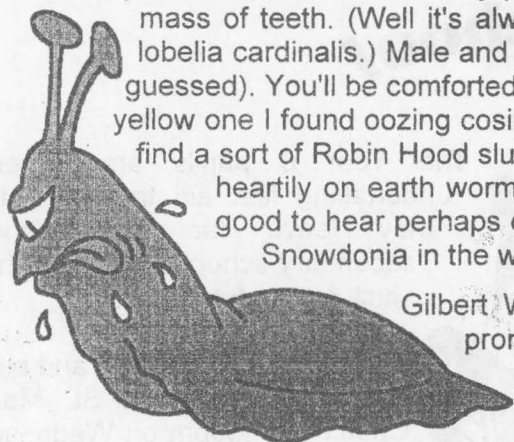


## YOU CAN'T HUG A SLUG

Snails you can respect. You might not love them but you can admire the colours, the variety of sizes, the intricate design of the shell. You can also pay a lot for a plate of snails in a restaurant although they'd be a pretty unappetising little morsel without the garlic and butter. But what can you say about a slug, apart from "Eeeeyiarrg..yuk! They're getting bigger all the time!"

So when somebody suggested (evidently scraping the bottom of the compost container for ideas for this edition) that we do something on slugs, with flying fingers I ran through the reference books, determined to find something nice to say. But my Oxford Book of Quotations has only three references, all of them unkind. There are thirty references to Nightingales.

Everyman's Encyclopedia describes them as semi naked gastropods, most of them possessing a small internal shelly plate or a few calcareous granules under the skin of the back (bet you didn't know that). You may also like to hear that they possess a mouth composed of external fleshy lips and a ribbon like mass of teeth. (Well it's always good to know why, next time you dig up the skeleton of your lobelia cardinalis.) Male and female sexual organs exist in the same individual (hmm, might have guessed). You'll be comforted to know there is also a household slug, which accounts for the giant yellow one I found oozing cosily along a beam in the spare room. Still with me? I did manage to find a sort of Robin Hood slug *Testacella*, that eats the pests off crops, but ruins it all by lurching heartily on earth worms too. And there the benefits of slugs seem to end, so it would be good to hear perhaps of someone whose life was saved by a slug on the upper reaches of Snowdonia in the winter of 1947.



Gilbert White an 18th Century naturalist, entertaining but perhaps a little prone to tall stories, quotes one Farmer Young: "In the spring of 1777 about four acres of wheat in one field was entirely destroyed by slugs which swarmed on the blades of corn and devoured it as fast as it sprang." As gardeners, we don't face economic ruin through

slugs, but it's still frustrating to lose flowers or vegetables. So what's the way out? Pellets poison the problem, but they also poison other creatures, hedgehogs, birds, fish and domestic pets. The half grapefruit and half pint of ale usually results in a couple of hiccuping slugs but others have been munching heartily all night without so much as getting their fleshy lips wet in the booze. Then there are the condiment queens of course, those wraithlike figures you see at midnight drifting mad eyed through moonlit gardens in white gowns-in other words "Er Next Door" in a nightie with the Saxa Salt. But however many you leave sizzling amongst the *sisyrrhincium*, there are thousands more waiting in the walls.

Something spotted in the paper not long ago may perhaps give hope to our readers. It seems that there is an increasing market for slugs as gourmet food. Slug eggs it seems are particularly prized. So, if only the taste catches on in a big way, slugs may become a rarity, hunted to the point of extinction, like caviar or truffles. It would also be a great opportunity for Iron Acton if we act immediately and corner the futures market in slugs. Mmm can't you picture it - gastronomic tourists coming thousands of miles to candle lit bistros in the High Street to sample Slug Bonne Femme. Slug Wellington. Coronation Slug ...

## THE FRIENDS OF NORTH ROAD SCHOOL

The Friends Of North Road School have had another successful year in raising funds which greatly benefit all the children at the school. In April we held a 'sleepover' where the Juniors stayed overnight at the school and games and a barbecue were organised for them. The children had a wonderful time and the Friends who stayed managed on very little sleep! The event was enjoyed by all and raised £189.

Another event, which we are hoping to stage each year, is a duck race. This year it was run (or swum) on May Day. The children were encouraged to 'sell' ducks to friends and family. The 300 plastic ducks were then released downstream in a local river and the first ones past the finishing line attracted a cash prize.

Our fund-raising year culminated in a Grand Prize Draw for which we had prizes such as a holiday for six, a Jack Russell print and a mountain bike amongst others. We held a disco at Rangeworthy Village Hall to make the draw and raised a massive £1,064.

As you know, this is the time of year when we say goodbye to old Friends and in September welcome new ones. We thank those who have put in lots of time and effort over the years and hope that we will continue to receive support from both parents and the local community, without which we would be unable to raise so much for the school.

**Julie Cooper**  
*Secretary to the Friends*



## North Road School

We are already looking forward to our Summer holidays after this busy term.

The Year 5 pupils joined Rangeworthy and Cromhall for a two-day activity camp just outside Abergavenny and had a most enjoyable time. The Year 6 pupils, again with the other two schools, are off for field trip in the Isle of Wight. We stay in Youth Hostel at Tolland Bay on the west side and find it a good centre from which to explore the island.

The first year of the literacy hour is coming to an end. We have recently enjoyed World Book day, a joke wall, travel displays and a production of Alice in Wonderland. It all culminated in our Concert/Governors A.G.M. held on 15 July..... then it's stand by for the National Numeracy Strategy! The F.O.S. have raised over £1,000 to help with numeracy resources.



The Year 6 pupils are currently undertaking first aid training before they leave for their various secondary schools. We wish them luck for the future.

The reception children and brass group performed at St. Mary's Church at 1.30pm on Wednesday 7th July, as part of Yate Festival Week. Our Summer Fair was held on Friday, 9th July and the School Sports on Thursday, 22nd July.

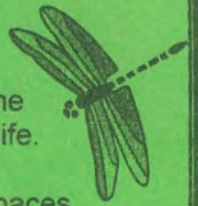
We are pleased to announce the birth of Mrs. Trickey's new son, Daniel, but were very sad to hear of the death of Mr. Frank Davis. He has been a Governor, loyal friend and supporter of the North Road School for about 9 years and will be greatly missed by us all.

**Glenys Anderson.**



## BIODIVERSITY - What Does It Mean?

Biodiversity is a term we use to define our concern regarding the conservation of the habitat essential to wildlife, both animal and plant life.



In South Gloucestershire we are keen to preserve our hedgerows, woodlands, open spaces such as commons, and natural and ornamental fishponds.

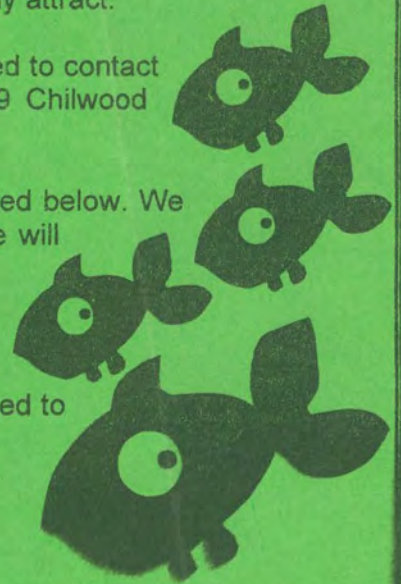
In Iron Acton parish, we are particularly interested in locating any ponds in our area and we would appreciate any information regarding their position and any wildlife they may attract.

If you feel you can help in any way in this worthwhile survey, you are invited to contact Dave White at Frome House in the High Street or Norman Carter at 9 Chilwood Close.

Please give your name, address and location of pond in the space provided below. We do assure you that there will be no intrusion on your privacy and no one will enter your private property without your prior permission and co-operation.

We have available forms from South Gloucestershire Council where you can enter any information regarding what wildlife your pond attracts. Also, there are limited funds available which in some circumstances could be used to assist pond maintenance.

Dave White  
Iron Acton Parish Council



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Location of Pond \_\_\_\_\_

Please return your completed form to Dave White at Frome House, High Street, Iron Acton or to Norman Carter at 9 Chilwood Close, Iron Acton.

## Mini Sagas

The Sunday Telegraph runs a competition for would be writers every year. The idea is to write a story with a beginning, middle and end in just 50 words. The title should not be more than 16 words and will be included in the 50 words.

Perhaps Focal Poyntz readers would like to have a go! Here's one for starters:

### "Myxomatosis"

Peter always ate up his greens, but cruelly forced his wife to have twenty-one babies. She was actually his long-suffering sister, Mopsy.

All the family was destined eventually to become Sunday lunch, chez Macgregor, so morality was never very high on the agenda.

Postscript - don't tell Beatrix!