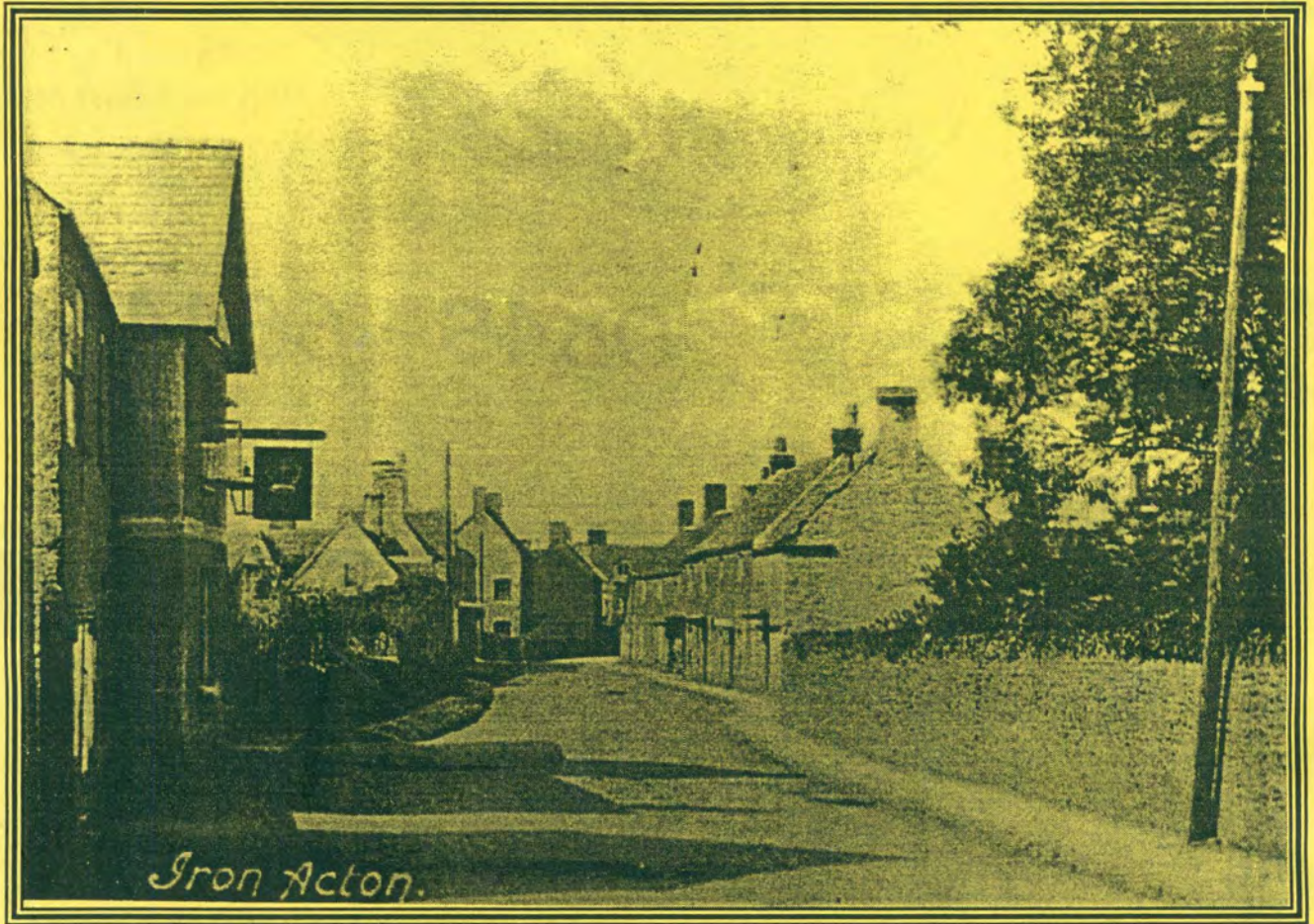


Focal Point

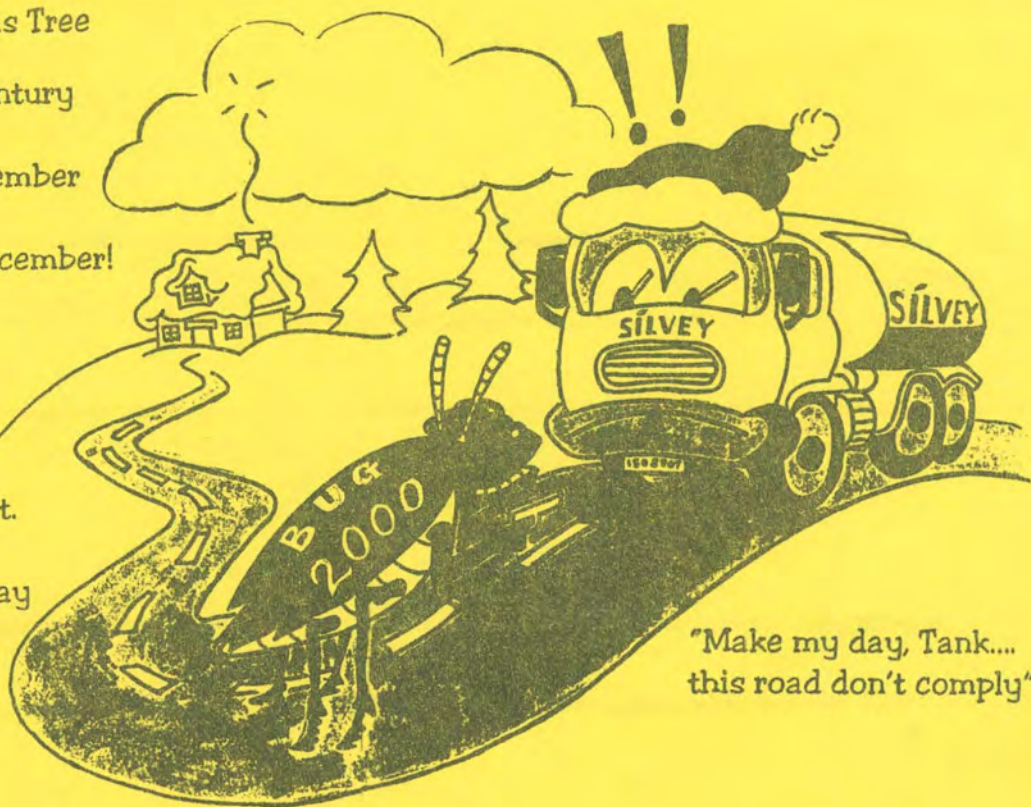


Iron Acton.

A Magazine for Iron Acton

What with the Christmas Tree
 And the pending 21st Century
 There's so much to remember
 During the month of December!

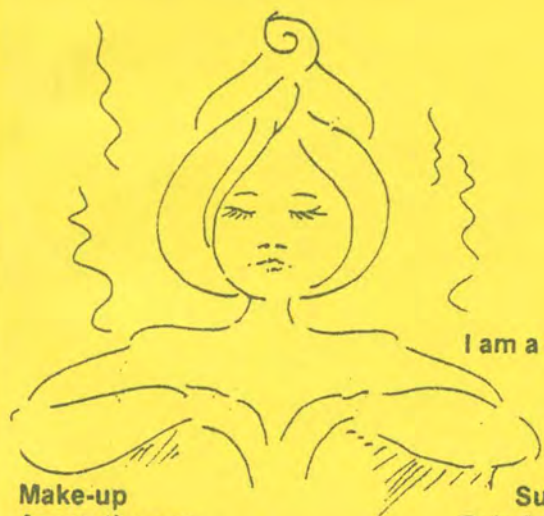
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 Relaxed friendly advice & details

WINTER

ISSUE No. 52



So, here we are, Issue 52 of Focal Poyntz. We hope you still enjoy reading the magazine and we would like to take this opportunity to repeat our wish to try and entice more of you to write articles for it. The publication date for the Spring edition is given at the foot of the diary page and items should be submitted to Jo Voss.

Prior to publication, each village organisation is contacted and invited to submit an article. If your organisation is newly formed and has slipped through the net please contact Jean Dickes who will happily include you on the circulation list for each subsequent mailing.

We wish everyone a very happy Christmas and a spectacular Millennium!

Your Focal Poyntz Team is:

Jo Voss
228674

Jean Dickes
228609

Rona & Barrie Wright
228247

Lional Alsop
228400

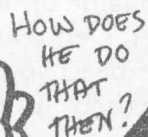
Hazel Dron
228509

William Climpson
228672

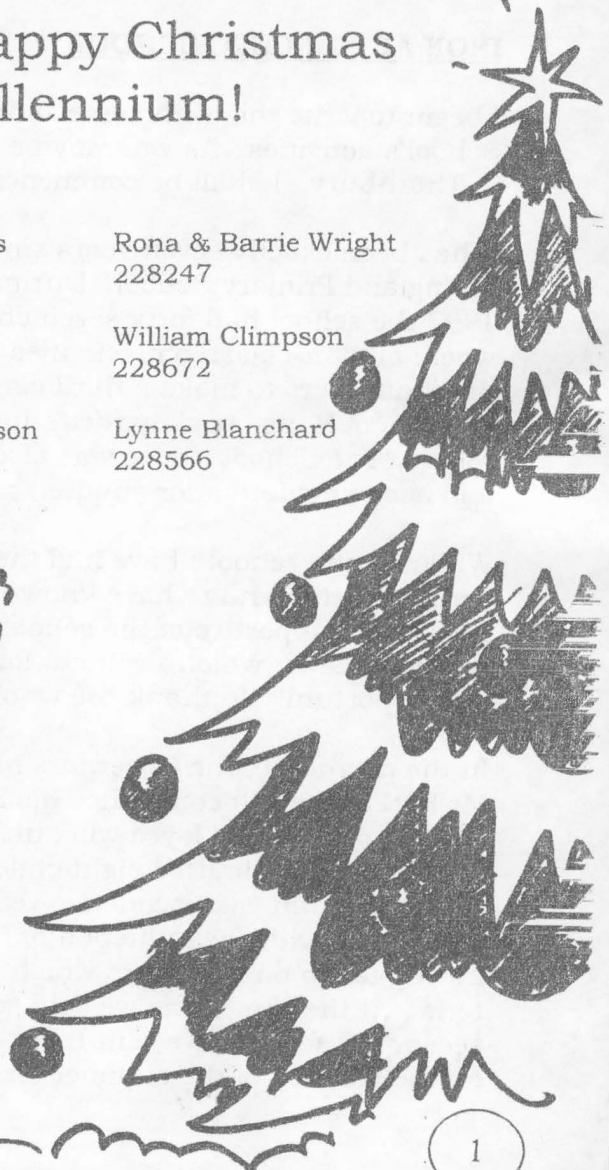
Maureen Blake
294381

Gill Thompson
228959

Lynne Blanchard
228566



How does he do that then?



ACTON AID

The last fund raising event organised by Acton Aid was the Sixties Summer Spectacular with live music and a seafood buffet, in Tim and Jane Spare's garden. £1,100 was raised in support of the Church Tower Restoration Appeal.

In mid-November an informal wine-tasting for members and their guests has been planned, with a promising assortment of wines available.

Regrettably the German Evening planned for later in the year has been reprogrammed owing to the temporary closure of the Village Hall. Details of the rescheduled event are still being finalised and will be published later.

In the near future our members will be distributing a "Seasonal Gift from Acton Aid" to all pensioners in the Parish.

New members are always welcome at the monthly meetings in the lounge bar of the Rose and Crown on the first Thursday of each month, please feel free to join us and sit in on a meeting without obligation.

Colin Smith



...SERIOUS FUND RAISING TALK...

IRON ACTON CEVC SCHOOL

I begin to write this with some sadness as it will be my last report to Focal Poyntz of the School's activities. As you may be aware, I have been appointed to St Mary's Primary School in Thornbury. I shall be commencing my duties there as Head Teacher in January.

It has been exactly seven years since I took up my post of Head Teacher at Iron Acton Church of England Primary School. During that time there have been many changes. In January 1993 the school had forty seven children in two classes. It had two classrooms and a hall where all non-classroom activities took place. By September 1995 the school had grown in pupil numbers to make a third class possible and this was sited in a prefabricated building in the School House back garden. In 1996 the school was inspected and given a complimentary report. The School House was also completely renovated to improve extensively the facilities and accommodation for children and staff.

Whilst at the school I have had the greatest of privileges to work with an excellent and dedicated staff and to have known and worked alongside children and parents who have been extremely supportive of the school and their children's education. It will be a time in my teaching career which I will not forget as there have been so many happy times. May I take this opportunity to thank the whole community for their support and kindness.

In the meantime, the Governors have appointed a new Head Teacher for Iron Acton School. Mr Karl Joyce will commence his head teachership in January. Some time between now and the end of term Mr Joyce will attend the school to meet children, staff and parents. This September we admitted eight children, although the school now has the capacity to admit twelve children each academic year. Mrs Jones, our specialist Teacher Assistant, has helped Mrs Howat with the induction of these new children as well as working in the other classes, having taken on the hours which became available following Mrs Blackmore's retirement last term. At the same time we said goodbye to six children who made the jump from primary to secondary school. We sent them on their way with our best wishes at the leavers' service held on the last day of the summer term.

This term the staff, having successfully introduced the Literacy Strategy throughout the school last year, have had to contend with the introduction of the Numeracy Strategy. Education is continually changing at an ever increasing rate!

We have held our Harvest Festival Service at which Rector Sue Rushton gave the address and the children presented readings, paintings and drawings of Jesus feeding the five thousand. Following the service the school auctioned all the produce that had been donated. £215 was raised, which continues to support the sponsorship of our child (or rather, young man now) on the Indian sub-continent through the Save the Children charity. The excess will be donated to the continuing Jack and Jill appeal for children's facilities at Frenchay Hospital.

During this term the children from Elm and Ash classes will visit Weston super Mare and the older children in Oak class will visit the Victorian Museum in Bath. Both trips will support their work at school. The school has again been invited to the annual Schools' Carol Service to be held at Clifton Cathedral.

This year sees the new Millennium and to mark the event the school will be undertaking a production based on Jesus Christ 2000. This is a production to combine many of the curricular activities the school already undertakes. We hope to perform this during the last week of term.

Dates

4 th December	Clifton Cathedral Schools' Carol Service
13 th December	Jesus Christ 2000 matinee performance
14 th December	Jesus Christ 2000 evening performance
16 th December	School Christmas Party
17 th December	Carol Service in Church and End of Term

Richard Larter



NORTH ROAD LADIES CLUB

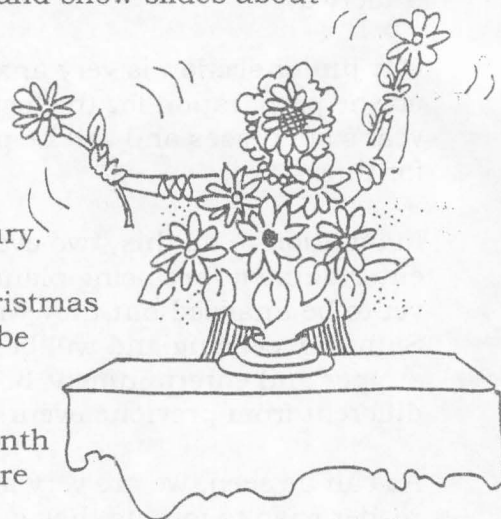
In September we were delighted to welcome Mr Everitt to talk and show slides about Spring bulbs. Afterwards, Mr Everitt answered many of our gardening queries. Our October meeting took us back to the days when we watched the Pathe News at the cinema. Mr Haynes showed us films of the Royal Family through the years. One really nice film was of the wedding of Princess Alexandra. On the first of November we celebrated our thirty-second birthday with a party at The Squire in Chipping Sodbury.

December brings us to our Annual General Meeting and a Christmas floral arrangement demonstration by Jean Ellaway. This will be followed by an American Supper.

Our meetings are usually held on the first Monday of each month in North Road Primary School, and new members or visitors are most welcome.

June Rycroft

(telephone 228668 for further details)



FRIENDS OF NORTH ROAD SCHOOL

As Christmas time approaches, the Friends of North Road School are looking forward to Santa's visit to the school on the afternoon of Friday, 3rd December. Last year he travelled by horse and cart and was accompanied by his beautiful assistant. He then took position in his grotto and met all the children in turn. There are always lots of things to do, buy and see at the Christmas Fayre, so do come along.

If you really fancy an adult's night out, please join us for our annual Valentine Disco which will be held at Iron Acton Village Hall on Saturday, 12th February 2000. Tickets are priced at £3.50 and you should bring your own drinks and food. We usually have a great time and make everyone welcome, so you needn't worry about not knowing anyone there. If you would like tickets or want to know more about the evening, either contact me (Julie Cooper) on 321225 or Jane Moss on 311127.

Julie Cooper



THE ACTONIANS

The Actonians continue to be active while the Hall is being rebuilt despite having to cancel the pantomime which we had hoped to present in late November.

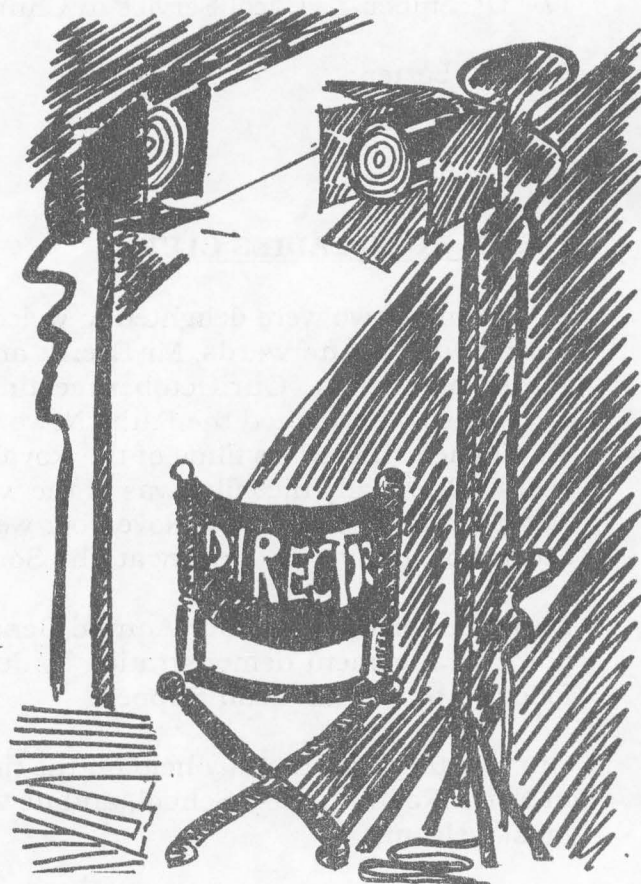
In place of the pantomime we are planning to present a three act drama entitled "An Inspector Calls" by J B Priestley on 4th, 5th and 6th February 2000. We have entered a one act play written by our own Jim Semkinson, entitled "The Trackman Cometh" in three festivals in Spring next year. Both the three act and one act plays have already been cast and preliminary rehearsals are underway.

Our junior section is very anxious to get cracking on the preparation for the festival season after last year's successes and will be presenting two plays for this.

In addition to all this, two evenings of entertainment are being planned. The dates have yet to be finalised but they will be on a Friday and a Saturday evening and will be a combination of supper and entertainment but, this time, a little different from previous events.

As can be seen, we are very active and should any reader wish to join us they can do so by contacting our Secretary, Ann Aplin, on 228243 or our Chairman, Steve Birch, on 772718.

Barrie Wright



BEWARE THE IDES OF THE MILLENNIUM

Never mind about computers crashing all around on 1st January – what about the things we haven't been told about? Here are just a few (idiosyncratic) suggestions about other things which could happen:

Toilet Rolls: If you have invested heavily in stocking up on a well-known brand of toilet paper, be prepared for a shock at midnight on 31st December. The rolls will turn into a carriage drawn by cuddly yellow Labrador puppies who will career down the stairs, tangled up in the few leaves of roll left over. At the touch of a finger, the leaves of all other brands of toilet paper will roll up into a tiny ball – all very inconvenient.

The Sun: Having been eclipsed very recently, the sun is to make its displeasure felt. I suggest you get up at dawn on 1st January and watch the sun rise in the west (look towards Wales). It will naturally set in the east at the end of the day.

Bath Water: We know that millions of scientists argue about why bath water goes down the plughole clockwise or anticlockwise depending on whether you are north or south of the equator. Bath water has had enough of these arguments and has decided for itself. Pull the plug after 31st December and nothing will happen: the bath water will simply not drain away. End of argument.

Footwear/Trainers: Overnight, all your footwear will automatically be too big or too small. Worse still, if you are wearing trainers at the witching hour, you will have to hop like a blackbird.

Robins: At dawn on 1st January, look for the robin you have been feeding, but prepare for a shock – he now has a blue breast. If you are feeling old enough to remember, one used to be able to buy a Red Indian figurine sporting an apron. If the apron was pink the weather was going to be wet: if it was blue the weather would be dry. The second Millennium about to end was, on the whole, particularly wet, hence the robin's red breast. On balance, the new millennium will be dry – need I go further? This will present a problem for Christmas card producers – but they have a year to sort it out.

Mobile 'Phones: No matter which mobile 'phone you try to use, or what combination of numbers you dial, you will get one of the following voice-overs: (a) Hello, it's me, I'm on the train. (b) Hello, it's me I'm in a traffic jam. (c) Hello, it's me, I'm at the check out.

Courgettes: All courgettes, being examples of genetically modified food, will revert to ridge cucumbers. Supermarkets will have already taken the precaution of putting their courgettes in very large compartments; this may look silly as you shop on 31st December, but just you wait.



Geoff Dickes

URBAN XANADU - with apologies to Samuel Taylor Coleridge

In t'Isle of Dogs did Tony Blair
A mini supermarket decree
Where Alf the cockney shyster ran
His scams so pleasingly that man
Had swallowed one in three.
There, thrice ten roods of priceless ground
With posts and fence were girdled round,
And old folk's gardens full of gnomes and mills,
Where plastic shreds were hung on every tree
Were bulldozed down with strong and silken skills
Which left behind no leaf nor greenery.

When mid this tumult Blair did hear
The pleading voices of the Kosovar
Then Prescott must fulfil their pledge
That he, with musak loud and long,
Should build that mini-mart in air -
Those cheesy shelves, those mounds of ice!
And all who heard would see them there
And all should cry: Beware! Beware!
Of caring eye and rumped hair.
Weave a circle round them thrice
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For they on ads-men's food had fed
And drunk the junk of Alf's advice.

John Naish



IRON ACTON FOOTBALL CLUB UNDER ELEVENS

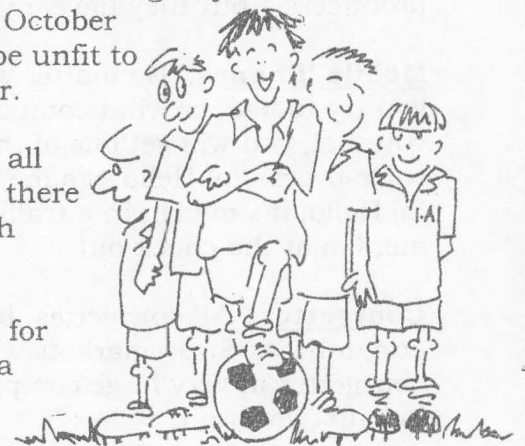
We have now joined the Hanham Minor League and have found it pretty hard so far. We are playing our home matches at Yate Outdoor Sports Complex at Brimsham Green School.

We have been playing since the beginning of September and have not been doing too well. Our situation wasn't helped when we were short of players because they were on late holidays but now that we have a full squad I hope we can turn to winning ways. We were hoping to beat our neighbours, Frampton Rangers "C", on 3rd October but the match was called off because the pitch was judged to be unfit to play on. This game is now scheduled for Sunday, 31st October.

Although we haven't had too good a start the lads are learning all the time. They've never had to play the offside rule before and there are some other changes that they have had to get used to, such as playing on a full sized pitch.

I am sure we can improve as the season progresses. That's all for now, you will hear some more from us in the New Year. Have a happy new millenium!

K D East



RICHARD LARTER

Richard Larter came to Iron Acton in January 1993 after serving as Deputy Head in a busy inner city school. The village school presented Richard with an interesting challenge in his first headship particularly as it coincided with a period of considerable change in primary education and its management.

One of the first tasks which faced him was the problem of accommodating a growing school population. At about the same time the Church Commissioners agreed to sell the old head teacher's house to the then County of Avon and Richard, together with the school's governing body, instigated an ambitious project designed to provide the school with facilities for extending the educational experience of all students and, at the same time, solving the problem of the increasing school population. The result was a spacious teaching and learning area developed in the old house and the third classroom located in the garden. In this and other projects such as the development of the school's information technology, a close working relationship with the Friends of the School proved invaluable.

In October 1996 the staff and Richard (with leg in plaster) were confronted with the dreaded Ofsted inspection. Though harrowing, the school survived and received an overall good report and encouragement for staff and students. Hot on the heels of this came the Literacy Hour and the Numeracy Hour. In sport Richard developed the gym and the football clubs, encouraging matches with other small schools in the area and gymnastic displays at the summer fete.

This brief resume can only hint at the hard work of the last seven years, culminating in the award of a Lloyds commendation for outstanding leadership in education which was presented to Richard at the summer concert.

Thank you Richard. Iron Acton will miss you and we wish you happiness and success in your new appointment.

Hazel Dron

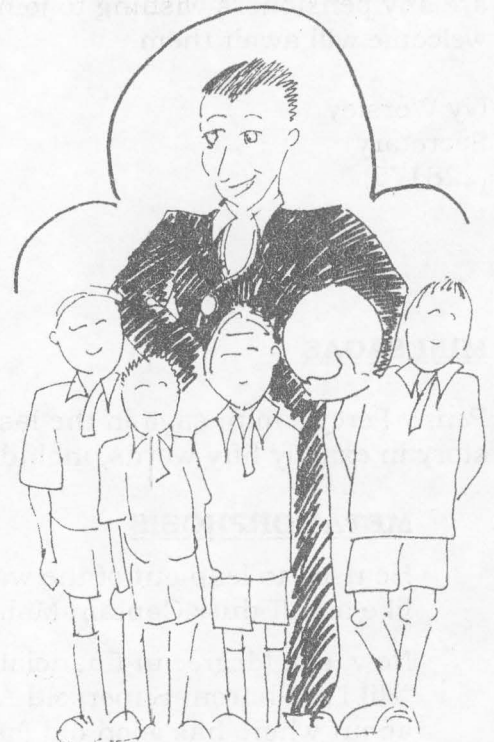
IRON ACTON PRIMARY SCHOOL - THE NEW HEAD

The new Head Teacher is Mr Karl Joyce who is at present the Deputy Head at Bussage Church of England Aided School near Stroud. Mr Joyce was educated in Wales and took his BA degree at the College of St Paul and St Mary in Cheltenham, followed by a post graduate Certificate in Education at Bristol Polytechnic. Prior to a career in teaching he had experience of commerce as a distribution supervisor of newspapers in North London.

Mr Joyce is a married man with a young family and is keen on fostering community links with the school and developing individual monitoring and assessment for each child in computer literacy. He is also keen on maintaining links with local church activities.

I am sure we all look forward to greeting the new Head Teacher, who comes to us with a great deal of experience. Parents will be invited to meet him during the Autumn Term.

David McCoy - Chairman of the Governors



THE ELIZABETHAN CLUB

We continue with our fortnightly meetings but unfortunately our membership has declined over the last few months due to members' ill health.

Although we have completed our series of Summer outings we still have a visit to Leyhill to see their production of "My Fair Lady" and our Christmas Dinner at the Rose and Crown at Rangeworthy on 16th December.

All of the Elizabethan Club members wish all readers of Focal Poyntz a very happy Christmas and if there are any pensioners wishing to join us a very warm welcome will await them.

Ivy Worsley
Secretary
(228175)



MINI SAGAS

Penny Percy's mini saga in the last edition has prompted some more. The idea is to write a story in exactly fifty words, including the title:

* **METAMORPHOSIS**

He used to leap out of the wardrobe – dapper, besuited, bespectacled – just like an off-duty Captain Mainwaring (which he was)!

Now, she (degree in financial counselling from Kingswood University) 'phones. "Hi! I'm Sharon, Supergold Account Advisor. Don't understand your comment about where has good old fashioned banking gone."

Geoff Dickes

* **GREENPEACE**

"Eat your greens, or you'll go straight to bed," her father said. "Ugh!" she thought, but she ate them, wanting to go out to play.

"Eat your greens, otherwise it's straight to bed and no TV," the matron said. Now, she loved her greens, but didn't eat them.

Peace.

Geoff Dickes

* **BIOGRAPHY**

Gently born, a feminist before her time, she rebelled against her tyrant father, took on the might of the Army and, wielding her lamp, earned the respect of the common man. Resisting the medical establishment's sway, she reformed the system, was honoured, then took to her bed and died.

Hazel Dron

- we invite more mini sagas from readers.

THE WRIGHT RESOLUTIONS!

"Write a piece for Focal Poyntz," they said. How many times have I heard that and replied with my normal feeble excuse: "Who, me? You must be joking. I can't write!" But the pressure grew and grew, so here I am to prove my point. Okay, so I succumbed.

"Just a few lines will suffice," they assured me.

"What about?"

"Anything you like," came back the answer.

Here I am with the world as my oyster but where do I start? At the beginning was always a good place I was taught, but at my age, where is the beginning? When I was born? When I started school, got married or even moved to the village? I am not at all sure, but to satisfy my tormentors and do my bit I must write something. So here goes. Please be very patient with a "Learner about to Operate".

I suppose the most important thing about to happen and the one everyone is talking about on the radio, television and newspapers at the end of the twentieth century is the beginning of the twenty-first. What have I achieved? Big question - my goodness, self analysis what a dreadful thought! But this is what many people will be doing as the clock strikes midnight and we move into the next century. When the party poppers, champagne, red wine and good food have all been enjoyed and we have sung Auld Lang Syne very gustily and had a thoroughly enjoyable evening, a little voice inside your head will probably be saying:

"Hey, this is the year Two Thousand, the beginning of a new century, not just another New Year. So what resolutions are you going to make to change your life?"

At this point the pounding in your head becomes more of a reality and you realise that champagne and red wine really don't mix. As the pounding increases and your resistance gets lower, you realise that a problem of this magnitude would be far better resolved after a couple of Alka Seltzers and a good sleep. And that's when the first resolution becomes very clear. I shall say firmly to myself as I climb the stairs to bed:

"I will never mix red wine and champagne together again."

Well at least I'll know I can rest easily with my first resolution made. Have you thought about yours? Not long to go now, you know!

Rona Wright



PETE AND IRIS REDMAN

It was with sadness and a whole host of fond memories that we said farewell to Pete and Iris Redman at the end of October. For many issues Pete provided the illustrations for Focal Poyntz - he was the first person who was a dedicated artist for the magazine. Pete and Iris have now moved to Northampton to be closer to their daughter. We wish them well in their new home and hope they are as happy as they were in Iron Acton. Their new neighbours are very lucky!

TREE NEWS

Trees of Time and Place

Nationally this project appears to be going very well and gaining momentum all the time with thousands of trees being germinated and planted out each year. Locally we also seem to have trees being germinated following last year's report in Focal Poyntz. I currently have ten trees ready for planting out and I understand that there are considerably more around the village. I do confess that I had no success at germination last year and the trees I have have been passed to me by others or self setters from my garden. The Parish Council has been approached regarding planting sites and I have been asked to prepare a report with requirements and possible solutions.

Seed gathering Sunday was on 10th October but by the time you read this it probably isn't too late to find a few seeds from your favourite tree and try your hand at germination. For further information on Trees of Time and Place telephone 01345 078139.

Tree Council

The annual Esso National Tree Week this year is 24th November to 5th December. For more information on this event there is a telephone hotline on 0171 828 9928.

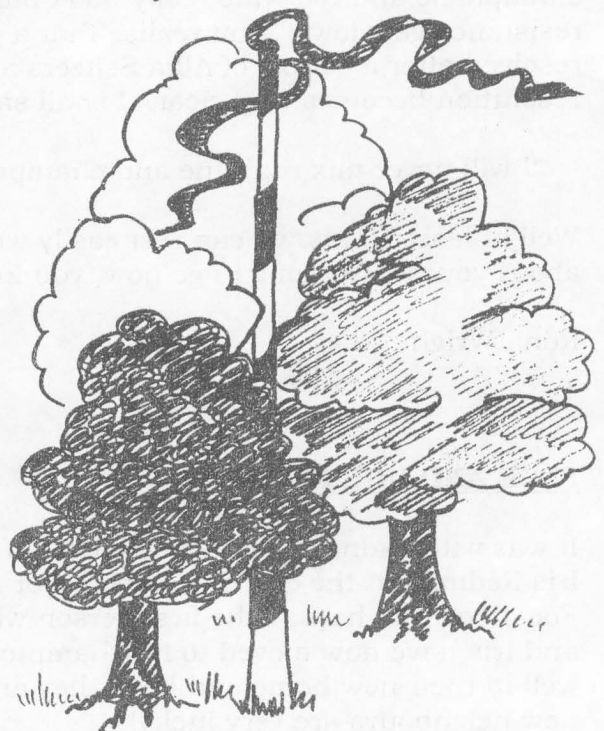
Westonbirt Arboretum

As I write this, Westonbirt is looking at its very best. The only problem is that everyone seems to want to go when I do! I understand that the staff think the display is the best for years, probably due to the excellent weather (for trees). The acers really are a wonderful sight with so many brilliant colours. Even our modest collection of six trees at home looks wonderful. By the time you read this, the season will be over but there are still the Enchanted Wood evenings to look forward to. This is an illuminated trail of approximately one mile when some of the oldest and best trees in the country are skillfully illuminated. More information on this and other events can be obtained by telephoning 01666 880220. If you do visit Westonbirt do not miss seeing the new Great Oak Hall which is in the process of being built. This, on its own, is worth the visit.

Oaks for the Millennium at Iron Acton

A suggestion has been put to the Parish Council that we could plant a small stand of oak trees somewhere in the village to mark the millennium, the idea being that each organisation, and any individual who so wished, could donate a tree. So far there has been a positive reaction from people who have been approached and the Parish Council has the matter on its agenda.

Barrie Wright



IRON ACTON WI

The good thing about the last Focal Poyntz being a little later than usual is that I don't have to remember to include so much this time! In September we nervously turned up to see the incredible things we could do with Needlecraft for Christmas. Our speaker was one of those very clever people who can do cross stitch, patchwork, Christmas decorations and cards, advent calendars, and clothes with such apparent ease (and probably before breakfast) that she couldn't get on the same wavelength as anyone who admitted difficulty in things needlecrafty (ie most of Iron Acton WI). She really was talented and it was awesome to see the sort of things that could be achieved - but I know I shall never attain such giddy heights and it obviously sent Carole Neale into a spin 'cos we didn't see her at all the following month!!

In October we were back to things of a more culinary nature when Tetbury House of Cheese visited with a huge selection of cheeses for us to try - as many English as French cheeses which pleased us greatly. Plates containing everything from properly aged Camembert to smoked Single (as opposed to Double) Gloucester were passed around for us to sample. The English cheeses were far superior - but what can you expect! If anyone saw a strange, shadowy figure rushing up and down the High Street accosting ladies who were disappearing in all directions I have to confess it was me! At one stage I just managed to stop 3 of Yate WI disappearing into the Old Rectory and then had to rush up to the Police Station after 2 ladies in a Metro who had just driven straight past. Having been unable to find us, they were going back to Old Sodbury where they'd promised themselves a glass of sherry in front of the fire. I soon stopped that, much to their disquiet, and dragged them off through the gloomy churchyard to the Marshall Room - they seemed a little perturbed at this moment and I never did find out whether it was the thought of the gravestones or me that caused their problem. No comments please!

Iron Acton WI celebrates its eightieth birthday in November. Originally we intended hiring the Village Hall and having a special sit down meal with outside caterers and inviting a representative from our group institutes to join us. However, with the changes at the Village Hall we now plan to have a 3 course buffet meal in the Marshall Room with each of us providing an item and, thanks to the kindness of Rona Wright in letting us use her aga type thingy, hot food can easily be provided. The big question is whether Barrie's going to act as the waitress - does anyone have a maid's outfit he can borrow? We're also going to have a talk on Christmases through the Ages. This is one evening I'm definitely looking forward to.

Yet again we entered the County Skittles Competition, and yet again we came second in our first match - bit of a bummer really 'cos we thought we were 14 pins down going into the final round and gave up a little bit - it was only when the scores were properly totted up we realised we'd miscalculated and were only 4 pins down going into the last round. Whoops!

The Christmas theme continues when a whole barrage of our members attend the County Carol Service in Keynsham in early December. We also usually join in with Coalpit Heath WI's Carol Service at St Saviours' - another evening that's become part of our Christmas tradition.

The year closes in December with our AGM - which is always followed by wine or sherry, mince pies, sausage rolls and all things seasonal. Usually by the second week in December we're all resembling hamsters on a wheel so this evening is a calm little oasis in a manic sea of Christmas preparation.

Our new year starts in January, on the second Monday of the month (which is the 10th) at 7.30 pm. By this time we shall hopefully be back in the Village Hall. If anyone is thinking of joining our WI please take the thought one stage further and turn up or, if you'd like to know more details before committing yourself, please ring and I'll be more than happy to help.

Lynne Blanchard (228566)



SAMSON AND DELILAH

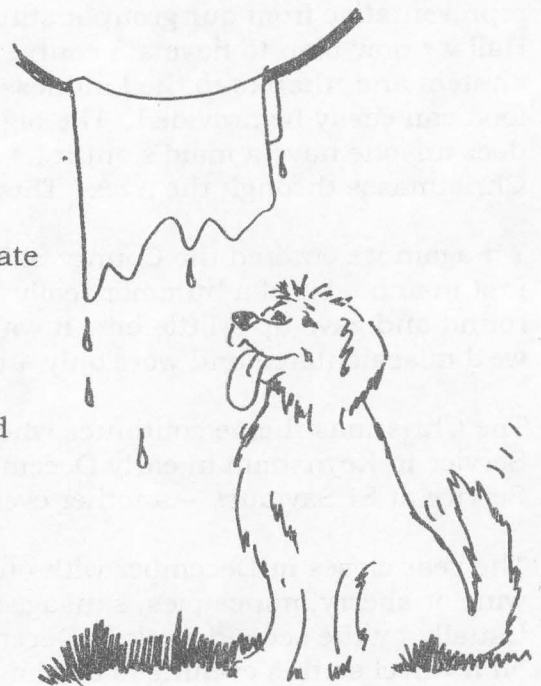
My tortoise-shell cat Pinky has a hands on, pragmatic approach to life. When she considers that lazybones has spent enough time in bed, she jumps on my face. She is better than an alarm clock but her zeal seems a trifle misplaced at 5.30 am. However, there is good thinking behind her eccentric behaviour. The resident dog, a happy, gregarious golden retriever called Samson has a bladder problem. He needs to be outside before 6.00 am if an accident is to be avoided.

Prising me out of bed is just the first step in solving the waterworks dilemma. I have to confess to being legless first thing in the morning. This problem unfortunately is not connected with strong liquor but has its origin in boring things like advancing years and infirmity. This is where my "pusher" comes in handy. It is a smart, up to the minute walking frame with wheels and a brake. This enables me to get going but the pace is painfully slow. To encourage me the cats, Pinky and Perky, stride purposefully around. "Come on, old lady, you can do it" seems to be the general message.

Samson waits by the front door. He is grinning from ear to ear and his tail is wagging furiously. I am fearful that all this excitement will cause a leak but the mission is successfully completed without mishap. Unfortunately the morning race to the front door (the continence stakes) is now a thing of the past. Samson has passed on to a better place, we hope, where enuresis is not a problem. Getting up in the morning is quite a tame affair now!

It is always sad when a pet dies but for me it brings back memories of happier days when we were a typical family with two point four children (the point four being the dog). However, it is impossible to think of Samson without smiling. He had such a sunny uncomplicated personality. He was a real antidote to the strains and stresses of modern living. He was the only pet I have ever known to have developed a serious relationship with a blanket. I had seen an advertisement promoting fleecy bedding for pets. "Your dog will love it." We were told. "It is machine washable and quite indestructible." All this turned out to be true. Samson greeted his blanket with a passionate intensity. He dragged it round the house with him and cuddled it when he went to sleep. When visitors arrived he would proudly present them with a scruffy, soggy thing. "What's this?" was the inevitable question, to which the family would reply "It's Delilah!" Samson had convinced us all that his blanket had animate qualities.

If Samson had left Delilah on the lawn outside and it came on to rain, he would bark until she was fetched inside. On washdays he was quite distraught. He would sit by the line, washing Delilah drip away, a picture of abject misery. When we handed Delilah back to him he was quite ecstatic. He couldn't wait to drag her into the mud again and restore her to the scruffy state he so admired. Sadly, Delilah outlived Samson. She has now been passed on to a family of young dogs. Will they love her as much as Samson did? I doubt if they ever could!



Penny Percy

FAREWELLS AND ARRIVALS IN LATTERIDGE ROAD

The Focal Poyntz Committee think it's probably got something to do with living in close proximity to Lynne B, but recently there's been a rush of departures, as well as arrivals, in Latteridge Road. Sue Johnson has recently arrived in Fairview Cottages, Sally Moxham and John in Lawn Cottage and David and Lynne Smith in Chy and Cres. We hope they will all be very happy in their new homes.

FRIENDS OF IRON ACTON SCHOOL

The Friends held another successful Summer Fayre last July. The total receipts came to just under £1,000. Again, a fantastic effort – many thanks to all who supported the event.

This term, following our first meeting, the Committee is looking into providing larger style free-standing activity equipment in the school grounds to cater for the older children. We have examined Tortworth Primary School's adventure play area and were very impressed. The Committee has further investigations to make before a final decision to go ahead can be made.

The fund raising events this term include a sponsored swim in association with the Rotary Club of Yate, and another musical quiz evening to be held on Friday, 12 November.

The Friends will again hold a raffle at the Jesus Christ 2000 production during the last week of term, where there will be a champagne first prize for the new millennium.

I do hope that you will be able to continue to support the Friends of the School when Mr Joyce takes over in January and, again, a very sincere thank you to all supporting Committee Members, past and present, during the last seven years.

Richard Larter

ST PETER'S HOSPICE FLAG WEEK APPEAL

As a result of the house collections for St Peter's Hospice Flag Week Appeal in July a total sum of £256.50 was donated by the people within the Parish of Iron Acton.

A sincere thank you is due to all those who kindly did the knocking on doors plus, of course, a thank you to those who donated. I know both the staff and patients at St Peter's appreciate the results of all the organisation and hard work which goes into such collections. We are fortunate in this area to have the newly opened Hospice bringing the total to two units providing both residential and day care for the people of Bristol and surrounding districts. The Hospice movement is run by professionals using resources donated by the public and so it is especially important that we keep this in mind whenever that person with the blue box knocks on our door.

At the moment we have a team of 8 people who collect within our Parish, however with more volunteers we would be able to cover more of the Parish thus enabling us to increase the overall donations each year. If you have a spare couple of evenings, just once a year in July, I would be delighted to hear from you (on 228498) – I know that both patients and staff at St Peter's Hospice would also greatly appreciate your support.

Many thanks – I trust I can call upon your support next year.

Di Heal



RAZZLE!

This is the name of the Rural Arts Touring Scheme and is supported by the Arts Council of England, Investment South West Arts and South Gloucestershire Council. Through the support of these organisations, a variety of dramatic and musical events are sponsored and held in village halls throughout the area.

On Saturday, 27 November "Jazz a Bells" are appearing at Rangeworthy Village Hall. This quartet of ladies play a comprehensive jazz repertoire from early blues, ragtime and dixie land through to the roaring twenties, Big Band ... and even funk! They have performed at venues as diverse as the Edinburgh International Jazz Festival, Ronnie Scotts and the Sydney Opera House.

Tickets are priced at £4.00 for adults and £2.00 for concessions, with a family ticket costing £10.00. Tickets can be booked by telephoning 01454 228519.

Razzle also plans to hold a larger event on Saturday, 15 July 2000 at Oldown Country Park when The Memphis Bell Swing Orchestra (which featured in the blockbuster movie Memphis Bell) will be the main act. The publicity promises "an evening of superb 40's music, nostalgia and atmosphere, whatever your age." Why not put this date in your diary now?

CAROL QUIZ

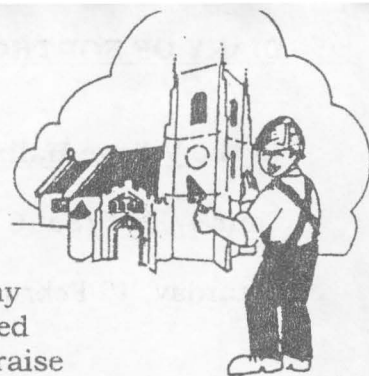
A little bit of fun for you look at the following descriptions of the origins of some well known carols and their creators and see if you can work out which carol is involved?

- 1 Written by Nahum Tate (1652-1715), a Dublin-born Irishman who became the sixth Poet Laureate of England, he wrote and adapted the work of others for the London stage but was attacked for his pains by Alexander Pope. This particular carol, published in 1770, was one of the first to be officially allowed in church services. He was also appointed historiographer-royal but his character and career declined together and he died as Southwark in a refuge for debtors. This single hymn could have made his fortune, but it didn't.
- 2 Written by an American, John Henry Hopkins (1820-91), his father was by turns an industrialist, a lawyer and a bishop. His son shows in this carol the ear of a musician, the tongue of a journalist and the eye of a stained glass designer. There has never been a carol, old or new, that gives such direct speech, such dramatic opportunities or such a rich exploration of the meaning of the gifts presented to the baby Jesus.
- 3 In Chaucer's Canterbury Tales the Nun's Priest relates his powerful farmyard melodrama of the cock, the hen and the fox. Of Chanticleer, the vain cockerel, he says "His voice was merrier than the merry organ". The same phrase reappears in this carol collected in our own century in Chipping Camden by Cecil Sharp. Somerset or Gloucestershire are its likely homes and it was certainly being sung in Chaucer's day.
- 4 The writer of this hymn, American, Phillip Brooks (1835-93) was pronounced "a conspicuous failure" as a young teacher. He eventually became one of the outstanding pastors and preachers of his day. Six foot and single, he often quoted hymns in his sermons and as a boy he had committed over 200 to memory. This was written for his Sunday school, inspired by an unforgettable visit to the Holy Land.

ANSWERS

- | | |
|---|---|
| 4 | O Little Town of Bethlehem |
| 3 | The Holly and the Ivy |
| 2 | We Three Kings |
| 1 | While Shepherds Watched their Flocks by Night |

IRON ACTON PARISH CHURCH FUND RAISING APPEAL



The following is a brief - you'll be pleased to hear, I'm well aware that my reports tend to ramble on a bit - update to let you know what's happened since we launched our appeal on 30 January 1999 when we set out to raise a sum in the region of £50,000 to cover the cost of repairing the tower ceiling and redecorating the inside of the Church.

Our most recent meeting was held on 14 October and our Treasurer was able to report that the fund held £19,726.54 (this includes fund raising, donations, gift aid, covenants, deposited covenants and the tax that can be recovered from any of the previously mentioned items). In addition, our Chairman reported that we have been granted some money from the Landfill Tax. This will either be the sum of £10,000 or £10,000 less 10% - the way the money is distributed has been altered and it wasn't clear from the documentation which of these options was the correct one. If anyone would like to accost Chris Heal or John Park they should, by the time this magazine is printed, know which way this particular coin has landed.

So, what do we have planned for the future? Another concert, similar to the one that launched our appeal in January, will be held on 30 October. Three further grant applications are in the pipeline with Chris and Howard having the "honour" of trying to plough their way through copious amounts of application forms and instructions on how to fill them in. A tentative date for 2000 is Saturday, 8 July when it is hoped that another Barn Dance will be held at Latteridge Green Farm and several other events are in the very embryonic planning stage and further details should be available in the Spring edition of Focal Poyntz.

We very quickly realised when we were faced with the problems with the tower that a large proportion of the total we needed would have to be raised through fund-raising. As this first year of the appeal draws to a close we would like to say a very sincere "thank you" to all those who have helped us in any way. We couldn't have achieved such a wonderful total without the help of many, many people. We are very grateful.

Lynne Blanchard
Secretary to the Fund Raising Appeal

WANTED!! YOUR UNWANTED, USED CHRISTMAS CARDS AND STAMPS

Here's a destination for all your used Christmas cards and it's local so you don't have very far to go and you'll be helping a very good cause. Iron Acton School needs your used Christmas cards. This will be the third year that the school has collected these. The collected cards are converted into cash and the money raised is used to purchase trees for the Avon Forest. In the first year they raised enough money for 2 trees. With help from the Village they should be able to buy even more trees.

At the time of writing, we're not too sure what the procedure will be. Last year, after the children returned to school after the Christmas holidays, a container was placed by the school entrance and all cards were deposited here. Ring Lynne B. after Christmas if you want to know what's going to happen this year.

..... and Oxfam will take any used stamps. They have shops in both Yate and Thornbury. All you need to do is cut the stamps off the envelope, leaving a little of the envelope around each one. Oxfam then makes money from selling the stamps abroad as "foreign stamps".

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