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Focal Point



A magazine for Iron Acton



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Christianist

Issue No 195

We would like to wish all our readers a very happy Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year.

Focal Poyntz starts the year with two of our very valuable and long standing members, Jo Voss and Jean Dickes, retiring from the team. We would like to take this opportunity to send our sincere thanks to them for their hard work and dedication to this magazine and wish them a very happy retirement.

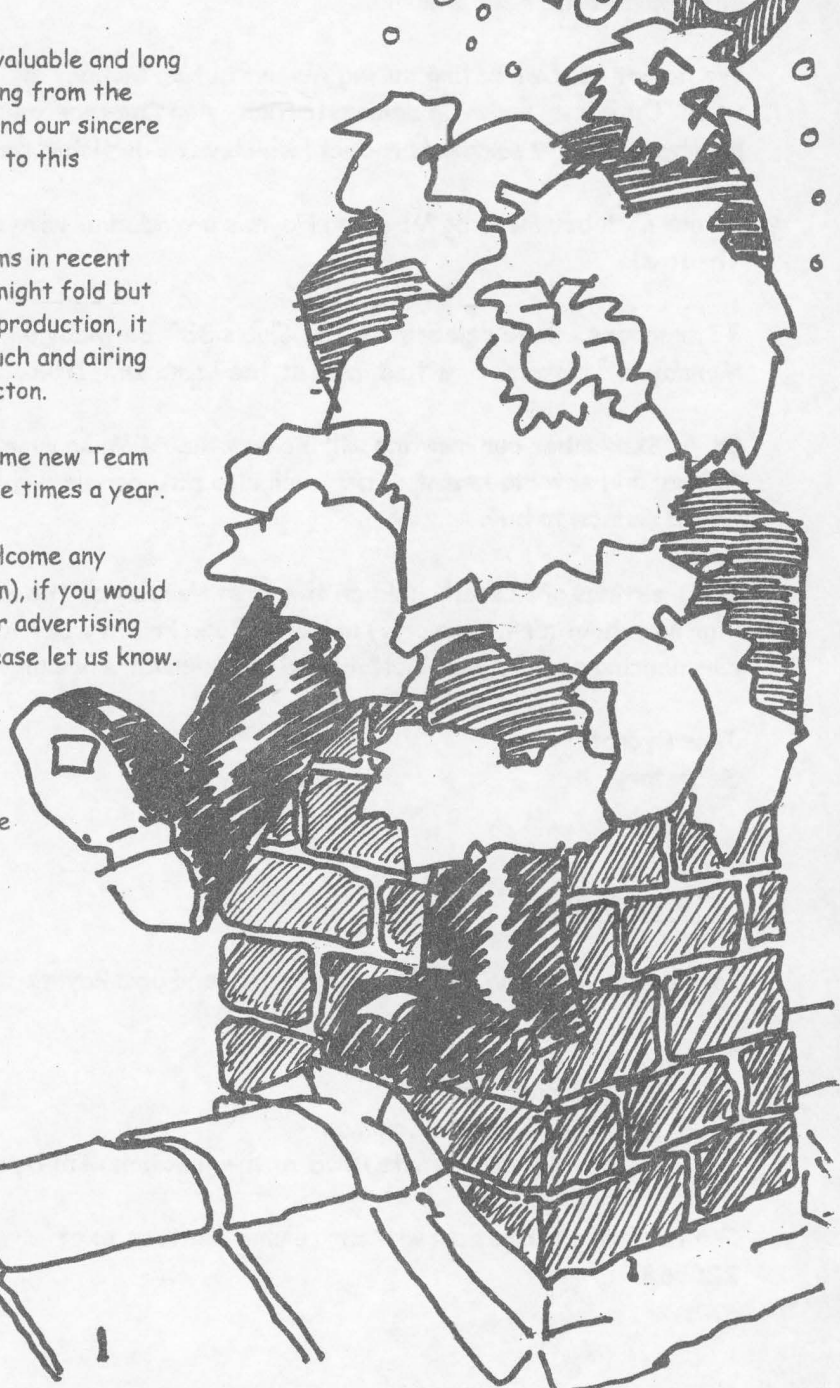
Focal Poyntz has suffered some production problems in recent months and, initially, it was thought the magazine might fold but the feeling was, that after 18 years of successful production, it would be very sad to lose this way of keeping in touch and airing subjects of interest to the Parishioners of Iron Acton.

Happily we can report, that with the addition of some new Team members, Focal Poyntz will continue to appear three times a year.

We are ALWAYS looking for articles and would welcome any contributions (to any member of the Editorial Team), if you would like to advertise (please contact Barrie Wright, our advertising wizard) or, if you have any interesting snippets, please let us know.

This is your magazine and your ideas and contributions are vital.

| | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Lionel Alsop 228400 | Lynne Blanchard 228566 | Maureen Blake 294381 |
| Sue Cowley 228323 | Hazel Dron 228509 | Roy Hubbard 228356 |
| Eileen Hughes 228439 | Barrie Wright 228247 | Rona Wright 228247 |



NORTH ROAD LADIES CLUB

At our May meeting Mrs Jean Preece told us of the visits made by herself and a friend to orphanages in Russia. After listening to Jean, our members felt they would like the Club's Charity for this year to be aimed at collecting specific items most needed by the children in readiness for sending to an orphanage in Russia.

After refreshments we were delighted to present Mrs Eunice Parkin with a floral arrangement and a card signed by members for her 90th Birthday. Eunice is a founder member of the North Road Ladies Club and has supported the club throughout the 32 years it has been running.

For our June meeting, members gathered on a fine, warm evening to set off, on foot, for a Treasure Hunt. Lyn Angell had organised the clues and kept appearing on her bicycle to "chivy" us along. The Treasure Hunt finished at Jameson's Sports Bar which provided liquid refreshments and food. Penny Wheeler was declared the winner.

On Monday, 3rd July we travelled by coach to Sydney Wharf, Bath to board a narrow boat for an evening cruise along the Kennet and Avon Canal. After heavy showers during the afternoon the rain cleared and we enjoyed a warm, clear evening.

We do not hold a meeting during August but on Monday, 4th September we were pleased to welcome 4 visitors to an "Oriflame" make-up demonstration. Ann Cameron volunteered to be the model for the evening and members eagerly sampled products which were available for purchase.

At our October meeting Mr Brian Haynes provided us with a nostalgic evening watching a "Night at the News Theatre".

32 members will be celebrating the Club's 33rd Birthday on Monday, 6th November with a meal at the Lamb Inn, Iron Acton.

On 4th December our meeting will include the AGM, an American Supper and entertainment. There will also be a candle display with a chance to buy.

Our meetings are usually held on the first Monday of the month (during school term time only) in North Road Primary School, commencing at 7.30 pm. Visitors and new members are most welcome.

June Rycroft
Secretary



HELP REQUIRED

Is there anyone who could help us to deliver Focal Poyntz to any of the following areas:

- * Lodge Road
 - * Broad Lane
 - * Engine Common
 - * Yate Road to the junction with Dyers Lane

For further information, without commitment, or to offer your services, please contact Lynne Blanchard on 228566.

ROYAL BRITISH LEGION POPPY APPEAL

Once again, due to your generosity, the Iron Acton District has increased its donation this year. We have collected a total of £1,143.26. This is a 4% increase on the 1999 total. My grateful thanks to you and all those who allowed me to leave static trays on business premises, pubs, offices, shops, canteens, etc.

I am well aware that a lot of hard work is carried out by the House to House collectors who go out on cold, wet, miserable days and sometimes on dark evenings. I have a special thank you to them for their help and I feel they deserve a special mention: L Blanchard, D McCoy, M Wheeler, C King, A Honeybourne and A Tillotson. They have all helped me for many years and Lynne, Dave, Mike and Cherry, together with Tony Townsend and Dave Taylor, also help to count the money afterwards.

Dave Taylor

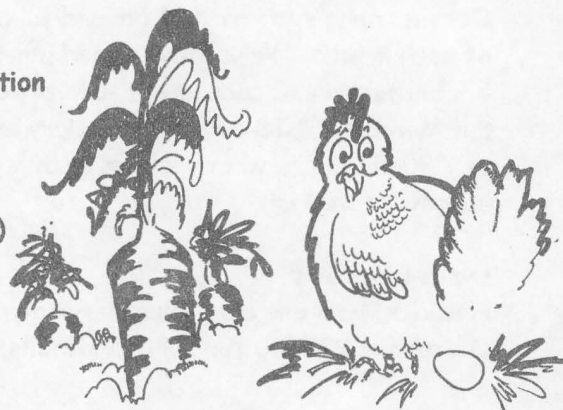
GHOSTS AND GHOULIES; IT HAS ALL HAPPENED BEFORE

Preparing a talk on Dr Edward Jenner of Berkeley I was reminded of the extraordinary fuss 200 years ago which greeted his pioneering efforts in Smallpox-control by vaccination with Cowpox. The very word *vaccination* comes from the Latin for cow - *vacca*, and Jenner also introduced into our language the word *virus* to describe the agent which he was able to transfer from person to person. Overnight, the modest country doctor was transformed into an international celebrity comparable to Beckham or Madonna, pursued by cranks, publicists and scroungers, inundated with begging letters, praise, worship and bitter insults. The cartoonists went to town, depicting people being vaccinated and growing horns overnight or women developing udders in inconvenient places. Luckily for Jenner there was no TV around then, and the majority of the world, appreciating the benefits of vaccination with Cowpox, soon drowned the voices of the "doom and gloomies".

Unfortunately in our own age the same appreciation has not been shown to the brilliant scientists who have used genetic knowledge to improve the yield of food crops in the poverty-stricken world. We who only see our food washed, brushed and packaged on the shelves of our local supermarket and who probably don't know that carrots are pulled from the ground covered in millions of earth-germs or that eggs come out of the hen through the same passage used for defaecation can see little benefit for us in genetically modified plants and we see only the "ghosts and ghoulies" which Jenner's contemporaries saw in vaccination. No matter that we have all been eating GM foods in our tomato ketchup and soy-thickened soups and pizzas for years and years without apparently suffering any harm we are now quite hysterical in our fears and apprehensions. Hard-pressed farmers who have agreed to use their land for experiments designed to prove the safety or otherwise of genetically modified crops have had their fields vandalised by mountebanks in white "ghost gear".

My mind goes back to poor modest Jenner and the terrible vilification he was made to endure and I conclude that human nature has not changed much in two hundred years. It's the same old story; if we don't understand something and can see no benefit in it for ourselves, (who cares about the poor farmers in India and Africa?) we suspect witchcraft, magic, aliens from outer space and wicked scientists brewing up their evil mixtures from bubbling flasks - just as in the horror movies!

John Naish



IRON ACTON WI

In March we enjoyed some spectacular slides of Westonbirt Arboretum through the seasons. The lady who enthralled us had recently become the volunteer co-ordinator and did such a sterling job that two of our ladies have undertaken training to become help desk volunteers and to assist at numerous events.

In April Mr Ford showed us how to enamel on copper. It was fascinating to watch powdered glass change under intense heat into the most beautiful designs on jewellery and pots.

In May we voted on the resolutions to be discussed at our Annual Meeting. This year they covered the topics of Post Office closures (we don't think this is a good idea), the funding of children's hospices (there seems to be some chaotic funding practices that need to be straightened out) and the way people who have suffered strokes are treated and rehabilitated (this seems to run like a postcode lottery and is often not to a very good standard).

We were back to something a little closer to home in June with a guided tour by Rob Bell around Acton Court. It's staggering to realise just how important a building we have on our doorstep and Rob was a superbly knowledgeable guide with some great anecdotes to tell.

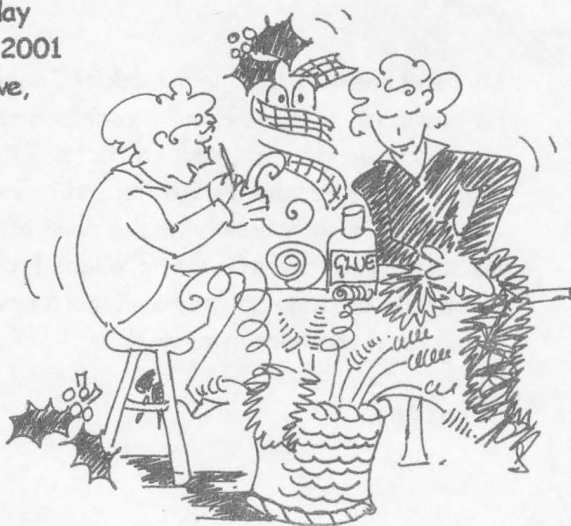
Our speaker failed to materialise in July but we used the time to decide what we liked and what we would like to change with the way we do things. August is our rest month and so we returned in September where our speaker, David Fry, who is a very well travelled town crier, competed with the music from the line dancing that's now taken over from the keep fit. We think he won!

In October Pat Faithful came to teach us how to make swags and garlands for Christmas. Pat always makes these things look so easy - until we try and then they look as though they've been caught up in a series of very bad gales! Our Birthday Party takes place in November and this year we'll be celebrating at the Lamb Inn. Our year closes in December with our Annual General Meeting - Pat's making a return visit to keep an eye on us while, with a glass of mulled wine and a mince pie, we attempt to copy what she does - I suppose the plus side is that after a couple of glasses of mulled wine ANYTHING is going to look okay! We also have a trip planned to this year's pantomime at the Bristol Old Vic when we shall boo and hiss contentedly.

It's been a strange year for the WI with "that calendar" causing so much comment and publicity. The original intention was to raise £3-4,000 for a cancer charity but things took off (in more ways than one!) and at the last count it had raised more than £300,000 (with more to come), had sold more copies than the 2000 Pirelli Calendar and is now set for a US launch with an initial print run of 2 million (profits to be split 50/50 between UK/US cancer charities. As well as raising the profile of the WI in a positive way I think it's also shown that ladies of a certain age and of a more voluptuous persuasion are attractive to quite a few gentlemen. It gives us all hope!

Here comes that annual invitation our WI year starts in January, why not give us a go and come along? Our meetings start at 7.30 pm and take place on the second Monday of each month. We've got a varied bunch of speakers booked for 2001 - because we're such an odd-bod bunch of ladies! Go on, be brave, put Monday, 8th January in your diary and come along to the Hall at 7.30 pm to see what we have to offer (apart from New Year hangovers that is!).

Lynne Blanchard
President - no-one else volunteered to do it!
(telephone 228566 for further details)



LAND'S END TO JOHN O'GROATS

All too often the only time we hear what our young people have done is when the activities are anti-social. We live in a world where bad behaviour is far more newsworthy than decent behaviour.

Focal Poyntz wants to reverse this trend! Richard Bradshaw, who lives in the High Street, has successfully completed a cycle ride from Land's End to John O'Groats to help raise funds for a charity called World Vision.

We've cribbed some of Richard's own words from the letter he sent to his sponsors

I am writing to let you know that I successfully completed the ride from Land's End to John O'Groats, and arrived back home safely on Monday, 9th October. It took about 18 riding days, although the actual time away was much longer due to the many problems we encountered.

The ride was overall a very enjoyable one, although not without its problems. For the first two weeks it just seemed to rain non stop and, because we were camping, this meant that all our gear was continually wet and smelly, and with the poor weather it was hard to keep morale high. We later encountered theft, breakdowns and later, in Jon's case, illness.

Unfortunately the other cyclist I was with, Jon, was unable to complete the ride as he was rushed off to hospital in Dumfries with appendix problems. He then returned home as he was too unwell to complete the ride. I decided to continue solo, but lightly laden with barely a change of clothes, using Youth Hostels and B&B's for the remaining 450 miles.

So the ride was certainly eventful. It was by far the most challenging thing I've done in my life. There were times when I was hating it, wondering why I set myself challenges like this. Other times were great, such as when I was riding at speeds of 45+ mph along empty mountain roads in the sun with the beautiful Scottish Lochs below me. The overall feeling when I finished was fantastic - and it was then I realised why I did the ride.

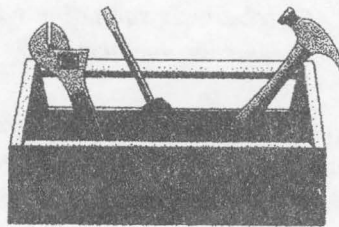
I will have raised over £600 by the time I have collected the last few sponsors' money.

- Richard, we are very proud of you!



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IRON ACTON PARISH COUNCIL

BUS ROUTE FEAR

On several occasions over recent months, the buses that serve the village of Iron Acton have been disrupted.

Whilst trying to negotiate parked cars, the buses have become jammed, causing the High Street to become blocked and the bus services delayed.

The habit of the bus drivers now is to look down the High Street and, if it looks as though the parked cars are going to cause a problem, they by-pass the village completely.

As a result of this inconsiderate parking, Parishioners are at risk of losing their bus services. This selfish behaviour is jeopardising the bus routes that serve so many Parishioners and which, are often used by the most vulnerable people in the Parish (the elderly and those who, for health reasons, either cannot or have been advised not to drive).

In the first instance we would urge Parishioners to help in the following ways:

- 1 Always park considerately in the High Street ensuring there is sufficient room for a bus to pass through.
- 2 Report obstructing vehicles to the police immediately, ensuring that you make a note of the vehicle registration number. The police do have power to tow these vehicles away.

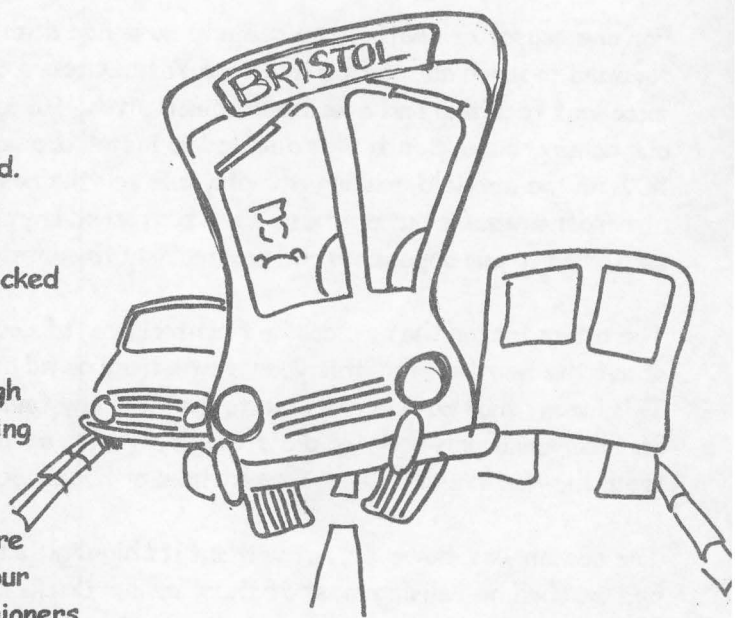
If action is not taken now then Iron Acton is at serious risk of losing its bus service!

ADVANCE NOTICE - ADVANCE NOTICE - ADVANCE NOTICE

GARDEN TRAIL 2001

The successful and very enjoyable Open Gardens day last summer has prompted several people to ask if we plan to repeat it this year. We would be very happy to organise another similar event if there is sufficient local support. The suggestion is that we should stick to the same time of year as it is well before the school holidays begin and at a time when gardens are in good condition - provided the owners have been working on them! If you have views on the subject please contact any of the following with your ideas:

- * Hazel Dron 228509
- * June Rycroft 228668
- * Mike Wheeler 228544



IRON ACTON CRICKET CLUB

For one reason or another, we seem to have had a very disrupted season this year. We began the season looking forward to using our new pitch at the Yate Outdoor Sports Complex behind Brimsham Green School, as it offers excellent facilities and a well maintained pitch. However, after two games, just when it was beginning to feel like our home ground, South Glos decided to install drainage on most of it which entailed digging small ditches across 80% of the outfield, making it unplayable for the rest of the season. South Glos did their best to find us alternative venues but as these were scattered anywhere from Cadbury Heath to Thornbury it caused great confusion to our opponents and particularly to ourselves!

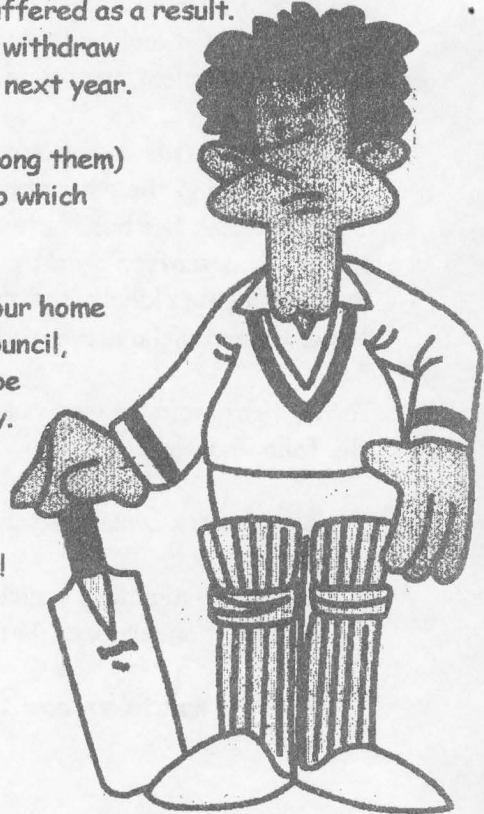
The other factor that we couldn't control was, of course, The Weather. I know cricketers always complain about the weather, but this year it was truly awful and wiped out at least half of our games completely. This meant that no-one was able to maintain any form and our performances suffered as a result. Perhaps, unsurprisingly, we did struggle to raise a side on occasions and had to withdraw from the Midweek 20 Over Competition; although we are hoping to enter again next year.

The season was, however, not without its highlights (some notable victories among them) and we shall be reliving most of these at our Cricket Dinner on 8th December to which anyone with even the most tenuous connection to the Cricket Club is invited.

We are all looking forward to next season when we shall be back at YOSC for our home games on the best draining ground around! Also, with the help of the Parish Council, we are planning to build some practice nets on the Parish Meadow that should be ready for the start of next season and will be for anyone in the village to enjoy.

Finally we are, as always, looking for new players. So if you harbour any cricketing ability (however long forgotten) please contact me or any other committee member so that we can agree your Winter Training Regime with you!

Simon Cross / Chairman



RIDDLE-ME-REE

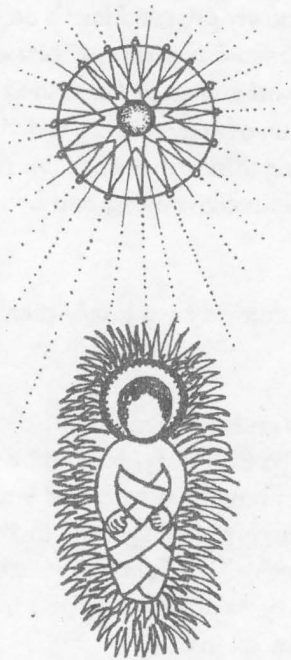
Hello everybody. Can you guess who I am? On Friday I hid amongst the leaves in the High Street and had some fun with the children walking to school. On Saturday I lurked in the Parish Meadow in several places. That helped the people walking to pretend they were making their way through a minefield. On Sunday I joined in a game of football between a father and son on the green - only they didn't seem to want to carry on afterwards. On Monday I spread myself out on the pavement so that a mother had to go out into the road with her pushchair.

Most dog-owners in Iron Acton don't let this happen. Unfortunately, there are one or two that do. If you know someone who doesn't clear up after their dog there are some ways in which you can help. Could you have a quiet word with them and appeal to their conscience. If you don't feel you could do this, please let someone on the Parish Council know; we could try a polite request. It's possible that someone who doesn't control their dog is not prepared to listen - in which case South Gloucestershire Council or the Police can be informed. Again, speak to a Parish Councillor if you feel you could not do this yourself.

Finally, we do appreciate the majority of responsible dog owners in Iron Acton who clear up after their dogs.



CHRISTMAS AT YOUR PARISH CHURCH



God became man. The awesome mystery of Christmas captured in the image of the helpless baby in a straw-filled manger, surrounded by worshipping and adoring family, animals, shepherds and angels. Even in the midst of all the busyness of our modern Christmas, all our hearts are lifted and touched by this timeless image.

At St James the Less this Millennium Christmas, you too can join in worshipping and adoring the Christchild in that place where His coming, 2,000 years ago, has been celebrated year by year for 700 years or more. Come and sing the traditional carols by candlelight, hear the familiar story told again and open your hearts to the joy of his Gospel of peace and love. you will be warmly welcomed at any (or all) of the Christmas services which are:

| | | | |
|---------------------|----------------|----------|---|
| Sunday, 17 December | Advent 3 | 9.00 am | Sung Eucharist and Baptism |
| | | 6.00 pm | Traditional Carol Service of 9 Lessons & Carols |
| Sunday, 24 December | Christmas Eve | 9.00 am | Holy Communion (Said) |
| | | 6.30 pm | Crib Service (<i>informal - particularly for families with young children</i>) |
| | | 11.30 pm | Midnight Mass |
| Monday, 25 December | Christmas Day | 9.00 am | Informal Family Communion (<i>children with their Families particularly welcomed</i>) |
| Sunday, 31 December | New Year's Eve | 10.30 am | Joint Sung Eucharist at St Peter's, Frampton Cotterell |

Sue Rushton / Priest
Telephone 772112

BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION

It's been suggested that Iron Acton might like to enter this competition again.

If there are any residents who might be interested in helping to co-ordinate Iron Acton's entry could they, in the first instance and without obligation, contact Bob Sheppard on 228515 for further details.

THE ACTONIANS - IT'S PANTOMIME TIME OH YES IT IS!

Midsummer's day in June saw a successful and well-received production of "The Admirable Crichton" which was performed both on-stage, inside the Parish Hall, and also outside, on the newly grassed lawns adjacent to the Hall. Despite threats of rain from the weathermen, the intrepid cast of "island castaways" braved the elements and made this a production that will be fondly remembered by cast and audience for a long time to come. In the event, the weather was kind, and the rain stayed away for the run of play and a good time was had by all. Reviews were good and everyone congratulated Ann Aplin for making the brave decision to stage a major part of her play outside in the English "summertime". Thank you to all who came along and braved the elements in the true British tradition.

Summer has always been the traditional "resting" time for the members, punctuated by a lovely picnic that was well attended.

September saw the start of rehearsals for our long awaited pantomime "Jack and the Beanstalk" directed by Anne Chenery. Wednesday evenings have resounded to cries of "oh, yes it is!" and "Fe, fi, fo, fum" as the Giant chased our heroes in the land above the Beanstalk. It has been great to have two talented young performers, Rosie Warner as Jack (daughter of Jenny who runs the Juniors and is singing along in the chorus) and Belinda Chenery as his partner Jill (daughter of our director, Anne). The Juniors are actively involved in the Pantomime which provides many of them with a first opportunity to appear on the stage. They will also be taking part in the One-Act Festivals in Bath and Malmesbury in the spring.

This article is inevitably being written during the final run-up to the Pantomime when everything is getting increasingly hectic but, fingers-crossed, a good time will be had by all - both cast and audience.

Our May production will be James Goldman's fine historical play "The Lion in Winter" which tells the story of the warring couple Henry II and his Queen, Eleanor, ably abetted by their sons. A thoroughly dysfunctional twelfth century family! Bob Allen (0117 976 1976) is just about to cast this so get in touch with him as soon as possible if you would like to act or help in any way.

Ann Aplin (228243) is also just about to cast our One Act Festival entry so get in touch with her if you would like to get involved. Her actual choice of play is as yet undecided but "The Orchestra" by the French writer Jean Anouilh and "The Perfect Party" by the American writer A R Gurney Jr are both in the frame.

We greatly appreciate the continuing support which we receive from Focal Poyntz readers and look forward to seeing you all at our forthcoming productions.

If you have an interest in acting, backstage or production support we have an activity which can match your skills and you will be most welcome to join our thriving, friendly, go ahead group. Please contact Ann Aplin, on 228243, or Steve Birch (our Chairman) on 772718.

The Actonians meet on Wednesday evenings at 8.00 pm in the Parish Hall.

The Junior Actonians meet on Wednesday evenings between 6.30 pm and 8.00 pm in the Parish Hall. Please contact Jenny Warner on 317945 for details.



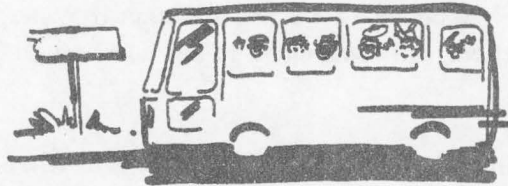
THE ELIZABETHAN CLUB

It was with deepest regret that on 12th July 2000 the Elizabethan Club closed after 47 years. Membership had fallen to 12 and as the majority of us are well over three score years and ten we could not carry on.

The Committee wishes to thank everyone who has helped us over the years and a special thank you to John and Joyce Seymour for their hospitality in allowing us to hold our meetings at their home, and a big thank you to Dennis King for auditing our books over the years.

Finally, thank you to Ivy and Elmer Worsley for all their hard work and excellent book keeping, and to Ivy for being such an excellent outing co-ordinator.

Elsie Blanchard / Chairman



STOP PRESS!!

It was very sad to hear that yet another village organisation, and the only one for the older members of our community, had ceased to exist. A major problem was just getting to meetings - often a taxi was the only option. Okay if 3 or 4 people could travel together but too costly for one person.

Luckily, other people have been concerned about the loss of the Elizabethan Club and Focal Poyntz has been approached to find out if there are any people within our parish who would like to continue attending the Elizabethan Club, or even start attending, if community transport could be utilized to collect people from their homes, take them to meetings and then return them to their homes afterwards.

Would ANYONE who is interested please talk to Bob Sheppard on 228515.

IRON ACTON CEVC PRIMARY SCHOOL

As we look forward to winter, Iron Acton CEVC Primary School can reflect on a truly magnificent year. Its highlight was a superb Ofsted inspection result which really enhanced our reputation as a fine school.

Major changes have also occurred with the retirement of Mrs Carole Howat, new teacher (Becky Davis), two extra classroom assistants and a new and exciting class structure. In addition, we have successfully adopted the new Curriculum 2000 and have just had our computer suite installed.

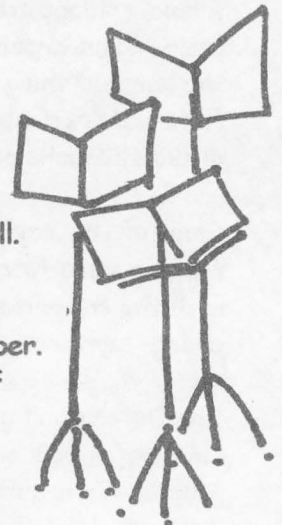
We have a new Chair of Governors, Dr Katie Mansfield, who replaces Mrs Marion Lloyd and the governing body continues to work hard for the children.

In sport the children have recently taken part in a cross country event held at Brimsham Green School and the football team has played in a tournament against local rivals Silverhill.

We have also been to the theatre to see "Joseph" and a Youth Sinfonia and are looking forward to another music day with the visit of a percussion and guitar workshop in December. Our Christmas performance will have a different slant to it and hopefully it will be a lot of fun for the children.

Life never stands still at Iron Acton. We look forward to 2001 with great excitement.

Karl Joyce / Headteacher



FRIENDS OF NORTH ROAD SCHOOL

The Friends of North Road School would like to welcome all those new parents whose children have just joined the School. We hope that together with existing parents and members of the community they will help us in raising much needed funds for the School as well as having fun at the same time.

We will be holding our Annual Review on Wednesday, 22 November in the School Hall when we hope those members of the local community who regularly support our events although they may not have children at the school, will come along to see what we do (or try to do!).

Our festive celebrations start on 1st December this year when the School will be having its Christmas Fayre. There will be lots of seasonal gifts to buy, cakes to indulge yourselves in and an opportunity to visit Santa.

We will also be holding a disco for the children in the week beginning 11th December. If any school age children would like to attend they would be made most welcome. The admission charge will be £1.25 per child and you can confirm the date and time by telephoning 01454 321225.

Julie Cooper
Secretary to The Friends of North Road School

POSTCARDS FROM THE POLDER

SHOPPING AND FAILING!

The novelty of shouting "there's a windmill!" has long since worn off and we are settling into our new lifestyle. The boys love school and have friends of many nationalities. My anxieties about moving them from our friendly village school to one of nearly 1000 pupils were unfounded. We cycle a lot or take the tram and our car remains largely unused. Holland is a small country and "high density housing" is the norm. This for me is the hardest thing to get used to. From my bedroom window I can see more houses, shops, four blocks of flats and precisely five trees. The weather is warm at the moment and the new pond is full of algae, but ducks still make occasional visits.

Some of you may remember my hatred of grocery shopping and my habit of waiting until the cupboard and freezer were totally bare before visiting the nearest/largest supermarket and returning, rather crossly, with the car packed full of carrier bags and muttering "that's it for this month". Well, I've certainly had to change my tune.

The Dutch don't go in for large deep freezers and tend to shop "for the day". This means you can't buy anything in bulk or even in large packs. Frozen peas come in a box four inches square and baked beans in a jam jar. It is quite possible to buy only half a loaf of bread and only recently have I seen milk in two litre cartons.



The local markets are much more interesting and I almost enjoy buying our fresh fruit and vegetables. There is also a bike accessory stall where we can buy new tyres, inner-tubes, panniers, child seats and impressive steel cables to lock our bikes to immovable objects (bike theft is common). The plant stall is a Titchmarsh paradise and, as the summer wears on, expands to fill a larger and larger space. Finally, on the corner, is the cheese stall. Dutch cheese here is Gouda-style, with a yellow rind and made in huge wheels, some big enough for a Daf truck. You can choose "Jong" or "Belegen" (young or mature). Young cheese is creamy and melts in the mouth; mature cheese would be of more use on the bike stall.

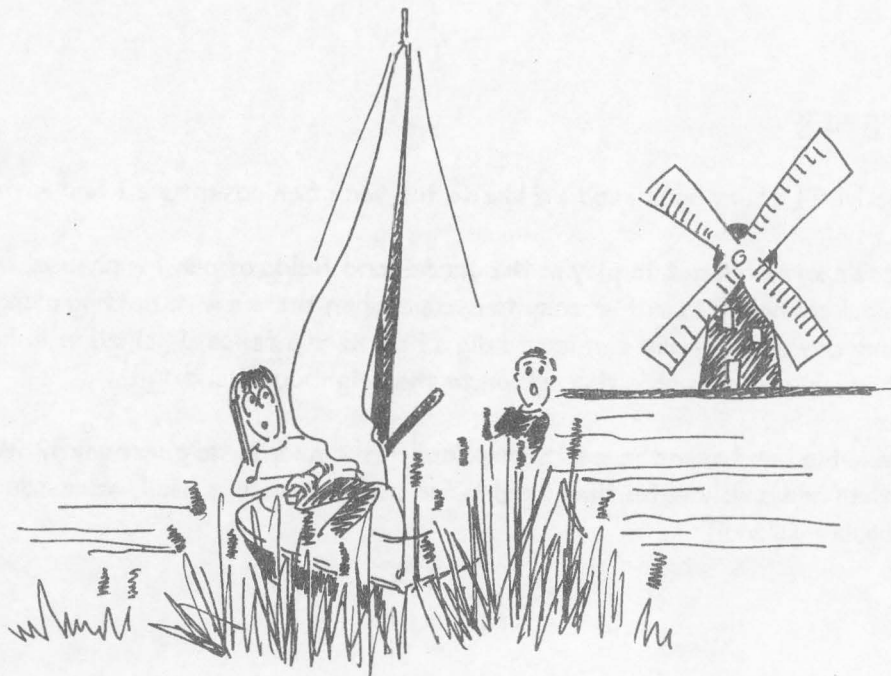
Q Apart from cheese, what does Holland have lots of?

A Water.

With this in mind we decided to try our hands at sailing. M's office has a sailing club with reasonable membership fees and 2 Flytoer boats moored on Kaagplasse, an easy half hour drive away. One sunny morning in May off we went to meet our instructor. Rudi was a small, weather-beaten man and unlike almost every Dutch person we've met to date, spoke appalling English. Of course, our Dutch was almost non-existent so off we set, M in charge of the jib (small sail at front), me steering and Rudi handling the mainsail and telling us what to do as best he could. With the sails billowing in front and the boys wearing outsize life jackets it was sometimes difficult to see where I was going. Rudi's directions were imprecise to say the least. "Head for the windmill" indeed! I steered the wrong way. "That was not the intention" scolded Rudi. In fine weather the lake is very busy with pleasure craft of all sizes. We got rather too close to a large double-decker craft carrying about 100 sightseers. "That was not the intention," said Rudi.

After a couple more lessons we were allowed to handle both sails and steer. Trying our best to do three things at once we lost speed and drifted slowly into the reeds at the lakeside. "That was not the intention" sighed Rudi. Eventually we were able to take the boat out by ourselves and we practised each weekend. By the end of August the lake was so busy that sailing was not much of a pleasure but we took picnics and tied the boat to a fence post alongside a small island and tried to figure out what to do by watching the experienced sailors whizzing past. Feeling more confident at the end of the afternoon we set off once again. The breeze had picked up and at first we headed in the correct direction, doing well. We tacked a couple of times, trying to follow the course of other boats. Suddenly, everything seemed to go wrong at once and land loomed. As we heard the keel begin to scrape along the rocks beneath, M, still fully clothed, jumped bravely into the water to stop us doing any further damage and hold the boat off the rocks. J and I pulled down the sails to prevent us being blown along. D looked close to tears as we pulled "Dad", soaking wet, back into the boat. We sheepishly headed back to the marina under the power of the outboard motor. Clearly, that was not the intention.

Donna Worrall



ACTON AID

Since the last edition of Focal Poyntz the Acton Aid members have continued to meet regularly, on the first Thursday of the month, and have enjoyed organising and supporting several events around the Village.

The Medieval Banquet was held on Saturday, 29th July at Algar's Mill. This event was well supported and enjoyed by all, with considerable thanks due to John and Marilyn Wright for their support and allowing us to take over their garden for the event.

In December, Acton Aid members will be delivering a small Christmas Gift to each of the pensioners in the Parish.



Acton Aid is particularly grateful to Allan and Gail at the Rose and Crown for allowing us to use the Lounge Bar for our monthly meetings for many years. The opportunity has now arisen to conduct future meetings, involving occasionally sensitive and often lively discussion in the privacy of the "back room" at The Lamb. So in November Acton Aid effectively "moved" to its current venue, where our groaning at the Chairman's jokes offends no-one.

The aim of Acton Aid as a registered charity is to assist in the improvement of village life. To achieve this we meet on the first Thursday of the month, at 8.00 pm in the "back room" of The Lamb. Discussions into ways of furthering our aims are undertaken, over a beer or two, in a light-hearted yet occasionally vigorous manner. The ability of Acton Aid to support village activities is dependant primarily on the enthusiastic efforts of the active members in organising the successful fund-raising events.

New members are always welcome. If you would like to join us, please turn up at one of our meetings.

Colin Smith
Secretary / Acton Aid

IT'S A DOG'S LIFE

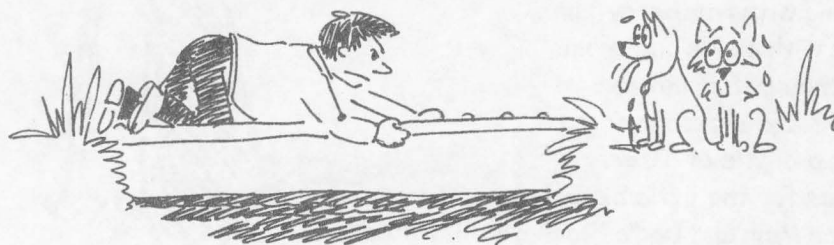
Hello everybody! It's Lucy again, and I'd like to tell you of an adventure I had with my sister Trixie.

Although there's lots of space to play in the garden and fields of our farmhouse, we still like to go exploring when we get the chance. It's not so easy to escape when there's wire netting along the bottom of all the fences, but one day when Trixie started to dig a hole near a fence, I joined in to help. Soon we were able to push the netting up and scramble through on to the neighbour's land.

There's a lovely big pond over there with an island in the middle, so guess what? We jumped in and swam across, and then had a wonderful time digging for buried treasure (well, we're educated dogs and have heard all about Treasure Island!).

Then the neighbours spotted us, but we were having so much fun we just ignored them, so they soon fetched our master. He was ever so cross with us but even he couldn't persuade us to come back. Eventually he fetched a ladder so he could get across without getting his feet wet, then pushed us into the water and made us swim back. Of course, when we got home it was bath time for us, but as soon as we were dry and beautifully clean, fluffy and cuddlesome, we couldn't resist paying another visit to the island to do a little more excavating. When we got back home we really were in the doghouse!

Now we're well and truly fenced in, because the wire netting has been reinforced with wood. Since we discovered the joys of swimming we'd love to have our own pool. Don't humans realise our doggie bath simply isn't big enough for us to show off our new talent?



FRIENDS OF IRON ACTON SCHOOL

We are well into the Autumn Term and fund-raising is going well. We had a very successful Halloween party, with over 60 children all dressed to frighten and scare. Much fun was had by all. It was noted that the streets of Iron Acton had never been so quiet on Halloween and some were left with an abundance of sweets, although I think some residents secretly missed the Trick or Treat visits.

We have also had a Body Shop Party. This was an excellent "girls' night out" and the support was overwhelming. As to the future, the children are busy practising and some are busy sewing in readiness for this year's Christmas performance. These will be held on 13th December (afternoon) and 14th December (evening). We look forward to seeing some of you there.

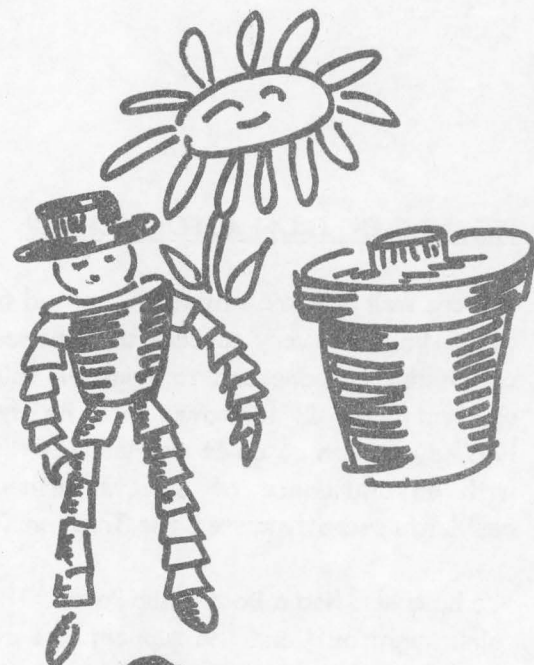
We would like to take this opportunity of thanking you all for your continued support and wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Tracey Byrne
Secretary

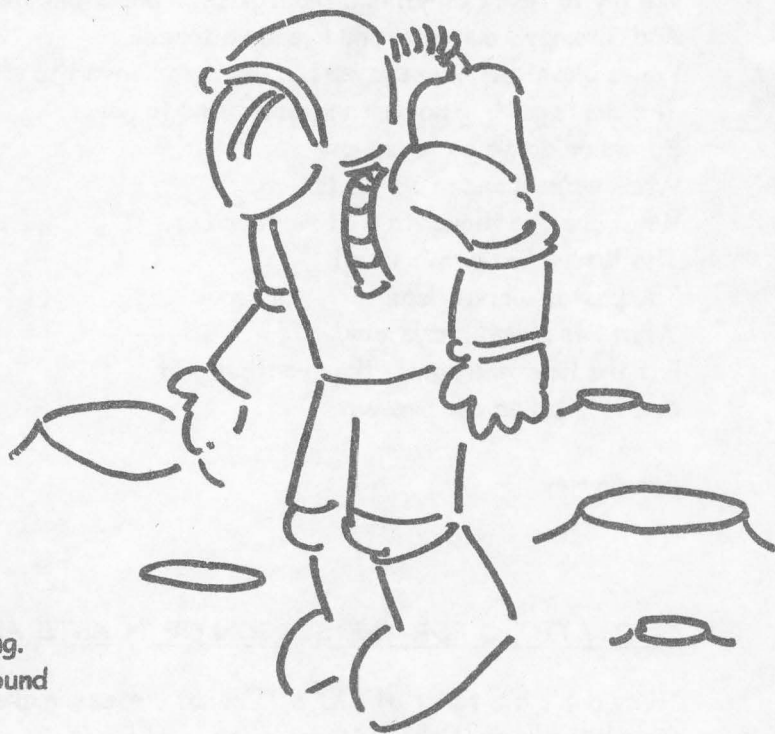


TALKING ABOUT THE 20TH CENTURY BLUES

Are you sitting comfortably? Then I'll begin.
It's 1952 and King George dies
When a little girl is born
No longer a twinkle in her daddy's eyes.
1953 and the Queen's coronation
It's the birth of a new Elizabethan generation.
We had Utility furniture and we had to make do
But from post war acorns, great dreams grew.
There were London pea-soupers and days of smog
Trying to get to school through all that fog.
We had tapioca pudding with raspberry jam
And sandwiches made with pickle and spam.
Holy Communion and the smell of incense
White gloves and socks and crossbar shoes.
Mass on Sunday, then a bottle of Tizer.
Saving up our farthings for the little black babies.
Staying up all night for Mum and Dad's "Rock n' Roll" parties
Bill Hailey and his Comets were rocking round the clock.
I'm a pink toothbrush, you were a blue toothbrush
Cos girls wore pink and boys wore blue.
Boys had train sets and girls had prams.
Boys wore caps and girls wore frocks.
Good old Uncle Mac was everybody's favourite
But I liked Bill and Ben and especially Little Weed.
Here is Janet and there goes John
What a boring way to learn to read.
BBC was the tops, then along came an upstart, ATV.
He might be a rebel without a cause, James Dean
But our best hero was Richard Greene.
And we all slept well in our beds at night
With Dixon in Dock Green to switch off the light.
Going to the Movies was the greatest fun of all
We wept for Bambi and laughed at Dumbo
And cheered for Ben Hur and Charlton Heston
But the parting of the Red Sea
Made me want to pee.
Moving the family from London via Paddington Station
We travelled on a steam train across this great nation.
Dad's first car was a Ford Model 'T'
That all the family named "Good old Phoebe".
Suddenly we awoke to the Swinging Sixties
And we were going off on a summer holiday.
With mini skirts and Mary Quant and skinny ribs
And razor sharp bobs.
Twiggy was in and so too was the Mini Minor
We wore psychedelic colours, orange and lime green
And hipster pants and black kohl eyes
We certainly were a sight to be seen.
The world was alive to the Sound of Music
To "Top of the Pops" and I'll Give it Five.



She loves you yeh, yeh, yeh
 We dreamed of romance. It won't be long.
 We read our lives in the words of a song.
 We no longer wanted to be Bobby's Girl
 We could work it out in a Hard Day's Night.
 I wanted to be a paperback writer
 The world was going mad as we tripped the light.
 Kennedy was shot, his brother too.
 Martin Luther King where was our dream?
 The world turned black, heroes were few,
 Where were we going? If only we knew.
 To Vietnam, to Woodstock
 Or to San Francisco with flowers in our hair.
 Hair, hair, hair. We grew it all ways.
 It was the dawning of the Age of Aquarius.
 Those were the days my friend and we though they would never end.
 But love was in the air and we were California dreaming -
 Marching, marching everywhere.
 To ban the bomb and stop the war and burn our bras,
 Though we didn't do it.
 We took the pill and we had sit-ins and love-ins
 And all we asked was to give peace a chance.
 And equal rites and opportunities
 For black and white, East and West.
 Rebellion was the word.
 The world was in confusion.
 Bob Dylan was a rolling stone
 And happiness was just an illusion.
 Now we were talking about my generation.
 We had landed on the moon, such a tiny little step
 From loons and beads to my first cigarette.
 The sad seventies drizzled in
 Big wheels were turning
 But not on the factory floor.
 There were three day weeks and candles burning
 Don't Look Now, it's the Dancing Queen.
 We were stayin' alive but burning
 From a Saturday Night Fever but
 We boogied on down
 In our hotpants, boob tubes and lycra
 To Donna Summer. Time flew like Greased Lightning.
 Then crash, bank, wallop the Stranglers strangled sound
 And the Sex Pistols spat "God Save the Queen".
 We wore Gothic black, a nation in mourning
 For rubbish piled high on our streets everywhere.
 One Step Beyond straight into Madness.
 Labour wasn't working. We stockpiled our sugar.
 But on the horizon a new age was dawning.
 To our rescue came striding the lady in blue.
 No more long unemployment queue.
 This lady was certainly not for turning.
 But we didn't like Mondays



And when we were told
 To get on our bikes by her lackies so cold
 We banded together, the world was on strike
 But the Miners were defeated, the end of an era.
 So we worked longer hours
 To lose our jobs for life a new fear.
 We had loadsa money and we were getting fat
 But the little African babies were getting none of that.
 So we banded together to offer them aid
 But Aids was on the horizon, a menacing killer
 Yet we carried on dancing to the beat of Thriller.
 Religion was dead, Long live Madonna.
 The world was our oyster
 We could go anywhere
 On the earth, under the sea, even to Mars
 The nice caring Nineties came in with a bang.
 We went to war in a Desert Storm.
 We watched in fascination on our TV screens
 As intelligent bombs sought out targets unseen.
 It was the beginning of a marvellous New Age
 New Era, New Dawn, a New Man for New Labour.
 Everyone got a PC. And now the whole world was speaking PC.
 We try to save everything; from glass to paper and all that is free.
 And Swampy's our hero and lives in a tree.
 We've blown the ozone layer but we try to save the whales
 The sun is getting hotter and rain turns to gales.
 So where do we go to my lovely
 When we're alone in our beds?
 What are the thoughts that surround us.
 The future lies within us all
 The past is all but dead.
 What lies ahead a mystery.
 But the here and now is the greatest gift
 And it is called our present.



Sue Cowley

QUOTATIONS FOR THE SEASON OF TOASTS AND DINNERS

"Why don't the feller who says, "I'm not a speechmaker," let it go at that instead of giving a demonstration?"
 (Frank McKinney Hubbard) - no relation of Roy's!

"One of the disadvantages of wine is that it makes a man mistake words for thoughts." (Samuel Johnson)

"Sometimes the difference between a good speaker and a poor speaker is a comfortable nap." (O A Battista)

"It usually takes me more than 3 weeks to prepare an impromptu speech." (Mark Twain)

Definition of a short speech: Thank you.
 Definition of a long speech: Thank you very much

A decorative border of musical notes surrounds the entire page.

Carols on the Green!

*Come and Sing your Heart
Out!*

On the Village Green

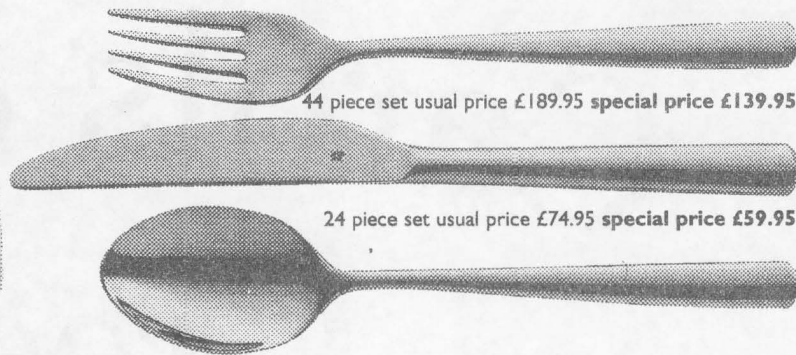
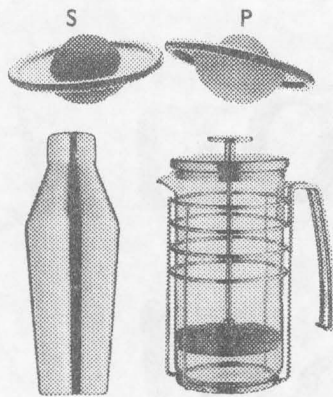
At 7.00pm

On Thursday 21st December

- ★ Very informal
- ★ Musicians bring an instrument
- ★ All ages welcome
- ★ Mulled wine to keep out the frost
- ★ Bring a lantern & some friends!

See you there!

*For further information call Lisa
Hatherell on 228725*




Boston Cutlery

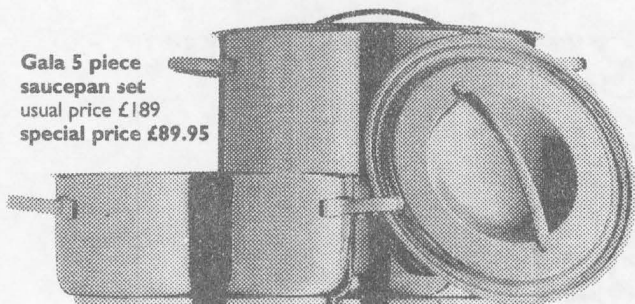
44 piece set usual price £189.95 special price £139.95

24 piece set usual price £74.95 special price £59.95

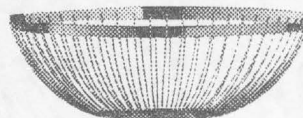
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DIARY OF EVENTS

In the Village Hall

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Line Dancing | Every Monday and Thursday |
| War Hammer | Every Tuesday |
| Actonians | Every Wednesday |
| Nursery School | Every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday Mornings |
| 2 nd Monday of Each Month | WI |
| 3 rd Monday of Each Month | Parish Council (<u>check</u> meetings are also held at North Road School). |
| 16 December 2000 | Actonians' Christmas Party |

In the Marshall Room

Mother & Toddler Group Every Friday Morning

At North Road School

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1 st Monday of Each Month | North Road Ladies Club |
| w/c 11 December 2000 | Disco for Children (contact 321225 for further details) |

At Iron Acton School

13 & 14 December Children's Christmas Performances

At The Lamb Inn

1st Thursday of Each Month Acton Aid

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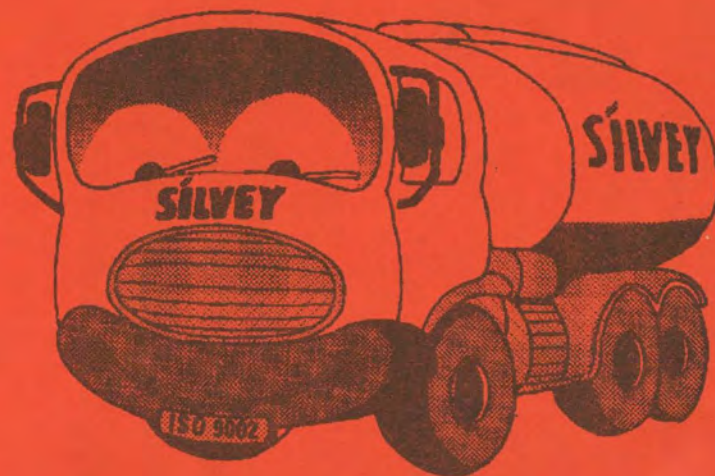
Gobble said the turkey
Honk said the goose
Cough went the boiler
The range is out of use!

Shrieks from the kitchen
Panic at the tank
Bread & cheese with all the trimmings
The house is getting dank!

Wished they'd called Silveys
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To bring a load of oil
For a Christmas more enjoyable!

Happy Christmas!

From all at **SILVEY**



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