

FOCAL POYNTIZ

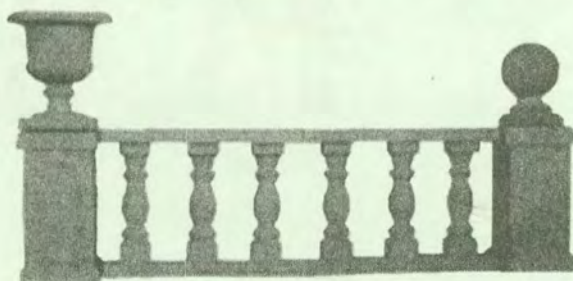


Sir
John Poyntz
1680

A magazine for Iron Acton

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SPRING

ISSUE NO. 64

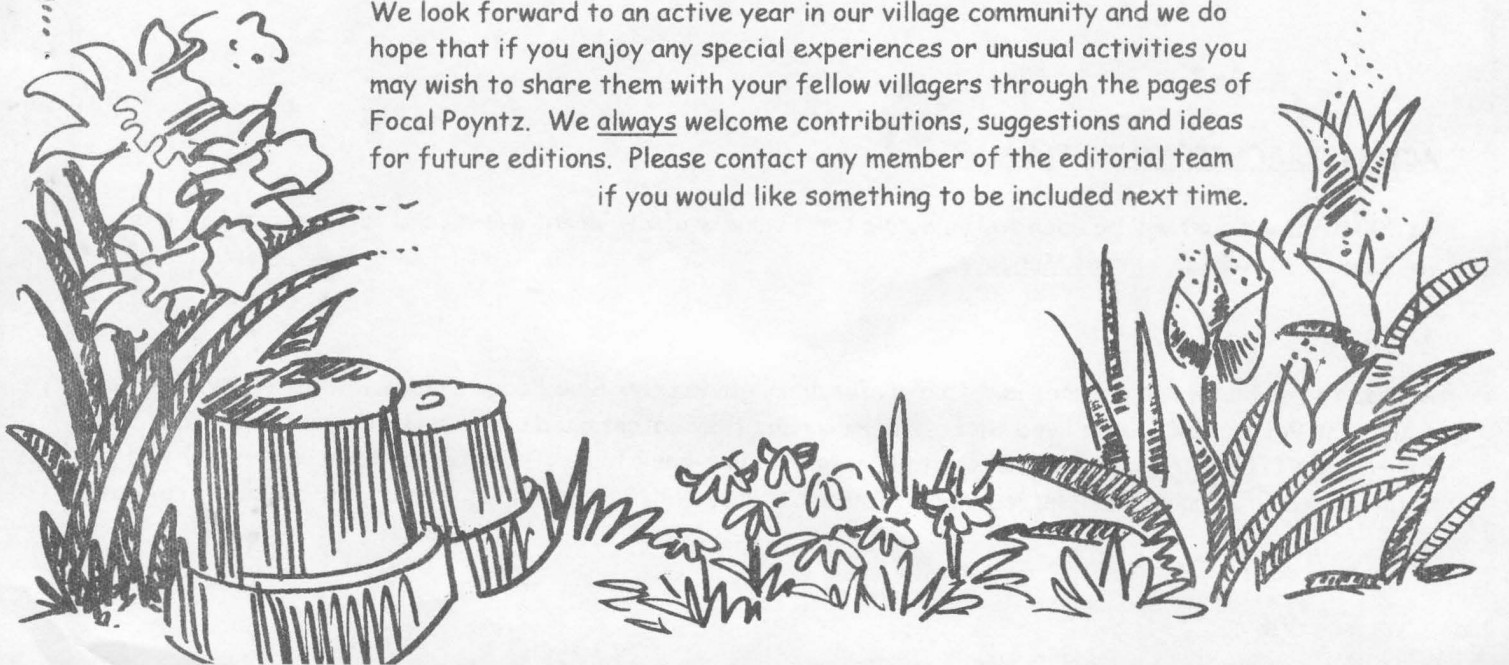
"I can but trust that good shall fall
..... and every winter change to spring."

Alfred Lord Tennyson's hopeful words give us confidence that Spring is just around the corner although at the time of writing anyone attempting a spot of early gardening will be more inclined to Keat's view of "*chilly fingered spring*". Late February's severe frosts, north-easterly winds and the first appreciable covering of snow for a few years came as a blow to the early development of plant life and bird activity we have experienced after another mild winter. Let us hope that not too much damage will result to wildlife and our gardens.

By the time Focal Poyntz arrives on your doormat we shall be into "European Summer Time" as I note in my diary. Whatever happened to good old BST?

Iron Acton will be waking to spring with preparations for the May Day celebrations on 3 May followed by 2 special garden weekends on 13/14 June and 20 June. We hope this edition of Focal Poyntz will provide a welcome accompaniment to a cup of tea for the frenetic village gardeners as well as an amusing and informative read for the less energetic among us.

We look forward to an active year in our village community and we do hope that if you enjoy any special experiences or unusual activities you may wish to share them with your fellow villagers through the pages of Focal Poyntz. We always welcome contributions, suggestions and ideas for future editions. Please contact any member of the editorial team if you would like something to be included next time.



ST JAMES THE LESS

Some dates for your diaries

Plant and Book Sale

Saturday, 24 April 2004

2.00 pm

The Codrington Arms Car Park, North Road

In aid of Church funds



Garden Trail

Sunday, 13 June 2004

11.00 am until 5.00 pm

Around Various Gardens in Iron Acton and

The Church Tower will be open to visitors and

Refreshments will be available

In aid of Church funds



Also

National Garden Scheme Openings

Saturday, 19 and Sunday, 20 June 2004

2.00 pm until 5.00 pm

The Gables (the home of Elizabeth Parker in Park Street)
and Avenue House (home of Pam and David McCoy in the High Street)
Will once again be open as part of the National Gardens Scheme

The Church Tower will be open to visitors and refreshments available.

ACTON COURT OPENINGS 2004

In 2004 Acton Court will be open to the public for a variety of different events and tours, every day from 16 June to 23 August, except Mondays.

TOURS

Access to the house and grounds is with a professional guide only. Blue Badge Guides tell the story of Acton Court, the Poyntz family who lived there, the monarchs they entertained and the state apartments they build for Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn. It's not necessary to pre-book tours. There are 20 places per tour and entry is on a first come first served basis. Tours last approximately one hour. Wear very sensible footwear!

- * Tours take place at 2.00 pm and 3.30 pm.
- * Tickets are priced at £5 and £3.50 concessions - pay at the door by cash or cheque
- * Blue Badge Weekday Tours take place on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Friday (except Friday, 25 June).
- * Weekend Blue Badge Tour dates are 19, 20 and 26 June, 3, 4 and 31 July and 1, 7 and 14 August

SPECIAL EVENTS

WEDNESDAY EVENINGS - OWL PROWLs - STARTING AT 7.30 PM

Experienced members of the South Gloucestershire Hawk and Owl Trust will conduct talks and nature walks around the grounds. 3 varieties of owl inhabit the Acton Court Site.

Tickets: £5.00 and £3.50 concessions (all proceeds from these evenings go to the Hawk and Owl Trust).

SATURDAY, 10 AND SUNDAY, 11 JULY - DIDO CROSBY'S 2 DAY WAX ANIMAL MODELLING WORKSHOP

Dido Crosby, zoologist, sculptor and creator of the Iron Animals at Acton Court leads a 2-day modelling workshop. Choose your favourite beast and Dido will help to make it. 10.00 am to 4.00 pm on both days.

Tickets: £70.00 (for 2 days)

SATURDAY, 17 JULY AND SUNDAY, 8 AUGUST - OPEN PAINTING DAY(S)

The site will be open to artists to come and paint at Acton Court. Bring your own lunch and materials. Any media except oil paints. 10.00 am to 4.00 pm.

Tickets: £10.00 for one day or £16.00 if you book for both painting days on 17 July and 8 August.

SUNDAY, 18 JULY - MUSICA FABULA

Jan Walters (historical harpist) returns to Acton Court with dancer/guitarist Steven Player for a lively programme of 16th and 17th century music; haunting melodies, top tapping dance rhythms and some surprises!

Tickets: £12.00 and £10.00 concessions - performance commences at 4.00 pm

SATURDAY, 24 JULY AND SUNDAY, 25 JULY - HENRY'S FILM CLUB

A chance to see Alexander Korda's 1933 production of *The Private Lives of Henry VIII* in an atmospheric setting. 7.30 pm performance on Saturday and 3.00 pm performance on Sunday.

Combined membership and entrance: £5.00

SUNDAY, 15 AUGUST - HIS MAJESTY'S SAGBUTTS AND CORNETTS

The world renowned ensemble, His Majesty's Sagbutts and Cornetts, is joined by soprano Julia Gooding to perform a varied repertoire from Venice, Rome, Dresden and Leipzig. Performance commences at 3.00 pm.

Tickets: £12.00 and £10.00 concessions.

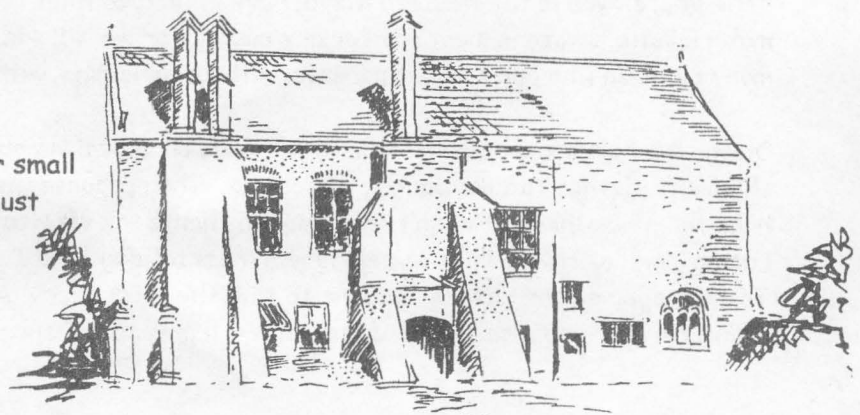
SATURDAY, 21 AUGUST AND SUNDAY, 22 AUGUST - THE FOOL'S TOUR

A theatrical tour of the house by Lady Joan Poyntz and her Fool when visitors will be shown the new 1535 wing of Acton Court and hear about the decoration and use of the rooms. Tours take place at 10.30 am, 12.00 pm, 2.30 pm and 4.00 pm.

Tickets: £6.00 and £4.00 concessions

Please confirm details with Acton Court as, although correct at the time of typing, there is always the possibility of unavoidable change.

Most events at Acton Court are not suitable for small children but the Fool's Tour on 21 & 22 August and the Owl Prowls on Wednesday evenings are Recommended for children aged 7/8 years and upwards.



Iron Acton Parish Meeting

Wednesday, 12 May 2004 - at 8.00 pm

Iron Acton Parish Hall

Open to all residents of the parish of Iron Acton

HAJJ 2004

Hajj means the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca. It is one of the 5 Pillars of Islam and it is a commitment for all Muslims to make this pilgrimage at least once in their lifetime.

The airline for whom I work is contracted by Garuda airlines, the national airline of Indonesia, to fly their people from Indonesia to Jeddah, for the pilgrimage. This year I was asked if I would be prepared to go, which meant that I would be away from the beginning of January until early March. One of the incentives was that spouses are allowed to come out and join us free of charge. David was due to come out in Mid January and stay until Mid February. Sadly he got a very bad chest infection and was unable to visit so I came home for 10 days in early February.

I was based in Surakarta (locally known as Solo) on the island of Java. It's a tropical island with a very hot and humid climate. Typically the mornings are sunny, with cloud building up late morning and producing very heavy torrential rain in the afternoon, which clears after 1-2 hours to give a dry evening.

The Hajj is divided into 2 phases. The first phase, which is about 4-5 weeks, is where we fly the pilgrims out to Jeddah and then return empty. The second phase is the reverse. Our aircraft carry 405 passengers on each trip but because of the long flight times it is not possible for us to go from Solo to Jeddah or back with a full load. We therefore made a stop each rotation in Medan, Sumatra, where we changed pilots. Each rotation, including rest at each place, took about 4-5 days - the longest sector being about 9 or 10 hours depending on the wind and whether it was the first or second phase. I found the whole thing extremely fascinating and learned an enormous amount about the Muslim faith and the people of Indonesia.

I was particularly touched and humbled by the Indonesians. They are a happy, smiley people who have very little in life. We in the western world, have little idea what real poverty is and our money grabbing, materialistic, someone must pay for any mistake or we will sue, attitude has come home to me. There are many children who are without parents, without schooling, without proper clothing and beg on the streets.

During my visit home in early February I made an appeal via our church and the mums of the village for children's clothes to take back to Indonesia. The response was excellent and I ended up with 4 dustbin bags full of clothes. It wasn't easy getting them back via Heathrow, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta to Sumatra. Luckily none of the airlines charged me excess baggage and I got them all back without too much trouble. The Manager of our hotel helped me to find the most needy group of children and sent his secretary to act as interpreter and also provided his car for transport. I spent the most moving, but enjoyable, afternoon

with the children. The village was very poor, unmade roads and shabby houses which few of us have ever seen. The children were expecting us and sat quietly obedient, boys on one side girls on the other. They were dressed in their very best school clothes and were quite shy. With the help of my interpreter and lots of sweets I had them all laughing and running about. I took lots of photographs which I will circulate soon.



Things moved on from that. There were about 45 pilots working from Solo and I got a collection going before we left. We raised in the region of £500 (which would be the equivalent of £4000 to us) and that was presented to the chap who runs the children's home at the leaving party. Sadly I had to miss the party because I had to fly an aeroplane!!

I intend to hold a barbecue sometime this summer to raise money for the children so, hopefully you will come, with your wallets, to support it. I also intent to give a talk to Acton Aid about the Hajj and Indonesia sometime soon.

Finally, I want to say a very big "thank you" to everyone who gave the children's clothes, especially to Jane Giddings at Just Jane's who did sterling work in collecting clothes.

Pam McCoy

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Since it was set up many years ago, I have run the Iron Acton/Latteridge Neighbourhood Watch. During this time secretaries have come and gone and so has the initial treasurer. Some of the necessary contacts have also left and not been replaced. The whole set up needs to be revamped but I feel it is time for me to stand down. So, please can someone who is keen to get the show back on the road contact me?

Peter Wedgewood / 228532



Iron Acton May Day Celebrations

Monday, 3 May 2004

Starting at 11.00 am

Everyone's invited!

THE MULBERRY TREE STEINER EARLY YEARS GROUP

It feels as if spring has come early for the Mulberry Tree Steiner Early Years Group. Everything is growing at such a rapid rate. The kindergarten and parent and toddler group have just moved to new larger premises at Cromhall Village Hall which are wonderful - light and airy, but still natural and homely. The numbers of children are expanding, the length of the sessions has extended and by next half term the number of mornings for the kindergarten will increase from 2 to 3.

The group was originally set up by 3 mothers from Wotton and Cromhall: Christina Wheeler, Grace Breathe and Gail Taylor. They felt strongly about providing a play-based environment for their children which places more importance on creativity and imagination than on facts and learning goals. They wanted an holistic education which truly nurtures the mind, body and spirit, creates a sense of awe and wonderment and preserves childhood. The work of Rudolph Steiner and the form of education which sprang from his thinking encapsulated what they were looking for:

"We should not be asking: what does a person need to know or be able to do in order to fit into the existing social order? Instead we should ask what lives in each human being and how can this be developed The new generation should not simply be made to become what present society wants it to be." Rudolph Steiner

OFSTED recently launched a national debate about early years in the UK. They argued that there was too much importance placed on what 6 year olds know and can do. The inspectors said England had much to learn from Finland and Denmark, where children begin formal education 2 years later. They said that in England everything was much more centralised, prescribed, pressured and monitored. Six year olds in England were generally well ahead of those in Denmark and Finland in terms of the Three R's however, by the age of 15, according to a recent international survey, Finnish children out-performed all others in reading, mathematical and scientific literacy.

Steiner kindergartens take an unhurried approach to childhood, offering a gentle approach. The kindergarten is always a hive of activity but is never over stimulating. The rhythm of the morning is very important. The Mulberry Tree Kindergarten and Parent and Toddler Group mornings follow a very similar rhythm, with seasonal crafts, baking, painting or sewing, followed by free play with simple toys made of natural materials. This time is to encourage initiative, co-operation and imagination. Then circle time with seasonal singing and rhymes, snack time with a fully organic snack, usually prepared together and then a walk in the lovely countryside around Cromhall and finishing with a simple story.

The Mulberry Tree is the only provision like this in this area. The kindergarten is open to 3-6 year olds and the toddler group for up to 3 year olds. If you feel inspired to find out more please ring

Christina Wheeler on 01453 844281 for the Kindergarten

or

Gail Taylor on 01454 294071 for the Parent and Toddler Group.

Christina Wheeler was brought up in our Parish and her parents still live, and are actively involved, here.



WELCOME to this year's Show! As you can see we have added a new Craft Section, which we hope you will enjoy entering.

Please let us know if you have any suggestions for further classes, new ideas are always welcome.

ALLOTMENT TROPHY - The Best Collection of Vegetables grown on an Allotment.

ASTER TROPHY CLASS - The Best Entry of 6 Double and 6 Single Asters.

GOLDEN JUBILEE CUP - Most Entries in all Sections by any One Family.

GENERAL SECTION

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Collection of Vegetables | 22. 3 Beetroot |
| 2. Collection of Salads | 23. 3 Blanch Leeks |
| 3. Collection of Fruits | 24. 4 Apples (dessert) |
| 4. 4 Potatoes (any 1 variety) | 25. 4 Apples (culinary) |
| 5. 3 Carrots (long) | 26. 4 Pears (dessert) |
| 6. 3 Carrots (short) | 27. 4 Plums (dessert) |
| 7. 3 Onions (from seed, trimmed) | 28. 4 Plums (culinary) |
| 8. 3 Onions (from sets, trimmed) | 29. 6 Roses (assorted) |
| 9. 6 Shallots | 30. 1 Specimen Rose (named) |
| 10. 6 Runner Beans | 31. 3 Reflexed Chrysanthemums |
| 11. 6 French Beans | 32. 3 Incurved Chrysanthemums |
| 12. The Longest Runner Bean | 33. 6 Dahlias (not over 2 1/2") |
| 13. 2 Peppers | 34. 3 Cactus Dahlias |
| 14. 2 Cabbages (any 1 variety) | 35. 6 Decorative Dahlias |
| 15. 2 Marrows | 36. 6 Sweet Peas |
| 16. The Heaviest Marrow | 37. Vase - "Cottage Garden Collection" |
| 17. 3 Courgettes | 38. Vase of Flowers (5-10 stems) |
| 18. 2 Cucumbers (frame or greenhouse) | 39. Best Pot House Plant (foliage) |
| 19. 2 Cucumbers (ridge) | 40. Best Pot House Plant (flowering) |
| 20. 6 Tomatoes | 41. Pot Grown Herbs (any 1 variety) |
| 21. 3 Parsnips | 42. Bunch of Herbs |
| | 43. Largest Sunflower Head |

HOMECRAFT SECTION

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 44. 6 Chicken Eggs | 56. A Loaf of Bread (not electric Bread Maker) |
| 45. 6 Eggs (any other variety) | 57. An Apple Tart |
- A Handicraft Article to Include:
- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| 46. 1 Pot of Jam | 58. A Painting, Sketch or Drawing; Framed or Unframed, Any Subject. |
| 47. 1 Pot of Jelly | 59. A Knitted or Crocheted Article |
| 48. 1 Pot of Marmalade | 60. A Sewn Article |
| 49. 1 Jar of Honey | 61. A Kit Tapestry/Cross Stitch |
| 50. 1 Jar of Chutney | 62. An Original Tapestry/Cross Stitch |
| 51. Victoria Sponge (3 eggs) | |
| 52. A Quiche | |
| 53. A Rich Fruit Cake | |
| 54. Plate of 6 Biscuits | |
| 55. 6 Fruit Scones | |

FLOWER ARRANGING (Rose Bowl to Winner)

64. Small Arrangement (Not more than 12" high x 9" wide)
65. A Predominantly 'Red' Arrangement
66. A Foliage Arrangement
67. A Dinner Party Arrangement (including the candle)
68. Subject Arrangement - The 1920's

CRAFT SECTION

69. A Wooden Item.
70. An Upholstered Item
71. A Ceramic Item

PHOTOGRAPHY SECTION

72. Photograph entitled "Animal Magic"
73. Photograph encompassing Light and Shade
74. Photograph entitled "Building" (under 16's)

CHILDREN'S SECTION

Pre-School

75. 6 Decorated Fairy Cakes
76. Painting (any subject)

4, 5, 6 YEARS

77. 6 Decorated Fairy Cakes
78. Miniature Garden
79. Vegetable Animal
80. Painting of a Person
81. Junk Model

7, 8, 9, 10 Years

82. 6 Decorated Fairy Cakes
83. Miniature Garden
84. Vegetable Animal
85. Pointing of an Animal
86. Computer Poster Advertising Next Year's Horticultural Show

11, 12, 13, 14 Years

87. A Cartoon Strip (any medium, including computer generated)
88. Computer Poster Advertising Next Year's Village Day

*Advance Notice
of Horticultural Show
Classes. (14th Sept)*

*A full copy of the
schedule plus
application form
will appear in the
Summer Issue of
Focal Point 3*

WE HOPE YOU ENJOY THE SHOW, AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

NORTH ROAD LADIES

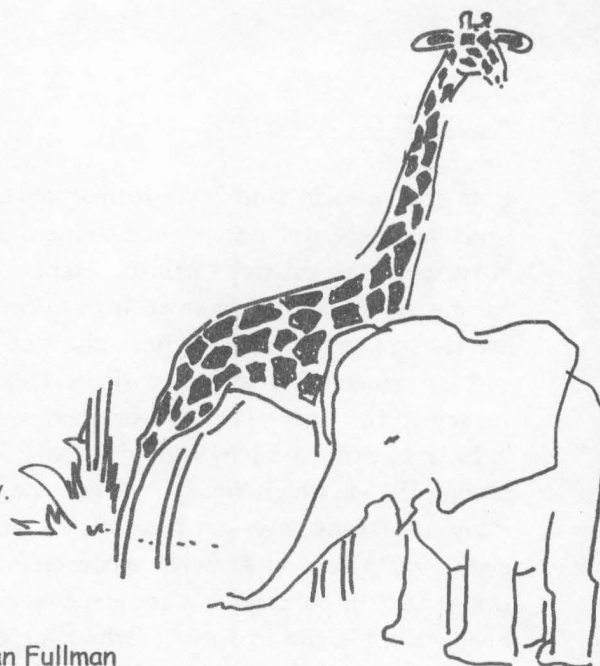
On 5 January, 33 members gathered for our first meeting of the year, when we were pleased to welcome a new member.

Richard, who does voluntary work for the Zoo, gave a really interesting slide show on the history of Bristol Zoo with some wonderful animal photographs.

Our charity for 2004 is Paul's Place at Coalpit Heath. We will run a bring and buy stall at our meetings to raise money for this charity.

Our programme for the next 5 months is as follows:

Monday,	2 February	Cheese Making - Mrs King
Monday,	1 March	The Macmillan Way Part 2 - Dave and Jan Fullman
Monday,	19 April	How the Wolf Cubs Won the War - Mike Brayley
Thursday,	29 April	Visit to the Holiday on Ice Spectacular on the Downs in Bristol
Monday,	10 May	Herbs for Women - Ann Freeman
Monday,	7 June	Reflexology - Talk and Demonstration



Visitors or new members are always most welcome to join us at any of our Monday meetings. Our meetings are held in North Road Community Primary School commencing at 7.30 pm.

June Rycroft / Secretary

PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council is now at full strength thanks to Hazel Dron who was recently co-opted.

Work is in progress to tidy up the Nibley Lane allotments which will, in due course, allow us to place the Norman Carter memorial seat. The water board has been contacted regarding the installation of a water supply to the Station Road allotments.

Several local footpaths have damaged stiles. It is the Parish Council's intention, with the help of the relevant landowners, to replace these.

Following concerns regarding travellers on the bypass the Parish Council has been in contact with the Travellers' Unit and also the Highways Department. As a result, a site meeting was held on the bypass and it was agreed to take steps to prevent any further travellers using the verges.

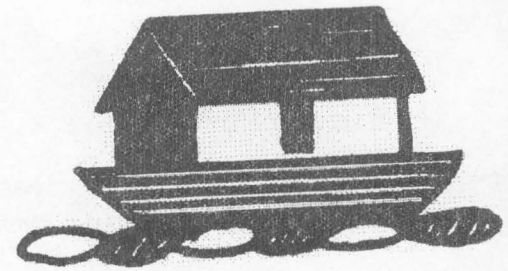
More work is required to clear Coach Pool at Dyers Lane and this will be carried out with due consideration of the wild life living there (eg the newts).

Despite the valiant efforts of the bus shelter cleaners it has become necessary to provide a back up service. From February, at quarterly intervals, the 6 parish bus shelters will be steam cleaned by a local contractor.

A site visit to Latteridge, with a South Glos Council representative, raised the question of pavements and public transport. The Parish Council would welcome the views of Latteridge residents on these subjects.



A VISIT TO ARMENIA



I am of Armenian stock. My father was an Armenian and our family tree, which has been well researched shows a direct line of descent from 1540 in Yerevan, the country's capital. Hence, Armenia has a special interest for me. It is a little known country in central Europe with a tragic past and its size and boundaries have changed countless times over the centuries. Formerly part of the Soviet Union and far smaller than in earlier times, it has Georgia to the north, Azerbaijan to the east, Iran to the south and Turkey to the west. It is the smallest of the former Soviet republics (smaller than Belgium) with a population, in 1991, of around 3.5 million, of whom 93% are Armenians. The population was decimated by the genocide around 1915 in which Young Turks of the Ottoman empire killed approximately 1.5 million Armenians. Many, many Armenians have left the country and there is a huge diaspora, principally in the USA, with large numbers also living in Russia. Armenia is now an independent European state with, like other former states of the Soviet Union, serious political and economic problems. It is dominated by Mount Ararat which originally lay within its borders but is now in Turkey although clearly visible from Yerevan. Mount Ararat, according to the Holy Bible, was the resting place of Noah's Ark after the great flood and remains of great significance to all Armenians.

Armenia is a fiercely Christian country, being the first country in the world to establish Christianity as its national religion, an event based on a legend the facts of which have never been seriously questioned and which is as follows. In 301 AD King Trdates III went mad, thinking himself a pig after stoning the Christian virgin, Hripsime, for refusing to marry him. The only person able to cure Trdates was a Christian prisoner, Gregory, who had been kept in an underground well for 12 years. Trdates was so grateful to Gregory that he converted himself and Armenia to Christianity. Jesus then came to Gregory in a dream showing him where to build a church and bestowing on him the title of Gregory the Illuminator. The church was built at Echmiadzin, the capital of Armenia from AD 180 to 340 and sits on a former pagan shrine. Thus Armenia has just celebrated 1700 years of Christianity and a memorable exhibition was staged in the British Library in London marking this anniversary.

I made my first visit to Armenia in 1986 when it was still part of the Soviet Union. Although it was a professional visit, my hosts knew my father was an Armenian and I was treated as the prodigal son and I made many friends. I was taken to Echmiadzin and to the small church at Hripsime and to many other historic sites but I was only there for a weekend. However, the friendships were lasting and, early in 2003, I received another invitation to visit Armenia. However, amongst my own extended family I have a nephew, Mark, who is an ordained minister in the Church of England. On learning this, my Armenian friends included Mark in the invitation. Mark, not only having the same family connections but also a great interest in the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church, was more than delighted to accompany me. Accordingly, at the end of September we flew to Yerevan for a one week visit. Without photographs it is difficult to paint a word picture of that memorable week but I will try.

Armenians have a reputation for their wonderful hospitality and, despite the impoverishment of the country, Mark and I can speak for the truth of this reputation. In between the various daily events that had been planned for us, we were taken to many places and wined and dined daily. There is only room in this brief account to mention 2 highspots although many other visits were made.

To the north east of Yerevan lie the mountains of the Georgian Range and, in these mountains, at 2000 metres, lies Lake Sevan - an enormous fresh water lake 750 metres long. Ancient routes on the Great Silk Road surround the lake. Mark and I were taken there on our second day. The weather was marvellous and the views quite fabulous. On a hilly island in the lake were 2 small churches, the like of which are dotted all over the country. We spent a wonderful few hours at the lake, visited the churches with the day being rounded off by the first of many delightful meals. Cold meats, cheese, lake fish and various salads were accompanied by the local unleavened bread, known as lavash, with apparently unlimited quantities of vodka (which Armenians drink

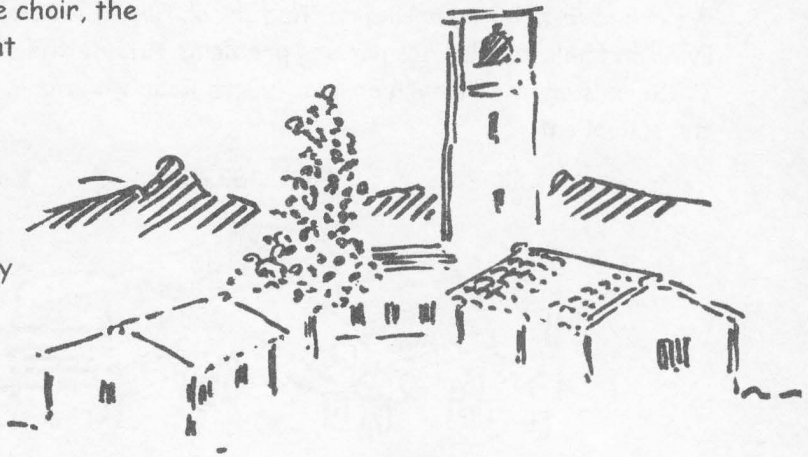
neat), the famous Armenian brandy (also drunk neat) and some delightful Armenian wines. These convivial meals became a daily event and a certain stamina was needed to survive!

The other major event was a visit to Echmiadzin, the home of the Supreme Catholicos of the Armenian church which is about a 40 minute drive from Yerevan and is the most holy site in all Armenia. Our tour visit started with a tour of the palace of the Catholicos where we were shown the wonderful collection of paintings and other treasures. The visit also included an audience with His Holiness who sat round a table and chatted with us in perfect English.

Afterwards we toured the cathedral including visiting the crypt where we were shown the remains of the pagan shrine. On the Sunday of our visit we attended the service in the cathedral - which was most impressive. This was a special 2½ hour service and part of the celebrations of 1700 years of Christianity. It was conducted by the Armenian Archbishop of Vienna although His Holiness, The Catholicos, was also present. The service was the Divine Liturgy, similar to our Mass except it was all conducted in the ancient Armenian language (of the 4th Century). Mark had an English translation so we were able to follow quite easily. The rich vestments of the participating priests, the choir, the incense and our privileged position right at the front of the huge congregation all contributed to making this a very special occasion.

This article can only provide a very brief glimpse of our visit but, as well as being a memorable week, it was a very "visual" week and Mark and I took many photographs which provide us with happy reminders of some very special sights and occasions.

John Zorab



FRIENDS OF IRON ACTON SCHOOL

We were absolutely delighted with the support we received from parents and parishioners at our Christmas Bazaar on 6 December. Thank you, so much, to everyone who came along for a cup of coffee and slice of cake and to browse around the stalls. Father Christmas was inundated with requests for Christmas gifts so we hope nobody was disappointed. We raised in excess of £400!

Plans are well in hand for further fundraising events this spring. We hope to organise a Chocolate Party for March (just in time for Easter). We also have plans in hand for an Easter Egg Hunt for the children.

The Friends are delighted to announce another 80's music evening. This will take place on Friday, 14 May in the Parish Hall from 7.30 pm until midnight. Following on from last year's success we have had requests to expand the music range to cover the best of the 1970's as well! Tickets for this event will go on sale in April at the same price as last year (£5 each) and will include a buffet.

Paula Evans / Chair of the Friends' Committee



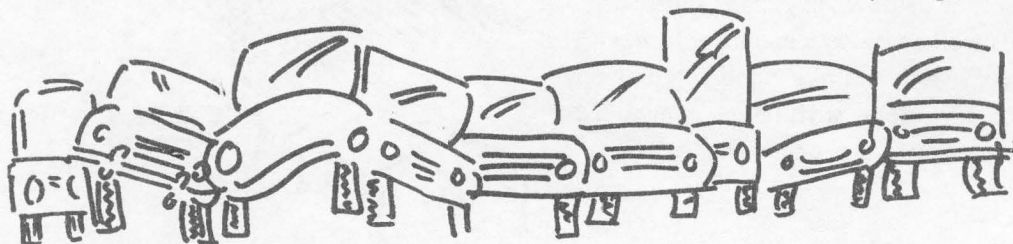
NORTH ROAD COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Having had a very stable staff for many years we are now embarking on a period of change. Our congratulations go to our Deputy, Sue Bishop, who has recently been appointed Head Teacher of Tortworth Primary School. Her hard work, particularly in music and science, means that we will lose an excellent teacher who has been involved in many projects during her 6 year stay at North Road. We will really miss her but wish her well in her new post and look forward to continuing to work with her as part of our cluster of small schools, we hope to appoint a new Deputy for September. We are also soon to lose our Assistant Secretary, Carole Ashlee, who will be replaced by Mrs Anna Wilkins. We look forward to her working with us. Jean Gallett, our Caretaker, has been out after receiving surgery on her back. We will be glad to see her back after she is fully recovered.

The school was recently awarded an Activemark by the Sports Council and received a runner's up award in the first South Gloucestershire Schools Sport Award Ceremony. Despite our small number of staff we are able to offer a wide number of sporting experiences to our pupils. We hope we will be equally successful in our application for an Arts Mark.

We are currently embarking on the formulation of a School Travel Plan, which we hope will promote healthy living and help to alleviate parking problems outside the school at the beginning and end of the school day. If there is anyone living in or near North Road who would like to be on our steering committee please contact the school on:

Telephone: 867788 / Fax: 867789 / E-mail: head@northroad-pri.s-gloucs.sch.uk



THE ACTONIANS DRAMA GROUP

The Actonians Drama Group is very busy this year! *Beyond Reasonable Doubt* by Jeffery Archer, our December production, was very well received by both its audiences and the Rose Bowl Adjudicator - and the cast and crew had enormous fun too!

Coming up! We are entering the Avon One Act Drama Festival this spring. The play is *Polly Honeycombe* by George Colman and by the time you read this report we will have performed it at the Rondo Theatre in Bath (on 25 February) and will know whether it will go forward to the next round.

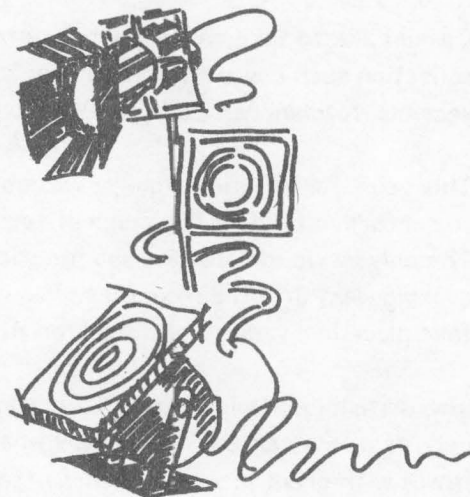
We are holding An Evening of Entertainment on Friday, 5 and Saturday, 6 March 2004 at the Parish Hall. There will be a variety of acts including songs and sketches. These evenings are generally a huge success and everybody has a great time. Tickets are available from Barrie Wright (228247) the price of £6 includes food. A bar will also be available. The show begins at 7.30 pm - we look forward to you joining us!

Another first for the group is to act as host for the Five Counties Youth Festival on Saturday, 27 March 2004. This involves the 5 winning groups from the Wiltshire, Avon, Bristol, Somerset and Gloucestershire Festivals. There will be 2 different performance sessions: one beginning at 2.00 pm and the second from 6.00 pm. Tickets are available from Ann Aplin (228243). The cost per ticket is £3 per session or £5 for both. Ann, a good judge of these things, assures watchers of a very entertaining day and a high standard of performance.

Our spring production is *The House of Bernarda Alba* by Federico Garcia Lorca. This is the tragic tale of frustration and explosive passions in a household of women ruled by a tyrannical mother. It was inspired by

real life characters and described by Loca as a "true record of village life". The production will run at the Parish Hall from 6-8 May. Curtain up is at 7.30 pm each evening and tickets will cost £5. Further details and tickets can be obtained from Ann Aplin on 228243. Please do come and support us and enjoy this classic play.

The Actonians are always keen to welcome new members for both on stage, back stage and technical work. We are particularly interested in anyone out there who's a frustrated sound and/or lighting technician who would like to join a friendly and hard working drama group. Please contact Ann Aplin (on the above number) or Pete Lawry on 311951 for further information.



Robert and Di Pardoe / Publicity

ACTON AID

Advance Notice!!

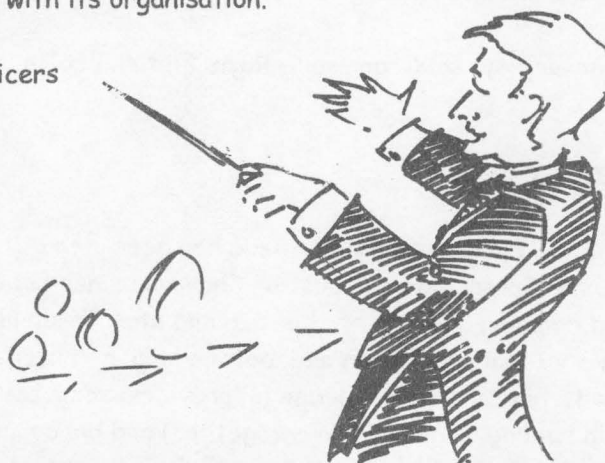
Building on successive and well received summer functions in the Parish Hall, Acton Aid is organising a Summer Concert on Saturday, 17 July in the Parish Meadow. The BBC Bristol Returners' Orchestra has been booked and full details will be circulated nearer the time. For now, all you have to do is put the date in your diary!

Our ongoing programme of talks has continued with Paul Townsend's insight into plastic surgery and Patricia Allcock's review of the history of Iron Acton. Next up will be Melville Dron giving us an insight into the life of the Ghurka Regiment. Melville's talk is provisionally scheduled for 13 May but final details will be posted in advance. All talks are held in the Function Room of the Lamb Inn, at 8.00 pm and we are open to all parishioners.

The Scalectrix Grand Prix, planned for New Year's Day, was postponed to a later date and we apologise to those who turned up in anticipation at The Lamb. We are keen to re-schedule the event and would be grateful to hear from anyone who is interested in assisting with its organisation.

At the AGM in February the following officers were elected for 2004:

Chairman	Paul Townsend
Deputy Chairman	John Wright
Treasurer	Patrick Murphy
Secretary	Ashley Mee
Services	Colin Smith
Publicity	David Hatherall
Village Hall	David Hatherall



Any parishioner who wants to find out more about Acton Aid is invited to contact one of the officers, or call in and join us in the Lamb at 8.00 pm on the first Thursday of each month. Meetings have the minimum of formality, with fund raising events and the distribution of resources discussed and planned over a pint or two.

Finally, if readers are aware of any parishioners who would benefit from the support of Acton Aid they are welcome to contact, in confidence, our Chairman on 228336 or Secretary on 228540.

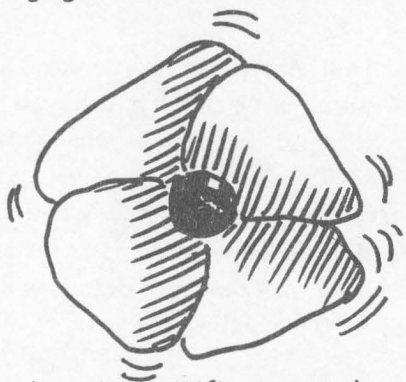
Ashley Mee / Secretary

POPPY APPEAL 2003

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your generosity in making the 2003 Poppy Appeal collection such a worthwhile venture. I thought 2002 was a great year (having collected £1416.86) but this year our total increased by £136.12 which gave a splendid amount of £1552.98. Thank you once again!

This year, for the first time, I was able to co-opt the services of the BBC Radio Bristol's Returners Orchestra to perform a fund raising concert for the Royal British Legion which raised £1182.00 for the Poppy Appeal. The only venue available at short notice came within the Patchway RBL Branch area and so the profit from the evening went into their coffers. We hope to repeat the concert in 2004 and hope that a second concert will take place in a venue closer to Iron Acton. Keep an eye open for posters around the village!

The British Legion is aware that it can only function if it has the money to fund its projects and that it has to rely, to a large extent, on helpers who are prepared to give up their free time to collect donations. Therefore, it was with great pleasure, that I attended a meeting where the following were honoured with certificates acknowledging their efforts over the last 5 or 10 years:



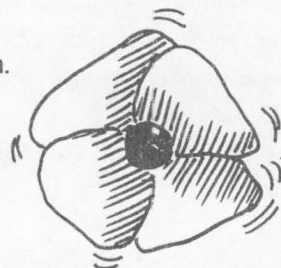
10 years service: Alma Honeybourne (from Bagstone)

5 years service: Pat Taylor
Dave Taylor
David McCoy
Mike Wheeler
Lynne Blanchard
Cherry King (from Rangeworthy)

A 10 years' service certificate was also awarded to John and Anne Murray, of Murray Tool Hire. Their generosity and devotion each year is always beyond expectation.

My congratulations and grateful thanks to the parishioners of Iron Acton.

David White / Honorary Appeal Organiser - Royal British Legion



IRON ACTON CRICKET CLUB

As avid readers of Focal Poyntz will notice there has been a change in the name appearing beneath this article. My predecessor, Simon Cross, held the post of Chairman since establishing** the club 8 years ago after moving into Iron Acton and deciding a village of this size and stature should not be without a Cricket club. He duly advertised in this very same publication and, before long, had mustered enough enthusiastic villagers to form a team. Since then with his cricket knowledge (in providing some basic training for those fledgling recruits), his cricketing ability (in holding many an innings together) and his common sense leadership, he has made numerous, invaluable contributions to the club. We hope he will continue to score prolifically on the pitch.

The other major change is that we now have a new Captain for the forthcoming season, Kevin Cooper. Kevin has not been long with the club but I'm sure that, with his overwhelming enthusiasm for the game, he will do a great job. The biggest challenge he and the club face is finding enough members willing to play regularly to form a central core around which the "Iron Acton Occasionals" can fit.

Although, at the time of writing, it is mid-Winter, there are still opportunities for members to put bat to ball and ball to wicket. The locally organised indoor winter league, played in the Sports Hall at Marlwood School,

has resumed and I am pleased to report a close fought victory against Oldbury in our first match. This is an exciting and fast paced variant of the game where runs can be scored very quickly by hitting the balls and running between the wickets. Runs can also be deducted for each wicket taken after the first 8 wickets have fallen to add an extra dimension to a run chase.

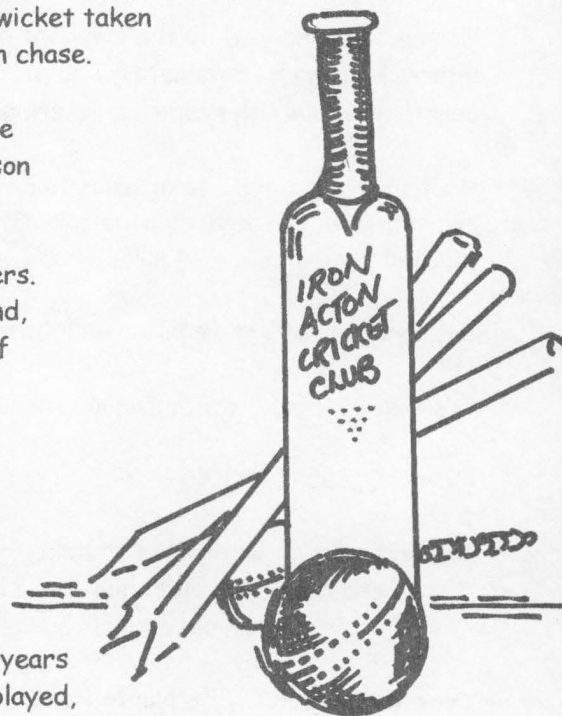
A number of indoor net sessions are also being organised. These ensure that we are not completely match unfit at the start of the playing season in late April/early May.

Finally, it is customary to end the report with an appeal for new members. Our Fixture Secretary has been working hard over the winter break and, as well as some of our established fixtures, he has promised a couple of new teams with whom to do battle.

Previous experience is not necessary
- on the job training will be provided!!

Chris Bradley / Chairman / 228559

** I understand there used to be a cricket team in the village many years Ago. If any local historians have any details (dates, where they played, pictures, scorebooks, etc) I would be really interested to hear from you.



THE FRIENDS OF NORTH ROAD SCHOOL



We are looking forward to a very busy few months.

Our forthcoming events include the Annual Duck Race, on Sunday, 4 April at 2.00 pm. This year we are very fortunate as Safeway in Yate is allowing us to sell ducks to their customers on Saturday, 3 April and we are hoping that this will generate more interest. We will also be involved in the May Day activities on the Green and are hoping to hold another fashion show in October, this will definitely be on a Friday ... we just haven't decided which one yet!

This year our fundraising efforts are to be focused on providing new books for the refurbished library, a smart board for Class 1 and a video camera for the older children at the school.

A date for all diaries is our Plant Sale which will take place on Friday, 28 May at 2.00 pm. There will also be cakes available and funds from this event will go directly towards the Year 6 school trip.

Julie Robinson / Secretary

Footnote from the FP Team

We would like to welcome Julie Robinson as the new Focal Poyntz contributor for the Friends of North Road School and Chris Bradley for the Iron Acton Cricket Club. Their predecessors Julie Cooper and Simon Cross carried out such sterling work for their respective organisations and for Focal Poyntz (it's no fun having to think up things to tell us 3 times a year). We wish Julie C a happy retirement and Simon much batting and bowling glory and we look forward to our links with the Friends of North Road School continuing with Julie R and the Cricket Club with Chris.

IT'S TIME BROADBAND CAME TO IRON ACTON/ENGINE COMMON/RANGEWORTHY

Having been seduced by the constant bombardment of television advertising for quicker access to the internet I rang BT requesting I join the club. Shock! Horror! I cannot join because our local exchange doesn't have enough people registering an interest. What does this mean I asked?

Well, in order for BT to allow us to have Broadband, we, as a community, need 200 people/businesses to register with BT then, no problem. The problem is we only have at the last check in December 2003 wait for it 74 !!!!!

So, come on, let's all register an interest, even if you don't want to join, so that those who do, can.

It's easy. Please contact Jenny Hall, who works at BT's Customer Care Offices, by:

Phone: 01285 640300 / Fax: 01285 640345 / E-mail: Jenny.Hall@BTlocalbusiness.co.uk

She will be only too pleased to help.

Let's do it let's join the 21st Century!

From an old codger Who wants to be a speedy old codger!

Chas Messenger (256 North Road)

NOMINATION FOR MAY QUEEN AND ATTENDANTS

Iron Acton May Day will take place on Monday, 3 May 2004. The committee would be delighted to receive nominations for the May Queen and her Attendants. The deadline is 6 April 2004 and successful nominations will be notified after the Easter Holidays.

Nominations should be delivered to either:

Paula Evans, Gorlan, High Street
Tracey Byrne, Middle Cottage, The Green,
The Lamb Inn, Wotton Road

The criteria for the May Queen and Attendants is: young ladies aged between 6 and 11 years, resident in the Parish of Iron Acton or attending school in the parish.

Please can a parent/guardian/grandparent complete the tear-off slip below:

Name: Age

Address:
.....

Contact Tel No:

School Attended:



SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE DEAF ASSOCIATION

On Sunday, 15 December 2003 a special Christmas Concert was held at St James the Less Church in Iron Acton.

The congregation was made up from the deaf, hard of hearing and hearing communities and was British Sign Language (BSL) interpreted.

Children from Rodford Primary and Ridge Junior Schools signed a number of Christmas songs as the rest of the congregation joined in with voice or signs.

There were 3 readings (in sign) by 3 different ladies - all "voiced" by BSL interpreter Jane Powell. This was the first time that the readers had had an opportunity to take part in such an event.



The whole evening was a joyous event and a great success and we hope to hold another concert in December this year.

A big thank you to all the children and everyone else who helped to make the evening a memorable one.

South Gloucestershire Deaf Association is a local charity supporting people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Graham Darley / Development Officer
01454 316460 (phone and fax)

ST JAMES THE LESS TODDLER GROUP

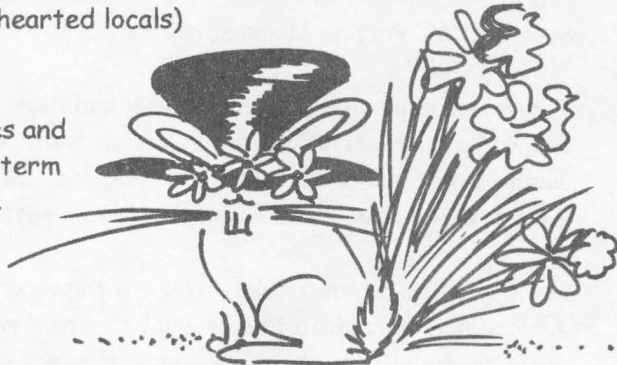
Here in the midst of winter, among the cold winds and raindrops, our little tribe is unaware that it's winter. They just know that outside playtime is on hold for now.

The Christmas party saw a lovely Santa arrive to make the babies cry with fear and the toddlers giggle with delight; but he handed out presents a plenty and the mums sipped sherry and munched on mince pies, so in the end a good time was had by all.

The mothers' Christmas gathering saw The Lamb packed with cheesy dancing, bright balloons and lots of empty wine glasses. We were let loose upstairs (away from any faint hearted locals) and we had a blast. Roll on the next excuse for a night out!

Next on the horizon will be Easter bonnets, egg and spoon races and chocolate eating marathons, not to mention the children! Half term is on 20 February, with our end of term party being held in the Parish Hall on 26 March - you'll find us on the bouncy castle.

Our group continues to expand, with new ideas and activities being bounced around the group every week. The children love the freedom to interact and nothing beats a good cuppa, biscuits and a natter.



If you would like to join us, we meet every Friday at the Marshall Room (next to the parish church), from 10.00 am until midday. Please contact either Chris on 228065 or Lisa on 228725.

IRON ACTON WI

2003 ended with our AGM in December. Unfortunately, none of the existing officers were able to escape and so I'm still President, Judy Park is Secretary and Elizabeth Edwards is Treasurer of our intrepid little band.

Someone, I can't remember who or I would happily strangle them, got everyone to agree to become potty in January - when Inspirations (that's the name of the company rather than an indication of our mental state) came with a selection of pottery that "all" we had to do was decorate (such a small word isn't it "all" but doesn't it hide a multitude of hassle it's like "only" as in "we only want you to"). I don't know about you but after the Christmas bustle and the short days all my brain wants to do is sleep, I think I was a hedgehog in a previous life! Don't expect me to be creative when it's taking me all my effort to stand up and talk at the same time. Nevertheless, some beautifully decorated items (from those who've obviously never been hedgehogs) were taken away for firing and returned to us looking far more lustrous than when they left.

In February we gazed in wonder at a galaxy of photographs of bugs (the insect variety). Most were taken in a very small area of Thornbury and it was staggering to realise what's crawling around us when we go for a walk in the countryside. I don't think I'll ever go walkies again without my wellies being firmly planted on my feet.

In March a collection of old gramophones and records found their way into the Hall. I think that everyone had a brilliant time but I missed my first WI meeting in a long time as I was hidden under a mound of bedclothes, whinging because I'd got flu and feeling very sorry for myself.

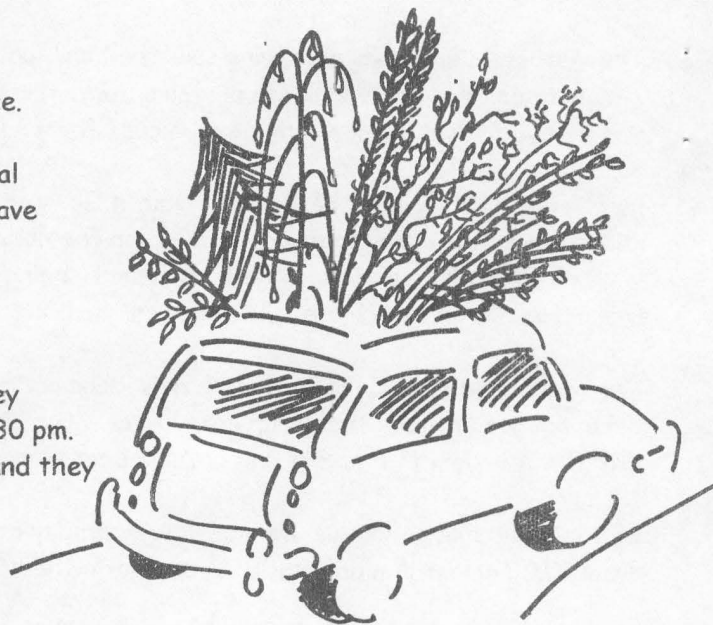
April will see us learning about Colour Flair - this is when someone will tell me that I've been wearing all the wrong colours for years and that I should be "autumnal" rather than "spring" oh happy days! In May we'll discuss the Resolutions for the National Federation of Women's Institutes Conference in Sheffield. The discussion is always lively to say the least and in June we hope to see the sylph like frame of David McCoy when he tells us about his work at Ashfield YOI.

July is the "different" one. We're looking into the possibility of an evening visit to the Abbey Gardens at Malmesbury. Those of you with an horticultural bent, will possibly be aware that this is where the gentleman and the lady who own it have become somewhat notorious for gardening "au naturel". I'm told he has to wear a big apron - something to do with Health and Safety I think. The other thing that always worries me when we go to places horticultural are the stories about other WI's that may precede us. I well remember the article in the national press saying all WI's had been banned from visiting one of the major gardens in Somerset because of their "predilection" for taking cuttings. The quote was "when they left, the garden looked as though it had been visited by a swarm of locusts"!!! Well, ladies always love a bargain ... and if it doesn't cost anything at it's manna from heaven. Let's hope any WI visiting Malmesbury leaves the apron in place.

We've also approached the organisers of the Horticultural Show about resurrecting the WI class that we used to have when Betty Cook and I helped to organise the event. All our ladies have promised faithfully to enter.

So, there you go, that takes us up to the next edition. Anyone mad enough to join us will be made welcome if they come to the Hall on the 2nd Monday of every month at 7.30 pm. (Committee Room not Main Hall) cos that's Line Dancing and they do things a little differently from us!

Lynne Blanchard / 228566



IRON ACTON CEVC PRIMARY SCHOOL

With the Christmas festivities only a very distant memory it is time to turn our attention to a very exciting time at Iron Acton.

This term a new teacher, Mrs Elmore, has joined us. She has come all the way from Scotland where she has been teaching for 6 years. We were very lucky, as a school, to secure the services of such an experienced teacher who is also a qualified ski instructor, expert highland dancer and talented musician. Mrs Elmore's contribution to the school over the coming years will no doubt be huge.



This is my last article for the magazine. In April I will be moving to a new headship at Uley in Gloucestershire. A bigger school with a new challenge. In my place, as acting Head Teacher during the summer term, will be Mrs Kemp (our senior teacher). Mrs Straker, our regular supply teacher, will be taking Mrs Kemp's class. The new Head Teacher will start in September. I am sure he/she will be as happy at Iron Acton as I have been.

We also await news of Mrs Adamson, who supports Class 3, as she is expecting her second child at any moment.

The children, as ever, continue to go from strength to strength. We have had visits from the dog warden who gave us a talk about the importance of looking after our pets. Y5 and Y6 have taken part in a Life Saver Award Scheme and Book Week was a great success. A French after school club has started and our fundraising appeal this term has been for Barnardo's. Cycling proficiency for Year 6 will be starting later in the year.

Our next whole school project is the creation of a wildlife and conservation area in the school grounds. A committee has been formed to find out how to get the planning, grants and support needed to make this a really worthwhile long term project. This initiative is being co-ordinated by Miss Baddeley who, I am sure, will keep you informed of progress in future articles.

As you can see, an exciting year for Iron Acton. As ever, if you would like to visit please phone Jane on 228322 to arrange an appointment or e-mail us on ironactonprimary.school@southglos.gov.uk.

Karl Joyce / Head Teacher

IRON ACTON HORTICULTURAL SHOW

The ladies of the Horticultural Show Committee have swung into action and the first thing on our agenda was to set the date for the 2004 Show. So, please, put Saturday, 4 September into your diaries.

As I write this article, we have just suffered a weekend of terrible gales, so the last thing on your minds is preparing your gardens and allotments for your prize-winning entries. A gardener's lot is not a happy one! Last year we had one of the hottest summers for many a year who knows what's in store for us this time?

On the suggestion of a number of people we have added a new Craft Section encompassing wooden, ceramic and upholstered items. We continue to be amazed at the amount of talented craftspeople there are living in the parish so we hope, with the advent of the new classes in the Craft Section, you are able to find an avenue for your talents. We've also changed a number of the flower arranging classes which we hope will stretch your imagination!



FOCAL POYNTZ INFORMATION

Your Focal Poyntz Team is:

Lynne Blanchard
228566

Maureen Blake
294381

Hazel Dron
228509

Roy Hubbard
228356

Barrie Wright
228247

Rona Wright
228247

Deliveries are ably carried out by:

Lionel Alsop

Roy Hubbard

Lynne Blanchard

Ashley Mee

The Bradley Family

Sue Shepherd

Hazel Dron

The Smith Family

Elizabeth Edwards

Laura Walters

Andrew Gowen

Pete Wedgewood

John Griffen

Mike Wheeler

Chris Heal

Barrie and Rona Wright

ARTICLES:

If you've got any news or articles that you think we'd like to receive please contact any of the people on the numbers given above. We would love to hear from you!

ADVERTISING:

If you would like to place an advert in future issues please contact Barrie Wright (228247) - our advertising "whiz" (£20 for a full page and £10 for a half page - invoices can be provided).

ARTWORK:

We are very grateful to Maureen Blake for some more of her very special drawings to complement the articles.

PRINTING:

As always, our printing has been undertaken by Oldbury Deckers Youth Club and we say a big "thank you" to them.

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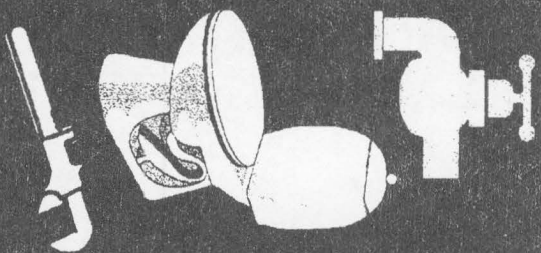
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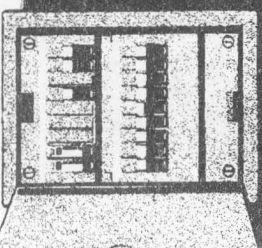
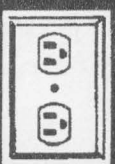
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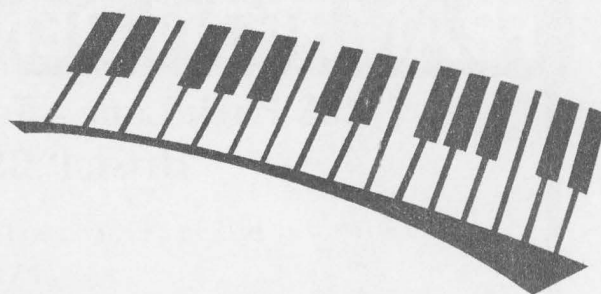
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