

FOCAL POYNIZ



A magazine for Iron Acton



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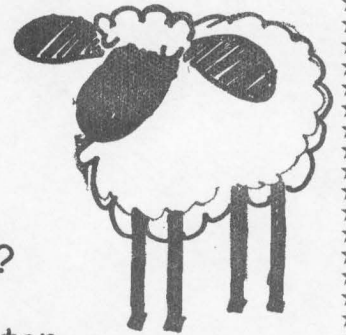
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Winter

ISSUE 75

2007

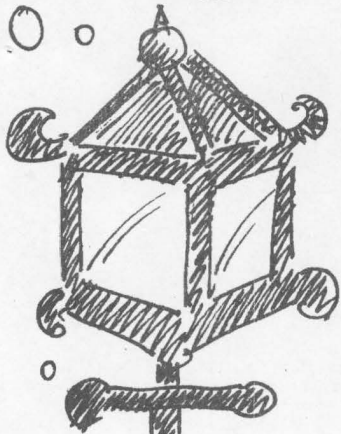
As another year gently draws to an end we would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for supporting Focal Poyntz.

We value the contributions from our village organisations who provide the backbone of the magazine and we are grateful to all those people who deliver the magazine to each far flung corner of the parish in all weathers. They are our invisible heroes.

We would be lost without Maureen Blake's contribution as we would have a very staid magazine without her wonderfully quirky drawing. Neither could we function without Oldbury Deckers Youth Club who produce all the copies of the magazine at such an economic price, to deadline and with compassionate efficiency.

We like to think that FP reflects the values and opinions of Iron Acton's residents so, please, let us have your contributions and help us to continue to produce a magazine that appeals to all interests and is relevant to all age groups in our communities.

Finally, we wish everyone a very happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year.



A Victorian Village Christmas

Iron Acton

Saturday 22nd December 2007

*Food stalls including mince pies, soup stall, and roasted chestnuts.... Doddington parish band and carol singers...
Father Christmas... and much more...*



Local craft and produce stalls... offering traditional festive foods and gifts.

IN AID OF VILLAGE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

**Starting with a Nativity at 4.00pm in
St James the Less church, High Street**

THE ACTONIANS DRAMA GROUP

..... Present Aladdin on

Thursday, 29 November	at 7.30 pm
Friday, 30 November	at 7.30 pm
Saturday, 1 December	at 6.30 pm

Thursday, 6 December	at 7.30 pm
Friday, 7 December	at 7.30 pm
Saturday, 8 December	at 6.30 pm

Tickets are priced at £6 for adults and £4 for children.

(Please note 7.30 pm on Thursdays and Fridays and 6.30 pm start on Saturdays not a typing error above!!)

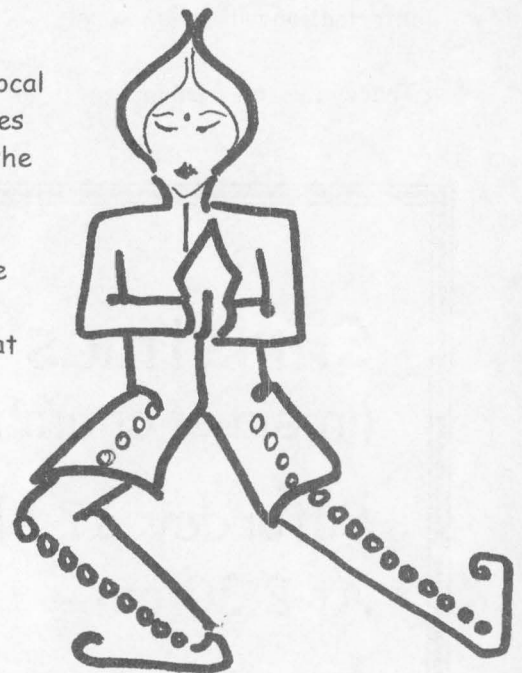
Yes, it's panto time again for the Actonians! The banner hung outside the Parish Hall should have caught your eye. Tickets are selling fast so there's no time like the present to reserve yours. Please contact the cast, crew or Ann Aplin at the Clove Hitch.

What treats do we have in store for you I hear you ask? All the traditional contents are there but served up in the unique Actonian fashion.. We take you from old China, via a magic carpet, to the shores of the Nile. We tell you how the poor son of a laundry washerwoman finds a fortune and the girl of his dreams. He then loses her and his fortune and has to fight to get them back. The journey isn't easy and we are there with Aladdin every step of the way.

Our play has been especially written for us by Godfrey Laundry - the local panto wordsmith. It is strewn with local references and really old jokes so be prepared to moan! Godfrey's wonderful script is augmented by the musical talents of Robert Pardoe who is our musical director for this production. The youngest cast members, all 20 of them, are being put through their paces by Sarah McMahon and gently encouraged to move to the music by June Cross. You'll see a carpet fly, the workings of a Chinese laundry, some cute dancing and some not-so-cute dancing, great songs, bad puns but, most of all, you'll have fun!

We hope that the panto will be the ideal end to a perfect 40th anniversary year. We have been providing entertainment to this village all that time and hope to carry on for another 40 years - providing you continue with your loyal support.

Ann Aplin (228243)



NEXT EDITION OF FOCAL POYNTZ

We're still working on the schedule for 2008, but our current aim is to have the spring edition of our magazine distributed to all houses in the parish by the weekend of 15/16 March 2008 - a week earlier than usual (this is because it's the Easter Weekend 21-24 March). A full schedule will wing its way to our contributors and distributors as soon as we possibly can.

FRIENDS OF IRON ACTON SCHOOL

Although the summer term now seems a long time ago, the friends would like to thank everyone who came along, helped or supported the school's Summer Fayre. The Fayre had a Disney theme and, despite the torrential rain, was a great success! The children dressed up in their Disney costumes and enjoyed activities such as Shrek's swamp, Piglet's Pets Corner and Princess Aurora's Beauty Parlour. A fun evening was had by all and raised £650 - which was put towards new computers and other resources needed by the school.

The children also enjoyed their first School Prom which was held in the Parish Hall during the Summer Term. They dressed in their finery and danced the night away. The Year 6 children (who left at the end of July) were presented with an autograph book from the Friends and they presented their teacher, Mrs Kemp, with a bouquet of flowers.

Back to the present and as autumn is upon us the Friends will be involved in supporting the harvest auction, sponsored wellie walk and a cake sale on Friday, 23 November at 3.15 pm.

The Friends' next main event will be the school's Christmas Fayre on Saturday, 1 December from 11.00 am to 1.00 pm. Please come along and have a cup of team and a mince pie, meet Father Christmas and do some Christmas shopping.

Looking forward to 2008, the Friends will be organising a cake sale on Friday, 18 January at 3.15 pm and a disco for the children on Friday, 8 February. Our main event at the beginning of next year will be a themed night on Saturday, 8 March at the Parish Hall. Please make a note in your diaries - more information will follow soon!

Tracey Lynton-Jenkins



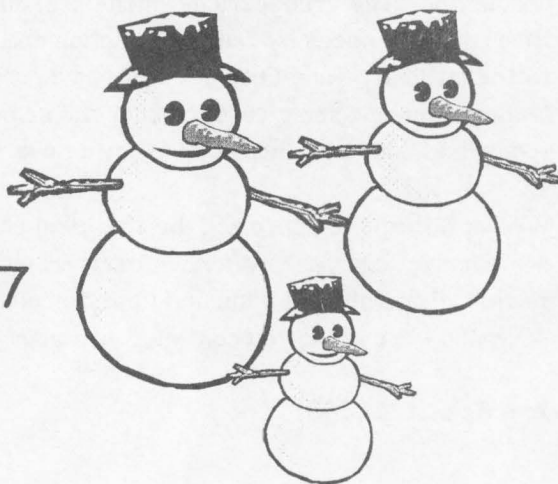
Christmas Fayre (in aid of church funds)

Saturday, 17 November 2007
At 2.30 pm

Iron Acton Parish Hall

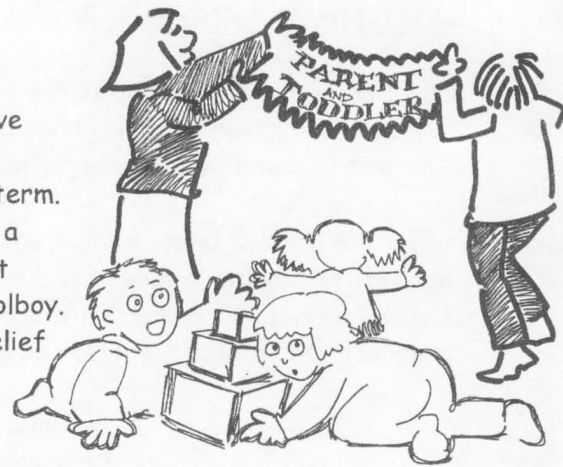
Gifts, Children's Corner, Books, Raffle, Tombola, Cakes,
White Elephant, Home Produce and Refreshments

Come and see Father Christmas!



ST JAMES THE LESS PARENT AND TODDLER GROUP

The thing about toddlers is that they grow up so, as ever, we have happily waved goodbye to several children and their mums over the summer and have started to wave hello to a few new members this term. This autumn I have had the pleasure of seeing my once little dot of a toddler running around in the school playground as he takes his first steps towards being an independent, confident and boisterous schoolboy. In those first tearful (on my part) school days it was an immense relief to know that he had already made some good friends in his class - thanks, mainly, to the Toddler Group.



When I first arrived in the parish 5 years ago I had no idea how I was going to make friends for myself (or, when they arrived, for my son and then daughter), but I was lucky enough to read about the Toddler Group in Focal Poyntz and eventually worked up the courage to go along. If you're a mum (or dad, gran, gramps, etc) with a baby or pre-school child (or perhaps several!) our group could be just right for you. Our group has been running for over a decade now so every mum there has been a "new face" at one time and knows how daunting it can feel so we'll do our best to make you feel welcome. We all live in or around Iron Acton (or Rangeworthy) and currently have places if you wish to join. So far this term the children have enjoyed making pictures with autumn leaves and seeds and the mums (at least those of us who could get an evening "pass") have met up for a drink (or two).

We meet at 10.30 am on Fridays in term time in the Marshall Room behind the church. We start with a craft activity for the children followed by coffee and biscuits (fruit and biscuits for the kids) and finish at midday, after a mad dash to tidy all the toys away, with a few songs.

If you are interested please don't hesitate to call either me (Mel Tofts) or Sally Aries (on 228037).

HORTICULTURAL SHOW - 2007

Well done Iron Acton! Yet again the green fingered residents did us proud and put on a superb display of fruit and vegetables despite the atrocious weather over the summer. The Home Product section was also well entered, and it was great to see so many of our men-folk entering the Victoria Sponge class. Well done lads! (Between you and me, the judge was pretty impressed).

During one of my visits to the allotments, all the doubts about whether anyone would have anything to show were quashed. I saw racks of beautiful golden brown onions drying in the sun (yes, we did have some sunshine, I think it was the last Thursday in August!) Potatoes were being dug, beetroot was flourishing, soft fruits were ripening, and runner beans were lengthening. A veritable hive of activity.

The 2008 Horticultural Show will take place on Saturday 6th September and we will also be taking entries of non-perishable items on Friday 5th. As always, the Horticultural Committee would welcome any new ideas for classes, as we like to add a bit of variety to the schedule, to keep you on your toes.

We received a number of comments following the judging of exhibits about how to display items, etc. If you are relatively new to Horticultural Shows, it is difficult to know what is the correct way to display your item. For your information, we have a book that details exactly how this should be done, which you are welcome to have a look at. However, we thought it would be a good idea to pass on some of the tips and in the spring and summer editions of this magazine we will be passing on some hints to help.



Paula Evans (228419)

NORTH ROAD LADIES CLUB

Our July evening coach trip to the Bristol Blue Glassworks proved to be a great success. Although the rain was falling heavily throughout the evening we were warm and dry watching the glass demonstrations. This was followed by a very enjoyable buffet.

After our summer break we met again on 3 September for a most interesting evening listening to John Bartlett telling the "Story of Old Snuff Mill", illustrated with slides. John spoke about the history, excavation and limited restoration of the mill. He also told us there was never actually any snuff produced at Old Snuff Mill (as one would expect from its name) - only flour.

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Bernard Tapp came along to our October meeting to speak about his visit to Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego - a region that embraces Southern Argentina and Chile. He showed us some stunning slides of a Megallan Penguin colony, huge elephant seal males with their harems and pups and Right Whales as they surfaced alongside the boat in which Bernard and his party were sailing. He showed us photographs of amazing glaciers with Bernard and colleagues actually walking on one of the glaciers.

By the time the winter issue of FP is distributed our members will have celebrated their 40th Birthday at the Codrington Arms in North Road.

The meeting scheduled for 3 December will be a very full evening. Susan Marshfield will, I'm sure, be making us laugh with her stories about "Christmas Past and Present". This will be followed by our AGM and American Supper. Members will also receive the programme for 2008.

Our meetings are held in North Road Community Primary School, usually on the first Monday of the month (during term time only) and commence at 7.30 pm. Visitors are most welcome to come along to any of our meetings.

June Rycroft / Secretary (228668)

IRON ACTON CRICKET CLUB



My summer report for Focal Poyntz started by saying it's nearly the end of June and, due to poor weather, we haven't yet managed to play a game this month. Sadly the same can be said for July and, as we don't arrange fixtures for August, this summer was effectively a write off! This somewhat limits my scope for this article and so I'm going to have to move swiftly on to the indoor winter league.

The indoor winter league kicked off recently with a game between ourselves and Oldbury. Oldbury, batting second, scored a pretty respectable 261 runs in their 22 overs, but this was some way short of the 372 runs we rustled up. Yet again, IACC get off to a flying start you'll have to wait until the spring edition to see if we can stave off the customary downturn as the season progresses.

If anyone out there is interested in playing the game and can stand the disappointment of game after game being ruined by the weather then please give me a ring on the number below.

Chris Bradley / Chairman (228559)

ST JAMES THE LESS IRON ACTON

CHRISTMAS SERVICES AT ST JAMES THE LESS

Sunday 9th December

9.30 am All Age Service - Christingle
(Non-Eucharistic)

Sunday, 16th December

6.30 pm Christmas Carols and Lessons
by Candlelight

Christmas Eve, Monday, 24th December

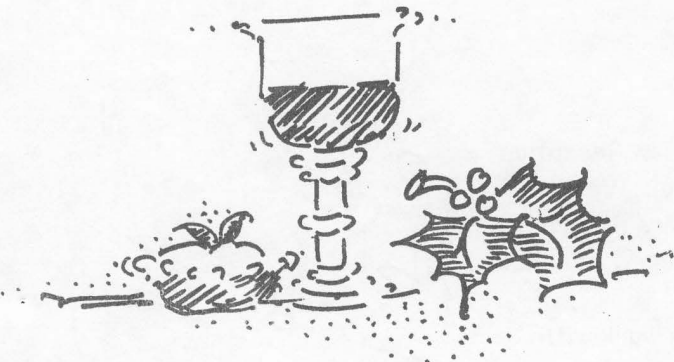
6.30 pm Crib Service
11.30 pm Midnight Mass

Christmas Day, Tuesday, 25th December

9.00 am Family Communion



Would you like to join us over Christmas and share in the joy of the Christmas message? You would be most welcome.



A Talk on William Tyndale

Will be held in St James The Less Church

On Friday, 30 November 2007 at 7.30 pm

Tickets (to include a glass of wine and a mince pie) are priced at £6.00 and are available from Pauline Horne on 01454 776420

(in aid of St James the Less church funds)

Governor for Iron Acton School

You will have seen elsewhere in the magazine that we are looking for a volunteer who might consider becoming a governor at Iron Acton School.

Deanery Uganda Link Volunteer

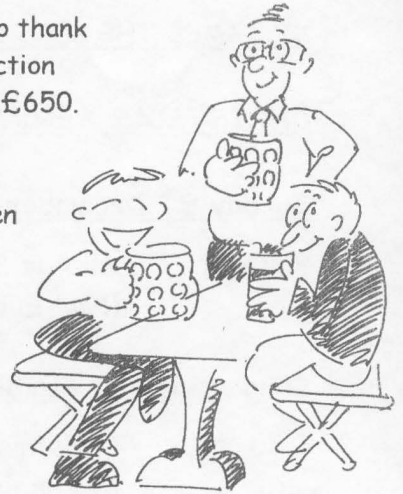
We would also welcome any offers of help or requests for information as we are looking for a parish representative for the Deanery Uganda Link. Meetings are held approximately 3 times a year. Please contact Penny Wheeler or David Harrex if you are interested.

ACTON AID

The summer Proms in the Meadow was, yet, again, a great success. We would like to thank all those who supported the event and those who made it happen. The bucket collection for SSAFA (Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association) Forces Help raised £650.

Our next event is the Annual Bonfire and Firework Display which is planned to take place in the Parish Meadow on Saturday, 3 November - and therefore will have taken place by the time this edition of FP is delivered.

Acton Aid's on-going programme of talks has continued with Ashley Mee giving us a fascinating talk on his climb up Kilimanjaro. This was supported by some excellent photographs and we were all exhausted just hearing about it. Keep a look out for details of future talks - these will be advertised on flyers around the village and kindly delivered with your newspapers by Dave and Pat Taylor.



Acton Aid has allocated funds in 2007 to the Parish Council (a contribution to the new play equipment in the Parish Meadow), the church (for lighting) and North Road Toddlers Group (to allow the purchase of some new sheds for housing their play equipment).

Before Christmas we will be distributing our usual gift to pensioners across the parish.

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 at the Lamb Inn at 8 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 (David McCoy - 228874) or Secretary (Peter Foote - 228674).

Peter Foote / Secretary (228674)

IRON ACTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

We started the year with several new faces. We welcome the new Reception pupils and the 4 new pupils who have joined further up the school. We also welcome 2 new members of staff: Miss Brooks to Class 3 and Mrs Benarous to support Year 2 each morning. We hope they will all be very happy at school.

This term has a very musical theme. Each week the older pupils work with 2 tutors on choral singing and a samba band instruments. This week the younger pupils had a very exciting morning taking part in a Gamelan workshop.



With our ever rising numbers space had become a premium - especially for the older pupils. During the summer holidays the school was a hive of activity as teams of builders extended the mezzanine classroom to link up with the space in the old school house. It was an ambitious undertaking with builders in every day of the school holidays. However, it was well worth the upheaval as Class 3 has been completely transformed with more space, separate toilets, an additional fire exit and changing facilities. In a separate project the stair well has been redecorated and our pupil/staff kitchen has finally been finished. Pupils can now carry out food technology activities in a modern, hygienic, attractive room.

As a church school it is important that we have a strong spiritual and religious focus. Following Rector Sue's retirement and Curate Jane Tailby's resignation we are short of foundation governors. Rev David Harrex has managed to find one "volunteer" but there is still one vacancy. If you are interested in supporting our school in this role please let myself or David Harrex know.

Jill Bendeaux / Head Teacher

DOROTHY WILKINS

We were saddened to hear that Dorothy Wilkins had died during late September - even though she had reached the glorious age of 96. Dorothy was the wife of Charles who was one of the founding lights of Focal Poyntz (or Focus as it was first known). It was certainly true that behind every good man is a very good woman and they were a joyful double act within the village community. Many were reduced to tears at the sight of "her" trying to control "him" ... not always succeeding ... and of the wonderful evenings full of good company and liquid refreshment (Roy Hubbard will be testify to these!)

Dorothy was legendary within the WI as she had summoned the then president for a cup of tea and proceeded to tell her she was concerned their meetings were having an increasingly alcoholic bias (in one year there had been a visit to Harveys for a sherry tasting and a talk on the subject of "Port Wine and Old Masters), a little appeased after an explanation she always kept an eye on them as, due to ill health, she hadn't been able to join in their meetings after years of active participation.

The other anecdote has to do with her driving. She had been a nurse and had driven during the war - she still drove like a cross between Sterling Moss and an angry army ambulance driver, fast and make sure you got out of her way. The top end of the High Street had to be approached with apprehension and trepidation as, at any moment, Dot's lovely little black car could go hurtling up towards Holly Hill regardless of what or who was coming in the other direction and, even if you thought you were in the right, just one look would make you know what she thought!



A lady who lived life to the full, had a rich library of amusing (and sometimes risqué) stories and who, with just the very mention of her name, arouses many happy emotions. She was a true character and one who will be much missed.

THE FRIENDS OF NORTH ROAD SCHOOL

The Friends of North Road School would like to say a big "Thank You" to everyone who helped with our Summer Fair. We had fantastic donations, lots of fun and managed to raise lots of money in the process.

Our main fund-raising focus this year will be aimed at buying new staging for the Main Hall as the old one is extremely rusty and difficult to store and we would like to be able to enjoy the performances laid on by our talented students. We have received an extremely kind donation from The Royal Bank of Scotland, care of Julie James, for £250 which will go into our staging fund.

We have some very exciting things lined up over the next 6 months - one of which is a Ladies Evening On 18 October with stalls from Chocoholics and Body Shop and an opportunity to buy books and jewellery (but which will unfortunately have taken place by the time you are reading this!).

Our Christmas Fair will be held on Friday, 14 December, starting at 2 pm. There will be lots of stalls, run by both adults and children, and Father Christmas will, of course, be in attendance. There will also be some stunning table decorations for sale, along with many other items. All are welcome to join us. We will also be holding a Ladies Fashion Show in March next year. Details are being finalised but if anyone would like to come along please don't hesitate to contact us.



If you would like any details about the Friends of North Road School or further information on any of our events please feel free to contact Maria Nash (Secretary of the Friends of North Road School) on 01454 852813 or the School Office on 01454 867788.

Maria Nash / Secretary (852813)

LAST POSTING DATES FOR CHRISTMAS 2007

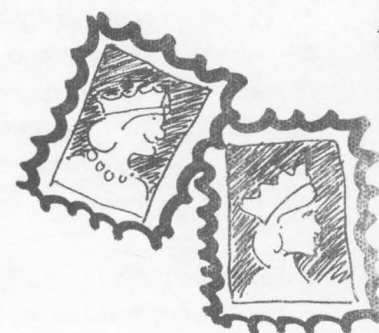
Great Britain Mail

Standard parcels and mail order return parcels	Friday,	14 December
Second class mail	Monday,	17 December
First class mail	Thursday,	20 December
Special delivery	Friday,	21 December
Special delivery	Saturday,	22 December



International Air Mail

South and Central America, Caribbean, Africa, Middle East, Asia, Far East (except Japan), New Zealand and Australia.	Friday,	7 December
USA, Canada, Japan, Eastern Europe.	Monday,	10 December
Western Europe	Thursday,	13 December



International Surface Mail

Apart from the following destinations, all other mail is too late - final posting dates were in October.

Eastern Europe, Greece, Cyprus, Turkey, Malta and Iceland	Friday,	16 November
Western Europe	Friday,	30 November

Full details are available from the Royal Mail website.

USED CHRISTMAS CARDS

From 2-31 January 2008 Tesco (including selected Express Stores), W H Smith, T K Maxx and Marks and Spencer will be collecting used Christmas cards on behalf of the Woodland Trust. Look out for the large green and white cardboard containers. Their 2008 target is to recycle 100 million cards and to plant 24,000 trees.

USED STAMPS

The annual reminder that if anyone wants to give used postage stamps to Lynne Blanchard (Rose Cottage, Latteridge Road, Iron Acton, 228566) she is happy to forward them to Oxfam or you can alternatively take them to either of this organisation's shops in Yate or Thornbury.

Can you just remember that you need to cut around the stamps leaving at least half an inch of envelope around the edge of the stamp.

CHRISTMAS TREE RECYCLING

Please remember to recycle your Christmas trees. They can be taken to any of South Glos Council's Sort It Centres at Yate, Thornbury, Mangotsfield and Little Stoke. Alternatively, we think that Westernbirt Arboretum may also offer this facility.

NORTH ROAD POST OFFICE AND STORES

Throughout 2007 further reports about Post Office closures have proliferated, leading to campaigns to stop further closures.

Within our own parish we have an absolute jewel in North Road. Can we please ask all the inhabitants of Iron Acton to remember that we have our very own post office and stores that needs to be protected at all costs and can we please, please, please use it - especially in the run up to Christmas - to purchase all of our stamps and to send parcels and cards via its mail box.

Opening Hours	Post Office	Stores
Monday	9.00 am to 5.30 pm	6.00 am to 5.30 pm
Tuesday	9.00 am to 5.30 pm	6.00 am to 5.30 pm
Wednesday	9.00 am to 5.30 pm	6.00 am to 6.00 pm
Thursday	9.00 am to 5.30 pm	6.00 am to 5.30 pm
Friday	9.00 am to 5.30 pm	6.00 am to 5.30 pm
Saturday	9.00 am to 12.30 pm	6.00 am to 6.00 pm

The Post Office Counter is closed between 1.00 pm and 2.00 pm each day.

If you're new to Iron Acton and live the Bristol rather than the Yate side and are unsure where to find the PO, head towards Yate, at the roundabout past the Texaco garage turn left, at the first set of traffic lights also turn left - you're now in North Road. The PO is along on your right hand side gently (and suitably) nestled between the Cross Keys and North Road School.

Why not tear out this slip and pin it onto your notice board?

WELCOME TO THE NEW LICENSEES OF THE WHITE HART

Focal Poyntz extends a warm welcome to Alan Lennard and Natalie Harvey who became the new licensees of the White Hart in late Summer. Natalie's a local girl from Chipping Sodbury so she knows the area well. We hope Brendan and Tracy won't mind us saying that it will be nice to have 2 good pubs back in the village. It wasn't so long ago when there were 3 active pubs and there are lots of fond memories of the 3 legged beer races of yester-year between the various establishments.

Alan and Nat have already entered into the community spirit by organising a fund raising for the church. We understand that everyone had a superb evening on 13 October.

We hope they have a long and association with our village and, along with the White Hart, we wish the Lamb, the Cross Keys and the Codrington Arms an incredibly happy and prosperous festive season.

HELP YOUR LOCAL FARMERS

Please be on the look out if you shop in Tesco's for a new range of milk entitled "Local Choice South West" and consider buying it. A 2 pint Local Choice container costs just 1p more than the normal milk but the Local Choice label is one of the ways that Tesco is supporting small local farms. The farms have to confirm to high welfare standards and Tesco commits to collecting and selling the milk locally - which also supports the environment by reducing food miles. I only found it on the shelves when the normal 2 pint containers I buy were out of stock - I found it tucked away, almost out of sight, with the organic and soya and goat stuff. (LB)

IRON ACTON WI

Since the last edition of FP hit the doormats we've enjoyed a lovely walk around Castle Combe (not exactly following the route we'd planned ... but we've never been the best map readers in the world and the poor man who was happily driving down a quiet country lane, minding his own business, enjoying the final remnants of the day, when I leapt out at him to try to find out if he knew where we were in relation to the map has hopefully recovered by now). As with all things IAWI we finished the evening in a lovely old pub down in the centre of the village.

In September Jean Drew tried, with infinite patience and good humour, to explain how to create Christmas tags, cards, bows and door wreaths it was a sight that would've reduced many a Blue Peter presenter to a gibbering heap (or in need of an illegal substance) as we tried to follow her example and although an enjoyable evening was had by all I suspect that most of us will still be hurtling our way to the shops for far more presentable and professional results than we produced. For those of us who definitely know our limitations and were never going to present them to the outside world for public scrutiny the vision we saw in the hall that evening was better than many comedy programmes!!!

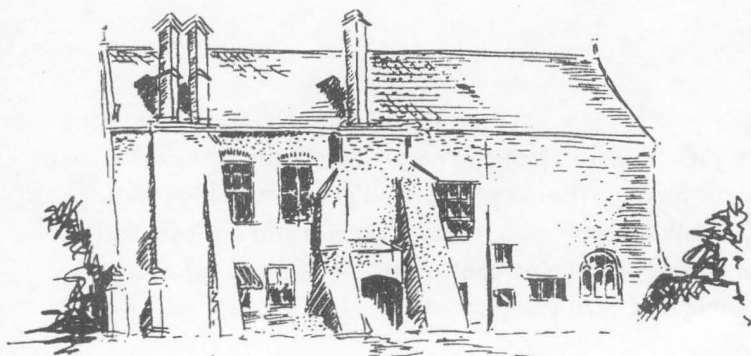
In October Robin Williams (no, not the actor and a different sex) came to tell us how she created the Slimbridge Soaps company. It started as a small cottage industry (until the smells and the sheer quantity of items meant she had to find other premises or a larger house) but is now based in its own premises a short hop from Slimbridge. By 7.30 pm a huge array of items, all beautifully presented, had been laid out on tables by 7.50 pm the various fragrances were invading the room, like invisible gas that weaved and infiltrated the senses. It was a heady experience and we were very pleased that we could purchase goods so we could take some of the aromas back with us.

At the end of October we host the second of our group events this year. Thankfully they only come around every 7 years as each institute takes a turn and it's a nightmare working out all the logistics. We should be magically entertained by Tony Griffith (who should have a host of tricks up his sleeve) and then we're providing a 2 course meal and a glass of decent wine on arrival. All this, coupled with good surroundings and convivial company, for the brilliant price of £2.50 and, if it all goes to plan as it did in April, we'll even make a profit!

I'm writing this before we've enjoyed our birthday party at the White Hart hopefully we'll be well behaved and not make any pages of the Northavon Gazette and then we have our AGM in December which is combined with mulled wine, mince pies and a whole host of delightful nibbles - it's a lovely precursor to Christmas (especially as we're in a false state of security, believing that we're in control and on schedule ... reality has still to hit)!

On behalf of Iron Acton WI we hope that each and every one of you has exactly the sort of Christmas that you dream of and that the New Year is the gateway to a wonderful 2008.

Lynne Blanchard / President (228566)



ACTON COURT OPENING DATES IN 2008

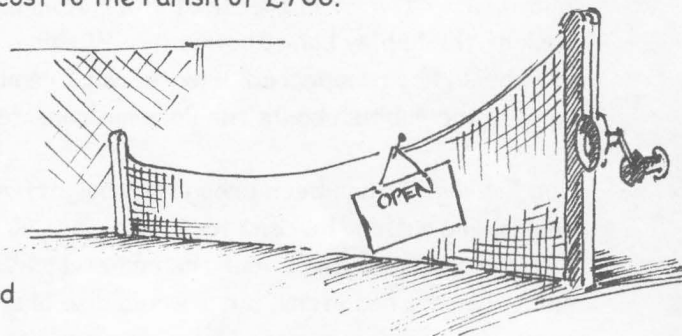
Advance notice that in 2008 Acton Court will be open from 17 June to 24 August.

IRON ACTON PARISH COUNCIL

Please find outlined below an update on the activities in and around the Parish.

Parish Meadows. Unfortunately I have to report that completely irresponsible and mindless damage has been caused to a 10m length of wall at the back of the tennis courts. From inspection, it was obvious that the wall has been pushed out from the Meadows into the adjoining field, and a hammer of some description used to smash some of the stones. The majority of the stones had been put in the stream in order to block it up! The wall has now been repaired at a cost to the Parish of £700.

Tennis Courts. It was great to see so many people using the newly painted and netted courts over the summer, obviously Wimbledon sparked a great deal of enthusiasm! Please remember that the courts can be booked through me, as Clerk, to avoid disappointment.



Play Equipment. The play equipment has now been installed in the Parish Meadows. This equipment was installed following consultation, and a presentation made by the children from Iron Acton primary school. There have been a few comments from Parishioners about the amount of equipment that was installed, and there didn't appear to be very much considering we have spent over £8,000, including VAT. Unfortunately the cost of robust play equipment is expensive and we are also obliged to install safety matting around equipment that has a 'fall height' in excess of 1m. This matting costs in the region of £20 per square metre, and we had to install 84m². The two sit-in spring items were in excess of £1,100, the see saw cost in excess of £1,100, the balancing step logs and wobble board cost over £500, the rock hold wall was nearly £1,000, and the four picnic benches cost several hundred pounds each.

Unfortunately during the course of the summer holidays the slide was damaged - the side support rails had snapped and a hammer had been used to create dents in the slide. This has now been repaired at a cost of £40.

Chilwood Close Green Play Equipment. I can report that letters and questionnaires were delivered to residents of Chilwood Close, Algars Drive and Nibley Lane. Of the responses we received 61% were against the installation of equipment, 30% for and 9% had no views either way. Therefore the Parish Council will take no further action.

Chilwood Woodlands. Fortunately the raves appear to have stopped due to a combination of the inclement weather and a reinforced Police presence. We have liaised closely with the Police over the summer months concerning signage to be installed. These signs are now with a local manufacturer and will be installed as soon as possible. During discussions with South Gloucestershire Council about the problems the Parish were having in the Chilwood Woodlands area, I spoke with one of the Environmental Officers who informed me that they were carrying out a survey on the river Frome to see how the population of White Clawed Crayfish were fairing. Unfortunately they do not appear to be doing very well, and there is little evidence of their presence. However on a brighter note, the Environmental Officer was able to tell me that they have found evidence of otter movements all the way along the river from Frampton through to Yate!

Footpaths. A number of footpaths around the Parish have become extremely overgrown with brambles and nettles etc. We have in the past used Community Service offenders to cut and strim the affected footpaths. I am aware of a number of footpaths that need to be dealt with, but if you regularly walk a certain footpath that needs looking at, please let me know.

(Continued Overleaf)

Neighbourhood Watch. Just a reminder that a Co-Ordinator is still required. If you are interested, please contact me.

North Road. On various occasions North Road has had to be dug up due to frequent ruptures in the sewer pipe under the road. This has caused considerable inconvenience to residents. The Parish Council wrote to Wessex Water making them aware of the trouble that this was causing. Wessex Water responded that in their 2008 Capital Expenditure Budget they have allowed for the replacement of the pump and pipe line.

Allotments. Over the course of the Autumn, we have removed 14 tonnes of rubbish and rubble from the back of the Nibley Lane allotments. Within a couple of days of this being removed, approximately 1 tonne of rubbish has reappeared! Please, can I remind everyone that this area is not a dumping ground, and to remove the rubbish costs the Parish a considerable amount of money.

Dog Fouling. It has been brought to our attention that there appears to be an increase in the amount of dog fouling within the cemetery area. As you can appreciate, this is not a particularly nice thing to discover when relatives visit the cemetery. We are in the process of requesting the installation of a dog bin within the cemetery, but I would also like to remind everyone that there is a financial penalty for anyone caught or witnessed allowing their dog to foul in a public place.

As ever, if you see anything that you feel should be brought to the attention of the Parish Council, please let me know.

Paula Evans / Clerk (228029 or paula@y-gorlan.wanadoo.co.uk)

VIEW FROM NORTH ROAD SCHOOL

Well, the summer holidays came and went, although the supermarkets would have you believe they didn't even happen, with their "back to school" posters displayed in their first week! Blackpool beckoned this summer for one week, my son's first choice, though I suppose one has to do one's bit for the English Tourist Board, even though it's all true what the newspapers were reporting - that a week in Blackpool is more expensive than a week abroad. Still, I have to concede that riding the Masterblaster (the world's longest indoor water slide) is to be highly recommended, should you ever visit that part of the world.

So we're now well and truly back into the swim and the children have returned with renewed energy and enthusiasm. We have already had lots of prospective parents visiting the school with a view to taking up a reception place for next year and, at the other end of the spectrum, the parents of our Year 6 children are giving serious thought to the next stage of their children's education as they attend the local senior school open evenings (I'll be joining them this year now that my son is in his final primary year). The majority of our children do move onto Brimsham Green but we also have a small number moving on to other local schools.

Now our thoughts turn to harvest and it won't be long before we will be appealing to the children to bring in harvest gifts for our service. These will then be auctioned off to parents and the proceeds from the auction are donated to the on-going projects in Genieri in the Gambia - the children always love to be reminded that the Genieri villagers have a small fishing boat named after North Road School.

Our Year 5 children have recently returned from their 3 day residential to the Robert Jefferies Centre in Abergavenny - where they had the most wonderful time. The children were very excited, regaling us all with stories of their expeditions and it would seem that their favourite activity was the waterfall walk, followed closely by the drinking of, apparently, the best hot chocolate in the world. We've also recently held our presentation evening for the Year 6 children and their parents regarding their 5 day residential

help to promote a positive attitude to challenge and adventure and, of course, help to develop the key skills of independence, leadership and teamwork.

Whilst we very much believe in developing the whole child at North Road and are continually looking for and embracing enrichment opportunities we were also delighted to be able to announce to parents that the teacher assessments of the infant children and the SATS results of our recently departed Year 6 children were excellent this year and that is certainly testament to the commitment and hard work of the children, staff and the strong partnership we enjoy with parents.

We are expecting our new building work to start shortly and we are all looking forward to the positive impact the kitchen extension and refurbishment will have on the quality of school lunches. Security will also soon be greatly enhanced when we have our new reception lobby in the office with a secure front gate system which will, in the words of our local crime reduction officer, make the playground a sterile area to "strangers". I know we are very fortunate to have on board enthusiastic school governors who have been very busy this summer helping with the initial planning stages of the project to ensure that we will be guaranteed best value for money from the final build.

We are also very lucky to have such an active Friends of the School group too, who have provided much of the funding to pay for many of our enrichment opportunities. The Summer Fayre was a real crowd puller, even though much of it had to be brought indoors as the heavens opened. The End of Year Disco also proved to be as popular as ever. The Friends are very busy organising a Ladies Evening for October and have all sorts of stalls booked. They are also in the planning stages of our Christmas Fayre - which will be on Friday, 14 December. They also very kindly helped to serve the teas and coffees for our coffee morning as part of the World's Greatest Coffee Morning for McMillan Cancer Support in their attempt to raise over £7m.

We were extremely pleased that we won the Yate Town Council's School Gardening Competition for the second successive year. At the end of the Summer Term we were presented with the winner's shield by the Mayor of Yate as we've actually won it now 6 times in the last 10 years. Each class has its own flower/vegetable bed and all the children contribute to the planting, cultivating and maintaining of their own special allotment.



The school football team has already beaten strong opposition in the first round of the Small Schools' Cup Tournament and is looking forward to an inter school tournament in mid October. The badminton and chess clubs are proving to be very popular. The Mad Science club is starting up again after the half term holiday and we have now started an after school multi-sports club for our Years 1 and 2 (which we are funding with money secured from an extended schools bid) and we soon hope to start an after school choir.

We're organising another walk to school week for mid November and another weekend family bike ride very soon. The whole school will be going to the pantomime before Christmas to see Robin Hood at the Ridings High School's Arts Centre and we have invited the Image Theatre back to school in the New Year to perform one of their participation musicals which is called "Tom's Midnight Garden". Finally, we are continuing to enjoy close links with our Small Schools' Network Group as we plan new collaborative projects which will include another junior parliament day, a day of dance, a maths fun day, theatre workshops and an arts week - which I know the children will really look forward to.

Mark Handley / Head Teacher

FOCAL POYNTZ INFORMATION

Your Focal Poyntz Team is:

Lynne Blanchard
228566

Maureen Blake

Paula Evans
228419

Stella Taylor
228417

Barrie Wright
228247

Rona Wright
228247

Deliveries are ably carried out by:

Sheila Alsop
Lynne Blanchard
The Bradley Family
Elizabeth Edwards
Andrew Gowen
John Griffin
Chris Heal
Roy Hubbard

Ashley Mee
Sue Shepherd
The Smith Family
Stella Taylor
The Walters Family
Pete Wedgewood
Mike Wheeler
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:

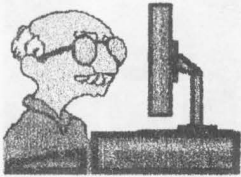
We are very grateful to Maureen Blake for some more of her very special drawings to complement the articles.

PRINTING:

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

COVER:

Our cover has been designed by Eileen Hughes - we have used it before but it's such a lovely design that we thought it deserved to appear again.



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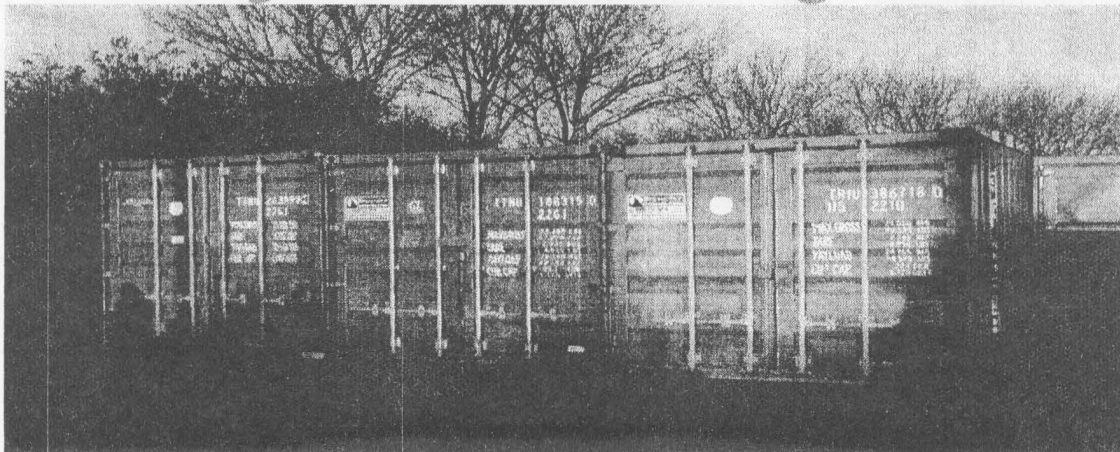
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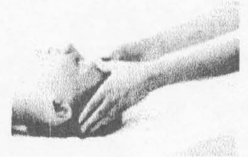
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