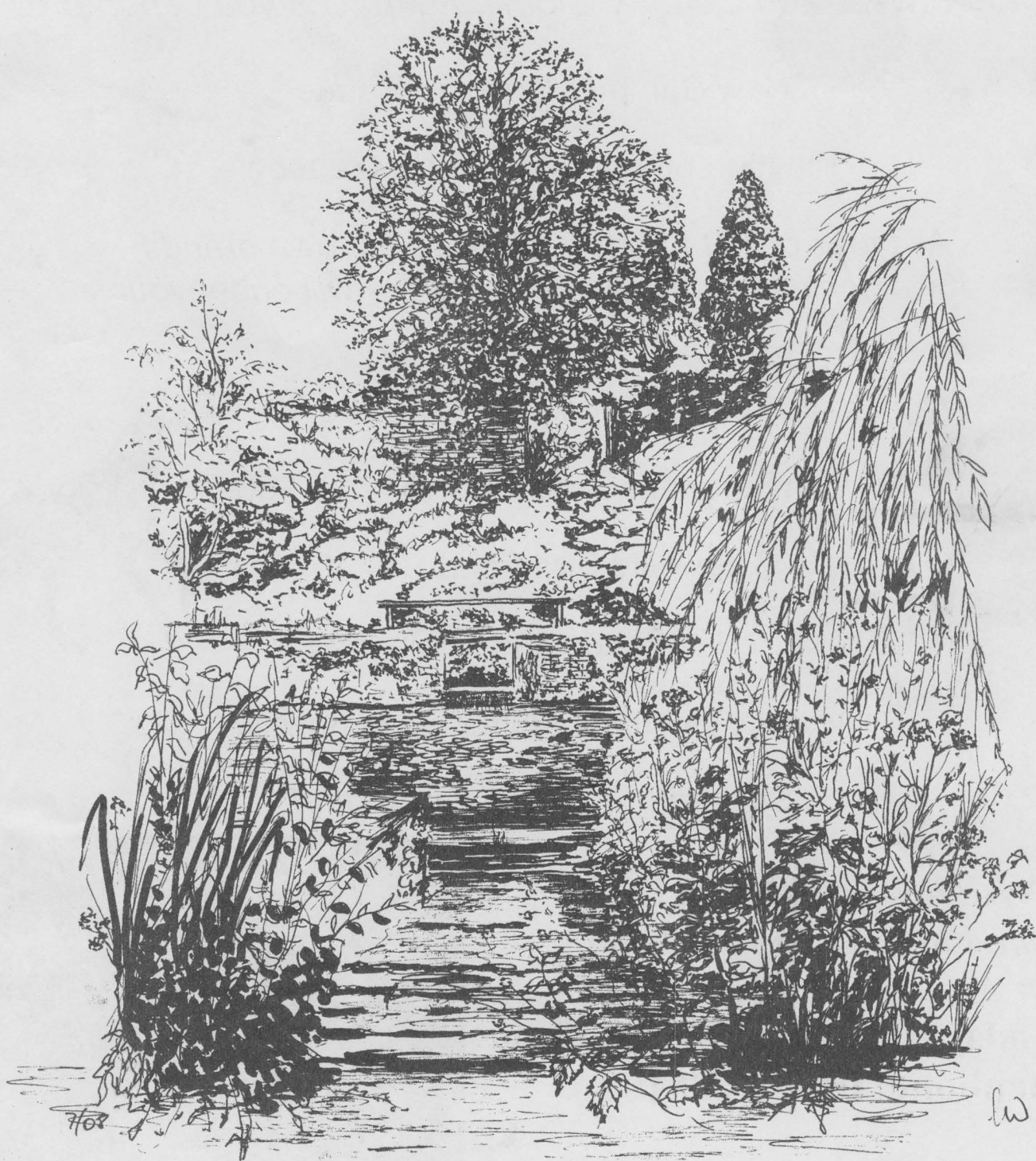


FOCAL POYNTZ



7/08

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Or just come along and try your luck on the 'Tote'.

Contact Jane Climpson on 01454 228672 for entry tickets / sponsorship

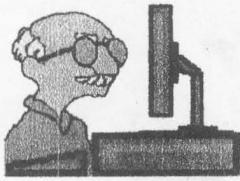


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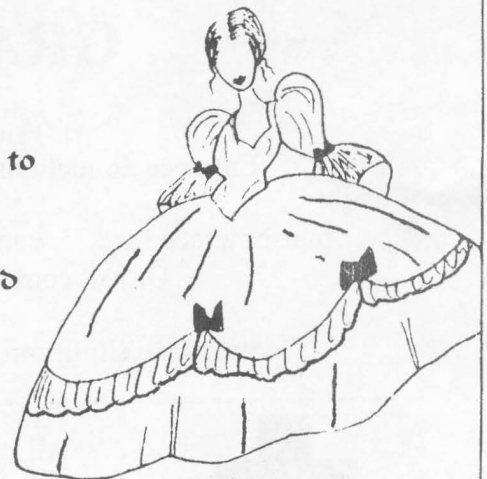
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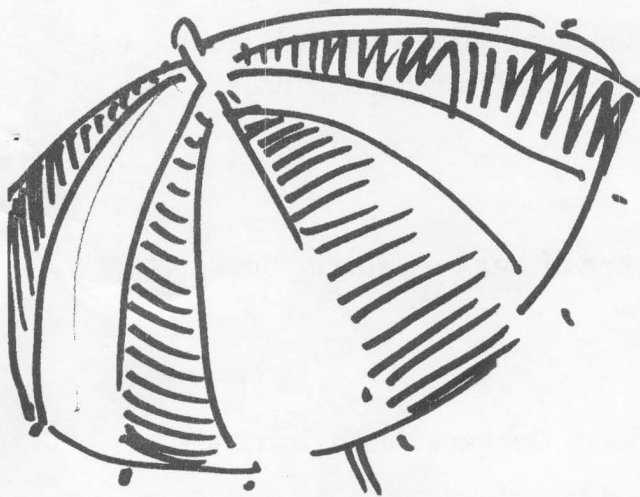
ISSUE No: 77

Welcome to issue 77 of our magazine (only another 7 years before we reach our centenary!).

The warm sunshine of summer has yet to arrive - maybe it's just around the corner? At least, whilst you sit huddled with your hands cupped around a warming mug of coffee, you'll have something enjoyable to read.

Our next edition is due out in the middle of November and should contain details of the Christmas events that are being planned by our local organisations

..... But that's a good few months away so, in the meantime, we hope you enjoy our latest offering.



FOCAL POYNTZ INFORMATION

Your Focal Poyntz Team is:

Lynne Blanchard
228566

Maureen Blake

Paula Evans
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Stella Taylor
228417

Barrie Wright
228247

Rona Wright
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Sheila Alsop
Lynne Blanchard
The Bradley Family
Elizabeth Edward
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 beautifully evocative cover was created by Marilyn Wright. It's a brand new drawing and has never before graced the cover of Focal Poyntz. We are very grateful to Marilyn.

IRON ACTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Each year I am amazed at how quickly the time passes. This final term of the school year is always packed full of exciting events such as picnics, cathedral visits, sports days and sporting festivals. The children are looking forward to their whole school trip to the Noah's Ark at Wraxall.

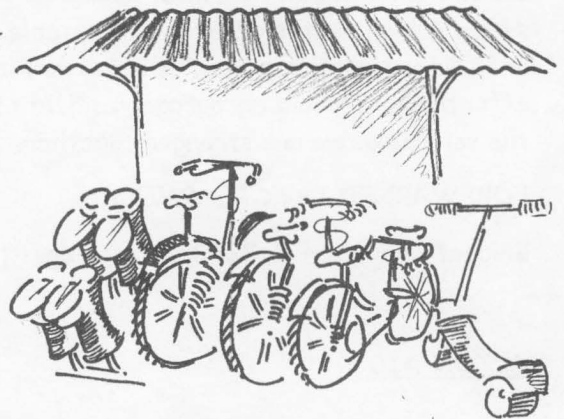
The new Reception children have already visited school and seem to be a very enthusiastic group. Year 6 will be visiting their secondary school soon. Last week they went on camp to Barton Hall in Torquay with pupils from North Road and Rangeworthy Schools. This has been a new venture for us and has been very successful. Thank you to both schools for inviting us.

Class 2 worked hard to learn some country dances which they performed at the small school dance festival at Tortworth School. Hopefully there will be an opportunity to see some of them at the Church Fete on 5 July.

Our covered waiting area, wellie racks and bicycle shelters are now well established and it is great to see so many pupils riding bikes and scooters to school. I am delighted that Sean McKinnon, a Community Police Support Officer, has agreed to run cycle training for pupils.

As I write this article the school is a hive of activity as we get ready for the Summer Fayre which has an animal theme this year. All around me raffle tickets are being folded, bird feeders are being made, sweets are being organised, stalls are being designed and buckets of grunge are being created. One of the highlights of the event is the opening parade and many of the children are busy preparing their costumes. As well as an excellent fundraiser this is one of the most sociable evenings of the school year and everyone is really looking forward to it.

Jill Bendeaux / Headteacher



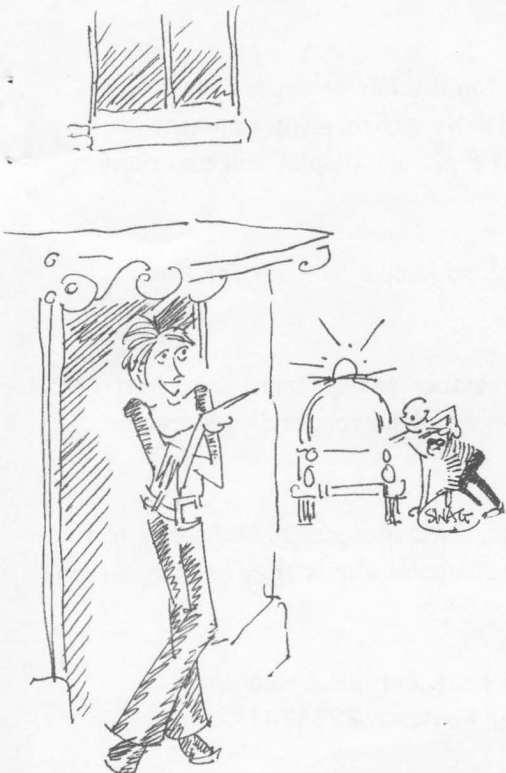
NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Let's remind ourselves of what it's all about. Neighbourhood Watch is a way of ensuring and sustaining a close, active liaison between residents and police. By increasing awareness, information sharing and supporting each other we can all contribute to ensure our parish is a safe place in which to live.

I have recently taken over the role of Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator which, unfortunately, has been dormant for several months. I am keen to get things back on track and have re-established links with the local community police team and have some ideas on ways in which we can take this initiative forward.

As many of you are aware, I have already contacted the existing Neighbourhood Watch Street/Road Representatives and I would like to thank them for their support and continued commitment to the scheme. With this in mind, it would be wonderful if we could have a representative for every street and road and I still need volunteers for the following place:

- 1 resident from Wotton Road
- 2 residents from Chilwood Close/Algars Drive/Nibley Lane
- 1 resident from Latteridge Road (from the traffic lights to Acton Court and a bit beyond)



As with the other volunteers you will be responsible for passing on relevant information to and from myself to other scheme members in your street/road.

The previous scheme membership has become so out of date that it is now necessary to start afresh. As such, I would be grateful if any household who wants to renew their membership or join the scheme could contact me, in the first instance, with their details..

There are a number of benefits to being a member of the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. You will receive current and relevant information relating to specific areas of concern enabling you to take appropriate action to minimise the risk of becoming a victim of crime. You will also be provided with crime prevention advice and we can all benefit from our collective awareness and observations which will be provided to the police to assist them. In addition, most insurance companies provide a discount for home insurers who are members of such a scheme. It is generally acceptable for scheme members to pay a small annual fee of £2 per household and this is something I feel is necessary in order to have the capability to finance and run the scheme effectively. I would encourage residents to support and join the scheme as we are stronger together.

FOREWARNED IS FOREARMED!

Bridget Thompson / 227354 / bridget.thompson@homecall.co.uk

ACTON AID

Acton Aid continues the fine tradition of meeting 12 times a year. The group meets on the first Thursday of each month at 8 pm in the Lamb. Newcomers are always welcome!

By the time Focal Poyntz drops through your letter box the parish will hopefully be reflecting on a successful Proms in the Meadows. This is the fifth year that Acton Aid has organised the event and we are grateful for the support of the parishioners who attend in their vast numbers with family and friends in tow.



Acton Aid members and their wives provided their usual service at the May Day celebrations catering for the masses on the Green. The burgers sold out in record time and takings were at an all time high enabling Acton Aid to make a significant contribution to the fundraising efforts.

Another date to pencil in your diary is Saturday, 27 September 2008. Acton Aid has organised "A German Night" in the Parish Hall. There will be food and drink available, together with musical entertainment in the form of an oompah band. Get your lederhosen out now! The Bonfire Night Firework Display will be taking place in the Parish Meadow on 1 November 2008.

Tickets for all events are available from committee members and the Lamb so keep a look out for the posters. Buy early to avoid disappointment!

An intrepid group of Acton Aid members is venturing further afield in November to represent Iron Acton on a 4 day trip to Prague. The trip is intended to be educational - members are looking forward to learning about Czechoslovakian beers and lagers!

Our on-going programme of talks has come to a standstill in recent months. It is increasingly difficult to find volunteers to give a talk. If anyone is interested in giving a talk or knows someone who is they are more than welcome to contact the Secretary.

Finally, if you know of any parishioners who would benefit from Acton Aid's support, please contact, in confidence, our Chairman (Peter Huish on 228861) or our Secretary (Peter Foote on 228674).

VIEW FROM NORTH ROAD SCHOOL

Just back from the Year 6 residential visit week to the PGL Adventure and Study Camp in Torquay on the English Riviera. It was great to see the children from North Road, Iron Acton and Rangeworthy Schools having the most wonderful time in the great outdoors. What a refreshing change from all their studying for SATs week. We were lucky with the weather - having glorious blue skies every day. The activities the children chose this year included the zip wire (or "death slide") which looked truly exhilarating and the trapeze bar which took your breath away (even when watching from the comfort of terra firma). They also enjoyed raft building, canoeing, orienteering, archery, fencing, abseiling, aqua fun, aero ball and quad biking. We're already booked for next year - it was that good!

Our younger children thoroughly enjoyed performing their country dance around the maypole at the Iron Acton May Day Fayre and, as usual, it was hard to pull my son away from all the attractions on The Green. We're looking forward to playing Iron Acton School in a friendly football match at the Iron Acton Church Fete and we're also hoping a group of our modern dancers will be giving a short performance that day too!

The school kitchen has been up and running for some while now and is serving the most delicious school lunches. The governors and parents have been invited in to lunch with their children over the last few weeks to sample for themselves our new look lunches.

The Friends of the School have been very active and they have just bought a brand new staging system for the school hall - which will be a fabulous resource for plays and assemblies. They recently organised our successful plant and cake sale, where hanging baskets could be snapped up for a bargain price. The Friends are now busy organising our Summer Fair and the Year 6 Prom Evening.

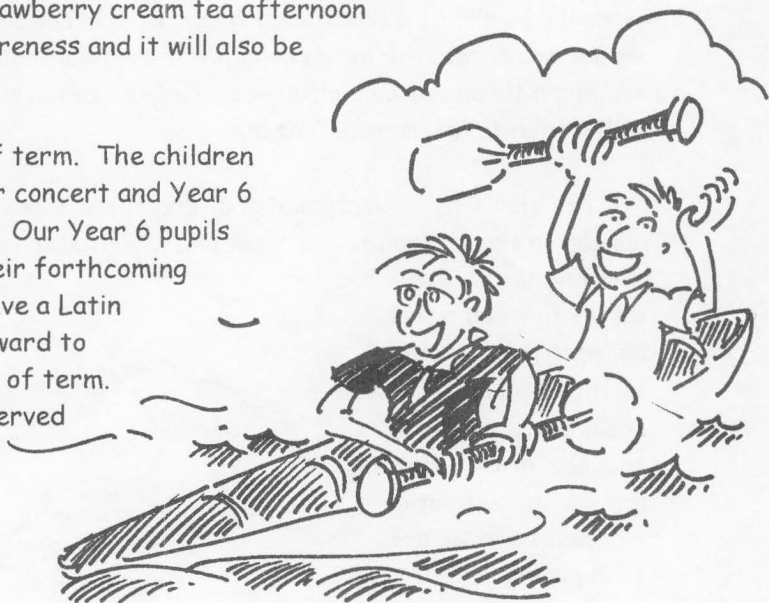
On the sporting front, our football team recently played in the finals of the Small Schools Football Tournament, where we lost to Rangeworthy in a nail biting sudden death penalty shootout. The footballers have enjoyed specialist coaching at our "Jamie Shore" football club. We're looking forward to a group of our infant children taking part in the multi sports event at the next Festival of Youth Sports' Day at YOSC. We qualified through to the final of the lacrosse event at the previous Spring Sports' Festival. We also fielded a cricket team in a recent tournament at the Chipping Sodbury County Cricket Ground. It's so encouraging for the children to experience a range of sporting activities.

We are delighted to have recently appointed Mrs Hatfield to be our new deputy headteacher. She will be starting in September and she will also be teaching our Year 5 and 6 children.

We are very pleased that Mrs Williams will be staying with us next year, teaching on one day a week. We are having a strawberry cream tea afternoon very soon to raise money for McMillan cancer awareness and it will also be an opportunity for parents to meet Mrs Hatfield.

We are all set for a very busy run in to the end of term. The children are already beginning rehearsals for their summer concert and Year 6 is organising a "North Road's Got Talent" contest. Our Year 6 pupils are excited, if not a little apprehensive, about their forthcoming induction days at their new senior schools. We have a Latin American music visit in July and we're looking forward to a small schools' Olympian project towards the end of term. The children will no doubt be ready for a well deserved break in the summer holidays.

Mark Handley / Headteacher



CLIMBING WITH LAURA

Daughter Laura's decision to spend 6 months of her gap year in Tanzania gave travel loving parents some holiday options. Zanzibar, safari and a family rendezvous were considered but, with Mum tied to school holidays and Easter being the wet season, not pursued so that left Laura's suggestion that Dad could fly out and climb Kilimanjaro with her.

Well I was up for it and still reasonably fit thanks to an exercise research programme at Bath University and thankfully Mum approved. Research was carried out and places booked on a 7 day trek commencing on 24 June to coincide with the end of Laura's placement and, hopefully, the rainy season. A couple of weeks later, following conversations at work, and with Laura's approval, colleagues David and Andrew decided to join the adventure.

Despite one or two health scares Laura enjoyed a fantastic experience at the Amani Centre, Morogogo. She threw herself into caring and teaching disabled children and took opportunities to visit the orphanage and farm linked to the centre. Most weekends she met up with fellow gapers and together they visited many parts of Tanzania.

Back at home Dad and colleagues began to shop their way through the substantial kit list and broke in new boots with walks in the Cotswolds and Brecon Beacons. Suitably equipped, we flew to Nairobi on 21 June for an overnight stop before taking the shuttle bus into Tanzania. Peter, our driver, treated us to a brief tour of Nairobi's main buildings before we settled into the hotel bar to sample some Tusker beer and enjoy a lovely discussion on Kenyan life and Swahili with barman Nash.

Reunion with Laura Day started with the Imman's call for prayer at 5.30 am. After a quick breakfast we boarded Bobby's shuttle bus for the 6 hour ride into Tanzania to Arusha, along with a motley crew comprising 3 Slovenian girls, a San Francisco couple on a 12 months world tour, 2 Kenyans, 2 Tanzanians and Theresa the mad Spaniard. The bus needed a push start before heading out of town past miles of slow moving commuter traffic, the majority comprising mini buses rammed with workers from the shanty town suburbs. Roadside communities were dusty, busy and colourful. Mechanics with Spartan mobile workshops sweating under dodgy trucks on the roadside in front of fruit shacks, cafes, pharmacies, butchers and grocers. After the Blue Triangle cement works we were into Masai country, with numerous small herds of goats or cows seeking out grazing under the watchful eye of their colourfully clad herdsmen.

Settlements became wider spaced: 25 to 30 miles between roadside trading communities, with the occasional sight of a traditional village of thatched mud huts, encircled by a low mud mound topped with shrubs to contain the herds at night. Four hours along the pot-holed road we arrive at the border and, dodging a throng of colourfully dressed and bejewelled hawkers, collect our visas before the metal gate is pulled open to let us into Tanzania.

The red earth turns dusty and grey and the villages less frequent. The wide open plains of the Serengeti appear on the horizon to the west and Mount Meru emerges in front of us. Every now and then a stick carrying Masai, in his distinctive red dress, appears from nowhere at the roadside.

Passing Mount Meru the vegetation becomes more lush, cultivation increases and we are soon pulling into Arusha.



Our driver meets the bus and is quick to apologise for the misunderstanding which has left Laura back at the guest house. Ten minutes later we are at the guest house and I am reunited with Laura after nearly 6 months. She has matured, seems relaxed and confident and, despite losing some weight, looks well. After a long hug we chill out in the garden, talking and looking through her amazing photos.

After a nice supper and early night we are up to sample a breakfast of purple porridge, pancakes and omelette - a combination we were to become familiar with on our trek. We enjoyed a leisurely tour of Arusha, shopped for souvenirs and found a cashpoint before returning to the guest house to meet the other 2 members of our trekking party. Quite a coincidence that Mike and Heather live in Loughborough, where I attended school and where number one daughter did her degree. Emmy arrived at supper to give us a briefing. She recalled her own ascent of Kili, a psychological as well as physical challenge for someone brought up with a mystical fear of the mountain. The message was slow, slow, slow, drink, drink, drink!

Another early night and we were up at 6.00 am to start the trek. Introduced to our 3 guides: Julius, Uforo and Godfrey, the minibus was loaded with kit and we set off on the 90 minute drive to Machame Gate. It was amazing to see the full support crew of 18 porters carrying all the food and shelter we would need for a week on the mountains; tents, chairs, trays of eggs, bags of potatoes, gas cylinders and much more. They soon disappeared up the track into the mist to ensure that camp would be pitched on our arrival. Starting at 1700m we had to steadily ascend through the rain forest with its lush, green, dense vegetation. Along the way we chatted with other groups and were surprised to come across a couple from Norway on their honeymoon. After 6 hours, as the forest began to make way to heathland, we arrived at Machame Hut campsite, an altitude of 2980m and a welcome tea of popcorn, soup, fish and vegetables. The mess tent was a bit cramped for 6 but it was good to sit on a comfortable chair and enjoy warming food.

It was dark by 7.30 pm and we soon settled into our tents for the night well, that was the intent but, due to the "drink, drink, drink" there were frequent visits to the disgusting long drop toilet. This, and the cold resulted in a poor night's sleep. We were roused at 7.00 am by the gentle voice of Elias the waiter, "Good morning, sleep well, hot water, breakfast ready". Out of the sleeping bag, on with some clothes, a quick face wash and in for breakfast. This was to become our routine for the week. Elias, the cook, prepared the ubiquitous purple porridge, along with sweet pancakes, eggs, sausage and toast ... all washed down with warming tea, coffee or hot chocolate. We then packed up our kit, sterilised our water containers which Elias had filled, collected our packed lunches and set off on Day 2.

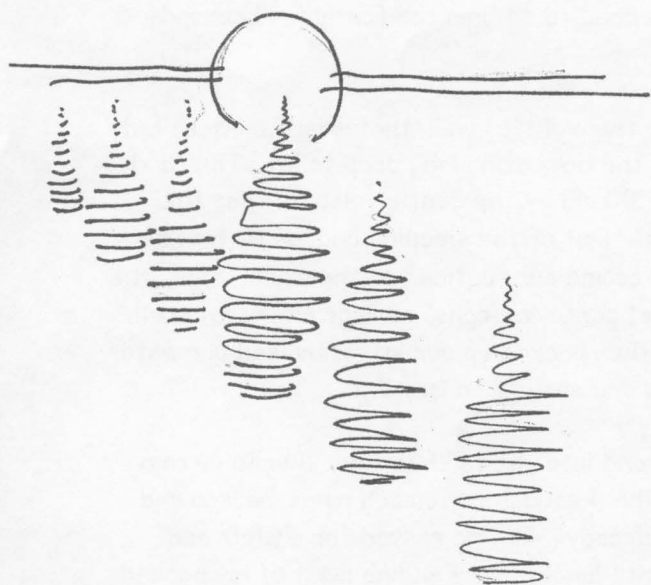
It was a pretty climb out of the forest, above the cloud base and into the tall heather. By mid morning we had climbed to 3500m and I suddenly started to feel terrible; headache, stomach pains, nausea and very lethargic. Surely I hadn't been hit by altitude sickness already? Having rested for a while and snacked on chocolate and energy bars I made slow progress until lunchtime. Feeding most of my packed lunch to the greedy ravens, I slept in the sun for 30 minutes, took half a diamox tablet and felt marginally better in the afternoon.

We had our first glimpse of snow as we traversed the Shira Ridge and crossed the plateau to Shira Camp at 3800m. The views from the plateau were fantastic, the jagged peak of Jonsell point and Klute Peak in the foreground, with Mount Meru appearing through the cloud some 50 km to the west and the mass of Kibo to the east.

My appetite had not returned at tea time and, feeling nauseous, I took to my bed. To help avoid the cold I used a fleece liner to my sleeping bag, which was bliss and despite several strolls to water the undergrowth (I did drink 1.5 litres through the night) I had a great sleep. Refreshed and feeling much better I ate a good breakfast and prepared for Day 3. Laura complained of a sore heel as she got dressed so we were fortunate that David had a vast array of foot treatments and plasters, the combination of which seemed to do the trick. The day was spent walking across the largely barren plateau, steadily climbing to the Lava Tower at 4630m. Some groups camp at the spectacular outcrop of

rock but we had a 2 hour descent to Barranco Camp, at 3950m in the bottom of the steep Barranco Valley. I was pleased to have walked for 7 hours and ascended an additional 800m without a repeat of the altitude sickness. Whether this was down to drugs or acclimatisation I will never know. Laura was very tired after the long day and struggled with the fact that we had descended 700m in the afternoon. I think she would have preferred to keep climbing! Still little appetite but managed to eat a tea of cucumber soup, spaghetti bolognese and banana fritters, washed down with mugs of tea.

Awoke to a clear morning on Day 4 after a good 11 hour sleep. This was a short day, but started with a climb up the spectacular Great Barranco Wall. Laura and I enjoyed scrambling up the rock face but Andrew and David did not like the sheer drops and were gripping onto the rocks and progressing with great caution. At the opposite end of the confidence scale our porters were shinning up the rock like mountain goats, despite their heavy loads and frequently inadequate footwear. On this part of the Southern Circuit the vegetation was more varied and we saw green malachite sunbirds feeding on the lobelia. After 3 hours we could see our destination at Karanga but it would take us 1.5 hours to get down into the valley and ascend to the camp at 4200m. We had not been given packed lunches and arrived at camp on a small plateau to find the lunch table set out under the sun, with clear views of the snow and glacier clad Kibo peak above us and cotton wool clouds stretching to the horizon below. What a setting to enjoy the most welcome chicken and chips with coleslaw that I have ever eaten! Hats off to Elias the cook for preparing such a feast and to the porters for carrying the food and utensils for 4 days. We spent the afternoon chilling out and taking some great shots of the scenery, and even had time for a reasonable strip wash in the tent before settling down to another early night.



Day 5 started with an al fresco breakfast in the warm morning sun, followed by a steady 4 hour ascent to Barafu Camp at 4550m. This was to be our base camp for the summit attempt later in the evening. We managed to grab a couple of hours sleep in the afternoon and a couple more after tea. Elias woke us at 10.00 pm and the 6 of us huddled over bowls of porridge, toast and mugs of tea in the mess tent discussing how many layers to wear for the night. Julius suggests 6 so we oblige, fill our platypus water containers and set off at 11.00 pm. Ahead is a steep 7 hour climb up the scree slope to Stella Point at 5750m. Under the moonlight we could pick out a magical line of torches winding its way slowly up the mountainside ahead of us. To keep spirits up Julius sang a lovely medley of Masai songs and chants. The moon created a shadow of the peak across the valley below us as we crossed the snow line and onto the zigzag path up the loose fine scree. Plenty of snacks were

consumed but by this stage my water had frozen. Thankfully others had better insulated bottles to share. Laura and I seemed to be happy continuing at a steady pace but Andrew started to struggle after 5 hours and need a lot of support to continue. At 6.00 am we finally reached Stella Point on the crater ridge. With perfect timing the sun appeared over the horizon to create a spectacular orange light from the top of the cloud base in the distance to the snow under our feet. Laura's photo of this is amazing and has been captured on the mouse mat I am using when typing this article.

Although it was only 45 minutes of very gradual ascent to the summit the porters agreed that Andrew could not continue. He was seeing stars and had no energy and as he would get a certificate for reaching Stella it seemed a sensible move. Godfrey, the Assistant Guide, escorted him back whilst the remaining 5 of us made the move to the summit. We passed the Rebmann and Decken Glaciers and it seemed we were on top of the world. David had begun to suffer but was determined to continue and after 45 minutes the summit appeared in view some 200m away. Arm in arm David, Laura and I knew we would make it and got

quite emotional. The magnitude of our achievement began to sink in, as well as appreciation for the opportunity to be at such an amazing place. The adrenalin kept us warm at the summit for 20 minutes as we took plenty of photos before starting our descent.

We arrived back at Barafu at 11.00 am, having jumped and slid down the scree, with a number of tumbles as tired limbs and minds lost co-ordination. We grabbed an hour's sleep before lunch and then packed our bags for a steady 4 hour descent to Mweka Camp at 3100m. As we descended the increase in oxygen just about compensated for our tiredness. We sorted out our tips for the guides and porters \$150 from each of us, divided in accordance with tour company guidelines and took to our beds soon after tea.

Day 7 30 June It's my wedding anniversary so I ring Judith when I wake up. The only problem is that in the UK it's 6.45 am and a weekend morning so my thoughts were not particularly appreciated! After breakfast we hand out the tips - which are well earned and seemed well received. The full contingent then line up to sing us a couple of songs and then we pack up for a 3 hour walk to Mweka Gate. Outside the park gates there are plenty of hawkers trying to sell trinkets but we sit in a small café and enjoy burger and chips washed down with bottles of coke. David and Andrew give away most of their kit to our grateful porters and we jump on the minibus for our journey back to the guest house.

Never have showers, razors, a proper toilet and supply of cold beer been so welcome. The 6 of us chilled out in the pretty garden under the later afternoon sun, contemplating our achievement.

THE ACTONIANS DRAMA GROUP

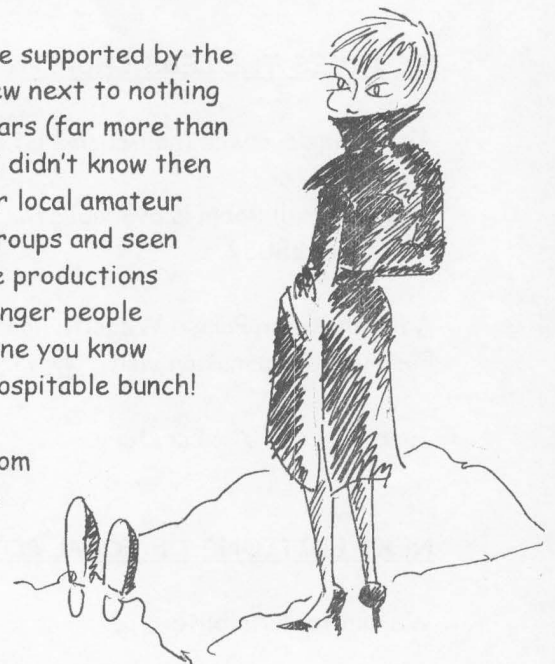
This year's autumn production is "Audience with Murder" by Roger Leach and Colin Wakefield. It is an intriguing, multi-layered, witty adult thriller that's full of unexpected twists. It is set in the present day so it isn't your "usual" murder mystery. To explain any further would spoil the enjoyment of the play The only way to find out what happens is to come along to the Iron Acton Parish Hall on either Thursday 27th, Friday 28th or Saturday 29th November!

We, in The Actonians, are rightly proud of our superb website, which is run so ably by Ray Bulmer, where anyone can keep up with the latest developments and exploits of your local drama group.

It is always nice to see how well our productions and other events are supported by the village and other people. When I joined The Actonians in 2002 I knew next to nothing about amateur drama, not having done anything on stage for many years (far more than I want to admit to!), but I was welcomed so warmly into the group. I didn't know then how highly regarded the Actonians were (and still are) amongst other local amateur drama groups. It's only when I have mixed with people from other groups and seen other productions that I have come to realise that the quality of the productions from the members of our group is very high indeed. We do need younger people to come along and try their hand at acting, so, please encourage anyone you know who has an interest in performing to get in contact - we are a very hospitable bunch!

Please keep supporting us in the ways that you have and we will go from strength to strength, without forgetting our close ties to the village and village life.

Simon Carney



IRON ACTON WI

We started on a very positive note this year after a slightly shaky end to last year. Some of our past members had decided to hang up their WI Committee hats after many years of service but, luckily, others have stepped into the breach and have brought with them lots of fresh ideas for the year ahead. We have had new members joining and 2 ladies have been able to return having been members some years ago.

We have already enjoyed some interesting speakers. There was a talk on bee keeping at the start of the year and a very informative talk and demonstration from Catherine Pederick from Gold Pink Glass who designed and made the stained glass screen in St Mary Redcliffe Church to commemorate the life of Roger Bennett, the popular local broadcaster and musician. We had a talk and demonstration on make-up for the mature skin from Gina Merrett-Smith, a professional make-up artist, and in June an inspiring talk from Di Bullock on Hearing Dogs for the Deaf (no-one can accuse us of not having a wide variety of speakers in our WI). Di brought along Popeye, her late husband's hearing dog, who is now alas deaf himself but, nonetheless, behaved impeccably throughout the evening (it could be said he looked slightly bored but hopefully this wasn't due to the company he was in!).

In July, we'll keep our fingers crossed for fine weather when we take a boat trip on the river from Bristol Docks, picnicking on the way. After our summer break in August more speakers are arranged including one from Bart Spices and, of course, the Birthday and Christmas parties will bring up the tail end of the year. We enjoyed being involved with the Victorian Evening last December and are looking forward to contributing to the atmosphere again this year selling refreshments and mince pies.



Meetings are held on the second Monday of the month in Iron Acton Parish Hall and new members are always made very welcome. Anyone who would like details of future meetings can contact our secretary, Stella Taylor, on 228417.

Sylvie Powell / Press Officer

ST JAMES THE LESS CHURCH

An All Age Service (non-eucharistic) is held on the second Sunday of each month commencing at 10.00 am.

The Marshall Room is available for hiring for private meetings, etc. For bookings please contact Mrs Sally Aries on 228037.

An Iron Acton Parish Website has been set up which gives a Calendar of Events taking place in the parish. For more information visit: www.ironactonparish.info

June Rycroft / Secretary

NEXT EDITIONS OF FOCAL POYNTZ

We aim to distribute

The Winter 2008 edition on or before the weekend of Saturday, 15 and Sunday, 16 November 2008.

The Spring 2008 edition on or before the weekend of Saturday, 28 and Sunday, 29 March 2009.

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 Plant Sale and Sponsored Swim - we managed to raise a very healthy £660, which will go a long way to helping us fund projects for the children.

We are also very pleased to announce that we have now been able to purchase the new staging for the school! After many fund-raisers we were in a position to give the go-ahead and the school is delighted and will be using it very shortly in forthcoming events.

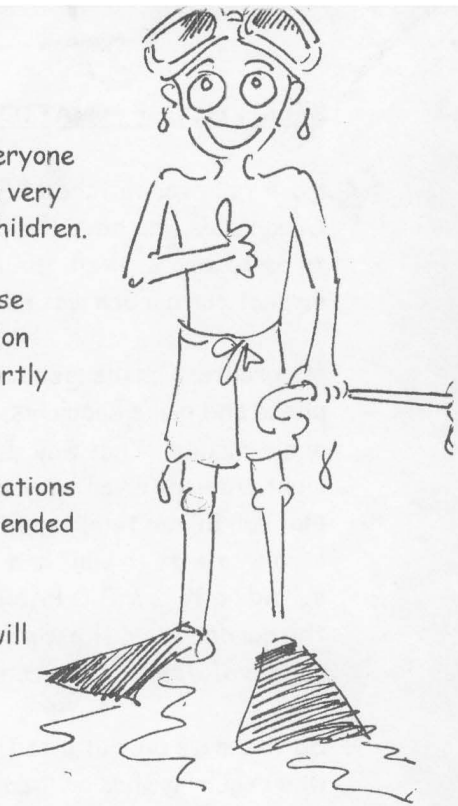
We were very pleased to take part in this year's Iron Acton May Day celebrations on the village green and would like to thank all helpers and everyone who attended on the day.

Our next fundraising event will be our Summer Fair on Friday, 11 July - we will have a tombola, BBQ, cake stall, beat the goalie, obstacle course and craft stall there will also be a raffle - the first prize will be an I-pod.

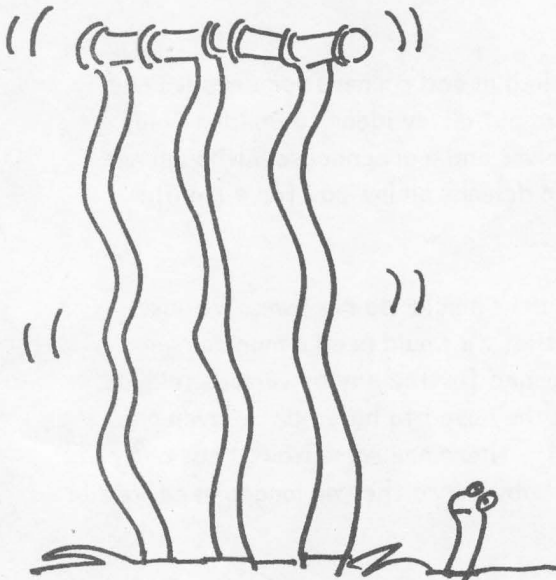
By the time you read this we will have held a Summer Prom for our Year 6 children - but all children from the school, together with their families, will be invited to attend too. The venue will be Iron Acton Parish Hall and the doors will open at 6.30 pm.

If you would like any details about the Friends of North Road School or further information on any of the events we've mentioned please feel free to contact me on 852813 or the School Office on 867788.

Maria Nash / Secretary



IRON ACTON CRICKET CLUB



I'm writing this at the end of June and Iron Acton Cricket Club is well into their summer season with only 4 of the 11 fixtures still to play. Thankfully the weather has been kinder than last year with only one match called off due to rain; though we have played on some very soft wickets which brings a whole new meaning to the term "soft dismissal". Results have been as predicted and in-line with expectations with 4 out of 5 batsmen scoring at least one run per examination. The opening fixture, against Old Sodbury, was perhaps the closest fought contest with 2 runs being required off the final ball to win. As we could only manage a single the game ended in a draw.

In past years the club has had up to 30 playing members which was usually just enough to ensure we could turn up with 11 players to every match. This has now dwindled to a core of about 15 and raising a full team has become a challenge in itself. Fortunately

The 15 are a fairly dedicated (not to be confused with desiccated) bunch but a few more players would help fill those gaps that have occurred this season.

Finally, to bring you up-to-date with the indoor winter season, IACC finished a very pleasing second - our only 2 defeats being against the team that finished above them. The shorted boundaries are clearly to our liking!

Chris Bradley / Chairman

BEECH HOUSE - NATIONAL GARDENS SCHEME

Have you ever watched BBC Open Gardens? Those County Organisers who have the power to make or break you seem to be so scary. Well, the lovely lady, Eileen, who came to inspect our garden was much less scary than those on TV.

My greatest challenge had been to actually pick up the phone and make enquiries, so I did it the less painful way and e-mailed! That way, I thought, I could look up the right answers prior to the preliminary interrogation. Not so! Eileen telephoned me a few days later to make arrangements to visit and inspect. PANIC erupts, slowly subsiding to ... MILD PANIC. "For heaven's sake", I say to the garden from the warm, dry kitchen, "I know it's the middle of January but can't you buck up a bit for next week?"

So there we go, out into the wind and rain, husband John who "makes things from stuff" and myself who regularly "has an idea dear". We know the Yellow Book is already in print for 2008 so we have at least 18 months to prepare. Not so (again)!

Eileen turned up with her raincoat and boots and notepad. She and I spent rather a long time in the garden discussing our plans such as "that won't be there", "John's going to rebuild that", "We're going to move that over a bit" and, of course, "it all looks better in the summer".

Over a warming cup of tea and chunk of home-made cake, Eileen asks John if he is also a gardener. "No" he replies from the kitchen sofa, "I'm just the builder". Then comes the bomb-shell from Eileen. Would we open this year 1st June wow yes, we'll do teas, yes, we'll do plant sales where did those answers come from? Eileen managed to get us into the Local Yellow Book under "stop press - late entries" now we have no back out clause.

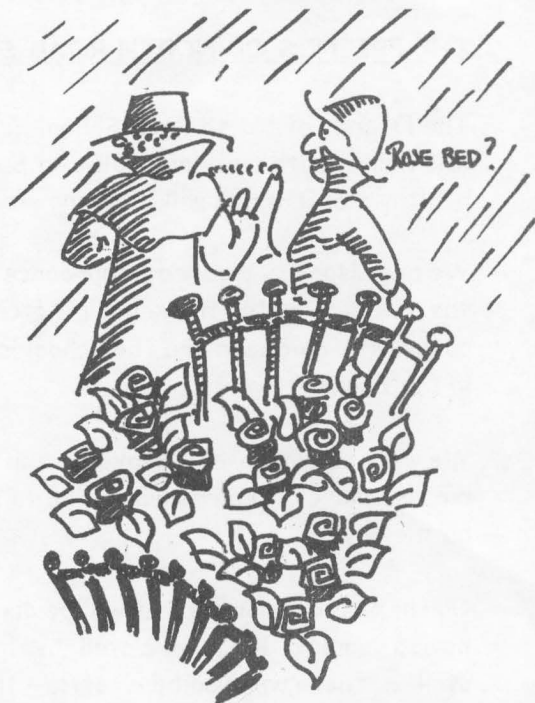
Out came all the old bits of wood and scraps of wrought iron stacked in odd corners for decades and mostly overgrown with couch grass and nettles. Now is the time to put all my ideas to Builder John! Thank goodness we have outbuildings to work in during the hailstorms and a greenhouse, although not heated, a couple of degrees warmer than outside. We worked like demons on low pay for 4 months and eventually began to feel proud of what we had achieved.

You wouldn't believe the research that took us to other Open Gardens similar to our own. We just needed to know how people organised the day. We soon realised that we would need a much larger teapot (if not two) plus a Baby Burco and trays. All were gladly loaned for the day by various friends. In our search for a Baby Burco of our own so many people told us they used to have one even one that's now used to hold fishing bait (we had to decline that offer!) - there are some weird teas one can buy but fish tea definitely isn't one of them. So, if anyone has a Baby Burco they no longer need we can absolutely guarantee to give it a loving home.

Closer to opening day BBC weather reports were commandeered online from home on a regular basis. What if it rains? 30 foot gazebo. What if we have cakes left over? put them in the freezer. What if NO-ONE turns up? well the family will enjoy getting together. The phrase "what if" was banned!

With help from family and friends donating cakes, manning the gates, providing plants, helping on the plant stall and providing teas we raised £561 for the National Garden Scheme and it's charitable work. Would we do it again? Absolutely YES So, when next year, we are in the Yellow Book look out for Beech House and help us make our second venture into the realms of possibility a great success.

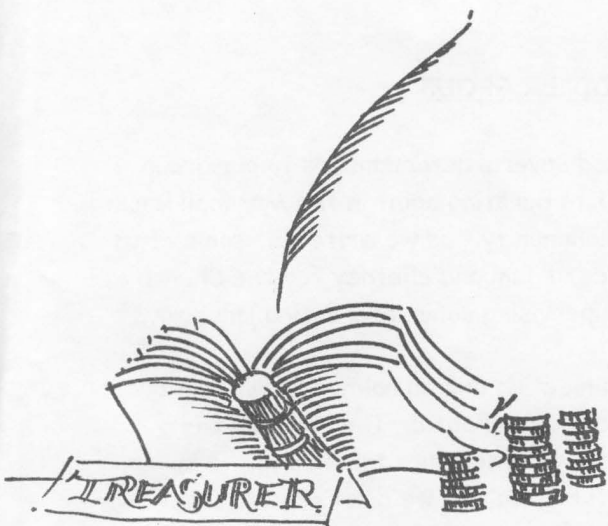
Hazel Williams



IRON ACTON PARISH HALL

The Hall Committee has applied to South Gloucestershire Council for permission to extend the Hall to the rear to accommodate a new, larger kitchen, to increase the props storage area and to provide a larger bar space. The application is now "doing the rounds" and if no objections are forthcoming should be approved in the autumn.

Our Treasurer, Helen Crowe, will be standing down from the committee in the autumn and we are eager to hear from anybody prepared to take on this role. The position involves keeping control of our finances and attending our monthly meetings.



If you are interested in becoming our Treasurer, or would like to get some more information on what's involved before committing yourself further, please call our Chairman, Tony Pullen, on 228949.

I will finish with a reminder that if anyone is interested in booking all or part of the Hall please contact Meryl Cook, our Bookings Manager, on 228405.

Barry Dewhurst / Secretary

NORTH ROAD LADIES CLUB

Since the last Focal Poyntz North Road Ladies Club has enjoyed some very entertaining speakers including Mr P Goodchild who spoke on "The History of Fry's Chocolate Factory", a talk by Trevor Herbert on "Your Daily Bread", Phil Lomax told us all about "The History of Weston Super Mare" and Jill Broad brought along many "Body Shop" products for members to sample.

By the time this summer edition is distributed our members will have been on their annual evening coach trip and this July we are visiting Chavenage House near Tetbury - so we hope the weather will be kind.



As our members wish to give to local charities it was decided that our 2008 charity would be split between the Jesse May Trust (which is a Bristol based charity that provides a hospice at home service of nursing care and respite for children with a terminal illness) and Frome House in Yate (a residential home for the elderly). As in previous years the money will be raised from bring and buy stalls at our meetings but this year we have introduced colour schemes for these stalls, plus the usual book stall. It is also hoped that our December meeting will incorporate a Beetle Drive for our charity.

We do not hold a meeting in August and so our programme for the remainder of 2008 is as follows:

Monday,	8 September	Looking Forward to Spring - a gardening talk and slides by Mr D Everitt
Monday,	6 October	Life in Malaysia - a talk and slides by Mr J Kane
Monday,	3 November	Our Birthday Party - venue to be arranged
Monday,	1 December	AGM followed by an American Supper and Beetle Drive

Our meetings are held at North Road Community Primary School commencing at 7.30 pm. Visitors will always be given a warm reception at any of our meetings.

June Rycroft / Secretary



ST JAMES' PARENT AND TODDLER GROUP

Over the spring we have welcomed several new members to our group and are currently thriving almost to bursting point in the Marshall Room. We are actively engaged in the community - as we write this some of us are busily making the last batches of jam and chutney for the Church Fete and where we will also be supervising some interesting large toys.

The Marshall Room is filled each meeting and on rainy days when we are all crammed indoors it can get quite chaotic. The children can enjoy crafts throughout the session at their new tables and the mums can have a little longer to drink their tea now we don't have to fight

for a bit of glue or paint-free space. We were able to buy the new children's furniture thanks to a generous donation from Action Aid and thanks to Iron Acton Parish Council we have purchased some new toys and a bookcase.

The children particularly enjoyed making hand-print pictures for Father's Day and planting sunflower seeds to grow this summer (thanks to Mrs Parker who generously donated seeds and pots). We would also like to thank everyone who responded to our plea for toys in the last edition of Focal Poyntz.

The group welcomes new members however new places from September this year will be limited by the group's current success and because very few of our current crop of toddlers are graduating to the Reception Class. For further information please contact Sally (228037) or Mel (228701)

Sally Aries

PRIMROSE COTTAGE OPEN GARDEN AND PLANT SALE

After several days of dedicated gardening. Primrose Cottage in the High Street threw open its gate to raise funds for Cancer Research on Saturday, 21 June.

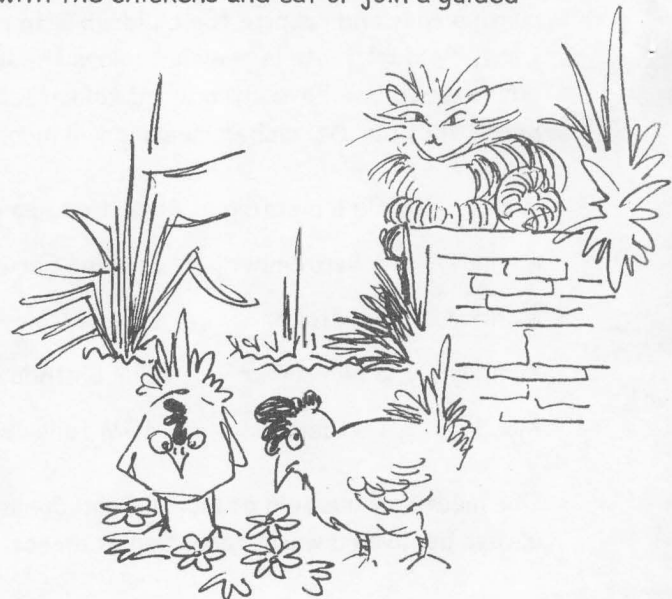
In beautiful, warm sunshine over 30 "garden lovers" were able to enjoy June Schofield's unique and lovingly tended garden. There was something to thrill everyone; from deep, well-stocked herbaceous borders to the formal, clipped box and heavenly scented rose garden. Visitors could wander leisurely amongst the vegetable patch, pause to pass the time of day with the chickens and cat or join a guided tour with June herself.

Trade was brisk at the Plant Stall and a grand total of £186.50 was raised. Many thanks to Jessica Lock for her time and plants!

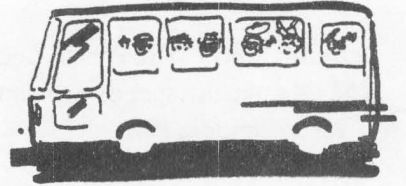
The chosen charity is Tenovus; based in Cardiff, they have no government funding but carry out cancer research as well as specialising in patient care, information initiatives and prevention programmes. Their scientists are acknowledged to be amongst the world's leading experts in the search for new treatments for cancer.

My gratitude to everyone who supported the day and thank you and well done to June and Mike!

Jill Redfearn



PARISH COUNCIL REPORT



BUS SERVICE: Many of you will have read in the press recently about changes and amendments to First Bus routes. As far as Iron Acton village is concerned, First Bus has stated that "buses will no longer travel along the High Street in Iron Acton as it has become increasingly difficult for buses to negotiate parked cars". Despite the Parish Council's protests and a request for First Bus to provide us with dates when this has happened, First Bus has not acknowledged our request. The bus route will now go along Station Road to the Latteridge junction traffic lights, up the bypass and on to Yate. The Parish Council identified to First Bus that this meant the majority of the residents of Iron Acton would have a greater distance to walk to catch a bus, and that perhaps First Bus should look into providing an additional bus stop at some point by the Wotton Road junction traffic lights. First Bus has acknowledged that they will be discussing this possibility with South Gloucestershire Council. In essence, the village will be served by the X27 which will run along the M32 with no change in frequency, and the 329 which is an evenings and Sunday only service.

In light of the loss of the bus service through the village and if you have trouble using the bus service, the Parish Council would like to remind residents of the Community Transport Services. For our area with is the Yate, Sodbury & District Community Transport Group. Their Ring & Ride number is 0845 241 0985. The Dial-a-Ride offers door-to-door transport. However to use this service you must register with the scheme and book your journey 24 hours in advance. The service is also free if you have a Diamond Travelcard.

NORTH ROAD: The work to complete the installation of the new sewer pump is well underway, and although it has caused a great deal of inconvenience to residents, is nearing completion. Let's hope that it does the trick!

ENGINE COMMON: A number of weeks ago, it was discovered that a rather large pit head had suddenly appeared along Engine Common Lane! We understand that South Gloucestershire Council is due to inspect the area and then discuss options for remedial works. The Chairman of the Parish Council will be accompanying South Gloucestershire representatives.

VILLAGE GREEN: Damage has been caused to the cobbles that edge the Green, and work to reinstate these will commence shortly.

CHILWOOD WOODLAND: The Parish Council is pleased to report that all of the measures undertaken by the various organisations appear to be working. The one slight drawback is that the gate on Frampton End Lane is actually blocking a footpath, but we have been informed by South Gloucestershire that they are looking into a solution to allow walkers through but still keep out the ravers!!

PARISH MEADOW: The Parish Council is considering plans to give the boundaries underneath the trees a good clear out and remove all the unwanted brambles and shrubs as well as crown lift the trees along the bypass wall. By undertaking this clearing, it will give the Parish Meadows more space, as the brambles are encroaching some 4-5 yards in places. The Parish Council also felt that by clearing out the vegetation underneath the trees in the play area this would open out the area making all parts of it clearly visible to users.

Unfortunately there has been a spate of vandalism in the play area with graffiti (in the form of phalli) being drawn on the play equipment. Obviously, considering the nature of this graffiti, it will have to be removed, the expense for which will have to be paid by the Parish Council. I also have been informed that on a separate occasion older children were witnessed trying to pull a large tractor tyre up the slide. This tyre is extremely large and heavy and could have caused considerable damage to the play equipment, not to mention hurting a child if it was to fall. Please, can I remind parishioners that the play equipment is designed for children up to the age of 11 years.

CEMETERY: The Parish Council is also considering plans for the cemetery as unfortunately we only have 7 internment spaces remaining. We are therefore currently investigating whether we can incorporate the vacant middle row.

ALLOTMENTS: During 2007 the Parish Council removed some 14 tonnes of rubbish and rubble from the track running along the back of the allotments in Nibley Lane, at considerable expense to the Parish. The Parish Council is planning to reposition the gate on Nibley Lane, moving it in by approximately 3ft. The gate will then be locked in an attempt to stop the fly tipping, but will allow pedestrian access to the side of the gate. The Parish Council is also looking into plans to provide an area at the top of the allotments for composting of allotment refuse.

DOG FOULING: This continues to be a problem around the Parish. Please, if you are a dog walker, make sure that you take appropriate measures to clear up after your dog. The Parish Council is planning to install 2 new dog bins - one at the top end of the cemetery, and one by the footpath on the bypass (Wotton Road junction).

As always, if you spot any vandalism, damage or problems in and around the Parish, please report them to the Clerk.

Paula Evans / Clerk / 228026 / paula@y-gorlan.wanadoo.co.uk

HORTICULTURAL SHOW - SATURDAY 6TH SEPTEMBER 2008

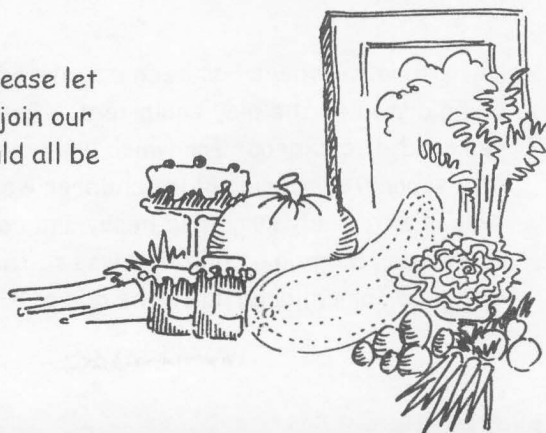
The planting season is now well under way and thankfully this year the weather has been gracious to the gardeners. However, talking to other green-fingered residents, it appears that yet again the slugs and snails have done their utmost to thwart our efforts. Listening to breakfast television the other day I overheard an article about pest control and how to control slugs and snails. There were the usual suggestions of slug pellets (organic or otherwise, depending on your ethics!), egg shells, sand and even soot, with the slightly more expensive option of copper wire or tape.

My 2 sons have finally shown an interest in growing vegetables, even though anything green or healthy does not pass the youngest son's lips! However, having finally planted up our little vegetable plot, there have been some quite harrowing and nervous moment as their father has shown them how to 'do things properly'. They have then attempted to earth up the potatoes, only to completely hack out the young shoot, stand on rows of newly planted carrots and get totally confused about the difference between a weed and a beetroot leaf! The best one was when their father went to put some (organic) slug pellets around his precious runner beans, only to find that the recently purchased bottle was empty. On looking at the vegetable plot, it became apparent just where those slug pellets had gone. Our youngest son had decided that in the battle against the slugs he would put a very dense and substantial ring of pellets around all 4 of his courgette plants!

Anyway, the schedule for this year's show is enclosed in this edition of FP together with an entry form. These details are also on the Iron Acton Village Website.

As always, if you have any queries, questions or suggestions, please let one of the committee members know. If anyone would like to join our happy little band, or if you could help us out on the 6th, we would all be extremely grateful.

Paula Evans / 228029



Christmas Fayre

(in aid of church funds)

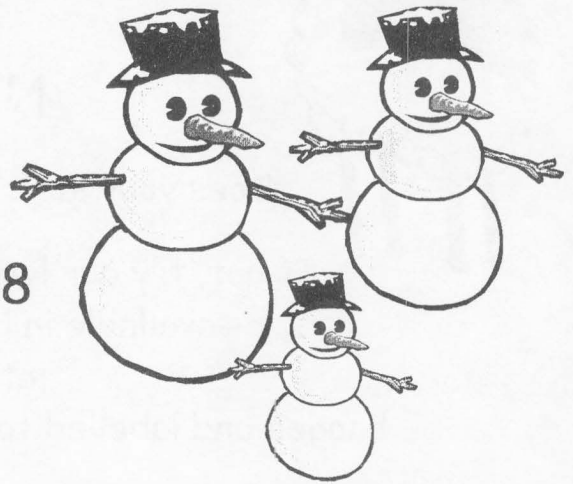
Saturday, 15 November 2008

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!



Distribution Details for Winter and Spring Editions of Focal Poyntz

We aim to distribute

The Winter 2008 Edition

On Saturday, 15 and Sunday, 16 November 2008

The Spring 2009 Edition

On Saturday, 28 and Sunday, 29 March 2009

We hope that by giving you these details now it
will help you to plan the dates of any events
that you want to advertise in our magazine



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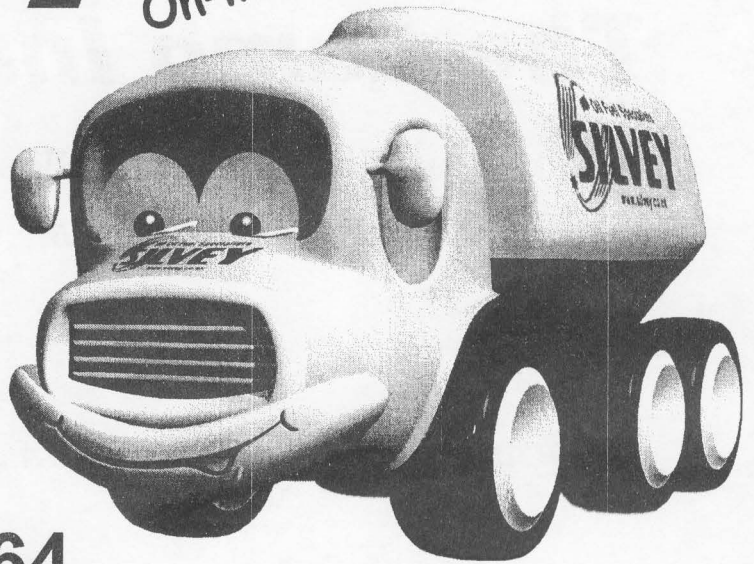
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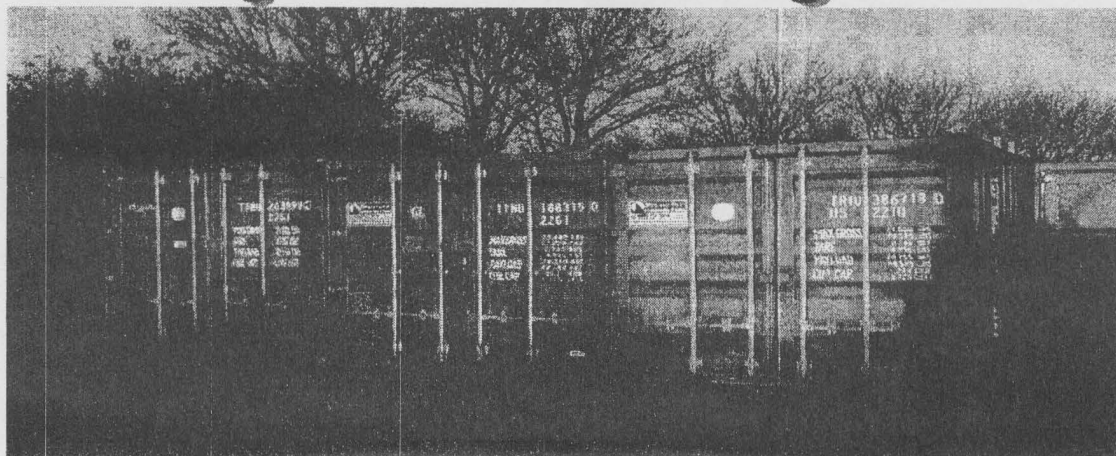
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