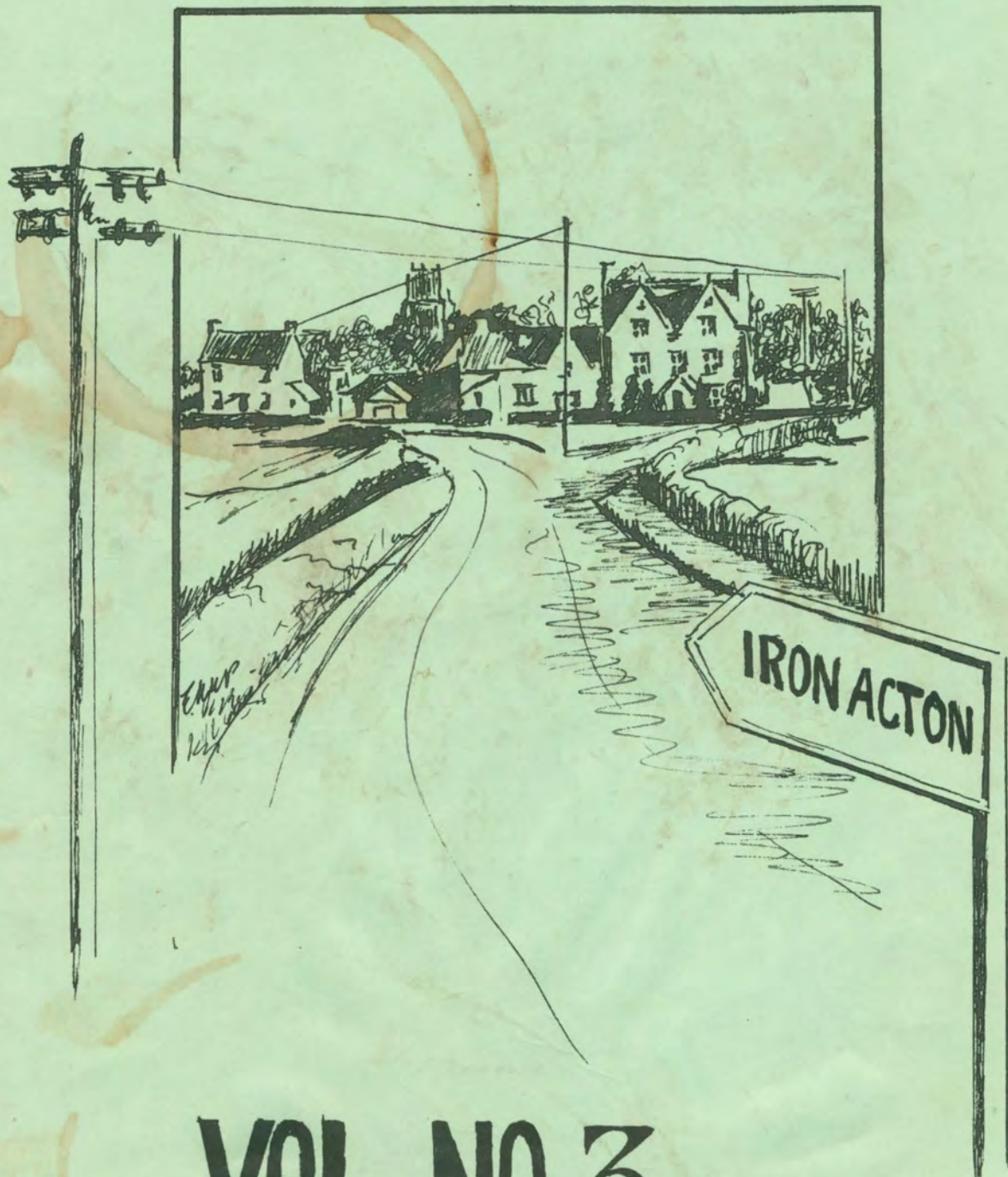


FOCUS ON



VOL. NO. 3.

No. 11



SPRING '86

EDITORIAL

It is a little late to wish you all a Happy New Year, but since this is our first issue and we haven't had the opportunity before, we wish you all a very happy 1986.

This is the beginning of our fourth year of publication, and we manage to soldier on, thanks to our advertisers, to our many subscribers, and to our contributors, who always find interesting subjects to write about.

We have heard it said that many more people would contribute to our funds but are not sure how much to give. Well truthfully, we are grateful for any amount however small (and we know that most of us can't afford to give a large amount) but look at it this way:-

Each issue now costs	£ 90 - £100 for 450 copies
Income from adverts	£ 30 - £ 40 per issue
Number of houses circulated	425
So if each household gave	50p. per year
Income would be	£212.50 and all our problems would disappear!

Do keep sending in tales about your holidays and hobbies, club and organisation reports, or any other items of interest, without them we would have nothing to print!

We were sad to hear recently of the death of two village "characters", Miss Marjorie Turner and Mr Bill Morgan. Until the last few years Marjorie was active in many village organisations, and Bill was well known for his paper round and help in raising money for many charities. Both will be very much missed.

Our next issue will be out about mid July, so if you have any articles to be included we would appreciate them by early June.

After this beastly cold winter we are all looking forward to some warmth and sunshine, so let's hope a really good summer comes our way!

Betty Cook
Neksdore

Charles Wilkins
Hillside

P & J Voss
Dean Lodge East

John Percy
Primrose Cottage

* * * * *

Welcome to the village:-

Mr and Mrs Tillotson and family, Dean Close.
Mr and Mrs Manning, Close Cottage.

* * * * *

Many thanks once again to Mrs Patricia Ashmead for typing 'Focus'

Mrs. Edith Leppard

Mrs. Leppard was born in 1892 on 22nd December (which by coincidence was also her father's birthday) in the borough of Marylebone, London, and was the youngest of nine children. She started work at fourteen years of age in "service", but determined that this was not for her and worked for many years as a Counter Clerk in the Post Office.

Edith and her husband and family came to live in Iron Acton in 1942, at the height of the "Blitz", and moved into a small cottage (no longer existing) in Latteridge Road, almost opposite the Court. The cottage had no electricity, no water or other amenities such as they had been used to in London, a great change from city to country life. Water had to be obtained from a well, and Mrs Leppard paid Spigot Brown (Who you may remember was mentioned in our last issue) two shillings a bucket for drawing it.

Latteridge Road was vastly different from the busy road it is today, but Mrs Leppard can recall convoys of Prisoners-of-war passing by on their way to Latteridge. All shopping was done in the High Street in the six or so shops that then existed. Edith Leppard has a married daughter, who lives with her at 30, Nibley Lane, and a son living at Tormarton.

Is Mrs Leppard the most elderly inhabitant living in Iron Acton?

* * * * *

Future of Acton Court.

The Sunday Times reports that "English Heritage, the Department of Environment quango, stepped in two days before Christmas to save the dilapidated Acton Court, an early Renaissance house near Bristol. It agreed to buy it from the Bristol Visual and Environmental Buildings Trust, which could not afford to renovate it. Plans for the house's future will be drawn up in the coming weeks.

The purchase and basic repairs will cost English Heritage £350,000. What happens after that is unclear. "It could be restored and opened to the public, or resold," says a spokesman.



Entrance to Acton Court.

Acton Court is the first major house purchase by English Heritage since it took over the government's responsibilities for historic buildings and monuments almost two years ago. Among its 400 properties only half a dozen or so are houses - the rest are ruins, abbeys and the like.

* * * * *

Displayed on a 'bus shelter in Bristol is a poster which asks "WHERE WILL YOU BE ON JUDGEMENT DAY?" Beneath it someone has written, "Still here, waiting for the Iron Acton bus."

* * * * *

PARISH COUNCIL

The date of the Annual Parish Meeting is Friday, April 18th. This is an open meeting and we hope to see a good number of people there.

Best Kept Village. It has been decided to enter again this year, so please watch out for the posters giving dates of judging. We must make an extra special effort this year and get back to the top.

A few months ago, the lifebelts and stands at the Chilwood dam were completely destroyed, because someone had deliberately set fire to them. We know the village youngsters are not the only ones who gather in that area and we don't think any of them would do such a senseless thing, but please parents impress on your children how important these lifebelts are. The Water Authority were very annoyed, as it costs several hundred pounds to replace them, and much more important, one day someone could lose their life there because the lifebelts are missing.

Estimates are now being sought for the multi-purpose hard play surface at the Parish Meadows, and we hope it will be ready for use by this summer. It will be suitable for many games - netball, volley ball, basket ball, 5 - aside football, as well as tennis.

First alterations to the County Structure Plan are now out and copies can be obtained from Avon Information Bureau Avon House, Bristol, price £2.

Northavon District Council intend to begin work on a Rural Areas Local Plan and there will be opportunities for public participation. Information leaflets will be available, and as soon as we can get them we will deliver them with "Focus", probably in July.

* * * * *

RANGEWORTHY PLAYGROUP

Playgroup has now returned to normal after the excitement and hectic activities of December. The children performed a Nativity Play for their families on December 20th and this was followed by a Christmas party with a welcome visit by Father Christmas.

In November P.C. Patela from Iron Acton visited the group to talk to the children in relaxed informal way. This was a successful morning enjoyed by all.

After initial concern last term about falling numbers and finances the future now appears to be brighter. While the group is still small, with 10 children on the register, there are some new children due to start this term and after a number of successful fund raising events and a welcome donation from Acton Aid the group's future now seems secure. With the rising numbers it is hoped that the group will re-open on a Wednesday morning during the summer months. There are still vacancies for this year and for 1986/7 so if you would like to pay us a visit to see what we do then ring Jill on 626 or call in at the Memorial Hall on a Monday or Friday morning. As there are children from Iron Acton at the playgroup help with transport can be arranged.

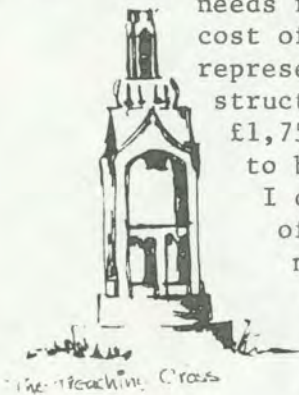
Jill Bradshaw.

* * * * *

THE IRON ACTON CHURCHYARD CROSS

One of the first letters I had to deal with on coming to Iron Acton in 1965 was one from the Ministry of Works, as I believe it was called then. It went something like this - "We are writing to ask you to confirm that the Churchyard Cross in Iron Acton is still in your ownership" and since then in correspondence with the Department of the Environment and in filling in their forms I am described as the occupier! This wording has struck me as amusing, and even after 20 years I find it a little odd to think of myself as occupying the Cross. In the current spell of freezing weather I could think of many better places to be occupying. Also in the correspondence I was told that no repairs are allowed to be done to the Cross without the permission of the Secretary of State.

It has always seemed to me that the people of Iron Acton regard the Cross as something of a talisman which is identified especially with Iron Acton. Unfortunately the ravages of time and the frequent use by the younger people of the Parish as a climbing frame, have taken their toll and the Cross now



The preaching Cross

needs repairing. Two years ago I asked for an estimate of the cost of repairs to the lower part of the Cross. When the representative of the Department came he said that the whole structure needed repair. I have a quotation for around £1,750 for the work and have to ask myself how the money is to be found. I have asked English Heritage for a grant but I can hardly approach the Diocese as the Cross is not part of the Church. The Parochial Church Council has to find money for work on the roof timbers and the Tower pinnacles as both need urgent attention. So really I am appealing for help from the people of the Parish of Iron Acton.

It would be a tragedy were the Cross to fall down or become so dangerous that it had to be taken down. People use it as a background for their wedding photos and it is used on other occasions as well. I think it is worth preserving as I am sure do most of the people of the Parish.

I believe it was erected towards the very end of the 14th century, perhaps as a memorial to an early member of the Poyntz family. The builder was Sir Robert Poyntz who died in 1439.

Before it was mutilated the Cross was about 30 ft. in height.

If you have a copy of Church Guide you can read "the stone of which it is made is very hard and the carvings on it are perfect: but it has been mutilated designedly. It has evidently been destroyed by heavy missiles, there are marks on the upper part where stones have struck but whether the remaining part was too solid for further mischief or whether the inhabitants of the houses on the other side objected to the proceedings, we are not informed". That was written in 1875 and I would like to think that whatever saved the Cross from mutilation all those years ago, the inhabitants had something to do with it, and appeal to the inhabitants of the Parish to save the Cross from collapse now.

Rev. Waker.

We know that someone is always asking for contributions to this, that and the other, but we do hope there will be a good response to the Rector's appeal.

The Preaching Cross is one of only a few surviving in the country, and it would be a sad day indeed if it should have to be pulled down. It has stood by the church for nearly 600 years - what history it has seen, and what changes in the village! If only it could talk, what stories it would have to tell. It has come to be a symbol of the village, and everyone will remember how it was used in the early 1970s when we had the Homes and Gardens Festivals. We still have the sketch of a simplified version of the cross which was used to indicate all the places open in the village at that time, and also sketches of other places of interest which Maureen Chapman (then Beasley) did for the leaflet issued then.

Friends of St. James the Less.

Have you ever thought that it was nice to have a beautiful and attractive church in the village? Nice to be able to take your visitors to the village to see it? Nice to go to a service at Christmas and to think that one day your daughter or grand daughter will be married there?

If so, have you ever thought that you would be prepared to give money, or help to raise money to maintain that church building, but have hesitated to give money to the P.C.C. or the church collection because you think that most of it will be spent on candles or incense?

Perhaps you would be prepared to help to found the Friends of St. James the Less to raise money to maintain the fabric of the church? Much money is needed at present, as the pinnacles on the top of the towers are becoming unsafe, the roof timbers need woodworm treatment, and as explained above, the preaching cross is in need of attention.

If so, contact me on Rangeworthy 339.

John Percy.

PARISH CHURCH

Easter Services at St. James the Less.

23rd March	Palm Sunday	Main Service	9.30 a.m.
27th March	Maunday Thursday	Main Service	7.30 p.m.
28th March	Good Friday	Main Service	9.30 a.m.
		Hour's Devotion	2-3 p.m.
30th March	Easter Day	Holy Communion	7.0 a.m.
		Holy Communion	8.0 a.m.
		Sung Eucharist	9.30 a.m.
		Evensong	6.30 p.m.

Notice in Church Porch: "Will Parishioners who are giving eggs at the Easter Services please lay them round the font?"

GARDENERS PATCH

We really are very lucky in this part of the world - although we have had some very cold spells this winter we have escaped the extremes of weather other regions of the country experience. Snowfalls have been quite light, freezing fog has practically passed us by, and we have had none of the flooding some people have suffered. Now, in a few short weeks, spring will be here once more and we shall all be busy sowing and planting. As gardeners we are naturally optimistic, so we shall all look forward to a lovely summer - it certainly can't be worse than last summer!

When buying your seeds, don't forget to include some double and single asters; due to the very wet season there were no entries for the Aster Trophy in last year's show so we must hope for a good number this year.

It was encouraging to see that more people are entering for the Allotment Cup, how nice it would be if everyone who works an allotment would enter! And what happened to all our Flower Arrangers last year? In all the 24 years I have lived in the village I have never seen such a low number of entries. It is quite a problem to work out a schedule that will suit everyone so if you have any ideas for classes please let us know. Otherwise we can only assume the present schedule is perfect, which I am sure can't be true!

This year's show will be on September 6th and we wish you all a good growing season, so that we shall have a record number of entries.

B.M.C.

GARDENS OPEN

Algars Manor & The Mill,
Sunday April 13th. Sunday May 25th Monday May 26th.

Dean Lodge Gardens,
Sunday June 29th, Monday June 30th.

* * * * *



A Miracle!

We hear many criticisms of the slowness of postal deliveries these days but this one must vindicate them all. A letter was delivered to the Rector at 8 a.m. on February 20th 1986 and was postmarked Oxford, February 20th 12.15 p.m!

A record to beat all records!

* * * * *

An Air Steward was asked by a passenger to "change this baby." He brought another one back and said "Will this do?" (He has since been suspended, pending an enquiry.)

* * * * *

Eight Hours From Heathrow Car Park

When, because of work you can only grab a holiday in darkest January, where do you go that is warm and where the Natives are friendly? The climate in Israel is perfect but they are still using real bullets and South Yemen (Aden, when I was last there) is wonderful if you want a trip across the Bay on the Royal Yacht.

Florida seemed great and only eight flying hours from the car park at Heathrow; they (the Americans) speak the same sort of language and Miami sounded just the place; that was until you read between the lines in the brochures that by now covered the carpet: 'All entertainment of an evening is in the Hotel' translated means 'Stay Off the streets at night! Cocoa Beach sounded quaint and, according to the brochure, each room had a 42 station television, with American Football always on at least 2 channels. That decided it; that's the place to go: a sort of Clevedon where the tide never went out, the sun was kept at a constant 75°F and the bars stayed open until 4 a.m. (legally).

Visas were applied for and there was a period of doubt that because of several speeding offences and parking tickets yours truly might be considered an undesirable, and refused an entry visa to the good old U.S. of A, but we were held in such esteem, all passports were returned stamped 'indefinite', a bit previous of their immigration I thought as I only wanted to go for 9 days.

The day of journey off arrived, and having fitted a new battery to the car the day before 'just in case' we set off full of confidence and suitcases all of them bearing flash-looking labels.

The confidence fell apart when we couldn't find the car park, 'By the tunnel into Heathrow' instructed the booking form, the only thing by the tunnel was the tunnel and a roundabout that forced you to drive into the tunnel.

Two circuits later we chanced upon the car park and, trying to forget all the much recounted tales of stolen wheels, radios and vandalism, thought what the hell and handed over the keys to the car, and an almost new battery.

British Airways reception were only just awake when our luggage dragged us into the booking hall, and I was a bit choked when the hand luggage labels read 'Economy' I think 'Tourist' is a nicer way of saying 'Doing it on the cheap'.

During the flight Matthew was allowed to go and see the steering wheel etc., up front and give the crew a few tips on how to get us down again. Funny, he wasn't gone long.

About eight hours from Heathrow car park we landed at Miami. Funny, I thought we were booked to fly to Orlando. It transpired that the Pilot was right and I was wrong; we were going to Orlando but stopped at Miami to change passengers over and for the crew to have a stretch of their legs or something.

And so we took off for Orlando; no more free booze, just an hour and we were there, Orlando, the space port of America. I'll tell you more about it in the next issue, 'Have a nice day!'

B.T.

GUIDE & BROWNIE SUPPORTERS GROUP

On February 7th, a bitterly cold night, we held a wine and cheese party in a very chilly Village Hall. In spite of the low attendance and the awful weather we managed to make a profit of £60 and so will have enough to pay the capitation fee this year. But we shall need to find a few new ideas for fund raising soon.

Our A.G.M. will be on March 25th at 7.30 in the hall, when we hope all the guide and brownie mums will come along and give us some inspiration.

* * * * *

ELIZABETHAN CLUB

Club members and guests enjoyed their Christmas Dinner at Stanshawes Court Hotel so much that the 1986 Dinner was immediately booked for December 16th. Members went to the Priory Inn at Tetbury for lunch on February 11th and a ride through the Stroud Valley afterwards. The Club attended an annual service taken by Rev Waker, in the church on Ash Wednesday.

We would welcome more members at our meetings on Wednesday afternoons at 2.30 p.m. in the Village Hall.

Whist drives are held on the last Wednesday of every month during the afternoon. Forthcoming events are as follows:-

Bulb show and exhibition	March 15th
Spring Sale	April 19th
Outings	May 27th, July 1st
	August 5th.
Charity Whist Drive	November 3rd
Christmas Sale	November 15th
Christmas Whist Drive	December 1st.

D. Elson
Secretary.

* * * * *

COOKERY CORNER

Try this delicious and easy-to-make tea bread when you want a change from scones.

Using a large breakfast cup, measure into a bowl a cup of All Bran, a cup of mixed cake fruit and a scant cup of sugar. Stir together and leave to stand for several hours or over night. Mix in a cup of self-raising flour. Turn the mixture into greased and floured loaf tins and bake in a pre heated oven, at 350°F. (180°C) for 45 minutes. Serve sliced and buttered. This bread keeps well for a week, is very good toasted, and will also freeze well for up to two months.

* * * * *

IRON ACTON YOUTH CLUB.

After a gap of 18 months the Iron Acton Youth Club has recently been reconstructed.

An appreciative and extremely encouraging response has been made by the young people with more than thirty attending the weekly meetings on Thursdays from 7.30 till 10. Any person between 11 and 25 is welcome to join on payment of £1. membership fee with 25p for each attendance.

The Club led by Philip Patela, assisted by Alex Parker and David Cryer are all acting in an honorary capacity and answerable to the management committee.

Expertise from Avon Youth Office in the person of Keith Salway allied with Philip Patela's enthusiasm has enabled the club to get off on a firm footing. Generous financial encouragement has been received from the Parish Council, Acton Aid, Smiths Charity and St. Nicholas Youth Club. These donations have enabled the committee to provide a good basic set of equipment to supplement that inherited from the old club - however, new games are always in demand.

When grant aid from Avon becomes available the committee will be able to appoint a qualified youth leader.

A thriving coffee bar is run by Chris Harding who welcomes offers of help.

A fundraising Disco is planned for April Fools night and anyone 11-18 will be welcome - tickets £1. For those who like dressing up a prize will be awarded for the most appropriate costume.

* * * * *

LAMB INN FOLK CLUB DATES.

All are welcome, any Friday, at the clubroom at The Lamb. Below is a list of guests booked in the near future - all other Fridays are Singer's nights.

MARCH	21st	Ian Woods
	28th	Betty & Norman McDonald
APRIL	11th	Gerry Hallom
	25th	TO BE ANNOUNCED
MAY	2nd	Portway Pedlars
	16th	Richard Grainger
	23rd	Jim Reynolds
JUNE	6th	Andy Caver
	20th	Anonyma

* * * * *

A patient in a St. Helier (Jersey) Hospital asked a Ward Sister if his old Nanny could visit him. The Ward Sister was not amused when the doors opened and in was led an elderly nanny goat at the end of a rope.

* * * * *

SNOW JOKE.

I'd heard about ski instructors before. This one's name was Werner and he was all neat in scarlet trousers with a matching hip hugging jacket, not a wasted morsel of flesh anywhere, Roman nose, masses of black curly hair and dark glasses. I warmed to the prospect of learning to ski.

A brilliant sunny day it was, out on the nursery slopes, but already little storm clouds were gathering: Werner dives towards me like a starved herring gull and stops dead in a flurry of snow. I see a tiny pout of disdain on those full, sensuous lips.

"Always you are leaning backwards. Why is this?"

"Sheer terror?" I suggest, but evidently there is no translation for this in his language. He shrugs and moves on to the hard core of the group who are already clamouring to go further up the hillside. To go up you have to walk sideways. Listening to the rhythmic slap, slap, thump of ten skiers in a line, trying to ascend sideways, I am not sure whether it reminds me more of a way-out Busby Berkely routine, or a work party on its way to a day out in the Siberian salt mines. Werner's voice is close to my ear, like a whip-lash.

"Now you will snow plough. And don't sit down!"

I plough, but face first, the snow cooling my burning cheeks. He stands over me, waiting for me to work out how to untangle my skis and get up. Behind those reflective glasses, who knows what emotions rage.

"I told you not to sit down!"

I find I am talking in special English with a strong German accent, so he will understand better.

"Werner, I am not sitting down in order to look at the view or even to read a few chapters of my book. I sit down merely as a prelude to falling down. It's a sort of half way house."

He turns to the rest of the group who are fast becoming a competent little team.

"To the tea bar," he shouts. I am so relieved. I had begun to wonder whether we would be having any breaks at all. Perhaps there would be rock cakes too. But the hut at which we arrive houses only a hard faced Austrian who clips the puzzling blue ticket that someone had tied on my arm a couple of hours before. And the tea bar turns out to be the T-bar, on which you perch with a partner to be towed up to the top of the hill. We sit, the mechanism jolts forward, we skid a couple of feet and fall off. There is a dispute about whose fault it is and I reluctantly accept blame. We remount, glide tentatively up, steeper and steeper. At the very steepest point something else happens. The bar slips out from under our bottoms and we are left clinging desperately to the T bar.

All my life I have had a recurring dream of hanging on to a ledge with my finger tips, knowing there is a steep drop below me and that I can't hold on much longer. This was my dream now, only it was real. If I let go there was a very swift slide back down to the start which would probably end with my concussion and serious damage to the vital parts of half the American NATO force who happened to be following us up.

My partner on the slope is well known to me and over the years we have been in some strange positions together, so, as usual, he is the one with the helpful suggestions.

"Try to dig your skis into the snow," he pants, little icicles forming in his beard.

"What the . . . do you think I'm trying to do!" I knew then why I never won badges in the Brownies. I don't whistle and sing enough when the going gets tough. Strong arms grab my ankles and in a moment my skis are unclipped. Partner and I collapse in a thorny copse at the side of the precipice.

Werner points disgustedly up the hill.

"Now you have to walk to the top!"

My degradation is complete. How I came down the mountain is still a complete white out, but at the bottom I meet my sister whom I perceive has also had enough. We retire stealthily to the balcony of the Alphof nearby, where they serve all kinds of interesting beverages and you can hide from your ski instructor.

Next day, when I enrol for my new class (bottom grade), ski instructor Robert who has honest blue eyes and square reliable jaw says:

"So Werner sent you, Uhuh!" His eyes narrow and he nods his head thoughtfully. I begin to suspect there are undercurrents with the ski instructors, especially when we watch Werner's team, now down to seven stocky little athletes gliding like so many dwarfs in a workmanlike line down the mountain sides. They should be singing a yodelling song.

"So Werner's team will win the races once again on Friday," he says. There is steel in his eyes. I suspect there will be ferment among the ski instructors at the apres ski bar tonight.

On Friday, after the races was the medal presentation and the ski instructors' disco. We are sitting with Werner's racing team when he comes over.

"I have just learnt yours was not the fastest time," he glowers at them. Having learned to ski like demons in just six days they are in no mood to be cowed. They laugh like the well adjusted kids they are.

Werner rubs his five o'clock shadow suspiciously, "Unless . . . the judges were lying . . . " he says.

"Ridiculous, taking it all so seriously," scoffs my brother-in-law, then winces. He has to be careful how he scoffs since he did his back the day before.

When I went up to get my medal (you get a medal just for surviving the week) the applause was deafening, as it was for everybody. Werner pinned it on (upside down as it turned out later). Dark eyes, now revealed for the firsttime, were a bit disappointing but all the same our lips touched.

"I hope we may have a dance later," he murmured, sharpening his teeth on my new pearl earring.

Perhaps, I thought, but then again, why not quit while you're still winning?

THE ACTONIANS

Our local Thespians are as usual hard at work. By the time that this Focus appears, the Evening of Entertainment will be past. But it is worthy of mention if only to show the numbers involved and the range of people involved. The Junior Actonians under the direction of Penny Percy will have performed three plays ('Pobble With No Toes', 'Silly Willy' by Clifford Bax, 'The Princess and the Woodcutter' by AA Milne) and one song. About 20 of our young ones and very young ones were involved. Some of the slightly older ones, under the direction of Elizabeth Aplin, will have performed part of 'You Never Can Tell' by Bernard Shaw; the just more slightly older will have performed their one-act festival entry 'Rag Woman of the Shambles', by Don Roberts. This latter play directed by the Secretary, Lesley Keatley has been entered for the Kingswood, Avon, Malmesbury, and Bath Festivals. At Kingswood Margaret Thompson got honourable mention in a nomination for Best Actress but unfortunately did not get the award.

At the end of April, the capacity of our actors to use an ethnic accent, in this case a Lancashire accent, will be tested in "Spring and Port Wine" by Bill Naughton. This comedy which is produced by Janet Lewis should once again provide some good entertainment for all.

Pantomime returns in November. So far the only, but principal selection, is that of Director. Once again Maureen Chapman has taken on the task and this in itself should ensure success. All other options remain open. Watch this space!

* * * * *

VILLAGE HALL

Village Halls are run in a variety of ways. Often it is the Parish Council who run them. In Iron Acton we have a separate organisation which is in some ways law unto itself but of course is representative of the various groups in the village and of the village itself through the elected village representatives. At times it is a sort of social committee and it was under that hat that the recent "Village Evening" was run.

Our old friends 'The Four Gentlemen Songsters' gave of their best, which is the best. Raymond Holland and his confederates are always entertaining and willing and it was a joy to have them back in the village. The Folk Club were welcome and if they were a little too long the fault lies with the occasionally seen producer of the entertainment. A welcome newcomer to this occasion was Shirley Whittard with her accompanist and both are likely to be bullied into any future event. When the curtain opened on Marilyn Wright's Cats there was a gasp from the audience at the setting. How she must have enjoyed that appreciation of some quick and hard work which was enthusiastically joined in by the participants. John Naish, with his scatological sketch, as usual brought the house down. The Actonians, in french underwear, provided a new look at some of their members. A Good Evening! If it is to be repeated (and there have been variety shows in the past) then more talent from the village and the surrounds should come forward. It is a major operation for the Committee, particularly for people like Meryl Cook who ran the catering, but it is worthwhile to be able to provide a good evening.

An auction is being arranged for 10th May when once again we hope that there will be plenty of sellers and plenty of buyers who will pay proper prices for the goods.

HISTORY OF THE VILLAGE HALL

For those who do not know and others with some recollections, the history and title to the hall is briefly as follows:-

Title to the land was transferred from A.F.S. Kent (Doctor of Science) of Holm Ray to our benefactor F.R.R. Rudman on 20th September, 1933.

In October 1948 Francis Rudman (Gentleman) of Dean Lodge conveyed our parcel of land, for a consideration of £1, to Eric Huggins (Butcher), Percival Powell (Buyer) and Harold Thompson (Commercial Manager) in trust and under covenants which essentially required the Trustees to obtain an order vesting the Trust premises in the Official Trustee of Charity Lands and thence for the administration and management by the 'Committee of Management'.

The conveyance sets out in particular detail how the management committee should be comprised but goes on to allow great licence to any committee in existence to extend representation to various organisations and to co-opt members. Most enduring and relevant is the requirement that the committee MUST be elected annually at a general meeting open to the inhabitants of the Parish aged 18 years and upwards.

It is interesting to read the names and organisations represented on that first committee.

Mr Harold Morton	P.C.
Mrs H.J. Handover	P.C.C.
Rev. S.J. Handover	School Managers
To be appointed	Youth Club
Mr Eric Huggins	Football Club
Mrs Howes	W.I.
To be appointed	Nursing Association
Miss E.M. Rich	Girl Guides
Mrs Wallbank	Methodist Society

Subject only to the consent of the Charity Commissioners the Committee has wide powers extending to the mortgage of the property and the inhabitants of the Parish can, at a general meeting and by a majority, decide to let or sell all or any part of the premises.

An order vesting in Official Trustee of Charity Lands was duly executed.

In 1949 The National Council of Social Service agreed to provide and erect a 'temporary building' on the site and this was let on hire to Iron Acton Village Hall Committee of Management from 1.8.51 at a half yearly rent of £6.10.0.

By 1963 the outgoings on rent seemed to be extremely onerous and the building was bought outright for £381.7.6 by initial payment of £175 and 5 yearly instalments of £41.5.6. Some sleepless nights were no doubt suffered by Miss H.M. Vassall and Messrs R.F.Barber and Godfrey Cook who guaranteed repayments over those five years.

So after 34 years the temporary 'NEW VILLAGE HALL' has become somewhat permanent and stands as a memorial to the endeavours of those early post war stalwarts.

In a later issue of Focus the goings on between 1948 and 1963 will be researched and chronicled.

The hall is not financially supported and survives on the revenue from hirings and general fund raising.

This interesting history of Iron Acton has been extracted from a recent issue of "Bristol Illustrated" by kind permission of Mrs. Dorothy Brown, the Secretary of the Bristol Visual and Environmental Group.

Iron Acton is one of the most delightful villages in the County of Avon. So far, no-one has introduced obviously discordant new buildings and generally, property owners have respected the character of their old houses, copying exactly the original timber windows if they needed replacement, rather than putting in metal windows or fussy "off-the-peg" neo-Georgian. So one can still read the history of the development of the village from the street.

The valley of the river Frome is half a mile away from the village. This, like all rivers however small, was an important source of power even into the nineteenth century, turning mills to make flour, to full cloth and to grind iron tools, making an important contribution to the local economy. There were literally dozens of mills on the Frome between Old Sodbury and Bristol. In Iron Acton two were mentioned in the Domesday survey, valued at 80 pence. The area was already known for making iron, and contributed bars of iron to the Saxon exchequer before the Conquest.

In 1086 there were two manors or major landholdings, each of two and a half hides with its own cottages, together amounting to about 18 adult males. Acton Ilgar was centred on what is today "Algar's Manor", a fine house on the banks of the Frome, largely 17th century, but probably with a medieval ground floor. The former mill house lies below it, indicating the site of one of the Domesday mills. This manor was held at the Conquest by Brictric, son of Algar, the important Saxon Earl of Gloucester, who also held Thornbury and many other estates in the "Honour of Gloucester". The other manor was held by the Acton family. In the early 14th century the heiress of the Actons married a Poyntz of Tockington and Cory Malet in Somerset. Her son inherited the Acton estate. This branch of the Poyntz family thereafter used Acton as their residence for over 300 years and they had a considerable influence on the village.

Not only did successive generations of the Poyntz family serve successive kings in foreign wars (presumably taking with them men-at-arms from Acton) but they were Sheriffs of the County of Gloucester and, in Tudor times, were ultimately involved with life at Court. Sir Robert Poyntz was knighted at the Battle of Bosworth and he and his successors served each Tudor King and Queen personally and enjoyed a variety of Court appointments. Sir Robert Poyntz who died in 1520, was buried in the lovely Poyntz Chapel which is part of the Lord Mayor's Chapel, facing the Cathedral in Bristol, over College Green. In spite of the demise of the Poyntz family in 1680, it seems that the parish and the village were in a period of great affluence. The great majority of village houses appears to date from the late 17th and 18th centuries. When one climbs any hill in the parish - for example near Hill House - looking in every direction, even today, the majority of the houses seem to date from the same period. This implies great prosperity in the 17th century, for in the days before Building Societies, one had to save over a considerable period to be able to build a new house. The great rebuilding in the 17th century is a notable feature in this Bristol quarter of the old County of Gloucester. The phenomenal demand for provisions for the growing city of Bristol and for the fleets of ships which sailed from there to the Indies, to Africa and Virginia, meant that demand for bacon, cheese and butter was insatiable.

We are fortunate in having a record of the men fit for military service in the parish in 1609, showing their occupations. Between 60 and 70 men are listed, and these include ten weavers, a cloth merchant and five tailors, which implies a considerable involvement in the cloth industry. The usual building trades and shopkeepers are also represented, with those engaged in farming comprising less than half of the men shown, though it has to be remembered that whatever his chief occupation, a man usually, unless he was a labourer, had a small agricultural holding and kept some stock. By the 17th century, hundreds of small coal pits were being worked in the parishes adjacent to Iron Acton, particularly Westerleigh and Yate. The road through the village would be intermittently busy with strings of donkeys carrying panniers loaded with coal. Important visitors would come to the Court which must still have been the chief employer.

In 1712, Atkyns states there were 60 houses, and 240 inhabitants in the Parish, "wherof 24 are Freeholders". By 1779, Rudder estimates that there were 460 inhabitants; a very fast population growth. The parish remained very much on the edge of the coal producing areas, although it seems there were one or two pits. Cinders left from the smelting of iron continued to be in evidence. But the cloth industry had gone and during the 18th century, agriculture apparently employed a greater proportion of the population. There were more agricultural labourers, something to be expected as enclosure took place and the independent smallholder was squeezed out. In 1801, 27% of the land in the parish was under plough, 650 acres of grain and 117 acres of potatoes with 22 acres of peas.

Mid nineteenth century directories give a picture of the village at that time. The 1801 population was 860 and it increased by only 25% during the century to 1901. The village contained five grocers and shopkeepers, two tailors and a dressmaker, blacksmith, wheelwright, miller, sadler, together with building tradesmen, but only one tavern is mentioned. A carrier went into Bristol four days each week, but other carrying services passed through the village. The indigent poor went to the workhouse at Yate. The Post Office received letters at 11 in the morning and despatched letters at 3 in the afternoon. By 1850 the railway had arrived, which must have transformed the through traffic situation as thoroughly as did the construction of the by-pass in the 60's.

* * * * *

Iron Acton W.I.

Sorry that this report is shorter than usual but hopefully it's sweet.

Officers for 1986

President	Elsie Blanchard
Vice President	Maurine Thomas
Treasurer	Molly Smalley
Asst. Treasurer	Elizabeth Edwards

1986 sees us acting as hostesses to the 6 other institutes in Sodbury Vale Group at 3 events throughout the year as well as organising our usual meetings. We are also planning to hold a wine and cheese party later in the year; open to everyone to raise funds. We'll be running (possibly walking) after you to part you from your money!

Anyway, that's it from me. Hopefully by the next edition the warmer weather will be here and I'll have finished hibernating!

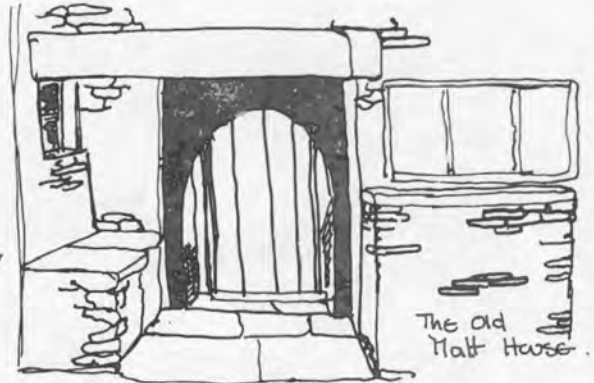
Lynne Blanchard - Secretary.

Acton Aid

At the A.G.M. in February, outgoing Chairman Geoff Dicks reported on a successful year with more money made, and more money given away than ever before. However, Treasurer Gerry Millward reported from the States that funds were nearly all gone!

Officers for the coming year are:-

Chairman	Paul Townsend
Vice Chairman	Mike Sutton
Secretary	Pip Voss
Treasurer	Gerry Millward
Fund Raising	John Tillotson
Social	Mike Sutton & Derek Parry
Service	Gordon Manniat
Weekly Draw	Rodney Smith
Horse Show	Mike Sutton



Suggestions that next year Mike Sutton would retire from work in order to take all the posts were hotly denied.

Paul Townsend encouraged everyone to work hard to make the coming year even better than the last. He wanted everyone to give "an arm and a leg" for Acton Aid. He could make good use of them!

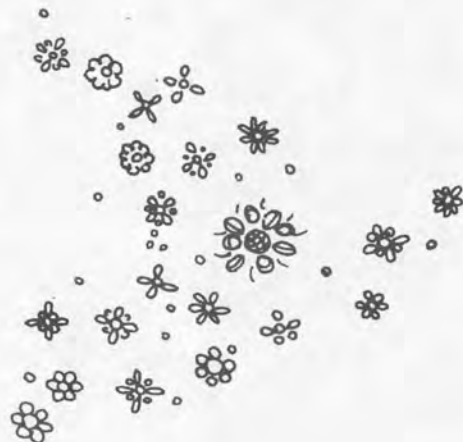
* * * * *

We all look on with anxious eyes
When Father carves the duck,
And Mother almost always sighs
When Father carves the duck.
Then all of us prepare to rise
And hold our bibs before our eyes
And be prepared for some surprise
When Father carves the duck.

He braces up and grabs a fork
Whene'er he carves a duck,
And won't allow a soul to talk
Until he's carved the duck.
The fork is jabbed into the sides,
Across the breast the knife he slides,
And every careful person hides
From flying chips of duck.

The platter always seems to slip
When Father carves a duck,
And how it makes the dishes skip,
Potatoes fly amock - -
The squash and cabbage leap in space,
We get some gravy on our face,
And Father mutters Hindu grace
Whene'er he carves a duck.

We thus have learned to walk around
The dining-room and pluck
From off the window-sills and walls
Our share of Fathers duck:
While Father growls and blows and jaws,
And swears the knife was full of flaws,
And Mother jaws at him because
He couldn't carve a duck.



DIARY OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS

At the Village Hall

Every Sunday	Brownies	10.30am
Tuesday	Girl Guides	7.00pm
Wednesday	Elizabethans	2.30pm
	Fencing Club	7.30pm
Thursday	Youth Club	7.00pm
2nd Monday/month	Womens Institute	7.30pm
3rd Monday/month	Parish Council	7.30pm
April 1st	Youth Club Disco	7.30pm
April 7th	Whist Drive in aid of St. Peters Hospice	7.30pm
April 8th	Bus Tokens issue	2.00/3.00pm
April 18th	Open Parish Meeting	8.00pm
April 19th	Elizabethans Spring Sale	2.30pm
April 24, 25, 26th	Actonians production "Spring and Portwine"	7.30pm
May 10th	Auction Sale in aid of Village Hall funds	10.00am
June 14th	Church Summer Fayre	3.00pm

At the Rose and Crown

Every 1st Thursday	Acton Aid	8.00pm
Alternate Mondays	Ladies Darts Team	

At the Lamb Inn

Every Friday	Folk Club	7.30pm
" Thursday	Mother & Toddler Group (during term time)	2.00pm

At Rangeworthy Hall

Monday & Friday am	Childrens Play Group (during term time)	
--------------------	--	--

At Green Lane Farm

June 8th	Horse & Dog Show	
----------	------------------	--

*The home of the
wood burning clay oven*



*Iron Acton,
near Bristol
Telephone
Rangeworthy
228*





Parkers Garden & Aquatic Centre



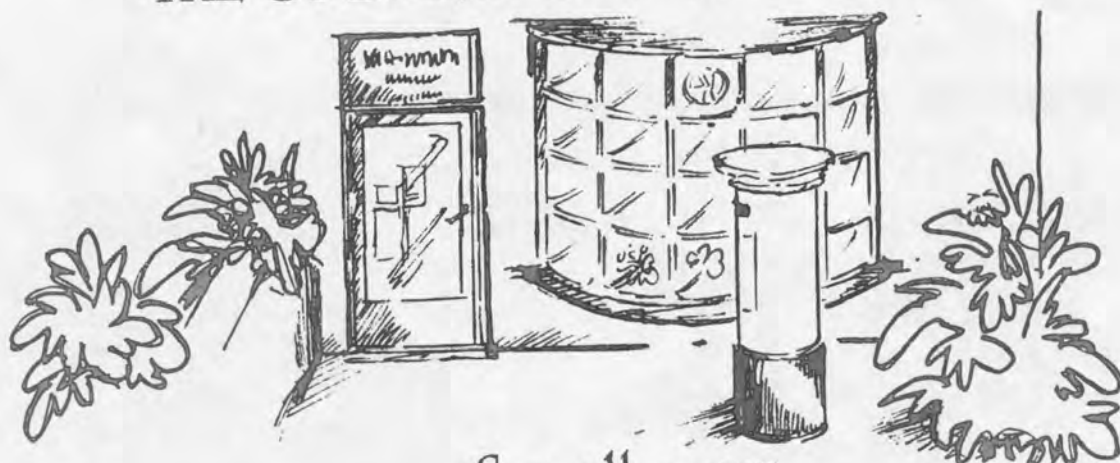
Forget the Rest We're the Best

PARKERS GARDEN CENTRE, WOTTON ROAD, IRON ACTON, NORTH AVON.
TEL: RANGEWORTHY 761

EVERYTHING JUST EVERYTHING FOR YOUR
GARDEN AND WATER GARDEN THIS SPRINGTIME!
TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OUR EARLY SEASON
PRICES. —

CHRIS'S

THE STORES & POST OFFICE



for all your
Greeting Cards

DRY CLEANING Kindling Wood
Firelighters

groceries stationery
Evening Post

& SHOE REPAIRS

Cherry Lodge Veterinary Clinic

MRS. F. HUGGINS, B.V.M. & S., M.R.C.V.S.

BY APPOINTMENT.

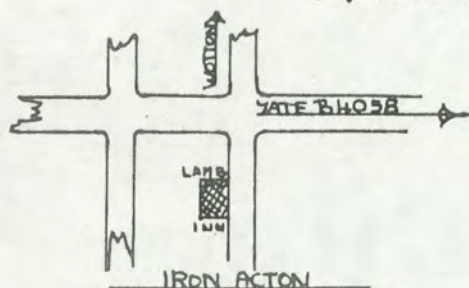
BRISTOL ROAD,
IRON ACTON,
BRISTOL,
AVON, BS17 1TG

Tel. Rangeworthy (STD 045422) 784

TELEPHONE ENQUIRIES WELCOME.

24HOUR EMERGENCY SERVICE

+ THE LAMB INN + + PHONE RANGEWORTHY 265 +



+ FLOWERS ORIGINAL BITTER +

+ SAMPLE OUR SUPERB RANGE OF
HOME BAKED FOODS +

+ LARGE NATURAL SECLUDED
GARDEN +

+ OLDE WORLDE FRIENDLY
ATMOSPHERE +

+ ALL FUNCTIONS CATERED
FOR +

+ THE LAMB +
+ 1690 +



Iron Acton HORSE & DOG Show



Sunday 8 June

Stamped addressed envelope for schedule (out May) to:

G. Dickes,

The Keepings,

High Street,

Iron Acton,

BRISTOL BS17 1JG

Rangeworthy 609.