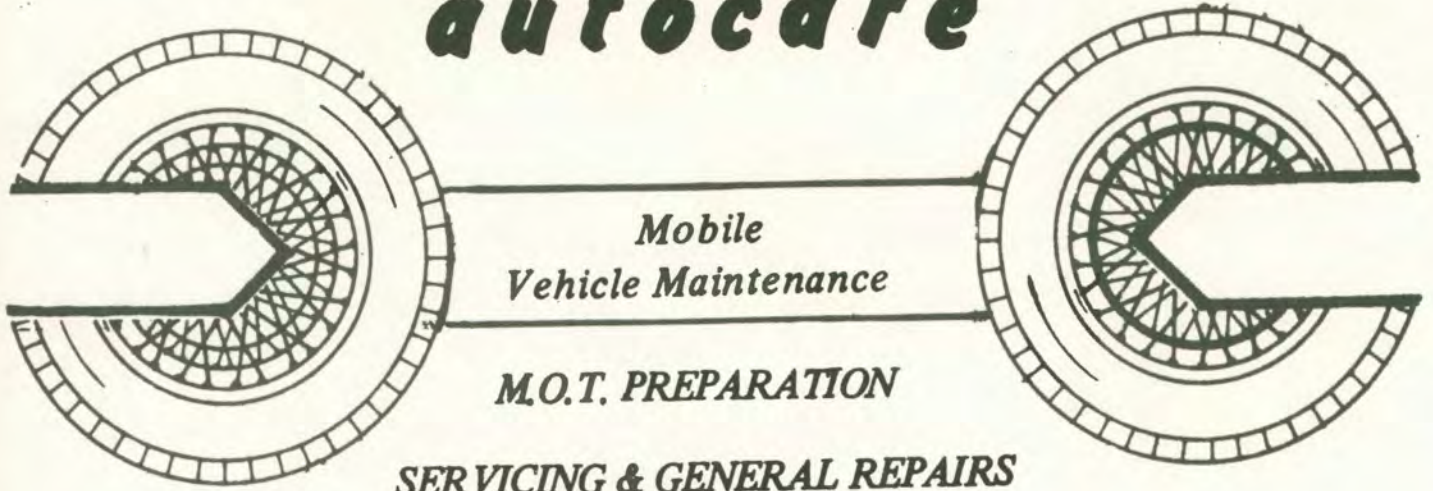


# FOCUS ON IRON ACTON

# roger's autocare



Mobile  
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M.O.T. PREPARATION

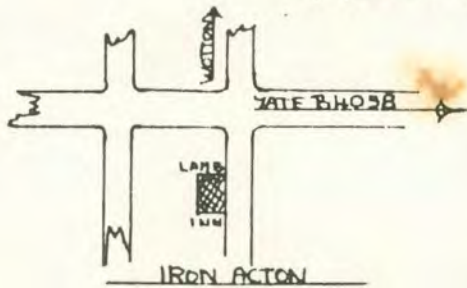
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## + THE LAMB INN +

+ PHONE RANGEWORTHY 265 +



+ FLOWERS ORIGINAL BITTER +

+ SAMPLE OUR SUPERB RANGE OF  
HOME BAKED FOODS +

+ LARGE NATURAL SECLUDED  
GARDEN +

+ OLDE WORLDE FRIENDLY  
ATMOSPHERE +



+ THE LAMB +  
+ 1690 +

## PROPOSALS AND POLICIES OF THE LOCAL PLAN

**HOUSING** - In line with the Avon Structure Plan, a limited amount of housing will be permitted provided that the character of the settlement is not adversely affected and adequate services are available. Village development boundaries are defined within which infilling will normally be permitted.

**EMPLOYMENT** - To promote local job opportunities, and reduce work journeys small sites are proposed for employment use. Land has been allocated at Wickwar, Wick, Marshfield, Severn Beach, Charfield and Hawkesbury Upton.

**TRANSPORT** - The Plan contains important road proposals including the Winterbourne/Frampton Cotterell bypass, a Wickwar bypass and link roads to the Second Severn Crossing.

**COUNTRYSIDE AND LANDSCAPE** - The Plan introduces measures to protect and enhance valued landscapes and to improve those which are degraded or spoilt. It also defines the Green Belt and Cotswold AONB.

**CONSERVATION AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT** - There is an abundant wealth of buildings of architectural and historic interest within the rural areas. The Council's objectives are to safeguard the character and setting of groups and individual buildings.

**SHOPPING** - The Council aims to encourage the retention of shops especially those essential to local needs and resist their change of use to service and other uses. Shopping developments outside of existing settlements and within open countryside will be resisted.

**RECREATION, LEISURE AND TOURISM** - The Council aims to achieve a balance between recreation and leisure pursuits and the protection of the environment archaeological and nature conservation sites. Policies also seek to improve sports, leisure and recreation facilities.

## YOUR CHANCE TO COMMENT

You may make comments on the Local Plan at any time until 29th January 1988. Mobile exhibitions may be viewed at the following locations between 3.00 - 9.00 pm.

- 30 Nov Hawkesbury  
Upton - Parish Hall Car Park  
1 Dec Wickwar - High Street  
2 Dec Charfield - Memorial Hall Car Park  
3 Dec Tytherington - Swan Inn Car Park  
4 Dec Coalpit Heath - Village Hall Car Park  
8 Dec Severn Beach - Beach Road  
9 Dec Tockington - Parish Hall Car Park  
10 Dec Oldbury - Anchor Inn Car Park  
12 Jan Pucklechurch - Community Centre Car Park  
13 Jan Marshfield - Market Place

and between 10.00 am - 1.00 pm:-

- 5 Dec Winterbourne - Ridings School Bus Park

A small-scale exhibition will be on view in the mobile Community Council caravan, the County Mobile Library and at Winterbourne Library.

Public Meetings are being held at 7.30 pm at:-

- 7 Dec Wickwar Village Hall  
14 Dec St.Helen's Primary School, Alveston  
15 Jan Marshfield Primary School

Copies of the Draft Rural Areas Local Plan may be viewed and purchased from the Planning Department.

All comments will be considered by the Council and where appropriate changes will be made. The Council will then take steps to adopt the amended Plan. This could involve a Public Local Inquiry where objectors will have the right to place their objections before an inspector appointed by the Secretary of State of the Environment.

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

If you have any comments to make or questions to ask at this stage please write to:-

Chief Planning Officer,  
Northavon District Council,  
Council Offices,  
Castle Street,  
Thornbury,  
Bristol. BS12 1HF

or Tel.: Thornbury 416262 [Ext.3227/3232]



LOCAL PLAN

RURAL AREAS

## WHY IS A LOCAL PLAN REQUIRED?

The Local Plan has been prepared to:-

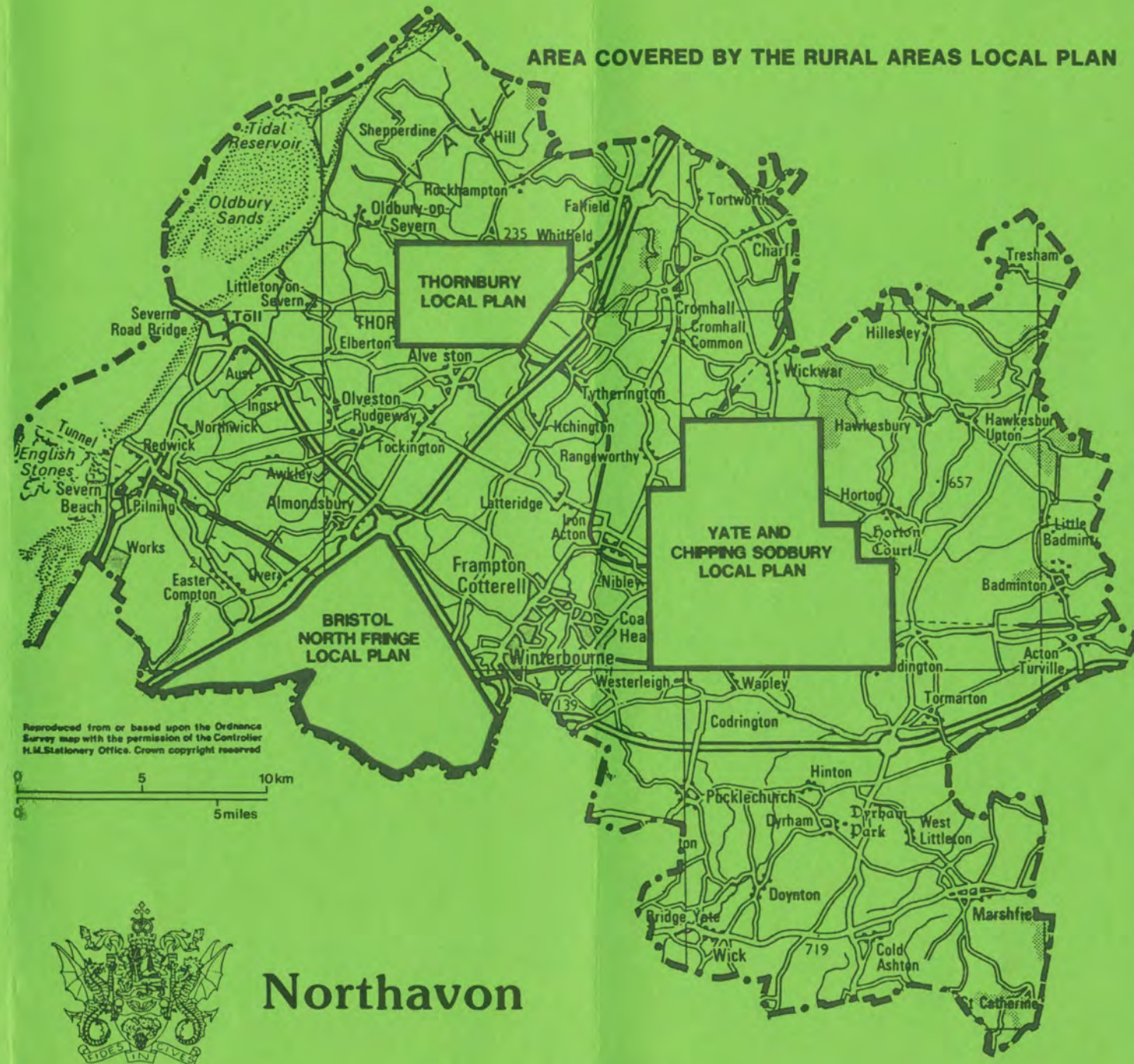
- develop the policies and proposals of the Avon County Structure plan - particularly those making provision for housing development
- provide a frame work for the control of development
- inform the public of planning issues and how their interests will be affected
- update existing village plans

## MAIN AIMS

The main aims of the Local Plan are to:-

- Make provision for housing and suitable employment opportunities.
- Protect good quality farmland.
- Safeguard the character and appearance of areas of landscape quality, nature conservation and historic importance.
- Improve the character, amenities and services.
- Make provision for and support an appropriate range of education, shopping, social, health and cultural facilities.
- To provide for safe, convenient and efficient movement of pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles.
- To maintain and improve the quality of the environment and to support increased leisure, recreation and tourist facilities.
- To indicate the extent of the Bristol Green Belt as it relates to the Local Plan.

## AREA COVERED BY THE RURAL AREAS LOCAL PLAN





# NO.16

# CHRISTMAS '87

## EDITORIAL

Christmas is almost with us again, and everyone involved in Focus wishes you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

This Autumn the village has been saddened by the premature deaths of Jim Macdonald, Geoff Thomas, and Ray Cole. We send our sympathy to their families, who have all experienced the pain of waiting for the inevitable under difficult circumstances. Our thoughts and prayers are with you, as Christmas approaches.

You will see later in this issue that we did not win the Best Kept Village competition this year in spite of much hard work by many people, because of litter. The Parish Council are concerned about dogs fouling the footpaths. The footpaths through the centre of the village have all been resurfaced. We live in a lovely village- let us not allow it to spoil.

In fact, how about a campaign to improve it? In The High Street there are lots of overhead wires. They criss-cross the street and go through our rear gardens. Why can they not be rationalised and put underground?

The editors of Focus are grateful to the Parish Council for a further donation to the cost of producing this magazine. We are dependant on donations from organisations and individuals and the income from our advertisers to cover our production costs.

Charles Wilkins,  
Hillside  
254

Betty Cook,  
Neksdor  
202

Jo Voss,  
Dean Lodge East  
674

Lynn Blanchard,  
Rose Cottage  
566

John Percy,  
Primrose Cottage  
339

Once again we are most grateful to Pat Ashmead for typing much of FOCUS.

## ACTON AID

\*\*\*\*\*

As we reported in the last issue of Focus, Lionel Alsop has taken over the duties of services - in this capacity he organised a very successful day for the older members of the village in August. This was a coach trip through Chepstow, Usk, Abergavenny and Brecon. It was obviously much enjoyed by all concerned.

The barbecue at Cornerways on American Independence Day drew a large crowd, many of whom stayed until the early hours! It was also an opportunity to add to the organisation's funds - these stand at about £700 less than this time last year.

The Barn Dance at Rangeworthy Village Hall on Halloween brought many members in Wild West outfits and our thanks go to Peter Manning and Derek Parry for hitching up that particular wagon and getting it on the road.

At the moment, Lionel Alsop is arranging the list of OAP's for the Christmas parcels - the parcels will be assembled, ready for delivery, on the evening of Friday, 18 December at Iron Acton School. Any members who can come along to help with the packing of the parcels will be most welcome.

Everyone will be aware of the sad deaths of 2 members, Jim McDonald and Geoff Thomas. Jim was an active member who regularly helped at the Horse Show, whilst Geoff was an early, if not founder member of Acton Aid. It has been the custom of Acton Aid to make donations to appropriate funds/organisations as a memorial ... In these cases they went to Frenchay Community Health Section for a specialist piece of equipment and St Peter's Hospice respectively.

### FORTHCOMING EVENTS INCLUDE

Friday, 18 December	Christmas Parcels - Iron Acton School
Saturday, 19 December	Adults Christmas Party - Village Hall
Sunday, 20 December	Childrens Christmas Party - Village Hall
Friday, 12 February 1988	Annual Dinner Dance - Chipping Sodbury
<u>Plus:</u>	Meetings on the first Thursday of every month at the Rose and Crown at 8.00 pm

## IRON ACTON SCHOOL

\*\*\*\*\*

At the start of the Autumn Term our school numbers had reached 40 children: 20 in each of the 2 classes.

The first half term passed very quickly helped by Visits to Clearwell Caves (by the Juniors), Priston Mill, Bath and Patch Elm Farm (by the infants) and by the time this article reaches you, the Juniors will have also visited Bristol Museum for a session on Rocks and Minerals, linked to our topic of Under the Ground.

We have also been pleased to welcome guest speakers from the RSPCA and Dr Barnardo's to talk about the work of their respective organisations.

Our part-time teacher Mrs Twomey left the school in July on her retirement and has been replaced by Mrs Carole Howat. Mrs Harries, one of the LEA representatives of the Govenors, has resigned and is replaced by Mrs Janet Matthews, Rosedale Cottage, Yate Road.

(Continued on next page)

At the time of writing, Christmas activities are rushing towards us. The following dates might be of interest:

Tuesday, 15 December	Christmas Concert 7 pm Nativity/Jack and the Beanstalk (tickets only - available from school)
Thursday, 17 December	Christmas Party 2 pm - 4 pm
Friday, 18 December	End of Term
Monday, 11 January 1988	School Re-Opens

Please note that the Annual General Meeting of Parents and Govenors will be next term on Wednesday, 10 February 1988.

#### GENERAL INFORMATION POINT .....

To all parents of children born between 1 September 1983 and 31 August 1984 (ie, children who are 4 years old at the start of term in September 1988), now is the time for you to register at the school of your choice for first year infant admission next September.

Contact your local school for advice or further information.

#### LYNNE'S LITTLE BITS

\*\*\*\*\*

This is a first time trial. The aim is to give an airing to various bits and bobs that are completely unrelated (as you will see!) and don't really come under any other section - a sort of Focus "miscellaneous" .....

#### TRESTLE TABLES - A PLEA

Several trestle tables have 'gone missing' from the Village Hall Store Room. We think that someone borrowed them for an outside function and hasn't had time to bring them back. If you think you know where they are can you ring me on 566? The Village Hall Committee won't rant and rave (well, no more than usual!!). We just want them back as they are used for so many village and charity events and having just had the roof repaired the funds aren't really available to buy replacements.

#### FRAMED PRINTS OF THE CHURCH

Thinking about those last minute Christmas presents? Available from the Rector are framed black and white prints of the church, they really are lovely (we've got one at home) and are reasonably priced at £3.99, also available are coloured versions, again mounted and framed, size 10" x 8", at a cost of £8. But please allow sufficient time for them to be obtained from the printers.

#### BARRIE WRIGHT - DIY EXPERT EXTRAORDINAIRE

This little entry is the result of a dare (say no more!). If any of you would like your homes completely renovated (or should that be demolished?) please contact Barrie Wright Esq. Heard the joke about the Irish builder who knocked 2 rooms into one by taking out the ceiling??, there was nearly an English version in Iron Acton! All Rona would like for Christmas is her nice, tidy home back or, failing that, please foward all copies of books entitled 349 ways to demobilise your husband to Eynsford Cottage!!

Continued

## USED CHRISTMAS CARDS AND STAMPS

Do you often wonder what to do with your old Christmas Cards and used stamps?? Here is the answer ...

St Peter's Hospice would love your old Christmas cards and also any old birthday or anniversary cards - they recycle them and sell them.

As far as used stamps are concerned, I have managed to find 2 completely different sources who would love to receive your used stamps:

- a Your local Oxfam shop - there's one in Yate and one in Thornbury.
- b Send them in an envelope marked: Stamps, HMP Dartmoor, Princetown, Yelverton, Devon, PL20 6RH. They are made up into packs and sold at home and abroad to stamp collectors - the proceeds go to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. (Please don't think this is an early April Fools joke, I can assure you it's not!)

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY MIKE TAYLOR

Perhaps he'd rather keep it quiet, but Mike Taylor celebrates his 50th birthday at the beginning of December (a tally some of our cricketers would be proud of!). Mike has managed to play so many tricks successfully on his friends that he has decided to vanish off to Europe for his big day ..... one day, perhaps in the not too distant future he will be caught out!!!

## CRIB SERVICE

For those of you who are new to the village, I thought you might like to know about the following. On 6.30 pm on Christmas Eve a lovely service takes place in the Church which is known as the Crib Service.

It's a service for the children (and their mums, dads, grannies, grampies and Uncle Tom Cobbley and all). It's full of good old fashioned Christmas Carols and the hand bell ringers play and then .....

Each family/child/individual (whichever you choose) is asked to take a present suitable for a child. At a given point in the service those with presents leave their pews and walk around the Church to the Crib by the Christmas tree, they hand in their present and these are then taken to Dr Barnardo's Children's Home (either by Father Christmas or, if he's busy, the Rector helps him out).

It really is a lovely service, it brings a tear to my eye each time and it also means that our combined efforts help to give a child a slightly better Christmas than they might have had.

Please do your best to support this event.

## POSTSCRIPT

Okay, so do you now catch the drift?? Anything goes (well almost) in this column. If you have any items just let me know - the only thing we ask is make sure that the person/organisation involved has a sense of humour.

Lynne Blanchard



## IRON ACTON HORTICULTURAL SHOW

The saving grace at this year's Show was the high number of entries in the Children's Section (over 100 and the Judge went off to have a well earned breakdown). I would like to say a big thank you to all those who entered this section and to Ron Dowding for his help in lighting the "blue touch paper" of enthusiasm.

Gruesome weather and the Show being later than usual were 2 factors partially responsible for the low number of entries in the General and Flower Arranging Sections but, having said this, the number of entries in the Homecraft Section was frighteningly low (only 1 decorated Victoria Sandwich - quick, keep me from the aspirin bottle!).

We made a profit of £120 for Village Hall Funds - well down on the previous 2 years. About £50 came from the evening auction and £50 from the raffle, the remainder coming from entry and entrance money.

Right, having had my grouch (I've finished now), here's my list of thank yous:

- \* To everyone who took the time and trouble to put an entry in the Show.
- \* To everyone who took their prize cards but not their prize money - I hope I don't offend anyone if I single out Gerry Millward here. Without people like him I would have been grizzling even more about profits!
- \* To the Judges who gave their time and talents freely (even if we did nearly lose our flower arranging judge - Godfrey Cook I'm ashamed of you, and at your age too!!!)
- \* To everyone who came to the Auction and parted with their money. To Howard Aplin who auctioned the produce in his own inimitable way and to Michelle Davis, Elizabeth Sellick, Joanna Thorne and Sarah Thorne who acted so efficiently and cheerfully as Auctioneer's Assistants.
- \* To John Naish and his daughter for successfully parting people from their money for raffle tickets and to everyone who allowed themselves to be parted from their money!
- \* To Sarah Matthews who helped us throughout the day and who's idea it was to put some coins into the bucket catching the drips of water from the roof - by the end of the afternoon we'd collected £1.52 and about 2 pints of water!
- \* To the WI who provided us with cakes to sell on the day.
- \* and finally ... to the long suffering members of the Village Hall Committee who, even though they might not know one end of a leek from the other, are prepared to wade in (with the state of the weather and the roof that day, I think that's an appropriate phrase) and help.

<u>Cup Winners:</u>	Hall Committee Rose Bowl	Mr G Millward
	Gordon Powell Cup	Dr J Naish
	St James the Less Cup	Mr G Millward
	Allotment Cup	Mr R Drage
	Acton Aid Cup	Mrs J Waker
	Runner Up Homecraft Section	Mr R Drage
	Aster Cup	Mrs J Millward
	Rose Bowl	Mrs E Blanchard
	Rugman Cup	James Boyce
	Guide Shield	Katherine White

Lynne Blanchard

## THE RAIN IN SPAIN

Having completed 10,000 working hours since last break in January, I decided enough was enough and a cheap holiday was needed. So there I was at 5.00 p.m. stood outside the Hippodrome, in the rain, feeling like a pork sausage in a synagogue on a Saturday, waiting for the Ferris coach to whisk me to the Costa Thingummy. Only slightly delayed, the coach arrived and I noticed on the back was painted "Follow me to the Sun!" I thought at the time, if I'm inside then where the hell is the sun going to be?

Fantastic, those coaches - a toilet that doesn't flush (a coca-cola can had seen to that in 1985) and every thirty minutes a hostess asking if there was anything I wanted to eat or drink - just like being at home! Three hours and ten minutes later, Dover, to find the 9.30 ferry had been cancelled, so a two hours delay. Time to watch all the foreign cars being dumped on our shores and time to gain courage to travel on S.N.C.F. ferries. Those letters stand for several words, none of which I am at liberty to use.

Having topped up on the duty free (but still a lot of money) a bottle of whisky and I decided to enjoy La Belle France. By the time Paris was going out of the back window of the coach, the whisky had won and my next view was of Lyons, well into the journey. A cup of coffee was all I needed to cross the border into Spain at Perpignan - no passport, customs or even a signed promise of good behaviour. So I drank my cup of coffee all the way through the mountains to the Costa Whatsit. As the coach drove down into Spain, so the flood waters rose, cars on their sides with doors wide open with the waters rushing through, dead horses in fields and the coach going slower and slower to stay on what was left of some of the roads. I remember thinking I wish the sign on the back of this coach - "Follow me to the Sun", was on the front, then maybe I would be in the sun. Because by that time the rain was coming down like rods.

Arriving at my holiday resort I was greeted by courier Florence.

"Would you like to enjoy a coffee in Kim's bar, because your room has been double booked?"

"Thanks a bunch," was my reply. I sat watching the rain while my reservation was sorted out to my satisfaction.

The whole resort had been taken over by the Germans as it was their potato festival or something at home - like our autumn break. They were everywhere; every bar and cafe was playing oompapa music or Strauss. It was like Munich in the rain - yes, it was still raining.

Ever since the Germans bombed my local chip shop in 1943 I have never felt comfortable with them. When a queue was formed to get a drink at the hotel bar, the Germans always wanted to start the queue at the front, and not one of them would admit to bombing my chippy.

The car hire company stopped hiring cars because the roads were too flooded and dangerous, so I went to bed for two days with colic. The noise in the hotel was unbelievable, with 2,000 Teutonic jackboots stomping about on marble tiled floors on the floor above, it was like a millipedes' convention going on. Sitting on the balcony was soothing and in a way romantic, watching the rain chuck down, but after forty hours even romance and visions fade and the rain did just start to ease. So down to the beach it was in the bright white new daps purchased as a final throw to having a holiday. The rescue helicopter that had been dashing up and down the shoreline set down right beside me. The rescue diver looked how I felt - worn out and fed up. That week thirteen holiday makers had drowned off our beach. Black Belt in running away took over and I legged it back to my hotel "approximately four minutes from the beach" (In a Ferrari, they might have added.)

I know you won't believe it, but with my bags packed, the rain was still tipping it down. The coach arrived; I took my seat and the sun came out. It was like it was programmed, even the ferry crossing was in sunshine. Pulling up outside the Hippodrome, the sun was still out. I guess the motto of this has to be: "Follow Ferris coaches to the Sun. Follow Bryan a to the rain in Spain!"

Bryan Taylor.

\* \* \* \* \*

A Derbyshire cricket supporter, booking a special coach seat to travel to the Nat West Bank Trophy final discovered that his ticket had been made out to Lourdes.

Notice in a French Hotel: "Guests are requested to show their feelings to the chambermaid before leaving."

\* \* \* \* \*

### RANGEWORTHY PLAYGROUP

Playgroup reopened after the summer break on Wednesday 2nd September, and despite losing a sizable proportion to school we have had sufficient children to enable the group to open three mornings a week. This term has begun quietly as the new children settle in but will build up as Christmas approaches. Our Nativity Play will take place at Rangeworthy Village Hall on Friday 18th December and visitors are most welcome.

This summer term ended in noise and confusion on Friday 24th July when we had our first attempt at Playgroup Sports Day. Some of the children seemed rather confused over what it was all about but it was great fun and will be repeated again next year. Prior to that the children enjoyed their summer outing to Weston-Super-Mare, when we struck lucky, the sun shone and they were able to sit on the beach and paddle in the sea.

If you would like to find out more about Rangeworthy Playgroup, then either call in to Rangeworthy Village Hall on Monday, Wednesday or Friday morning, or give me a ring on 626.

Jill Bradshaw.

## PARISH COUNCIL

Everyone who knew him was shocked and saddened by the death of our chairman, Geoff Thomas. He had been a member of the Parish Council for fifteen years, but he and his family had been well known in the village for many years before that. Geoff was always ready to help wherever he could and will be very much missed by many people.

We were disappointed by the response to our Sponsored Footpath Walk, apparently our publicity was not sufficient, though we had posters in all the available places. We hope to have another walk in the spring, so we must make sure more people hear about it then. Those few stalwarts who turned up enjoyed their walk, to give £84 to the fund for repairs to the Village Hall roof. Some of our footpaths are blocked and overgrown, and if we don't make an effort to keep them open they will be lost for ever.

**FOULING OF PAVEMENTS BY DOGS SEEMS TO BE ON THE INCREASE ALL OVER THE VILLAGE.** We have had complaints in particular from parents at North Road School, where the pavement seems to be always in a mess. Children often have to have their shoes cleaned off before they can go in to school, so that the mess is not tracked into the school rooms.

Dogs are pretty intelligent creatures, and it only takes a little time and patience to teach them to use the gutter or rough ground where people do not walk. If you can't be bothered to teach your dog not to be a nuisance to the community, isn't it better not to keep a dog at all?

During the summer we have had complaints about cycles and motor cycles on the road leading to the path to the Parish Meadows. This path was granted by special concession to make life easier to link events in the meadows with the Hall, and to help those in the eastern end of the village. The wording on the sign has now been changed to emphasise that this is a PRIVATE ROAD and the only wheeled vehicles that have any right to use it are those belonging to the residents, and prams or pushchairs. Please impress this on your children, before they get into trouble.

The riding of cycles and motor cycles in the Parish Meadows is against the bye-laws, but we know it happens sometimes. One day there will be a prosecution, so make sure it isn't YOUR CHILD.

\* \* \* \* \*

"The Royal British Legion took 45 men & their widows on their Annual outing, a tour of the Cotswolds" Stratford-upon-Avon Herald.

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"The Royal British Legion took 45 men & their widows on their Annual outing, a tour of the Cotswolds" Stratford-upon-Avon Herald.

## WHIST DRIVES

Where are all the whist players of Iron Acton?  
There is a Whist Drive every month in the Village Hall and the organisers are disappointed that so few local people seem to attend. Proceeds are always for charity, St. Peter's Hospice having benefited more than once, so come on all you card players, brush up your whist technique and go along. Don't leave it all to people from other Villages!

THE FOCUS TEAM ARE VERY GRATEFUL THAT ALL PROCEEDS FROM ONE WHIST DRIVE WILL BE GIVEN TO OUR FUNDS,- FINANCING THE MAGAZINE IS ALWAYS A PROBLEM.

MANY THANKS TO THE WHIST DRIVE ORGANISERS.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Next Friday evening Major T. will tell the stirring story of his escape from Bandits in the Church Hall." Local Paper.

\* \* \* \* \*

## GUIDE AND BROWNIE SUPPORTERS GROUP

A very pleasant Coffee Morning was held at Dean Lodge in July - unfortunately we were lucky with the weather in this disappointing summer - and people enjoyed sitting and strolling in the garden. Our funds were boosted by £60 from this event.

Unfortunately we were not able to repeat last year's evening of fun and games on the last evening before the summer break, but will try to arrange it next year. In September we had a Jumble Sale in the Hall, which made a profit of nearly £90.

Guides and Brownies went on a Night Hike which they always enjoy, and were provided with soup and hot dogs by the supporters group on their return.

We shall hold our popular Coffee & Gateaux evening in the February half-term holiday.

\* \* \* \* \*

### **Epitaph in Herefordshire churchyard.**

Remember me as you pass by,  
As you are now so once was I,  
As I am now so you must be  
Therefore prepare to follow me.

---

To follow you I'm not content  
Unless I know which way you went.

EXTRACTS FROM THE NOTES OF A FORMER MEMBER OF THE  
6TH GLOUCESTERSHIRE REGIMENT OF THE HOME GUARD, ALMONDSBURY PLATOON.

The following are extracts from the notes of a member of the 6th Gloucestershire Regiment of the Home Guard, Almondsbury Division, during the Second World War. The author hopes they will show that the picture given by the BBC's "Dad's Army" wasn't altogether fair on the people who gave up much of their time to protect their villages.

After the retreat of the British Expeditionary Force from Dunkirk our country was virtually unprotected and the Prime Minister, Mr. Winston Churchill, asked for all able bodied men to report to the nearest police station to register into what was, at that moment, to be called the Local Defence Volunteers(LDV). We were issued with arm-bands with the letters LDV on them and in the first instance were auxiliary to the police.

Our first task was to stop all motorists on the main Bristol Road and check their identity cards. If the drivers failed to provide them they were taken to the police station where they had to prove their identity as anyone who did not have an identity card was regarded as a "fifth columnist" - in other words, a spy. At that time the IRA, being sympathetic to the German cause, was threatening to blow up bridges and viaducts in order to disrupt the movement of rail traffic. The Almondsbury Platoon also guarded the tunnel at Over (this was quite a busy line as a marshalling yard at Pilning was used for armaments and goods for the war effort.)

Some of us had our own shotguns and some were loaned by various people in the district. At the beginning these were the only weapons we had but we found that a shotgun with ball ammunition can be quite a lethal weapon! Those who did not have shotguns were instructed in making petrol bombs. About this time we thought a German invasion was imminent and we collected materials around the village for the erection of barricades (things like old farm machinery, wagons and horse rakes). The idea was to hold up the motorised infantry so they could be attacked while trying to clear the obstructions.

Each evening, except Saturday, we would parade at Almondsbury Parish Hall and receive instruction in basic army training. Later we had our own HQ at the Red House on Almondsbury Hill. The tension eased after a few weeks when it became obvious the invasion was not imminent. We now received some Ross Rifles and Browning Machine Guns from Canada which, although they were different from the British Lee Enfield Guns, were very accurate and as they had ring sights were more suitable for an amateur to handle.

Our title was now changed to the Home Guard. We were issued with standard army uniform (not always a good fit for the more portly figures of our middle-aged personnel). Officers were appointed who taught us marching and army drills - most had been officers in the Great War (1914-18) and quite often a regular army officer would teach us about hand grenades, mortars, machine guns and unarmed combat. Most Sundays we went to our rifle and bombing range at Cattybrook. On several occasions we went to Lansdown and used the regular army's assault course and did bayonet practice. By this time we were a very efficient platoon, able to carry out any duty that could be done by the regular army. To strengthen our village defences we dug out machine gun positions and foxholes where we could attack a the enemy with hand grenades.



One night I was at an observation post, when the sky was lit up by at least 50 brilliant flashes of fire. I could not make telephone contact and I was at a loss to work out what was happening. I eventually discovered that what I had taken to be enemy action was, in fact, lightning striking the barrage balloons used to prevent low flying attacks by enemy aircraft.

Another of our duties was to try and pinpoint where bombs fell - there were very many of the Almondsbury area. One night when there was a lot of enemy activity there seemed to be an avalanche of unexploding bombs hurtling down around us. These turned out to be shells fired from an anti-aircraft gun at Avonmouth. We never found out whether they had been sabotaged or wrongly timed but, for me, it was one of the most frightening nights of the war.

One Sunday we were taken to an army exercise at Littleton - made more realistic because the coach ran off the road into a deep ditch. Tin hats, respirators and rifles were thrown all over the place but we got out safely and finished our journey on foot. There were platoons from all over Gloucestershire at the exercise. Suddenly a low flying aircraft appeared and we heard a shout of "gas attack" and we were sprayed with an imitation of mustard gas - all very realistic!

We had many other exercises including the capture of Badminton House from the regular army.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### HAND BELL RINGING

Once again the Handbell Team will be touring round the Parish before Christmass - to give pleasure, we hope, - to remind people that the Festival of the Birth of Christ is almost here - and to collect money for Cancer Research and for the Church. We try to come round whatever the weather and will aim to start at Latteridge either on the 17th or 18th of December. After that our itinerary is not definitely planned, though we usually try to visit the Green and the ancient hamlet of Acton Ilgar on the second and third evenings. After that we try to work through the rest of the Parish, and make several calls outside the Parish boundaries, between then and the 23rd. On Christmass Eve we do not go far away but call on one or two houses and the Rose and Crown, the Lamb, and the White Hart.

We are always delighted by the warmth of the reception we get wherever we go and by the generosity shown to us. This enabled us to send £250 to Cancer Research last year and give around £220 to the Church

There are occasions when we call to see people at an inconvenient time. If we do, or if you would like us to call at a special time on a special day, please let the Rector know, and we will do our best to fit you in when you want us.

\* \* \* \* \*

Arthur Pitt writes;

"Once again it gives me great pleasure to thank everyone who supported me for my last Whist Drive on behalf of St. Peter's Hospice. A total of £102.50 was raised and from this I donated £10 to Focus. Thanks to all who donated prizes, and to our band of Ladies that keep us whist players going with refreshments.

## FRIENDS OF IRON ACTON SCHOOL

On the 12th October 1987 the first A.G.M. of the Friends of Iron Acton School was held. Mr Dowding thanked the friends for their support and assistance which has enabled the association to get off to such a tremendous beginning. Since the inaugural meeting on February 11th the Friends have raised over £1,000. This compares with a capitation allowance for the same period of £827 from Avon County. In July the school held its annual Summer Fete. It was a glorious day and the many stalls and sideshows plus the strawberry teas raised the magnificent total of £500. £200 of this was raised from the raffle which was well supported by the village people. This term our main activity has been a stall at a car boot sale on October 4th, which raised £64.

So what have we done with the money? Since February with our help the school has been able to purchase a video recorder, and a B.B.C. computer and printer for the infants department. Avon County has also made grants towards these purchases. In July the Friends also paid for the school to have a very enjoyable day out at The Tropicana in Weston-Super-Mare.

But "The Friends" has not only been about raising money. The school now has a list of helpers which can be called on to assist with transport for outside activities, cookery lessons and helping to catalogue the new library books. 27 people have joined this pool of helpers and other interested people are most welcome.

What of the future? The school still needs financial support in many different areas. Our next project is to help buy the equipment needed to implement the new maths programme being introduced by the school. New P.E. equipment is needed and the library will need to be continually updated. This year we decided not to hold a Christmas Fayre as this does compete with other village organisations. However, we will be selling an Iron Acton School Christmas Card designed by a child at the school. This will be on sale at the end of November and all profits will go to the school.

At the A.G.M. Mr Dowding expressed his thanks not only to the Friends of the School, but all the local people who had supported us this year by buying raffle tickets, baking cakes and donating stall items. We are most grateful for your help without which we could not have made such a wonderful start. We hope that you will continue to support us in our second year.

Jill Bradshaw.

\* \* \* \* \*

Conversation between two children in a classroom: "Did you get anything interesting for Christmas?" "I had a vulture." "You couldn't have done!" "I did, I had a £2 vulture from Boots."

Little boy on seeing a Bishop in full regalia processing up the aisle of his Church: "Now I know what a crook looks like."

Notice in a Church Porch: "Beetle in the Vestry has been confirmed."

What's the difference between an auction and seasickness? One is the sale of effects, the other the effects of a sail.

## IRON ACTON MEN HANGED!

### Apprehension of a Formidable Band of Robbers

During the short period of eight months from August 1826 to April 1827 five young men (four from Iron Acton and one from Yate) were hanged at Gloucester Goal.

Thomas Gardiner, 21, of Wotton Road, and William Mills, 28, of Yate Lower Common, were executed on the 19th August 1826, and the two brothers, Mark Dyer of Dyer's Lane and John Dyer of Mission Lane, who were 30 and 28 years respectively, on the 28th April the following year. All four were members of a notorious gang which had terrorised the neighbourhood over the previous six or seven years. The whole gang, known as the Wickwar Gang (because the preliminary hearing took place at the Wickwar Magistrates Court) is supposed to have amounted to forty or fifty, of which about thirty men and women were arrested.

According to The Bristol Mirror of the time:

"The accounts which have reached us of the depredations of the gang almost exceed belief. It has been no uncommon thing for a farmer to rise in the morning to find the greater part of his furniture, fat pigs, poultry, cheeses, etc., swept away, and the cave or depository for the stolen goods so carefully contrived that all search for the property was invariably in vain."

One reporter at the Gloucester Assizes, observing the group standing in the dock, described how "they covered a wide diversity of age, extending from a youth of sixteen to a hoary old sinner of nearly fourscore."

After the executions the bodies of Mark and John Dyer were brought from Gloucester for burial in the churchyard at Iron Acton. It is claimed that an elderly fellow by the name of Stiff was sent to Gloucester Goal to collect the bodies and take them back to Iron Acton. He had taken with him a young lad and it was said that neither spoke to the other or dared to look behind until they reached the Bagstone Turnpike.

\* \* \* \* \*

For a full and most interesting account of THE WICKWAR GANG one should read the publication of that name compiled by Mr Alfred Strange, of 113, Wycliffe Road, Abington, Northampton NN1 5JJ (formerly of Wotton Road). Copies may be obtained from him, price £1.00 (postage stamps accepted.)

We are grateful to him for permission to publish the above extracts.

\* \* \* \* \*

### ACTONIANS DRAMA GROUP

Our next production is "Move over Mrs Markham" by Ray Cooney and John Chapman in the Village Hall on Thursday, Friday & Saturday 3rd - 5th December at 7.30 p.m. Tickets £1.75, Children & O.A.P's £1.00 from Iron Acton Post Office or Fiona Manning, Close Cottage, High Street. We look forward to seeing you!

## IRON ACTON W.I

Well here we are writing the last report for this year. Our meeting in July was a talk and demonstration on Basket Making and one or two members are now the proud owners of some very nice baskets.

In August there was no meeting of the W.I.

Unfortunately, in September our Speaker did not turn up but this gave us a good opportunity to catch up on all the news and events of the last month.

The October meeting took the form of a real live horror movie in the Village Hall called "Unwrapping the Mummy" complete with a talk by Mr Slugett of the Bristol Museum.

The November meeting is our annual Birthday Party and this year it has been decided to have a Ladies Night out at The Wheatsheaf, Winterbourne.

December 14th is our Annual General Meeting which is always followed by the traditional sherry and mince pies and at this point I would like on behalf of all the members of the Iron Acton W.I. to wish everyone in the village A Very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year and to extend a very cordial invitation to any lady in the village who would like to join us at the Village Hall on the second Monday evening of each month at 7.30 p.m. when a good time is normally had by all!!

Rona Wright.

\* \* \* \* \*

## NORTH ROAD LADIES CLUB

On the first Monday in November we celebrated our 20th Birthday with a dinner at Rangeworthy Court. Many of those attending were Founder Members, including myself, who has many happy memories of the Ladies Club to recall in speakers and outings. Why don't you all past members rejoin us and any new ones Dec. 7th We have the Cotswold Consort Singers to entertain us with an evening of Carols. Their fee goes to charity.  
Guests 50p.

Jan. Skittles evening at the Football Club. Date to be arranged.

Feb 1st Mr Tom Bullock of Radio Bristol to talk on antiques.

Mar 7th Mr & Mrs Fullman on one of their walks.

June Broom, R597.

\* \* \*

**Not quite kosher** The Spiro Institute of Education based in St. John's Wood is offering courses on the History of Jewish Food. Lectures will be given by a Mrs Bacon.

**Restaurant notice, in Lancaster:** "Come and enjoy our food and the uniqueness of our restaurant. We serve children (medium rare.)"

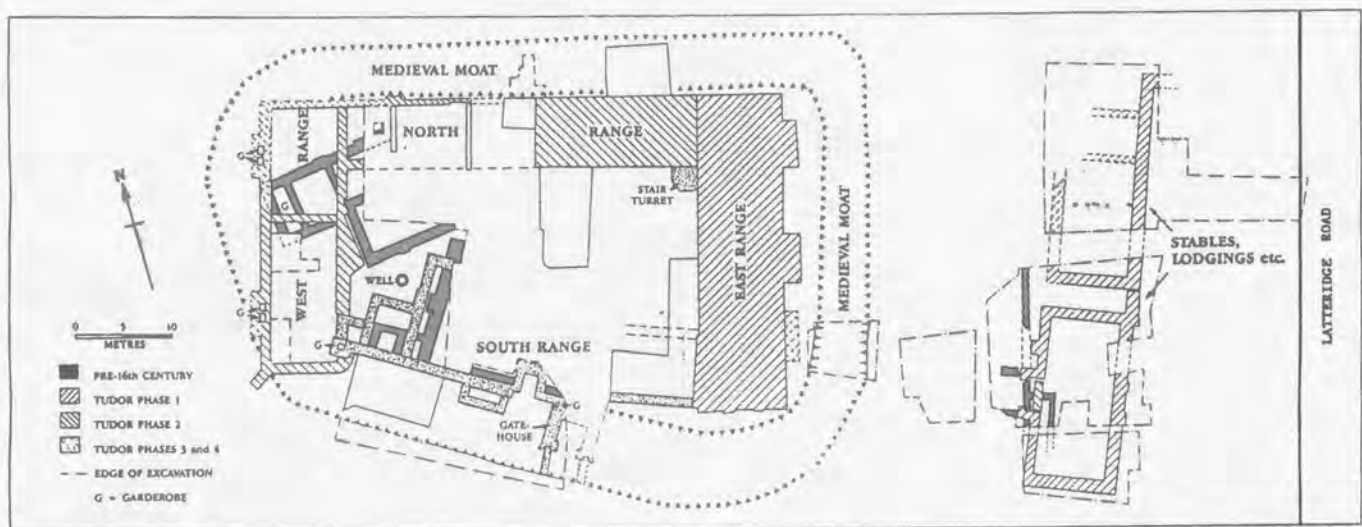
## ACTON COURT

Acton Court which, up to three years ago, was believed to have decayed beyond the point of repair, is now considered, it seems, to be one of the most important houses of its period in England. What was a large house in itself, now turns out to be only the East Wing and oldest surviving part of a huge and complex manor on the site of an even older house, dating at least from the 15th century.

Excavation work which has gone on through 1987 has revealed that the house was improved and extended over most of the Tudor age and must have looked very different in the past. For instance, standing at what is now the front entrance, the view of the house would have been obscured by buildings used as lodging houses and stables. To the north, and behind the present house, still stands part of a wing which served as a gallery, joining the East Wing to a West Wing, the whole forming three sides of a square, with other buildings and a well in the central courtyard. The main buildings were encircled by a moat, eighteen feet wide, probably filled in in 1550 and now revealed in part.

There are still reminders of the house's former grandeur: The ecclesiastical looking window to the left of the East Wing is 15th Century and is believed to have been brought from Kingswood Abbey at the time of the Dissolution of the Monasteries. The huge state apartment on the upper floor of the East Wing (used as a granary in 1700) still has a painted frieze, at present covered in whitewash, and plaster Tudor roses and fleur de lys have survived in a room which was converted to a stable at about the same time. In the Garderobes (small rooms originally used for storing armour) have been found drinking pots and gambling tokens and a collection of clay pipes.

In the mid 16th century Sir Nicholas Poyntz welcomed Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn to this great house. The last of the Poyntz family left in 1680 and by 1700 the house had so reduced in status that the once stately rooms had been converted to granaries and stables and the West Wing and part of the North Wing had been demolished. It is interesting to speculate on how and why this happened.



\* \* \* \* \*

## ELIZABETHAN CLUB

The Elizabethans have enjoyed their summer programme with outings to Teignmouth, Bideford and Frome Cheese Show.

I must apologise for not mentioning the sad loss of Mr Buckley and Mr Turner in the last edition of Focus. Members wish Mr Stan Ponting and Mrs Carter a speedy recovery from their stay in Hospital.

We welcome five new members to the club - Mr & Mrs Worsley, Mrs Russell and Mr & Mrs Merry.

We had a wonderful Harvest Home and we were pleased to see our coach driver, Phillip, and members of the Hall committee present.

We are having three winter outings - to Weston to see the Carnival, Bristol and Bath to see the lights with a buffet supper afterwards, and to the Pantomime at the Bristol Hippodrome in January.

Our Whist Drive on November 9th is in aid of Focus.

D. Elson - Secretary.

\* \* \* \* \*

## BEST KEPT VILLAGE

Unfortunately we were not among the winners this year, although the village looked very smart all through the summer. Our problem still seems to be litter as you will see from the report from the organisers:-

"A very good useful plan. There was some litter on the green, outside the phone box and in Holly hill. The gardens were generally lovely and a lot of hard work had been put into the cemetery. The village amenities etc. were well maintained and we liked the posters,"

We had a lovely display of posters and a the prize winners were Joame Thorne, Michelle Davis, Peter Hill and Philip Parry.

Winners in the garden competitions were:-

Hanging Basket Mr & Mrs Eke, The Green.  
Container Mr & Mrs Cutts, Irondale.  
Garden Mr & Mrs Woodward, Algars Drive.

Baskets at the Rose & Crown were also commended. These were at their best a week or two after the judging and brightened up the whole High Street.

Thanks to everyone who made so much effort, perhaps it will be our turn to win again next year!

\* \* \* \* \*

**Notice in School:** "No one must use this Swimming Bath until water has been passed by the head-master . . ."

## FRIENDS OF ST JAMES THE LESS

### THE DONKEY DERBY

The amount raised from this event was £348.31 and the Committee would like to thank everyone who sponsored a race, a donkey or who braved the elements to stand in the Parish Meadow on Sunday, 17 May. We would also like to thank Mr Peter Lewis, of Heron Homes Limited, who's donation was sufficient to cover all of our printing costs.

and now ..... our next event will be .....

### A MULLED WINE AND MINCED PIE EVENING

This will take place on Saturday, 12 December at 8.00 pm in the Village Hall. Tickets will be £2.50 and if you accost any members of the Committee (John and Penny Percy, Mike Wheeler, Gerry Millward, Margaret Woodman, Betty Cook, Eric Kinder, The Rector or me) we will be only too pleased to supply you with tickets.

Seriously though folks, it should be an enjoyable evening. What more could you want than a festively decorated venue, seasonal entertainment and perhaps a surprise or two and for those of you who don't like wine, beer and non-alcoholic drinks will be available. What an opportunity to use this as a gentle start to the forthcoming festive season? ..... we look forward to seeing you.

### AND FINALLY

Concerning the actual organisation the Friends' of St James, we hope to start sending out letters concerning membership and helpers, etc, during the middle of November. Please be patient as we will only be sending out 15-20 letters per week and it may take a while to get around to everyone BUT if you think you have been left out and you are interested in our little organisation, my possums, just let me know.

Lynne Blanchard  
Secretary

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### The Blue Vet

The doggy had flu  
Did not know what to do  
He called in the vet  
Who arrived in a sweat  
Then the vet caught flu  
And went all blue  
They both ended up  
In bed with flu

Helen Giles

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### At the Zoo

There was an animal  
At the zoo  
He only lived  
Till half past two!  
He only drank  
Cans of beer ...  
He only ate  
Once a year!

Michelle Holliman

## STARTING AGAIN

Spanish was something I studied between September 7th and September 27th in a year that predates even the Suez crisis. It was abandoned as I remember it, because it clashed with youth club night and my consuming interest in a recovering case of acne who had once been told he looked like Marlon Brando and in fact was developing the balding patch to go with the image.

This summer, returning to Spain after a short interval of bringing up children, I wished I'd gone on with the lessons (undeserving Marlon went off with Brown Owl anyway.) For one who likes to be top cat, it is shaming to have to stand in the background mouth gaping while son does the grocery shopping, orders the meals, asks the way to the nearest filling station, even cracks Spanish jokes. Gin con agua tonica was the sum of my Spanish conversation, (though I said it to perfection).

So at evening class fever time in September I went back to school. It's all very different now. The rather depressed gentleman with a blue nose from Carshalton Beeches, who took me as far as page five of Modern Spanish Grammar in my youth was replaced by a dapper South American in Canary pullover and Next check trousers. "No, I have not been to Spain this year. This good tan I got from the beach I have in my bedroom."

Even more notable is the way that Spanish people must have changed. I can remember in my first brush with the language being impressed with their amazing obsession with apples. "I wish to eat apples. Does your brother eat apples? Do the young girls wish to eat green apples? My grandmother and my grandfather eat many apples." It left one asking serious questions about the strength of Spanish false teeth and offered possible reasons for the state of their public toilets.

The main character in my new Spanish book is slick, female and British. None of your "the mother goes to the market and buys twenty kilos of - " you guessed it! La senora Adams is an entirely different kettle of paella. She has an office in Oxford Street where she works diligently every day, in between visits to Spain where she buys antiques and learns Spanish rapidamente because she is so intelligent. Househusband presumably stays at home in London looking after the four children. It doesn't say which kind of fruit they wish to eat.

Stylish Senora Adams zips from town to town, followed by a rather slavish Senor Gomez (relationship between the two not entirely clear) but he is a wizard at explaining about Spanish money or the customs of the different Spanish regions. She is a wizard at cutting him down to size when he laments the worldliness of Christmas. "You mean," she says, fixing him I imagine with a steely eye "You eat a lot!"

Along with the Christmas cards, next year's holiday ads start to arrive. In September my sights were fairly low. To be able to say "Half a pound of cheese and the Daily Mail." would have been the peak of my ambition. Following in Senora Adams' footsteps, perhaps next time I'll get a black straw hat and dark glasses, and dash from coast to coast in a convertible Seat Panda, making intelligent remarks about the state of Spanish tomato growing.

Jo.V.



## IRON ACTON FOLK CLUB

The Iron Acton Folk Club has now settled into the Rose and Crown.

Allan and Gail have proved most helpful and willing in their efforts to keep the Club alive and we would like to take this opportunity of thanking them for everything they have done.

The Club is, of course, open to all and if anyone from the Village would like to come and join the several villagers who already come they would be most welcome!

The guests for the next couple of months are as follows:

6 November	John the Fish
13 November	If the Cap Fits
27 November	Gerry Mogg
11 December	John Alderslade
8 January	Keith Hancock
22 January	Mike Silver
12 February	Tom McConville

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## VILLAGE DAY 1988

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Various people have said how sorry they are that the Folk Festival hasn't returned to the Village and although in 1988 this will once again take place at the Holford Arms, 7 of us from the Folk Club at the Rose and Crown have got together and our aim is to put on a "Village Day" in 1988.

We've called it a Village Day because we would like to involve as many village organisations as possible and if you can raise some money for your own, individual groups then that's fine by us - more on this angle later in article.

With events like this it is usual to book one "big name" and we have been really fortunate to book The Yetties on their one remaining free Saturday in 1988 - **Saturday, 18 June**. Many of you will have heard of these 4 fellas from Yetminster in Dorset (no prizes for guessing where the name originates) but you may not know what their music is like. Well, at the time of writing, they have their own series on Radio 2, on Wednesday evenings, at 8.30 pm so why not tune in and listen?

We also hope to have various dance sides and we also think it would be nice to get the good old Maypole on The Green working again - look out for notices asking for volunteers!!!

One of the main reasons we decided to go ahead (as well as providing the village with something to do on a Saturday afternoon!) was to say a big "thank-you" to Allan and Gail at the Rose and Crown who gave us shelter when we thought we were going to become homeless and who gave us an unbelievable amount of help and support (so we hope you'll help us to help them by drinking the pub dry - but please, please don't drive afterwards!!).

I've already approached the Rector to see if a small Flower Festival might be held in the Church in conjunction with this event and the WI to see if they would like to provide teas and, hopefully if the relevant Committees agree, we should have the beginnings of a good day.

By the time you read this (if I've managed to pull my finger out), I should have written a letter to all of the organisations in the village to see if they would be interested in helping us out in some way.

One possibility is for organisations to put up stalls on the grass by the Village Hall (we can use inside if wet) but it is important that you liaise with me so that we have an inkling as to who is doing what - I would have a fit of the screaming abdabs if we found ourselves with 10 cake stalls!!

If any of you have any suggestions or ideas for the day please let me know on Rangeworthy 566.

Our aim is to have a happy, enjoyable, trouble-free day - please support us.

### The Date for your Diaries

SATURDAY, 18 JUNE 1988 - WE HOPE TO START SOMETIME AROUND  
MIDDAY

\* \* \* \* \*

DIARY OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS

At the Village Hall

Every Tuesday	Brownies	6.00 p.m.
	Guides	7.30 p.m.
Every Wednesday	Elizabethans	2.00 p.m.
	Fencing Club	7.30 p.m.
Every Thursday	Youth Club	7.00 p.m.
1st Monday in month	Whist Drive	7.30 p.m.
2nd Monday in month	Women's Institute	7.30 p.m.
3rd Monday in month	Parish Council	7.30 p.m.
Dec. 3rd, 4th, & 5th.	Actonians production of "Move over Mrs Markham".	
Dec. 12th.	Friends of St. James the Less, Evening of Mince Pies and Mulled Wine.	
Dec. 19th.	Acton Aid Christmas Party	
20th.	Acton Aid Children's Party	
Feb. 16th. 1988	Guides & Brownies Coffee and Gateaux.	

At the Rose and Crown

Every 1st Thursday	Acton Aid	8.00 p.m.
Every Friday	Folk Club	
Alternate Mondays	Ladies Darts Club	

At Rangeworthy Hall

Mon, Wed, & Fri, mornings	Play Group (during term time)
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At North Road School

Dec. 7th.	North Road Ladies Club	
Feb. 1st.	Do.	7.30 p.m.
Mar. 7th.	Do.	

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SAINT JAMES THE LESS, IRON ACTON

TIMES OF CHRISTMASS SERVICES

Christmass Eve, December 24th

8am Holy Communion

6.30pm Crib Service

(A service for all the family however young  
where we follow, in spirit, the shepherds  
to the Stable to greet the Christ-Child)

11.15pm Mattins of Christmass

12Midnight, Midnight Mass

Christmass Day, December 25th

8am Holy Communion

9.30am Sung Eucharist(a Family Service)

4pm Evensong (said)

Boxing Day, December 26th The Feast of Stephen

8am Holy Communion

10.30am Holy Communion.

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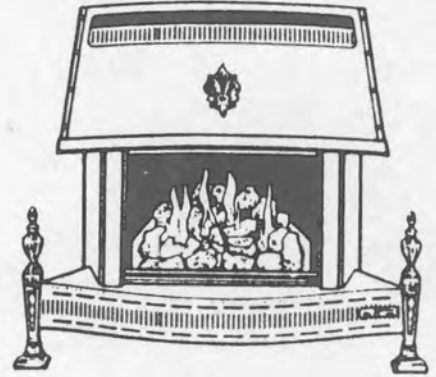
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WHITBREAD BEERS  
IN A FRIENDLY  
COSY  
ATMOSPHERE

FUNCTION ROOM WITH BAR AVAILABLE FOR HIRE ---PARTIES, MEETINGS, CLUBS  
ETC.