

FOCUS ON IRON ACTON



CHURCH OF ST. JAMES THE LESS



IRON ACTON SCHOOL



LAMB INN

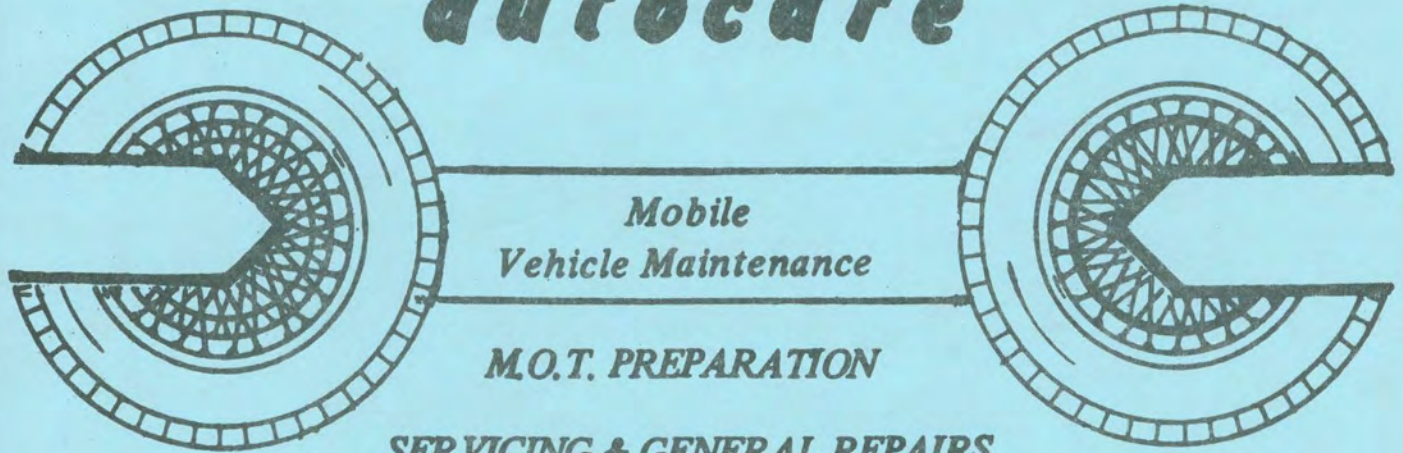


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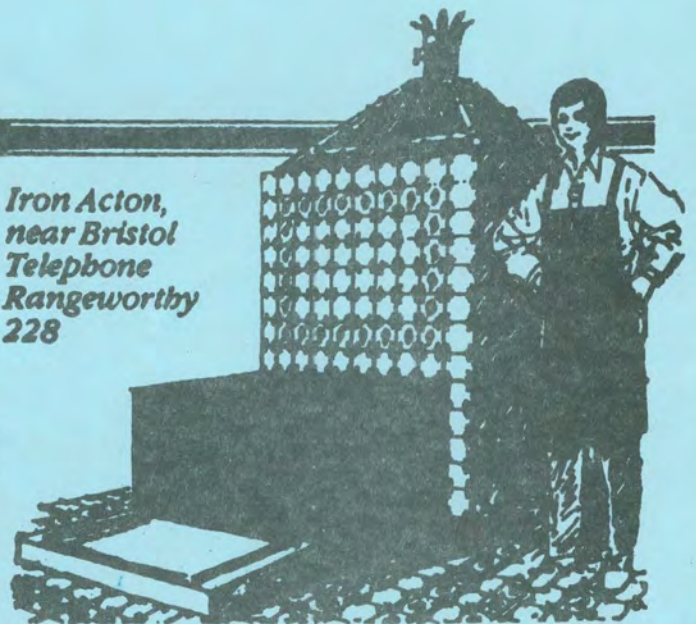
Roger Marsh, 127, Cherington, Yate, Avon. TEL: (0454) 321631

*The home of the
wood burning clay oven*

**THE WHITE
HART
INN**



*Iron Acton,
near Bristol
Telephone
Rangeworthy
228*



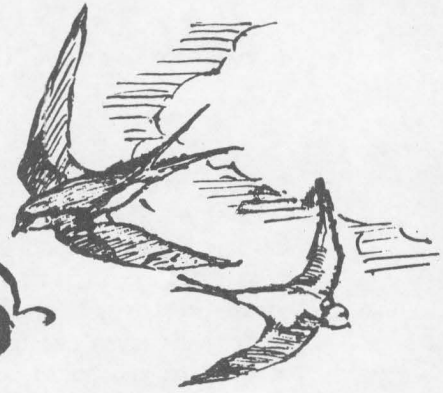
**YOUR OLD FAVOURITES STILL AVAILABLE
PLUS NEW DISHES WE HOPE YOU WILL ENJOY**



No 23

SPRING

1990



EDITORIAL - SPRING 1990

Spring is here. Touches of blue and yellow and white appear in the hedges all around the village, especially in Nibley Lane. Unfortunately these are not always bluebells, dandelions and wild garlic. Very often the colours in the hedgerows are caused by plastic waste which has been blown or dumped there. It would seem that much of the dumping is done by people from outside the village. What a pity they don't know of the excellent amenity site at Yate which Northavon has provided for the disposal of refuse. If anyone hasn't yet found the site, Jo Voss will give you directions. She's currently in line for Northavon's Bronze Bin Lid award for dumping the most junk between August and September last year - four thousand eight hundred and eighty two car loads in two amazing weeks. She's tipped to win, get it? Oh skip it then!

Most people enjoy Focus, but, like everything else these days, it goes on getting more expensive to produce. This year on the morning of 7th May there will be a celebration on the village green, to Christen the new maypole and to raise funds for Focus. Said maypole will be danced round and village organisations will be running stalls, refreshments, plants etc. We hope to see all our friends and their friends too. If you don't like Focus, come and tell us why. If you like Focus, come and support us.

Our thanks as ever to Patricia Ashmead who does so much to help make Focus look good.

Charles Wilkins
Hillside
254

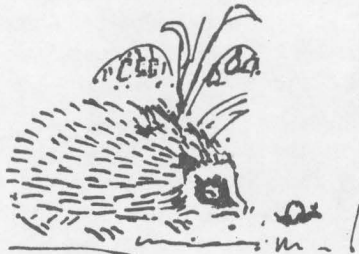
John Percy
Primrose Cottage
339

Betty Cook
Neksdor
202

Jo Voss
Church Cottage
674

Pete Redman
Lawn Cottage
395

Lynne Blanchard
Rose Cottage
566



"IRON ACTON TIMES"

Congratulations to our rival magazine. A very good effort by the school children - you will soon be able to take over Focus!



We continue now with Jill Bradshaw's interesting article about her sailing experiences-

"A Yachties' Life"

Sailing with two children has certainly been different. We used to enjoy sailing across the Channel at night, when with an alternate watch system we could appreciate the solitude of the sea and spy numerous shooting stars. The kids loved the night crossing too, sleeping all the way. But as we arrived in port ready for a few hours sleep, they would wake full of the joys of spring and scrambling to get into the dinghy to visit the beach that had been spotted 100 yards away. A day of frayed nerves and bad tempers took the edge off the enjoyment of the sail. We soon realised why we used to see boats motoring across the Channel in a light wind - they had children on board who find a crossing of over 15 hours rather difficult to take. They also tend to complain if the boat spends too long over on its side beating, - their jigsaws and crayons keep on rolling off the table!

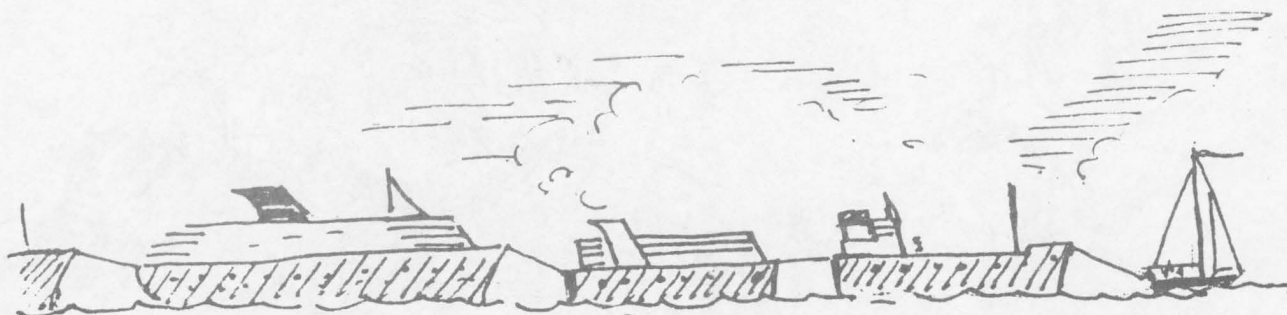
People used to give me such sympathetic looks as I lowered two toddlers onto the boat from some harbour wall, but little did they realise that the motion of the boat lulled them to sleep. In the roughest sea they would smuggle down into their sleeping bags and shift their bodies around in their sleep if the boat changed tack. They were just as happy perched on a potty at an angle of 45° as in the bathroom at home.

Our sailing holidays have also changed. In the Contessa we sailed along the Brittany coast, often stopping at several different anchorages in one day. The holiday was for sailing. Now we are revisiting all the old places but discovering the lovely beaches close by, the dramatic cliff walks and the attractive villages. Navigation used to take up 90% of Neil's time but now it is about 10%, so the rest of his and my energies are spent in entertaining two children, putting tapes into walkmans and unravelling the lines of toy yachts sailing behind us. However, now they are getting bigger they are beginning to become quite useful at steering, pulling up sails and doing little crewing jobs about the boat.

Richard and Claire certainly added an excitement to sailing when they were toddlers - one never knew what would happen next. The auto-pilot has been known to mysteriously alter course for the rocks off Brittany, and one's stomach drops like a stone to see a little hand moving purposefully towards the engine controls when both parents are marooned on a harbour wall trying to tie the boat up.

Last year as the children got bigger the boat seemed to shrink in size. More lockers were taken over by toys, children's books etc. So in the winter we bought "Sapphire", a bit bigger and more racy. To external appearances we probably look quite grand but I still feel a world away from the glamour of "Howards Way". This summer our image was set as we entered French harbours with two children standing on deck giving a gusty rendition (the 20th that day) of "There will always be an England", a favourite from the school play. Mr Dowding has a lot to answer for. Also while surfing down the waves at 10 knots off the Dorset coast we seem to lack "je ne sait quoi" when the background music is "Rupert and the Frog" song.

Little did I realise nearly 20 years ago when I first capsized in the Solent that sailing would become so much a part of my life and how much I would grow to enjoy it. Next time you cross the Channel look out for "Sapphire". She usually has toy boats tied to the stern and two noisy children hanging over the side. If your ears are well tuned you may just pick up the chorus of "Rupert and the Frogs".



ACTON AID - IN CRISIS BUT INDEFATIGABLE.

Acton Aid has now entered its eighteenth incredible year. A serious cash crisis looms following a Horse and Dog show (usually a major fundraiser) which suffered a financial damp-down due to being held on the one rainy day of an otherwise scorching summer. In spite of this, Chairman Bryan Taylor forecasts that 1990 will be a highly successful year and believes the present team to be the finest ever.

Acton Aid, started in 1973 by Brian Burgess is not (if there is anyone left in the parish who still thinks so) a bunch of retired colonels and do gooders. New people moving into the village have been attracted to the organisation and the social secretaries consist of two refreshingly young men (in fact the age limit had to be lowered to bring one into the organisation).

WHO DOES WHAT AND WHY IN ACTON AID?

The original aim of Acton Aid was to act for the good of the parish of Iron Acton and its people. Over the years fund raising has helped parish organisations many times - Brownies, the Church, Pensioners, FOCUS magazine itself, to name only a few. Acton Aid has assisted with hospital visiting, provided equipment for organisations, given holiday breaks to people caring for older or handicapped people. Many individuals have contacted Acton Aid in a crisis, from floods to overgrown gardens and there have been simple anonymous donations to people in need. These acts of kindness are commonplace in the village. Members possess such a wide range of skills and know-how that there is always someone who's got the answer to a problem.

But forget any image of a group of overweight lads running around in boy scout uniforms. Yes, members want to put back something into the system, to help the environment in which we're lucky enough to live, but it's also about fun and friendship. The fundraising itself provides great social occasions which nobody should miss out on.

WHAT'S AHEAD FOR ACTON AID?

New blood on the committee means there's new energy in planning a variety of unusual entertainments. This year there will be a HORSE RACE NIGHT at the village hall, OCOMPAN night, WINE TASTING COMPETITION, PARISH TENNIS TOURNAMENT, as well as skittles, darts, barbecues and safari nights.

It is hoped to hold the Horse and Dog Show again, in September and once again with the help of Eric Harford who is kindly lending his field off the bypass.

The committee is always open to new ideas and new ways of conducting business. New members are always welcome; the only qualifications needed are to be male, over eighteen and living in the parish of Iron Acton. Meetings take place on the first Thursday of the month at the Rose and Crown Iron Acton, courtesy of Alan and Gail Didcott.

Acton Aid Social Committee Agenda

This year the honour of being the Fund Raising and Social Organisers for Acton Aid has been bestowed upon us. Thankfully, we know that you will be supporting us in our quest to raise as much money as possible to spend on needy causes within our Parish. We intend to enjoy ourselves, and we hope that you will too.

Annual Bar-B-Que	July
Race Night (Horse/Dog races on video)	April/May
Pub Quiz Challenge - we shall be looking for teams of four	
German Evening	October
Boat Trip	Summer
Brunch, Champagne Garden Party	End of May/June
Christmas Party	Early December
Annual Dinner Dance (Chairman's Night)	February 1991

Rob Taylor Andy Tillotson

Iron Acton C of E School.

Our Christmas concert took a different format this year, we opened with 'Father Christmas and the Spiders' which told the story of how spiders wove the first tinsel with their webs around the pine needles of a Christmas Tree. Next came 'Follow the Star' a nativity musical which drew on the talents of a number of solo singers. Once again we thank Ray Bulmer from the Actonians for setting up and operating the extensive lighting system.



We shall be in St. James the Less Church on Friday April 6th at 2.30 p.m. for our Easter Service and this summer we shall be including the musical version of 'Oliver!' in our Summer concert.

At the time of writing there are 46 children on roll; we were sorry to lose Lesley and Karen Knowles who moved to Wickwar, but we welcome Steven and Bianca Thomas from the Railway Inn, Yate, Katie Baker from Holm-Ray and Sean, Damien and Melissa Dacey who are staying temporarily with their grandmother.

If there are any other possible admissions that we haven't heard about for September 1990, please let me know as soon as possible. From April 1st 1990 all schools in Avon will be formula-funded and each school will have its own budget to arrange. A considerable factor in the formula is the number of pupils in school (each one carries a 'price tag' of about £800!)

The joint football team between North Road and Iron Acton (Acton United) has played three matches so far. Rangeworthy (home and away) resulted in 2-1 and 3-2 wins respectively and Kingswood brought a 6-1 victory. The Iron Acton girls played Rangeworthy at netball and although they lost 12-8, Mrs Hatt was pleased with their performance, especially from the younger girls (we have no 4th year girls, which can make quite a difference!). There will be a chance for the girls to gain their revenge at the soccer (netball tournament after Easter).

Did you know that Focus has a competitor in the magazine stakes? It is the 'Iron Acton Times' produced by Class 1 which is published each half term. The newspaper is produced as part of the juniors' English work - the reporters interview staff and children about newsworthy events, devise jokes and competition pages, write about sports events and include a letters page.

The whole newspaper is compiled on the schools B.B.C. computer and then produced on our Epsom printer. As a result of the newspaper sales, Iron Acton Times has been set up as part of a Junior Enterprise Scheme. The editorial board has opened its own bank account (courtesy of Nat West, Chipping Sodbury) and is saving profits from the first two issues in order to buy an improved computer program which will allow the printing of a more sophisticated newspaper.

At the end of the printing of each issue, the editorial team have to calculate the cost to the school of paper (printing and photocopying) and electricity. This is subtracted from the takings (the newspaper is sold for 20p each) to give the profit.

The children had an early introduction to the problems involved in running your own company ... the forms which they had to fill in for the bank and .. not least .. trying to find a car parking space in Chipping Sodbury High Street when they went to open the account!

* * * * *

THE FINAL EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARIES FOR 1932 OF MR ARTHUR STRANGE OF NORTHAMPTON, FORMERLY OF WOTTON ROAD.

- 14th Dec Took shoes to Turley's. Afternoon over to Downend with B. Seymour to watch match Bristol Co-op 3 Lombarbians 2 (Wednesday League) - large crowd. Quite rough game.
- 15th " Choir practice - carols. Afterwards with M. Turner, G. Kingscott and M. Pinnell we sang "Good King Wenceslas" outside Mrs Bennett's (or tried to!)

- 17th Sat. Called round for T. Curtis. He was going to the match in the car. I called for B. Dyer .. off to Hillesley on our bikes. H. Hendy came with us - didn't take long - a queer little place. We had to change in a small clubroom. Hillesley 0 Codrington Arms Juniors 6. They had some older chaps from Hawkesbury playing for them. Cycling against the wind on way home. Home at 5.45. Dick Dickson came with us. To the Inst. in the evening. H. Wiggins and E. Morgan knocked T. Fletcher and self out of the whist tournament.
- 18th Sun. Walked to Church in evening. The Revd. S.J. Handover had a chair to sit on in front of the choir - said he was 'perfectly disgusted' with our behaviour. J. Elson, M. Turner and self in back row.
- 19th " To Rangeworthy. Out in football field with A. Webb and R. Poulton. R. Powell also came out. Mr Turner (Lab.Exchange) had phoned through with message for him to start work at Barn Hill Quarry tonight. In evening to North Rd. Chaps were raffling a goose in Haines' shop.
- 21st " Evening went to school concert. Mr. Tily ordered G. Wiggins out. A very good concert.
- 24th " Mr Huggins gave me an Xmas Box. 6d. Over to Watleys End. Watleys End 2 Iron Acton 2 (B. Seymour and G. Wiggins scored) Acton scored first. Large crowd - exciting game. Evening to the Institute Miss Harrison talked to us about her brother (Mr. Harrison of Algar's Manor) and the boys who did the damage to his punt in August.
- 25th " Christmas Day - to Holy Communion at 8 a.m. good few there. Served at the 11 o'clock service with D. Clark. I walked to Church in the afternoon. Evensong and carols. M. Pinnell sang the part of the page in "Good King Wenceslas."
- 26th " Boxing Day. Rode M. Pinnell over to North Rd. Hillesley lads were late in arriving - Very foggy. T. Curtis and "Siki" Wookey had to play. G.S. Smith had gone hunting. "Siki" gave them a penalty and A. Mainstone missed one for us in the last minute. Codrington Arms Juniors 1 Hillesley 1. I promised to go the Rovers match tomorrow with A. Sheppard.
- 27th " I arranged to meet B. Dyer, G. Smith and R. Elson outside the "Black Swan" at Eastville. Down to Acton where I found that A. Sheppard had already gone. Met up with Jimmy Luton at Hambrook. Bristol Rovers 4 Aldershot 1 - fine game. Huge crowd of over 2000, some on the roof tops (stands). I never saw B. Dyer and others. Came home with P. Maggs (old C.S.G.S. boy) and C. Dando (both from Frampton).
- 29th " To the Lab. Exchange with F. Axford. Later went down to Rangeworthy for the Hunt meet ...followed down New Rd. round Bagstone - up round Wickwar with M. Turner and D. Gibbons - back to New Rd. again. M.T. had a puncture - we saw the fox play a trick on the hounds. Along Sam Hill's cover - we went round by Leechpool then they followed along the top of Bury Hill then came back to Mudgetown - right along to Tytherington up to the top of Stole (?) Hill and along Baden Hill - came home with with E. Morgan. Church Social at the school in the evening - I felt too tired to go.
- 30th " Had 1/- from Mrs Trott for going to Dr. Sarafian for the medicine. To choir practice. The Revd. S.J. Handover says he is sending us to the pantomime on Jan 12th instead of the usual Choir Tea. (probably due to the rowdy behaviour at the last party) Codrington Arms Juniors team to play Kingswood (away) A. Strange : A. Mainstone: H. Thompson: G. Smith: M. Broome: F. Rimmell: R. Elson: D. Dickson: H. Cryer: B. Dyer: V. Baker.
- 31st. " Iron Acton 5 (G. Wiggins 2 G. Hedges S. Dyer A. Harmer) Alverston Down Spts. 0 They had only ten men. Good crowd. Exide Recreation 1 Rangeworthy 3.

PARISH COUNCIL.

It seems that many people are still not taking advantage of the benefits available. If you think you are one of them, it is not difficult to find information on how to qualify - leaflets are always at the Post Office, and the Mobile information van calls at The Lamb Inn from 9.30 to 10.00 a.m. and at the Codrington Arms from 10.05 to 10.30 a.m. fortnightly on Thursdays from March 29th. Also at Rangeworthy Village Hall from 10.40 to 11.20 on the same days. So if you want more information about low income supplement, poll tax or similar matters go along. If you are not able to go yourself, get a friend or neighbour to make enquiries for you and pick up some leaflets.

You will have noticed the Maypole is now in place ready for painting. We are very grateful to Roger Hale of Tubecon who has donated the pole, and to Bob Sheppard who arranged for MEB to lend lifting equipment and did all the work to get the pole erected.

We were greatly relieved when we heard that the quarry at Mudgetown Farm had been turned down. Thanks are due to everyone who helped in the battle, but in particular to the Rangeworthy and Cromhall Action Group. Without their dedication and determination, it would have been quite a different story. Heartfelt thanks to you all!

We are sorry about the floods in the Parish Meadows. We have a little group of budding civil engineers in the village who are practising dam-building and were successful in completely blocking the bridge. The water has been so high it was just not possible to get at the blockage for a long time, though the stream is flowing through the bridge now instead of over it. We would like to talk to these boys as they have cost the council (and indirectly, you, dear reader) quite a lot of money by taking stones from the walls and tiles from the barn roof to make their dams.

Meetings normally every third Monday of the month, but as the April one clashes with Easter Monday, watch the notice boards for the new date.

* * * * *

ENTOMBED

Oh well, thought Tom Fisher as he limply got out of bed and put on his trousers, strapping the braces round his vest. Another day in that blasted, infernal, dark pit. How he hated his job! then again everyone did. He shouldn't have let his anger out on that young lad the other day, boxing his ears because he didn't lay enough coal on the truck. Oh well, what's done is done he thought, walking down the cobblestone path in the direction of the mine.

As he walked down the path he met Charlie, Alf, Ted and Bert and together they came to the mine. Doing the tedious job of donning their sweaty boiler suits and putting on their helmets was an everyday chore to them.

As Fisher was adjusting his helmet Carrington the foreman came out. There had been some talk of a strike because "Mr C" as they called him had been mistreating some of his employees, out of spite, and there was some talk of him doing dirty with the wages.

"Listen here boys" said Mr C, "As you know or should know, today is routine inspection when I shall come with you down the mine and see how you are doing, after all some work is lacking!"

There was a wave of disgruntled murmurs coming from the crowd and Mr C straightened himself up to his full height, which wasn't much! After a while the lift arrived carrying the tired miners and then the "sick to the back teeth" ones.

When the group arrived at the damp dark mine they set to work selecting one tool from a pile of tools. Mr C now in boiler suit and helmet began strutting about in a "yuppy fashion".

About thirty minutes later there was a sudden cry from Alf and Ted. "Sir" cried Alf, "we seem to have hit something down here". In a hurried though dignified manner Mr C waddled over in the direction of the voice. Alf and Ted were standing by a hole of enormous proportion. Peering into it he screwed up his face in disgust as he sniffed the foul air. Turning round he noticed Ted's lamp by the edge of the hole.

"Well it's a" he broke off, wide-eyed with fright "Good God man extinguish that lamp before .." He never got to say his next few words as a terrific explosion knocked him back against the cave wall instantly killing poor Alf and Ted, who were near the hole.

Fisher hearing the explosion started to run towards the exit with the other seventy odd miners. then an instinct which he did not know took over him and led him to the rubble and destruction behind him. There lay the shattered bodies of his friends and on the floor lay Carrington, bleeding and bruised - but alive. Fisher was about to leave when a wave of sorrow and pity swept over him. He picked up Carrington, put him in a fireman's lift and proceeded to walk while carrying him, to the exit. It was then that he heard the roar. The roar of water thundering down the mine, suddenly it dawned on him. The explosion had hit an underground river! Running as fast as he could he suddenly saw Bert on the floor - his leg severed, barely alive, Fisher stopped, it was a straight choice: take Carrington one of the men he most disliked in the world or Bert his cherished friend. He felt hurt, confused and then making his choice he grimly made his way down the tunnel, suddenly hearing another explosion as he rounded the corner. Bodies lay scattered among the debris. He nearly retched. Hearing a sound he turned instinctively, it was Charlie. His stomach and right arm were bleeding, staining grotesquely his boiler suit.

"Tom" he said weakly, "Everyone was going into the lift, people were crushed stamped. I d-don't know how, it just e-exploded". Tom stood for a moment trying to think - "come on Charlie" said Tom we're going to climb the lift shaft.

"What he said incredulously.

"You heard me c'mon"

With Tom, pushing and pulling the other two, the three slowly began to work their way up the shaft, muscles contracting and bunching up at the effort. Tom Fisher had tried to keep the water a secret from Charlie but it was no use - "What's that noise Tom?"

"What noise"

"That roaring noise!"

"It - uh - must be your imagination"

"No, I swear its getting louder - Oh my God its water!" He tried to speed up almost losing his footing.

"Charlie, remember the saying more haste less speed" gasped Tom under the tremendous weight of both men. It was then that Charlie slipped and fell, Tom grabbed his hand. It was as though Charlie was suspended in mid-air. "Let me go Tom, save yourself!"

"No-no" Tom shouted

"PLEASE LET ME GO"

"NOOOO" even louder.

It was then that Charlie revealed a knife from his boiler suit pocket

"Bye Tom best old mate of mine - good luck" he said quietly as he cut Tom's hand which instinctively opened to let Charlie fly into the inky blackness.

Tom wept a few silent bitter tears and then gritted his teeth and carried on.

Looking up he saw light. Inside, silently screaming with joy he began to speed up, as Charlie had done he lost his footing. Sweating and cursing he replaced his foot in a hold and continued upwards, it seemed like forever. Suddenly he smelt fresh air in his lungs, friendly arms reached down to help him out and relieve him of the burden of Carrington. He looked skywards - it was good to be alive!

RUSSELL HILLIER. Aged twelve

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GUIDE AND BROWNIE SUPPORTERS

Thanks to everyone who came to the Coffee and Gateaux evening and had a share in all the luscious creamy confections - hope it didn't give the bathroom scales too much of a shock! We made over £130 which will pay the capitation fees this year, with a bit left over. We hope to arrange a Disco for brownies and their friends, and a games evening at the end of summer term.

Still we have no one to run the guides - a great pity.

Our thanks to Mike Sutton who has promised to make a box to keep all the Brownie equipment safe in the Village Hall Storeroom.

Friends of Iron Acton School.

The winter months are usually our quiet time for fund raising, with most of the School's energies and spare time being devoted to Christmas preparations + the School Play. The Friends have held two coffee afternoons/50/50 Sales at the School both raising in the region of £100. These events are always well supported, with bargains to be made, and scrumptious cakes to eat! To keep our funds topped up Karen Hillier again co-ordinated orders for Studio's cards at Christmas - a time-consuming task but one which raises about £75 for the school. Plans are now in hand for our annual Jumble Sale to be held on Grand National Day April 7th in the School, starting at 2.30 p.m. Collections of jumble around the Village will be made closer to the date, so its a good opportunity for a good clear out of your wardrobes, as all donations will be gratefully received. Do please come along on the day as in addition to our jumble stalls, there is always an interesting white elephant stall, a toy stall for the children, a delicious display of home made cakes, + our exciting Grand National Draw. So come along, have a flutter and watch the Grand National Race while enjoying a cake and a cup of tea.

Later on in the year The Friends will hold the Annual Summer Fete, at the School on Saturday July 7th. This is our main event of the year + we hope that it will continue to be as successful as past years.

The Friends have continued to use the funds raised to purchase items for the School. Substantial amounts have been spent on buying Maths and Science equipment to help implement the National Curriculum, and new Reading Books for the Infants have also been purchased. We have continued to foot the bill for the annual running costs of the photocopier and to pay part of the cost of the Infants weekly swimming session. The Friends paid the cost of the coach to the S.S. Great Britain for a Junior's trip and have also purchased a set of Sports Kit in the School colours for the children to wear when they compete in Inter School sports events.

Last November the annual general meeting of the Friends was held when Mr Dowding was able to tell our supporters that in the past 12 months, the Friends had raised the magnificent total of £1,500. This would have been impossible without YOUR support, and we appreciate all your help. Do continue to support us, as the school still needs new equipment etc. especially to implement the National Curriculum. So remember April 7th Jumble Sale + July 7th the Summer Fayre. We will also be holding our first purely Social Evening - a Skittles Evening at the Half Moon Coalpit Heath on Saturday May 12th, so watch the Notice board for further details.

* * * * *

ELIZABETHANS

Well here we are again a New Year 1990 and what a start, storms wind and rain very frightening for people living on their own especially pensioners. Some of our Members, like other people in the area had damage which caused worry and stress, but we must be thankful that it did not take a life. Then there is the poll tax - another worry to add to rising prices etc. and people on fixed incomes find it hard to cope with. I suppose we will all pay up and be cheerful again now the Spring is on the way. In January we had an afternoon out to The Bristol Hippodrome to see the pantomime, we all enjoyed it. In March we are going to Bristol Zoo on a Senior Citizens day out, so lets hope the wind and rain will abate for that day. Several trips are booked for the summer and there are always a few seats vacant if anyone would like to join us, ask any Member and they will pass your name on. On May Day we are holding a Whist Drive (Evening 7.30 p.m.) in aid of FOCUS so we ask all Whist players to support this worthy cause and make it a successful evening. Our 1st trip is on April 24th to Evesham and Morton on the Marsh. Home at 7 p.m.

We wish all your readers a Happy Easter and if we're let out of the Zoo (Ha,ha) you will be hearing from us in the Autumn.

Susannah Russell

The Sewing Lady

One of the many businesses that once existed in the village was that of the sewing lady.

Her name was Mrs Williams and her workshop was on the corner of Park Street. She specialised in little boys' trousers, little girls' dresses and men's working shirts: she also did alterations and plain sewing.

She was a little lady and as a nine year old I was at eye level. She wore long black dresses and her wispy greying hair was worn as a bun. She was very kind, good humoured and spoke with a very soft voice; maybe this was because she always seemed to have a bunch of dressmaker's pins at each corner of her mouth.

To enter her shop was a wondrous experience. The door bell shook vigorously to call her from her household duties.

The treadle sewing machine stood in the window and the room was very light, warm and comfortable. On every wall there were two or three cuckoo clocks and every quarter of an hour there was a terrific clatter and all the cuckoos sprang into life.

Very rarely did she have the pleasure of working with new materials; children's things were made from grown-up cast-offs; nothing was wasted. New material for men's shirts meant a journey to Chipping Sodbury to buy striped flannel shirting. She was very clever. She measured us and produced a good fitting dress; there was no sign of any dress patterns.

In the evenings she worked by oil lamps. Electricity had not yet arrived, in the early thirties. She was kept very busy. This could be seen by the number of items hanging up waiting for the finishing touches.

Her charges were very small somewhere in the region of 1/6 (7½p) for a dress, but then that would buy 4 pints of cider. Sewing was very thirsty work.

Mai Beasley

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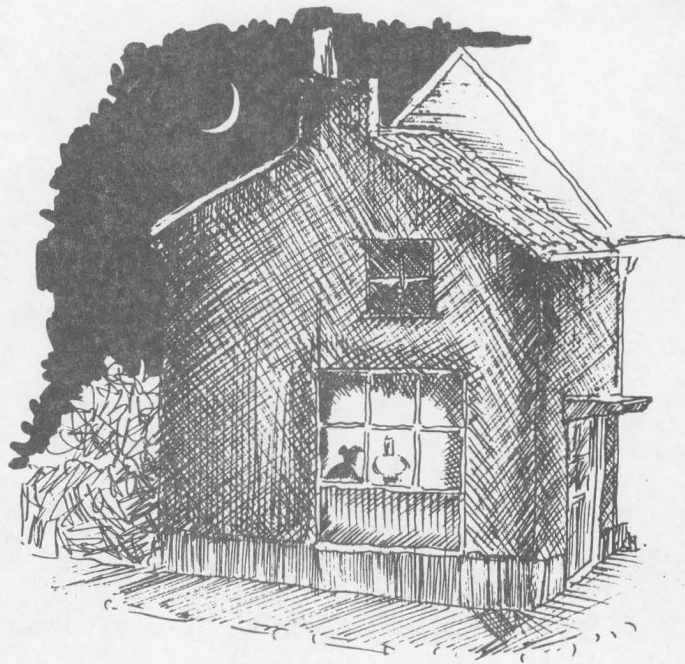
EILEEN AND CLAUDE GOWAN'S GOLDEN WEDDING CELEBRATION

Having almost recovered from the 'shock of a lifetime' we received on arriving at the Winterbourne Community Centre on the night of November 3rd, we would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone of our relations and friends who were there to share the evening with us.

For all the surprises, for all the gifts and cards, our sincere thanks. And what can we say to 'The Chew Mob' for their oh! so individual rendering of their sea shanty. To the ladies of Winterbourne Community Centre a special thank you for their superb catering.

Our very special thank you goes to our family: Yvonne and David, Sam and Fliss, Heather & Graham, Teresa, Mark and So to them, to all our friends, we send our love and immense gratitude for a never-to-be forgotten occasion.

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SCOTLAND 21 FRANCE 0 - WHO'S CHICKEN OR WHOSE CHICKEN?

At this time of the year there is a tendency for a number of village husbands to find it imperative to fulfil important business commitments in Paris, Dublin and Edinburgh. Interestingly the business involved must always be carried out on a Friday and tends to run late so necessitating an overnight stay which usually stretches into Sunday. Similar important "business" fixtures also occur in Cardiff and Twickenham and while these do not usually involve the whole weekend, our poor men seem to work awfully long hours on the Saturdays concerned.

Last weekend I was privileged to accompany my poor overworked spouse to the Edinburgh fixture with the French business contingent. I am of course talking about the Five Nations Rugby Union Championship.

I had never been to Murrayfield and was quite enthusiastic about the trip in spite of the fact that I do not consider myself a lucky mascot for Scotland. I have attended a number of Rugby Internationals during the last 28 years and, almost without fail, Scotland has been unsuccessful whenever I have been present. However, always the optimist ...!

We drove north on Friday afternoon, reaching the border country and my first glimpse of snow this year after darkness had descended. Edinburgh was surprisingly mild and we found and settled into our hotel gratefully after a fairly tiring journey.

A Saturday morning saunter up Princes Street provided an interesting insight into our French neighbours approach to the chilly northern capital. In retrospect it appeared to be "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em". Everywhere that morning were to be heard male French accents speculating on the correct sizes of knitwear and tweeds for their womenfolk languishing at home and charming the tartan clad lady shop assistants the while. More alarming was the prospect of numerous Frenchmen resplendent in kilts and clogs! Any close encounter with these gentlemen in the crowded streets suggested that the sons of sunny south western France were well fortified by their own or their Scots opponents native spirit well in advance of the vigours of the game.

Two o'clock found us at Murrayfield after a brisk three mile walk to the ground. I always find something stirring in the ever growing and unstoppable monstrous regiment of fans marching inexorably in the direction of the rugby ground, whether it is Twickenham, Cardiff Arms Park or Murrayfield, and this was no exception.

The crowd was cheerful and good natured and our progress to the rugby ground was steady and unimpeded.

Our seats were immediately in front of a large group of French fans who kept up a loud and witty repartee throughout the proceedings. Sitting in a friendly Fug of Gauloises, in the less exciting moments of the action on field I had the opportunity to test my rusty French. I am still puzzling over one invocation, "Attrapez Robespierre!" To which of the fifteen gallic heroes could be attributed the name of the author of the Terror?

Could it have been the gentleman who left a pretty stud pattern on the scalp of one of the flowers of Scotland and as a result was invited to take an early bath?

It is not for me to comment on the technical niceties of the game - leave that to Bill McClaren - but even my limited knowledge, which does include considerable experience of washing the kit, allowed me to appreciate some of the finer points of a most enjoyable game. There were some well fudged penalty kicks and two excellent tries but the hero of the game was a fine feathered gentleman sporting tricolour ribbons on his spurs who was released and took possession of the French end shortly after half time. This splendid cockerel, symbol of the French side, potted about scratching and pecking at the hallowed Murrayfield turf quite unperturbed by the prospect of being flattened by the joint Scots and French packs whose main sphere of activity centred on the part of the ground occupied by him for most of the second half of the game. During brief excursions into the Scots end, marshals attempted a rather feeble effort at capture - I suspect the nearest they had ever been to a chicken was Tesco's chill cabinet - but the cock evaded them and calmly went about his business which seemed to be concentrated on the area between the goalposts and the 22 metre line.



At last the final whistle signalled a famous victory for the Scots and an equally happy fate for the cock.

The end terraces at Murrayfield are reserved for schoolboy fans who traditionally invade the pitch at the end of the game. One enterprising young lad, clearly of good farming stock, hardly checked his rush on to the field to clasp Monsieur Cockerel to his bosom and thus avoid the brave bird meeting an even more serious fate than trampling by the joint brawn of the rugby teams.

The capture of the cock took place directly in front of me and, in common with my neighbours, I felt sure that his ultimate fate would have not a little to do with a fine coq au vin in some Scottish household that weekend.

Imagine my delight to read in Monday's "Glasgow Herald" the definitive account of the rooster's fate. Rescued by an entrepreneurial eleven year old whose home farm boasts a flock of hens but no cockerel ("it would cost money to buy one") the Coq Sportif, christened Rodriquez Murray, is assured of a home for life amid the rolling hills of Kelso. I hope Rodriquez is awake to the fact that he is expected to fulfil the role for which nature designed him in his new home or he may yet provide the main ingredient of a splendid coq au vin a la Kelso!

H.D.

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VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE
AUCTION SALE SATURDAY APRIL 28th 1990

In 1989 we sold an Edison Phonograph with rolls and horn for almost £200. At a previous sale we sold a dinghy!

We sell household effects of quality - dishwashers, washing machines, cookers, music centres, TV sets and videos as well as porcelain, pottery, silver, brass and copper. Furniture arrives with oil paintings, water colours, prints and drawings.

We do not aspire to call ourselves an auction of antiques and collectibles, but we recognise that for buyer and seller this description is flexible.

If you do not wish to offer anything for sale, come and explore the boxes of miscellaneous items. The contents do not only consist of red plastic orange squeezers and aluminium hard boiled egg slicers. We have found a 1941 ration book in mint condition, an Imari vase, albeit slightly imperfect, and even a ruby red glass jug that appeared to be hand blown.

We shall be receiving goods at the Village Hall on Friday April 27th 1990 from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Commission rates are as follows:-

- 20% on the sale price of a lot less than £25
- 15% on the sale price of a lot between £25 and £50
- 10% on the sale price of a lot over £50

We accept reserves, but if an item with a reserve is unsold then a charge of £1.00 will be made unless such other charge is agreed at the time of acceptance of the entry.

You may view before the sale on Saturday 28th April from 9 a.m.

The Auction will start at 10.30 a.m.

DECEMBER 28th - HEATHROW

With the departure of B.A. flight to Hong Kong, via Delhi, went Annalisa, aged 21 and off on a great adventure/experience. She is to be spending the New Year with friends in Hong Kong before going on to Brisbane, destination James Cook University, Townsville, N. Queensland - sun, flora and fauna and of course the Great Barrier Reef.

Annalisa who is currently studying biology at Exeter University has been awarded a Rotary International Scholarship to study biology at a University of her choice, representing Area 110 of the Rotary Movement. This scholarship application is open to under-graduates who are not related to Rotarians and commences by being accepted by a Rotary Group who are prepared to put the candidate forward. It was a long task requiring a lot of fact finding initially in order to be able to submit a choice of five universities at which the applicant wishes to study, giving reasons why. There is then a series of interviews and final selection. One of the provisos of the scholarship is that, as the applicant is thought of as an ambassador, she must be prepared to attend lunches, dinners and other such meetings with a view to giving an address. Anyone who knows our eldest daughter well will know that this task comes as no hardship!! Quote from one school report "Annalisa would do well if she only kept quiet long enough for the teacher to speak."

On arrival at Brisbane, Annalisa was met by a long lost cousin of mine who had emigrated 20 years ago - he took her to his home where she caught up with herself for 2 days before setting off alone on her first tour, a 24 hour coach trip to Melbourne. Her only complaint was that she didn't have her duvet to keep her warm during the night. The journey was good, she says never again will Latteridge be in the middle of nowhere after driving between the Great Dividing Range.

The academic year in Australia doesn't begin until March so she has 6 weeks in which to travel and visit many of the contacts she has been given both by Rotary and others. Her first stop was with a retired couple; when entering their home she came face to face with a picture of our dear old Suspension Bridge. This couple have a daughter who has emigrated to this country and is currently running Australian Travel in Bristol.

Whilst in Melbourne she has visited Phillip Island, a giant earthworm museum, the Nobbies Rocks to see a Seal Colony and then the Penguin Island where hundreds of Fairy Penguins walk up the beach at dusk. She was a guest at the Melbourne Rotary Lunch in the Melbourne Arts Complex. She even visited a wildlife sanctuary called "Healsville" - I knew there was somewhere they took off certain members of the family in years gone by.

On to Ballarat staying in the Y.H.A. This is a reconstruction of a government camp where they still use £.s.d. and the hostel warden came from Barnstaple.

Next stop Canberra and some bush hiking in Paddys Creek, lunch lying on a rock next to the rippling water and swaying Eucalyptus. Apparently Canberra is an amazing place, purpose built as the capital city. Very, very clean and organised, where rush hour doesn't exist. The roads are wide, parking easy and bike paths everywhere (dream on Broadmead) However, says Annalisa, it lacks that something, atmosphere and a sense of history. Whilst there she included a visit to the new Parliament Building to learn some of the political procedures.

On then to Sydney, from where we had a 'phone call following the Australian news coverage of our gales - why haven't they invented the view-phone - I would love to look down it!! Here it appears to be parties and barbies and lots more sight seeing. Another Rotary Lunch where they were enrolling their first 3 female members - a historic day. The trip from Sydney was to the Blue Mountains and the first disappointment - it rained all the three days spoiling the planned hikes to the 3 Sisters Rocks and the scenic railway which runs at 52 degrees. Having decided that was a washout, she went back to Sydney and on to Newcastle to stay with a couple whose two daughters have also left home for Uni - the Derby and Joan situation made her realise how Chris and I feel. Whilst there she went to see the damage caused by the recent earthquake. When leaving Newcastle by train she experienced her first embarrassing moment when jumping from a train, the weight of her back pack pulled her over, arms, legs, bags everywhere, shades of Iron Acton school bruises all over again. Never mind, 7 hours later came Coffs Harbour, half way up the Gold Coast, 1.5 km walk to the Y.H.A. which was a cool wooden hut. From here she booked on a 4x4 tour of creeks and peaks of the Great Dividing Range with a driver and 2 Irish girls.

At one point they walked for 20 minutes to view a waterfall and it was there she met one of the forest hazards - leaches - 3 on her leg - the joys of being a biologist I suppose. On into some rain forest to see Walking Stick Palm and Strangler Fig Trees. A good trip complete with home made cake.

Two days later on to Byron Bay to stay at Belongil Beach House, a small complex of wooden huts. All rather ethnic with guitar players and sweet smelling air - that was probably imagination (I hope so). She shared a room with 2 very normal Swedish girls thank goodness.

The last leg is back to Brisbane for a few days before the journey north to Townsville.

Since writing this report we now have very exciting news from the journey north - sailing, scuba diving and endless sunshine, but I will save all that for next time. In the meantime, keep sending the postman to Latteridge - G'day from a lonely mum!!!

Di Heal

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RANGEWORTHY PLAYGROUP

The New Year has brought a new Joint Leader to Playgroup along with a lot of new little faces. At Christmas we were sorry to see Sandra Dyer leave us after all she has done for us over the years. We are very pleased to welcome Angela Thompson to the post of Joint Leader.

Numbers are now such at Playgroup that we are again able to open three mornings a week, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. There are a couple of spaces available if anyone is interested for the Summer Term. anyone wishing to know more about Playgroup or who would like to put their child's name on the Waiting List should contact either Mary Morley (259), Angela Thompson (C/Sodbury 323541) or Mary Owen our Registration Secretary (273). With Playgroup fairly full now anyone with a child who will be three in the next 12 months would be wise to give Mary Owen a ring or call in at Playgroup and see what the children are doing and put your child's name down - we are open from 9.15 a.m. to 12 noon.

In March we will be visiting the lambs at Poplars Farm, Latteridge by kind invitation of Mr and Mrs Digby Blanch. A date for your diary Wednesday 25th April our Annual General Meeting when we hope to see all you Mums there, a good chance to meet up with old friends and have a glass of wine.

We are planning to hold another sponsored Trike Trundle to raise funds for new equipment. We hope to coincide this with a visit from the local Police and a talk on road safety.

We are always looking for new ideas to interest the children so if anyone has any special skills or even unusual pets you think would be of interest to young children, we would love to hear from you.

Many more outings and activities will be arranged during the Summer Term although at this time no details have been finalised. See you all at the A.G.M. on 25th.

Sue Shepherd.(Chairman).

* * * * *

A diminutive Welshman was up before the magistrates in London charged with a sexual assault on a much larger Australian female. The magistrates were baffled as to how he had managed it and closely questioned the policeman who had arrested him.

"How on earth did he do it, officer?"

"He used a bucket, sir."

"You mean he stood on it?"

"No, sir, he put it over her head and swung from the handle"



I have noticed a great increase in the number of wrens, probably due to the recent mild winters. Spotted woodpeckers and nuthatches have been regular visitors to the birdtable, with the usual hoard of bluetits and great-tits and a few coal tits. It's amazing how sparrows and starlings have learnt to hang on the nut holders, but blackbirds and chaffinches never attempt it. Greenfinches of course are expert at it and will drive the smaller birds away.

The most unusual visitor to the garden this year was a brambling, which should have been on its way north to Scandinavia where they breed.

B.C.

ACTONIANS REPORT.

The Actonians Drama Group have been very busy since the beginning of the year.

We started the New Year with our production of 'Salad Days' which was thoroughly enjoyed by all those involved. This was a slightly new venture for the Actonians as it was a musical play.

At the time of writing we are into the season of one-act play festivals but unfortunately we had a disappointment (literally!) in that the violent storms destroyed our first venue in Weston-Super-Mare.

Our next production in the village hall be 'A Man For All Seasons' in the middle of May.

As we always say, if anyone would like to join us, we would be delighted. We now have regular meetings on a Wednesday in the Village Hall starting with the Junior Actonians from 6 o'clock followed by the adult members at 7.30 p.m. We would welcome anyone who would care to come along.

Liz Birch.

Congratulations to the Actonians on winning the Kingswood One Act Play Festival, and to John Adams for winning the Best Actor award in the same festival.

Editors

EVEN MORE WEATHER LORE

"Whatever the weather on Easter Sunday, will be the same at harvest time."

"Plant when the mulberry leaves are out, then there will be no more frost."

"Fine Friday, fine Sunday. Wet Friday wet Sunday."

"When the sun sets clear on Wednesday, clear weather till Sunday."

"If the robin sings in the bush, then the weather will be coarse,
If the robin sings on the barn, then the weather will be warm."

Many of these sayings plus a lot more can be found in "The Emmerdale Farm Book of Country Lore" by James Ferguson. Quite an interesting book on old tales and superstitions.

IRON ACTON WI

1990 saw the beginning of a new WI year with the first meeting of the new Committee. Pauline Hill is our President, Maureen Thomas is our Secretary and Elizabeth Edwards is our Treasurer.

A new year and a new programme of speakers! January provided us with the topic "creative world" - unfortunately no-one told us it was going to be audience participation and we ended up brandishing tapestry needles and thread and attacking canvas in the vain hope that we'd end up with something resembling an embroidered alphabet letter - although, to be fair, quite a few people achieved the desired effect!!

February and our speaker could not come but, never fear, Elizabeth Edwards - who also doubles as our Treasurer - gave us a lovely demonstration on how to decorate eggs and also brought her truly amazing collection of eggs - we can't wait to see how she gets on with the ostrich egg!

March brought us Mr Hopkins Clark from Bath Theatre Royal who explained the history of pantomime and showed some lovely slides showing past productions from the Theatre Royal - which brought back many happy memories.

April brings an invitation to all of you to join us on Tuesday, 17 April at 8.00 pm in the Village Hall when we will be having a talk on the HISTORY OF THE MARY ROSE by Mr Soar from the Mary Rose Trust. Tickets are priced at 75p and are available from members.

In May it's time to discuss the resolutions to be put forward at the AGM at the Albert Hall and June comes a topic called "Sugaring" - which sounds a bit mysterious. For our July meeting it has become the tradition to arrange an outing. Last year was to a cider factory, this time we hope to go to a Gloucestershire Vineyard and Winery.

In June we have organised a party to see the musical "Chess" at the Bristol Hippodrome.

An additional outing will take place on Saturday, 7 July to Salisbury Cathedral for their Flower Festival. Leaving the Village Hall at 9.30 am, we will be leaving Salisbury on the return at 7.00 pm. It's up to you how you spend the day, once you get on the coach you'll be given your ticket and you can choose how and when you see the flowers, or go around the shops, or have a nice lunch ... or tea. The cost will be £6 per head and this includes coach fare, admission to the cathedral and driver gratuity. Anyone wanting more details or would like to put their name forward only has to ring Rangeworthy 566.

We end our report on a sad note. We have just heard that Barbara Shortman has died. Barbara was a prominent member of the WI for many years and we shall all miss her at our meetings. We also send our love and condolences to Bob and their Family.

LYNNE'S BITS AND PIECES

These, as you will see (or more likely won't see) are very thin on the ground this time around. Blame it on the effect of an Exhibition at the NEC and a case of trying to get a quart of work and obligations into a pint pot. In other words, I'm all behind (no comments please!!).

MRS HOWES

Just a little piece to say how sorry we are that Mrs Howes has left the Village. We understand the reasons and hope that she thoroughly enjoys her new life but we will miss her cheery smile and mischeivous ways!

FRIENDS OF NORTH ROAD SCHOOL

Where are you and how do we contact you???? We'd love you to write us a piece for Focus but we don't know how to contact you. You don't have to be Jane Austen or Enid Blyton to write for us (for proof you only have to look in my direction!!). Come on then someone, somewhere contact us!!

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SERVICES AT ST JAMES THE LESS, IRON ACTON

<u>Palm Sunday - 8 April</u>	8.00 am	Holy Communion
	9.30 am	Blessing and Distribution of Palms, Procession, Passion and Sung Eucharist
	6.30 pm	Evensng and Holy Communion
<u>Monday in Holy Week</u>	8.00 am	Holy Communion
	7.30 pm	Stations of the Cross
<u>Tuesday in Holy Week</u>	10.30 am	Holy Communion
	7.30 pm	Stations of the Cross
<u>Maundy Thursday</u>	7.30 pm	Solemn Eucharist, Procession to the Altar of Repose, Stripping Altars
<u>Good Friday</u>	8.00 am	Mattins and Litany
	9.30 am	Good Friday Liturgy
	2.30 pm	An Hour Before the Cross
	7.30 pm	Stations of the Cross
<u>Holy Saturday</u>	8.00 am	Mattins, Litany and Ante-Communion
	7.30 pm	The Paschal Ceremonies
<u>EASTER DAY</u>	7.00 and 8.00 am	Holy Communion
	9.30 am	Sung Eucharist
	6.30 pm	Evensong

Additional Dates:

Feast of St James the Less our Patron Saint	Tuesday, 1 May	
	7.30 pm	Solemn Eucharist with Sermon by Fr Roger Thomas, Rector of Frenchay and Winterbourne Down. This day is also the 25th Anniversary of the Rector's Institution.
Plant Sale	Saturday, 28 April -	at the Rectory
Summer Fayre	Saturday, 23 June -	at the Village Hall
Ascension Day	Thursday, 24 May	
Whitsunday	Sunday, 3 June	

Diary of Forthcoming Events

In the Village Hall

Every Tuesday	Brownies	6.00 pm.
Wednesday	Elizabethans	2.00
	Junior Actonians	6.00
	Actonians	7.30
Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday Mornings	"Pied Piper" Nursery School	8.00am.
2nd Monday in month	Women's Institute	7.30 pm.
3rd Monday in month	Parish Council	7.30
4th Monday in month	Whist Drive	7.30
3rd Thursday in month	Chipping Sodbury Knitting Group	1.30
28th April	Village Hall Auction Sale	
7th May	Whist Drive in aid of FOCUS ON IRON ACTON	7.30
16th-19th May	Actonians present "A Man for all Seasons"	
23rd June	Church Summer Faire	

At the Rose & Crown

1st Thursday in month	Acton Aid	7.45
Alternate Mondays	Darts Clubs	

At Rangeworthy Village Hall

Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings	Play Group (during term time)
<u>On the Village Green</u>	May Day Fair on Bank Holiday

At the Post Office

The Mobile Information Van of Avon Community Council visits every other Thursday from 5th April at 9.40 to 10.30 am also calls at Rangeworthy Village Hall at 10.40 to 11.20

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The Editors of FOCUS ON IRON ACTON wish to thank all those who have helped in the production of this issue. We are especially grateful to all our subscribers and contributors.

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Advertisers wishing to take space in FOCUS should contact Mrs Cook (202) or Charles Wilkins (254).

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