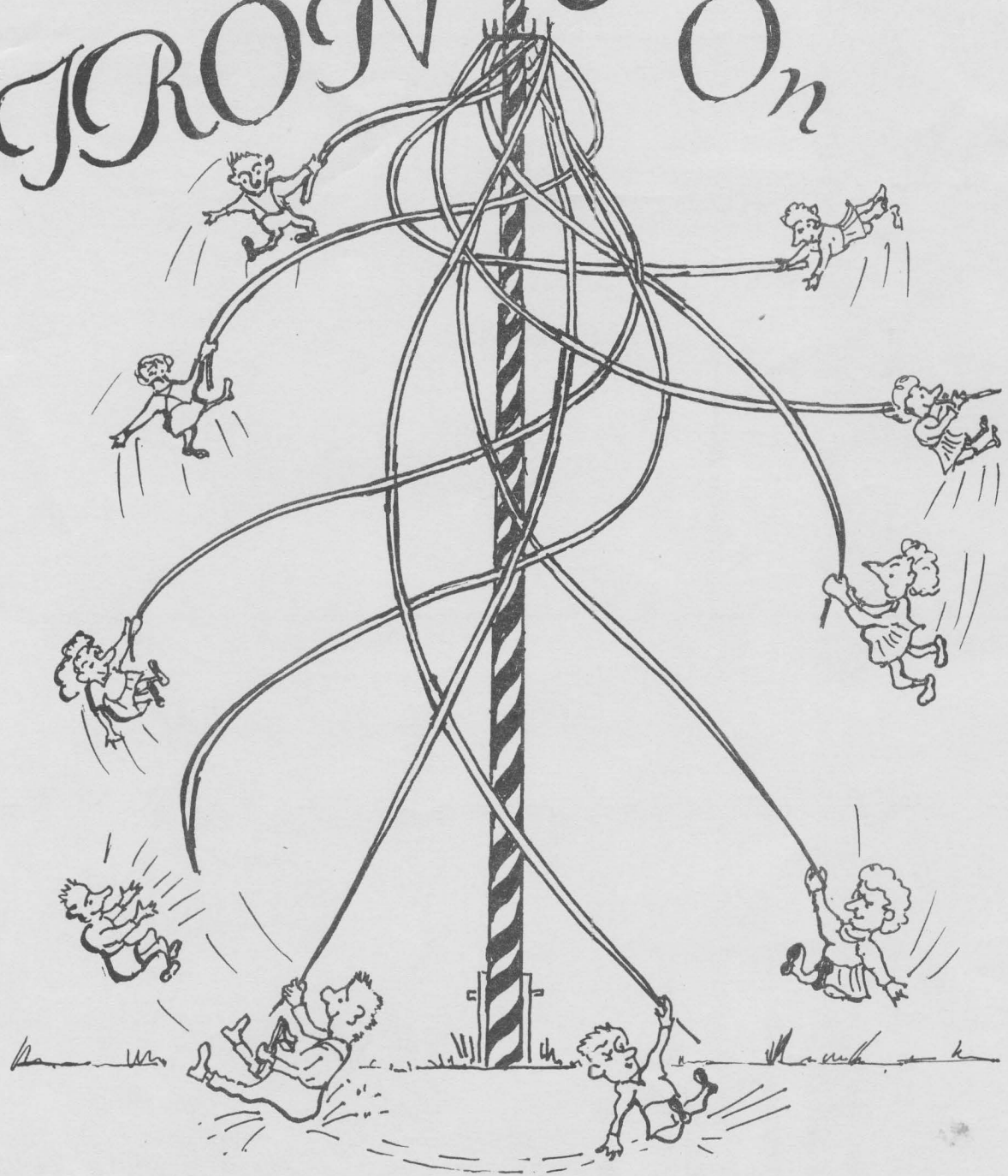


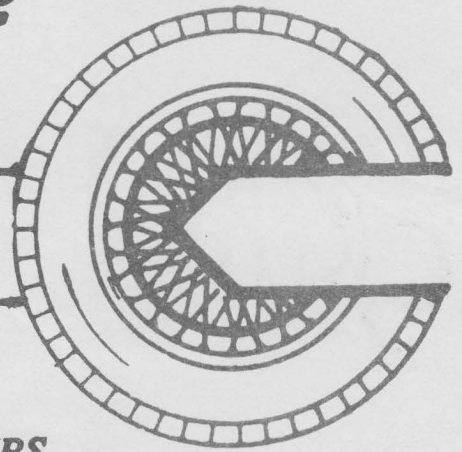
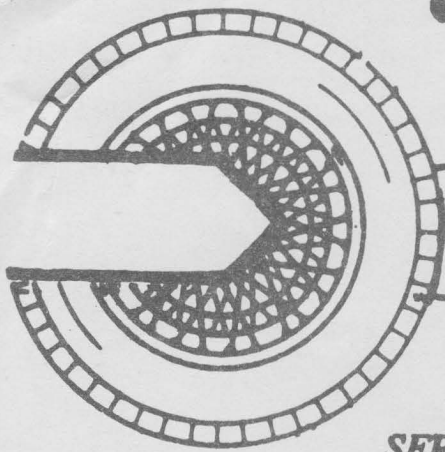
Focus MAY DAY FROG ON

32



R.

roger's autocare



*Mobile
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M.O.T. PREPARATION

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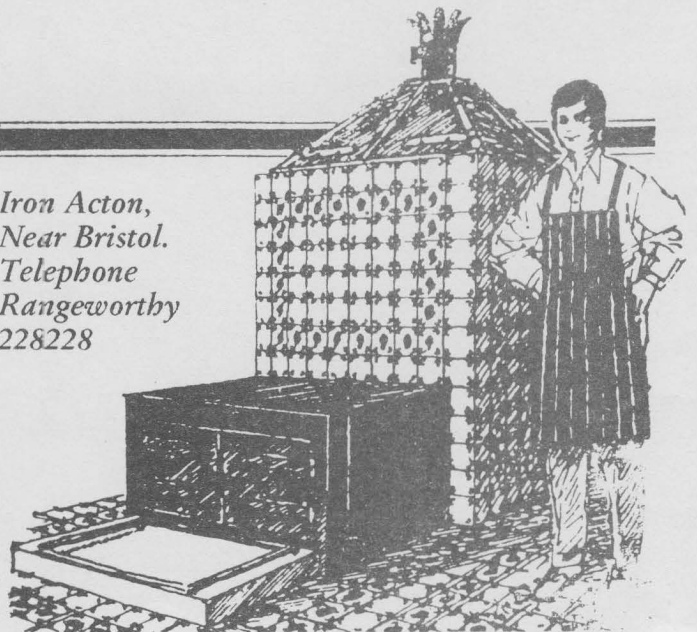
NO JOB TOO SMALL

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

*The home of the
wood burning clay oven*



*Iron Acton,
Near Bristol.
Telephone
Rangeworthy
228228*





EDITORIAL

What a long, grey winter it has been! But all the reservoirs are full again after several years of drought, and spring has come early so we must look forward, hopefully, to a good summer.

We hear so often these days, of people breaking into houses and even attacking the occupants. We can't stress enough how important it is to keep your doors locked at all times.

Older people in particular should keep a chain on the door, and let no-one in without identification if you don't know them. Keep your doors locked when you are watching television, burglars creep in very quietly! It seems a lot of fuss when you have been used to trusting people all your life, but times have changed and it's better to be safe than lose your precious possessions or perhaps have to spend a very painful time in hospital.

Some traffic in the High Street seems to take no notice of speed limits, and we wonder if "road bumps" would slow them down. Let us know what you think of the idea.

Plans are under way for May Day - details later in the magazine - and we hope to see you all on the Village Green on May 3rd.

We welcome to the village our new headmaster, Mr Larter. An appreciation of him by one of the pupils is given later. The health of the village school is very important to the village and we wish him a happy and successful time here.

John Percy
228 339

Betty Cook
228 202

Lynne Blanchard
228 566

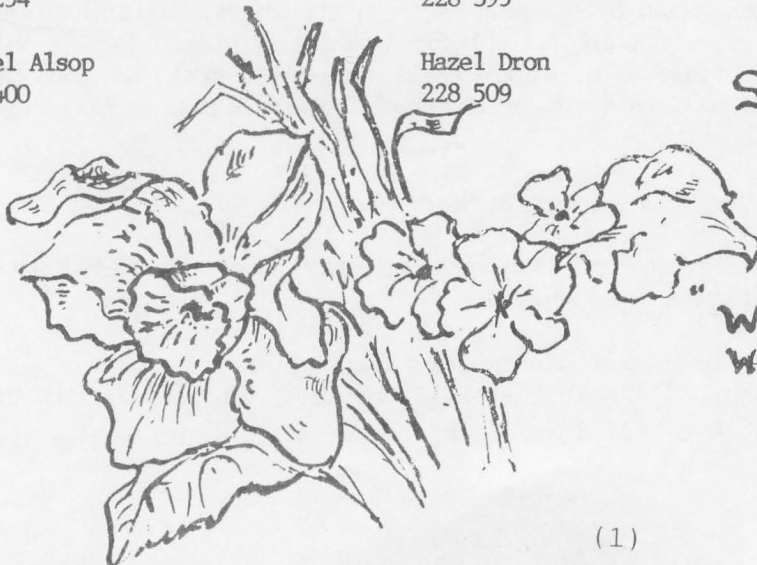
Charles Wilkins
228 254

Peter Redman
228 395

Jean Dickes
228 609

Lionel Alsop
228 400

Hazel Dron
228 509



Spring Mottoes ~

"Change not a clout
Till May be out"

"Who doffs his coat on a winter's day
Will gladly put it on in May."

Alfred Strange's Diary

1933

September

- 1st. To Sodbury to cash my monthly salary cheque £1.18.6. Rode back with Henry Marklove.
- 2nd. In Elson's car to Staple Hill. Stanley Villa 8 North Rd. 3 (E. Baker, C. May 2) I had a poor match in goal! Went to the Buff Show with B. Aldom - large crowd there. Tug-O-War competition, Noah's Ark, dodgems, etc. Football: Rangeworthy 2 Lynton Spts 5. Cricket: W. Hammond reaches 3000 runs.
- 3rd.Sun. My uncle C. came in with a chap named Chappell from Wickwar. He stayed to dinner. He had lost his bike at the show yesterday.
News: Germany's secret war ammunition factories.
- 4th. To evening classes. Had to use old acetylene bicycle lamp. Uncle T. working on night shift at Wickwar Quarries.
- 5th. Evening. Finish digging potatoes on top ridge by Gowens. Weeded paths and burned up rubbish.
- 6th. Shellard (council lorry driver) reported there was no petrol at the quarry. I telephoned Shell Mex. He also said a train shunting trucks (Yate Station) when he was unloading coal had damaged the back of his lorry. Bought lemonade at Trott's with B. Aldom. We waited to hear on the wireless how the Rovers had got on.
- 10th.Sun. After evening service I walked up to Yate with D. Gibbons, the common was on fire - 'firebugs'.
- 11th. To North Rd; helped pick team - argument over payment for use of cars. Raining all day, after long dry spell.
- 13th. Office - man from Shell Mex called. He talked to Mr Stone and me about oils - very interesting.
- 14th. Office - Pritchard called to complain that the tar (spraying) had affected him.
Bristol - Brighton week at Brighton.
- 15th. Dug five rows of potatoes and covered them over with sacks because of frost. To North Rd; I rode in front of R. Elson who was trying out his motor bike (it had no lights)!
- 16th. Match at Bedminster, South Bristol Central 3 North Rd. 0. They were all over us. Dick Carvin and Archie Mainstone were our best men.
- 17th.Sun. Served at H. Commun. Service taken by the Revd Barrett (All Saints, Clifton). Parson on holiday. Had a brief ring on the big bells before evening service. To Yate with D. Gibbons and R. Elson. We met Miss Smith off the train. Mrs Elson and K. had come to meet her. We stayed for a while at Elson's. A dog threatened to attack D.G. in Long Lane. He had left his bike at our place.
- 18th. Kath Gould (Mr Gould's daughter) is teaching at North Rd. School.
- 20th. Called with rates at Mr Bond's, Stover. Home with Don Emery (I went up to Sodbury Mop). Campbell to attack land and water speed records.
- 22nd. Office - Fetched cigarettes for Mr Kear from Twydales (Yate).
Football North Rd. 2 (B. Dyer, R. Elson) Bristol Gas Co. 1. I let the ball slip through my hands from a free kick. We were hard pressed in the last $\frac{1}{4}$ hr. Velt. Watkins played a great game.

- 25th. Office - Mr Gould wanted 60 British Legion letters typed. Later delivered some around Stover and I. Acton. To evening class, Greggs College. I passed Iron Acton Church clock at 6.15 and arrived at college, Park St. 6.55.
- 26th. Thunder and lightening. I got soaked through. Floods out at the bottom of Bowling Hill. Home with M. Turner - terrible storm lasted until 8 p.m.
- 27th. Mr P. brought cider to the office to have with his dinner! Delivered Brit Legion letter to Jack Strange (Rangeworthy). Spoke to Henry. Had chat with Fred Fortune and his sister Rhoda. Bell ringing practice. I did not get on very well - I noticed my sister going into the police station and wondered what was wrong. It was about Mr Maskell who had been taken ill. Later Mrs Trott asked me to fetch Mrs Richards (Rangeworthy) which I did.
- 28th. To evening class. I had to borrow a lamp at Dyer's - charged 3d. My uncle C. keeps taking my lamp to work with him.
- 29th. Choir practice. The Revd. Handover back from holiday. Afterwards over to North Rd. Some time in Holbrook's shop - home with Reg. Bignell.
- 30th. Football. North Rd. 1 (R. Elsom) T.S. Hall & Co. 5. Eddie Dixon played outside right.

* * * * *

PARISH COUNCIL

We were so sorry that Mrs Leppard did not manage to reach her hundredth birthday; such a shame to have got so near and then fail. We can only hope the end was peaceful after such a long and happy life.

We have not yet managed to find an up-to-date map of the footpaths which shows the correct boundaries and includes Engine Common, but as soon as we do it will be available in the Post Offices in the village and in North Road. You have probably noticed the footpath signs which have appeared in many places, and hopefully the weather will soon be fit to enjoy walking.

It was decided not to enter the Best Kept Village competition this year, as we thought it would be good to have a break, and perhaps people will have more enthusiasm for it next year. But from April 16th to 25th there is to be a National Spring Clean Week, and we hope that teams of people from different organisations will be helping to clean up all the parish.

Are you interested in learning how to build a dry stone wall? If so let Norman Carter, 9, Chilwood Close, Tel 228563, have your name and we will be able to organise a weekend two day course. Date not yet fixed but we will let you know in due course.

Have you written in to give your views on local government re-organisation? Do you think Avon County should be retained or abolished? Should Northavon be a unitary authority or should it be merged with Kingswood? Do you think the City of Bristol should take over all the land up to the M4?

This is your last chance to express your feelings on the matter, so write in QUICKLY TO THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS:-

The Local Government Commission for England,
Dolphin Court,
Lincoln's Inn Fields,
London
WC1V 7JU.

Chairman, Bob Sheppard, 200 North Road,
Vice Chairman Sue Gawler, Shale Cottage, Wotton Road
Councillors, B. Cook, E. Blanchard, R. Curtis, F. Davies, G. Gale, D. Hancock, C. Heal.
Clerk N..Carter, 9,Chilwood Close.

ACTON AID

Acton Aid continued to work for the people of the Parish during 1992 and following the election of a new team under the Chairmanship of Lionel Alsop, looks forward to doing so again in 1993.

With its aim to help the Parish as a whole, Acton Aid can fairly claim to reach parts of the village other organisations don't. During the recent past it has given assistance to the Schools, the Village Hall, the Village Day, the elderly and the children. In December 70 of the more senior citizens were entertained to tea and a performance of "Oliver", and a chaotic Christmas Party was thrown for 83 children from North Road and Iron Acton Schools.

Those who have helped to put on these events have enjoyed themselves and the communal efforts has its own rewards. Its not all hard work - there have been a number of successful social events, not least an excellent Barn Dance and Pig roast.

The meetings - 8.00 p.m. - first Thursday of each month at the Rose and Crown are more social than business.

Membership of Acton Aid is not demanding or exclusive, it provides an easy opportunity to make your neighbours your friends and to learn a little of the local news.

So in 1993 - don't first dump your kids on us at Christmas, come to the pub, join in and become an Action Aid Activist discussing and developing ideas over a pint.

For more information ring:

Lionel Alsop (Chairman) on 228400

Robert Bourns (Secretary) on 228993

Chris Wiggins (Vice Chairman) on 228696

We have placed in this issue of Focus an advertisement for the attention of the Senior Citizens of the Parish. That is those in receipt of an elderly person's state pension.

Over the past years our list of names of Senior Citizens whom we contact and invite to the various events organised by us has become very out-dated.

We are anxious to bring this list of names up to date so that proper contact can be made as and when necessary, and that people are not left out from events as must have happened in times past.

So, if you are a Senior Citizen of some years or indeed have become so recently and wish to add your name to our list, or to check that you are already listed, please complete the tear-off slip or contact by phone as indicated.

We realise that some of you may not wish to become involved so your response is entirely voluntary.

It is our intention to place this advert in subsequent editions of Focus so that new Senior Citizens can notify us and that our list can be regularly updated as far as possible.

A visit to **Alton Towers** is being arranged for Saturday 17th April 1993. This is for **teenagers who are in full-time education and reside in the parish of Iron Acton**. The excursion will be free, so seats are limited to 50, and these will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis. If you are interested, and eligible, please contact, as soon as possible:-

Robert Taylor on 228417.

Bryan Taylor on 228172

MAY DAY - MAY 3rd.

Our fourth Village Day will take broadly the same form as before, with maypole and country dancing, ladies clog dancers and sword dancers.

There will be a band, lots of stalls, bouncy castle, pony and carriage rides. As before we shall start with the May Queen procession from Chilwood Close, led by the Yate Dragoon Band.

We are repeating the Fancy Dress in spite of last year's disappointing entry. This time there will be two classes, 8 years and under, and 9 to 16, with a cash prize for each. No fees or entry form, just join the procession or turn up on the Village Green for judging.

Please, please, please, PLEASE, PLEASE LET US HAVE SOME MORE ENTRIES FOR MAY QUEEN THIS YEAR.

Surely all the girls in the parish can't be that shy?

Only two rules:-

- a) The entrant must be of primary school age.
- b) The entrant must live in the parish of Iron Acton.

So come on girls, fill in the slip at the bottom of the page and send it in by April 9th. We will help with clothes, and the queen and two attendants will receive framed photos of themselves taken on the day.

In conjunction with all the above there will be a Road Run over 10 kilometres, open to local athletic clubs.

So see you there. There will be something to cater to all tastes, and we hope you will all roll up and have a good time.

Profits this year will be divided between your favourite magazine (yes, Focus!) and other organisations taking part.

Without all of you the day will be a flop, so come along in your thousands, and bring all your friends and relations to make the day a big success.

If anyone has any ideas for an additional fund raiser, or can offer a few hours of help on the day please contact Betty Cook 228202 or Bob Sheppard 228515.

ENTRY FORM FOR MAY QUEEN COMPETITION, RETURN TO BETTY COOK, NEKSDORE, HIGH STREET, OR BOB SHEPPARD, 200,NORTH ROAD, BY FRIDAY, APRIL 9th.

NAME

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE

IRON ACTON VILLAGE HALL.

The past year has been a challenging one for the Hall Management Committee.

As is the custom, we have supported Village Day, Algars Manor teas and the Horticultural Show - all of which have benefited the Parish and to some extent the Hall Funds. Fund raising is an ever present need and, with the help of the Actonians, the "Blitz" evenings were a great success.

A good deal has been done to improve the Hall, with extensive re-decorating, new front doors and a refurbished floor. Also it was necessary, once again, to carry out major roof repairs. To meet the Fire Officer's requirements the stage floor had to be renewed and the curtains fire proofed - quite an expense, which was managed with the help of the Parish Council.

On the down side, we have had one or two problems - the pay phone was stolen twice, involving broken windows and other damage. Also a recent private party brought complaints from local residents. This could have had serious consequences as the Police did initially consider taking legal action against the Committee. Coping with such problems puts quite a strain on the voluntary effort of those involved. The increase in rules and regulations, most notably the 1992 Charities Act (the Hall is registered with the Charity Commissioners) and the rigid enforcement of Environmental Health Regulations, along with an apparent decline in standards of conduct, has forced the Committee into taking a more stringent attitude towards running the hall.

As a consequence applicants for private parties will, in future, have to personally satisfy the Committee by attending one of the regular meetings to discuss the type of party, numbers involved, type of entertainment (disco etc.) and provision/consumption of alcohol. A refundable bond will be levied to cover damage etc. All details, as usual, will be available through the Booking Secretary. Unfortunately, due to unaccountable damage and losses the Committee feels it can no longer make chairs and tables available for private use away from the hall.

Not all good news, but with goodwill and understanding on all sides the committee will continue to ensure that the Hall, as stated in the Trust Deed, is available to meet the needs of all in Iron Acton.

P.W. Wedgwood
CHAIRMAN.

* * * * *

ACTON AID

For the attention of the Senior Citizens of the Parish.

If you wish to add your name to our list of Senior Citizens or to check you are already listed, so that you can be contacted in the event of any functions we may organise for yourselves, please complete the tear-off slip and post to:-

Mr R. Taylor,
Jessamine Cottage,
Dyers Lane,
Iron Acton,
Bristol.

or Phone Mr R. Taylor 228417

or Mr L. Alsop 228400

Name/s:

Address:

Tel:

The Prescription

"Never lost anyone through constipation yet." he said, "I'll give you something for it."

I was in the Doctor's surgery having had a slight problem which despite having tried all the usual remedies refused to go away. (Sorry).

It was a prescription for I know not what, which I was never to use, as during my half an hour or so in the waiting room, I contracted a tummy bug and a dose of the 'flu. The bug took care of the constipation and the flu gave me three days off work which saved me the embarrassment of leaving my job and running to the loo every ten minutes.

Being curious I showed the prescription to my mate who deciphered it as a plan for a dog kennel; the chap next door's wife knitted it up into a Fair Isle pullover; and it was sung with great vehemence by the Local Male Voice Choir.

Since then, it's been translated into a best seller by a professor of Egyptian Antiquities and reached the Top Ten in the pop charts, where it stayed for no less than eight weeks. One of the main political parties adopted it as their manifesto and are currently using it as a blue print for these Hospital Trust Funds that they are now setting up. But the ultimate accolade must be when it was runner up in a local W.I. competition for Christmas Pudding Recipes.

It's yellow with age now, and the ink has faded - we shall never know what it really said. I'll show it to you if you like.



Our New Head Master.

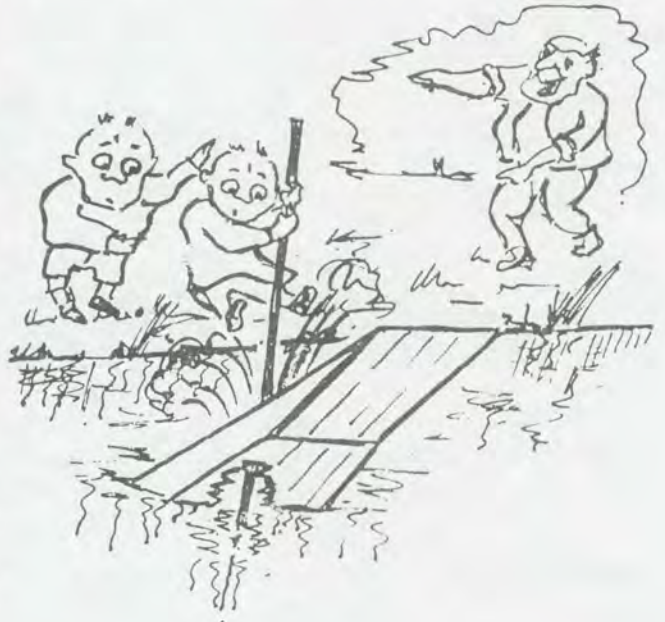
Our new Head Master is really kind, he tells us funny jokes. When it's P.E., he actually shows us what to do on the trampoline, he is excellent! Also, he has helped me a lot to understand spelling, so I can do my spelling test better. He is excellent at teaching science and I really enjoy it! I am glad he has come to our school because I can understand things more. And I like it because he is starting gym club up again, and I can go! He's great.

By Laura Gidding (aged 8)

LIFE AS A BOY IN IRON ACTON

Here is the final part of Mr Cater's reminiscences of his childhood.

One summer about 1929 we boys had been playing around the wood and walking away from the area towards the mill when we found a punt floating on the river. This boat belonged to Mr Harrison of the Manor and had come adrift. We decided to put it up on the bank, and whilst doing so Ron Strange shouted "Here comes Messrs Walker and Mainstone from the mill". They had apparently seen us and were coming along to see what was going on. Some one said "Push the boat back into the river". This was difficult so Ron Strange who had hold of the pole pushed the punt forward, with the result that the pole went through the bottom. We then, however, managed to push it back in the river where it sank. We were certainly caught and in spite of the pleas of Miss Harrison who ran our boys' club, her brother took us to Sodbury Petty Court where we were found guilty and fined ten shillings. This caused great talk in the village with the result that Mr Harrison was not well liked for what he had done.



Miss Harrison was a lovely lady who lived at the mill and ran our boys' club, where we would play cards, table tennis, billiards, darts etc. We always had cakes and tea and she really thought a lot of the boys. I believe she had been a nurse in the previous war, perhaps World War One.

Also, during the summer months a horse drover - I don't know where he came from, only that his name was Tich - would pass through the village during the evenings or early hours of the morning. He would come through the village with a string of horses, which I think he got from Avonmouth and was taking to Gloucester. He would be shouting all the while at the horses which were tied head to tail. On occasions he would come through at around 7 to 8 o'clock, and from the churchyard we boys would tease and shout at him to which he would reply by shouting and raising his fist at us.

As people of my age will remember, we had at Sodbury the Union, or as it was called the Spike, and early mornings some of the tramps who were travelling between the Union at Sodbury to Thornbury would call at our house and ask my father, before he went to work, for hot water for their billy cans to make tea. Also we had the men going around the countryside looking around garden walls for snails which they called wall fish. I don't quite know who would have eaten them. There was also a man who caught moles - the mole catcher. There was always something going on. Whilst I remember about the tramps, I can recall one morning my mother saying that Mr Dillon, a farmer who lived in High Street and had come to Acton away from Ireland and the troubles and who had been a policeman, had arrested a tramp who had broken the window of the saddler who had his shop on the corner of Park Street and High Street.

Whilst we have today travellers camping everywhere, I well remember the many Romany families who lived in the district and who camped many times at Cog Mill and the little lane which ran across the river, opposite the vets surgery. They were, I remember, the Loveridges, the Locks, Smiths and others, they caused no such trouble as today, being mainly concerned with making and selling pegs, catching and eating hedgehogs and using the fat to rub into their hair. I never remember seeing a bald or grey haired gypsy.

The first year I came to Acton was the last year of the Acton Fair and the gypsies used to trade their horses near the green below the White Hart and many I was told were the fights after the fair and a good belly of beer.

I, of course, with all the other children, left school at fourteen and although I started work I still attended the church and choir. At some time I learnt to ring the church bells and had many happy times ringing in the New Year and we were for many years invited to Mr Bob Howes who lived near the church for drinks and eats and were always made very welcome and we looked forward to this occasion very much indeed.

My grandparents who lived in Pear Tree Cottage were getting old by this time. My grandfather smoked Star cigarettes and he used to hide the cigarette cards in the walls and the boys then used to look for them. He would also, when going for a walk Saturday afternoons, go through the ha-ha to the station and back around and if there was a football match on he would walk across the pitch and the teams would stop until he had passed; he was quite a character.

There were lots of characters who lived in the village at this time. Of course there was a lot of unemployment in Britain, as in the village. One man who everyone knew was Troddy Green: he was mostly out of work and he would go poaching and picking mushrooms which were very plentiful in the area, especially at Latteridge where most of the men went. All the men out of work were obliged to go to Chipping Sodbury to sign on at the labour: most of them walked so it was quite a thing for the men to do.

On a Friday night the Buffs met at the Crown and at 10 o'clock always sang the hymn going home, "Lead Kingly Light". We at home could hear this quite plainly.

During the 1920's, it must have been early, they revived the May day celebrations and my sister Alice was picked May Queen. I remember how she was dressed up beautifully and was pulled through the High Street to the Green in a four wheeled hay wagon, which I think was loaned by farmer Bill Sheppard in Nibley Lane. A very good day was had by all and the Evening World was there to take my sister's photo and my dad, aided by friends, managed to get drunk on cider. This was very much to my mother's disgust and anger as my father had fallen down and dirtied his Sunday blue serge suit. As a matter of interest, my mother loaned the photo of my sister to Mrs Dyer of the garage in Yate Road and unfortunately we never had it returned. It may well still be in the Dyer family now and I would dearly like it back if possible.

I do not know how large the attendance is at the present time of the Mothers' Union or Women's Institute but I have pictures of them and the two were very well attended. I recall being sent down to Mr Huggins, the butcher, for a bowl of blood to put on the bulbs which my mother was growing for the Women's Institute bulb show. The village had something going on all the time; very much different to today.

Some days I would walk down to the carpenter's shop of Mr Arthur Mainstone and watch them making a coffin. His shop was right opposite the road leading to the Green, Park Street. I would also on a winter's evening call at the shop of the cobbler, Mr Stiff, and ask him if he had any out-of-date boys' magazines, like the Rover. Another job I did with some of my mates was to go to Farmer Gurd who lived on the Green and he would get us to go to one of his fields and pick up stones all day and at the end we were given the princely sum of 6d each.

On reflection, I would say that life in Iron Acton then was one of togetherness, no rush or hurry, everyone knew one another and would help each other. My mother, I recall, was midwife to Mrs Mainstone's one or two boys opposite to where I lived - it was like that in Acton and I look back with fond memories of my early life there.

About this time my father got moved back to Yate to work, so we moved back to Yate, Nibley council houses, where we were to live for a number of years, which of course is another story.

* * * * *

Have you seen the lovely show or daffodils on the little bank at the side of the Village Hall? These were planted by the W.I. one windswept, rainy Autumn day as a memorial to many past members, but especially to Molly Smalley and Barbara Shortman. They hope that you will enjoy the Flower's Beauty and also bring back fond memories of the ladies concerned.

* * * * *

The time-and-motion study expert stopped to speak to the glamorous typist. "I'm bound to tell you that I shall put in my report that you waste too much time on your appearance." "Go ahead," she said, "but I've only been here two months and I'm engaged to the boss, so it's not been entirely wasted."

BRYAN'S BIT I.

Bryan Taylor has sent us a long item on his recent visit to Australia, for which we are most grateful. We have split it into three episodes. Here is the first,

Around the World in Forty Days or do it my way 'Down under in 16 meals'

"Going to Australia for Christmas": sounds a bit flash, doesn't it? On the other hand, if I had said "Dusty, Mum and I were going to stay with my sister for a few days over the Christmas period", it would have been O.K., so that is what we did.

Eldest son Mark crammed us and our luggage into his little Fiesta car on a very bright and quite warm December morning to get to Gatwick for our charter (new word for economy, or cheepo) flight to the other side of the World.

Gatwick Airport has a way of making you feel skint before you leave the country; shops and shops with goods that you could never afford, frocks, shoes, diamond watches even glasses all at prices that look like a year's hard earned money. How could anyone pay those prices and if they don't how do the shops manage to stay there?

We all clubbed together and bought two cups of luke warm capochino with some brown stuff floating on top: it was a good job we had brought with us some home-made cheese rolls and a bottle of Tesco lemonade. Getting rid of the luggage, the eldest son and sweeping through immigration was easy; deciding on the Duty Free was the difficult bit; everything is on 'Special Offer' or two for the price of one. With the batteries on the calculator running down we were ordered to "Gate 99 for departure". Gate 99 is the furthest away, as always and with half the walking pavements out of action as usual, I thought "here we go again", with 4 litres of duty free, 3,000 cigs, 3 flight bags full of hair driers, soap, fresh socks, Body shop samples and water wings "in case we land in the sea". I start my commando course to Gate 99, trying to keep up conversations when right out of breath, and trying to look as if I do this every other week, only to arrive in a no smoking area and have to sit on a hard cold plastic seat for over an hour, thinking "What the hell was all the rush?", and "Why am I in a no smoking area with over 3,000 cigs in my flight bag?"

No joking, within 10 minutes of take off we were served a 3 course dinner; this was at 11 a.m. in the morning. Passing over Naples, or wherever, spot on 3 hours later we were served a 4 course lunch - that must have been about 2 p.m. because after that the time blurred into food not minutes and hours. An hour before landing at Shajha in the Persian Gulf (or somewhere) we endured breakfast at 3 a.m. local time, looking at my watch it was 11 p.m. (my time).

Shajha was just as I remembered it from 25 years before: a nothing place, an air raid shelter not worth the bombing, so we hadn't. 2 hours later we were invited to rejoin the aircraft after having passed 'security' - 2 locals, with equipment that didn't work, - this in December 1992.

A snack of funny fish things was plopped on our laps half way back to the sky, with the cabin Captain in a high voice advising of the choices of the next meal awaiting us in less than an hour (5 a.m. local time) - 1 litre of duty free ago my time.

With Goa 3 miles below (where the hell is that?) and the straits of somewhere else out of the Port windows looming into sight but for the cloud base below us, the next miracle arrived - melon done about 8 different ways, with orange, without orange, in sherry, without sherry and to top it all with corn flakes, at 2 p.m. my time. That must have been breakfast. To be fair, all the airline staff do work very hard; they smile and they do serve. I just wish I had the guts to tell them that all I really wanted was a cheese sandwich, a cup of tea and four hours sleep! Beef Stroganoff was served just before arriving at Singapore, - not a wise choice: together with the acid red (free) wine, the landing there was, to put it mildly, a bit up and down; the last meal did the opposite it went down then up, but never mind.

Singapore terminus is vast. The only two things that aren't there are litter and a tattoo shop. I shall return I thought, and I did three weeks later. Scrambled eggs with smokey bacon were waiting for us on our return to the skies. How is it when we cook that it stinks the house out yet these airline people do it for 300 people at one sitting there isn't even a wiff?

2 hours later and we were back to the 4 course lunch or was it dinner or was a meal just a part of being in a time machine.

18 hours flying time, 4 hours fuelling stops, a total of 22 very pleasant hours on the Britannia 747 all went into a blur along with 1 litre of duty free consumed when there wasn't anyone watching. A meal was served just before Perth, Western Australia; if my life depended on it I could not not describe it except it was all in tin foil on a plastic tray, the same that the previous 15 meals had been.

My darling sister was waiting for us at Perth Airport and have a guess at what she said, - "Did you have a good journey?"? no. - "How do you feel?"? no. - "Are you hungry, do you want to eat?"? yes.

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THE ELIZABETHAN CLUB

The Elizabethan Club enjoyed its Christmas Celebrations; our Dinner was a huge success and the entertainment was very good indeed. Our visit to the pantomime was enjoyed by all - despite the problems we had encountered about a new ruling which prohibits parking outside the Bristol Hippodrome - even for loading and unloading. Eventually our coach was allowed (after we had obtained special dispensation from the police) to drop and collect us in Frogmore Street - although we suspect that next year it may be easier to travel to Bath, and that the Hippodrome will lose our custom. Changes in policy such as this cause a fair amount of discomfort and distress to the pensioner section of our communities.

We have welcomed 4 new members this year..... and offer membership to nay pensioner who would care to join us in the Village Hall on Wednesday afternoons at 2.30 pm.

The 1993 season of outings will commence in April with a visit to Moreton-in-Marsh and Evesham. This will be followed in May by an outing to (we hope) the Black Mountains.

In July the Elizabethan Club will celebrate its 40th Anniversary and we hope to make it an extra special month with an outing on the 6th which will be followed on the 7th by a party in the Village Hall with strawberries and cream on the menu and entertainment to follow.

We hope to run our usual Whist Drive in aid of the Club and Focus on Monday, 29 March.

We have visited (please note that they did let us out afterwards!!) Leyhill to see the latest L.A.D.S. production. It was hilarious, and I don't know if I dare say it, but most of us thought it was superior to the Hippodrome's offering. The production of the Pied Piper of Hamelin at Thornbury proved to be the destination on another theatrical trip - yet again this was a wonderful production that was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone in our party.

So, here's to Spring and Summer and a wish that the sun will shine on us for all our outings. Everyone at the Elizabethan Club wishes each and every reader of Focus a Happy Easter.

Elsie Blanchard / Secretary

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Fiona Harold (formerly Manning), who provides French tuition at Iron Acton school, is starting an after-school French club in the village for 4-10 year olds. For further information, please ring her on 0454 615557

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New Husband: "Just think darling - we've been married for twenty-four hours!"
New Wife: "Yes darling, and it seems like only yesterday."

There is nothing the matter with me.
 I'm as healthy as I can be.
 I have arthritis in both my knees.
 And when I talk, I talk with a wheeze'
 My pulse is weak and my blood is thin.
 But I'm awfully good for the shape I'm in.
 Arch supports I have for my feet
 Or I wouldn't be able to be on the street
 Sleep is denied me every night
 but every morning I find I'm all right
 My memory is failing, my head's in a spin
 But I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in.

The moral is this; as this tale I unfold
 That for you and me who are growing old
 It's better to say I'm fine with a grin;
 Than to let folks know the shape we are in
 How do I know that my youth is all spent?
 Well, my get-up-and-go has got up and went
 But I don't really mind when I think with a grin
 Of all the grand places my get up has been.

Old age is golden I have heard it said
 But sometimes I wonder as I get into bed
 With my ears in a drawer, my teeth in a cup,
 My eyes on the table when I wake up
 Ere sleep comes to me I say to myself
 Is there anything else I should lay on the shelf?

When I was young my slippers were red,
 I could kick my heels right over my head
 When I grew older my slippers were blue,
 But still I could dance the whole night through;
 Now I'm old my slippers are black,
 I walk to the store and puff my way back
 I get up each morning and dust off my wits
 Pick up the papers and read the Obits
 If my name is still missing, I know I'm not dead
 So I get a good breakfast and go back to bed.



Elderflower Champagne

A little early in the year, perhaps, but here is a recipe for what we are still allowed to call "Elderflower Champagne".

Put 3 heads of elderflower into a bowl with 1½lb of white sugar, the juice and rind of a lemon and 2 tablespoons of white vinegar. Add one gallon of cold water and stir well to dissolve the sugar. Leave 24 hours, strain and pour into screw-top cider bottles. Keep 2 months at least before drinking. (after 6 months, open **very** carefully, as it may run over).

Substitute 2 or 3 well-flavoured apples for the flowers out of season.



A HEADMASTER'S FIRST IMPRESSIONS

When being appointed to the position of Head Teacher at Iron Acton Primary School, I felt that this would be a part of my career that was challenging, interesting, demanding and above all enjoyable. I was therefore excited at the prospect of starting work at the school and getting to know the children.

Since becoming a deputy-head teacher, and especially towards the end of my time in this position, there was a developing ambition within, to become a head teacher of a small rural primary school. This ambition could be described by a comparison with the idyllic fictional places created in the writings of Laurie Lee in 'Cider with Rosie' and the 'Miss Read' books, however without the National Curriculum and Local Management of Schools. Though these stories are somewhat dated, I feel that much of Iron Acton School can be seen within these pages. Is this a fair comparison? - only time will tell.

Not knowing the area, my first impression of Iron Acton was one of a peaceful, picturesque village. After having been appointed, my family and I spent a Saturday afternoon wandering through the village as though we were tourists. The village was well set out and for that we walked down the High Street, passing the old church of St James the Less set in its own grounds with its imposing Norman tower dominating the landscape for miles around. We all signed the visitors' book after finding the church open and bought a Parish magazine. Moving on we passed many quaint old houses and some not so old including two rectories, one which my son described as having what seemed to be automatically controlled gates. Further we passed a public house and the essential village shop and post office. The village green rather unusually some distance from the church with its lovely maypole looked very eloquent in the mid-afternoon winter sunshine. Here I wondered if the school had any part to play in May Day celebrations? Walking on, following footpath signs, we walked through fields to an area where we encountered tennis courts and for the children swings. Here we, of course, had to have a brief stop for my two children to try them out. They got the childrens' approval and then we continued on back in the direction of the school via the High Street again, passing the Village Hall.

When we arrived back at school, Mrs Pat Taylor had arrived and was able to let us in to have a look around the school. Being an infant teacher, my wife was very interested and commented on how well resourced the school appeared to be. Here we see an example of the community members helping to promote that family, caring atmosphere upon which any school can thrive. The whole environment seemed that afternoon many miles away from the centre of Yate let alone Bristol.

There are always two sides to every fence; and perhaps these are unfortunate times within which we live, but my arrival as Head Teacher was marred by one school burglary and subsequently a second when the school lost its video recorder, followed by a snatched handbag. I promised myself that in my job I would endeavour to be proactive and not reactive, but you can only do so much - hence security of the school is now under review.

Finally, may I say to all I have met so far in my new position, a sincere thank you as they have been extremely welcoming, accommodating and especially tolerant in matters concerning the school, for which my learning has just begun.

Richard H Larter / Headteacher

THROUGH THE EYES OF A CHILD

Last November, near to Remembrance Sunday, (writes Lynne Blanchard) a priestly friend of mine was working with a group of junior school children on the theme of 'peace'. The following poem, written by one of the children, resulted from that session. I thought it deserved a wider audience than his limited parish magazine (I'll get lynched for that) and I especially like verse 2 which has a strong rhyme scheme and imagery.

Peace is like a river flowing gently
Peace lasts for ever if we all are friendly
Peace is better if we share with the poor
Why does peace have to be spoilt by making war?

If we all have peace together we can share each other's dreams
We can all make it happen if we all work as a team
Peace is like a silken feather from a white dove
Peace works really well if we all share love.

IRON ACTON WI

I've now been sitting here in front of a violent electric blue coloured VDU screen typing away at various Focus bits and pieces for two and a half hours. It's a wonderfully sunny and warm Saturday afternoon and my fingers keep hitting all the wrong keys and not only have I invented some wonderful words, but a lot of them have turned out to be swear words too. I'm also getting just a little bit bored and this is when the straitjacket starts to loosen and the reports become a little more frivolous you have been warned!

Right, having had a little digression (the tablets don't seem to be working) I suppose I'd better tell you what the good old Wild Indians have been up to of late.

In January I, along with oodles of the other members, fell in love with Cuddles (no, not that 'orrible thing that Keith Harris rams his hand up the back of). This Cuddles was a wonderful hedgehog (a proper live one) that was brought along by Mrs Nairn to illustrate her talk on the organisation she has started called "Hedgehog Rescue". She told us about their habitat and lifestyles, how we humans mutilate and torture them, and what we can do to improve their lot. It really was fascinating and I hope to write a little bit for the July Focus so that we all know how to help these lovable creatures once their hibernation time comes around in the Autumn. On a final note, all hedgehogs that Mrs Nairn rears or helps recover are given a suitably relevant name. Hence Opec was the one who fell in the container of sump oil in one person's garage and Scorch was the one who suddenly emerged from the middle of a bonfire, faster than a bat out of hell and with smoke pouring from his backside! We all had a wonderful evening and Scorch and Opec eventually recovered!

February, what can I tell you about that? Well, as you know, there is this image of the WI lady wearing her hat (presumably with other attire or we'd all get arrested) and clutching a jar of marmalade or jam. We'll leave the jam/marmalade making to Mrs Waker (who makes a most passable product which is available from The Rectory at really modest cost) and that leaves us with the hat. So in February our lady speaker told us all about her new hat hire business AND BROUGHT ALL THESE WONDERFUL MILLINERY CREATIONS FOR US TO TRY! These hats came in all shapes, sizes and colours. The great thing is that you can go to her home, take your wedding outfit with you and then try everything on together. Hire cost would be within the range £5-15 and each item is properly cleaned upon return - so you can't catch what the last person had. If you want the lady's telephone number grab any member of the WI.

Last Monday, ie our March Meeting, saw us making our way into Bristol to see how handcrafted Bristol Blue Glass is made. It was a beautiful demonstration, although the demonstrator would never give me a run for my money in the talking stakes (he made Tim Spare look like Frank Carson!), and several of our 'ladies' had an opportunity to try glass blowing. I don't think I'd better explain what they looked like as Focus will probably be charged under the Obscene Publications Act (I did try to put it politely, failed, and deleted the 3 relevant lines). However, I shall be looking at their husbands in a different light from now on!

Each Village WI is part of a County Federation which puts on a variety of activities for its members. So, in the coming months, we shall be participating in archery, gliding, a trip to the Palace of Westminster and something called "Top to Toe" which is described in the blurb as "the way to a new you". I shall not be participating in this - not because I don't need it, but because it's taken me 36 years and I still can't cope with the me I've got!

On a local level we enjoyed a wonderful trip to Penhow Castle late last November. Advertised as a Christmas Candlelit Tour we had a tour of the castle and finished in the Great Hall in front of a roaring log fire with large glasses of hot punch and a steaming, big mince pie. It really was a most beautiful and enjoyable evening and we all (well, most of us) ended up in the Rose and Crown afterwards. We're still sifting through possibilities for the next outing it may be to Dartington Crystal and the Rooksmoor Garden in North Devon or possibly to Dunster Castle with a cream tea. As they say, watch this space!

Next edition I'll tell you all about our cake making demonstration, our visit to a 'Herb Lady' in Trowbridge and our trials and tribulations with origami (perhaps we could challenge North Road Ladies to the best bird??). We've also got some fund raisers in the pipe line and by the next issue I should be able to tell you a little about the County Federation's involvement with Amnesty International which should tie in quite nicely with the creation of a local Amnesty Group - should be interesting!!

Lynne Blanchard / Secretary

CHRISTINGLE AND A CLOWN NAMED ROLY

My heartfelt thanks go to everyone who was able to support last year's Christingle Service. I don't think I could have chosen a worse date if I'd tried!! Next time I promise I'll liaise with the Actonians so that you poor old mums and dads don't end up harrassed and trying to be in so many places all at once!



HOWEVER If all the parents and children's kind comments are anything to go by I think you enjoyed yourselves, as well as making a great financial contribution to the work undertaken by the Children's Society.

AND DID YOU SEE ROLY, OUR SPECIAL CHRISTINGLE GUEST, ON THE BBC'S CHRISTMAS SHOW ON CHRISTMAS MORNING????? REMEMBER WHERE YOU SAW HIM FIRST!

We also welcomed Diana Murrie, the Bristol Diocese's Children's Officer, back into our midst. This time she brought her son, Nick, with her and he was a great help with his bass guitar at the workshop when we needed to practise the new carol - poor love, he'd been at a party in London until the early hours of Saturday morning and had then driven back down to Bristol at 6 am so that he didn't let us down. Nice one Nick!

What will be my longest lasting memory? No, it won't be the picture of Roly the Clown feather dusting the Rector's head but it will be looking around the Church at the children's faces as he taught them to say The Clown's Prayer.

What's the Clown's Prayer? This is where Roly got all the littlies (and an awful lot of the biggies too) to kiss the palm of their hands, to blow the kiss upwards and say "I love you Jesus". I warn you, I can't put up with too many experiences like that in Iron Acton Church and I wasn't the only one groping around for a handkerchief 'cos I couldn't see through my tears.

But then, as Roly says, he is the "Clown of laughter and of tears".

Once again, to those who gave of their time and talents to help with the workshop, to those who came and supported and gave us their honest opinion afterwards, to those like John and Penny Percy and Claire and Richard May who donated the little thingies that go to make up the Christingle, thank you very, very much.

Lynne Blanchard

OLIVER

Focus Committee Meetings tend to be a wonderful hive of discussion. Often we don't all agree on the same thing (democracy being a wonderful thing), but each and every one of us did agree that the Actonians' production of Oliver last December was brilliant. The Group is to be congratulated on its achievement, it really was a great effort and production.

However, Lynne also thinks that if the French can use that French model Innes de la something or another as the model for the sculpture of the 'Spirit of France' then the Actonians could also loan out B Wright Esq, AKA Mr Bumble, but who also appears to bear a more than passable resemblance to Napoleon (especially with that hat). But perhaps it's a case of not tonight Josephine or should that be Rona?????

NORTH ROAD LADIES CLUB

To start the year we welcomed several new members, and for our January meeting we were given a demonstration on the Art of Origami by Raymond Bath. Members tried their hand at making various boxes, birds, etc. Some of the results were quite pleasing. At this meeting a cheque for £150, raised by the Club in 1992, was presented to Mrs G Nelson of Yate who received it on behalf of St Peter's Hospice.

In February we were given a talk by Jan and Dave Fullman on yet another of their holidays - this time it was their "Lakeland Adventure" illustrated by slides taken during their sojourn and in March we had a really delightful slide show of lovely flowers, views of Venice, the Cotswold Way and Scottish canals all set to music. This was provided for us by Ray King and his wife.

Members have voted to support 2 charities this year; funds raised are to be equally shared between Yate and District Special Needs Playgroup and the Breast Ultrasound Scanner Trust. The former hope to build a play and activity complex for mentally and physically handicapped children and the latter to raise £10,000 for x-ray scanning equipment for Frenchay Hospital.

The Club has also agreed to have a stall at the May Day Celebrations on the Village Green.

Dorothy Denning

THE FRIENDS OF IRON ACTON SCHOOL

The Friends are again very grateful for the support of so many people in the Village and after Christmas we welcomed our new Head Teacher, Mr Larter, and we greatly appreciate his support and new ideas.

During the Autumn Term we held another successful skittles evening at the ARC Social Club. We are grateful to Liz and Tony Woodman for arranging the venue for us. The 50/50 Bring and Buy Sale raised over £100 and additional fund raising was obtained when the Friends ran a bookstall at the Woman's World Exhibition in Chipping Sodbury and earned £60 in commission for funds.

In February we held a successful Family Disco in the Village Hall, although it was intended primarily as a social event we were very pleased to also make a profit of £90!

During the Autumn Term we purchased a colour printer for use with the School's computer, approximately £300 was spent on non-fiction books and the Friends also provided funds for the Children's Christmas Party.

Recently, a combined handwriting and spelling scheme has been purchased and funds will soon be spent on the first installment of a new maths scheme and some teacher resources for science.

On **Saturday, 27 March at 2.30 pm** we will be holding a **Spring Bazaar** in the **School Hall**. We will be selling craft items, nearly new clothes, cakes, toys, books and plants. There will be a lucky dip and a Grand National draw. Refreshments will also be available.

For the Summer Term we are planning a **Promises Auction** on **Friday, 14 May at 8.00 pm** in the **School Hall**. In the two months leading up to this event we will be seeking out people who have skills/services/items which they are willing to pledge. For example, the pledges could range from gardening, cooking, baby sitting, or a singing lesson through to a hot air balloon flight or a holiday! The possibilities are endless. If **YOU** have something to offer for sale we would love to hear from you!! Perhaps you have friends or relatives in 'very influential places' would they be willing to help us??

Another date for your diaries is **Saturday, 3 July** when we have our annual **Summer Fayre**.

Once again, thank you for all of your support in the past. We hope that you will feel able to continue to support us so that we can continue to provide both necessities and the extras to support all the staff in the School and help provide an enjoyable education for our children.

Ann Bradley

DIARY OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS

VILLAGE DAY - MONDAY 3 MAY ON THE GREEN

In the Village Hall

Every Monday and Thursday	Nursery School	9.00 am
Tuesday	Brownies	6.00 pm
Wednesday	Elizabethans	2.00 pm
	Junior Actonians	6.00pm
	Actonians	7.30 pm
2nd Monday in the month	Womens Institute	7.30 pm
3rd Monday in the month	Parish Council	7.30 pm
4th Monday in the month	Whist Drive	7.30 pm
3rd Thursday in the month	Knitting Group	1.30 pm
April 17th	Northavon Auctions	
May 16th	County Council Election-Provisional Bookings	
May 15th	Northavon Auctions	
May 27,28,29	Actonians "Cold Comfort Farm"	
June 12th	Northavon Auctions	
June 19th	St James the Less - Summer Fayre	

In the Parish Church

April 24th	Plant Sale - Rectory
June 19th	Summer Fayre in the Village Hall

At Iron Acton School

April 19th	Summer Term Begins
May 31st to June 4 inclusive	- Half Term
July 22	Summer Term Ends
September 6	Autumn Term Begins
October 25th - October 29th inclusive	- Half Term
December 21	Autumn Term Ends

At North Road School

1st Monday in the month	North Road Ladies	7.15 pm
May 5th to May 11th	Book Sale	

At the Rose and Crown

1st Thursday in the month	Acton Aid	8.00 pm
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FOCUS ON IRON ACTON is produced three times a year usually at the end of March, July and November and is distributed to every house in the Parish. Contributions for publication are always welcome and should be given to any of the persons named on the Editorial Page, who will be ready to help with advice if needed. Items ought to be submitted about four weeks before date of issue.

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