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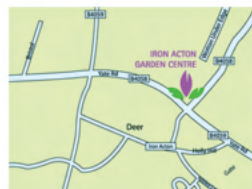


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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

LOCAL POYNTZ TEAM: - Jon Aries, Caroline Haselhan, Sarah Ridler, Amanda Scott, Jane Spare, John Wright, Marilyn Wright and myself, Pamela McCoy.

We have welcomed 3 additions, to our team: Heather Tillotson, Laura Walters and Nikki Johnson. It was felt to be time to get some new people, with fresh ideas onboard, so we really appreciate their joining us.

LOCAL POYNTZ PHOTOGRAPHERS: - Sally Aries, Gillian Otlet

A HUGE “THANK YOU” TO ACTON AID:

Our printing costs have increased and, due to the pandemic and the economic climate, we have lost some of our sponsors. The result is that we have a small “cash flow” problem. We approached Acton Aid and they have, very kindly, picked up our costs for software and website for this year. Many thanks to A.A.

THIS EDITION – On pages 34 and 35 you will find the continuation of the recent article from George Ellis (our friend in America). Steve Hill, from Green Lane Farm, has travelled to Ukraine and back with much needed aid and supplies. You will find a, really, fascinating account of his travels and problems on pages 33 and 34.

ARTICLES: - We have received some new articles, in this edition, for which we are very grateful. In fact, there is an additional one which I was unable to accommodate due to lack of space. It will appear in the next edition. We are always delighted to receive new articles so, please, contact me if you would like to write something.

ADVERTISING/SPONSORS: - We would welcome any new advertisers and sponsors. If you would like to place an advert, or know of anyone who might, please contact me and we can discuss terms, etc. My details are below. Please bear in mind that any advert will appear on our website for no extra cost.

The deadline for the autumn edition is 15th July 2022. We really need to have all articles by that date, PLEASE.

FRONT PAGE: - The beautiful, front-page image was taken by Sally Aries and is a view of the lovely allotments off Nibley Lane. It shows the amazing Dahlias and the beautiful tumbling flowers from the old wheelbarrow. All planted and cared for by Bruce Pearce.

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SPRING BIRD WATCH

Where has the last year gone, what with Covid it has been a strange and testing time but the birds aren't aware of any of this, they go about their usual routine of feeding, sleeping, migrating and the like.

By now our summer migrants will be well established and hopefully raising a brood of chicks. The Swallows and Martins were about a week later this year due to inclement weather over the continent, but I have to admit that as we were away in France over Easter we missed their arrival here, but saw them in France.

During our short stay in the French village we enjoyed hearing Nightingales sing from scrubby ground and around the streams and rivers in any overgrown patch. The trouble with us, in this country, is that we are too tidy in our gardens and the countryside, clearing overgrown vegetation and pulling up weeds. What the birds need are more unkempt areas in which to nest and feed. If you can, save your back and leave an area in the corner of your garden for nature to take back control. Leave the nettles and weeds which can be home to all sorts of insects and pests but which birds, frogs and hedgehogs need to survive.

The last time I heard Nightingales in Iron Acton was over 30 years ago singing at night from the brambles near the railway line at the back of the Old Rectory. About 15 years ago there were 5 singing males along the railway line from Ram Hill to Westerleigh which could be heard from the bridleway but, because of "leaves on the line" network rail cut all the trees and undergrowth from the banks. Yes this resulted in no more leaves on the line but sadly also no more Nightingales either!

Another treat in France was the sight of Black Redstarts on the roofs and wires of nearly all the houses in the village where we were staying, they are as common there as Robins are here, they look in outline and size like a Robin but are dusky grey all over with a rusty red tail which it bobs and flicks, hence the name Redstart. There are a few pairs in the UK but only about 50, they first bred before the 2nd world war but increased their numbers due to the bomb sites in and around London, where they still breed, and they can also be found locally around Sharpness, Portbury and Gloucester Cathedral.

On our return to the UK I found my Robins nest, which was in a garden trug under a seat around the Cherry tree, destroyed and the young dead on the ground. I am not sure of the culprit but that's nature.

The Jackdaws in my front gable nest box now have 5 young to feed. I also have 2 nest boxes in the large Chestnut tree both with Jackdaws sat on 4 eggs each. Elsewhere around the garden I have 2 Great Tits nest, a Blue Tit and the start of a Wrens nest.

It's nearly time to get out my CD recording of Swifts screaming ready to play it out of the front bedroom window. Hopefully this will attract them to one of the many nest boxes under the eaves. One of the Swift nest boxes is occupied by an enterprising Starling who is feeding 2 chicks at the moment. This is unusual as they normally build a nest in a deep box or hole in a tree with a nest cup about 100mm wide and deep, so the nest box next to the Swift box was supposed to be for them. However in choosing the Swift box they had to build it up and then make a cup but hey I am pleased to have them nesting at all as they are in decline. One of the reasons is due to the lack on nest sites because of improved roofing materials which prevents them from entering roof eaves.

It's the same for Swifts which is why I have put so many boxes up. Let's see what June brings as far as they are concerned and hopefully by the next issue I will be able to have some positive news on that front.

As a side issue, Swifts feed entirely on the wing and at times very high up and I thought mainly on flying insects but scientists have found that 80% of their diet is spiders. What I want to know is how the spiders get 2 or 3 hundred feet in the air – answers on a post card please.

Several villagers have commented on the incessant calling of the Green Woodpecker, whose old English name is the Yaffle. This comes from the sound of it's call, almost laughing – yell, yell, yell, yell or yaffle! The simple answer is he's looking for a mate.

Talking of woodpeckers I still get the Great Spotted Woodpecker roosting in the hole in the Walnut tree. Every night he comes to the feeder for his top up of sunflower hearts before he retires. I have also had 2 different females on the feeder during the day as well as the over wintering Blackcaps. The Blackcaps have changed their migrating pattern, instead of going south from Germany and Holland they are migrating to the UK, presumably because of milder winters and the abundance of bird feeders which we in the UK provide.

You may notice the seed in the feeders this time of year is not going down so fast as there are plenty of other wild sources of seed and insects. This is a bit of a double edge sword as it will save us all feed costs but means we won't get so many birds on the feeders. The usual suspects this winter and spring on the feeders included up to 20 Goldfinches, pairs of Greenfinches, Bullfinches. Chaffinches on the ground under the feeders and surprisingly as many as 7 Bramblings for most of March. Let's hope they all return next year.

Chris Boyce



Summer Issue 2022

THE ACTONIANS News

email: actonians@outlook.com Website: www.actonians.co.uk

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Our Spring production, Love Begins at 50, is now over. This farcical comedy gave lots of opportunities to laugh out loud at the misunderstandings and embarrassing situations that were unleashed when Clive, facing his 50th birthday and disillusioned with his marriage, decides to scan the Lonely Hearts adverts in the hope of re-awakening the passionate feelings of his youth!

In contrast to such frivolities, our next production is the classic story of **Oliver Twist** written by Charles Dickens and set in Victorian London. The story has been cleverly adapted for stage by Anya Reiss. This play has a large cast and we will be working closely with members of our Junior group.



There are many opportunities for new members to get involved in this production as there are plenty of acting parts available if you are interested in trying your hand on stage. Or perhaps you would like to work backstage alongside our more experienced members. We will be holding open auditions in July so everyone is welcome. All you need to do is to contact us through our website.

Oliver Twist runs from Weds 23rd - Saturday 26th November.

Our thriving Junior Actonians group have just started to work on a short play called Oh Mr Shakespeare which they will perform to family and friends in July.

IRON ACTON COMMUNITY CHOIR

Imagine both the surprise and appreciation felt when I received an email in December 2021, informing me that I had been nominated for one of the Chair of S Glos Council Community Awards for 2022. I read the email out to Di (my wife), who then, rather delightedly, confirmed that I had been nominated by the Iron Acton Community Choir for all the efforts made to keep the choir going on Zoom throughout the year and a half of Covid. The initial award ceremony was planned for January, but had to be postponed due to Covid regulations and eventually took place on March 16th at the WISE Campus. I was able to invite a couple of guests, and so Di and Lisa Hatherall (who had written the original nomination on behalf of the choir) both joined me for the evening. It was a slightly eccentric event but no less enjoyable for that. We were able to meet and chat with a number of the dignitaries and fellow award winners (about 15 in all) over a buffet supper before gathering in the theatre for the actual ceremony. It was a privilege to hear the stories associated with the range of award winners given across the S Glos community, and to celebrate all the good works that people tirelessly pursue on behalf of others in their neighbourhoods. We were entertained by a couple of musical interludes provided by the drama students at the College. All in all, it was an enjoyable evening, and a worthy celebration for all the award winners.

It would be slightly invidious not to mention all the others who help to make the choir function as successfully as it does (Jane who plays the piano for rehearsals, Marilyn who takes the baton when I cannot be there, and particularly Jason who provided all the technological support for Zoom rehearsals and was an absolute godsend throughout the pandemic period). The Award had my name on it, but should definitely be shared by all of the members who continue to commit their time and talents to enable the choir to flourish, and I thank and salute you all.

We are now able to practice, pretty, free of restrictions, which is such a blessing, but this award will remain as a significant reminder of those tough times all of us faced over the last 2 years, and also of the joy and pleasure that singing in community brings to those who take part.

If any of you reading this are feeling you would like to try it out, do get in touch with me (robpardoe@gmail.com) or pop along to our Tuesday evening rehearsals in The Parish Hall at 20.00hrs and introduce yourself. We are a non-audition choir, so all you need is enthusiasm and passion...the rest will follow!





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ST JAMES THE LESS CHURCH

Where you are always assured of a warm welcome

Spring really is the most hopeful and beautiful season. After all the spectacular Spring flowers we now have all the blossom on the trees and so far this year the high winds were much earlier and have not so far decimated the blossom as so often happens.

It is so good to see things returning to normal with May Day on the green hopefully having been a great success by the time you read this and Mash and Proms to look forward to in July.

We are so lucky to live in such a lovely part of the country in relative peace and harmony. I am sure we are all counting our blessings especially when we think of the people of Ukraine enduring such terrible loss and suffering through no fault of their own. Let us hope and pray that a resolution can be found sooner rather than later to relieve the suffering of both Ukrainians and many Russians who do not agree with the situation.

Our church services are now back to normal and we have welcomed new people to our family. The Wednesday congregation is growing nicely and I'm sure it's not just down to coffee and cake after the service! Please join us for a quiet service and stimulating chat any Wednesday at 10.00am.

We have been very lucky to have had Revd. Dave Jones taking responsibility for us over the last two years and we are very sad but also delighted for Dave that he will be moving on to take responsibility for St Saviours Coalpit Heath and Youth Mission work with Yate. St Saviours has recently become part of the Fromeside Benefice so we will not lose Dave altogether. We will be delighted to welcome a new curate in the Summer. Ben Thompson is well known to many of us as he worked with us and Yate before going for Ordination training. He will be ordained in Bristol and we will welcome him and Sara and their growing family with joy.

The other great loss we have this year is the retirement of our Administrator Kathryn Nichols. Kathryn has given us invaluable service over the last six years and we will miss her very much. We wish Kathryn and her husband a happy retirement and look forward to meeting her successor later on in May.

Our services are now Wednesday 10.00am and Sunday 9.15am. Second Sunday Family Service 10.00am. Please look on noticeboard or website for any changes

Kathryn Nichols (Administrator)

www.fromesidechurches.org.uk

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Churchwardens:

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carolgroom@hotmail.com

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denisannette2020@outlook.com

Iron Acton's AUTObiography – cars that have shaped our lives



The car gets a lot of bad press nowadays, often well deserved - we're all aware of the major issues concerning its environmental impact, air pollution and congestion. While in no way wanting to reduce the importance of any of these, perhaps there is also space to acknowledge the positive impact the car has had on most of our lives. For many of us in the parish, the car in general has brought huge benefits: opening up the whole country and beyond, enabling a wider range of leisure activities or providing more employment opportunities. More specifically, for a large number of us, there will be at least one particular car that holds a special place in our hearts – perhaps a memory from childhood, or a first taste of freedom, or a reliable bus that used to keep the family mobile.

We thought it would be great to share these automotive memories and put the spotlight on the cars which helped build the parish - or at least had a part in shaping the people who live in it – to collate Iron Acton's AUTObiography (sorry). For the intellectuals as they gather around the bars at the Lamb or the White Hart, it can be seen as an important bit of social history, while for the rest of us it could be an excuse for a bit of good old-fashioned petrol (or diesel) soaked nostalgia.

In this spirit, may I put forward my candidate? It's a 1974 Lancia Beta 1800 (not the 1800 ES which had the rare delights of sunshine roof and electric front windows but was well outside our budget). As a reminder, Lancia was an Italian manufacturer that was bought out by Fiat in 1969. The Beta was the first fruit of this union, being a Cortina rival that was made between 1972 and 1984. Living as I was in the West Midlands in the 1970s, with streets teeming with Austins, Morrisies, Hillmans and Fords, it was impossibly exotic, redolent of a way of life in a country I had only really glimpsed then in episodes of the Persuaders and the Saint.

Not everyone viewed it so favourably, though, as buying one was seen by some locally as a supreme act of betrayal – one neighbour (who worked at the Jaguar factory) accused my Dad of callously abandoning the British worker. Others disapproved as they still had fresh memories of fighting the Italians in WW2. Despite this, to my young mind it was worth it, though, to luxuriate in the deep velour seats, hear the rasp of the engine and experience a little jump of the heart each time I saw it in front of the house. It wasn't perfect – it was thirsty, cost a fortune to service and most infamously took rusting to new levels. After three years, the subframe was a bag of flakes and my Dad traded it in for a locally made Chrysler Alpine, so at least we were once again reconciled with the British worker – and our neighbour. The Alpine was a fine car and heralded a return to motoring normality for our family, but the Beta, in deep Rosso York red, had burned into my consciousness, kindling my love for cars and becoming for me an evocative symbol of my childhood. Even searching out photographs for this article had me

instantly transported back to the long, hot summer of 1976. In short it was, at least to me, Roger Moore and Tony Curtis walking along the beach in Porto Fino cast in (not terribly thick or well rustproofed) steel form.

Which car would you nominate as having an important place in your life? Please let us know the car and why it is/was so significant for you. Perhaps we can build up a virtual garage of great automobiles from across the decades to the present day that have helped make the people of Iron Acton what they are? As personal transport enters another, no doubt just as exciting but definitely different, era of electricity, hydrogen and self-driving, it could also be a fond salute to what has gone before.

'Austin Tesla'



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SATURDAY 10TH SEPTEMBER 2022

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Entries: 9am – 11am staging until 11.30 am

Judging: 11.30am onwards

Show opens to the public 2.15pm

Tea and home-made cakes available

Auction and Presentation of cups: 3.30pm

Non-perishable items may be entered on
Friday 10th September from 5-7pm

Welcome to Iron Acton Horticultural Show. Whether you grow it or make it, bake it or create it, this is your chance to show it! The Horticultural Show is organised into seven sections and 90 different classes, there is something for all ages and abilities.

Questions

Any questions, please contact a member of the Horticultural Show Committee

Meryl Cook: 228405, Jenny Millward: 228704 or email us at
ironactonparishhall@hotmail.com

Our schedules are all prepared and will be on the Parish Hall website -
www.ironactonparishhall.co.uk and on The Local Poyntz website – www.ironacton.info by
the time this is published. Hard copies are also being produced and will be on display at
The Lamb Inn, The White Hart, the Swap Box and the Garden Centre.

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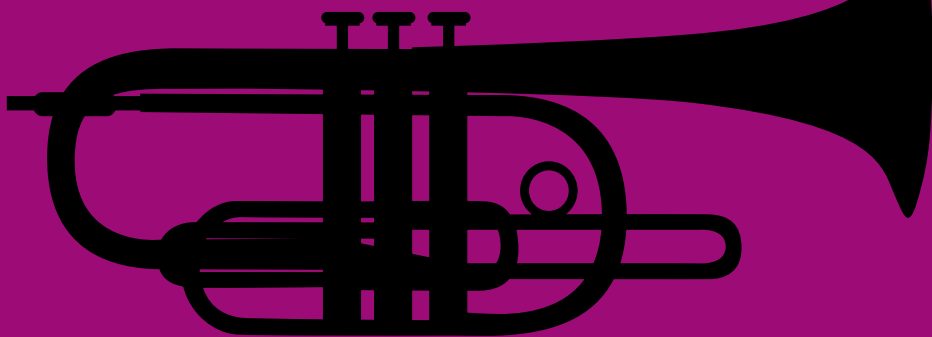
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IRON ACTON PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWS

The Easter holiday has just concluded and Term 5 is now upon us. The children and staff have returned refreshed and ready for the term ahead. In the lead up to the Easter break, a range of opportunities were provided for the children to learn about and celebrate Easter. We were able to welcome families to our Easter service at St James' Church where the children each shared something creative linked to the Easter theme; the school and church were also presented with the Church and School Partnership Award by Liz Townend at the Diocese of Bristol. Earlier in the week, we had a visit from Father Malcolm and Father Dave who helped the children to reflect on each part of the Easter story and to understand how Christians celebrate Easter.

Earlier in the term we were able to get back to organising some of our usual trips and visits – this is something that has been somewhat more challenging over recent years. One of our classes went to visit a local farm to support their enquiry question: Where does our food really come from? Another class received a visit from educational cooking company Travelling Kitchen, too. They spent the day preparing a range of high quality healthy dishes then shared these with their families at the end of the day.

We have now been given more information about our new Reception cohort for September. Another 15 children will join Barn Owls Class – this is a full cohort once again. Overall this will mean we have just under 100 children on roll at the school, ensuring our ongoing sustainability into the future.

The children have been busy preparing for the forthcoming May Day on The Green. It is wonderful to be able to get involved once again and to see the children rehearsing the may pole dancing.

For many at our school, these will be the final few weeks of their primary education as our 17 year 6 children prepare to move on to secondary school. This year most will be heading to Brimsham Green with a few also going to Winterbourne, Yate, KLB and Chipping Sodbury. Before that time comes, they will be travelling to Wales for a week long residential visit where they will take part in a range of adventurous activities. As well as this, all children will perform in their end of year pantomime at the Parish Hall. The last term is always the busiest with lots to look forward to!

Thank you all for your support of the school.

Mike Riches

Headteacher

Phone: 01454 228322

Email: enquiries@ironactonprimaryschool.co.uk



NORTH ROAD COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL



During the Spring Term, we were involved in interviewing for an Artist in Residence working with the school during the Summer Term and the next academic year. We are delighted to share that we have commissioned Bristol based artist Molly Hawkins to create a new permanent outdoor artwork for the school building and playground. The commission is funded by Cotswold Homes as part of their nearby housing development, The Grove. Molly was appointed last term and will be developing her designs over the coming months through visits to the school and a series of workshops with the children. Molly visited our school assembly in April to meet the pupils for the first time and will be attending the School Council meeting. The art work is planned to be painted on the school wall during the summer holidays, updates will be posted on our school Twitter account: @NRCPSchool

Molly Hawkins is a visual artist and designer with a background in theatre design, costume, puppetry and illustration. Her large scale, vibrant interventions in public spaces spread joy using the power of colour and pattern. Molly trained in Theatre and Performance Design at the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts (LIPA), graduating in 2013. She has painted bespoke artworks in Mexico, Germany, Poland, India and at sites across the UK including cafes, bars, workspaces, theatres, museums and arts centres. Past projects include a 3 x 3 basketball court mural at Writtle University College in Essex, a wall mural and several painted house fronts in Bristol, and the 'Sparkasse Bank' in Flensburg, Northern Germany. You can find out more about Molly and her past work by visiting her website www.mollyhawkins.co.uk or following her on Instagram and Twitter: @mollymural



The Summer Term is now in full flow with all children exploring learning questions under the whole school focus of 'Our Wonderful World'. Classes are learning about minibeasts, The Rainforest, Africa and the Romans. Learning questions were launched with WOW events, which included a trip to Westonbirt, a Roman Clay Pot craft session and a virtual safari! There are lots of exciting learning events planned for the term including trips to The Living Rainforest and The Roman Baths. We will also be enjoying a range of special events including a whole school family celebration for the Queen's Jubilee and a whole school Sports Day.

We recently had confirmation of 60 applications for our September 2022 EYFS intake of 15 places with 28 of these being first place preferences. We are very much looking forward to meeting our new pupils and their families in the coming months.

The staff and governors continue to be extremely proud of our pupils, their achievements and their use of our school values in all that they do.

Sarah Stillie, Headteacher, North Road Community Primary School



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35 MILES OF THE SOUTHWEST COASTAL PATH by TILLY ARIES

My friend Izzy and I recently embarked on a trip down to Cornwall to walk the South West Coastal path from St Ives to Penzance. Having planned this trip mid-lockdown on the sofa, after finding out we wouldn't be able to do Gold DofE with school, let's just say we were a bit naive. After a bus trip from Bristol to Penzance, we left Penzance bright and early at 8am to catch a bus to St Ives, the starting point. Feeling really energised and motivated we set off. The exhaustion hit at Zennor, 7 miles into the 15 mile leg...We were warned this section was going to be the hardest, but didn't think that equated to the path being made out of boulders, "an awkward walk" as a writer described it. Which we thought was a bit of an understatement. We bumped into a couple doing the same leg as us but quickly parted ways and around this time, 5 miles before the end, the drinking water ran out, but don't worry it soon rained. And when I say it rained it wasn't just a drizzle, it tipped it down, combining that with the wind, we were walking in the beginning of Storm Evert. Completely wind beaten and soaking we arrived at the first campsite in Pendeen. We tried pitching the tent and by the time it was up it was soaked through. The campsite owner had moved her car in front of our tent to try to give us some shelter and said we could sleep in her car if it got really bad. Storm Evert had other ideas, and soon the wind was reaching 40/50mph, with predicted winds of 70mph at 2am. Luckily, we ended up sleeping on the floor of the campsite owner's front room. We were able to shower next door and learnt that the walkers we passed beat us there and had been worried! That night we had a hot cup of tea and dinner, next to a warm fire. The only one not happy to see us was their cat. I think we'd taken his sleeping space.

We slept through the storm and the next morning only one tent was still standing. We'd managed to get our tent to dry inside overnight and we then set off for a shorter 7 mile walk on, to St Just. We'd been given loads of vegan bars which hilariously enough weren't gluten free so Izzy had 12 of them to get through (I'm a coeliac). We managed to find coffee on the way and made it into St Just at around 2pm, eager to have a proper pub meal. We were caught looking at a pub menu and a local let us know the pub had just stopped serving food. We were so disappointed, but he saw how exhausted we were and went to ask if they could stay open a second longer for us, which they did! I work at The Lamb Inn and Izzy works at a Cafe near Wotton, so we both know how annoying it is when someone rocks up at the end of a shift asking for food, so we were extremely thankful.

That night we pitched our tent under a tree thinking that we'd need as much shelter as possible in case the weather took a bad turn again (of course it didn't even rain that night so we looked a bit odd). We even made it down to the beach in the evening for a sunset swim.. The next day was a rest day, we were very glad to have scheduled this in. We spent the day optimistically in skirts despite the fact it was rather chilly, exploring St Just and leaving our walking boots in the tent!

The next leg was St Just to Treen Campsite in Porthcurno. We were on the hunt for lunch in Sennen by 11am, finding food wasn't successful (like it hadn't been on the whole trip, not only do I have coeliac disease Izzy is pescatarian, so what we can both share is pretty limited), so we sat on the side of the road and ate an ice cream for lunch. We then continued up the hill onto Land's End, we plodded along and became quickly surrounded by hundreds of tourists. Not even half a mile from Land's End, walking away from Sennen, all the tourists had gone and once again we had a quiet coastal path to walk along. This was a truly beautiful walk and the weather was lovely and sunny. We spotted seals in a small cove before bumping into a group of organised walkers. Despite being completely aware of our location, one of the walkers insisted on showing us where we were on the map...We got swept up in the middle of their group and we stuck out like sore thumbs with our huge backpacks with bright orange waterproof covers on. It wasn't

raining but Izzy had packed most of her things like crocs on the outside of her bag and needed the cover to hold everything in, so I thought I'd go along with it. It was a great section of the path, we didn't know it at the time but it was to be our last day walking.

Izzy's ankles had become really swollen and she was having to walk a lot slower with the rucksack (weighing in at 15kg at the beginning of the trip). Seeing as we both struggled with the day before, we decided not to walk 10 miles to Penzance, which made us both really sad as we'd really wanted to complete our planned walk. We both knew it was the right decision. But we want to return next year and walk that last leg (with smaller backpacks)! We met some truly kind people along the way, happy to help give food recommendations, advice and a lady even gave us sweets to get us through.

We packed up and decided to venture down to a beach below Treen Farm Campsite, we had two options, Pedn Vounder Beach or Porthcurno Beach. We both desperately wanted to venture down to Pedn Vounder, but it was too steep of a descent and the tide was on its way in, about to swallow the slither of sand that we could see. So we reluctantly joined the swarm of tourists on Porthcurno beach. We weaved our way through and got knee deep in the sea before calling it a day. We left the beach as more huge groups of people were walking down, we then got a bus to Penzance. At this point we were starving, we got off the bus and quickly joined a queue for a cafe advertising gluten free food, perfect! Another walker that overtook us literally two seconds before was seated and then we were turned away. So we sat on a bench and had food from Tesco. As I can't buy meal deals I ended up having an apple, gluten free cake and more ice cream for lunch.

As we hadn't walked all day we arrived very early at the youth hostel, it felt weird to be back again...We then pitched the tent for the last time. We woke up in the morning and walked back into town to get some proper breakfast, and of course a coffee. The bus was due to leave at 11:30, so we took our time eating a yummy breakfast and then got on the National Express bus back to Bristol. We were the only ones to board at Penzance but were quickly joined by people getting on at Falmouth. The journey was long and after 8 hours we were back in Bristol Bus station, where we started a week before.

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TEENAGE HELL

After a brief hiatus of just three weeks, when our number three turned 20, we once more embrace the teenage years, as our youngest passes through the door of 'childhood,' beginning that eventful journey, challenged by hormones and social media, into independence! Of course, for now, our daughter is still the same child who went to bed with excited expectations of the birthday celebrations ahead. She was bemused at the 'Kevin becomes a teenager' You-tube video she had been encouraged to watch the night before, even, I think, a little scared. She was relieved that an imposter hadn't overtaken her in the night. She wasn't feeling grumpy, and she wasn't feeling sad!

Thirteen is just a day older than yesterday, another step along the way but unfortunately the onset of the teens is often depicted as a threat. People nod knowingly, gloating with their x-ray vision, at the minefields they see ahead, waiting to explode and rock the family calm. Children are lovely, teenagers horrid. No wonder parents and some children feel sad and scared by this sudden, apparent abruption in the line of stability. Child lost; alien teenager inserted. It is as if everything that happened before never mattered, all your parenting/childhood discounted, a monster now in your midst. No wonder it terrifies, no wonder I shun it. The focus of teenage transformation insists that childhood is instantly switched with an inevitable plunge into darkness. After years of torture, an adult will hopefully be spat out, leaving that horrible teenage skin, discarded. All at once, it as if our child will inevitably cause chaos, suddenly and without warning. But from her first, empathic toddler 'NO,' our child has already found the 'teenager' within. She was already striving to be the 'me' inside. To be content we must be the person we are meant to be, to grow and journey every day of our lives, taking with us an ever-increasing snowball of all that we have become. Each stage adds a new depth. It is true that as a teenager, the journey certainly does begin to pick up pace as hormones rush in and expectations to achieve and pressure mounts; adulthood beckoning them on. It can feel extremely uncomfortable as they start to take control and grasp hold of the wheel, sometimes at full speed! But with our trust they will eventually see that the brakes do help and if the parent loosens their grip, both of you can have fun along the way (I promise!!). Teenagers are more vulnerable than their younger selves. They still need the rock of steady parents, applauding them from the side-lines and picking them up when things go wrong. They are stretching and outgrowing the childhood cocoon not understanding who they will be when they emerge. The only hope is that they do emerge and that they don't fall asleep within, entrapped, and stunted by fear. I once read that should you have the choice of taking time off from work when your child is either in its infant, or teenage years, then the latter should be prioritised. Yet at the very moment when the teenager silently cries out for help, the parent is most often juggling more than they can cope with themselves. I want our daughter to feel a growing sense of self, an excitement about the choices she can now make, feeling a thrill rather than fear. The greatest gift I can give my children is to ensure that they do not stay as Peter Pans, shadowless, condemned forever to leave no mark wherever they turn, to always be yearning for the life on the other side of that window. I want them to embrace adulthood, but to know that they will always be themselves; they will carry the child, the teenager right into their adult future.

I remember dreading the teenage label, I did not want to grow up. I wanted to hide and stop time. I wanted the protection of the childhood fantasy world I lived in, its gentleness, its escapism and its protection from responsibility and fear. I didn't want to leave myself and become this new other person; the fearsome teenager. It stalled the adult in me and made me cower, trembling, under cover. Major decisions rested on my fear of growing up. I resisted any thoughts of it being time to 'leave the nest,' ruling out university or jobs elsewhere. Bizarrely I plumped for nursing (applying only to my hometown), a career that would see me facing more responsibility and fear than I could have ever imagined. The dear friends I made back then, howl with shared hysteria during our treasured annual getaways, as we reminisce about our student nurse days. We often recoil at the level of responsibility nursing catapulted us into, aged only eighteen, unsure of how we coped. I recall genuine terror when I oversaw an acute medical ward for an hour each night, whilst the senior third year student I worked alongside took her break. I feared the dark and the ghost stories of the lady (only half of her visible), floating along those creepy corridors, chillingly cold, outside the ward. More importantly I prayed nothing dire would happen to the patients under my watch, that no emergency would throw me off track and cause any harm. Unbeknown to my senior nurse, I would make sure I was just a bit too noisy, as I paced between the beds, so that at least one patient would wake up, ensuring I had company! One elderly gentleman was perceptive enough to suggest that I could wake him up anytime if I fancied a chat! One night I nearly passed out, as seemingly, a white ghost sailed past my ward! Word had got out and the nurse on the ward opposite could not resist the opportunity!!! The laughter that the moment caused, as he threw off his silly sheet, showed me how ridiculous I had been. I never feared that floating old lady again! The whole of my student nurse days was a mixture of terror coupled with laughter and underpinned by the unflinching, mutual support from my friends; together we matured, found our feet, and learned to trust our instincts and capabilities. I bless the day the BRI accepted me as a nurse from that one, unthought out, application. It was there that I found resilience and fortitude and learned how to unwrap the cocoon trapping me and where I began tentatively shaking out my slightly ragged wings and putting them to the test. My flying is often lopsided, and I land rather too frequently. Although I sometimes yearn that one day, I will suddenly swoop in full flight upwards, for now I am pretty happy fluttering around at low speed!!

I do not want my youngest to be like me. I do not want her to fear growing up. I want her to be strong, to embrace the world, to suck up life. To be resilient, to be brave, to be kind. This more than ever, seems to be an urgent need and duty of care. The teenage years are nature's protection, a chance to look within, to try on adult shoes and see what fits, before you take the road ahead alone. The adult without the teenager inside will be poorly equipped to withstand the unknown ways ahead.

As the world reels from the darkness that atrocities have flung it, we watch in disbelief and horror as others who once trod on stable ground, now see chasms rupturing their paths, revealing the boiling abyss below, rising to extinguish all light. I can barely breathe as I contemplate that last hug, those last whispers from a Mum to her teenage boy, as his call to arms rips him from the gentle progress of child to man and slams him into hell.

I pray that my daughter's journey to adulthood can continue gently, supported along its progression by stability and that the path ahead, though it bends and undulates, remains firm underfoot, and opens in light before her.

Lisa Hatherell

IRON ACTON FILM CLUB

It's wonderful to report that we were able to run the 2021-2022 Film Club season without any COVID interruptions, for the first time in 2 years. We would like to thank our members for their continued support. It has been lovely to spend time watching films on the big screen again in the company of friends and neighbours. The new layout with tables and chairs rather than tiered seating has worked well and we are likely to continue with this format next season.

The films we showed this season were Dream Horse, The Dig, The Last Bus, The Courier, Knives Out and No Time to Die

For those already on our mailing list we will be in touch over the summer about renewing your membership for next season and voting for the first 3 films of the season. Film Club resumes on Saturday 1st October 2022 in the Parish Hall.

If you are not on our mailing list and would like to keep touch with the Film Club please contact myself caroline.haselhan@btinternet.com or phone either of the numbers below.

Simon Cross
01454 228291

Caroline Haselhan
01454 228791





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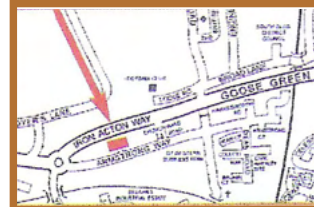
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Iron Acton K9 Club

What a wonderful time our dogs and handlers had at the village May Day. Our display team had worked hard to put together their routine to show what we had learnt in our Kennel Club Good Citizens and Club classes - we were almost paw perfect!! In the Meadows, we met lots of new dogs and handlers who had a great time having a go at our Dogstacle course and helped raise £100 for Holly Hedge Animal Sanctuary. A big thank you to all the organisers for such a successful village event.

May Day Stand, Sit & Down Stays



We are looking forward to welcoming new puppies to the club for our next puppy course and all our classes will be working hard to achieve their Kennel club awards. The dry weather has enabled our activity dogs to enjoy training in agility and hay bale retrieves.

We will be organising a Novelty Show and Activity Show in the coming months so look out for those dates.

For more information about the club and our activities, please take a look at our *facebook* page, website www.ironactonk9club.co.uk or ring Sue on 01454 228803 / Karen on 01454 228891.

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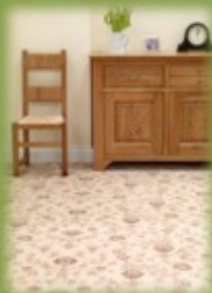
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IRON ACTON WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

Our speaker in February was an old friend, Trevor Carter, who was titled Storyteller of the Year. He actually gained this moniker by winning a competition in Bristol some years ago. A number of entrants told a story and the audience voted for their favourite, on this occasion Trevor's. He very much likes to write poems based on nostalgia and regaled us with some entitled If You and I Were Dragonflies, Frankenstein, Wayne from Iowa, Has Anyone Seen the Elephants (we could join in with that one) and finishing with Where There's Tea There's Hope. Trevor was thanked for once again giving us an enjoyable evening.

Our next speaker was Susan Symons, who was an excellent mine of information on Queen Victoria. She has written a number of books on her subject, dividing them up into different phases of the Queen's life. Her talk to us was on Victoria from a baby and the amazing circumstances that led to her becoming the monarch at the age of 18. Her coronation was unrehearsed and a number of gaffes took place, such as the ring being put on the wrong finger! This part of her life was concluded when she met and married Albert, her mother's nephew. Susan was a natural raconteur and we all agreed we would love to invite her back so she can continue the story of the next stage of Victoria's life.

April's speaker was another old friend, although this time Geoff Woodland's subject was very topical: Modern Slavery. He explained how there are more slaves in the world now than in any other point in history. Most civilisations in the distant past used slaves, such as the Egyptians, Romans, Greeks and Portuguese. These days slavery takes many different forms in this country, from working in car washes and nail bars with little or no remuneration and dreadful living conditions, to cases of the homeless and vulnerable being promised work and limitless alcohol or drugs only to find the conditions so intolerable they want to leave but are then threatened with physical violence if they try to abscond. The subject was grim but Geoff used his musical skills to punctuate the talk with songs such as Oh Susanna, The Cotton Fields Back Home and Hallelujah, all with which we joined in. He also gave advice on who to contact should anyone be concerned about someone they felt may need help.

We presented some gardening vouchers to Maureen as a thank you for relaying all WI information from national and local sources via e-mail to all our members. This was particularly useful during lockdowns when getting information was more difficult. Two members of the group attended a birthday party at Hawkesbury Upton WI and as well as having a lovely buffet, they were entertained by the Yate Ukulele Band.

Plans were made for May Day, when we will be running a cake stall. There will also be an 'unwanted gifts' section. Volunteers were signed up for baking cakes and biscuits, looking after the stall and selling May Day programmes. After 2 years of being unable to hold the event, everyone is looking forward to a successful and fingers crossed, warm and dry day.

We meet on the second Monday of the month in the Parish Hall at 7.30pm and anyone who is interested in joining us would be very welcome. Our Secretary, Bridget, is always happy to give details of future speakers and outings and is available on 01454 321741.

Sylvie Powell

PHONE BOX ON THE HIGH STREET.

As you all know; a group of us “adopted” the old ‘phone box which is on the High Street. We spent a lot of time and money, which we raised from a film event and from donations, renovating it. We fitted shelves and lighting. We made it into a “Swap Box”; where people could help themselves to a book or two and donate the same. We designated a lower shelf to be for children’s items. Over the Christmas period children from Iron Acton C of E school decorate it and, it looks lovely!!

We have a group of 12 and I set a rota where each of us has a week to clean, tidy and dispose of unwanted literature etc. For each individual it is not, in theory, an arduous task as it is only once in a 12 week period.

The items for children is particularly appreciated and things turn around very quickly.

SADLY the ‘phone/swap box gets abused, from time to time. We find that it gets used as a “Dumping” place by people who find it easier to get rid of their unwanted items here, rather than take them to a charity shop or to the Sort-It centre which is 2 miles down the road. Please see the photos, below.



These 2 photos show just one of these occasions, where someone has “dumped” about 150 old DVD’s, resulting in 1 one of our team having to remove and dispose of them.



THE PHONE BOX ALSO GETS VANDALISED

Just recently we have had some, mindless, individual or two vandalising the ‘phone box. We, all, find it extremely sad and annoying. It is beyond my comprehension as to what a person achieves by this act of wonton destruction.

We have had vandalism before and I will not be surprised to see it happen again. See the photo (right)

On this occasion the lower shelf and its brackets were removed and thrown about, and all the lighting was wrecked.

It can, and is being, repaired and replaced. It takes time and money.



We will continue to manage our Phone/Swap box. We will continue to clean it, to sort out and dispose of old/unwanted stuff. We will continue to encourage those, lovely people, who treat this facility with respect. We will encourage people to bring children’s items (it does not have to be books), which are always appreciated.

THE ONLY THING WE ASK IS THIS; IF YOU SEE ANYONE ABUSING THIS FACILITY, PLEASE ASK THEM TO REFRAIN.

Thank you
Pam McCoy

TO UKRAINE WITH LOVE FROM GREEN LANE FARM AND FRIENDS

Steve Hill, supported by Angie has driven around 6,000 miles in two trips to deliver much needed aid to Ukraine. As well as collecting donations of goods and funds, he bought a van which needed much work and then set about making contacts to ensure that the goods went straight to the Ukrainian people in need. Items delivered included wound dressings, medical supplies, toiletries, blankets, sleeping bags, clothes, food (including baby milk and pet food), nappies and some children's toys. Here is their story of the first trip.

Like most people we were appalled by the recent events in Ukraine. We gave some thought as to what possible help we could provide for the people of Ukraine. As an HGV driver, Steve initially investigated any options to take humanitarian aid via an agency or charity but, after extensive searches, we drew a blank. We then took the decision to buy a 3.5t van which would not be subject to as many rules, regulations, operator licenses and other formalities as a larger vehicle. As time was of the essence, we decided to bid on a cheap Mercedes Sprinter with a Luton box on eBay. Our winning bid landed us with a high mileage, non-runner with no MOT and a broken steering box (I have told Steve; he is never to buy anything on eBay again). Our only option to get it roadworthy was to take it to the nearest garage that could perform the appropriate work. Amazingly, Graham, the owner of Collingwood Garage in Weston Super Mare was fully supportive of our venture and provided all the parts and labour at-cost. After assessing the work his words were "I wish I had better news – this van has had a very hard life"! After much diligent work on his part, it was finally ready for MOT. On reaching the test station it would not fit under the entrance doorway and the examiner said he was unable to inspect the vehicle. Not prepared to give up, Graham deflated the back tyres and pushed the van into the testing centre, where it passed!

Meanwhile, we had a donation of 100 'tea crate' sized cardboard boxes from Smart Packaging and Angie set up a 'Just Giving' page for fund raising. This was boosted by a generous donation from Deb at Courtyard Flowers who sold blue and yellow bouquets just prior to Mother's Day. Donated items came principally from Trents Farm Shop and the Co-Op at Winterbourne. Sprint Print provided some graphics for the van.

With sufficient funds and a full load, we set off for the Polish/Ukraine border. The chosen ferry route was Harwich to Hoek van Holland as Richard Hunter had managed to blag a free crossing with Stena Line (and a tank of fuel donated by Morrisons) then through the Netherlands, Germany and into Poland. Despite all the horror stories about COVID restrictions and British customs refusing to let aid leave, we had no problems passing border checks. All went well then until about 150 miles from Krakow when we pulled into a service area and saw a British registered minibus with a flat tyre. We provided them with a can of tyre weld (among the many spare items provided by Motor Aids) to fix their puncture and found that they were a group of three young lads who had bought the minibus with the aim of taking aid into Kyiv and Lviv and providing casualty evacuation out. We then drove in convoy for the rest of the journey to the overnight stop in Krakow.

The following day, about 200 miles from our destination the engine lost power. On investigation it was obvious that one of the injectors was blowing diesel out through the top of the engine. We continued at reduced power through the mountains close to the Ukraine border until the engine had another massive reduction in power. The load on the engine had caused a further injector to become un-seated. With literally 5 miles to run, we limped on at not much more than a walking pace with grey smoke billowing from the exhaust and the engine making a terrible noise. Unsure of our destination we spied a yard with several vans parked in a line so decided to stop and seek assistance. This turned out to be a small transport company with its own garage facilities. Once we had explained our situation to the owner Pavel (via a telephone call

to his English-speaking sister) he got one of his workers to accompany us to the warehouse facility for the unload. All the donations were gratefully received by Halina (a Ukrainian Doctor) for their final journey into Ukraine.



Returning to the garage, we worked on the engine from 4pm into the evening by which time we had re-seated three of the injectors but realised we needed one new one to complete the repair. This was duly ordered and couriered in at 10am the following day. Pavel fitted the new injector using an oversized bolt as the original thread had pulled. Although this was a 'field' repair, it's likely that Pavel was the only mechanic in the whole area with the expertise to have got the van up and running and the repair held until our return to England where we were able to complete the repair properly. The whole trip was 2600 miles across 4 countries.

We have since completed a further trip to the Romanian/Ukraine border (3400 miles) and are now fundraising for a third trip which will be back to Dr Halina on the Poland/Ukraine border.

Many thanks to everyone who has contributed their time, efforts, money, and items.

For further information on how to help – please email angie.hill@live.co.uk

VILLAGE PUB CRAWL from the post WW2 era (Continued from the spring magazine)

As a four-year-old it was probably the first time I'd seen a dead animal up close, let alone several large animals being smoked. I was rooted to the spot in curious awe and then sheer fright took over. I'm digressing, it's time to clear the air and get back to our village pub crawl....

So, where was the fourth pub? Well, leaving the Lamb and going south-easterly on Nibley Lane, over the railway bridge, after a mile or so we'd arrive at Hope Road. Just up Hope Road was the Strawberry Gardens - a tiny little public house that masqueraded as a cottage. The pub was just inside the parish limits and this tiny public house may have been open just in the summer months for a few years. After a short bicycle ride from Chilwood close, as teenagers we'd go to visit the place. The Scrumpy or the sweet cider they poured, was, I'm told, wink, wink, delicious. Beyond any doubt, Iron Acton was well stocked with pubs, and these gathering places provided venues enabling villagers to socialize with much enthusiasm and thirst. Remember, these were times when televisions in the village were few, if any. iPads and cellphones did not exist and social media meant sharing the Dursley, or Thornbury Gazette. Friends were not digital versions, they were real. These were people, old or young, bringing their children and sheep dogs to the pubs where villagers could learn the latest news, contemplate, commiserate, be happy, or be sad all at the same time. They had a good reason during this time to be so inclined.

During the 1950's it seemed Iron Acton was travelling through a rather odd phase from the medical view. This became a constant topic around the dinner table as well as the village pubs. Living in Chillwood Close was in some respects a microcosm of the post-war survivors that came from all over the UK to find work and a place to live, but also bringing their afflictions and maladies.

There were a few men my father's age that were combat injured, seeing men injured or limping using walking sticks was quite common.

But for some reason, a number of women were coming down with cancers, mostly lung cancer. My father would make the medical determination based on his own anecdotal evidence at the time (later proved true) that this time would be appropriate to teach his children the lesson that 'the probable cause was smoking cancer sticks.' I wondered for a while why anyone would do that, since I heard this lecture weekly, but I never saw these 'sticks' for sale down at Fursman's shop. Then it dawned on me that cigarettes were the problem. My grandfather, Iron Acton's headmaster at the time was an ex-WW1 artilleryman and smoked a pipe, so, what's so bad about that? He was doing quite well, wasn't he? Looking back that was rather a harsh, simplistic way that my father stated the problem; having loved ones going through war, being bombed, or tramping across the African desert or Normandy and enduring long years of stress and anxiety was enough for anyone to reach for a smoke. Cigarettes could be described then, as now, as an anti-depressant, or simply put, a common, over the counter 'mood enhancer.' But, never the less, at some point in this part of Iron Acton village where we lived, (I don't know about the other parts of the village), there seemed to be always someone becoming a patient that the travelling nurse or GP was visiting frequently. Bronchial disorders were also very common, leading later on into COPD, and emphysema. These medical personnel did a marvelous job taking care of the very ill or terminally ill village patients and providing solace to families as they were helped through the final days. This came close to home late one evening when a large van came to a neighbour's house to take yet another casualty away. Too many children were losing mothers but the GP's and nurses were there to make it all as peaceful as possible and one could hear all this sad news sitting at a village pub table or bar stool.

But looking back, a village pub was not just a place to have a good pint, or a Scotch, it was a place where life was poured out and sometimes, like drink itself, things could get rather messy. Coming to the US at twenty years old, there were no such places in Florida as a good 'local'. Actually, going out for a drink was somewhat frowned on by some in the bible belt in the south, and the English pubs that were opening up slowly in the larger towns in the US were still a novelty. The drinking age in the US was twenty-one, and back in England, eighteen. The bars in the southern US and Florida where I was living were mainly Tiki bars by the beach, such as the 'Drift Inn' bar going to Anna Maria island, 'Hurricane Hanks' was famous for serving ice cold beer for a dollar a glass to locals and tourists in the warm breezy open air coming off the Gulf of Mexico. I would chat with strangers, or the 'Snowbirds' as we called them, but it wasn't the same. You'd never see them again once they took a flight to go back north and I missed my friends back home.

I still miss those village times and the people that made up the tough fabric of a certain Gloucestershire post-war village. Any place with a name containing Iron and Oak in it has to be resilient does it not? We were, back then, poorer than church mice but fortunate indeed to have lived there and learned some hard life lessons. So, since you, patient reader, have made it this far to the end of this rather long story, you win a prize... if you live there in the village, count yourself as one of the lucky ones. Call up a friend or two and meet at the local pub and catch up on things over a good pint! You'll find out what really is about to happen before the rumours start. The world needs this kind of thing and now more than ever. It's both good for you and your health and keeps the pubs going. Cheers!

George Ellis

TEENAGE HELL

After a brief hiatus of just three weeks, when our number three turned 20, we once more embrace the teenage years, as our youngest passes through the door of 'childhood,' beginning that eventful journey, challenged by hormones and social media, into independence! Of course, for now, our daughter is still the same child who went to bed with excited expectations of the birthday celebrations ahead. She was bemused at the 'Kevin becomes a teenager' You-tube video she had been encouraged to watch the night before, even, I think, a little scared. She was relieved that an imposter hadn't overtaken her in the night. She wasn't feeling grumpy, and she wasn't feeling sad!

Thirteen is just a day older than yesterday, another step along the way but unfortunately the onset of the teens is often depicted as a threat. People nod unknowingly, gloating with their x-ray vision, at the minefields they see ahead, waiting to explode and rock the family calm. Children are lovely, teenagers horrid. No wonder parents and some children feel sad and scared by this sudden, apparent abruption in the line of stability. Child lost; alien teenager inserted. It is as if everything that happened before never mattered, all your parenting/childhood discounted, a monster now in your midst. No wonder it terrifies, no wonder I shun it. The focus of teenage transformation insists that childhood is instantly switched with an inevitable plunge into darkness. After years of torture, an adult will hopefully be spat out, leaving that horrible teenage skin, discarded. All at once, it as if our child will inevitably cause chaos, suddenly and without warning. But from her first, empathic toddler 'NO,' our child has already found the 'teenager' within. She was already striving to be the 'me' inside. To be content we must be the person we are meant to be, to grow and journey every day of our lives, taking with us an ever-increasing snowball of all that we have become. Each stage adds a new depth. It is true that as a teenager, the journey certainly does begin to pick up pace as hormones rush in and expectations to achieve and pressure mounts; adulthood beckoning them on. It can feel extremely uncomfortable as they start to take control and grasp hold of the wheel, sometimes at full speed! But with our trust they will eventually see that the brakes do help and if the parent loosens their grip, both of you can have fun along the way (I promise!!). Teenagers are more vulnerable than their younger selves. They still need the rock of steady parents, applauding them from the side-lines and picking them up when things go wrong. They are stretching and outgrowing the childhood cocoon not understanding who they will be when they emerge. The only hope is that they do emerge and that they don't fall asleep within, entrapped, and stunted by fear. I once read that should you have the choice of taking time off from work when your child is either in its infant, or teenage years, then the latter should be prioritised. Yet at the very moment when the teenager silently cries out for help, the parent is most often juggling more than they can cope with themselves. I want our daughter to feel a growing sense of self, an excitement about the choices she can now make, feeling a thrill rather than fear. The greatest gift I can give my children is to ensure that they do not stay as Peter Pans, shadowless, condemned forever to leave no mark wherever they turn, to always be yearning for the life on the other side of that window. I want them to embrace adulthood, but to know that they will always be themselves; they will carry the child, the teenager right into their adult future.

I remember dreading the teenage label, I did not want to grow up. I wanted to hide and stop time. I wanted the protection of the childhood fantasy world I lived in, its gentleness, its escapism and its protection from responsibility and fear. I didn't want to leave myself and become this new other person; the fearsome teenager. It stalled the adult in me and made me cower, trembling, under cover. Major decisions rested on my fear of growing up. I resisted any thoughts of it being time to 'leave the nest,' ruling out university or jobs elsewhere. Bizarrely I plumped for nursing (applying only to my hometown), a career that would see me facing more responsibility and fear than I could have ever imagined. The dear friends I made back then, howl with shared hysteria during our treasured annual getaways, as we reminisce about our student nurse days. We often recoil at the level of responsibility nursing catapulted us into, aged only eighteen, unsure of how we coped. I recall genuine terror when I oversaw an acute medical ward for an hour each night, whilst the senior third year student I worked alongside took her break. I feared the dark and the ghost stories of the lady (only half of her visible), floating along those creepy corridors, chillingly cold, outside the ward. More importantly I prayed nothing dire would happen to the patients under my watch, that no emergency would throw me off track and cause any harm. Unbeknown to my senior nurse, I would make sure I was just a bit too noisy, as I paced between the beds, so that at least one patient would wake up, ensuring I had company! One elderly gentleman was perceptive enough to suggest that I could wake him up anytime if I fancied a chat! One night I nearly passed out, as seemingly, a white ghost sailed past my ward! Word had got out and the nurse on the ward opposite could not resist the opportunity!!! The laughter that the moment caused, as he threw off his silly sheet, showed me how ridiculous I had been. I never feared that floating old lady again! The whole of my student nurse days was a mixture of terror coupled with laughter and underpinned by the unflinching, mutual support from my friends; together we matured, found our feet, and learned to trust our instincts and capabilities. I bless the day the BRI accepted me as a nurse from that one, unthought out, application. It was there that I found resilience and fortitude and learned how to unwrap the cocoon trapping me and where I began tentatively shaking out my slightly ragged wings and putting them to the test. My flying is often lopsided, and I land rather too frequently. Although I sometimes yearn that one day, I will suddenly swoop in full flight upwards, for now I am pretty happy fluttering around at low speed!!

I do not want my youngest to be like me. I do not want her to fear growing up. I want her to be strong, to embrace the world, to suck up life. To be resilient, to be brave, to be kind. This more than ever, seems to be an urgent need and duty of care. The teenage years are nature's protection, a chance to look within, to try on adult shoes and see what fits, before you take the road ahead alone. The adult without the teenager inside will be poorly equipped to withstand the unknown ways ahead.

As the world reels from the darkness that atrocities have flung it, we watch in disbelief and horror as others who once trod on stable ground, now see chasms rupturing their paths, revealing the boiling abyss below, rising to extinguish all light. I can barely breathe as I contemplate that last hug, those last whispers from a Mum to her teenage boy, as his call to arms rips him from the gentle progress of child to man and slams him into hell.

I pray that my daughter's journey to adulthood can continue gently, supported along its progression by stability and that the path ahead, though it bends and undulates, remains firm underfoot, and opens in light before her.

Lisa Hatherell

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