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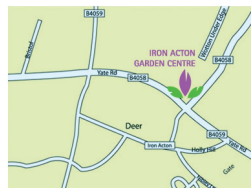


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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

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

LOCAL POYNTZ PHOTOGRAPHERS: - Sally Aries, Gillian Olet

ARTICLES – As always, we are delighted to hear from you. If you have a story to tell or would like to comment on any of the articles, please contact me. My details are below.

THANK YOU – The Parish Council have, very kindly, agreed to sponsor one issue of our magazine. We are extremely grateful to them so a huge **thank you** to our Parish Council.

As I write this, the sun is shining, and the temperature is rising. I have been working in my garden over the last few days and, even though the weeds are growing like Triffids and threatening to engulf me, it is delightful. I can hear numerous birds singing and there is a blackbird who flies down and stands beside me telling me to move out of his way so that he can grab a worm or two. And then our dog, Nellie, comes out and scares him away! We are all very fortunate to live in this beautiful and tranquil place.

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 2023. We really need to have all articles by that date, PLEASE. You would be amazed by how many people ask me, many days past the closing date, "when is the closing date?" Even one of our team members asked me that question not too long ago! Generally, I reply with a smile "It was xxxx". No matter, I always do my very best to accommodate everyone.

FRONT PAGE: - The front page is a collage of photos taken at the event held in the Parish Hall for our senior citizens, on 5th May, to watch the Coronation and enjoy a lunch. The photos were taken by Sally Aries

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SUMMER BIRD TALES

As I sit down to write this summer article in the first week of April, after a very wet March, I can only imagine that you are reading this outdoors in the sweltering heat! Some of the birds in and around your gardens will already have raised their brood, young tits will have left the nest boxes, Robin and Blackbirds will be raising a second brood, “my” Jackdaws in the front nest box above our bedroom window will have flown and the ones in the Chestnut tree nest boxes will soon fledge – for some reason they are usually later to fledge than the ones at the front of the house. Whilst talking of nest boxes could I point out that in the last article I mentioned using pesticide to control pests in the nest box, a reader pointed out that this is not recommended by some authorities so in the interests of the environment I suggest using only soap and water to clean boxes.

Overhead the Swifts will be chasing one another in formation and screaming in the hour before dusk, the Swallows in the stables by the footpath adjacent Street Farm will be feeding their first brood on the overhead cables or fence around the fields and soon to start a second round of eggs.

In Frampton End Lane there will be Whitethroat singing their scratchy song in the hedgerows and you may even see and hear the Yellow Bunting or Yellowhammer, as it is usually called, singing its “little bit of bread and no cheese” tune – you may need to be a little imaginative to pick the words out. Every 50 metres or so you should hear the onomatopoeic song of the Chiffchaff although every now and then they lose the end of its song so it chiff’s without the chaff, the birds arrived en masse at the end of March and I have heard them singing all around the hedges in the lanes and along the Frome Valley Walkway.

Will we have been lucky and heard the Cuckoo during May who knows but by the end of the month its call will also have changed and by July the adults will be making their way back to Africa.

Overhead you will be seeing soaring and gliding Buzzards, maybe 8 or more on a hot day with plenty of thermals, in my younger days “aye them were the good old days” it was rare to see a Buzzard and the only ones I knew of nested in the valley near Doynton with another pair on Brean Down, if you wanted to be sure to see them it meant a trip to the valleys and woods around Exmoor.

The same could be said of Peregrine Falcon and Raven where they only nested on Brean Down and Steep Holm and occasionally in the Avon Gorge, now both can be found in every quarry around Sodbury, Wickwar and Tytherington and some even nest on pylons and in trees in and around Lower Woods.

Sparrowhawk was a secretive bird of the woods and only recently has it taken to coming to our feeders in the hope of a tit or sparrow for lunch. Red Kite was unheard of and the first I saw was near Aberystwyth when they were down to about thirty-four pairs in the whole of Wales and none in England. As for the Goshawk it did not get any mention in the “Proceedings of the Bristol Naturalists Society” Birds of Bristol 1947 – before I was born by the way. Other mentions of note in the booklet was that Grey Partridge were “common and widely distributed” Corn Crake heard around Rangeworthy, Saltford and Nailsea, Turtle Dove was widely distributed and not uncommon, Nightingale not uncommon – where have they all gone now.

Others have no doubt taken their place and increased in number, it was unusual to see more than 3 Magpies, now you can get well passed the ten in the Magpie rhyme, this is probably due

to less persecution from farmers and gamekeepers. Another success, if that is the right word, is the Collared Dove which first bred in Norfolk in 1955, I remember excitedly finding a nest near Bridgwater in about 1967 and now there are nearly a million and becoming a bit of a pest. Cormorants were birds of the coast now they can be found feeding and breeding well inland. Little Egret first bred in Dorset in 1996 and now numbers over one thousand breeding pairs and can be frequently seen around Algars Mill and around Cogmill and it will not be long before they breed in our area.

Well I hope all the birds have had as good a breeding season as I have portrayed and we have all enjoyed seeing and hearing them through the summer as you sit in your garden in the evening sun with a drink in your hand enjoying the whole experience of nature.

Chris Boyce



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ACTONIANS NEWS

Our latest production of London Suite by Neil Simon has been and gone and I'd like to take this opportunity to reflect on the work that went on behind the scenes.

This production was unusual in the fact that it was four plays all set in the same hotel suite and it had not one, but three, Directors. As the design of the hotel suite was important to all four of the plays the Directors worked with the Set Designer at an early stage deciding on the set, furniture and fittings to make it look like an upmarket London hotel. Then members of a small construction team constructed the box set in a local shed ready for it to be painted. The whole set then needed to be dismantled and transported down the High Street in time for the weekend before the show.

The props team gathered all the items together for each individual play, which included creating five hundred thousand pounds in notes! Costumes needed to be provided for all ten actors so wardrobes were raided and some costumes had to be made or altered by our costume designer.

The sound and lighting technicians designed the effects that were needed and they operated the sound and lights during the performances. Back-stage, a Stage Manager and crew made sure that everything came on and off the stage at the right time and in the right place, including the actors! A couple of people were needed to prompt throughout rehearsals and during performances in case the actors forgot their lines.

Posters, flyers and programmes are designed and printed. The week of the play the raised seating has to be set up and the bar stocked and manned. There are more people involved to take tickets and manage the front-of-house.

And then it's all over! The seats are put away, the set is dismantled and clothes and furniture returned to where they came from and we have a party!

..... And then we start it all over again for our next production in November which is yet to be confirmed so keep your eyes on our website for news.

www.actonians.co.uk or follow us on Facebook

ST JAMES THE LESS CHURCH

where you are always assured of a warm welcome and sometimes coffee and cake or bubbly and buns!

What a busy time the Benefice has had since Ash Wednesday especially at St James the Less!

Lent groups throughout the Benefice and Mission Area were well attended and interesting. I think we all learned something new which is always good. Easter Services in all our churches were well attended including washing of feet on Maundy Thursday and a moving Easter Vigil complete with real fire on Easter Eve at St James. We had a full church on Easter Sunday for a joyous celebration of the most important Festival of the Christian Year. Many thanks to Linda and Eileen for the beautiful Easter flowers and to Jan and the children from the school for the Easter garden. Thank you to everyone who helped to make Easter very special this year.

Hopefully by the time you get your copy of Local Poyntz we will have had a successful May Day on the Green. So good to be getting back to normal! I missed it last year due to Covid so fingers crossed for this year. The Mash and Proms promise to be extra special this year with the welcome appearance of Russell Watson at the proms. Well done to whomever managed that one!

We have all enjoyed another village lunch thanks to Fiona and her team and look forward to the village celebration of the coronation in May. Spare a thought for the lovely couple getting married in our church on that day too. A date not to be forgotten by them or their families!

Let us all hope for some decent Summer weather this year without the extremes of 2022 and hope you all enjoy a good one.

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

There is always someone available should you wish to talk or let off steam about anything worrying you. Details on notice board in church porch. The church is usually open every day during daylight hours for quiet reflection and prayer.

Nessa Jarman (Administrator)

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IRON ACTON PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWS



We are just returning from the Easter holiday and preparing for the term ahead. Term 5 marks the start of testing season in primary schools whereby our Year 2 and Year 6 children will take part in the annual SATs tests. The children and their teachers have been working hard to prepare for these tests and, due to the consistently excellent teaching and learning that takes place at our school, we are confident they will perform well. Later in the year, similar assessments will take place which focus on testing the phonic knowledge of our Year 1 children and the times tables recall of our Year 4 children.

Just before the Easter holidays began, the whole school visited St James' Church to take part in an Easter celebration. Each class prepared something Easter or spring themed to share with their families as part of the service. Children in Barn Owls Class sang 'Spring Chicken' whilst wearing chicken headdresses they had made; those in Falcons Class shared an Easter poem and art work; Buzzards Class shared part of the Easter story and a song; our oldest children in Golden Eagles Class wrote and read out a range of prayers. It was wonderful to see the confidence of the children in doing this and to be joined by so many members of our school community.

The children recently received visits from the NSPCC as part of our safeguarding programme. They took part in age-appropriate assemblies led by the organisation and representatives spoke to our oldest children about what is meant by the term abuse and how to respond if it ever happens to them or someone they know. This is always a challenging topic but crucial in empowering children to speak out and stay safe.

Preparations for May Day are well under way and the children look forward to performing their may pole dancing. They have been working hard to prepare for this special event. Please come along and support the Friends of Iron Acton School at the tombola stall too! We are also looking forward to celebrating the King's Coronation with some school events on the Friday leading up to the big day as well joining the procession on the Sunday.

Our next 15 Reception children and their families will begin to visit the school over the coming months in preparation for September. We hold a welcome event in June to ensure families are prepared for all aspects of school life and we then invite children into school to spend some time with their teachers and new friends through 'stay and play' sessions. As we welcome 15 new children, we say goodbye to 15 who have reached the top of the school. This year, around half of the 15 will head off to Brimsham Green whilst the other half will move on to a range of other schools in the area. We wish them all the best when the time comes!

Thank you all for your support of the school.

Mike Riches, Headteacher

enquiries@ironactonprimaryschool.co.uk

01454 228322

FRIENDS OF IRON ACTON SCHOOL

After all the excitement of the Christmas season, it's been a calmer term for Friends of Iron Acton School. However, we ramped things up in the run up to Easter with a couple of fun events for the children.

First, we provided all the children with DIY easter bonnet kits which they made in school together. They all really enjoyed taking part and there were Easter egg prizes for the best from each class.

Then, on the last day of term, we did an Easter Treats Table Sale at the end of the day, immediately after the church Easter service. This time the event was specifically to raise money to help the school support children with additional needs. We had edible treats, knitted gifts, crafts, goodie bags and a lucky dip - a fun end to the term and the children loved the little knitted egg covers!

We also had our AGM in March. It was great to get to know some of the new parents whose children recently joined the school and to plan for the year ahead, as well as reflecting on the fundraising over the past year. We were particularly proud to have received a grant from our local councillors to build a digging patch within the school grounds and to hear from Mr Riches about how it was being used by the children.

As we go into the next term, we're busy planning a number of events - including the tea and cake stall for Algars Manor and Algars Mill Open Gardens and of course May Day - let's hope for sunshine!



Andrew Tillotson

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OVERGROWN PATHWAYS ETC.

Those dog walkers amongst us who cross the railway line via the steps will be aware that it has become extremely overgrown with cow parsley, stinging nettles and other weeds. You will also have noticed that the handrails have become wobbly and rather dangerous.

There is a narrow lane which runs at the rear of Chillwod Close and Algars Drive which leads on to various fields and a public pathway. This lane has also become very overgrown with weeds and bushes.

Bruce Pearce lives on Chillwood Close, and I was chatting to him the other day about the above matters, and he reported that he had already cleared the lane. The following day he had cleared all the overgrown vegetation from either side of those railway steps. I called in to ask if he would have any objections to my writing this up in the magazine. He replied "no" and also said that he had contacted Network Rail with regard to the state of the handrails and also the tracks. Network have promised to get back to him. I wonder when!!

Isn't it wonderful to have someone, in our community, who not only cares about our surroundings but gets up and does something about. And he does it quietly.

Thank you Bruce

COMMUNITY LUNCHES

To the senior members of the Parish of Iron Acton
Community lunches

2 lunch dates for your diary:

12.30 Wednesday 27th September 2023

12.30 Wednesday 6th December 2023

We hope you can join us in the Parish Hall for lunch and chat and maybe some music on one or both dates. For those who have been before you know how much fun they are. For those who haven't, please come and see for yourself!

Please RSVP me Fiona Bourns by phone or text on 07935926175 or email r_bourns@hotmail.com if possible, by Saturday 16th September for the September lunch and by 26th November for the December lunch.

Thank you very much and hope to see you in September and December if not before.

Fiona Bourns

IRON ACTON WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

We welcomed Susan Symons to our February meeting and very much looked forward to the second instalment in the life of Queen Victoria. With her wealth of knowledge and use of slides, she covered the period of Victoria's marriage to Albert and the birth of her nine children. When Albert died ten years after the triumph of the Great Exhibition, Victoria wore widow's weeds for the rest of her life and slept with Albert's nightshirt in her bed.

Susan Parson took us on a tour of Bath with the aid of slides. As well as learning a lot about its past history, it was fascinating to learn that that all is not as it seems with the beautiful buildings with which we are familiar. To save on costs the rear views were often very "rough" and not nearly as attractive as the facades.

Reflexology, a centuries old practice, was discussed and demonstrated by Buddug Green who has clinics in our area and whose aim is to promote relaxation and relieve stress. She explained that different parts of the foot correspond to different parts of the body, for instance the toes are connected to the head area and the ball to the heart and chest. By stimulating these areas, the nerve responses can have beneficial effects to that particular organ.

The handbell we have sponsored in memory of our late Queen Elizabeth was kindly lent to us by Rose White and brought along to a meeting by Rona, who instigated the project, so we could view the results. Seeing the inscriptions of EIIR, crown and date on one side and Iron Acton WI on the other was a proud moment for us and hope it will be a lasting memory of both her Majesty and our WI.



We entered the Avon Federation skittles tournament this year and were pleased to win our first match against Coalpit Health. Unfortunately the ladies of Old Sodbury beat us in the next round but it was a good natured and fun match,

We were pleased to donate £35 (plus gift aid) to the Children's Hospice South West from those members who preferred this option as opposed to exchanging Christmas cards.

Some members participated in the Twiddlemuff competition. Fourteen of these tactile, decorated muffs will be given to Southmead Hospital for the use of their patients with dementia, who often need to be distracted by "twiddling" with the bells, pompoms and ribbons etc. which adorn the

muffs. Maureen's was chosen as the best and it will be submitted along with the best from other groups in a competition for an overall winner.

Upcoming events this year include a visit to Salisbury Cathedral.

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 events and is available on 321741.

Sylvie Powell

FRIENDS OF NORTH ROAD SCHOOL

We have had a busy few months at Friends of North Road School. We had a Youth Club earlier in the year, which was very popular with the children. So much so, we have decided to run them on a more regular basis. The children enjoyed meeting up with their friends, taking part in the activities and trying the refreshments on offer.

We had our most successful Bags2School collection to date in February where we raised £495.00 This involved families bringing good quality clothes that were no longer needed into school. The clothes are then collected and the weight is then converted into money. The more weight we collect, the more money is given. Our next collection takes place on Friday 9th June. If any one has any good quality clothes that are no longer needed, please feel free to bag the clothes up and pop them over the wall of the school on the evening before the collection or if is a large amount of clothes please contact FONR and we can arrange collection.

We are very much looking forward to Iron Acton May Day again this year. We will have a stall throughout the event. Our stall will be providing craft activities for the children to enjoy.

We are also excited about the North Road School verses Iron Acton School annual football match derby. This is planned for Friday 28th April. It is taking place at North Road School this year and refreshments will be available throughout the afternoon. All of the children involved in the football team have been practising hard and are very much looking forward to the match.

We are planning for the end of year celebration evening for the year 6 on 15th July. This will be a chance for the whole school community to enjoy a disco together to celebrate the pupils schooling at North Road School and to wish the year 6 children all the very best for their secondary school education. Let's hope the weather will be kind for us.

Our Friends Of North Road meetings take place on the second Wednesday of each month at 2.30pm at North Road School. During these meetings, we discuss fundraising ideas that we have and plans to put the ideas in place. We really welcome new members. For more details please contact Katharine on katharinegray01454@yahoo.co.uk

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LAVAZZA

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IRON ACTON'S AUTObiography – VEHICLES THAT HAVE SHAPED OUR LIVES



Fans of music from the past decade or so, and especially hip hop and rap related genres will be familiar with Mercedes-Benz being used as an aspirational symbol of success, affluence and taste. Tracks by 50 Cent, Kendrick Lamar, Eminem, Pink, Kanye West and others position a 'Benz' as the pinnacle of style and bestower of status. A recent study found Mercedes-Benz was the most mentioned car manufacturer in song lyrics, way ahead of the next most popular which was Bentley.

But it's not always been like that. Mercedes-Benz has long been seen as prestigious and exclusive but previously it was in a way that was reassuring, traditional and perhaps a bit dull. It's true that they had been mentioned in songs before - Janis Joplin famously asked for divine intervention to help her get hold of one in the song 'Mercedes-Benz', recorded shortly before her death in October 1970 - but this was more to parody materialistic values than to be approving of the brand.

Which leads to this edition's entry to the virtual garage that we are jointly building up. You may remember that the idea is to establish a fleet of vehicles, each of which means something significant to people in the parish. The car in question is the Mercedes-Benz 200 to 280 range, codenamed as W123. This was a set of mid-sized executive cars sold between November 1975 and January 1986. In fact, the W123 was the code for the saloon car, which was soon complemented by the coupe (C123) and the estate (S123). The latter was only produced in small numbers but soon challenged the Volvo 240 as the load carrier of choice for middle England. The person proposing W123 for the virtual garage is doing so because it represents to them solidity and resilience. It was a car many longed for but did not have the budget to buy. The W123 came from the time when Mercedes-Benz enjoyed an image of excellence in engineering, sturdiness and reliability. They were understated and over engineered and far removed from the rust and reliability issues that troubled the marque in the late 1990s and early 2000s or the high profile 'pimp my ride' style of some models today.

Despite being expensive – in 1976 a base model 200 cost £4,475 when a 2 litre Cortina Ghia could be yours for £3,121 – most W123s were functional rather than luxurious, with little as standard. Radio, sunroof, aircon and even heated rear windows were optional extras on all but

the top models. They were, however, beautifully built and endlessly reliable. Anyone who travelled around Europe in the 1980s will have seen W123s in use as taxis, with many exceeding total mileages of 500,000 miles. Large numbers also lived second lives in parts of Africa where the good engineering and relative simplicity made them welcome companions in tough conditions. In all, 2.7 million were produced, the vast majority being saloons. They were manufactured not just in Germany, but also in China, Thailand and South Africa.

The W123 has been called 'the best car ever made'. This may be a slight exaggeration, but it is certainly the most important model that Mercedes-Benz has made so far, hastening the transformation of the manufacturer from being a relatively niche manufacturer to becoming the mainstream prestige brand it is now. The W123 will also add to the range of styles represented in the virtual garage. So far we have the exotic represented by the Lancia Beta, the frugal by the Mini 850, the sporty by the MINI Cooper and Ford XR3i, and the practical by the Ford Transit and VW Transporter. The Merc will bring an element of distinction and common sense. The model I suggest is a 1982 range topping 280E saloon in the metallic colour silberblau as shown in the photograph above.

The virtual fleet continues to grow. Please send in your suggestions for future additions explaining why you have nominated that vehicle and what it means to you.

Austin Tesla





The Joy of Preening

Three ladies
Nestle at the back door,
Grateful for the glass
I view their primping and
Shooing feathers
Beaks poking under wings and yoga extensions to clean those gorgeous upy- turny tails,
Every now and then a beak reaches over to weekle in a place sister cannot reach.
These little ladies are my three supremes
A meditation in companionship
A ripple of feathery cleanliness
Attentive to every feather and fluff
And - they lay us the most perfect
Mini eggs,
With trumpets and singing to announce each precious gift,
My heart melts and I reach for the cheese
They peck the glass anticipating snack time
Poetry in poultry
A moment of being with bantams at the back door
Soothes a weary soul and never fails to raise a smile

Jessica Fusco-Naish
(Honorary member of Iron Acton Poetry Club)
Moniaive, Dumfries, February 2023



IRON ACTON K9 CLUB



Monday agility dogs

Our dogs and handlers are looking forward to the village May Day. Last year our team had worked hard to put together their routine to show what we had learnt in Kennel Club Good Citizens and Club classes so this year our agility dogs will show their skills. We will also be organising retrieves over hay bales in the Meadows to raise money for local dog charities.

We are looking forward to welcoming 12 new puppies to the club for our next puppy courses and hope they will stay with us to work on passing Bronze, Silver and Gold Kennel Club assessments. Recent puppy successes were Kay & Holly, Richard & Hank, Angela & Dolly, Katie & Norman. Lynne & Lexie, Julie & Deter, Meryl & Kali, Helen & Harper, Phil & Bailey. See you all in bronze class.

We will be organising a Novelty Show and Activity Show on 25th June 2023 in the village.

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



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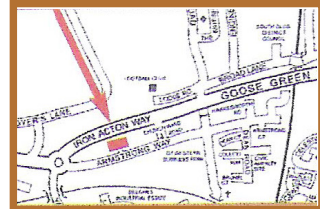
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CALENDAR BOYS – THE ACTON AID VERSION

January

The very first month of the year
Finds the Aiders so full of cheer;
With chilly winds and ice and snow,
Keeps us sober, but full of glow.

July

Bastille Day, at home and France,
Allows good Aiders to drink and
dance.
A month for Proms and noisy Mash
Fills their funds with loads of cash.

February

A foggy time so damp and bitter
As we rely on Zoom and Twitter
Our annual thrash in Parish Hall,
All dressed to dine and have a ball.

August

A jolly month for holiday time
So full of rain and hot sunshine.
The Aiders strip, but to the waist,
For them full frontals are a disgrace.

March

This is the month to plan the year
For anything that must have a beer.
With both St David and St Pat,
Each a fine Welshman and that is
that.

September

Back to school and back to work
From which the Aiders will not shirk,
With Balti nights and Festive beer
Fills us men with so much cheer.

April

April Fool comes nice and early
But we chaps are never surly.
For St George the Turk! Oh! such a
sight,
Gives us the chance to have a great
night.

October

The silly season has just arrived,
But busy Aiders plan with pride.
The coming months of sparks and
glitter,
Fun and frolics with loads of bitter.

May

The starting month of sun and
flowers,
Gives the Aiders fun for hours.
May Day with pole on Village Green,
A wonderful sight which must be
seen.

November

A dismal month ahead to share,
But we Aiders don't stand or stare,
For in with a bang comes old Guy
Fawkes
Who gave us bonfires and firewakes.

June

A month bereft of saints and sinners
Reminds the Aiders of school dinners;
This makes no sense, but full of
rhyme,
Giving Fathers' Day such a good
time.

December

The season of goodwill and cheer,
Christmas parcels and loads of beer,
Still fully clothed with sparkling eyes,
Leaving stripping off to the W.I.s.

Anon the Bard

IRON ACTON PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish of Iron Acton was delighted to be able to hold the very popular May Day celebrations this year and welcomed all those who attended with a well-organised and very enjoyable event which was also blessed with good weather.

Various groups in the Parish joined together to arrange celebrations for His Majesty King Charles III's Coronation over the weekend of 6th-7th May.

There was a very successful event on Saturday 6th May where senior citizens of the Parish attended the live screening of the Coronation at the Parish Hall and were treated to lunch and cakes and a glass of fizz to toast our new King and Queen. The Parish Hall was beautifully decorated by the Acton Maids and school children of Iron Acton and North Road had made amazing Coronation bunting which was hung around the Hall. Marilyn Wright provided flower displays fresh from Algars Mill garden. The very capable catering team led by Pam McCoy provided a lovely lunch and cakes and tables were waited on by Ruben, Joe and Joseph (aged 13-14) who did a great job. James Rickard kindly set up the screen and technical equipment for the viewing. Acton Aid and the Parish Council sponsored all the food and drink. Our heartfelt thanks go to everyone involved. There are too many people to name who all provided their time and skills to make this a hugely enjoyable and memorable event. We hope you enjoy the photographs, on the front page, which were taken on the day, and show what a lovely community atmosphere there was.

On Sunday 7th May, there was a procession of parish school children along the High Street and then parishioners held a street party in the Parish Hall car park. Once again, we were blessed with beautiful weather and everyone who attended enjoyed a vibrant community event.

The Parish Council has been working hard to ensure that our beautiful Parish is kept well maintained and local concerns are dealt with. We have planted new trees around the Parish and wish to thank everyone involved. A tree has been planted in The Meadows to celebrate Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

We will shortly be providing an upgrade of the current multi-use courts to a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA). Work is due to start on 22nd May and will last approximately 4 weeks, during which time the courts will be unavailable. We are looking forward to the exciting opportunities for sporting activities which this will provide our parishioners towards the end of June.

We welcome input from our local community to the decisions we make on your behalf and if you would like to be involved in our Parish Council, please contact our clerk Donna Ford via our website at www.ironactonparishcouncil.co.uk

Councillor Catherine Spedding (Chairman of IAPC)

ACTON AID

Acton Aid has been around for over 50 Years, some aspects constant, others develop over time. The constant is that we exist for Iron Acton men to meet monthly to benefit residents. We make the meetings enjoyable. Over time, what we've done, and how we've done it has progressed.

We meet at The Lamb where we are hosted by Tracey and Brendan (what Iron Acton group do they not support?) It's the 1st Thursday every month in the upstairs function room (supposed to be 8pm, but we're typically unpunctual). Discussions tend to be entertaining!

Early fund raising was Barn Dances; later Horse & Dog shows were an annual event. For over two decades we've run the Proms in the Meadow, more recently the Friday addition of the Mash. More about this in a minute!

A constant in the charitable effort has been the Christmas parcels for pensioners. We've always had difficulty in learning who is old enough! If we've missed you, feel free to let us know. Many more private disbursements are made, as well as to beneficiaries such as schools and other Parish groups, including this publication.

Our Fireworks night has become a tradition - often praised by the host of attendees. We try to keep the ticket prices as low as possible.

Also, we are pleased to be able to work in concert with the Parish Council in matters where our goals are aligned. We always have their support when necessary, and we share a common aspiration to improve accessibility to, and use of facilities in, the Parish Meadow. We've been able to give financial support.

Once again this year, we've given strong support to the May Day organisation. Acton Aid have been in the corner of The Green, where, with the very welcome assistance of wives & friends, our members have supplied an almost unending supply of bacon rolls, hot dogs and burgers to feed visitors. (We did our best to keep the quality up, but despite our best efforts inflation prevented downward pressure on prices.)

So how is this a 'quarterly' report on Acton Aid's activities? The truth is that all these things only come about successfully through our monthly meets. Typically, event planning continues over many months so we're commonly discussing far into the coming year. Inevitably though, we concentrate on the upcoming matters. That neatly brings our summer music event to front and centre.

As you read this, we hope you've bought tickets for the Mash, starring the returning Queen tribute band (Fri 30/6) or for (Sat 1/7) for the re-formatted (formerly called) Proms in the Meadow. This year we've secured the famous Tenor voice Russell Watson to star the event, bringing an internationally renowned dimension to our small Village. Local content is not sacrificed, Iron Acton choir will sing in support of Russell, and we're pleased to continue our long-standing association with Bristol Millennium Orchestra. In addition to other works, they will, again, close out the performance with our local version of the 'Last Night' patriotic music – all then topped off with our regular firework display.

(For full details and Ticket purchases search on-line for: Acton Aid Events).

Finally, our invitation – to all men of the Parish: you can expect a very warm welcome if you come to join us at the Lamb 8pm, 1st Thursday any & every month.

Mike Sutton

MEMORIES OF IRON ACTON DURING WW2

On the 29th September 1939 everyone was issued with an identity card under the emergency National Registration Act. The 1939 Register was updated throughout the war and used in the foundation of the NHS and as such it is an excellent starting point for looking at what war-related work the residents of Iron Acton were doing. Air Raid Precautions roles such as the ARP Casualty Service / First Aid Service were common (the Listers at Muddedown Farm, Francis Rudman at Dean Lodge, Ada Sheppard, Alice Long, Phyllis White, the Joliffs from Stover Road, Frederick Ricketts, Albert Carter, Ethel Kingscote, Sarah and Cybil Jones, William Bond, Reginald Wallington) as were ARP Wardens (Gerald Turner, Charles Mills, Hubert Meek, Philip Walthan, William Forrell, John Curtis, Harold Rymer, Peter Dyer, Absalom Locke, William Williams of Home Close, Sidney Didcott, Eric and Hilda Huggins, Cyril Winter-Alsopp (at Parnalls), William Pierpoint-Sutton, James Bond, Harold Morton). There were Special Constables (William Bennett, Maurice Ellis, Thomas Bennett, Leonard Arkell, Walter Goulding, Andrew Forrel, Walter Curtis, Wilfred Hall, Edward Forrest, Walter Jones) and Auxiliary Fire Brigade personnel (Jonathan Harford, George Green). Gertrude Perry is even listed as a member of the Chartered Society for Massage and Medical Gymnastics!

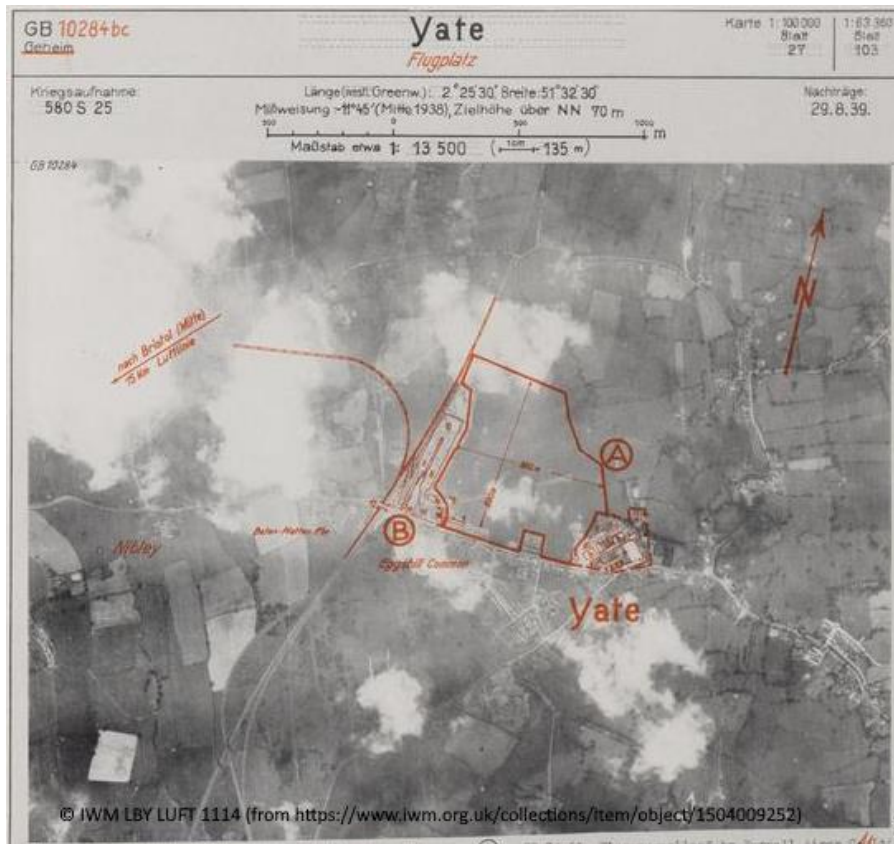
Given the number of air raid warnings the village experienced early on in the war, maybe this number of ARP members was needed. That the school children were sent to the 'cellars' nearby has been mentioned in a previous article but one history project interviewee has now clarified that they '*used to go from the school over to The Lamb ... when the air raids were on*' and go through a doorway on the right hand side and down about 5 steps to wait out the raid. Mrs Jestina Brown was landlady throughout the war and, when she died in 1947 aged 79, she was Gloucestershire's oldest landlady having run The Lamb for 50 years.¹

A resident of Chaingate Lane remembers her dad "*made our pigsty into an air raid shelter cos he didn't feel that we were safe in the house...the whole family and a lot of people from ... the lane as well used to come there and, of course, they all chatted away.*" While this was going on, her father would be outside trying to herd his cattle "*with incendiary bombs falling all around him.*'

Parnells was bombed on the 27th February 1941 and one villager remembers watching the bombers go over whilst his mother was hysterical with worry about his father who worked there. These worries must have been commonplace - at least 53 people worked locally in the aircraft industry. The same person above also remembers his father-in-law, an ARP warden in Rangeworthy, having to deal with an unexploded incendiary bomb that went through the roof above his future wife's bedroom. Another person remembers a distant relative narrowly missing being blown up by bombs that fell on the Wotton Road while he was riding his bike. This may have been the raid that dropped a bomb on the Thomas's land opposite Splatt Farm. The Luftwaffe target map below shows the aircraft repair depot (A) and Parnell's.

¹ Western Daily Press 25 March 1947

<https://search.findmypast.co.uk/bna/viewarticle?id=BL/0000513/19470325/030&stringtohighlight=jestina%20brown%20iron%20acton>



There is also the sad story of Brian Gregory, a seven year old who was killed by an army lorry on Holly Hill. His cousin remembers "he came running down the steps and run out in the road and ... this wagon came and ran straight over him...I can see him now ... The only thing I...remember, the gas mask went up in the air." Brian was buried on 10th May 1941 by Rev. Handover

Between 1940 and 1942 Tortworth Court became HMS Cabbala, a Royal Navy 'Stone Frigate' used for training signallers and coders. After 1942 the US Army built a hospital which was staffed by the 128th and 91st Evacuating Hospitals (until 1944 when they shipped out for D-Day) and the 94th, 224th and 225th US General Hospitals (1944-5).¹ The 165th Signals Photo Company was based in Chipping Sodbury before landing on Utah Beach on D-Day.² The US 3473rd Ordnance Medium Automotive Maintenance Company was based in Yate and the 572nd and 767th Engineer Truck Companies at Wickwar. One of these last two units could have been the *'unit of black GIs stationed in Cromhall'* mentioned in an interview. The HQ for Bristol Air Defence was probably in The Gables where Nissen huts were put up in the garden. Residents remember talking to soldiers leaning out of the upstairs windows as they walked down Park Street. Pottery from the garden can be seen above.³



There were a number of local POW camps for Italians (at Sunnyside) and German prisoners (in Yate) as well as a small, local camp at Stockhills on Latteridge Lane. Two POWs did the milking at Lavender Farm and others could often be found swimming in the old quarry opposite Cog Mill. While some had stories of friendly Germans such as 'Bert' who was allowed out on 'little outings' (until he was late back one night and had all these privileges removed) the same farm had an ex-SS soldier who would stand around and say "when you lose the war, you'll find that...." These POWs were used for ditching, removing trees and generally helping the farmers.

¹ Heritage Gateway

https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=240eb800-308d-4142-97cb-796f471a65c0&resourceID=19191

² 165th Signal Photo Company & WWII PR 65th Infantry Regiment <http://165spc-ww2pr65ir.weebly.com/165-spc.html>

³ Pers. Comm. B Hackland 25th April 2023 who also painted the pottery.

Other interesting memories of the war include:

- Some farms were given to other farmers to manage by the Ministry of Agriculture only being returned to the original tenants at war's end.
- Black market goods were freely available in such a rural parish with a couple of prominent local residents actively involved. The Lamb was mentioned as the place to go!
- One person remembers their father being in the Home Guard with some of the other farmers including George Taylor from Latteridge
- There were 20 evacuees at the village school and one interviewee remembers the Boniface family who lived with Bob Howes at Rectory House. The family had come from Eastbourne in 1943.
- The children collected berries and mushrooms. One was paid 9p/lb for the berries by a Dr Barbara.
- There was a VE Day celebration on the village green.

12 people have been interviewed but there is much more to find out! If any readers have anything to add (or correct!) or would like to be interviewed contact the project - ironactonmemories@gmail.com or 07786 067336. —

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