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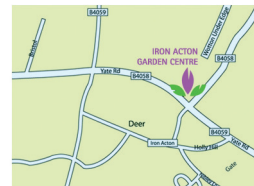


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MON-FRI 9am-6pm

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SUN 10.30am-4.30pm

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.

LOCAL POYNTZ PHOTOGRAPHERS: - Sally Aries, Gillian Otlet

I am not superstitious, however, today is Friday 13th August and I am struggling to get all the articles and adverts onto my desktop publisher and off (electronically) to the printer. Mostly it is easy and goes like clockwork whilst other times it drives me crazy. Today it is definitely driving me crazy!! I have some updated software and it will not recognise some of the various fonts and, because I am not computer literate, I am tearing at my hair. Maybe I should go across the road and into the church and pray for help. Maybe I should just ask someone who understands these retched programmes before I am bald!

THIS EDITION — I have included the second part of the article from George Ellis about his experiences on the railway track and the trains which ran on it, many years ago. You will find it on pages 24 & 25. Let's hope that George will read this and send us some more of his reminiscences which we can all enjoy. I wonder if there is anyone, within our Parish, who remembers George, if so please contact me.

RECIPES – In the summer magazine, Fiona Bourns gave us 2 lovely recipes for rhubarb. This magazine we have a recipe from Barbara Naish which you will find on page 22. I would like to continue with these recipes so please contact me and I will include your recipe or 2 in the next magazine. I am sure that you must have some delicious recipes for Christmas.

The deadline for the winter edition is 1st November 2021. We really need to have all articles by that date, PLEASE.

FRONT PAGE: - The front-page image was taken by Gillian Otlet and is from the Horticultural a couple of years ago.

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SAINT JAMES THE LESS

St James the Less Church where you are assured of a warm welcome

At last, we can see a light at the end of a very long tunnel.

I hope you have managed to stay well and are looking forward to a cautious return to some sort of normality over the next few weeks.

We are delighted to be able to now keep the church open each day as before but sadly we are still not able to sing in church. This will be reviewed in the autumn but meanwhile we will continue to hold our Family services on the second Sunday of the month outside weather permitting when we can sing as loudly as we can!

The church capacity has now been increased to 100 but masks will still need to be worn unless you are exempt and social distancing is encouraged and alternate pews used for communion services to enable the priest to administer the wafer safely.

Coffee and cakes or biscuits can now be served after Wednesday service. Hooray for brownies!!

We have been blessed by a magical flurry of weddings in the last couple of months which has been joyous, and the bells have once again been rung to celebrate. Along with two Baptisms very soon we are so pleased to be able to at last carry on the good work of the church and thank all involved for their great efforts to keep us all going over the last 18 months.

We especially thank Fr Bob Latham for the sterling work with the online services along with his partner David and for all his work in translating all the rules and regulations of the covid epidemic to ensure we were abiding by them and keeping everyone as safe as possible. We will miss him and wish him well in his new post at Westminster Abbey.

I would like to thank Di (and Chris) for all the hard work as churchwarden for the last four years and very pleased to welcome Annette to the role for the next however long!

Finally let us not forget those we have lost for whatever reason during this time and the many for whom we have not been able to say goodbye to in the usual way. May they shine brightly in our hearts and minds now and forever.

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

Kathryn Nichols (Administrator)
www.fromsidechurches.org.uk

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10.00 am



THE ACTONIANS NEWS

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

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The joint Bristol and Avon Short Play Festival finally took place in June and Actonians entered two plays, Syrinx and Lockdown in Little Grimley. Syrinx did well and Bertie Woodward got the Youth Award. Sue Anstey was awarded the Adjudicator's Award for Directing and the play was the highest scoring runner up and, as well as receiving a trophy, the play went through to the Western Area Final in July.

So two weeks later, on one of the hottest days of the year, we set off for Frome with Hyacinth, the bus, kindly on loan from Green Community Travel, transporting the set. It was a pleasure to perform on the stage at the Merlin Theatre and the cast and crew did a good job. We had a very good adjudication but the competition was stiff



and we didn't win this round. Therefore, our journey was over and the place in the All England Final went to a Drama Group from Illminster. It was well deserved and we wish them the best of luck in the Final.

What is next? Well, the Club is now planning to put on two light-hearted short plays at the end of November to cheer everyone up. This will give members an opportunity to get back into the swing of things after such a long break and we look forward to welcoming back our loyal followers. Details will follow.

If you are looking for a new challenge we would be delighted to welcome new members. Just contact us through email, Facebook or our Website – details above.

And finally the long awaited, much anticipated Tartuffe has been scheduled for May 2022.

Our Junior Group have restarted their weekly sessions and are working towards their production of Alice which will be performed for family and friends in the Autumn.

NEWS FROM NORTH ROAD COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL



The Summer Term was a busy one at North Road Community Primary School. We enjoyed meeting the new families whose children will be joining us in September as well as hosting two outdoor 'stay and play sessions' to safely allow the children to come and meet the teachers and the other children who will be in their class.

In July, we were excited to be able to hold our annual Sports Day. Due to the Covid restrictions, it was held in pods as four class sporting events across the day during which parents were able to join their children and the pod staff to support and encourage the children during their races. It was an exciting and fun day, which culminated in an online whole school announcement of the final scores and Cabot House, were crowned the Sports Day 2021 Champions!

The circus arrived during the penultimate week of term and a big top was erected on the school field. The fantastic pupils of our school deserved a special end of year treat after all of their positivity and perseverance during this different and challenging year. During the day, all pupils within their pods were treated to a comedy circus show and took part in workshops to learn circus skills. They included juggling, Chinese balancing sticks, stilts, tight rope walking and spinning plates. The children came to school dressed as circus performers and had a fantastic day. They were able to demonstrate many of our school values, particularly positivity and perseverance when learning new skills!

During the final week of term, the Friends of North Road along with the children and their families were also very busy making the final arrangements for the Where's Roley and Friends Trail in which over 50 characters were made and placed at locations across Yate and the surrounding villages. All proceeds from the sale of the maps went towards providing a much-needed refurbishment of the main school toilet facilities and to purchase resources for the classrooms. We are incredibly fortunate to have such a supportive and hardworking Friends of North Road who have worked tirelessly through-out the pandemic to find new and inventive ways to continue to support the school. The children and the staff are hugely appreciative of all of the community support for North Road Community Primary School.



Sarah Stillie, Headteacher, North Road Community Primary School

IRON ACTON COMMUNITY CHOIR

I am so happy to report that the Choir has commenced rehearsals again. We have been meeting outside in the garden of the Parish Hall since June 22nd. To say that we have relished the opportunity to sing together “in harmony” again would be an understatement. It has been glorious to be together and regain our communal voices. It has also been a particular bonus that all our individual learning on Zoom over the last year or so has paid dividends in allowing us to sing that new music together with some success.

The energy and enthusiasm members have been bringing to Zoom rehearsals for many months has certainly been transferred and enhanced through singing together again. Community singing remains a powerful force for good and the Iron Acton Community Choir is a real proof of that. It is a privilege to work with all the singers and we manage that fantastic balance between working very hard and having a lot of fun too. We now number about 35 members in total.

We will continue to meet on a Tuesday evening in the Village Hall at 20.00 hrs in an as Covid-secure environment as possible according to the Hall guidelines. We normally pay an annual membership fee (£30) to support the running of the choir in terms of hiring of the rehearsal space and the purchase of music. Any money raised from our singing (and this does happen!!) always goes to chosen charities.

We currently have spaces within the choir in all voice parts, but particularly we would like to recruit more Sopranos, Tenors and Basses. You just need to be keen and enthusiastic, no prior experience nor musical knowledge required and there is no audition. If you are interested then just let me know (robpardoe@gmail.com) and we'll take it from there...or pop in to one of our Tuesday evening rehearsals when we have restarted after the summer break and see what you think.



STOP PRESS:

IRON ACTON COMMUNITY CHOIR'S RETURN!



We have an informal “concert” at The Lamb on the

21st SEPTEMBER @ 1930 p.m.

It will be an opportunity for us to sing some of our favourite pieces from the last 18 months of rehearsals with friends, family, and the Iron Acton Community.

Weather permitting, we will be outside in the garden.

It would be lovely to welcome you along on the evening to share with you.

IT WILL BE FREE TO ATTEND

We will primarily be singing for our pleasure, although we hope our audience will enjoy it too!



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IRON ACTON PARISH COUNCIL

I am very pleased to report that we were able to hold our July Parish Council meeting in the Parish Hall. We have managed well using Zoom during the course of the Pandemic, but it was lovely to get back to some form of normality and in addition to welcoming back our Councillors, we also welcomed a number of members of the public.

There was concern expressed about the proposed development by Enso Energy of the Elm Farm site into a solar farm and battery storage facility, which would involve an area of approximately 44 hectares. Residents of Latteridge were concerned about the impact on the village and trustees of Acton Court were concerned about the visual impact from this important, historical building. Given the recent extreme weather events at home and around the World, it is of course important to do all we can to look to alternative forms of energy, which do not contribute further to climate change. However, there is a balance to be struck and our local area seems to have a number of solar farms. The application P21/04721/F will be decided by South Glos Council later this year.

We were saddened that despite strong objection, planning permission was granted for another 31 homes at Engine Common, bringing the total to 238 homes granted permission recently.

Members of the Parish Council have been involved in contributing to the Yate Town Masterplan to ensure that our local issues are taken into consideration in the provision of new facilities and transport schemes.

On a brighter note, the Parish Council was delighted to see the results of the refurbishment of Gloria Jean, the boat in The Meadows play area. She will now give many more years of fun to those using the play area. Our thanks go to those involved for their hard work.

Parish Councillors have been considering the future of the current tennis courts and have been looking at replacing them with a MUGA (Multi-Use Games Area), which would provide fantastic facilities for tennis, football, netball and basketball. We will let you know our plans once we have looked at all the options.

We continue to work hard on your behalf to ensure that local issues are addressed and are always keen to hear your views. Our next meeting is at Iron Acton Parish Hall on 7.30pm on Monday 20th September.

In the meantime, I hope that the weather forecast for a sunny August materialises and that everyone is able to enjoy whatever break they are able to take.

Councillor Catherine (Chairman)

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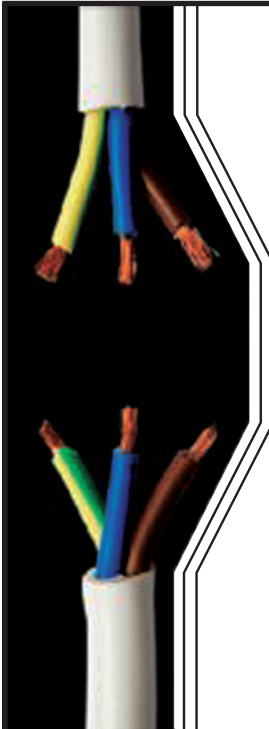
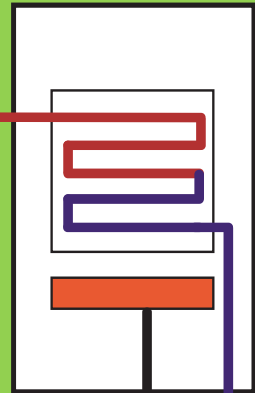
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FRIENDS OF IRON ACTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Since I wrote last we have been a busy bunch, even managing our 1st meeting in person outside the Lamb.

The last month of the school year is always busy for Friends, traditionally we have given each Year 6 child a book of their choice and an individual piece of word art using words collected by their peers to describe them. Having Mrs Hamson working at school we were able to hand them out to the children during the Year 6 leavers service.

As well as saying Goodbye to 2021's year 6 children we also bid a fond farewell to 2 wonderful helpers, Nic and Rachel, their help and support through the time their children have been in Iron Acton has been amazing and we will miss them greatly.

It was sad not to be able to have an end of term disco and our 'Actonbury' summer fair as they are always enjoyed by the children and the parents. But we couldn't let the end of term slip by without a bit of excitement for the children who have done so well settling into the new school routine. On Monday 19th July Friends organised for an inflatable obstacle course for the day, all the children had such an amazing time and talked about it daily for the rest of the week!

On the last day of term (with the help of Miss Abley) we bought individual mini tubs of the award winning 'Cheery Moo' ice creams for the children and staff, luckily there were leftovers for parents too! Local to us, Mum of 2 Lisa handmakes the delicious Ice-cream in her kitchen in Gloucestershire, you can find out more on Facebook and Instagram (Cherry Moo Ice Cream) or her website www.cherrymoo.co.uk. Tubs of various sizes are available to order online.

We are really looking forward to the next school Year, we have our 1st social event, a BBQ and meet up to get to know everyone who has joined the school during the pandemic restrictions and hopefully this will be the beginning of many more social and fundraising ... watch this space for our next sponsored event, after the success of the abseiling we are looking for our next challenge!

The Friends of Iron Acton Primary

IRON ACTON PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWS

We have come to the end of another fantastic year at Iron Acton Primary School and we have much to celebrate. We have recently said goodbye and good luck to a wonderful group of 16 Year 6 children as they prepare to move on to secondary school. We have also been through the process of welcoming 15 new children to our Reception class in September – this is another full cohort. This will take our total number of children to 101 which is the largest the school has ever been!

We have recently said goodbye to our long serving caretaker, Pat Taylor. It was with great sadness that Pat moved on from the school after 30 years carrying out her role with great care and attention. There is nobody who knows the school quite like Pat does and who has seen so many staff and families come and go over the years. We wish Pat well for her retirement.

Whilst there have been many ups and downs through the course of the year, we have managed to ensure the children experience some of the important key events that usually take place. Our Year 6 children recently went on a residential camping trip to the Forest of Dean where they enjoyed activities such as archery, den building, orienteering and tunnelling; all wonderful activities to build confidence, resilience and self-esteem to prepare the children for the next phase of their education. We have also been able to hold our annual sports day on the field, to which we invited all families to cheer the children on. Our Key Stage 2 children (age 7 – 11) enjoyed participating in their end of year pantomime – Aladin Trouble; they performed this on the stage to the cameras at the Parish Hall. We were also pleased to be able to hold our Leavers' service where we said goodbye to the Year 6 children, one of our Year 5 children, a teacher and our chair of Governors – Ellie Blanch – who has spent 7 successful years leading the Governing Body in the important role of chair. It really has been a positive end to a challenging year and we feel ready for a summer break!

The deadline for applications for Reception children who will join us in September 2022 will soon come around. We will be welcoming families to visit the school through individual appointments through the autumn months. Please do contact the school office if you have a child who is due to start school and you would like to take a look around. We would be very pleased to meet you.

Thank you all for your support of the school.

Mike Riches

Headteacher

Phone: 01454 228322

Email: enquiries@ironactonprimaryschool.co.uk

BIRD WATCHING IN SUMMER

It has been a mixed breeding season for my garden birds, the Jackdaws in the front gable fledged 2 young and the ones in the Chestnut tree just 1 fledged. The poor Blackbirds have been badly hit by the activities of the local Magpies, their first nest behind the shed was predated at the fledgling stage, the 2nd nest in the honeysuckle on the arbor had 4 eggs and was predated before hatching and the 3rd nest on the honeysuckle on the front of the house was predated just as the young hatched.

The wren's nest built under my grandson's tree house, had 5 eggs but again was predated by, I suspect, grey squirrels. Other failures included the Collared Doves who build, probably, the worst nest of any bird consisting of a few thin twigs perched on a branch precariously and not surprisingly fell off with the 2 eggs- all doves and pigeons only lay 2 eggs and rumour has it that 1 is male and 1 is female although I cannot confirm this old wife's tale.

The Great Tits managed to fledge 4 chicks from the 7 eggs so not all bad news. As I write this, I can hear adolescent Robins cheeping around me, unfortunately these are not the offspring from "my" Robin who actually nested in Mulberry House. I could see "my" Robin taking food over Adam and Navees' garden into Mulberry House to feed his female and young. His record was 14 mealworms eaten straight away and then as many mealworms as he could fit into his beak to feed his offspring, usually 7 or 8. (I have had to stop writing this article whilst I see a Tree Creeper crawling over the Cherry Tree above me).

The Robin pair have been successful but since the beginning of July he has not been coming to feed, so I suspect he has gone to the great garden in the sky – I like to think he has passed on peacefully and not been eaten by a Sparrowhawk but either way he fulfilled his purpose on earth to reproduce and bearing in mind that the average life of a Robin is 13 months his life is complete. You have to think twice in that the birds you see in your garden every year are not the same ones from the previous year but new younger birds, their parents having succumbed to old age or predation!

Whilst I hate to see nests robbed and predated by Magpies and Jays, I am philosophical in that they have young to feed as well, and they have been around long before Homo Sapiens and will probably be here long after we have shuffled off this mortal coil!!

If I have any grumble, it is with Grey Squirrels who only arrived on our shores around 1890 and who are prolific destroyers of nests and eggs and should be actively discouraged from gardens and if necessary, by force, they are not protected by law and can be "dispatched" at any time – (basically killed).

As I write this in the third week of July "our" Cuckoos are already in North Africa with some even south of the Sahara. How is it that the young Cuckoo which may still be being reared by foster parents who have never strayed more than a mile from their birth and yet the young Cuckoos will instinctively know to fly on their own to the Belgium Congo. Okay a newborn baby will instinctively learn to walk eventually but it can only learn to speak after listening to its parents, how does a Cuckoo know without any other adult Cuckoo's around that it has to go to the middle of Africa and, according to satnav, within 10 miles of its ancestral roots – amazing.

By the time you read this article the summer waders who breed in the Arctic will be passing through the UK, birds such as Sandpipers, Godwits, Whimbrel, Terns, and many others who took advantage of the 24-hour daylight to rear their young. Others of our so-called winter visitors

can be heard in August passing high in the sky at night, listen out for the high pitched shrill of the Redwing passing over after dark.

Whilst on the subject of migrants, our Swifts will have already left for Africa and will not touch "Terra Firma," until they return next year although this year's young will not stop flying until 2023, feeding, eating, sleeping and all other bodily functions, until they breed after 2 years old.

I would like to monitor the Swifts breeding in the village so it you could all keep a note of how many birds enter your properties under the eaves next year, when and how many pairs or birds we can build up picture. As I write I think I have counted 20 birds around Park Street and High Street at the west end of the village but none in the centre or up by The Lamb but I may be wrong. All your help is appreciated.

Chris Boyce

IRON ACTON WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

The weather was kind in June and July when we proposed to hold the first of our outdoor events and some members met up in the Parish Hall garden for a picnic and general catch up, the first time some had been able to make personal contact with friends. A few were unable to make it due to pre-booked holidays and long-awaited hospital appointments.

Later in June the committee convened at Elizabeth's house and she informed us that unfortunately we would be unable to visit the gardens in aid of Cock-A-Doodle-Do Trust this year. It was therefore decided to hold an evening walk in July and meet up afterwards at The Lamb with members unable to participate. It turned out a beautiful evening and wonderful to appreciate our local countryside. Many more members were able to attend this event and it was lovely seeing some for the first time in over a year.

It is hoped, weather permitting, to have a coffee and cake morning in August, again in the grounds of the Parish Hall, with committee members providing the cakes.

We have our first speaker booked for September and in October it will become necessary to re-elect officers at our AGM. After around 30 years of serving as our Treasurer, Elizabeth is retiring. She selflessly held on for an extra year due to the exceptional circumstances but it is finally time for someone else to take over. This has slight echoes of some years ago when the group was in jeopardy for want of senior officers and was only able to continue because of the ladies that gamely stepped forward. We hope the same will happen this year so we can continue the wonderful traditions of the WI in Iron Acton.

Our secretary, Bridget, is always happy to answer any questions about our friendly group and is available on 321741.

Sylvie Powell.

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TIM'S CYCLING CAKE

What marvellous rhubarb recipes Fiona shared with us!

Gooseberries came to my mind then. On a trip to the Baltic States with the Dendrological Society (tree lovers) we visited a 35 acres research station for gooseberries! We were in awe - who would want so many varieties of gooseberries? But at -35 degrees in winter these fruit bushes are totally hardy. I am not giving you a recipe for gooseberries. I am giving you Tim's Cycling Cake. It is really one of German Christmas loaves which Tim and his friends love to nibble as they ride along on their annual 4 day cycling tour. Here it is:

Fruit Loaf

3 eggs whisk, gradually add
125 g Sugar
Vanilla essence whisk until creamy, stir in
Ground cinnamon
125g Hazelnuts, half them
125g Figs, wash, cut into cubes
250g Raisins or Sultanas, wash, drain thoroughly
60 g flaked Almonds
125 g mixed Peel
125 g S.R.Flour mix with
50 g Cornflour

Mix all ingredients together, put in a lined loaf baking tin and bake at 175 -200 degrees for 70 -90 minutes.

I bake in my fan assisted oven at 160 -180 and check after 50-60 minutes.

The loaf will keep a long time (if not eaten!) well wrapped up. The cyclists eat it as it is. I love a generous spread of butter.

One note of caution: beware if you have loose teeth!

Barbara Naish



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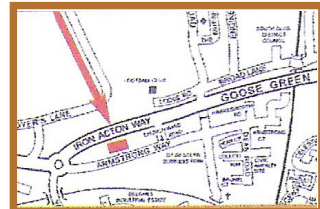
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THE RAILWAY CHILDREN OF IRON ACTON – PART 2

George Ellis

We never did walk to the Frampton railbed end, but the old, grown over right of way did go over the stream a fair way from the station. This portion of southerly track, being just over a mile long was finally finished in the late 1860's. Railways were always laid down for sound, long-term economic reasons; in this case iron ore was being mined in the Iron Acton and Frampton vicinities. Mine owners desperately needed a viable way to ship out the product for refining or raw distribution that they were digging out of the ground hundreds of feet below. I can remember digging around in the back garden of the house to help plant greens and make pocket money and hearing the clang of the shovel as it frequently came across the common, heavy lumps of material in the form of iron haematite kidney ore. This tennis ball sized material was very heavy and I always wondered how this substance could defy gravity to rise to the surface. So, this mineral wealth buried around the immediate Iron Acton area was plentiful and it was in demand. The name of the village is therefore aptly given. Iron was needed for the British industrial machine at that time and the steel rails to carry it off, if put in place, would complete the circle. A railway line to open up the Iron Acton mineral wealth to get product to the processing furnaces and foundries of the industrial midlands was badly needed to turn the iron into gold sovereigns for mine owners. After petitions were requested by the iron mine company owners, the approval grants came, then finally, Royal assents were given if all criteria were met and approvals went well. The track, engineering, drainage canals, signaling systems, station equipment, everything needed for an operational railway line to be (relatively) safe had to be thoroughly inspected. Iron Acton became accessible to every British major city by two plain steel rails and the little village, steeped in history, was truly 'open for business.' The Thornbury line portion from Iron Acton north, was finally completed due to similar commercial demands about three years later.

All this progress was not initially a bed of roses as any new, disruptive commercial idea, always has problems; the surveyors were brought in first to assess the best routes for the track. Topography, drainage and other natural impediments have to be engineered to arrive at economic end points. Valuations of land to be acquired no doubt caused some issues and arguments. Let alone the political aspects, so, even though landowners and farmers being the astute people that they usually represent, would no doubt see the long-term economic benefit but were probably not all that happy with farmlands being bisected by steel rails, drainage channel changes and possible right of way losses. 'Not in my back yard' attitudes are nothing new, so, reading the Bristol, Yate and Thornbury newspapers of the day would probably be revealing. Bridges, cuttings and tunnels had to be built with steam shovels, requiring more workers to be brought in to enable roads to be put down. So, this mid-19th century time was one of rapid growth, that brought drastic change to the people in this village of Iron Acton, within this sleepy part of Gloucestershire.

Although Thornbury or Tytherington are each located maybe just five or six miles away in a straight line to Yate station, where the farmers market was located across the main road, back in the 1850's local farmers dealt with some ancient, poorly maintained thoroughfares that twisted and turned with the landscape, so, far from a straight line. Macadam was just getting started with enabling decent roads to be resurfaced at this time as well. So, time being money, it must have still been a costly and a good half day's walk to get to market from these rural areas. A definite task if one was taking a couple of pigs or hens to sell off at the Tuesday farmers market in Yate, let alone the plod through all kinds of weather to get back home. Later, when the very first passenger travel was introduced to the Yate-Thornbury line, on September 2nd 1872, it carried close to 100 passengers, spread out among three classes of fares, with a first-class seat costing 4 shillings, return, Maggs notes

in his book. He also gave an excellent detailed report where the Western Daily Press reported, that is being captioned by myself here, as 'travelers gushed over the novelty of travel, many in attendance had never seen a steam locomotive and a gentleman from Wotton under Edge provided a pyrotechnic display'. Brass bands provided the music and it appears with the excursions to Yate and back that day that all had a wonderful time. The train would run as they still do to some extent 'mixed goods and passenger' travel, and this inaugural train actually originated in Bristol. From that time onwards the common man's travel journey for business or pleasure was changed forever. The advent of the Great war shows that this line also played a large part for the area war effort with troop and horse transport trains being used along the line which must have solidified its existence. Ambulance trains were used as well, and business overall was doing well for the line. From a timetable from the 1940's, according to Maggs' book, it took twenty-two minutes on the schedule to travel from Yate to Thornbury, and this included both stops at Iron Acton and Tytherington stations, plus a possible slow down at the Latteridge road crossing. Of course, I haven't tried it recently but I'm wondering if one could drive from Yate to Thornbury today in traffic and beat, let alone match, a steam powered mixed goods and passenger train running on a 100 years old train schedule over track laid down 150 years ago. We can safely assume that seeing and having the newly fangled steam engines and track available to these outlying villages must have been akin to reading now of bullet trains.

To many of us of my age, however, we simply thought Iron Acton in general and the railway line was just another part of our entitled playground and part of growing up. At that time in the 1950's and '60's we simply did not appreciate where we lived and what we had.

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RUNNING FOR GOLD

Never mind Tokyo, Iron Acton has its own Olympian!! Some of you will still be reeling from the sight of jazzy, Lycra leggings and tacky, gaudy tops pounding the fault lines of our pavements. But as I haul my unwilling self around the village, I suddenly get the whole middle-aged exercise, fashion industry objective. It is designed to distract onlookers from what is really going on inside that lurid Lycra. As I gasp at every step, trying to steer my bumbling, jumble of under-equipped muscles into a semblance of coordinated trotting (running it is not!!!), the dash of unsightly clothing should temporarily shock and dazzle your gaze! My sister asked which category of runner I fit; The 'Good Morning gasper', the 'full on conversationalist' (pretending not to die), or 'the smug one', able to have a full-on chat, breathing steadily! I am none of these. As my neighbour Mike and many others will verify, if I am spotted my hand goes up in horror with a strangled cry; 'You did not see me!!!'.

If anyone had ever told me 6 months ago that I would start, let alone finish the NHS 'Couch to 5K' programme, I would have been rendered breathless not by running, but by my laughter. I have not run since school days. I still shudder at the hideous, cross - country runs, which metamorphosed me into one of the 'naughty girls'. Though I hid behind the bushes halfway to catch the runners coming back, to my mortification I was still always last. Indeed, most sport tortured me and was the inspiration for my first attempt at writing. I submitted an article to the school magazine about the despair I felt at my sporting ignominy. I was always the last girl standing when it came to team selection, my face blazing red.

Why then, when I now have autonomy, would I subject myself to the unnecessary exertion and unwanted exhibitionism of running, at my age? Well yet again Covid has a lot to answer for! I thought I had already ticked the 'get fitter' response to being a vulnerable 50 something in this pandemic, walking ever longer and faster. As I screeched at David if he touched any 'Covid - contaminated' gates, he bleated at any attempt by me to slow down or attempt to shorten the route! Surely this was enough?

As we walked, our family business saw colleagues separated and those furloughed, struggling with isolation. A team divided needed a common purpose. Most jumped at the chance of a charity initiative to take 30 mins of daily exercise in April. I met my own nemesis, announcing my intention to start running. Online shoe purchase made, I prayed they wouldn't fit! But my Cinderella moment had arrived. There was no getting out of this. I did not expect to get past week two.

Aptly, I set off on April fool's day for my first run, feeling fear and joy as I propelled those new trainers into action. After 60 seconds I was struggling, week nine was not looking likely! Although each run felt tortuous, I felt a force around me (as well as Jo Whiley, my NHS mentor) pushing back at the demons which screamed in my head that I would fail. At first my head swam, pressure building scarily, the ground echoed with every thud, my lungs hurt. I was never so acutely aware of my own body. My legs kept going, but my upper body needed every ounce of persuasion join them. Yet when I hit the lowest points and was overwhelmed with a desire to stop, I have never felt more connected to myself. It is like an outer body experience, me watching me, persuading myself to stay strong. Distraction is key to getting through the pain, music is a must. David though supportive, thought it was a bit premature to invest in wireless earphones, until at least week 7! So, I had to play the app and my music out loud. I had some odd looks from anyone who came close! I tried to avoid you all by sudden diversions, but bit by bit, you all caught up with me! I triumphantly compiled my own list of favourite songs on Spotify;

not realising my 12-year-old's additions would also belt out! Running to 'High school musical' is not ideal: 'Are you a Man or a Muppet' and an odd version of our choir song 'Hoist Up the John B' is positively strange!!! On several occasions, three songs played on loop for the entire 40-minute session. Quite frankly the repetition of Disney's 'Moana', Take That's 'Relight my fire' and Abba's mournful 'Chiquitita', did nothing to quell the pain inside my lungs. I quickly learned, however, that any technical problems must never be resolved whilst running. Never touch the phone! After another fearful music selection, I jabbed at my phone to correct the problem. Why did this run feel so cruel? When a rare facetime came in from Birmingham (daughter 3), I took the call. With face, a livid red, I spluttered out instructions; 'Ring home; get Dad to leave water on the doorstep'. In confusion she agreed. The water glass ahead was like an oasis in the desert, my step quickened. As I grasped it, a passing walker looked a little stunned as I chucked it over my head, letting it cascade over my pounding temples. It took me a while to realise that my music fumbling had also switched off the app. I was set to keep running indefinitely!! I now have the wireless earphones. They are not reliable either! They do not take kindly to the deluges of the water I continue to throw. There have been more repetitive loops of songs and when the music falls silent, I distract myself by writing in my head instead. This is today's effort!!

Irritatingly my inspired inclusion of Chariots of Fire, never played. But suddenly, 9 weeks on, body near collapse, it rang out. I felt the sand between my toes and as I pushed through the agony, I reached the ecstasy of completing my first 5K run. My own 4-minute mile! My gold.

But remember ... you never saw a thing!

Lisa Hatherell

IRON ACTON FILM CLUB

The Film Club committee met recently to discuss restarting the club in October. In order to ensure we can resume our monthly film shows in a COVID safe manner we will have to make a few changes to our normal format. However, we are very keen to start the season as planned on Saturday 2nd October 2021.

We will be contacting our members and those on our mailing list in the next few weeks with details of our plans and we look forward to welcoming back both returning and new members.

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

Best wishes to all our members and supporters.

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Mad Apple Circus.



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THE TREE-RING DATING OF ALGARS MANOR

There is a record of a manor and mill in Acton Ilger in the Domesday survey of 1086 and various authors have used the historical records to trace the owners of the house from then down to when John Naish bought it in 1950. The name Algars Manor is a late Victorian re-naming to suit the ambitions of its then owner John Crowther-Gwynne (who was later to over-extend his finances and end up emigrating to Vancouver Island). The house was long known as Mareysplace (after its 14th century owner Henry De Marisco / De Mareys) and more recently, and more appropriately in my mind, Chillwood Farm. It was Chillwood Farm that the Shepherd family ran, with the mill, for nearly 200 years while the owners lived elsewhere. Yet, despite knowing a little about all these owners and tenants, the family never really knew whether John's home-made wooden name plate with 1610 written on it was accurate. So, in 2009, as a present to John, we decided to see if we could find out using dendrochronology or 'tree-ring dating'.

How Dendrochronology Works

The science of dendrochronology is based on a combination of biology and statistics and, when it is successful, it is one of the most accurate dating methods - often precise to the season of the year.

Everyone knows that trees have rings, but dendrochronology can be this precise because a tree's annual rings are composed of two distinct parts - the spring growth or 'early wood', and the summer growth, or 'late wood'. For the European oak, as well as many other species, the annual ring 'early wood' is composed of large vessels formed during the period of shoot growth (between March and May). Then, there is an abrupt change at the time of leaf expansion around May or June when the increasingly fibrous 'late wood' is formed with much smaller vessels. Dendrochronology utilises the changes in the width of the annual rings caused by climatic conditions to give the sample a date.

If a beam or timber is complete to the bark edge, then a precise date of felling can be determined - a tree with bark which has the spring vessels formed but no summer growth can be said to be felled in the spring. If the timber isn't complete (after all, the sapwood is attractive to insect and fungal attack, so it is often removed before use) statistics come to the rescue by providing an estimate based on the fact that European oak sapwood tends to be of a relatively constant width and/or number of rings.

Figure 1 shows when accurate dating or statistics might need to be used depending on what part of the tree is present:

- **Core A** gives the earliest time the tree was felled because the final rings are missing.
- **Core B** gives a felling date range but is missing the final sapwood rings.
- **Core C** gives a precise felling date because all the rings are present.
- **D** shows the outermost rings of the sapwood with growing seasons

At Algars, seven beams, all oak, with complete sapwood or reasonably long ring sequences were sampled using a 16mm hollow auger. Of the seven samples four were from the roof and three from the ground-floor crossbeams in the dining room.

The dry samples were sanded and cleaned to allow the ring boundaries to be clearly seen and they were then measured under a x10/x30 microscope. In this way the size of each growth ring is recorded with the earliest at the start and the latest or outermost ring at the end.

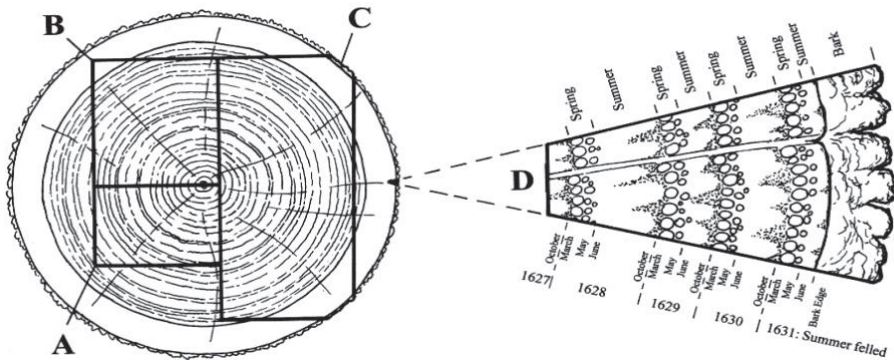


Figure 1 Different cores that could be sampled



Figure 2 The dining room in its late Victorian glory!

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So, when was Algars Manor built?

Using statistical analysis of the rings, all the samples were cross-matched and formed two groups. These were then matched against more than 1800 master chronologies from across the British Isles and to produce date ranges of 1381-1559 for one group and 1478-1546 for the other.

Because three of the dining room and one of the roof samples retained complete sapwood it was possible to date their felling to the winter of 1559/60.


Although we have these dates and we know that there has been a house on the site since Domesday it is unclear if any of that building remains. The ground floor walls are much thicker than those above, so the dendrochronological dates suggest one of two things. Either that the front of the house was constructed altogether around the winter of 1559/60 or shortly thereafter, with the first-floor walls possibly being thinner because they were designed to take less building load than the ground-floor. Or it is possible that the ground-floor walls belong to an older structure that was raised to its present height around that time.

Whichever of these is the case, we now know that the house was built or rebuilt in 1559 around the time that Elizabeth 1 was crowned queen and when Algar's Manor was owned by the Poyntz family. The tenant was one William Veele and the Veele family were to be live here until around 1600. William's wife Catherine is buried in the church where her grave slab on the church floor reads:

*Hic sepulta est
Catherina
Filia Guiliemi Veele, Generosi,
de Chillwood,
Februarii 25/1585.*

In 1600 the Crowther family took up residence and in 1685 the Poyntz family sold the 'tenement called Chillwood with all lands, meadows and pastures' to John Crowther for £370 of 'lawful money of England' thus completing the house's quiet journey from manor to farm.

Tim Grubb

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