

Local Talk Back

AUGUST 2020

ISSUE 507



The Orangery, Badminton House Open Gardens July 2020



A MAGAZINE WITH NEWS, VIEWS AND REPORTS FOR THE RESIDENTS
OF ACTON TURVILLE, BADMINTON AND LITTLE BADMINTON

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Mrs Joanna Dickson Leach - £20

Dr. R Hartley - £20

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Badminton Village Club

High Street, Badminton, South Glos. GL9 1DD

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VICE PRESIDENT: The Marquis of Worcester

Badminton Village Club is pleased to announce we are... OPEN!!!

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We are open Friday, Saturday and Sunday only.

Saturdays and Sundays 12 noon – 2pm & evenings from 7pm

Friday from 7pm

*Please adhere to Government
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EDITORIAL AUGUST 2020

The other weekend I was snoozing on the lounge, making the most of a rare but very welcome spell of seasonally warm weather. As I emerged from my slumber, my attention was immediately drawn to something large and feathered flashing across the sky. My immediate thought was buzzard, but no, this bird was bigger and the colours were wrong. My next thought probably reflected the fact that I was still half asleep, and had been browsing the BBC News website before being tempted onto the lounge: Bearded Vulture. The BBC website reported that one of these hugely impressive birds had recently been spotted roosting in the Peak District, having apparently flown over from the Alps where there is an active programme to reintroduce them back into the wild. With a 3m wingspan, these birds are larger than a Golden Eagle, but thankfully they do not pose a threat to farm animals or humans. Which was a relief. Could this really be a Bearded Vulture?

Well it could have been – but it wasn't. The reality was almost as exciting though – a Red Kite. As I watched it soar overhead, it was joined by a second bird, the two of them circling majestically above Acton Turville before gaining height and heading off towards Badminton. It wasn't so long ago that Red Kites were in a similarly precarious position to the Bearded Vultures, driven to near extinction by a combination of egg collectors, taxidermists and game keepers who suspected the birds of taking game. By the end of the nineteenth century, the number of breeding pairs was down to little more than double figures, mostly to be found in remote parts of central Wales. Over the next 60 years, numbers fluctuated but the birds remained perilously close to disappearing completely from Britain. Recognising that the situation was unlikely to improve without direct intervention, a programme was started in 1989 which sought to reintroduce Red Kites to a number of sites across the UK. Since then, numbers have been slowly increasing, and sightings have become quite common along the M4 corridor, but this was the first time I'd seen them from the comfort of my own garden. Hopefully it won't be the last. It also reminded me of the article about the Red Kite feeding centre in Mid-Wales that appeared in Local Talk Back a couple of years ago. I keep meaning to visit: now that some attractions are re-opening, I really must make the effort.

On that subject, it was a real boost to see the Badminton House gardens open to the public on one fine Sunday in July. I must admit I've become slightly averse to crowds since lockdown started, and the thought of visiting places where significant numbers of people could be expected to gather has little appeal. This situation wasn't helped by a recent visit Gill and I made to an attraction just outside Bristol. On the face of it they did everything right. Tickets were pre-booked for a specific time slot to reduce queues, hand washing stations were liberally scattered around the site, and they had successfully implemented a one-way system that would have impressed the Chippenham traffic management department. Unfortunately, the very nature of the attraction created a series of pinch points where crowds quickly built up, and, much like Chippenham, once you got caught in the one way system, you didn't have the option of turning around and beating a hasty retreat. Things were so different at Badminton. Visitor numbers were kept to a sensible level, potential pinch points had been identified and either roped off or made one way, and plenty of volunteer guides were on hand to make sure everything ran smoothly. These things don't happen by chance and it was clear that a lot of thought and planning had gone into making the event a pleasant experience for all. We really enjoyed ourselves, and the gardens were particularly spectacular this year. Many thanks and congratulations to all those responsible. The day provided a clear indication of how life can return to normal whilst still remaining safe.

Things might have been different with a couple of Bearded Vultures flying around though.....

Until the next time

IAN CARTER

The Acton Turville Marker Stone



Last month we published a picture of the marker stone that stands alongside the Badminton road on the outskirts of Acton Turville. We'd been contacted by a reader who asked why the stone had been so comprehensively defaced, removing all traces of the writing that had originally been carved into it. Many thanks to those who got in contact with us, including Peter Moss and Clive Candy from Acton Turville, both of whom informed us that the story dates back to the Second World War.

In the spring of 1940, with the German army advancing deep into Western Europe and Allied troops being hastily evacuated from the French port of Dunkirk, it looked almost inevitable that Britain was on the verge of being invaded by enemy forces. The detailed plans drawn up by the British Government sought to counter this very real threat, but also recognised the need for the country to be ready to respond should an invasion be successful. In very short time, a wide range of measures were put in place, designed to obstruct and disrupt any invading forces. These ranged from mobilising the 1.5 million-strong Local Defence Volunteers or Home Guard (immortalised in the BBC series "Dad's Army"), to digging hundreds of miles of "tank traps" - deep trenches which were designed to hamper the progress of tanks and heavy armoured vehicles.

Another effective means of slowing progress was to make it difficult for the invading forces to establish their precise location. Enemy paratroopers would often use road signs to pinpoint their whereabouts on a map, so the instruction was given to remove road signs, signposts and even railway signs from all parts of the country. Peter Moss recalls being told that was why the marker stone in Acton Turville was defaced, and if you look closely it's just possible to make out the words "TO LONDON 108 MILES", which supports that theory. So that's it. Case closed. Or is it?

Maybe not. There is another aspect to this story. Clive Candy was with the contractors building the new over-rail bridge when this stone was found, dumped in the deep ditch on the Badminton side of the bridge. The contractors recovered the stone, cleaned it up and erected it near enough where it was found. But is this where it was originally located? These marker stones are not uncommon; just locally there is a similar stone set in the wall at Marshfield High Street, and one at Burton which marks a spot as 100 miles to Hyde Park Corner in London. As Clive points out, these stones were usually sited where they would be highly visible to all road users, typically on busy roads or by Coaching Inns, Toll Gate Houses, cross-roads etc. All of which makes the location of the Acton Turville stone somewhat mysterious. Clive doubts whether its current location is the correct one, and suggests it may originally have been positioned near the crossroads on the Burton Road, by the Fox & Hounds public house. Was it moved from this position during the war, defaced then dumped in the ditch? Maybe someone can tell us.

This stone provides a poignant reminder of the very serious situation this country was in during the early 1940's, and we agree with Clive that it's a shame the stone is not in a more prominent position. Should it be moved? As always, we'd welcome the thoughts of our readers.

Badminton Memorial Hall Centenary

1920 – 2020

The History and Development of the Village Hall – Part Two

Badminton Village Hall was built as a Memorial to the 18 men from the village who were lost in the First World War. In June we brought you the story of its development and opening in 1920. Part two tells the story from 1920 onwards.

The early news comes from the Vicar's monthly newsletters in the Parish magazine, with only access to 1926 and 1927 so far. It seems that the Memorial Hall was used for quite a lot of functions and late 1925 into 1926 and 1927 was no exception.

There was the usual monthly dance in December 1925 when it took two Master's of Ceremony to get through the proceedings. Prizes were won by men, women and children and dance classes were available throughout the month.

In Christmas week of 1925 there was a 'Fancy Dress' dance, followed on Boxing Day with children's entertainment with tree and cinema. The cinema was provided to the hall shortly after opening. On January 12th 1926 the children's fun continued with tree and treats by the Women's Institute. The 21st January saw a Variety Show put on for Hall funds, and on the 27th a Cricket Club Dance. All of this happened at a time of bad weather. At the end of 1925 Park Pond was frozen over and on January 17th 'the village was deep in snow'.

In February the Hall Committee held a rummage sale and a March Dance in aid of the Tennis Club funds drew a record crowd.

It can only be assumed that in the previous years similar social occasions took place. Many charities benefitted from these dances etc. as well as the Memorial Hall for ongoing funds.

The Easter Monday dance of 1926 raised £11 for the funds. (*The office for National Statistics say £11 in 1926 is equivalent in purchasing power to about £676 in 2020*).

Two days later a Variety Show Concert raised £7 (£430) for the London County Children's Holiday Fund. A cinema night raised just over £2. Thanks to the Entertainment Committee the dances and dance classes since the previous autumn realised a profit £43 for hall funds. (£2,645 today). Expenses were nearly £25 in cleaning the interior and asphaltting the path around the hall.

In June the Vicar writes that they had survived the long threatened National Strike without a shot being fired.

At the Whit-Monday dance Mr Arthur Davis and Mr B Salt were praised for being excellent M.C's. Also mystery parcels were won by Mr Cyril Bird and Miss Joyce Knight (*these names are mentioned as they still have family living locally*).

Henry Somerset, 9th Duke of Beaufort, who had done so much to help the Memorial Hall to be built, sadly passed away in November 1924, but Her Grace, the Dowager Duchess, was still very much involved with the business of the Memorial Hall and helping with the ongoing fund-raising. The Duchess had put up a Memorial to the late Duke – some very nice gates between the grave and the East Front: "later there will probably be some improvements to the Memorial Hall grounds in his memory".

The Vicar reported that the Badminton Women's Institute also used the hall for their meetings, having on the 15th June "A very interesting lecture in the Hall on Bottling Fruit".

The Cinema in the hall was being very well used and the Dowager Duchess gave the W.I. a party in October, part of this was seeing a film of David Livingstone's Exploration of Africa.

1927 continued as before but now Whist Drives and Dances for hall funds were reported and a rummage sale also helped Memorial Hall funds to the extent of £20 (£1,230 today). The hall now had a £12 balance in the account.

Badminton Village Hall Centenary continued.....

The only mention of the village hall through the war years 1939 – 45 comes from articles concerning H.M. Queen Mary, mother to King George VI, who spent the war at Badminton House. Mary, Duchess of Beaufort was Queen Mary's niece.

Queen Mary became part of the everyday life of the locals. For entertainment she arranged for regular film shows to be brought out to be shown in the front hall of Badminton House and invited her friends and neighbours and nearby troops. She also arranged for concert parties and West End plays complete with their stars to come to Badminton and these were put on in the village Memorial Hall, again for her friends and neighbours. She also enjoyed the concerts put on in the hall by the villagers. Sitting in the front row, she would have the village children on the floor around her feet, and would receive every one of the artists afterwards. There is a photograph of one such concert which we hope to be able to show in the next Talk Back.

Fast forward to an article in the Local Talk Back by John Davis, Estate Farm Manager, in 1976. He was very much involved with the running of Badminton Memorial Hall alongside Terry Witchard.

John says "For many years it has been felt that the facilities at the village hall were far from adequate. We are extremely lucky that the hall is one of the best in the county, but the toilet facilities and kitchen does not match up to modern requirements.

From 1963 – 68 much work and labour was put in to getting the hall on its feet financially, and in a good state of repair. The outside was decorated in 1967."

Several plans were drawn up for a new pavilion and funds were raised, but the plan was shelved. John then reported "The idea was developed that the facilities required by the sports clubs could best be incorporated in an extension to the village hall. A plan was drawn up in 1971 but eventually in 1974 another scheme was proposed, and put

on paper and at long last everyone involved considered that this would supply the facilities that were required. After obtaining planning permission and assurance of a grant from Northavon District Council.

The extension was commenced on January 1st 1975 and carried out with close co-operation of the Hall Committee and the clubs involved in its eventual use. The basic cost was in the region of £8,000 as long as the majority of the work was undertaken on a voluntary basis. It would provide a main room which would be multi-purpose, for use as a bar for parties and dances, for cricket teas and for meetings which needed a smaller space than the hall. Also on the ground floor there would be a ladies and gents toilet, changing rooms and showers for sports clubs and a separate room for the referee."

Ray Bird has provided information on some of the ways that funds were raised to carry out this project. This included a monthly 300 club draw run by John Davis and a regular newspaper collection that was sorted by Bill Witchard, Terry's father, and stored in a shed in the old Badminton School until sold for profit. Ray and John Davis also held several darts tournaments in the village hall to boost the funds. Many dances, discos and other functions were for the same cause.

In the new bar/meeting room one of the walls was covered in wood panelling divided into plaques which could be purchased by individuals or businesses for about £20 each. Small brass plates were added to each panel and engraved with the name of the donor.

Another fund-raising venture in 1975 and 76 were at least two fancy dress soccer matches between men dressed as women and ladies dressed as men.

Dorothy Lane has kindly passed on to us photographs of one of those matches in 1976 when her husband, Don, was part of the 'drag' team.

Photos of a Fancy Dress Football Match 1976

To raise money for the extension to the village hall. (names from various sources – apologies if wrong)



L-R Ron Copeland Kenny Punter Don Lane Tony Barrett Mervyn Barrett Mike Childerley Ray Bird Tom Scrivens
Kenny Crewe Bev Morgan Roy Weeks



L – R Jill Gunney Caroline Nettles (Strange) Ruth Witchard Julie Childerley (Andrews)
Pam Bubb Angela Crewe Anne Preston (Neal)
Front row: Bronwen Barrett (Luter) Edith Nettles Vera Davis Sheila Staines

MEET THE ADVERTISER

MATTHEW BUTLER - FROM PENGUIN POOLS TO STAINED GLASS



Sue and I have lived in Acton Turville for almost twenty years now. After growing up in a Yorkshire village, the first half of my career was in the business world, where I ended up as Director of Public Affairs at two of Britain's hundred largest companies. Since we moved back to the Cotswolds, life has been nothing if not varied: I completed a PhD in history and archaeology, spent time running the fund-raising campaign for Canterbury Cathedral, am a tour guide at Badminton House and sometimes to be found acting as a "roadie" for the rock band Jethro Tull - who, until lockdown struck, were still going strong...

For more than ten years I have been running a second hand and antiquarian book business, specialising in architectural history and archaeology. Browsing by appointment (after the end of lockdown). That's the end of the advert, and *more* than enough about me!

There is an image of the second hand book dealer rummaging around the dusty shelves of a charity shop and coming across an un-noticed rare volume which turns out to be worth thousands. That is unlikely to happen. Firstly, because I would have to spend many months searching charity shops, and, secondly, because these days charity shops are much more aware of the value of the books they sell - and good for them, because the charities benefit.

Some books come to me in ones and twos, and some I buy at auction. But most of the books I acquire come as part of a private collection - sometimes because people are moving house and need to "downsize" or sometimes, sadly, because someone has died. Although I sell online - the specialist site abebooks.co.uk is best for rare books - I rarely buy online, unless it is from a reputable dealer or someone I know. I have no doubt that people try and be honest with their on-line descriptions on e-bay or wherever. The problem is that whereas the seller may think that it is great that his hundred year-old book is only missing one of its maps or plates, and describe it as excellent, I know that without that map or plate the book is worth less than half of its true value to a collector. When valuing antiquarian books, condition is everything. And of course there are still many people who are happy to buy a less than perfect copy of a rare book at a more affordable price. Very often these are the people who will actually use the book and enjoy it - rather than have it sitting on the shelf: in perfect condition maybe, but also unread!

So, like most jobs, the task is ten per cent inspiration and ninety per cent perspiration...and the latter is particularly true when you're trying to load a lorry with 100 heavy boxes of books from the cramped and grubby first floor flat of a recently deceased architectural historian in south London on the hottest day of the year, as I was two years ago!

That doesn't mean there aren't ever great moments of discovery. For example, a few years ago in Ealing I bought the books of a former Roman Catholic Priest, who had died, from his partner (yes, I know Roman Catholic Priests are meant to be single, but you meet all sorts of wonderful eccentric people in my world!). Among his books were some first editions of novels by Evelyn Waugh.

MEET THE ADVERTISER cont'd

When I got them home and started cataloguing, an envelope fell out of one of the books. It contained a handwritten letter from Waugh to his publisher along with a signed photograph of Waugh himself. It turned out that this was an important letter - in it Waugh talked about how he wanted to be described on the back of the dust-jacket of one of his novels.

As my time in large companies taught me, a business will only succeed in the long term if it has good values and builds trust with suppliers and customers. So when I agree a price with a seller of books, I always say that if I discover anything that neither of us knew about that radically transforms the value of a collection, then I will let them know, because it is only fair that we share the benefit. The Waugh letter was one of those occasions. The letter sold for several thousand pounds at auction, and the Minister who sold me the books was able to furnish the library at his new home on the proceeds.

One of the joys of the book business is that I learn something new every day, and you never know what you are going to come across. I would love to keep many of the books for myself, but Mrs Butler forbids it and I have a rule allowing me just one from each collection I purchase. I don't specialise in local books, but sometimes interesting local items turn up.

Recently, a small book "In This Dark House" arrived in one of the boxes I purchased from an architectural historian. The book's author, Louise Kehoe, was the daughter of the internationally renowned modernist architect of the 1930s, Berthold Lubetkin. Lubetkin is best known now for his design of the Penguin Pool at Regent's Park Zoo. At the time this was a revolutionary design, demonstrating the possibilities of concrete, and was viewed as a piece of sculpture. Lubetkin also designed the famous Highpoint flats in London. So what?

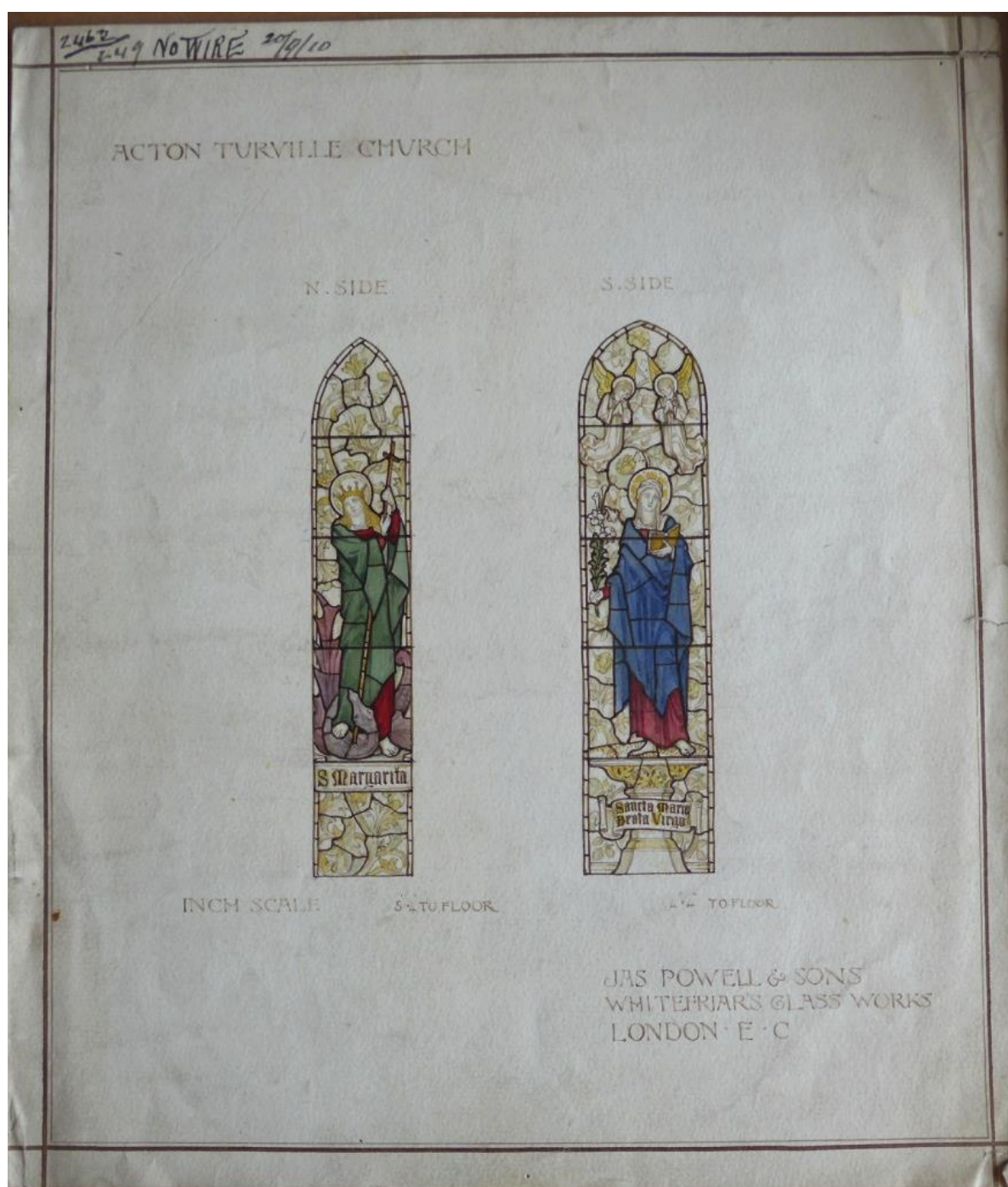


Well, what I *didn't* know was that Lubetkin and his family moved to Upper Kilcote near Hawkesbury Upton in 1939. The book is a description of their life there during the war years and after, and history of the architect, a Russian who fled the Revolution in 1917. It is a tough read in places, because Kehoe (who now lives in America) alleges that their father had a controlling and abusive relationship with his girls. These claims were hotly disputed by Lubetkin's other daughter when the book came out, as she had very different memories of their time at Kilcote. It has been written that some animals from the Zoo became "refugees at Kilcote during the war. I wonder if any TalkBack readers know whether this is true?

MEET THE ADVERTISER cont'd

By way of complete contrast, the other week I acquired the original colour design for two of the stained glass windows in Acton Turville Church. The windows of 1910 were designed by the well known firm of Powell and Sons, based in Whitefriars, between Fleet Street and the Thames in London, and are now in the Chancel of the Church, one on either side. The first window depicts St Margaret, and the other The Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ. The design also includes some details about their position and installation. Arthur Powell in charge of the Studio when the Acton Turville glass was made, was the son of the founder and well known for using modern chemical techniques to try and produce the best "authentic" medieval glass. Rossetti and Burne Jones both designed for his studio for a time.

The Lubetkin book is not for sale, I'm afraid, but copies can be tracked down at a reasonable price on Amazon. As for the Stained Glass Design - price, as they say, on application!



Badminton House Open Gardens

The announcement that the gardens at Badminton House would once again be open to the public on Sunday 12 July 2020 came as a very welcome surprise. Restrictions meant that entry was via advance tickets only, and the number of visitors was carefully controlled, but none of this could detract from what was a beautiful day, with the gardens looking absolutely perfect in the warm summer sun. The pictures give a flavour of the day. Many thanks to all who made it possible.



ACTON TURVILLE PARISH COUNCIL

No physical meetings able to be held at present

*Please! No Dogs are allowed on the playing field or in the play area.
All gates must be kept shut. No vehicles are allowed in or on the playing field except by permission of the Parish Council. Please put all litter in the bins provided. Thank you.*

JULY 2020

Playing Field

The Playing Field and now the Play Area have been reopened and both are subject to Government Guidelines, "social distancing rules of 2m continue to apply" Signage has been installed for your assistance.

Anyone wishing to play Tennis please visit <http://actonturville.info/tennis/> for more information.

An update from the Tennis Club is publicised elsewhere in Local Talk Back.

Overgrown Tree

We have received complaints about an overgrown tree in Hollybush Close which comes under the responsibility of South Gloucestershire Council. This has been reported and the relevant officer will be making a site visit to establish whether there is a safety issue with the branches.

Meetings

We will continue to hold telephone conference meetings and/or similar until such time as we are permitted to resume our face-to-face meetings. Anyone wishing to submit questions or report any issues should send them to the Clerk at the details listed below.

Sybil Haddrell (Acting Chair) 218772, Sally Smith 218510, Chris Bennett 218550,
Toby Evans 219116, Ian Carter 219129

Next meeting: Monday 10th August 2020 @ 7.00 pm (as above)

Parish Clerk: Sue Radford-Hancock Tel: 218675

Email: actonturvillepc@aol.com Website: www.actonturvilleparishcouncil.org



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Our website and future booking system is under construction. Details to follow soon.

A bring your own picnic will hopefully be on the agenda this summer using the playing field with a chance to play tennis. Government guidelines will be strictly adhered to.



This is the time to sit down and enjoy your garden. The colourful annuals will have plumped up and the perennials all growing well. Just the pots and newly planted things to water. Maybe a saunter around to admire your handiwork with a glass in your hand.

Tips of the Month

If you have some plants whose leaves are going yellowish they could be looking for a more acid soil. Something to try before buying Sequestrene is to top dress the plant with a handful of Epsom Salts or, if you have access to some pine needle soil (there could be some under a Christmas tree for instance), use it as a watered in mulch. You may have to do this every year.

Any plant that is prone to black spot or mildew such as box and roses will do better if it is watered low down, right at soil level not on the leaves.

Jobs for this Month

Keep dead heading any spent flowers, and re-shape bushes straight after flowering finishes.

Dahlias, cosmos and antirrhinums. Dahlias have two 'buds', a round one, which is a new flower and a more pointed one which is a spent flower so needs removing. Dead heading keeps the plant flowering until the frost comes. Maybe this is a good time to give everything a feed, something like Tomorite or seaweed. Feed all pots weekly. Remove foxglove and lupin spears and they will then flower again with two side shoots, not as big but still enjoyable.

Don't worry if your fruit trees have dropped quite a bit of fruit for no apparent reason. This is just the natural way the tree thins the crop, which lets it produce bigger fruit - you can thin out even more if you want even larger fruit.

Alstroemerias are a good plant to grow for cutting, and last well in a vase.

Yellow leaved plants usually with the name aureus may need a shady place to stay yellow. If you haven't already, divide flag irises and alliums

Choosing Plants for the Garden

Keep a garden notebook to hand and jot down plants you like in nurseries and gardens. For a shady spot with large dramatic leaves like a hand, consider Fatsia Japonica. Evergreen, mid height, also can be variegated. Another good and smaller plant for shade are the Epimediums. Shade does not mean dark and dry - plants need at least some light and water.

Places to Visit

Garden visiting has been pretty difficult but some gardens in the yellow book NGS can be seen by booking on line. Not quite as spontaneous as usual, but it's always a nice time out and it supports those people who have made the effort.

Church Matters

August 2020 Letter from the Vicar

Dear Parishioners,

I am sorry not to have written in June and July, but as some of you know, I had a bit of a health scare and I am not allowed to drive for the time being. I now on a bicycle which gets me around. So, please forgive me if whilst driving, you are irritated by a Vicar on a bicycle cycling around a corner at a very slow pace! But everyone is being very kind.

The key theme of mental health awareness week this year was **kindness**. There are reports of great kindness having taken place in the villages during the lockdown; new and better relationships having been formed between neighbours, the elderly and isolated better cared for, and so forth. This is all great news from a Christian and community standpoint. The more we look after each other, the more 'Christian' we are being.

I am very sorry that the churches were shut during the lockdown. I think as people now know, they were shut in order to protect people. Because like pubs, churches are places where people linger and create dangerous infection areas. However, the good news is that the Internet has provided a new wonderful resource for people at home. Ben Humphries our organist, has produced some really good services on YouTube (<http://YoutubeBadmintonBenefice>) – and we are intending to keep them going. Some are pre-recorded, others live from our churches.

We are hoping to put some services on in our churches in August, please look at the website for details of our services, by clicking on the date.

The resurrection motif – good and kind things can arise out of terrible situations.

Let us hope for some decent weather this August.

With my best wishes,

Richard
Rev Richard Thomson

Contact details:

Priest in charge, Withymoor Vicarage, Old Down Rd. Badminton GL9 1EU

Benefice website: www.badmintonchurch.org.uk

Email: revrichardthomson@gmail.com

Tel. 01454 219236

Mobile 077 177 91858

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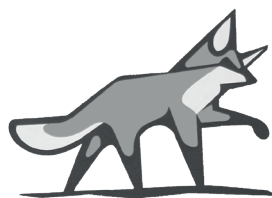
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Picture Gallery

Our feathered friends feature once again in this month's Picture Gallery. Thanks to Yvonne Nettles for capturing this great picture of a baby Sparrow looking out for its next meal. Moving clockwise, we have a couple of young Blackbirds and what appears to be an equally young Greater Spotted Woodpecker. Our final picture comes from Dominic Rennie who spotted this very photogenic Green Woodpecker in his garden in Acton Turville. Many thanks to Yvonne and Dominic for sending in the pictures, we hope you enjoy them.

