

Local Talk Back

AUGUST 2025

<http://actonturville.info/talkback/>

ISSUE 562



Busy Bee Amongst The Thistles. *Photograph by Paul Jones, Acton Turville*



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

EDITORIAL AUGUST 2025

I was watching a programme on television some time back about HS2, the high-speed rail link that was originally intended to connect major cities in the north of England with each other and, importantly, London. The first part of the programme was interesting. It described how HS2 was supposed to work and what benefits it was expected to deliver, but then, much like HS2, the programme went downhill and everyone they interviewed started blaming each other for the project's failure. I kind of zoned out at that stage, but my interest was revived with mention of the "Badminton line". I didn't get the full story but, from what I could gather, the Badminton line was a similarly complex project that succeeded because everyone wanted it to work, whereas HS2 failed because everyone wanted to argue. There might have been more to it than that, but that's what I took away.

After a bit of internet searching I came across a book called *The Badminton Line – A Portrait of a Railway*, and in no time at all I was reading about the line's fascinating history. The story starts in 1838 with construction of the Great Western Railway's main line between Paddington and Bristol. The chief engineer was Isambard Kingdom Brunel, who, in 1841, watched on as the final section between Chippenham and Bath was completed with the opening of the Box Tunnel. The GWR main line was a success, but it wasn't fast, mainly because the section between Wotton Bassett and Bristol meandered around natural obstacles and negotiated many inclines, all of which slowed progress. It didn't take long for people to start looking at alternative routes.

As it turned out, it was the rapid expansion of coal production in South Wales that was to be the catalyst for change. With no means of crossing the River Severn, coal trains had to follow a torturous route to Bristol that took them via Gloucester. The GWR decided to rectify that annoyance by building the Severn Tunnel which opened in 1886. As well as creating a line that linked the coalfields of South Wales with Bristol before heading on to London, it opened up an exciting new opportunity – why not extend the line to the ferry ports at Fishguard in North Wales and provide disembarking goods and passengers with a fast link to the capital? The fly in the ointment was the slow section between Bristol and Wotton Bassett, so the bold decision was taken to build a new, fast line that ran between the Severn Tunnel and Wotton Bassett, where it would rejoin the existing main line. The new line would employ cuttings, embankments, tunnels and bridges to minimise gradient changes, and the route would be carefully selected to keep the line as straight as possible with no tight radiuses. This was to be the Badminton line, and it opened in 1903.

The contract to build the line was won by Pearson & Sons with a price of £986084. On the 29 November 1897, Her Grace the Dowager Duchess of Beaufort used a silver spade to cut the first sod of earth in Blanchard's Field near Old Sodbury. Work to build the railway had begun. Seven new stations were to be constructed, with Badminton Station sitting between those at Hullavington and Chipping Sodbury. As well as the platforms and station buildings, the plans for Badminton Station included a signal box, a goods yard with animal pens, a coal merchants, a detached house for the station master and two blocks of semi-detached houses for the station workers.

Construction of the line was not straightforward, and one of the biggest challenges involved the Sodbury tunnel which broadly follows the path of the B4040 before emerging at Old Sodbury. Flooding was the main issue, which required a channel to be dug beneath the rails to divert away the 500,000 gallons that flow daily into the tunnel from various underground sources. When it rains, that figure can increase to a mind-boggling 750,000 gallons per day.

The Badminton line was an immediate success, with a survey showing that, in 1904, there were 21 passenger services calling at Badminton Station daily! Numbers would continue to increase for many years, but in the post-war period, when investment in the railways was slashed and people began to discover the freedoms afforded by the motor car, the railways fell into decline. One by one, the stations along the Badminton line closed, until there was just one remaining – Badminton itself. After several reprieves, it too succumbed, and on the 3rd June 1968 it closed its doors to passenger services for the last time.

Whether by design or good fortune, the closure of the stations coincided with plans to introduce new high-speed rail services, pulled by modern, diesel locomotives capable of running at 125 miles per hour. All that careful work to design a railway with neither inclines nor tight turns made the Badminton line perfect for such services, and it proudly became one of the first to operate them. The transformation was complete when Bristol Parkway station was opened in 1972, and it is now one of the busiest routes on the network, 120 years after it first opened.

As a post script, the company who won the tender to build the line, Pearson & Sons, ended up massively out of pocket. They continually ran into unforeseen problems, with repeated landslips caused by unstable land which was exacerbated by long periods of atrocious weather. The cost of the remedial work quickly mounted up, and when they submitted their final bill, they sought an additional compensation payment of £250,000 – just over 25%. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the GWR refused to pay and, despite taking their case to the House of Lords, the company's claim was unsuccessful. They took it on the chin, but vowed never to work for the GWR again.

I wonder if they're involved in HS2?

Until the next time

IAN CARTER

Items for Local Talk Back email to: localtalkback1975@gmail.com Tel: 01454 218267

To advertise in Local Talk Back, please email Pauline on: LocalTalkBackAds@gmail.com

PLEASE SUBMIT ARTICLES FOR PUBLICATION IN THE SEPTEMBER EDITION OF LOCAL TALK BACK BY 15TH AUGUST 2025.
THANK YOU.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

August 2025

Fri 1 st	Acton Turville Social Coffee Morning, Fox & Hounds
Fri 8 th	Didmarton Film Club, Didmarton Village Hall
Wed 13 th	Luncheon Club, Fox & Hounds
Sat 16 th	Acton Turville Social Summer Party, Playing Fields, Acton Turville, 7pm - midnight
Sun 24 th	Badminton Benefice Festival of Music, St Mary's Lasborough, 3pm
Sat 30 th	Hawkesbury Show, Hawkesbury Recreation Ground, 12.30pm
Sun 31 st	Castle Combe Circuit Car Boot Sale, 9am – 2pm

September 2025

Fri 5 th	Acton Turville Social Coffee Morning, Fox & Hounds
Sun 7 th	Badminton House Open Gardens
Mon 8 th	Acton Turville Parish Council Meeting, Trinity School, 7pm
Wed 10 th	Luncheon Club, Fox & Hounds
Fri 12 th	Didmarton Film Club, Didmarton Village Hall
Sun 21 st	Harvest Festival, St Mary's, Acton Turville
Sun 28 th	Badminton Benefice Festival of Music, St Andrew's, Leighterton, 5.30pm
Sun 28 th	Shabby Sheep Pop-Up Bookshop, Sherston 10am-4pm

ST. MARY'S CHURCH, ACTON TURVILLE

100 Club

WINNERS FOR JULY 2025

Lesley Drake
Philippa Burton
Sarah Farmer

Congratulations!



Local Talk Back is always on the lookout for additional material. Maybe you have an interesting story to tell, an event to report on, or would like to be involved with production of the newsletter? If you think you can help, why not get in touch?

localtalkback1975@gmail.com

We'd love to hear from you!

DONATIONS RECEIVED THIS MONTH

We received one anonymous donation this month. Thank you.

In addition, £5.80 was generously donated in the shop collection boxes.

We really do appreciate all donations as it helps to keep the Local Talk Back being delivered to your doors.

There are Local Talk Back collection boxes in Acton Turville Stores and the new Badminton shop.

To donate by cheque, please make payable to

LOCAL TALK BACK

and send to:

*The Treasurer, Local Talk Back,
6 Hollybush Close, Acton Turville,
Badminton, South Glos, GL9 1JJ*

Thank you!

THE HAWKESBURY HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY SHOW 2025

SATURDAY 30TH AUGUST

HAWKESBURY VILLAGE HALL
AND RECREATION GROUND,

HIGH STREET,
HAWKESBURY UPTON,



*GATES OPEN
AT 12.30 P.M.*



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WHAT'S ON



DIDMARTON FILM CLUB

Didmarton Village Hall, Friday 8th August 2025

To receive full details of the films being shown each month by the Didmarton Film Club, simply join the club by filling in a form which will be available on film nights – membership is free, just provide your name, email address and mobile number to join.

Members are allowed to bring guests to the film shows, which will continue to be held on the 2nd Friday of each month at the Didmarton Village Hall. Whilst there is no charge for entry, all those attending are expected to make a donation (suggested amount £5).

The bar will run as usual.

Non-members may contact the organiser, Jenny Body, for the title of this month's film.

Doors open at 6.30pm, film starts 7.30pm

Please let us know in advance if you intend attending so we can ensure that sufficient seating is available

jenny.body1@gmail.com

FOX
& HOUNDS INN
Acton Turville, nr Badminton
GL9 1HW
01454 218224

Fox & Hounds Luncheon Club

Wednesday 13th August

Tea/Coffee on arrival

Two Course Lunch (main course + dessert)

£13.00 per head

Everyone welcome!

*The Fox & Hounds Luncheon Club meets the
2nd Wednesday of every month.*



The Shabby Sheep Book Shop

The Shabby Sheep Book Shop will be looking to host bi-monthly Pop-Up Bookshops in the local area, with the first event kicking off on:

**Sunday 28th September 2025,
10am to 4pm
at Sherston Village Hall.**

With more than 3000 titles to browse, including fiction and non-fiction across all genres and for all ages, our pop-up bookshops really will offer something for everyone.

All our books are in fabulous condition regardless of whether they are brand new or pre-loved, and all are being sold at heavily discounted rates. We'll also be offering many special editions, as well as signed, antique, vintage and collectable books.

We're sure you'll find your next read or three, and if that's not reason enough to visit, there will also be:

**Free Tea/Coffee
Free Kids Bookmark Crafts**

For more information, please contact Jo via email:
shabbysheepshop@btinternet.com

www.shabbysheepshop.co.uk

ACTON TURVILLE PARISH COUNCIL PROPOSED HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FOR ACTON TURVILLE

On Monday 14th July, representatives from the Badminton Estate gave a brief presentation to the Acton Turville Parish Council, outlining proposals for a substantial housing development on the outskirts of Acton Turville.

To provide some background, the likelihood of such a development was initially discussed several years ago within the South Glos Council's Local Plan, which proposed a limited development of 25 houses within Acton Turville (note these numbers are in addition to the 17 dwellings on the Hollybush Farm site). Whilst the impact of the proposal would have been significant, the plan made it clear that the numbers had been kept to a level which reflected the limitations of the village's current infrastructure - it aimed to deliver a solution which was "sustainable", citing issues with public transport, doctors and dental surgeries, and, most fundamentally, capacity at the village school, as the key factors which influenced the size of the development.

Despite having been assured that the previous iteration was the final version, the plan underwent major changes as a result of new targets being set by central Government, and the figures for Acton Turville doubled from 25 to 50 dwellings. The presentation by the Badminton Estate team was intended to explain how they intended to achieve this higher target.

Their preferred solution is to build on a green field site that runs between Littleton Drew Road and Luckington Road as shown on the attached sketch (the layout of the houses is purely for illustration purposes, and does not represent the final design). The Estate explained that they have engaged with the same team of architects who were responsible for the Hollybush Farm development, and emphasised their aim to deliver a solution which is sympathetic to the local architecture and in keeping with the rural setting. They will, however, rely on a third-party developer to finalise the design, and to build the development.

The Parish Council has a number of concerns. Firstly, the development exits onto two roads, one being a fast road which has experienced a significant number of speed-related accidents in recent years (Luckington Road), the other being a narrow road adjacent to a school which suffers major congestion due to parked cars, particularly at drop-off and collection times (Littleton Drew Road). As this road is already the access road for Hollybush Close, Chestnut Close and the forthcoming Hollybush Farm development, we believe it will require major revision to make it safe and suitable.

Our second concern relates to the sustainability issues that were at the core of the proposals made in the earlier version of the Local Plan. There are currently 173 houses in Acton Turville. The Hollybush Farm development will add another 17, and the Estate are now proposing an additional 50, which means an almost

40% increase in houses and residents. Can the village and its infrastructure really cope with such growth?

Lastly there are the less tangible consequences. There is the impact on the character of the village, the effects on those villagers who currently look out on green fields, the increased levels of transport from those who have to drive for essential services. How will these be assessed, considered and mitigated?

Of course, we also recognise the potential benefits to the village, in particular the need for low-cost, high-quality housing which many people, including villagers, have long sought. In addition, a larger population will be a very welcome boost to our valuable (and valued) local businesses, and may lead to improvements in some of the areas referred to earlier like public transport and health facilities.

As far as timescales are concerned, the Badminton Estate have discussed options with the planning department at South Glos and are now working with their architects and potential developers to refine the plans prior to submitting their formal planning application, which they aim to do in the spring. After that, the planning process could take anywhere from three to nine months. The Parish Council will be submitting a formal response to the application, and we would urge all villagers to engage in the process by scrutinising the application and responding as appropriate. We will, of course, provide regular updates in Local Talk Back and on our website and Facebook page as soon as more information becomes available.

Schematic of proposed housing development for Acton Turville.



WHAT'S ON



TOUGH MUDDER - SATURDAY 16TH AUGUST

TOUGH MUDDER SOUTH WEST RETURNS TO BADMINTON, OFFERING A 5K OR 15K CHALLENGE ACROSS MUDDY, WORLD-CLASS OBSTACLES AND VARIED TERRAIN AROUND BADMINTON PARK. VISIT THE WEBSITE TO FIND OUT HOW TO SIGN UP FOR THIS UNFORGETTABLE CHALLENGE

BADMINTON HOUSE OPEN GARDEN DAYS – SUNDAY 7TH SEPTEMBER

THE PRIVATE GARDENS AT BADMINTON HOUSE WILL BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR THE FINAL TIME THIS YEAR ON SUNDAY, 7TH SEPTEMBER. ENJOY A RARE OPPORTUNITY TO WANDER THROUGH THE BEAUTIFUL GARDENS OF THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF BEAUFORT, DESIGNED BY RENOWNED LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS RUSSELL PAGE AND FRANÇOIS GOFFINET.

LOOKING AHEAD – RHS BADMINTON 2026

WE ARE EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE THE OFFICIAL DATES FOR THE RHS BADMINTON FLOWER SHOW 2026. THE EVENT WILL TAKE PLACE IN THE HISTORIC GROUNDS OF BADMINTON PARK FROM WEDNESDAY 8TH JULY TO SUNDAY 12TH JULY 2026. AN EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW DAY FOR RHS MEMBERS WILL BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8TH JULY.

RHS FLOWER SHOWS ARE A DAY OUT FOR ALL THE FAMILY, WITH UNIQUE GARDENS, TALKS AND TIPS, CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES, FLORAL INSTALLATIONS, MARKETS, STALLS AND LOTS OF TASTY FOOD AND DRINK TO ENJOY. RHS BADMINTON PROMISES TO BE AN UNFORGETTABLE EVENT

TICKETS AND FURTHER EVENT DETAILS WILL BE RELEASED SOON. STAY UP TO DATE BY FOLLOWING OUR SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS.



See <https://www.badmintonestate.com/events/> for full details

St Mary's Hawkesbury Pet Service



Come and join the fun
at St Mary's Hawkesbury
Sunday 17th August at 10am

If you can't bring a pet, bring a toy animal!

ARRIVE EARLY TO HEAR THE BELLS
Ringing from 9.30-10am

STAY FOR BREAKFAST
Free coffee and croissants
after the service



ST MARY'S CHURCH, ACTON TURVILLE

Harvest Festival

Join us at St Mary's on Sunday 21st September for our Harvest Festival. There will be coffee, cake and a harvest singalong from 3pm, followed by the Harvest Service at 4pm.

Whether you bring a cake, bring a friend, make a donation to the local foodbank, or just turn up to say hello, we'd love to see you. We really hope you can make it.

Churchyard Tidy-Up

The graveyard behind the church is beginning to look a bit overgrown, so we're looking for a group of willing volunteers who can help us tidy it up.

Date to be confirmed, but it's likely to be Saturday 20th or Sunday 21st September, weather permitting. If you can help, please contact Alastair or Local Talk Back. If you can bring a strimmer, some shears, a scythe or just a pair of scissors, even better!!

Badminton Youth Club Update

The Badminton Youth Club is currently enjoying its summer break but will be back once again in September - look out for an announcement in the next issue of Local Talk Back.

We've really enjoyed watching the club grow and seeing everyone having so much fun. We'd like to say a huge thank you to those who have helped run the youth club and those who have taken part, and look forward to seeing you all again soon.



WHAT'S ON

Chipping Sodbury Music Society

Chipping Sodbury Music Society started in 1947 as Downleaze Music Club, founded by a small group of music lovers, listening to music on the radio or "long playing" records in each other's houses. The group attended concerts when they could, but as time went on felt they wanted to do more – promoting concerts themselves. The club grew in number with the success of their efforts to appreciate good music leading to having to book larger venues for their meetings.



In the 1960's the club became Chipping Sodbury Music Society, promoting concerts and concert visits in a season, moving to Chipping Sodbury Town Hall to accommodate their growing audiences. The expertise and talents of the musicians playing in the concerts has helped the Society to go from strength to strength.

Today, Chipping Sodbury Music Society promotes seven concerts each season with musicians of such mastery and finesse that they are both nationally and internationally renowned. The musicians like playing in an intimate setting with a close, appreciative audience. Young musicians at the start of their career, usually supported by The Countess of Munster Musical Trust, play one concert in each season.

The variety and style of all the concerts are chosen to appeal to the widest possible audience.

Membership is £85 for seven concerts, tickets on the door are £18, tickets on Ticket Source are the same with a small extra fee. School-aged children and young people still attending school are free.

Our 2025-2026 season starts in October. Come, hear and enjoy wonderful music played by musicians of considerable talent in a pleasing setting. You will be very welcome.

Visit us on www.csmusicsociety.co.uk

Deb Willington, secretary to Chipping Sodbury Music Society



ACTON TURVILLE TENNIS CLUB

The Acton Turville Tennis Club is an LTA-affiliated group which runs the community tennis court in Acton Turville. You don't need to live in Acton Turville to join our tennis club, anyone can sign up, and once you're a member you can use the court for free. Booking is simple, just use the on-line form to pick a time and date to suit you.

Non-members can also use the court on a pay-to-play basis.

Coaching is available from LTA accredited coaches

For more information, visit the club's website - <https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/ActonTurvilleTennisClub>

From the Archives

When we heard that Gloria Gibson had sadly passed away, we thought it fitting that this month's "From the Archives" feature should be about the Valentine Club, which Gloria chaired for many years. It's taken from the April 2001 of Local Talk Back, which rather alarmingly was 24 years ago!

THE VALENTINE CLUB

On February 14th The Valentine Club reached it's 21st birthday. How many of us who were there on that Valentine's Day back in 1980 imagined that we would still be going strong and still able to find a varied and interesting selection of talks and demonstrations.

Our Programme this year began with Heather Martin with her beautiful clothes which she had designed, embroidered and appliquéd herself. She takes orders for her lovely clothes and showed us camisoles, jackets and a beautiful wedding dress.

On the following meeting Ann Beasley joined us for our worldwide travel evening, which began in Spain with a taste of 'Spanish Liqueur' and carried on to France and Italy with the wine. Our next stop was China, with Ann telling us of the preparations for her Sponsored walk of the Great Wall of China. We all admired her spirit of adventure and have named her 'Action Woman of Acton Turville'. We very much look forward to her return visit to tell us of her adventure and to see the photographs. Other people had brought along pieces of memorabilia from a holiday or trip and talked of their holiday experiences and disasters. These took us from English seaside resorts around the globe to France, Italy, Portugal, Morocco, Alcatraz in San Francisco, New Zealand, Australia and South Carolina amongst others.

March 8th was a memorable evening for our demonstrator Nadine of 'Nadiné's Flowers' of Chipping Sodbury. It was her very last demonstration before her retirement. She brought a glorious array of flowers which she made into five very different arrangements.

March 22nd was our A.G.M. After the election of committee we had a discussion about the last year's programme and the new programme. Then we entertained ourselves with a chocolate fondue with lot's of delicious dips, a look at the 1881 census register lists for Badminton, Little Badminton and Acton Turville, other local history items including old photographs of Badminton school children and Badminton House staff and a look at the book about the first Duchess of Beaufort's plants and flowers.

To carry on our birthday celebrations 26 members and husbands had a delicious Sunday Lunch at The Old Royal Ship, Luckington on 18th March.

APRIL MEETINGS (For your diary)

April 12th A talk and demonstration of the 'ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE' by Sarah Chubb.
'Learn how to organise the way you move for increased comfort, self awareness and well being'.

April 26th A talk by THE COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY OFFICER, Chris Cummings.

The New Programme

April is the start of our new year's programme and we hope there will be something of interest to suit most tastes. We would welcome any new members who would wish to join us. We have women of all ages and we meet on the 2nd and 4th Thursday's of the month in the Jubilee Room at Badminton Village Hall at 7.45pm.

We also welcome guests for the evening for a small entrance fee so if there is a particular subject you are interested in please come along. For more information ring Sally 218510 or Yvonne 218267.

Some future 'attractions'

- Ann Beasley's sponsored walk of The Great Wall of China.
- Tesco stores. A talk and slide show.
- Novelty Cakes.
- Organic foods- meat and vegetable.
- Westonbirt Arboretum
- Bob Browning's talk - '200 miles and a black toenail = £1000'
- Susan Marshfield's humorous talk 'Mini Breaks'
- The Body Shop Party
- 'The Edwardian Christmas' by the always hilarious Yvonne Bell.
- Floral decorations and Embroidery.
- (a possible) visit to Highgrove House Gardens and A Canal boat trip.

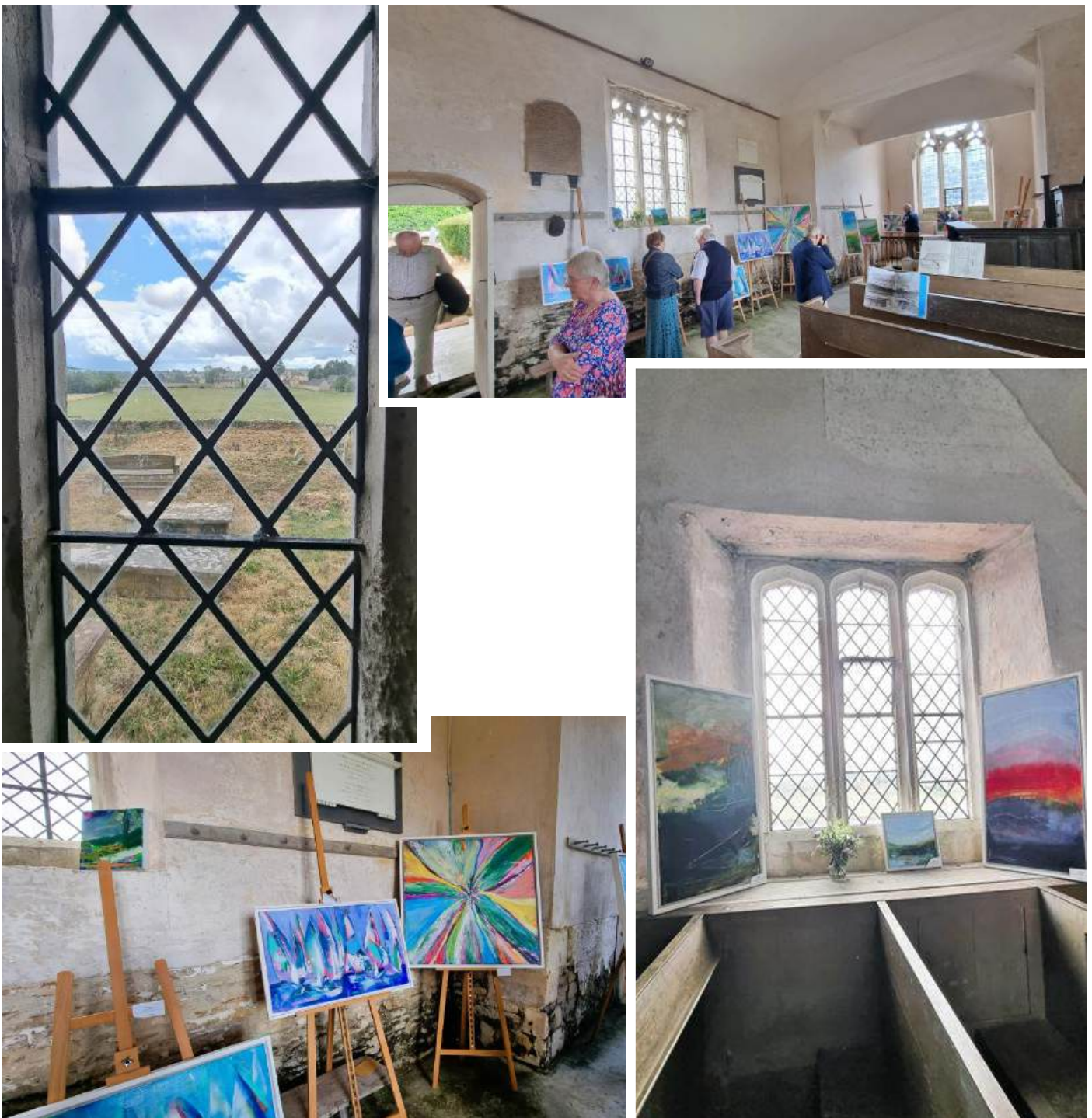
Badminton Benefice Festival of Music 2025

On Sunday the 6th July, St Arild's church at Oldbury-on-the-Hill provided the perfect setting for an exhibition of contemporary art by local artist Sue Brown. The exhibition was organised by the Badminton Benefice as part of its 2025 Festival of Music, which is bringing a series of imaginative events to local churches over the summer.

The location of St Arild's church might best be described as "rural", sitting as it does in a field 1-mile north of Didmarton, adjacent to Manor Farm. There's a bridle path that takes you as far as the churchyard, then you choose your own route to the church itself – there is no path. It's as if the church has spent the last 150 years or so stuck in a timewarp.

That changes as soon as you walk through the door - rather than the dark and sombre interior that you might expect, light floods into the simple whitewashed interior through windows which, with one exception, are filled with clear glass. The effect is stunning, really bringing to life the vibrant canvases on display. The background music provided by the Wotton Chamber Group added further to the atmosphere, ensuring the event was another success for the team who have worked so hard to deliver the 2025 Festival of Music.

If you want to see the church for yourself, it is currently open daily between 10am and 4pm.



GLORIA GIBSON 1927 – 2025

We were greatly saddened to hear the news that Gloria Gibson had passed away. Gloria was married to the Reverend Tom Gibson, who for many years was the vicar of Badminton, Little Badminton and Acton Turville. Many people still talk warmly about Tom and Gloria, and remember how fully they embraced village life, becoming such popular and much-loved members of our community.

Gloria was a warm, kind and caring person, but she also lived a fascinating life, albeit one sometimes tinged with sadness. We are indebted to Angus, Michael and Phillippa for letting us reproduce the eulogy that was read at their mother's funeral which perfectly described a life well lived. We send them our sincere condolences.

Her passing represents the end of an era. Rest in peace Gloria.

Born in 1927 in Durban South Africa, Gloria was the only child of an English father and a Norwegian mother, who was part of the Norwegian diaspora who settled in Natal in the 19th century. Due to her father's work as a pilot and was based there, she spent a lot of her childhood in Lorenzo Marques in what is now Mozambique where they lived in considerable style at the famous Polana Hotel. Her father, our grandfather, was an early aviator in Africa and Gloria would often accompany him on adventures into almost unknown parts of central Africa in the 1930's, mapping air routes and refuelling stops for Imperial Airways.

After the war broke out she was sent to boarding school in South Africa. At the age of 14 she was called to the head mistress's study to be told that her mother had died of a sudden and unexpected brain hemorrhage. With her father away fighting, she spent the war at St Anne's at Hilton, a well-known girls boarding school in Natal. Her holidays were spent staying with various relatives and her uncle on his very beautiful Stud Farm in Natal where she spent her time riding and perfecting her Zulu, a language which she spoke fluently! I bet none of you knew that!

Gloria would always with great pride and with good reason, term herself 'a child of the Empire'...

As the war and her schooling ended, she went on to Cape Town University where she flourished. Parents of friends have always maintained that she was the most beautiful girl of her year and was always in great demand! Her best friend at the time was Dorothea, Tom's sister.

Tom had just returned from the war and had rejoined the family business, TT Gibson & Son in Cape Town. The inevitable introduction by Dorothea took place and the rest is history! It was love at first sight and they quickly became the most glamorous couple in Cape Town, seen at all the best parties including the late Queen's 21st Birthday Party at Government House in 1947. A historical event she was very proud to have witnessed.

They duly married in Johannesburg, where Gloria's father now lived and they set up home in Cape Town where I and



Lady Caroline Somerset (centre) and Gloria Gibson (right) with members of the Guide Dog charity, who the Valentine Club regularly supported with fundraising events.

then our late brother Graeme were born. It was at this point that tragedy struck. They then had a daughter, Diana. Sadly she died at about 3 months... This was a huge event in our mother's life and very nearly sent her mad. Tom decided to extract us all to a new place. So we set sail from Cape Town to Southampton where we lived outside London and then Angus was born!

Gloria had great taste and as always created beautiful homes for us all and we started to settle into English life. Tom worked in London in, of all things, advertising, which I understand he was very good at! But 1950's post war England was dull and grey and they both yearned to be back in Africa.

Our grandfather's aviation company in South Africa was thriving and he asked Tom to set up an office in Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. So off we went to live in Salisbury, now Harare. Again, Gloria created the most beautiful home for us all. She would throw fun packed birthday parties for us and we would holiday in the bush, on the Zambesi and at Victoria Falls. And then with great joy Philippa was born!

GLORIA GIBSON CONT'D

Since coming back from the war, Tom had never really settled. He was agitated and restless. We had become more and more involved with the life of the cathedral in Salisbury. Graeme and I were altar boys and choristers and some of the clergy had become close family friends.

Something had triggered in Tom's mind and he decided to train for ordination as an Anglican priest. To do this meant he would have to go to England to train. UDI was boiling up in Rhodesia, violence was breaking out and it was time to go, again!

Given the style in which we lived in Rhodesia it was a big ask to expect Gloria to face a future as a vicar's wife in rural England but no, she absolutely went for it and couldn't have been more supportive and enthusiastic.

He finished his training at Sarum Theological College in Salisbury (Wiltshire), yes, Salisbury to Salisbury!



Then proceeded 'parish life'... As you all know Tom was a larger-than life figure. For us all, it was like growing up with Earnest Hemingway, lots of noise and lots of bluster! But Gloria was really the power behind the throne, her calm, good sense and reason would always quietly prevail. Together they made the perfect team and a lot of the success Tom made as a priest would not have been possible were it not for his steadfast and sensible wife, Gloria!

After his Curacy in nearby Harnham where we lived in a very cold and damp cottage. Their first parish was Rowde and Poulshot near Devizes in Wiltshire. In another life Gloria could have been a very successful interior designer. Rowde Vicarage was a Georgian Vicarage with a beautiful walled garden and on a very limited budget, she made it into the most elegant home. It was a fully functioning family home and we were all encouraged to bring and entertain our friends, sometimes late into the night and so it became the go-to after party venue throughout our teenage years.

Master, the then Duke of Beaufort invited Tom to be Vicar of Badminton, Acton Turville and Hawksbury Upton, after having apparently, unsuccessfully, advertised the position in Horse & Hound magazine! Whilst Tom didn't hunt he was encouraged to accept and was duly installed as vicar. Tom and Gloria both loved Badminton and threw themselves into parish life. Gloria helped establish with The Valentine's Club, a club for the young wives of the parish and endless other parish activities, at the same time as supporting and organising Tom, no small feat! She loved her garden and entertaining and they made life-long friendships here. The annual Badminton Horse Trials demanded a lot of organising, particularly the big Sunday Service for the competitors and guests, including, very often, the Royal Family. When David Beaufort succeeded to the Dukedom, Tom and Gloria continued their already well-established roles in the parishes with his full encouragement.

Then tragedy struck again, with the death by cancer of our brother Graeme who at the age of 24 had just married the lovely Caro. He died here in Little Badminton and is buried next to Tom. This event was tumultuous and rocked the whole family to the core.



'Retirement' wasn't in my parents' vocabulary. No sooner had they settled in Bath than they were off to run the Anglican Church at Cadenabbia on Lake Como in Italy as visiting chaplain, and wife! Then followed St Georges Anglican Church in Venice and on one occasion Palermo in Sicily, as well! They loved their 'retirement' and were in their favourite places for months at a time over many years.

Despite the tragedies that had befallen her, Gloria was a woman of unbending faith, it was a faith that fuelled her life.

Last September, Gloria asked to move to Bridgemoor Care Home, on the river in Bath. A more appropriate home you could not find, it was also where Tom finally died. The staff at Bridgemoor were the kindest and most attentive you could imagine and they respected her dignity and her very forthright views! She felt safe and until a few months ago would be seen sitting in her armchair, hair done, make up on with her pearls and ear rings reading Country Life!

Dear Gloria, we shall miss you....



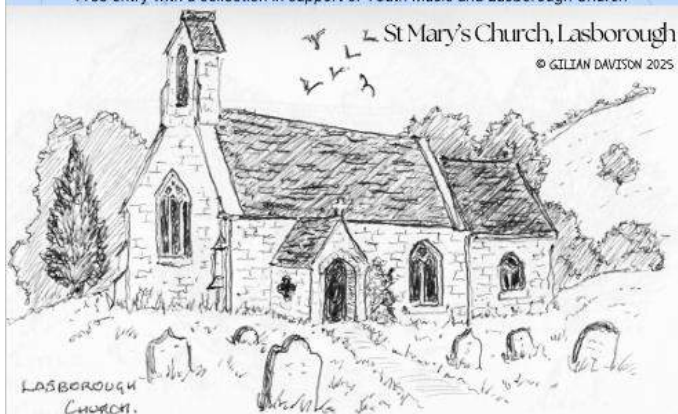
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Church Matters

August 2025 Letter from the Vicar

Dear all,

The Lord's prayer is a beautiful prayer and one that we all know well. Today I just want to spend some time writing about it.

Often we think that sorting out life's problems is solely down to us, and the problems of the world can weigh heavily upon our shoulders.

When his disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, the Lord's prayer was his reply, and so it is a lesson, this is how you should pray! And the key themes he was teaching them was to pray with **humility** with **dependency** upon God. And in complete **trust** that God would hear them and respond.

That is quite radical these days, when the emphasis is upon **us** being in control. As if **we can control** our way through life. Well, we must **respond** to situations, but **responding** is very different from trying to **control** situations. Responsibility is not the same thing as control. The **ability to respond** is literally what responsibility means. Rather than walking by on the other side. Or burying our head in the sand. It is doing something to help. Control, on the other hand, is assuming dominance.

So, the Lord's prayer teaches us to respond to the world around us, not bury our heads in the sand. But doing so in a way that is dependent upon God's grace and support. 'Not in our strength alone O Lord, but Thine, O Lord'. Not with dominance.

With my best wishes for the summer holiday,

Richard

Rev Richard Thomson

Priest in charge, Badminton Benefice website: www.badmintonbenefice.com

Email: revrichardthomson@gmail.com

Home: 01454 606854/ Mob:07717791858

Church Services for August 2025

Date	Time	Parish	Service	Minister
3 rd August Trinity 7	9.30am	Lasborough	Matins	D Hewitt
	10.00am	Hawkesbury	Morning Prayer	Mrs D Young
	6.00pm	Acton Turville	Evensong	Mr M Butler
10 th August Trinity 8	9.30am	Lasborough	Holy Communion BCP	Rev P Cheeseman
	9.30am	Leighterton	Holy Communion BCP	Mr R Bryant-Pearson
	6.00pm	Hawkesbury	Evensong	Sir Ian MacFadyan
17 th August Trinity 9	9.00am	Didmarton	Holy Communion BCP	Rev R Thomson
	10.00am	Hawkesbury	Family Service – Pet Service	Rev R Thomson
	11.15am	Sopworth	Matins	Rev R Thomson
	6.00pm	Acton Turville	Evening Prayer	Rev R Thomson
24 th August Trinity 10	9.30am	Lasborough	Holy Communion CW	Rev R Thomson
	11.15am	Little Badminton	Matins + HC	Rev R Thomson
	6.00pm	Hawkesbury	Evensong	Rev R Thomson
31 st August Trinity 11	11.00am	Hawkesbury Showground	Songs of Praise	Rev R Thomson

See Benefice website for readings: badmintonbenefice.com

ACTON TURVILLE PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council last met on Monday the 14th July. The minutes of the meeting can be viewed on the Parish Council's website <https://www.actonturvilleparishcouncil.org/documents/minutes>.

District Councillor Reports: District Councillor Becky Romaine provided an update on a number of outstanding issues at our July meeting, ranging from the incorrectly-positioned bus stop sign to the serious risk to pedestrians from the incomplete pavement between Burton and Acton Turville. It is hoped a site meeting between the Parish Council and South Glos Council will help progress these issues. Councillor Romaine also highlighted forthcoming changes to recycling collections which will initially see collection days changed before a move to three-weekly collections in 2026. Leaflets explaining the changes are being provided to all households.

Police Report: In July, our local PCSO Cheryl Dibble presented the latest figures for reported crime in Acton Turville which remains extremely low. The Police van will make further visits to the village, providing villagers an opportunity to chat and discuss any issues with the local team. The next visit will be on the morning of Friday 5th September which coincides with the Acton Turville Social coffee morning. Further information will be provided closer to the date.

Proposed Housing Development: Representatives from the Badminton Estate gave a presentation on a proposal to build 50 new dwellings in the village. Full details can be found elsewhere in this issue of Talk Back.

Flooding: Badminton Estate continue to investigate and rectify the issues which contributed to the flooding that occurred at the end of November 2024. Several potential factors have emerged, including issues with drains and soakaways adjacent to the Tormarton Road and on the Littleton Drew road. Work is on-going to reduce the risk of similar flooding occurring in the future.

Date of next meeting: Monday 8th September 2025 @ 7.00pm
(there is no meeting in August)

Venue: Trinity School, Acton Turville.

Contact details for Parish Councillors are as follow:

Chair: Sybil Haddrell 218772, Vice Chair: Ian Carter 07789 057168,
Sally Smith 218510, Mark Studden 07885 791314, Melanie Greggain

Parish Clerk: Sue Radford-Hancock Tel: 01249 650052

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

Sudoku

August's challenge set by Neil Fozard.

To solve the puzzle, each row, column and 3x3 box must contain each of the numbers 1 to 9.

EASY !!

	3		8	7				
	9			1		4		7
			3			5	9	
	6			9	2		8	
		1						9
	2			5	7		6	
			9			8	1	
	8			2		3		6
	1		7	6				

NOT SO EASY !!

							3	
	6	8				7		1
			9	4			6	
					1			
6	9	1				5		
3		5				6		
8			5	6			2	
				3			7	
4		3	7	1				

Answers to the July quizzes:

'Easy'

6	3	9	4	7	2	1	5	8
8	2	7	3	5	1	9	6	4
1	4	5	6	8	9	7	2	3
2	7	6	5	1	8	3	4	9
3	9	8	7	2	4	6	1	5
4	5	1	9	6	3	2	8	7
9	6	2	8	3	5	4	7	1
5	1	4	2	9	7	8	3	6
7	8	3	1	4	6	5	9	2

'Not so Easy'

3	9	6	2	8	7	5	1	4
5	8	1	4	9	6	7	3	2
4	2	7	1	3	5	9	6	8
7	6	4	9	2	8	3	5	1
2	3	9	5	4	1	6	8	7
8	1	5	7	6	3	2	4	9
6	5	2	8	1	9	4	7	3
9	7	8	3	5	4	1	2	6
1	4	3	6	7	2	8	9	5

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THANK YOU

We would like to thank everyone who donated to the Winterbourne Wind Band Fundraiser on Saturday 5th July. Your donations are very much appreciated by us, the Band, the charity and the Ukrainians who joined us and said how touched they are that we are still remembering and supporting them three years on. It was a lovely afternoon spent with a lot of very generous people who embraced the change of venue and enjoyed the music.



We are absolutely delighted to tell you that we were able to send £1,148 to 'The Helping Hand for Ukraine', a division of Chernobyl Children's Life Line.

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