

Local Talk Back

DECEMBER 2023

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

ISSUE 544



Alastair Gilbert with the standard of the Royal British Legion at the
2023 Acton Turville Remembrance Event

Photograph: Chris Farrell



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

EDITORIAL DECEMBER 2023

As I sit here putting the finishing touches to the final Local Talk Back of 2023, I look out the window and see the first indication that winter might at last be on its way. It was only a few days ago that we had temperatures in double figures and I was thinking about cutting the grass or painting the garden fence, but now the frosts have come my thoughts have shifted to putting up the Christmas tree, gathering firewood and panic-buying mince pies.

The recent warm spell rather sums up the confused seasons that characterised 2023. After a wet spring, the summer weather arrived early, and from the middle of May we were enjoying long periods of sunshine. Come June, we were basking in record temperatures. Was this the new Mediterranean climate we'd been told to expect after 2022's heatwave, the 'new norm' that we'd heard so much about? We couldn't know for certain, but we responded by making ourselves comfortable on our new garden furniture, stocking up on charcoal for the barbeque, and bracing ourselves for several months of wall-to-wall sunshine. In hindsight the money would have been better spent on umbrellas and wet weather clothing, as by July the 'new norm' had morphed into something suspiciously like the 'old norm' with a period of rain that lasted throughout August and into September. Then, just as we'd locked the barbeque away in the shed and tossed the charcoal in the bin, back came the sun and we found ourselves enjoying one of those mythical Indian summers that we'd previously only read about. Nobody can be sure what the next few months might bring, but it might be best not to get too comfortable as the BBC keeps repeating a programme about the great freeze of 1963. I wonder if they're trying to tell us something?

Despite the confused weather picture, a quick look back at 2023 through the pages of Talk Back shows there were still plenty of events to enjoy. Bright sunshine welcomed visitors to the first of the three Badminton House open garden days in April, but by the time the horse trials came around at the beginning of May, things had taken a turn for the worse and it looked like the going was likely to be soft – especially in the car parks. Thankfully the weather was dry and bright for cross country day, held on the Sunday this year to avoid a clash with the coronation of King Charles III, and although the conditions were challenging, the cream came to the top and it was a popular win for Ros Canter on Lordships Graffalo. June once again saw the Badminton gardens bathed in brilliant sunshine for their second open day of 2023, then in July it was time for something completely different – two outdoor concerts held a mere stone's throw from the majestic Worcester Lodge. This was a new venture for the Badminton Estate team, but fans flocked in their thousands to see firstly Rod Stewart then, two weeks later, The Who perform all the hits from their extensive back catalogues. Over in Acton Turville, the main event was a Summer Party, expertly organised as always by the hard-working Acton Turville Social team. Protected from torrential rain under two huge marquees, villagers enjoyed hot food, live entertainment and plenty of community spirit late into the night. To round off the year, Badminton House opened their gardens one final time in September, and guess what? The sun shone, and the biggest queues were to be found at the Marshfield ice cream van. It was great to see so much going on, and our thanks go to everyone who put so much effort into organising all the events that were held locally in 2023. Top tip for 2024 seems to be to plan things to align with the dates of the Badminton Open Gardens, don't you think?

As is customary at this time of year, there are some people Local Talk Back would like to thank. This year we've been very grateful to receive news, articles, reports, photos, even paintings from many contributors without which we couldn't put together the newsletter every month. We've also received some lovely feedback throughout the year from our readers from as far away as Australia (and Westerleigh!), and some very generous donations, all of which we very much appreciate. As always, Sprint Print in Yate have done a fantastic job with the printing, invariably turning it around within ridiculously tight timescales. After Talk Back emerges from the printers, it's collected by Richard and Belinda Elford. They sort the 400 copies into bundles which they hand to their group of distributors who drop a copy through everyone's letterboxes. Without their support, we'd be lost. And then of course there are our advertisers, expertly managed by Pauline, who enable us to provide you with Talk Back free of charge. To all of you, thank you so much.

So, as I clear space for my bulk purchase of mince pies and work out how to fit a 10-foot Christmas tree in the living room, that just leaves room for all of us here at Local Talk Back to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year. Have a good one, and look forward to seeing you in 2024!

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 FEBRUARY EDITION OF LOCAL TALK BACK BY 15TH JANUARY 2024.
(THERE IS NO LOCAL TALK BACK IN JANUARY)

THANK YOU.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

December 2023

Fri 1st Acton Turville Social Fireside Carols – Fox & Hounds
 Sat 2nd Trinity School Christmas Fair, Acton Turville
 Sat 2nd/ Wreath-Knitting Workshop, Badminton Estate
 Sun 3rd Wreath-Making Workshop, Badminton Estate
 Wed 6th Badminton Craft Group
 Fri 8th Wine & Food Tasting, The Stores, Acton Turville
 Fri 8th Whisky & Chocolate Tasting, Badminton Estate
 Sat 9th Mince Pie Masterclass, Badminton Estate
 Mon 11th Acton Turville Parish Council Meeting
 Wed 13th Luncheon Club Christmas Meal, Fox & Hounds
 Sun 17th Carol Service, St Marys, Acton Turville, 6pm
 Sun 24th Christingle Service, St Marys, Acton Turville, 4.30pm

January 2024

Fri 5th Acton Turville Social Coffee Morning, Fox & Hounds
 Mon 8th Acton Turville Parish Council Meeting
 Wed 10th Luncheon Club, Fox & Hounds

*****Please check with venues before setting off*****

Please let Local Talk Back know if you're planning an event and we'll add it to our dates for the diary.

DONATIONS RECEIVED THIS MONTH

This month from we have received one anonymous donation of £25. Thank you We very much 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 Badminton Stores.

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*

ST. MARY'S CHURCH, ACTON TURVILLE

100 Club

WINNERS FOR NOVEMBER 2023

Prue Moss
 Kate Bruton
 Karen Walter

Congratulations!



Poppy Appeal 2023

The Badminton Branch of the Royal British Legion would like to thank everyone who supported this year's Poppy Appeal which saw the Branch raise the amazing sum of £10833.43.

Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

ST MARY'S CHURCH, ACTON TURVILLE 100 CLUB

We'd like to say thank you to everyone who has supported us again this year - it's not too late to renew your membership or to join, but I thought I would use this opportunity to answer a couple of questions I have recently been asked. We have to thank the staff in the shop for drawing the numbers each month, and I am pleased to let you know that almost £500 has been raised, so far, this year.

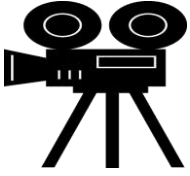
Chris Spreadborough

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WHAT'S ON



DIDMARTON RURAL CINEMA

The Didmarton Rural Cinema will be back in the New Year after our Christmas break when we will once again be showcasing some of the best recent films in the friendly surroundings of Didmarton Village Hall.

We would like to thank everyone who has supported us in 2023, and wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.



& HOUNDS INN

Acton Turville, nr Badminton
GL9 1HW

01454 218224

Fox & Hounds Luncheon Club

Christmas Lunch

Wednesday 13th December

Two Course Christmas Lunch
with a glass of wine or a soft drink,
followed by coffee and mince pies.

Entertainment from singer Richie 'C'

£16.00 per head

Everyone welcome!

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



ACTON TURVILLE SOCIAL UPDATES

Acton Turville Social wishes you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

We hope that next year we will have lots of fun again with our "dog" racing, quiz night, a new event in the pipeline and yes, our village Summer Party.

Coffee mornings resume on Friday January 5th - all welcome - especially the cake makers.

All our events happen thanks to enthusiastic volunteers and donations.

See you all soon!

Mel, Karen and Caroline, Acton Turville Social



St Mary's Church, Acton Turville

The Christmas Service of Nine Lessons and Carols will be held on

Sunday 17th December at 6.00pm.

Everyone is welcome. The service will be led by Rev Richard Thomson.

Stay for mulled wine and mince pies afterwards.



The Christingle Service will be held on

Sunday 24th December at 4.30pm.

Children are especially welcome.

This service will be led by Dr Matthew Butler.



The church's income is very small right now; we have to rely wholly on voluntary donations. Expenditure on insurance, electricity, heating, maintenance and repair and diocesan quota amounts currently to £1000 more than our annual income. If you would consider making a monthly or yearly monetary gift, however small, please contact actonturvillechurchtreasurer@gmail.com or call Chris Farrell or Eileen Stephens. We have a "planned giving" scheme that will enable the church to recover tax on donations.

Thank you.

NEWS NEWS NEWS



BADMINTON ESTATE

Greetings from Badminton Estate. Our upcoming season of events are selling out so make sure you snap up the final spaces before the Christmas break. Sharpen your culinary skills by participating in a pastry masterclass led by the illustrious Chef Julie Jones or indulge in the unique experience of Whisky Tasting with Highland Chocolates. We're eagerly looking forward to hosting you at these fantastic events and spreading the joy of the season.

CHRISTMAS WREATH KNITTING

SATURDAY 2ND DECEMBER, 11.30AM - 1.30PM

CHRISTMAS WREATH MAKING WITH THE FLOWER HUT, TETBURY

SUNDAY 3RD DECEMBER, 11AM - 1PM AND 3PM - 5PM

WHISKY & CHOCOLATE TASTING WITH DISTILLER DAVID WOOD

FRIDAY 8TH DECEMBER, 7PM - 9PM

CHRISTMAS MINCE PIE MASTERCLASS WITH CHEF JULIA JONES

SATURDAY 9TH DECEMBER, 10AM - 12PM

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



Unique Acton Turville Christmas Cards

The village as it used to be



ALL CARDS NOW HALF PRICE!
Packs of five just £2.50!

Printed from original paintings
on quality card A6 size

Packs of five £2.50 including envelopes.
Available from Jenny Lomas 0774 871 6148

Jennylomas04@gmail.com

All profits shared between Parkinson's UK and
Acton Turville Social.

Acton Turville 2024 Calendar

Raising Funds for St Mary's Church, Acton Turville

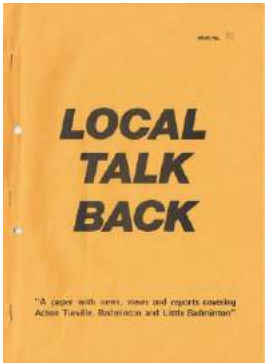
A huge thank-you to everyone who has purchased one of the fund-raising calendars for Acton Turville Church and to the local businesses who have sponsored pages. Copies have so far reached America, Australia and New Zealand so our little village is certainly 'on the map'. Copies are still available from The Village Stores and stocks will be available into the New Year - so if you are still scratching your head or panicking about a last-minute present, why not give something which will last a whole year and also support our village church. Remember - "A Calendar Isn't Just for Christmas!"

Chris Farrell, Parish Treasurer



FROM THE ARCHIVES

45 Years Ago - December 1978



There's a big announcement in December 1978's edition of Local Talk Back, something that will become a mainstay of village life for years to come – the Fun Run. Or to give it its full title, the Annual Inter-Village Charity Fun Run. This first event was scheduled for Sunday the 31st December, starting and finishing at the Fox & Hounds in Acton Turville. Contestants were under strict instruction to be present by 11am in preparation for the start at 11.30am, when runners would be flagged off by His Grace the Duke of Beaufort. The route, which was “somewhere between 3½ and 4½ miles” (it seems it hadn't been measured particularly accurately), initially headed up to Littleton Drew before dropping down to a mandatory checkpoint at the Plume of Feathers in Burton. From there it was about-turn with the second half of the race following the same route back to the Fox & Hounds. You could compete individually or as part of a team, with substantial prizes available to the winners of

each of the six classes. For instance, the winners of the men's team event got to share a barrel of beer, whilst a magnum of champagne was the prize for the winning ladies team. There was a similar theme when it came to the individual classes with bottles of whiskey and brandy being the rewards for the winners, providing a real incentive to put in a kick and get to the front. Of course the real winner was always intended to be the charitable cause that the run was supporting, which in 1978 was the Multiple Sclerosis Society, but when an event starts in a pub, has a checkpoint in a pub, ends in a pub and offers beer, champagne and spirits to the winners, it's clear that the other priority was to have some fun. Well done to Bob Osborne for getting such a laudible event up and...well, running.

For those who don't look upon running as a leisure pursuit, Les Rochester has a couple of local-interest books to review. The first is “The Badminton Tradition”, by Barry Campbell, who had spent much time speaking to local residents and leafing through the archives at Badminton House to produce his definitive history of both the house and the Somerset family who have lived there since the seventeenth century. The book, which also provides a brief history of the Beaufort hunt and the Badminton Horse Trials, is a splendid read and can be readily found on-line at a reasonable price. Slightly more elusive is the other book reviewed by Les, called “A Companion into the Southwold” which covers the history of villages in the South Cotswold. The book was written by local historian Percy Cousins and published in 1975. Only a limited number were printed, but frustratingly, “technical difficulties” prevented further editions appearing which is a shame as it sounds most interesting, containing such priceless gems as “The absence of snakes and adders in Badminton was noted in “Natural Rarities in Gloucestershire” in 1681, the cause being deduced as the barrenness and coldness of the land thereabouts.” Les clearly enjoyed the two books which he concluded “made welcome additions to our local history records”.

Elsewhere, much of the December 1978's Talk Back is filled with news of forthcoming fundraisers and the results of those that have already taken place: for instance, the British Legion Poppy Appeal collected £25.62½p in Acton Turville and £13.40½p in Burton, whilst Ruth Hazzard collected £19.70 for the Royal National Institute for the Blind. Fundraising has its risks though – Brown Owl Jean Earl was kept busy manning the Brownies' jumble stall at the Badminton Village Hall Christmas Bazaar but still managed to come home with more items than she took to sell! I'm sure many of us can relate to that Jean. As for forthcoming events, on the 10th December, a very special event was taking place at Great Badminton Church, which was hosting a Welsh Male Voice Choir to raise funds for Cancer Research, and on the 18th December, Trinity School were having their annual Carol Concert, complete with obligatory mince pies. Talking about carols, a note of desperation can be detected in an appeal by the Acton Turville Parish Council, who want villagers to join with them when they sing carols on the 22nd December. Applicants are required to have “the necessary stamina and/or voices”. You get the feeling that both would be a bonus, but you'll still get the gig if you have just one or the other. Or maybe neither. The merry bunch were planning to stop at strategic points around the village before heading off to the Fox & Hounds. Funny how so many events wind up there isn't it?

Last word from December 1978 goes to Ray Bird:

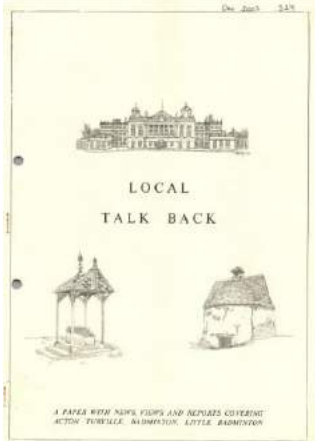
“A disco will be held in Badminton Village Hall on Saturday 9th December to raise funds for Badminton Cricket Club. Tickets at 75p available from Gerald Bodman, Terry Witchard or myself, or any cricket club member. Dancing will be to the Captain Apache Roadshow from 8pm to 12pm.”

Regular readers will know that our reviews of 1978 have provided regular updates on the highs and lows of the local disco outfit run by Adrian Knight and Nicky Capp, so it's great to see them firing on all seasons at the end of the year.

Cont'd over

From the Archives (cont'd)

20 Years Ago - December 2003



As so often happens when we look back through the archives, not much seems to have changed in the intervening 25 years. The Fun Run is still taking place, starting and finishing at the Fox & Hounds. In 2003 it was aiming to raise £3000 to purchase specialist equipment for the University Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, who would use it to support their research into joint replacement and rehabilitation. And carol singing continues in Acton Turville, although there's no mention of the Parish Council leading it this year which might be telling. The Fox & Hounds in Acton Turville are advertising their New Year's Eve event which includes music and a free finger buffet, whilst over in Badminton, the Village Club have their own party where revellers can have fun dancing to Tim's Disco. Hang on, "Tim's disco"? What happened to the Captain Apache Roadshow? Am I going to have to read through 25-years' worth of Talk Backs to find out or can someone fill us in (please)?

There's another break with tradition to report. For 24 years, the Valentine Club had been holding a Christmas Party in Badminton for the more senior members of the community. For the first time since it started, the ever-popular event had been forced to find a new venue due to the fire that damaged the memorial hall earlier in the year. They weren't going far, only over the A46 to the Village Hall in Hawkesbury Upton, and there was a coach laid on to make sure everyone got there (and back) safely so the prospects were looking good for another thoroughly enjoyable day.

10 Years Ago - December 2013



And so we come to the final part of our look through some old editions of Local Talk Back. It's December 2013, we're up to Issue 436, and Yvonne Nettles, Sally Smith and Sandra Broomsgrove, aka the Three Country Girls, are still in the editorial driving seat. They've had a day out, to the garden centre at Lacock, and we join them as they sit in the tea room, trying to comprehend what they had just experienced:

"Take the first step through the door and you are in a winter wonderland as you walk through a grotto full of displays of snowy scenes, a giant gingerbread house and a life-size Santa. The main displays are of a deer under a tree of white fairy lights, and an almost life-size snowy garden scene complete with wooden bridge and life-size geese swimming in the 'icy stream.'

"Step out through the back door and you are looking out on a 300 sq metre ice-skating rink, complete with Alpine Café and terrace overlooking the ice. The ice-skating spectacular is open 7-days a week. Ride-on bananas and penguins for children and beginners are available."

Yes, I had to read that last bit more than once as well. And I wonder what the Three Country Girls would have made of this year's display at the same garden centre, which advertises its Christmas section as the largest in the country? They'd probably have needed more than cups of tea to come to terms with it.

The big changes from our reviews of December 1978 and 2003 are a decline in fund raising and festive events in general. By 2013, the Valentine Club had reached the end of the line, bringing to an end the hugely popular Christmas Parties for the Senior Citizens. And where Talk Back had previously been full of announcements about carol singing, Christmas Bazaars, carol concerts and male voice choirs, by 2013 there appeared to be far less of that sort of event taking place. Even the fun run had hung up its running spikes. On the positive side, the void left by the Valentine Club had been partially filled by the Luncheon Club which was meeting once a month at the Fox & Hounds. In December 2013 they were pushing out the (gravy) boat for their Christmas Party - not only was there entertainment from singers Mac & Son, but there was the promise of presents and prizes for all on the 11th December, bringing to an end a very successful year for the Luncheon Club (which today remains more popular than ever). Not to be outdone, the Badminton Village Club were once again holding a New Year's Eve disco, but not just any disco - they'd gone upmarket with a Dinner Jacket and Dresses disco. I wonder what the Captain Apache Roadshow (or their predecessor, Merlin's Disco) would have made of that?

So that's the end of our wander down memory lane. We hope you've enjoyed our monthly ramblings over the year, we've definitely appreciated your feedback, and it's been good to hear that our articles have helped remind so many of you about events that happened in our villages over the years. Times change, people move on, but memories last forever.

Meet The Advertiser

Local Talk Back was recently contacted by Emily King who was looking to advertise the regular Qigong classes that she runs at the Badminton Memorial Hall. We were naturally delighted to include Emily's advert, but before that we needed to answer a rather fundamental and important question - what exactly is Qigong? To find out, we arranged a chat with Emily, who very patiently explained all about Qigong and its many benefits, before telling us what we could expect from the classes she runs at Badminton.



Thanks for taking the time to chat with us Emily. We're very keen to find out more about Qigong, but before we get onto that, could you tell us a bit about yourself please?

Of course. My name is Emily King and following many years of working as a Mental Health Nurse on a busy inpatient ward, I have become increasingly passionate about more natural and empowering forms of self-care for both the body and mind. There is a huge amount of anxiety and stress around within the Western world, and this is clearly leading to an increase in both mental and physical health problems. I discovered Qigong around 10 years ago, but still, even after all this time, following each practice my mind is clear and at ease and my body feels energised and full of vitality. It's simply something I had to share with other people, hence why I trained to become a teacher.

So, on to the big question: just what is Qigong?

Qigong originates from China and has been practised as a form of Chinese medicine for over 4,000 years. Chinese medicine is based on the premise of preventing ill health from occurring rather than treating ill health when it occurs. In more Western models of medicine we seek help and treatment for our ill health when the problem has already occurred and yet many of our health conditions have been many months and years in the making and could have been avoided.

As a famous Chinese saying states – “Don't dig your well when you are dying of thirst, do it before”

How does Qigong work then, and what are the benefits of practising it?

Qigong works with your energy system and gets you in touch with the natural flow of energy in both your body and mind. With regular practice you will find that your bodies energy, or “Qi”, has become more open and free-flowing, which in turn allows for all of your vital organs to function fully for optimal health and wellbeing. Many health conditions can be improved upon or resolved with regular Qigong practice.

Qigong practice is incredibly relaxing and, due to its mindful nature, focus upon the breath and the use of gentle movements, it really does help to de-stress the mind and return you to a sense of calm, clarity and mental wellbeing. Many people report that they also sleep much better following the classes, which is definitely something I have found to be true for myself.

If left within our bodies, negative emotions, anxiety and stress can build up and stagnate within us and this in turn can cause our natural energy flow to become blocked. We even hold on to past traumatic experiences in a similar way as the emotions and stress within these experiences becomes held as a blockage within our body, in many ways keeping us held within this state for much of the time. We can even take on and store the negative energy and emotions from others. All this blocked, negative energy can cause a myriad of health problems as our vital organs stop functioning as they need to for optimal health. When our energy is prevented from circulating freely, we experience pain, stiffness and general ill health as our immune system becomes compromised. It is believed now that 95% of GP visits, with the vast array of health problems we present with, are stress related. This is where Qigong can really work its magic!

That sounds very powerful. What form do your classes take?

Within the first part of the classes I lead you through exercises that help to clear out this blocked energy as we release and purge both the body and mind of everything we wish to let go of. Once this energy is cleared we can bring new more vital energy into our bodies. The Qigong classes also bring in stretches, activation exercises and all come to a close with the flow movements which are incredibly relaxing and healing for both your body and mind.

Qigong leaves you feeling energised and full of vital energy, it really is very pleasurable.

As it involves exercise, does that mean you need to be quite fit to take part?

Not at all, the exercises can be enjoyed at any age or fitness level. Qigong can even be done whilst seated for those with mobility issues.

That really is quite fascinating Emily, thanks so much for taking the time to chat to us. All we need to know now are when your classes are taking place.

Evening classes are currently being held at Badminton Memorial Hall every Wednesday from 6pm to 7pm. The perfect way to unwind and clear your mind at the end of the day!

Watch Out, Watch Out, There's An Otter About!

A couple of months back, Jenny Lomas from Acton Turville was alarmed to find that the pond in her garden was being systematically cleared of fish – she estimated as many as 100 might have disappeared in a matter of days. Posting on the Acton Turville Facebook page, Jenny wondered what might be responsible for the pond clearance, and fingers were quickly pointed at everything from mink to beavers. Another possible suspect was the heron that had been spotted on local rooftops, but as she rightly pointed out, it would be quite some heron if it was capable of eating that amount of fish! And it wasn't just the one pond that was being targeted; at least three other villagers reported the same things happening in their gardens.

To find the answer Jenny turned to technology, setting up a night-vision camera in her garden. In no time at all the culprit was identified – it was an otter, who could be seen enjoying a leisurely swim in the pond before sauntering off into the bushes. Now, Acton Turville may lay claim to being the source of the (Bristol) Avon, but it's a long way from the nearest major waterway where you'd expect to find an otter establishing its nest, so where had these ones come from? Had someone released them locally, were they part of a reintroduction programme? Not necessarily, as it turns out otters are surprisingly mobile and can travel 10-15 miles in a single day. They must have really wanted those fish.

It wasn't long before Talk Back started hearing of fish disappearing from ponds slightly further afield, including Burton, The Gibb, even Castle Combe. The most upsetting report came in from Ray Maddock who lives near The Gibb who, over several decades, had built up a magnificent collection of Koi carp, some estimated to weigh up to 25 lbs. When he realised he was losing fish he too set up a camera, and he was similarly stunned to discover that the culprit was an otter. The amazing pictures that you see here came in



from Ray and show the otter struggling to wrestle one of his largest carps from the pond, first by dragging it out by the tail, then sinking its teeth into the fish's nose. In both cases the fish gets away, but the third picture records the results of a successful raid, with the otter disappearing into the undergrowth with one of Ray's prize carps.

We're very grateful to Ray for the pictures. If you have your own otter-related stories, please get in touch!



Top, the otter attempts to drag a 25lb carp from the pond by its tail.

Above, the same fish again being dragged from the pond, this time with the otter holding it firmly by its nose.

Left, the one that didn't get away. And no, the dog isn't real!

Village Agent Update

Help, support, and advice for residents of the Cotswold Edge area, which embraces the villages of Acton Turville, Badminton, Little Badminton, Hawkesbury Upton, Wickwar, Horton and Little Sodbury.



My Village Agent role is overseen by WERN – The West of England Rural Network. **WERN** is a local charity promoting rural sustainability. As we approach the colder months and switch the heating on our thoughts turn to heating costs and how energy efficient our homes are. For some people utility bills are their most significant outlay. If you are struggling with the cost of heating your home or know someone who might benefit from some help or advice there are a couple of schemes of interest:

Warm and Well is managed by Severn Wye Energy Agency on behalf of South Gloucestershire Council. They administer the Home Upgrade Grant - fully-funded home improvements for homes without mains gas heating.

This scheme is for households which:

- ✓ Live in South Gloucestershire
- ✓ Do not have mains gas heating
- ✓ Own or privately rent an inefficient home (EPC rating: D, E, F or G)
- ✓ Have a combined household income of under £31,000 per year

This scheme will provide:

- ✓ Expert surveys, reports and recommendations for your home
- ✓ Fully-funded energy-saving upgrades
- ✓ Improvements such as insulation, heating, renewables.
- ✓ Support for you and your household at each step.

For more information or advice, call **0800 500 3076**, or visit their website and check your eligibility at:

<https://warmandwell.co.uk/grants-and-funding/home-upgrade-grant/>

Pension Credit is extra money to help you cover your costs if you're over State Pension age and living on a low income. You might be able to get it even if you have other income, savings, or assets. Pension Credit comes in two parts - Guarantee Credit and Savings Credit. You might be eligible for one or both parts.

Guarantee Credit tops up your weekly income to a guaranteed minimum level. In 2023-24, this level is:

- **£201.05** if you're single, **£306.85** if you're a couple.

Savings Credit is extra money if you've got some savings or if your income is higher than the basic State Pension. It's available to people who reached State Pension age before 6 April 2016. In 2023-24, you could get up to:

- **£15.94** extra per week if you're single, **£17.84** extra per week if you're a couple.

On the GOV.UK website you can check if you are eligible for Pension Credit and apply online:

<https://www.gov.uk/pension-credit-calculator>

Village Agents can make a real difference to their communities by working with local people and support agencies. Your help to promote and develop the service would be greatly appreciated.

More information on the project can be found here: www.wern.org.uk/village-agents

Or contact me on:

T: 07795442272

E: paul@wern.org.uk

Paul Jones



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Thank You!

I would just like to put on record my thanks to Paul Jones, our local Village Agent, who recently helped me resolve a long-running issue. Like many people, I struggle with computers and find it difficult to find information on websites, including telephone numbers for people to speak with in order to sort any problems. On the advice of a friend, I contacted Paul who visited me in person the next day. He let me explain the issue I was having and promised to look into it, and within a couple of days he confirmed that he had spoken to the relevant people and they had agreed to review my case. I am delighted to say that, thanks to Paul's input, I have now received the response I was looking for.

Until Paul became involved, I was feeling so frustrated that I had no way of finding what was happening to my paperwork. It was such a relief to find someone I could talk to face-to-face, someone who took the time to understand the issue and who had the contacts to find what was happening. I'm sure I would still be waiting for a response had it not been for Paul. I can't thank him enough.

Valerie Ind, Little Badminton

ACTON TURVILLE SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE 2023

by Toby and Noah, Year 5 pupils at Trinity CE Primary School

On Friday 10th November 2023 the staff and pupils of Trinity CE Primary School made their way to St. Mary's Church, Acton Turville for the annual Service of Remembrance.



At 10:30 we lined up ready to walk to the church with two Year 6 pupils, Rayven and Sienna, at the front holding our poppy wreath. Behind them were the remaining Year 6 pupils walking with their Reception buddies, followed by the Year 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 pupils. Once we got to the church we headed inside for the first part of our Remembrance Service.

At the service Reverend Thomson welcomed us. We began by saying a prayer after which two of the school ambassadors, Amelia and Lexi, stood in the pulpit to read from the Book of Romans 12.14-17;

*Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.
Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.
Live in harmony with one another... Do not repay evil for evil.
Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone.*

This was followed by the first of our two hymns;

Remember

*Remember, remember
Those who fought and fell so we could be free
The sacrifice they made; so brave, with valour their lives they gave
Gone, but they live on in memory*

Chorus:

*So bow your head now, standing still in silence we will all pray
To learn and live in peace and justice on Armistice Day.*

*November, November
The clock strikes ten and then, eleven will bring
The silence of respect for those that history can't forget
Now for them a song of thanks we sing*

Chorus (x2):

*So bow your head now, standing still in silence we will all pray
To learn and live in peace and justice on Armistice Day.
(Words and music by Emily Barden)*

We then listened as Caspar, Izzy, Thomas, Sophie and Henry stood in the centre aisle of the church and read '**In Flanders Field**' by John McCrae;



*In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

*We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders Fields.*

Cont'd over

ACTON TURVILLE SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE 2023 (CONT'D)

Our second hymn was **'We will remember'** by Mark and Helen Johnson;

*Turn your thoughts on this occasion
To those who fought and died in the war.
Years have passed and time has forgotten,
But we will remember the soldiers once more*

To end this part of our service Lucca, Lincoln, Luke and Arty read the Trinity CE Primary school prayer;

Dear God,

Thank-you for looking after us on our journey at Trinity.

We know You love and care for us in our days here together. Thank-you that, whoever we are, we are welcomed by You.

Thank-you for so many opportunities to learn and grow.

We are sorry for the times we forget to show Your love to others. Thank-you for Your forgiveness.

We know that, just as Jesus is the Light of the World, we can shine as lights in the world, too.

Please help us show courage, friendship and respect in our learning, our playing and our community.

We ask this through Jesus Christ,

Amen

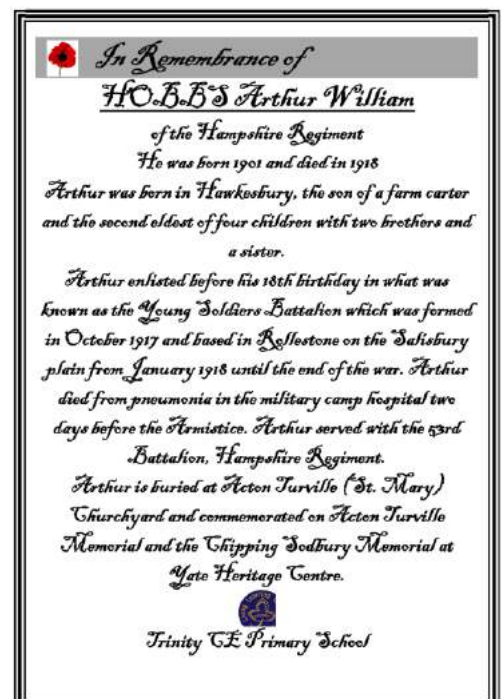


Next, we walked outside to congregate by Arthur William Hobbs' grave for the second part of the service. We were joined by members of the British Legion and the wider community. Once again Reverend Thomson started the proceedings with the act of remembrance, followed by Peter Moss reading the names and a brief biography of the fallen who are associated with Acton Turville.

Two of the school ambassadors, Cameron and Willoughby, then read verse 4 of **'For the fallen'** by Laurence Binyon;

*They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.*

At this point a trumpeter played **'The Last Post'** signifying the start of the two-minute silence and the lowering of the flag held by Alastair Gilbert. The silence was impeccably observed by all present.



ACTON TURVILLE SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE 2023 (CONT'D)

After we heard the '**Reveille**', marking that the the two minute silence was over, Peter Moss read the **Kohima epitaph**;

*When you go home
Tell them of us and say
For your tomorrow
We gave our today*

In line with tradition, the school children laid the wreath and a number of small wooden crosses. Two other wreaths were laid by others present. When everyone got back to their places, we sang the '**National Anthem**' and Reverend Thomson ended the service with a blessing.

Finally, we walked back to our school, taking note of the giant poppies along the route which also had information about local people who served our country. We think it is very important that we mark Remembrance Day every year and pay our respects to those who served and those who lost their lives in service. We would also like to thank the British Legion, Alastair Gilbert, Peter Moss, Reverend Thomson and St. Mary's Church for their help and support.

Lest We Forget



*All photographs courtesy of
Chris Farrell, Acton Turville*

Local Talk Back would like to sincerely thank Toby and Noah for their beautifully-written and thought-provoking article and everyone at Trinity School for making the 2023 Remembrance event so special.

We would also like to thank Alastair Gilbert and the British Legion for all they do to support those who have served their country and to ensure we remember those who lost their lives in the line of duty.

Thank you.



Looking Ahead

The Valentine Club

Our recent series of articles looking back at events which occurred in our villages 45, 20 and 10 years ago has certainly generated a lot of feedback, and we've very much appreciated all the comments that you've sent in. One question that has arisen more than any other was why we chose the years 1978, 2003 and 2013 to focus on? The answer is quite simple. Our original plan was to look back 40, 30 and 20 years, but when we looked in our archives, we found several gaps in our collection so had to select alternative years. I'm pleased to say most of those gaps have now been plugged, thanks to the kind help from some of our readers.

The second most frequent question was why there was so little mention of the Valentine Club. The club was formed back in 1980 and had its first meeting on the 14th February, hence the name. Subsequent meetings were held on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month in the Badminton Memorial Hall, providing a friendly focal-point for people of all ages with a hugely-varied programme of activities, demonstrations and guest speakers. As well as the regular meetings, the Valentine Club is fondly remembered for the many outings and coach trips it organised and the annual Christmas Party it put on for the Senior Citizens, which brought much happiness to so many people. None of this would have been possible without the hard work and commitment of the committee which worked tirelessly behind the scenes. Lady Caroline Somerset accepted an invitation to be the Club's President and Gloria Gibson, wife of The Reverend Tom Gibson, was the Chair. They were ably supported by a team of volunteers, the names of whom will be familiar to many of our readers.

The reason why there wasn't much coverage of the Valentine Club in our From The Archive articles was down to the years we chose – 1978 predated the formation of the club, and the big jump to 2003 skipped the years when the club was at its most active. By 2013, the club was no more. All is not lost though, and we're working hard to prepare an article about The History of the Valentine Club. And that's where we need your help. We'd love to hear about your memories of the Valentine Club, of the club meetings, the Christmas Parties and the days out, whether that's to see shows in Bristol or to the seaside at Weymouth. Maybe you've got some pictures you could share with us? If you can help, please get in touch with us at localtalkback1975@gmail.com and we'll try to pull something together for the New Year. In the meantime, here are some pictures to set the ball rolling.



Clockwise from above:

- *Winner and runner-up the 1981 Royal Wedding cake decorating competition - Sheila Staines and Jenny Bubb.*
- *Children from Trinity School wait to hand out the desserts at the very last Senior Citizens Christmas Party.*
- *Presentation of Indian Cooking.*
- *Lady Caroline with Nellie Rich.*
- *Lady Caroline and Gloria Gibson with members of the Guide Dog charity.*



J J's GARDENING BLOG



What a strange time it has been in the garden. So mild that some plants have done their best to keep flowering, while others look decidedly soggy and might give up altogether. However, trees and shrubs that produce berries have been spectacular. Berberis, Rowan, Cotoneaster, Malus, Skimmia. But it is also the time for topiary to be enjoyed, particularly if frost adorns the outline of a spiral yew, box ball, evergreen archway or lollipop holly. Topiary decorated in small Christmas lights also furnishes the garden. Grasses can be attractive too, such as Panicum, a peachy froth of a mound.

Love Your Evergreens

It's the moment for evergreen trees to show off. They come in a range of colours, sizes and shapes. Going to a specialist nursery will provide you with much more choice and informed advice. One to look out for is Abies nordmanniana 'Golden Spreader', with as its name suggests golden needles. Another more unusual one is Abies Korean 'Ice Breaker' with silver reverse to the needles and fir cones. Do find out from the nursery what the final height will be, all trees continue to grow in height, just some really slowly which are classed as miniature. And be aware some trees can reach 20 metres and will not be a good idea in most gardens. One other point, if you plant a conifer, they don't tell you that they want water until it's too late, so be sure to keep them well watered for at least a year.

And Finally

All the usual advice applies equally to evergreens, a nice well drained soil with sunshine which shows off the colour of the needles. And a mulch of bark chippings or good rotted compost to finish. A nursery you could click on is www.limecross.co.uk in Sussex.

December Sudoku

December'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 !!

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

NOT SO EASY !!

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

Answers to the November quizzes:

'Easy'

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

'Not so Easy'

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

ACTON TURVILLE PARISH COUNCIL

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.

Your co-operation is appreciated. Thank you.

DECEMBER 2023 REPORT

Playing Field –We have received a number of reports recently of dogs being taken into the playing field and, more worryingly, the children's play area, by their owners. Please note that dogs are not allowed to enter either of these areas.

The playing field may be used to hold organised events only with the prior permission of the Parish Council. Anyone wishing to do so should contact the Parish Clerk for a permission form. This is now a standard requirement to comply with our insurers.

Please Scoop the Poop – Numerous people have highlighted to the Parish Council an increase in dog mess that is blighting our village. It's not confined to one area, with the reports relating to a number of areas. As the increase appears to be coincident with the darker mornings and evenings, the charitable explanation is that dog owners are unable to see when or where their bundles of joy have left a deposit. There are less charitable explanations, but we're sure they don't apply round here. Anyway, please ensure you clean up after your dog and don't leave it to some other unfortunate soul to stumble upon it.

Full Fibre Broadband – We were rather hoping that OpenReach would have completed their installation of the hardware necessary to support full fibre broadband by now but sadly that's not the case. Although the service is available to some households in the village, it looks like the remainder will have to wait several months before it is extended to their properties. The Parish Council are endeavouring to confirm with OpenReach their timescales for completing the roll-out of full fibre in Acton Turville and will press to have the remaining work undertaken as soon as possible.

Parish Councillors:

Chair: Sybil Haddrell 218772, Vice Chair: Ian Carter 219129, Sally Smith 218510,
Claire Broomsgrove 218433, Mark Studden 07885 791314

*Next Meeting: Monday 1st December 2023 @ 7 pm. Venue: St Mary's Church, Acton Turville.
Details on Parish Notice Board/Website*

Parish Clerk: Sue Radford-Hancock Tel: 01249 650052

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

DEFIBRILLATOR TRAINING

Would you be interested in learning how to operate an electrical defibrillator (AED)?



Tim and Iris at The Stores in Acton Turville are looking at arranging an informal training course for the unit placed at their premises in February (exact date TBC). This will be open to anyone who wishes to attend.

You will learn how to locate, access and use the defibrillator and perform basic CPR. This is not a first aid qualification, but it could help save a life.

If you are interested, please contact Tim or Iris on 07989701266 or email mrs penn@hotmail.co.uk with the subject "defib training" so that we can get a rough idea on potential numbers.

Church Matters

December 2023 Letter from the Vicar

Dear all,

It was my assembly on the day closest to All Saints Day (Nov 1st), on Wednesday and I was asking the children in school if anyone knew of any saints. You can not imagine my delight when dozens of hands went up and we had St Matthew, St David, St George and few more famous saints, then there was a lull, and I asked if anyone could think of any more, when a little arm went up, and the small voice said St Nicholas. When I asked the child what he could tell me about St Nicholas, he said, that he gives presents to children.

I know that we have to be very careful about what we say about a certain elf, so I cautiously said that of course there was a link between St Nicholas and Santa Claus, (the clue is in the sounds), and that it is true, St Nicholas is indeed remembered for giving children presents, and that in parts of Northern Europe, they still celebrate this saint on 6th December with gifts for children.

As we walk towards Christmas, children are often at the heart of our thoughts. And we watch on the news children who are suffering with bombs falling and homes that have been reduced to a simple mat with canvas covering. Our joy at the birth of Christ is mingled with our prayers for such children in a mysterious and painful way. Not that different from the birth of Our Lord, who was very nearly killed by the wicked Herod, and became a refugee in Egypt.

Bearing the pain as well the joy, of Christmas is important. And our prayers for children suffering, matter. As we enjoy the squeals and happiness of our children around the Christmas tree, may our prayers never be very far from those other children who are living amidst the trauma and horror of military devastation.

Have a Happy Christmas,

Richard

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

Email: revrichardthomson@gmail.com


Home:01454 219236/ Mob:07717791858

Church Services for December 2023

Date	Time	Parish	Service	Minister
3 rd Dec	9.30am	Lasborough	Matins	Churchwarden Led
	11.15am	Didmarton	Matins	Rev R Thomson
	3.00pm	Acton Turville	Evensong	Rev R Thomson
	5.00pm	Hawkesbury	Advent Service	Rev R Thomson
10 th Dec	9.30am	Lasborough	Holy Communion BCP	P Cheeseman
	11.00am	Leighterton	Holy Communion 1928	Rev R Thomson
	11.00am	Little Badminton	Matins	Rev R Thomson
	5.00pm	Hawkesbury	Evensong	Rev R Thomson
17 th Dec	11.15am	Sopworth	Matins + HC	Rev R Thomson
	5.00pm	Hawkesbury	Carol Service	Rev J Wilson
	6.00pm	Acton Turville	Carol Service	Rev R Thomson
	6.00pm	Westonbirt	Carol Service	Rev P Cheeseman
	6.30pm	Didmarton	Carol Service	Revs Maslen
24 th Dec Christmas Eve	11.15am	Little Badminton	Matins + HC	Rev R Thomson
	4.00pm	Hawkesbury	Nativity Service	Rev R Thomson
	4.30pm	Acton Turville	Christingle Service	Mr M Butler
	6.00pm	Lasborough	Carol Service	Churchwarden Led
	6.00pm	Sopworth	Carol Service	Rev R Thomson
	11.30pm	Didmarton	Midnight Mass BCP	Rev R Thomson
25 th Dec Christmas Day	9.30am	Lasborough	Holy Communion CW	Rev R Thomson
	11.15am	Great Badminton	Christmas Day Service	Rev R Thomson
31 st Dec 1 st Sunday After Christmas	11.15am	Leighterton	Matins + HC	Rev R Thomson

All readings and updates of services on website badmintonbenefice.com



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Happy Anniversary to Acton Turville Stores!

It's hard to believe it was 20 years ago that Tim and Iris Penney took over the running of The Stores in Acton Turville. Back in November 2002, things were looking bleak, with the Parish Council reporting in Local Talk Back that a planning application had been submitted to South Gloucestershire Council to "demolish the shop and erect a residence in its place." The Parish Council went on to explain that the application would only be approved if it could be demonstrated that the "premises were incapable of supporting a retail use" and, whilst they recognised many people felt very strongly about the prospect of losing their shop, that did nothing to help the then-owner keep the shop going as a going concern. In the best British tradition, a committee was formed and a public meeting was held, at which all the potential options were discussed. However, the use of public money to purchase the property was quickly dismissed!

Discussions continued well into 2003, but it was clear that the Shop Committee would struggle to raise sufficient funds to tempt the owners to sell. Things didn't look good. Then, an announcement in the October 2003 editorial:

"As one door closes, another one opens, this time to guarantee the continuation of the shop in Acton Turville. It was nice to hear that local family Tim and Iris Penney are the new owners and we wish them every success in their new venture."

To celebrate, Tim and Iris threw a party which even made it into the local press – see the picture on the right (was that really taken in 2003? Nobody seems to have aged at all!).

In the 20 years since Tim and Iris took over the reins, the shop has gone from strength to strength. It's taken hard work and dedication but they've been supported by a great team and a community which really appreciates all they've done. To show them just how grateful you are for saving the village shop, why not tell them in person on the 8th December when they're having an evening of wine and food tasting – details below.

*To Tim, Iris and all the team,
congratulations, and thank you.*

THE STORES, ACTON TURVILLE

TO CELEBRATE
20 YEARS

OF SERVING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY,
TIM, IRIS AND THE TEAM
WOULD LIKE TO INVITE YOU TO
THE STORES AT ACTON TURVILLE
FOR AN EVENING OF WINE AND FOOD TASTING ON

**FRIDAY 8TH DECEMBER
FROM 4PM TO 7PM.**

ALSO A SELECTION OF FESTIVE GOODS
AVAILABLE FOR SALE



Open for business: The shop in Acton Turville gets into gear after being taken over by the Penney family. Among those at the launch, which featured produce from local businesses, are customers Wendy Morgan and Liz Kirkham, Tim and Iris Penney with their daughter, Susan, and local resident Peter Moss

It's a family affair as locals take over village shop

VILLAGERS in Acton Turville are celebrating after their local shop was saved from closure. Tim and Iris Penney stepped in and bought the shop after it was threatened with closure. Former shopkeeper Danny Western claimed he had been struggling to make a living from the business for years. "People in the village, near Badminton, dismissed his claims and said we should try and save the shop in Turville itself. They even looked at setting up a co-operative to run it themselves as a community shop, similar to the volunteer-run shops in Crosshill and Cheltenham, near Thornbury. South Gloucestershire councillors refused permission for the shop to be knocked down to make way for a house to be built. Now Mrs and Mrs Penney, who are locally well known, have bought the premises. They fit in running the shop while not maintaining another job. Mr Penney is a full-time electrician and Mrs Penney is a part-time general assistant at the village school. "Their daughter, Susan, works full-time at the shop and their son, Charles, also helps out. They are providing locally produced food and are negotiating with local suppliers of baked goods, meat and vegetables." Mrs Penney said: "The village shop has always been an important part of my life. It's more than just a local convenience. It's the heart of the community, where people stop and chat."



**MERRY CHRISTMAS
&
HAPPY NEW YEAR**

FROM EVERYONE AT

THE STORES
ACTON TURVILLE
(01454) 218264

Great Range of Christmas
Goods Wines & Spirits

Selection of Ready Made
Hampers
Or
Come in and make up a
Hamper of your choice

Padded Envelopes &
Posting Boxes For
Sending Gifts

**Don't forget to visit on 8th December 4-7pm for our wine
tasting and Christmas goods event**

Reminder of Last Posting dates for
Christmas Delivery
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2nd Class—18 December

Open Boxing Day
8am—12 noon

