

# Local Talk Back

FEBRUARY 2026

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

ISSUE 567



*EARLY BLOOMS AT ST MARY'S, ACTON TURVILLE*



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

# EDITORIAL FEBRUARY 2026

Hello again from Local Talk Back, which returns this month from its traditional winter break, refreshed and revitalised and ready to go. That sentence was an example of me demonstrating my resolution to have a much more positive outlook on life this year, and to grasp opportunities as and when they arise. The first opportunity I took was to stop listening to the news which seems to be helping my positivity no end.

I remember the last time I started the editorial year in a similarly buoyant mood. It was six years ago, and my editorial began with the following prophetic words: "2020 has a nice sound to it; it feels like it should be a significant year." Within months we were deep into lockdown, and the year had taken on a slightly different significance to the one I was hoping for. Needless to say, I've been a bit more circumspect with my editorials ever since.

Trying to remain positive, I always think there are two good things about February. Firstly, once you get through it you're into March, which starts with the meteorological beginning of Spring and ends with the switch to British Summer Time. Secondly, it's a short month, so use the time wisely and start to plan for the summer.

I don't think I've ever known a summer like last year. It was that long period when we had one dry, sunny day after another, but without (for the most part) the stifling heat that characterised summers such as 1976, when temperatures were constantly spiking into the unpleasant zone. Last year, you could plan ahead, safe in the knowledge that your day at the seaside or evening in front of the barbeque wouldn't be ruined by the weather. It was dry for the horse trials, it was dry for the Badminton House open gardens, and it was dry for the flower festival and summer party in Acton Turville.

Look at the *Dates for the Diary* on the next page and you'll see it's beginning to fill up already. You'll also see there's a new event to enjoy in the shape of the RHS Badminton Flower Show. Taking place between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> July, this show has been much anticipated since it was first announced in April 2024. Its appearance at Badminton is part of an RHS initiative to deliver their shows to a wider audience by holding them at a number of new venues. RHS Badminton will be a biennial event, alternating with the well-established Hampton Court show. As well as the inspirational show gardens created by some of the top garden designers in the country, RHS Badminton will showcase a unique feature garden which celebrates the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Archers. Apparently it will "honour the rich heritage of The Archers while reflecting the changes in land use and farming methods over the past 75 years." That sounds like quite a challenge. Let's hope George Grundy doesn't turn up and cause a scene. Away from the gardens there'll be the usual mix of floral marquees, shopping opportunities, celebrity presenters from the world of TV and Tik-Tok and a bevy of artisan food and drink outlets to keep your body and soul suitably nourished. It's a real coup for Badminton to be awarded this event. May the sun shine on it, and on all the other events planned to take place over the spring and summer. So much work goes into organising them and a bit of sunshine makes all the difference.

Returning to this month's Talk Back, on which the sun always shines, we're really pleased to have some new contributors this month. Dave Bartlett, Simon Long, Alan Hetherington and Matthew Butler have each very kindly produced material which couldn't be more different but which we hope you will enjoy. Some of them may even become regular features, with the prospect of one or two more contributors appearing in coming months. It means a lot to us when people send in articles and pictures and it keeps the newsletter fresh, especially in the winter months when there are not the usual events to report on. If you can ever help us, please get in touch. The email address is [localtalkback1975@gmail.com](mailto:localtalkback1975@gmail.com).

Well, with my mood of positivity suitably boosted by avoiding all forms of world and international news, I think I'll treat myself to a very special holiday. Somewhere cooler this year I think. Greenland looks nice – so quiet and relaxing. I wonder if you can fly there from Bristol?

Until the next time

IAN CARTER

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To advertise in Local Talk Back, please email Pauline on: [LocalTalkBackAds@gmail.com](mailto:LocalTalkBackAds@gmail.com)

PLEASE SUBMIT ARTICLES FOR PUBLICATION IN THE MARCH EDITION OF LOCAL TALK BACK BY 15<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2026.  
THANK YOU.

### **DATES FOR THE DIARY**

#### **February 2026**

Sun 1<sup>st</sup> Shabby Sheep Pop-Up Bookshop, Sherston Village Hall  
Fri 6<sup>th</sup> Acton Turville Social Coffee Morning, Fox & Hounds  
Fri 6<sup>th</sup> Didmarton Film Club, Didmarton Village Hall  
Tues 10<sup>th</sup> Chipping Sodbury Music Society presents Francisco Correa & Asaka Quartet, Chipping Sodbury Town Hall, 7.30pm  
Wed 11<sup>th</sup> Fox & Hounds Senior Citizen's Lunch

#### **March 2026**

Sat 7<sup>th</sup> Didmarton Point-to-Point Races  
Sun 8<sup>th</sup> Spring Crafts Workshop, Badminton Estate, 10.30am-4pm  
Tues 10<sup>th</sup> Chipping Sodbury Music Society presents Hannah Shilvock and Viola Lenzi, Chipping Sodbury Town Hall, 7.30pm

#### **April 2026**

Sun 26<sup>th</sup> Badminton House Open Gardens, 10am

#### **May 2026**

Wed 6<sup>th</sup> – Badminton Horse Trials  
Sun 10<sup>th</sup>

#### **June 2026**

Sat 27<sup>th</sup> Fundraiser for Ukraine, Portcullis Lodge, Acton Turville

#### **July 2026**

Wed 8<sup>th</sup> – RHS Badminton Flower Show, Badminton House  
Sun 12<sup>th</sup>

#### **August 2026**

Sat 15<sup>th</sup> Acton Turville Social Summer Party

\*\*\*Check with venues before setting off\*\*

### **DONATIONS RECEIVED THIS MONTH**

*We have received two anonymous donations this month. Thank you.*

*In addition, £9.70 was generously donated in the shop collection boxes.*

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

*There are Local Talk Back collection boxes in Acton Turville Stores and the 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!*

### **ST. MARY'S CHURCH, ACTON TURVILLE**

#### **100 Club**

#### **WINNERS FOR NOVEMBER 2025**

Lisa Rice  
Peggy Sainsbury  
Lee and Kay Butcher

#### **WINNERS FOR DECEMBER 2025**

Trudy Manning  
Jenny Felix  
Fred Hope

#### **WINNERS FOR JANUARY 2026**

Rebecca Rennie  
Clive Candy  
Richard Elford

***Congratulations!***

#### **Donna Smith**

We would like to thank everyone for the kind messages, lovely cards and beautiful flowers that we received when we recently lost our daughter Donna, who passed away on December 1st aged 52.

Over £500 was raised in donations towards Ataxia research.

John and Sally Smith

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# WHAT'S ON



## DIDMARTON FILM CLUB

Didmarton Village Hall, Friday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2026

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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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](mailto:jenny.body1@gmail.com)



Acton Turville, nr Badminton  
GL9 1HW

**01454 218224**

## Fox & Hounds Senior Citizens Lunch

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> February

Tea/Coffee on arrival

Two Course Lunch (main course + dessert)

£13.00 per head

*The Fox & Hounds Senior Citizens Lunch  
is held in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every month.*



BADMINTON ESTATE

## SPRING CRAFTS WORKSHOP

SUNDAY 8TH MARCH, 10:30AM–4:00PM

Join us for a relaxed, hands-on day of creativity, led by Emma and Melinda from Larkswold.

You can choose from three beautifully curated workshops:

- Ceramic March Hares
- Easter Table Centrepieces
- Scented Candle Making

Whether you're an experienced maker or trying something new, this inclusive workshop is designed to inspire, relax, and spark creativity. With expert guidance throughout the day, you'll create something truly special – perfect as a Mother's Day gift, for Easter, or to enjoy in your own home.

Spaces are limited, book early to secure your place and celebrate at Badminton.

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

## Thank You

Thank you to everyone who has offered condolences since my husband of twenty-nine years, Graham Middleton, died just before Christmas. Graham had been seriously ill for some time following a stroke four years ago, when he was forced to stop work, and while his death was not unexpected, it was sudden. He was always an intensely private person which is why, unlike me, he was not often seen around the village. I was pleasantly surprised at the number of messages from people as well as the villagers who attended the funeral. The support I've received from so many proves that Village Life is thriving and the Community rallies with support when needed. Without the kind comments and help from neighbours I could not have got through the first few weeks. Thanks again to you all. Chris Farrell



## Elusive renaissance masterpiece turns up in Little Badminton!

By Matthew Butler, Acton Turville

In November, after a challenging couple of months, Sue and I decided we had earned a short break, and took ourselves off to Florence for a few days.

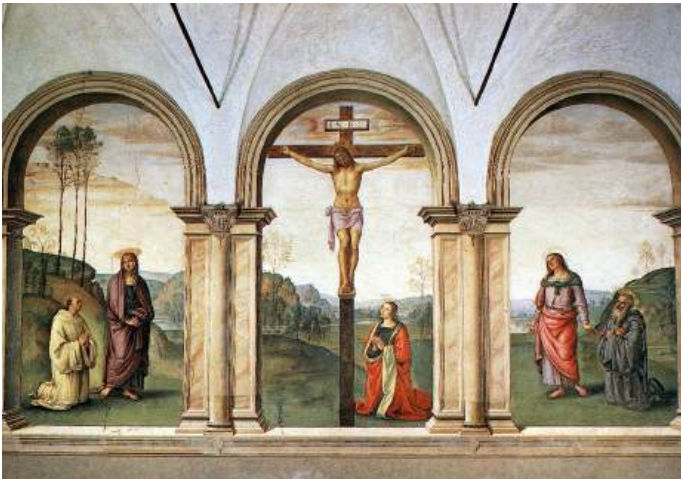
It was my first proper visit, I'm ashamed to say, although Sue had spent part of her "gap year" there. There are so many wonderful things to discover.

An old friend, who knows quite a bit about art and architecture, said we must try and see a wonderful picture by the celebrated renaissance artist Perugino in one of Florence's less well-known former monasteries, Santa Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi. Having checked online to make sure it would be open, off we went on our last morning in the drizzle to walk to the other side of the city to see it.

Of course it was all locked up. We switched on our mobile 'phone torches and held them against the windows of the former Chapter House which contains the fresco, painted on the far wall. But we really couldn't see a thing. As we walked back to our Hotel to start our journey home, I rang my friend to tell him. "I'm not surprised" he said. "It took me three visits and the third time I was so cross I kicked the door – at which point somebody actually heard me and opened up!"



*The former monastery of Santa Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi.*



*Perugino's fresco can be found in the chapter house of the convent*

On a cold January Sunday I was back in Little Badminton Church for the 11.15 Service and allowed my eyes to wander to the large old picture on the north wall. Surely, it wasn't? But it was: a pretty good Victorian reproduction of the Perugino in Florence. I couldn't believe my eyes! According to one description:

"The landscape is one of serene peace and beauty: wide open fields roll gently from one scene to the next, while up above clouds drift quietly by in a haze, illuminated softly from

below by a sun low on the horizon. Particularly beautiful are the tall and spindly trees, almost silhouetted against the sky on the far left. The sparse and subdued features seek not to jostle for the viewer's attention but to focus it elsewhere. The breadth, radiance and quietness of the scenery are used to create a calming, contemplative aura which counterbalances the anguish of the crucifixion itself. The overall result is sublime".

Of all the pictures in all the world...who would have thought?

Matthew Butler

## THE PLACES THAT STILL HOLD US

By Simon Long, Acton Turville

*This month, we're pleased to be able to bring you the first in what we hope will be a regular series of thought-provoking articles by Acton Turville resident Simon Long in which he delves into various aspects of everyday life in our local villages. We hope you enjoy them as much as we do, and perhaps make you look at things in a slightly different light.*

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Brian trudges gratefully into the Fox & Hounds with his dog, Doombar, trailing behind — both soaked to the bone, both given a warm welcome. The fire's already lit. Lisa's behind the bar pouring his usual without asking. No one even mentions the rain.

This is Acton Turville on a Tuesday evening. This is what community looks like when it's quietly doing its proper job.

In an age of scrolls and swipes, where connection is instant but intimacy is rare, there's something stubbornly beautiful about an open pub door, and someone behind it who knows your name.

The "Fox" isn't just a pub. It's a time capsule, a refuge, a lifeline. In our village, it represents something far greater than food and drink: it's the last great gathering place in a world that keeps finding ways to drift apart.

When my wife and I moved here from The Big Smoke over four years ago we expected sheep in fields and slower traffic. What we found instead was a connection to people we hadn't anticipated — a kind of community that seemed, frankly, too good to be true. But there it was, pint in hand and roast on the table, waiting for us at the Fox. There it was again, a treasured lifeline, in the Village Stores. In fact, it seemed to be everywhere in the surrounding area.

We don't talk about it much, but loneliness wears a local face. It isn't always an old man on a city bench. Sometimes it's someone you've known for years, living three doors down, who hasn't had a real conversation in a week. It's a widow standing in the kitchen, wondering whether anyone would notice if she didn't show up to the next luncheon club or coffee morning.

And that's where places like the Fox step in, not with fanfare, but with familiarity. It's the kind of place where you can slip into a seat without needing a reason, and someone will eventually ask how you're doing, and mean it.

We often think of mental health in clinical terms — professionals, appointments, numbers on waiting lists. But sometimes the first thread in the safety net is woven across a pub table or a shop counter. A simple, "You alright?" can be the start of something that really matters.

Have you ever bumped into someone at the village shop and sensed, instantly, that they weren't just there for milk? You exchange the usual pleasantries — weather, bins, maybe a quiet grumble about parking. But there's something in their eyes that says, *please talk to me a little longer*. And so you linger. You ask about their week. You both pretend not to notice how long you're standing by the Digestives. That's what small communities do: we notice the silence between the words.

Zoom out, and the picture is bleaker. The village local, the post office and stores, the church — these are at risk of becoming images in the local library (assuming that doesn't go the same way!). Not due to lack of love, but lack of use. If we don't show up, these places fade. And when they go, something quietly collapses inside the soul of a village. We lose the place where stories are shared, help is offered, and lives are quietly witnessed.

It's the Christmas carol concert, the Remembrance Day Service, the Quiz Night, the village summer party, the local book club, the birthday party in the Badminton Memorial Hall. These aren't quaint distractions from real life — they *are* real life. The scaffolding that keeps us from falling through the gaps.

*Continued over*



## THE PLACES THAT STILL HOLD US (cont'd)

There's a myth that you have to do something grand to matter. But in small communities, it's the gentle repetitions that hold everything together. Showing up. Saying hello. Offering a lift. Popping the kettle on. Buying someone a drink without saying why.

Across our villages, these gathering places have quietly held the full sweep of life; weddings and funerals, school plays and conker tournaments, club meetings and weathered reunions. They've absorbed our laughter and softened our silences. There's bunting in the cupboard from a fête ten summers ago, tea towels stitched by hands no longer here, and noticeboards that tell the true story of what it means to live somewhere — together. These spaces don't ask much. But they give us everything: continuity, comfort, and the quiet assurance that we're not alone.

Maybe you have a place like that too — a bench, a bell tower, a barstool — where life's messiness is met with welcome, not judgement. Where you've found comfort in the familiar, or friendship in the unexpected. One day, these havens may not be there. The walls may remain, but if we don't keep showing up — in body, not just spirit — the soul will slip out like heat from an unlit fire.

So here's your invitation.

If you are able to, get out and about. Tap into your second heartbeat.

Because in each of our villages, there's a welcoming doorway to knock on, a cuppa with your name on it, a pint of Thatcher's Gold, a light that flickers in pub window on a cold night — saying, without words: *You belong here*. And in times like these, that kind of light matters more than ever.

*What's your gathering place? Do you have a story, memory, or moment from a place where community came alive for you? We'd love to hear it. Write to us at [localtalkback1975@gmail.com](mailto:localtalkback1975@gmail.com)*

### *Raising Funds for Ukraine - Save the Date!*

This year's Ukrainian fundraising event will be held on Saturday 27th June from 2.00pm at Portcullis Lodge, Acton Turville. Once again, music will be provided by the ever-popular Winterbourne Wind Band.

Last year's event raised over £1,100 which was amazing. We hope you will be able to join us once again and help raise money for this very worthy cause.

*The Spreadborough family*



A poster for a pop-up bookshop. At the top, there is a banner of colorful triangular flags. Below it, the logo for 'THE SHABBY SHEEP BOOK SHOP' features a sheep holding a book. A red stamp-like graphic says 'FREE ENTRY'. The main title 'POP-UP BOOKSHOP' is in large, bold, green letters. Below the title, there is an illustration of a bookshelf with various books and two potted plants. A banner below the shelf says 'HUGE DISCOUNTS from on-line and high street prices.' The event details are: 'Sunday 1st February 2026 10am to 4pm' at 'Sherston Village Hall (Large Hall), High Street, Sherston, Wiltshire, SN16 0LQ.' To the right, there is a list of book categories: 'Over 3000 Titles', 'NEW BOOKS', 'Pre-loved Books', 'Fiction Books', 'Non-Fiction Books', 'Children's Books', 'Antique/Vintage Books', 'Signed Editions', 'First Editions', and 'Rare/Special Edition'. At the bottom, there is a stack of books with labels: 'Terrariums', 'Bookmarks', 'Bookish Gifts', 'FREE Tea/Coffee', and '10% DISCOUNT when you spend £10 or more.'

# Looking After Our Brains: Why a Little Winter Sun Goes a Long Way

By **David Bartlett**, Director, *Your Brain Health*

I'm often asked what I do for a living, and my answer usually surprises people. I run a company called *Your Brain Health*, and my work focuses on understanding and supporting brain health, particularly in people who have experienced concussion in elite sport.

But before that sounds too specialised or distant from everyday life, it's important to say this clearly: brain health is something that affects every one of us.

I live locally, walk the same lanes, and share the same seasons and routines as many of you reading this, some of whom will have seen first-hand how devastating brain-related conditions can be. That may be in the form of dementia affecting a loved one, the long-term effects of head injury or the quieter struggles with memory, mood, and concentration that often go unnoticed.

When we think about our health, we're usually quite good at keeping an eye on the physical basics. We talk about blood pressure, cholesterol, weight, and heart health. Yet very few of us ever stop to think about the health of our brain, despite it being central to everything we do. Brain health isn't just about avoiding disease; it's about how we think, feel, move, sleep, and function day to day. It shapes our independence, our relationships, and our quality of life.

This is particularly relevant at this time of year. Winter presents a unique challenge to brain health, not least because of the limited sunlight. In the UK, the sun sits lower in the sky during the winter months,

and this change in angle may prohibit our bodies in absorbing enough vitamin D. Added to those colder temperatures meaning heavier clothing, and less time spent outdoors, it's easy to see why vitamin D deficiency may occur.

Vitamin D plays an important role in supporting the brain. It helps regulate inflammation, supports nerve cells and is linked to mood and cognitive function. While it's not a cure-all, low levels have been associated with poorer brain health outcomes, and this is something we see time and again in both clinical and sporting settings. It's a quiet factor, often overlooked, but an important one nonetheless.

So as the days begin, slowly, to lengthen, it's worth making a conscious effort to get outside when you can. Daylight, movement, and fresh air all matter. When the sun does appear, even briefly, it's worth taking advantage of it.

On my own walks recently, I've started to notice the first daffodils pushing through the ground. It's a small sign, but a hopeful one. Spring is on its way, and with it comes a natural opportunity to reset our routines and think a little more about how we look after our brains.

Over the coming weeks, I'll be writing more about brain health, what it is, why it matters, and the simple, practical steps we can all take to protect it. Because while we can't control everything, there is far more within our control than many of us realise.



# Cryptic Crossword

By Alan Hetherington, Acton Turville

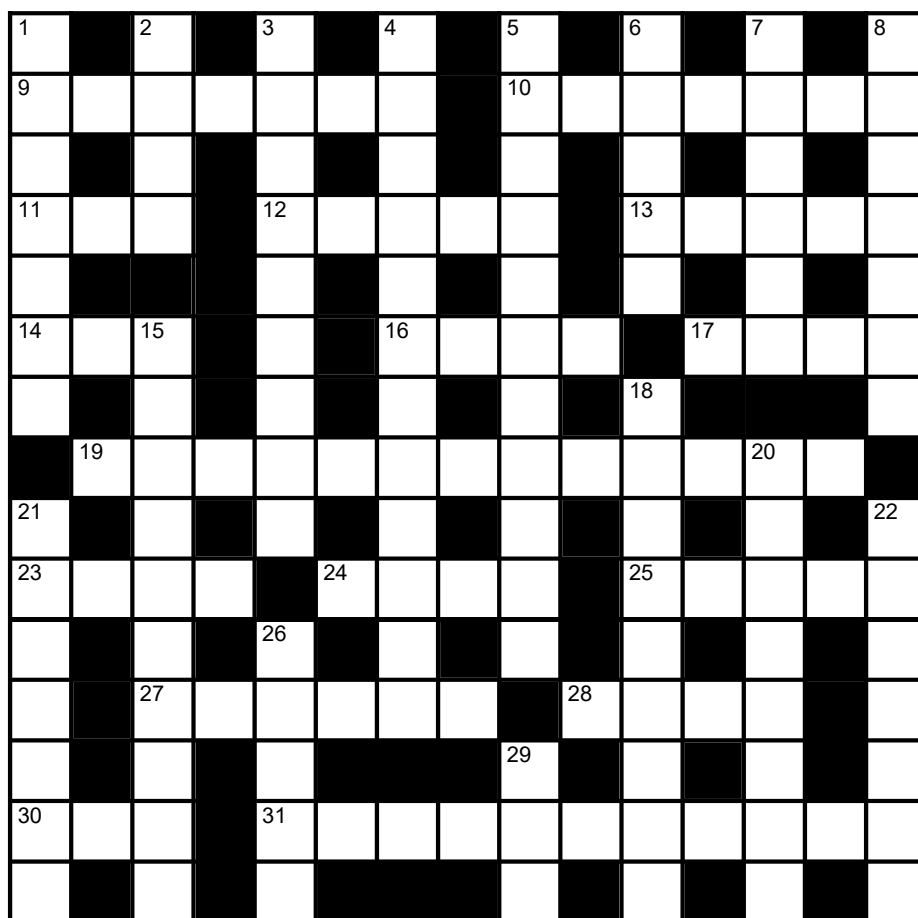
*It's been many years since a crossword last appeared in Local Talk Back, so when Alan Hetherington from Acton Turville said he could create us one with a local theme we were very quick to take him up on his kind offer. You'll see that it's a cryptic crossword, so having an encyclopaedic knowledge of local history is not necessarily going to be enough to provide you with all the answers. We'll publish the solution next month, along with an explanation of how the answers were derived. Let us know how you get on, we might even come up with a prize for the first person to send in the correct solution. Good luck!*

## Across

- 9 Leaders of Acton Turville are in position, so calm down! (7)
- 10 One idiot involved in attempt to get to school (7)
- 11 Somewhat magnificent diamond (3)
- 12 MOT on a French scale (5)
- 13 We're all together in music (5)
- 14 Mix of flugelhorns (3)
- 16 Instrument with which CEO bought back shares (4)
- 17 Take a shot on a second letter (4)
- 19 Home to raving lunatic revolt (5,8)
- 23 One could say "You idiot" (4)
- 24 Music producer creates but a rearrangement (4)
- 25 Part-time worker has time to seduce (5)

## Down

- 1 Ship hosts quiet band from Wells (7)
- 2 Head of Year dined somewhere near Chipping Sodbury (4)



- 3 House sport (9)
- 4 Pretty strong in French course but trailing now apparently (8,4)
- 5 A tornado, 'tis twisting its way into our village from the North! (7,4)
- 6 County flags (5)
- 7 Minute ahead of Badminton and Sodbury (6)
- 8 Clay pit mining is normal (7)
- 15 Turn locking nut to reveal adjacent housing (10)
- 18 To set Lime Down as a symbol of love? (9)
- 20 Energy supplier makes me wild! No! (4,4)
- 21 In return, Ipswich produces vegetables (7)
- 22 My stars could lead me to the church (2,5)
- 26 Flows from holes in the skin, we hear (5)
- 29 Batman holds source of funds (3)

## *From the Archives*

*The early issues of Talk Back were full of reports from local groups and organisations. One group that was particularly prolific at sending in reports was the 1<sup>st</sup> Acton Turville Brownie Pack, whose exploits would be recorded for posterity by their Brown Owl, Jean Earl. Reading her reports today, it is fascinating to be reminded how much things have changed in the intervening 50 years or so with their recurring references to squash and biscuits. We're also intrigued to read about animals made out of acorns and the construction of a model of Canada!*

*We've selected a few samples from Jean's reports which give a taste of what the Pack were up to. We hope you enjoy them. If you have any memories of your own you'd like to share, please get in touch.*

### MAY 1976

Our talk on "Safety In The Home" by Mr Johnson of the Fire Service was a very interesting one, and the evening closed with squash, biscuits and a cup of tea. The second brew being better than the first as someone accidentally used salt instead of sugar!! Maybe I should take the blame, as I keep my salt in a very pretty tea caddy!

### AUGUST 1976

At our meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> June, quite a few of us were busy making Indian headbands, while the rest took it in turns to watch Tawny decorate summer jelly dishes with fresh fruit etc. Our congratulations to Greta Jones who passed her Animal Lover badge tested by Mrs Greening.

### NOVEMBER 1976

On the 21<sup>st</sup> September, four Brownies took their Hostess badge with Mrs L Mayhead and passed. Congratulations girls. After our meeting, we enjoyed the goodies which the girls had prepared. A competition was also held, for any animal made out of acorns. As we have now bought a Brownie Doll to be presented each week for the smartest Brownie, we had to have a name for her, so each Brownie wrote a name to be drawn out of the hat, and the winning name was "Sally" chosen by Greta Jones.

On Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> September, the pack was split into two groups, one group learnt to sew a button on while the others learnt to weave. We also sang a new song with Tawny, called "My Sister has just joined the Brownies".

### MARCH 1977

This month I want to talk about Thinking Day. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> February each year, we celebrate the birthday of our Founder, and also the birthday of our World Chief Guide, Lady Baden-Powell GBE. Our thoughts are also with Brownies and Guides all over the world and everyone connected with Guiding.

Each unit in our District have chosen a country to think of, ours being Canada, and we have been busy this month making a model of Canada. So that you have the opportunity to see it, Mrs Beesley and Mr Dove have kindly agreed to display it in the respective shop windows for us. From Monday 28<sup>th</sup> for a week at Acton Turville, then the following week at Badminton.

### DECEMBER 1978

We have two new recruits recently – welcome to Karen Bird and Tracey Salt. A pow-wow was held one evening to choose between a bonfire celebration or a Halloween party. We decided on Halloween although we had fun making the Guy Fawkes for Acton Turville's bonfire. The Halloween party was super, everyone going to town on their costumes. We played apple-bobbing, and in torchlight we had hot soup and sandwiches.

## *From the Archives*

AUGUST 1979

I am sorry to say I will be leaving as a Brownie Guider at the end of this year. This is mainly due to family commitments. If there is anyone in Acton Turville who is interested in Guiding, please let me know.

OCTOBER 1979

I am pleased to tell you that Mrs Wheeler will be taking over from me as Brownie Guider in the New Year. We are delighted about this, especially as most of my Brownies know her already.

*And so ended Jean Earl's reign as leader of the Acton Turville Brownie Pack. She did however make a brief return to the pages of Local Talk Back in June 2004, when she sent in some memories of her time as the Leader of the Pack. Her letter included a photo taken in the car park of the Fox & Hounds pub which would have been when she was Brown Owl, a position she held from 1972. Note the barn in the background, before it was converted into a house!*

MEMORIES by Jean Earl (Brown Owl)

We thought perhaps you might like to see a photograph of the 1<sup>st</sup> Acton Turville Brownie Pack taken



roughly 25 years ago! Gosh, how time flies! Looking at all the faces reminds me of the good times we enjoyed. I do hope the then-Brownies also have fond memories of the Brownie 'Revels', the outings and pantomimes, and the Silver Jubilee and Teddy Bear Picnic we celebrated in Dikki Proudfoot's orchard, when Lady Caroline joined us for wheel-barrow races and bangers and beans. She also made a presentation to everyone of a small Silver Jubilee glass and a jigsaw of the Royal Family. We were also very honoured to have six Brownies included in the guard-of-honour when The Queen visited Filton High School.

When I finally gave up the Brownies, the parents very kindly presented me with a picture of an owl and a cuddly owl, which started me off collecting. I now have about 300 owls. Oh dear!

**JEAN EARL**

*Jean was married to local Policeman Mike Earl, and lived in the Police house on the Burton Road in Acton Turville before moving to Badminton. She was always an active member of the community and an avid fundraiser, so it was only fitting that her contribution to village life should be marked in March 2010 with a special community award from South Gloucestershire Council. In their citation, Badminton Parish Council described her as a "good soul, and a charity and fundraising guru". Sadly Jean passed away in 2024, but her legacy lives on.*

## *From the Archives*

*Some random snippets from the Talk Back archives which feel much older than their 40 years. Who remembers the "dialling code booklet" referred to in the first extract, which you'd keep on the shelf next to the phone book and Yellow Pages?*

### **BADMINTON TELEPHONE EXCHANGE (From LTB Feb 85)**

To cater for the future growth of telephone lines served by Badminton Exchange, in addition to improving the quality of speech transmission on calls to Wiltshire, the direct routes to Chipping Sodbury and Chippenham will cease.

Consequently, over twenty local codes will change from 8.30am on Wednesday, 6 February, 1985. The new codes will be shown in the dialling code booklet due to be delivered prior to the transfer. Customers are advised to check the changes that have been made to avoid the possibility of receiving a recorded message referring them to the new dialling booklet or the enquiry operator.

### **BADMINTON PARISH COUNCIL (From LTB May 1986)**

Just to remind you of the Informal Meeting to be held in the Memorial Hall on Tuesday, 6 May, at 7.30pm, to discuss the communication from the Boundary Commission as to your desirability of remaining in Avon or returning to Gloucestershire. A representative from the Gloucestershire County Council will be in attendance to answer your questions.

### **EXPORT DRIVE (From LTB Jan 1986)**

Many people in the village and surrounding areas have commented on increased activity of our vehicles, and the odd looking loads that they were carrying; plus the arrival of even stranger looking loads on strange lorries from all parts of the British Isles.

I have been asked many questions, many times, by many people, so I propose through the columns of Local Talk Back, to answer these questions.

We have been instructed by a firm who are shipping a "tuna fish packaging plant" to collect in one place the whole of the machinery that will eventually complete the factory, crate it up in waterproof cases, mark cases with destination marks, weight proofs, international signs that signify keep upright (a picture of a wine glass standing upright), keep dry (a picture of an umbrella in the open position) and deliver the lot by Friday 27/12/85 to Felixstowe Docks, where it will be loaded that day on to a ship for its sea passage to final destination – GHANA.

The objects that could not be identified until now were boilers, steam vessels, weighing machines, a canning machine, drying trays, mobile fish haulage trays, vacuum tanks, conveyor belts and the whole paraphernalia totalling 100 tons that is obviously needed to turn a tuna fish into the product that you recognise on the supermarket shelf as a tin of tuna fish.

We offer our apologies to any and everyone who has been in any way inconvenienced by noise, lorries or any other disruption. The reason for the extra pressure was that the shippers found that if the plant was not shipped by 31 December the export licence would expire so, instead of the original date of 6 January, to have it all prepared, it had to be done by Christmas; and many thanks to my staff who have worked long hours to meet the shipping deadline, and who have continually kept us supplied with sarcastic humour and a string of swear words that even I had not heard before.

Maurice J Greening



# Church Matters

## February 2026 Letter from the Vicar

Dear Friends,

This year is many things, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the translation by William Tyndale's translation of the New Testament. This served as a foundational work for Myles Coverdale's translation of the whole Bible in 1535. It is also the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of St Francis on 3rd October 1225 - his Feast day October 4<sup>th</sup> will be the high point of this year of Franciscan commemoration, so, I may tell one or two stories about St Francis in my letter in the newsletter, this year.

My first story tells of young man named Francis Bernardone who has been released from captivity after a spell in prison as a prisoner of war. In the post-imperial age, many years after the Pax Romana had ended, towns warred against each other and the fortified town of Assisi was no different. In a local fight, Francis had been captured. On release, he worked in his father's cloth trading business and had access to expensive French cloth.

The story focuses upon the re-building of a tumbledown church at San Damiano. Francis felt called by God to re-build it. Without thinking about the consequences, he took some of his father's cloth and sold it in the market. He then took his ill-gotten gains to the priest for the repair the church.

This was clearly not a very sensible idea. The good priest was shocked that the money had been come from the theft of the cloth, and he refused to accept it. When he had told Francis' father what his son had done, Francis' father was furious. In fact, he was so cross that he dragged Francis before the Bishop to be punished.

The Bishop rebuked Francis for his theft but recognising it was in a good cause and not for selfish gain, ordered him to just give the money back to his father with no further punishment. Francis then did an extraordinary thing, perhaps he felt emboldened by the sympathetic response of the Bishop. He stripped off his expensive clothes and handed them to his father, and naked but for his undergarment, he publicly rejected his father. He told him that he was no longer his son and he put himself under the protection of God, as his father. The Bishop, touched by this act of devotion, covered Francis with his own cloak signalling that he was now under the protection of the Church.

What can we take from this story? Well, I leave it to you. For me, there is something very powerful here about a naïve but fierce passion, for God's church. And a reminder that every little church in any part of the world, is a place that matters and a place where we can find God.

With my best wishes,

Rev Richard Thomson, (vicar)

Badminton Benefice website: [www.badmintonbenefice.com](http://www.badmintonbenefice.com)

Email: [revrichardthomson@gmail.com](mailto:revrichardthomson@gmail.com)

Home:01454 606854/ Mob:07717791858

Church Services for February 2026				
Date	Time	Parish	Service	Minister
1 <sup>st</sup> February The Presentation of Christ in the Temple	9.30am	Lasborough	Matins	Lay Led
	10.00am	Hawkesbury	Morning Prayer	Rev R Thomson
	11.15am	Didmarton	Matins	Rev R Thomson
	3.00pm	Acton Turville	Evening Prayer with HC	Rev R Thomson
8 <sup>th</sup> February 2 <sup>nd</sup> Before Lent	9.30am	Lasborough	Holy Communion BCP	Rev P Cheeseman
	9.30am	Leighterton	Holy Communion BCP	Rev R Thomson
	11.15am	Little Badminton	Matins	Rev R Thomson
	5.00pm	Hawkesbury	Choral Eucharist	Rev R Thomson
15 <sup>th</sup> February Next Before Lent	9.00am	Didmarton	Holy Communion BCP	Rev R Thomson
	10.00am	Hawkesbury	Family Service	Rev R Thomson, Debbie Young - Talk
	11.15am	Sopworth	Matins	Rev R Thomson
	3.00pm	Acton Turville	Evening Prayer	Mr M Butler
18 <sup>th</sup> February Ash Wednesday	9.30am	Hawkesbury	Holy Communion	Rev R Thomson
22 <sup>nd</sup> February Lent 1	9.30am	Lasborough	Holy Communion CW	Rev J Hunnisett
	11.15am	Little Badminton	Matins	Rev J Hunnisett
	5.00pm	Hawkesbury	Evensong	Sir Ian Macfadyen
	6.30pm	Leighterton	Evensong	Robert Bryant-Pearson
See Benefice website for readings: <a href="http://badmintonbenefice.com">badmintonbenefice.com</a>				

## More Dates for the Diary



### Chipping Sodbury Music Society

Forthcoming Events

#### FRANCISCO CORREA & ASAKA QUARTET

Tuesday 10th February 2026 – 7:30pm  
Chipping Sodbury Town Hall

*Prizewinning Asaka String Quartet joins international guitarist Francisco Correa for an exciting and hugely varied programme ranging from Boccherini's "Fandango" quintet, to newly premiered Wynwood Walls by celebrated Welsh composer Stephen Goss. Programme also includes Mendelssohn quartet Op. 12 in Eb major and Tarrega's Fantasia on themes from La Traviata.*

#### HANNAH SHILVOCK AND VIOLA LENZI

Tuesday 10th March 2026 – 7.30pm  
Chipping Sodbury Town Hall

*This highly talented, passionate duo showcasing the music of the bass clarinet and piano. A rare chance to see and hear this fascinating mix.*

For full details and to purchase tickets, visit the Chipping Sodbury Music Society website at  
<https://csmusicsociety.co.uk/>

### SPECTACULAR SNOWDROPS AT PAINSWICK ROCOCO GARDEN

With over five million snowdrops, the 18th-century Rococo Garden at Painswick, near Stroud, boasts one of the finest displays of naturalised snowdrops in the country. The flowers are at their peak in February, making it the perfect time to visit and enjoy the magnificent displays.

More details on their website here:

<https://www.rococogarden.org.uk/>

*Please note pre-booking is essential during February*



## Sudoku

February'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 !!

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

### NOT SO EASY !!

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

Answers to the December quizzes:

'Easy'

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

'Not so Easy'

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

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## Picture Gallery



Thanks to Claire Broomsgrove and Lee Butcher for capturing these great photos of the local sun rising and setting. The colours have been amazing just recently. Did anyone get a picture of the Northern Lights?



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