

Local Talk Back

MARCH 2025

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

ISSUE 557



WISHING WAYNE & LESLEY A VERY HAPPY RETIREMENT AFTER
33 YEARS IN CHARGE OF DREWETT'S STORES.



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

EDITORIAL MARCH 2025

If you make it as far as this month's centre pages, you'll see that your editor has blown the Talk Back budget on a day out in Swindon. These days, Swindon seems to be most famous for The Magic Roundabout, a series of traffic islands that would look more at home on The Krypton Factor rather than the Swindon ring road where it has been routinely confusing drivers since 1972. It was very different 100 years ago. If you'd have asked people what Swindon was most famous for, the answer would almost certainly have been "the railway", for the town was at the forefront of the railway boom, and its railway works built some of the most iconic locomotives to grace the British rail network. For over a century, Swindon was a by-word for engineering excellence across the world. But that came to an end in 1968, when the workshops that employed so many of the townsfolk closed its doors for the last time.

The town has worked hard to ensure its fine engineering heritage is not forgotten. Look around and you soon notice the many buildings which date back to the days of the railway. From the rows of simple-but-sturdy cottages built to house the thousands of railway workers who moved to the town to find work, to the more imposing structures which served as offices, medical centres, hotels, schools, pubs and places of worship, all are preserved as reminders of more prosperous times. Pride of place goes to the railway museum, housed in buildings that once formed part of the vast engineering works. Here on display you'll find everything from huge Swindon-built steam locomotives to examples of the prosthetic limbs manufactured by the works for those unfortunates who suffered an accident in what must have been a perilous working environment. The museum is large, the exhibits are impressive and imaginatively presented, the displays are informative, but when I visited, the place was almost devoid of visitors.

I had a similar experience at the aerospace museum in Bristol, which opened in 2008 to provide a permanent home for Concorde and give recognition to the role Bristol played in the history of flight. Again, beautifully done, celebrating something that we should all be very proud of, but, judging by reports on the local news, it's losing money and struggling to attract enough visitors to cover its costs. If these two museums are struggling, what hope is there for all of those that can't quite stretch to an example of the world's only successful supersonic airliner, or a steam locomotive capable of 100mph in 1904?

Perhaps museums are falling out of favour, and are simply seen as irrelevant to a large (and growing) portion of the population. I couldn't help noticing that most of the visitors at the railway and aerospace museums were, well, of a certain age. They probably remembered the pre-diesel days when steam trains were still operating, or had watched Concorde streak across the skies as it whisked the well-healed between London and New York in just 3½ hours. For those people, a visit to the museum provided a trip down memory lane, a dose of nostalgia, but for museums to be commercially successful they need to attract a wider demographic. The choice seems to be between maintaining their historical integrity but losing money, or keeping their heads above water by re-launching themselves as a cheesy theme park. Is there a happy medium? Can we protect the locomotives in Swindon from a Thomas the Tank Engine makeover? We might find out very soon when the Science Museum opens its massive new venture at Wroughton, just over the M4 from Swindon. Long used as a storage facility for those items which they were unable to display at their other sites, often because they were just too big, the Wroughton facility has been transformed over the past six years into a state-of-the-art venue capable of housing 300,000 items. The work has cost £65m, so we hope they've got pretty close to that happy medium or there'll be a lot of very red faces.

At a local level, I remember reading in an old issue of Talk Back about plans to set up a museum in one of our villages. I can't remember the specifics, but I do recall it had been discussed at some length and was close to becoming a reality. From what I can recall, it came about because people had artefacts such as pictures, documents and all sorts of objects in their possession which were of little monetary value but which collectively told the history of the village. People recognised the need to preserve this material and thought a museum might be the best solution. Frustratingly, the frequent reports in Talk Back stopped and nothing more was heard of it. If anyone can fill in the details, please get in touch!

Sadly one chapter of local history will be coming to an end this year on Saturday the 29th March when Wayne and Lesley will be leaving Drewett's Stores and Post Office, having been serving the community since 1992. In that time they have transformed the business, but more importantly become good friends to so many of us. To Wayne and Lesley, thank you, we wish you all the very best for the future.

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 APRIL EDITION OF LOCAL TALK BACK BY 15TH MARCH 2025.
THANK YOU.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

March 2025

Sat 1st Didmarton Point-to-Point Races
Thurs 6th Badminton Youth Club
Fri 7th Acton Turville Social Coffee Morning, Fox & Hounds
Fri 7th Acton Turville Social Bingo Night, Fox & Hounds
Mon 10th Acton Turville Parish Council Meeting, Trinity School, 7pm
Wed 12th Luncheon Club, Fox & Hounds
Thurs 13th Badminton Youth Club
Fri 14th Didmarton Film Club
Thurs 20th Badminton Youth Club
Thurs 27th Badminton Youth Club
Fri 28th Didmarton Film Club – Special Screening “Van Gogh Exhibition – Poets & Lovers”
Sun 30th Arm Knitting, Badminton Estate

April 2025

Fri 4th Acton Turville Social Coffee Morning, Fox & Hounds
Sun 6th Parochial Church Council AGM, St Mary's Church, 6.45pm
Wed 9th Luncheon Club, Fox & Hounds
Sat 12th Acton Turville Spring Clean, Fox & Hounds, 10am
Fri 14th Acton Turville Parish Council Meeting, Trinity School, 7pm
Sun 27th Badminton House Open Gardens

*****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.

ST. MARY'S CHURCH, ACTON TURVILLE

100 Club

WINNERS FOR FEBRUARY 2025

Arthur Haddrell
Lee and Kay Butcher
Mary Mullens

Congratulations!

DONATIONS RECEIVED THIS MONTH

We have received a donation this month from Emmie Gilbert, in memory of her late father Maurice Greening.

Thank you Emmie.

In addition, £27.50 was very generously donated in the local shop boxes.

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*

In Memoriam – Amanda Wallbridge

The Local Talk Back team was so sorry to hear that Amanda Wallbridge had passed away. She was only 53. Her funeral at St Mary's was full of colour and joy, just as Amanda had wanted it, but tinged with tears and sorrow as those present said their sad farewells. A fitting tribute to Amanda will be included in the next issue of Talk Back. We send our most sincere condolences to Scott, her family and her friends. We know she will be greatly missed by so many people.

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NEWS NEWS NEWS



BADMINTON ESTATE

MOTHER'S DAY GIANT ARM KNITTING & CREAM TEA

SUNDAY 30TH MARCH, 10:00 AM – 1:30 PM

Looking for a unique and relaxing way to celebrate Mother's Day? Treat yourself and your loved ones to a cosy morning of giant arm knitting, followed by a delicious homemade cream tea! Whether you're a complete beginner or a crafting enthusiast, you'll enjoy creating your own soft, chunky knit piece in a fun and friendly setting. Then you can sit back and savour a delightful Mother's Day cream tea, featuring a selection of freshly made sandwiches, homemade cake, and traditional scones.

BADMINTON HOUSE OPEN GARDENS –

SUNDAY 27TH APRIL 2025

Explore the private gardens of the historic Badminton House, the home of the Duke and Duchess of Beaufort, at this, the first of three garden open days to be held in 2025.



BADMINTON HORSE TRIALS SPECIAL OFFER!!

Local residents can enjoy late shopping at the Badminton Horse Trials on Thursday 8th May and/or Friday 9th May 2025, at a special rate of £10.00 per person. Entry is between 4pm and 6pm, via Charcoal Clump or Lambing Pen gates. Accompanying children 12 years and under have free admission. Contact the box office for more information!

SEE [HTTPS://WWW.BADMINTONESTATE.COM/EVENTS/](https://www.badmintonestate.com/events/) FOR FULL DETAILS



Save the Date

Fundraiser for Ukraine

Saturday 5th July between 2pm and 5pm,
at Portcullis Lodge, Acton Turville.

The Winterbourne Wind Band will once again be performing for us.

Everyone welcome. No tickets required, just turn up.



Come to

BADMINTON YOUTH CLUB!

Tuck available

£2 each week

Come along and have a say in how your Youth Club evolves.



Play badminton in Badminton!

Help make it what you would like it to be!



LEGO CORNER



Fun Crafting Activities

THURSDAYS

6:30pm - 8pm

Badminton Memorial Hall

DATES FOR MARCH

Thursday 6th,
13th, 20th, and
27th

Parents or Carers will need to sign a consent form

Our Youth Club Leader is Fully DBS Checked!

WHAT'S ON



DIDMARTON FILM CLUB

Didmarton Village Hall, Friday 14th March

The terms of our new licensing agreement mean the Didmarton Film Club is not permitted to publicly advertise details of forthcoming screenings. However, to receive full details of the films being shown each month, all you need to do is join the film club and we'll put you on our mailing list. Forms will be available on film nights – membership is free, just provide your name, email address and mobile number to join.

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

Cash Bar

Doors open at 6.30pm, film starts 7.30pm,

Friday 28th March 2025

An Exceptional Film Showing – Van Gogh Exhibition - Poets and Lovers

As an experiment, we will be showing the acclaimed video of the Van Gogh Exhibition – Poets and Lovers – from the National Gallery.

Van Gogh's revolutionary artistic style during his years in southern France transformed reality into vibrant, symbolic imagery through a passionate creative process focused on storytelling in his paintings.

Exceptionally we will be charging £7.50 for this screening

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



ACTON TURVILLE SOCIAL

**SAVE THE DATES
2025**

BINGO – FRI. 7TH MARCH

QUIZ NIGHT – FRI. 16TH MAY

DOG RACING – FRI. 11TH JULY

**SUMMER PARTY!
SAT. 16TH AUGUST**

Contact Mel to Sign Up:

ActonTurvilleSocial@Gmail.com

07771 565736



Fox & Hounds Luncheon Club

Wednesday 12th March

Tea/Coffee on arrival

Two Course Lunch (main course + dessert)

£13.00 per head

Everyone welcome!

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

FOX
The
& HOUNDS INN

Acton Turville, nr Badminton
GL9 1HW

01454 218224

From the Archives

On a recent stroll up to St Mary's churchyard in Acton Turville, making the most of some spring-like sunshine, a couple were spotted hard at work on the church. They'd clearly been busy. As well as painting the inside of the porch, they'd been removing huge quantities of leaves from the roof and gutters, repointing the stonework, and applying a waterproof coating to try and combat the damp that had been appearing on the internal walls. On another visit, members of the Parochial Council were spotted battling with a rather recalcitrant boiler, valiantly attempting to get some warmth back into the church before the congregation arrived. The effort (and the associated costs) required to maintain an historic building can never be underestimated, but walking up to the church on a sunny day, with the snowdrops out and the daffodils close behind, you're reminded just what a beautiful church St Mary's is, and how lucky the village is to have it.

This being the 50th year of Local Talk Back, we've been spending more time than usual looking back through the archives, which is where we came across the article below. It appeared in Issue 7, dated May 1976, so the work to clear the churchyard that it refers to must have started in 1928.

The problems it describes have never gone away, and maintaining the churchyard remains a never-ending task. Wouldn't it be great if the community came together again to keep it looking its best? If anyone wants to help, or maybe organise a working party to give it the attention it deserves, please get in touch with Talk Back and we'll pass on your messages to the Parochial Council.

Acton Turville Churchyard

I wonder how many of you have thought how it is that your churchyard is one of the best kept in the country?

Many years ago the churchyard was a wilderness, but by starting in a corner where a loved-one lay, a father and son gradually cleared the old churchyard, and with scythe, sickle and shears, made it a place where families could walk with ease and flowers could be seen. Help came from many quarters, some giving their time and skill, others small donations towards necessary expenses and so the churchyard fund was born.

After the war, the new piece of ground (more commonly known as Whitehay) was acquired as a burial ground. This was ploughed, levelled and re-seeded and the concrete road built, all achieved by voluntary labour and donations for the materials. Later, flowering trees were planted with daffodils around their roots and a bed of roses by the church door, all given by different people in memory of loved ones. As time went on, push mowers and then motor mowers were purchased, and the job of keeping the churchyard tidy was taken on by various villagers for only token payment. Many a fine summer's evening and weekends were given up and all the villagers benefited from these labours of love.

We all like to use the church at sometime in our lives, whether that's for regular worship or only Christenings, weddings and funerals, but whatever the occasion, the well-kept appearance of the churchyard either adds to our joy or lessens our sorrow. Perhaps the present villagers have not realised that there is a fund kept for this purpose – some families contribute direct, while many others have supported Mr Crook's Harvest Home at the Fox & Hounds, the proceeds of which he has generously given towards this fund.

Now some 48 years later, Richard has joined his parents. Could we not keep up the good work which he did, with the helpers, for nearly half a century?

MK Mullens, May 1976



The spot from where Richard Mullens and his son started to clear the churchyard

From The Archives

On this month's back cover, you'll see an article about a fire tender that used to be based at the Badminton air strip. Peter Seymour Smith from Acton Turville contacted us to say he remembered it supporting the parachute club whenever it used the airstrip, and was also in attendance at the Badminton Air Days. During the conversation, someone mentioned a flypast by an airliner which flew so low that the passengers could be seen waving from the windows. A quick rummage through the Talk Back archives unearthed the following fascinating story. It starts in the July 1985 issue, with the following announcement:

*"AIR DISPLAY ATTRACTIONS AT BADMINTON
Badminton Air Day gets airborne again for the 7th
time on Sunday, 21 July. The attraction of the
display at Badminton is very much the rural setting
presenting a perfect back drop for the older type of
aircraft.*



The show will be opened by a low fly past of a British Airways Trident and this will be part of a chartered flight from Heathrow to Bristol, the proceeds from which are going to "Children in Need". This is the last year the Trident will be in service with BA."

The British-designed and built Trident came into service with BEA, or British European Airways, in the mid-60s. Its three jet engines were mounted in the tail, greatly reducing cabin noise and making it very popular with passengers. Over the years it was updated, improved and enlarged, with the final versions capable of carrying 180 passengers. It was a full-size aircraft. It was going to fly low over Badminton. And Local Talk Back's Kath Gentry was on board. Her fascinating story was published in September 1985, and is reproduced below.

"Mrs Marie Bird and I were fortunate in booking seats on the first of three flights organised as fundraisers for Children in Need and other charities, and as a farewell to the Trident which is to be soon taken out of service.

We were taken by coach to Heathrow where after the usual security checks, we were served champagne and canapes.

Just before take-off, we had the thrill of seeing Concorde leave. It was a beautiful sight, the familiar shape of the plane showing while against the blue sky. Then it was our turn. A little unnerving to hear the thud of the undercarriage coming up, but very exciting to see the ground slipping away as the plane gathered speed.

We followed the motorway for some time, passing over Windsor Castle. The countryside was lovely – all green and gold in the sunshine. We were soon flying over Chippenham then Malmesbury with its beautiful Abbey. Then we were warned that the moment we had been waiting for had come, and there it was, Badminton House and the lake, then Slait Lodge and the airfield, with the upturned faces of the Air Day crowd looking up at us. Three times we passed over – the third time very low, and much slower. Then up and away again, over Chipping Sodbury, with its golf course and the huge quarry (the Captain called it Chipping Norton!).

By now it was raining, but the ground was still very clear and we were able to see the Severn, and Avonmouth and the outskirts of Weston-Super-Mare, before turning in to land at a rainswept Lulsgate Airport.

Here we were picked up by coach again and brought back to Badminton. By now it was pouring with rain, but nothing could dampen our spirits. We had been filmed by a TV camera crew; we had had a chat with Radio West DJ Johnny Walker, and had flown over our own village in a large jet plane for the first time. In fact you could say we had enjoyed an unforgettable experience.

Mr & Mrs Jeremy Higginson are to be congratulated on the success of their venture, and many thanks to them and British Airways and their staff who gave their time, and paid for everything including fuel and landing fees, so that all money taken in fares could go to bring a little happiness to a lot of children."

The whole experience, so beautifully described by Kath, sounds slightly surreal, and you can't imagine anything like this happening today. It reminds us of simpler times, when peoples' first response would be to find ways to make things happen, rather than spending their time looking for reasons to stop things happening.

I wonder if there's any film of the event? Kath talks of the TV crew meeting them at Lulsgate (now Bristol International) Airport, so there's a good chance it was filmed. If anyone can help with pictures, film or memories, please get in touch, we'd love to hear from you.

BEWICK'S SWANS AT SLIMBRIDGE



This is a follow up to last month's article about the Slimbridge Wildlife and Wetlands Trust (WWT), focussing on the Bewick's Swans in particular. As it gets colder, they leave their breeding grounds in

the Russian Arctic Tundra to go on an epic migration of 2,500 miles or more to reach their wintering grounds. Some stay on the wetlands of the Netherlands and other's cross the Channel to Slimbridge, Welney and other wetland areas. They are far from safe on their journey. They are fully protected across their flyway but still get shot illegally. One third of the Bewick's swans that arrive at Slimbridge, on being X-rayed, are found to carry lead shot in their body. Other dangers are collision with power lines and habitat loss in their feeding grounds. The numbers over wintering here have declined by about 38% since the mid 90's. They could become endangered.

Sir Peter Scott discovered that the Bewick's have their own unique bill pattern so can be recognised and named. Their names are logged as they arrive and any cygnets they bring back are named and the family recorded. With some arrivals the wardens know who the parents and grandparents were. They can tell if the pairs stay together or if they come back with a new mate.

This winter the first Bewick's arrived on 3rd November. They were 'Piquet and Primero'. The pair have been together since 2015, returning to Slimbridge in 2021 with two cygnets, and in 2023 with three cygnets. On 12th November 'Gastro' and mate 'Roux' were on site. Gastro first wintered at Slimbridge as a single male in 2018. In winter 2019 he was the first swan to arrive, with new mate Roux. They have returned every winter since and brought their first two cygnets back in winter 2023. The next day's arrivals included 'Horn and Laren'. They first wintered here in

2016 and in 2021 brought two cygnets back. 'Mannheim' first wintered here as a cygnet with parents 'Sabia and Sabian' in 2022 and as a yearling in 2023.

Three Bewick's came through during Storm Bert on 23rd November. One of them was 'Maisie', she was more well known as she had been fitted with a tracker in 2015 and her migration route was able to be followed for a couple of years until she lost the tracker. Maisie's journey was followed by Sacha Dench during the 'Flight of the Swans', when she flew alongside the swans by paramotor all the way from Russia to Slimbridge. Sacha and team were trying to find the reason for the decline in numbers of Bewick's coming back. 'Maisie' was joined by mate 'Mayfield' in 2016 and they have returned to Slimbridge every year. This time bringing last year's cygnet named 'Mayflower'.

The first of December brought 'Ringing and Knocking', named to celebrate the players of the Postcode Lottery which raised £5.9 million in support of WWT's work since 2015. Two days later another famous Bewick's swan arrived – Old 'Winkey', who is at least 27 years old. 'Winkey' first came with mate 'Tinkie' in 2001 and was last seen as a pair in 2010 and had only one cygnet together. The following year he was with new mate 'Winker' but this year he is alone.

In January they were counting about 71 to 76 Bewick's on the reserve most days. There were also two Whooper swans who arrived separately but paired up. The Whooper swans will return to their home in Iceland.

On 21st February the first 11 swans left Slimbridge. With a clear sky and Venus shining brightly it was a perfect condition for the Bewick's migration back to Russia. The oldest swan, 'Winkey' has left now. If he returns next winter, he will have equalled the record of swan 'Brimstone' who reached the grand age of 29. And sadly, no cygnets were brought back this winter.

Yvonne Nettles

In Memoriam

Maurice John Greening 1931 – 2025

Acton Turville lost one of its true characters with the passing of Maurice Greening at the end of January. The turn out for his funeral at St Mary's church on a cold February afternoon showed just how fondly he will be remembered, and the stories being shared told of a man who live life to the full. All of us here at Local Talk Back offer the family, especially Harry, Jim, Emmie and Nic, our most sincere condolences.



Maurice John Greening was born on the 27th November 1931 in Swindon. His working life started whilst still at school, when he would jump on his bike and cycle to the outskirts of Swindon to help out on the farm owned by Eric and Joyce Smith. Eric hunted with the Beaufort Hunt, and Maurice soon became good friends with Bert Paitman, who was the Huntsman. Bert lived in Badminton, and when Maurice was about 16 he left home and took lodgings with Bert and his family.

Maurice had many stories to tell about his time growing up in Badminton, the majority of them involving some form of mischief-making! On more than one occasion, it seems that Maurice and a couple of friends would be at Wick Farm, making plenty of noise, prompting the local policeman to ride up on his bike to find out what was going on. Invariably, the stern talking to soon became a friendly chat, and in no time the group were sharing a drink with the village Bobby. The details get hazy, but Maurice swore he could remember turning the policeman's bike upside down and watching as he tried to mount it, to no avail! They then proceeded to sit him on the bike the right way up and give him a good push to get him going, only to find him the next morning in the hedge, whereupon they help him out and send him on his way home once again! Maurice had many such stories, but most are probably best left untold.

Maurice became friendly with the Young Farmer groups and that is where he met his wife, Margaret. Maurice and Margaret were married in 1957, and in 1959 moved to Ladyfield in Acton Turville. They had four children, Harry, Jim, Emmie and Nic.

Shortly after moving to Acton Turville, he bought himself a digger and small tipper lorry and started working on sites doing groundworks. His business soon expanded and before long he set up his own haulage business, initially buying and selling horse manure which he would deliver around the local villages, then moving onto hauling building materials for Bradleys and various other quarries. One of his jobs involved delivering the material that was used in the construction of the M4 motorway in the 1960s. It made Maurice very proud that his sons Harry, Jim and Nic would join the business a few years later.

In 1999, Maurice and Margaret moved to Park View, Grittleton, where he continued to keep busy doing little jobs and Margaret was busy with her chihuahuas. After 58 years of marriage, Margaret died in 2015. Maurice lived his final few years in The Old Royal Ship – it must have been a dream come true for him – living in a pub, being cared for by Nic and Helen – to whom he was most grateful.

He sure did love to tell a story. You were never quite sure how accurate these stories were, but that didn't matter. I think most of us will remember him for his story telling. He was also very knowledgeable about the local area. His 93 years were certainly eventful.

Rest in peace Maurice.

The Greening Family, Feb 2025



The family of Maurice would like to thank everyone for their kindness, sympathy cards and very generous donations on the sad occasion of his recent death. The donations went to St Mary's Church, Acton Turville

Maurice had lived in the area for over 70 years and was a highly regarded member of the community, in the words of one villager, "there aren't many houses in the village that Maurice hasn't helped repair" he was the local "go-to person" of his day. He loved to sit and chat and share his stories and local knowledge with anyone who was happy to listen!!

Full Steam Ahead - to SWINDON STEAM

I must admit Swindon isn't somewhere that I regularly visit. Most of my sightings of the town have been from an InterCity coach en route from Chippenham to London, but a recent errand left me with a couple of hours to spare, so I thought I'd take the opportunity to check out STEAM – The Museum of the Great Western Railway (GWR).

The prosperity and expansion of Swindon owes a huge amount to the railway, and more specifically the construction of Brunel's Great Western mainline between London and Bristol. When construction of the line was approved by Parliament in 1835, Brunel realised he needed somewhere central to repair the locomotives that he'd bought to pull his trains, and eventually settled on Swindon which was located close to the mid-point of the line. Building work starting in 1841, with the repair sheds going up first, many built from stone that was excavated when digging the near-by Box Tunnel. As the works rapidly expanded, the number of people working there soon surpassed 2000, transforming Swindon from a market town with a population of 2500 into a bustling railway town. To accommodate the influx, the GWR started building a village for its workers, conveniently located close to the works and boasting schools, doctor's surgeries, even a church and public house.

The works continued to grow, adopting a policy of taking in-house as many tasks as possible, rather than relying on outside firms to do the work. The main workshop covered an area of more than 11 acres, and could produce 60 locomotives a year. And it wasn't just the locomotives they were building; they were also making the carriages, the wagons – even the rails that the trains ran on. At its peak, the works employed 14,000 people, many living in the railway village. During the Second World War, the engineering facilities were

diverted to helping the war effort, making parts for tanks and gun mountings as well as amphibious landing craft, before returning to its core task once peace was declared. It wasn't until the 1960s, when Dr Beeching drastically axed much of the rail network, that the Swindon works fell into decline, finally closing its doors on the 26th March 1986.

For many years, Swindon relied on a small museum, housed in a building that had formerly provided lodgings for workers at the nearby railway works, to celebrate its engineering heritage and historic links with the railway. When that museum closed, its collection was moved to a much more fitting location in one of the old engineering workshops that had lain empty since the closure of the Swindon works. Adjacent to the McArthur Glen retail outlet, STEAM opened in the year 2000, its 70,000 square feet of floorspace allowing exhibits to be displayed in light and airy surroundings.



From the top:
Replica of the 1837 loco North Star.
Imaginative settings are used for displays and exhibitions.
The mightily impressive loco King George V dates from 1927.

Full Steam Ahead (cont'd)

It was half term when I visited and the McArthur Glen car park was quite busy, but once parked it was a short walk to the museum where I paid my £13.80 admission fee and headed in to see the exhibits.

The first section gave a taste of what life was like in the works, with displays showing everything from the stores to the foundry where the huge components that went together to form the steam engines were cast. At each



stage there were videos explaining what was on display, and audio descriptions of what it was like to work there. Hot, noisy and dirty probably best sums it up. And that's just the stores...



Moving past the half-built carriages which illustrate the woodworkers' art and on through a demonstration of boiler riveting, the excitement mounts as you enter the main hall. However handy it might be to learn the principles of riveting, nothing beats standing next to a 120-ton steam locomotive, admiring the gleaming paintwork and polished brass, and imagining how it would look racing along the Badminton line in a flurry of smoke and steam at speeds of up to 100 miles an hour. You don't just get to stand alongside the trains either – in the case of the Caerphilly



Castle you can even walk under it to admire all the bits that normally stay hidden.

Locomotives and rolling stock are the stars of STEAM. There's the King George V, which was the most powerful passenger locomotive in Britain when it was built in 1927. Close by is the City of Truro, the 2000th locomotive to be built in Swindon in 1903 and claimed to be the first loco to reach a speed of 100 miles an hour in 1904 when travelling between Plymouth and Paddington. There's even Queen Victoria's Royal Saloon which formed part of her 1897 Diamond Jubilee train, providing accommodation for the Queen, Prince Albert and their attendants as they toured the nation.

From the top:
Queen Victoria's Royal Saloon.
You can walk underneath Caerphilly Castle.
Lots of polished brass on City of Truro's footplate.

A huge amount of effort has gone into ensuring the exhibits at STEAM are displayed in realistic surroundings, with signal boxes, waiting rooms and goods sheds employed to house a range of exhibitions which highlight just how much the nation relied on the railways before the private car became the transport of choice. It was therefore slightly disappointing to see how few visitors there were on what should have been one of its busiest days. Maybe I caught it on a bad day, but rumours have been circulating for some time that the museum is barely covering its costs and its future is uncertain. It would be a real shame if such a fascinating facility were to close, and I'm glad I found the time to visit it. Why not call in if you're over that way?

For details about Swindon STEAM, visit <https://www.steam-museum.org.uk/>

Ian Carter

Parish Notices



St Mary's Church, Acton Turville

The church electoral roll has to be renewed every six years, which means that this is the year to take action. The Church of England maintains a count of the numbers (not names) of the people who are on the church electoral roll. This roll is entirely separate from the civil electoral roll (the one that enables us all to choose the least unwelcome people to represent us in Parliament and town hall). A person who is on the *church* electoral roll is entitled to give views at the AGM, to vote for candidates who offer to serve on the Parochial Church Council (PCC), to stand for election to the PCC, and to earn my eternal gratitude. In the likelihood of the closure of our church within the next six years, only those on the church electoral roll will be entitled to record a comment that will be submitted to the bishop.

Your name will be included on the roll if you complete the form, available in the church porch (with pen and collection basket) or from me. You will need to complete a new form even if you are on the present roll. The forms must be completed by the 31st March.

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be held in the church on Sunday 6th April at 6.45pm after Evensong. All are welcome. Those on the electoral roll can have a say in how the parish church is run. Otherwise you will be missed.

Eileen Stephens, Secretary to PCC.

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AND
GO!**

From
3 March
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book before
visiting a Sort
It recycling
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South Gloucestershire

Booking system to be introduced at Sort It recycling centres

South Gloucestershire Council is introducing a booking system at its four Sort It recycling centres at Little Stoke, Mangotsfield, Thornbury and Yate, requiring all visits to the recycling centres to be booked in advance. Booking opens on 24 February 2025 for visits from 3 March 2025 onwards. You will be able to book a timeslot online at www.southglos.gov.uk/recyclingcentrebooking, by phone or at a council One Stop Shop. You will need to provide your vehicle details, contact information and the type of waste you intend to bring. Residents who have accessibility needs will be able to indicate this when booking a timeslot.

Postcards of Badminton

We've recently been sent these two old postcards of Badminton. The originals look like they're black and white photos that have been tinted, and they're clearly a pair. Although life looks so much quieter then, much of what the photographer captured is still recognisable and familiar. Can you spot where they are? And when do you think they were taken?



Church Matters

March 2025 Letter from the Vicar

Dear all

The news coming from across 'the pond' seems to me to be increasingly non-Christian, even pagan. Talk of evicting immigrants, the displacement of whole populations, annexing territory, withdrawing aid – are the sort of things you might expect from someone without a Christian moral compass. Certainly, they are not something you would consider to be Christian actions. And yet we are told, a large proportion of Christians backed the new administration.

I was interested to read that the incoming President had rejected comments made by the Bishop of Washington in her sermon, when she asked him to be kind to those on the edge. The following week the Primate of ECUSA (The Episcopal Church of United States of America) was in the same church in Washington, giving her backing to the Bishop of Washington.

But one wonders if this is all a big act. Is this all a big show? To show that the USA has teeth. It too can be selfish, uncooperative and divisive. But to what end? Meantime, many fear for the morality of the systems which govern so much of international life, and ask whether they are in danger.

And into this we remember Jesus. He taught that that we should turn the other cheek and care for others without partiality, as in the parable of the Good Samaritan. The man robbed and left for dead is our brother and sister, whether she looks like us, is from the same place as us, or even speaks our language.

How then does cutting USAID, the biggest donor programme in the world, compare with that teaching? People have died as a result of that Aid being cut. Or forcibly moving people out off their land. Though of course, they did that in 1830, with the 'Indian Removal Act'. But this is a form of theft, is it not? Unless they go voluntarily (as pigs may fly). And yet who cannot be happy if a just peace is restored in Ukraine, so that could be good.

Time may tell, but from a Christian point of view, the American Administration is walking a dangerously un-Christian path. I hope by the time you read this letter, things will be considerably better than they are today (mid-Feb).

With best wishes,

Rev Richard Thomson

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

Email: revrichardthomson@gmail.com

Home:01454 219236/ Mob:07717791858

Church Services for March 2025

Date	Time	Parish	Service	Minister
2 nd March Sunday before Lent	9.30am	Lasborough	Matins	Churchwarden Led
	10.00am	Hawkesbury	Morning Prayer	D Young and Rev R Thomson
	11.15am	Didmarton	Matins	Rev R Thomson
	5.00pm	Acton Turville	Holy Communion BCP	Rev R Thomson
5 th March Ash Wednesday	tbc	Hawkesbury	Service of Communion with Ashing	Rev R Thomson
9 th March Lent 1	9.30am	Lasborough	Holy Communion BCP	P Cheeseman
	9.30am	Leighterton	Holy Communion 1928	Rev R Thomson
	11.15am	Little Badminton	Matins	Rev R Thomson
	5.00pm	Hawkesbury	Choral Eucharist with Litany	Rev R Thomson
16 th March Lent 2	9.00am	Didmarton	Holy Communion BCP	Rev R Thomson
	10.00am	Hawkesbury	Family Service	L Thomlinson and D Young
	11.15am	Sopworth	Matins	Rev R Thomson
	5.00pm	Acton Turville	Evensong	Robert Bryant-Pearson
23 rd March Lent 3	9.30am	Lasborough	Holy Communion CW	Rev G Stacey, Area Dean
	11.15am	Little Badminton	Matins	Rev G Stacey, Area Dean
	5.00pm	Hawkesbury	Evensong	I MacFadyan
30 th March Mothering Sunday	11.15am	Hawkesbury	Matins	Rev R Thomson

See Benefice website for readings: badmintonbenefice.com

Sudoku

March's challenge set by Neil Fozard.

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

EASY !!

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

NOT SO EASY !!

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

Answers to the February quizzes:

'Easy'

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

'Not so Easy'

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

ACTON TURVILLE PARISH COUNCIL

Police Support. It's a long time since Acton Turville had its own village Bobby, and whilst the Parish Council recognises that policing has changed massively since those days, we have for some time been concerned at the lack of a visible Police presence in this area. We raised our concerns with the recently-appointed Police & Crime Commissioner and received a positive response in which she emphasised her commitment to strengthening neighbourhood policing and work with communities such as ours to tackle issues including anti-social behaviour. As a consequence of our letter, the number of Police patrols has already been increased, and the Community Contact Vehicle (ie Police car!) has already been sighted several times in the village. We are actively working with our local PCSO, Cheryl Dibble, to see what can be done to improve matters further.

Village Spring Clean. The next Spring Clean is planned for the 12th April. Why not come along and help us make the village sparkle? More details in next month's Talk Back.

Thank You Claire. We are sorry to be saying goodbye to Claire Broomsgrove, who joined the Parish Council in July 21, following in the footsteps of her mother Sandra who was also a Parish Councillor. During her time as a councillor, Claire had been an invaluable member of the team, and her ability to get straight to the point and deliver clear, pragmatic solutions will be greatly missed. We wish her all the best for the future.

Date of next meeting: Monday 10th March 2025 @ 7.00pm

Venue: Trinity School, Acton Turville.

Contact details for Parish Councillors are as follow:

Chair: Sybil Haddrell 218772, Vice Chair: Ian Carter 07789 057168,

Sally Smith 218510, Mark Studden 07885 791314

Parish Clerk: Sue Radford-Hancock Tel: 01249 650052

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

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Mystery Solved!

You may recall that last month we were seeking information on a Land Rover fire tender (right) that was being restored by a gentleman called Julian Bray. Julian was trying to piece together the vehicle's history, and had heard it might have been used as an emergency vehicle on the Badminton airstrip. As the estate office could find no trace of the vehicle in their records, our expectations were not high, so we were amazed when Peter Seymour Smith from Acton Turville got in touch to say he not only remembered the vehicle but had pictures of it in front of the Badminton hangar! Peter explained that he and his friend Andrew Bearder were members of the Parachute Club that was based at the airstrip in the 1980s/90s, and that the Land Rover would be used to provide emergency support at these events and the much-missed Badminton Air Shows. It was part of a collection of Land Rovers put together by John Davis, the Badminton Estate farm manager, who was instrumental in setting up both the Parachute Club and the airshow. Sadly John passed away in 1998 and his collection was broken up, so it's good to see the tender had survived and is now in the process of being lovingly restored by Julian Bray. John would be so pleased to know it's in such good hands. We're very grateful to Peter and Andrew for sending in the pictures (below) which we have passed on to Julian. If anyone else has memories of the Land Rover, the Parachute Club or the Airshow, please get in touch. We'd love to hear from you.



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