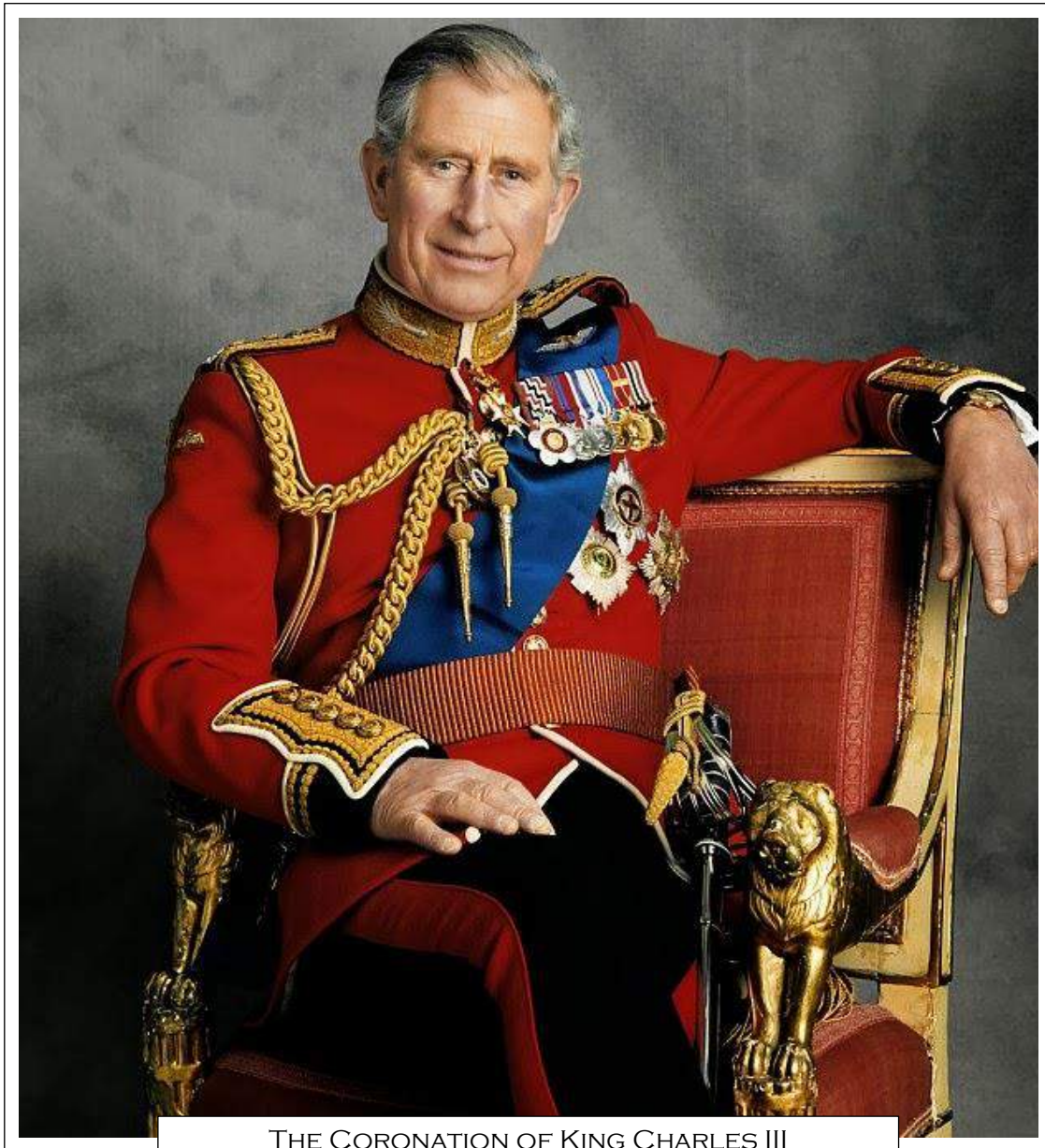


Local Talk Back

MAY 2023

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

ISSUE 537



THE CORONATION OF KING CHARLES III
6TH MAY 2023



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

EDITORIAL MAY 2023

Last month's editorial came courtesy of our guest editor Chris Farrell. Normal service has been resumed this month and I'm back holding the editorial reins. Or am I? The news is currently full of articles about the march of Artificial Intelligence. The articles explain how computers have been given the ability to think for themselves, to be creative, to learn from their mistakes, to develop levels of intelligence far in excess of their human masters. Nightmare – it sounds just like Stanley Kubrick's 1968 science fiction classic 2001: A Space Odyssey in which the computer controlling a spacecraft bound for Jupiter decides it will no longer take commands from the crew and instead will do exactly what it wants to do, starting by killing the aforementioned crew. Is this really what is in store for us? Is my laptop going to turn on me when I'm least expecting it?

Hopefully not, but some of the potential consequences are quite eye-opening. Many of the articles about Artificial Intelligence mention something called Chat-GPT. As the editor of Talk Back, it could be the answer to all my prayers. Just imagine I decided to write an article on Badminton House. If I did that today, I'd probably start with a search on Google which would bring up lots of documents that contain various useful snippets of information. I'd then extract the relevant content from all the different documents and re-write them into something that was vaguely readable and coherent. With Chat-GPT, I'd just ask it to write the article for me. It would go away, analyse all the different material from the myriad different sources, and bingo, 5000 words on Badminton House. What's more, I could have it written in the style of any author I choose. Maybe a famous historical figure, or Ant & Dec. What's not to like?

The whole Artificial Intelligence/Chat-GPT thing had rather passed me by until I was browsing a website about cars and motoring. There was a discussion area where people were telling stories about the cars they used to own when this elderly chap turned up with the most fantastic tales. By the age of 25 he had his own airline, enabling him to purchase the most exotic cars on the planet. He sold the airline, moved into property development, married a vivacious Scandinavian lady, spent most of his time in the company of A-list celebrities and, most importantly, bought more tasty cars. His stories were lapped up by the readers who wanted to know more and more about his amazing life and he willingly obliged, illustrating his posts with pictures to support his claims. All was going well until someone (rather rudely I thought) started to question his claims. Others immediately leapt to his defence. To support their claims they pointed to information about his companies they'd found on the internet, and details of his life which matched what he had posted. The reality was that the stories were true, but it wasn't him that had posted them. In fact, it wasn't even another person who had posted them; someone else had used Chat-GPT to create the posts using freely-available information from around the internet. They then used the same tool to answer the questions that flooded in. I have to say I was very impressed with the way someone was able to identify the posts as counterfeit, employing skills that Sherlock Holmes would have been proud of to point out the large number of frequently used and oft-repeated phrases which are apparently a bit of a giveaway that the posts are computer-generated. Without knowing that though, you could easily be fooled into thinking you were chatting to another person. Well, I'd have been fooled by it.

I found the whole experience rather depressing. The internet is an amazing source of information but more and more we hear about fake news stories that are posing as fact. There are armies of people generating fake reviews for products in order to get them 5-star ratings on Trust Pilot, individuals claiming to have get-rich schemes which are guaranteed to transform your finances (which they probably will, but not in the way you were hoping), and others who take to social media to spread tall stories, half-truths and conspiracy theories. You can guarantee that some people will believe them, but equally there are now an increasing number of people who believe nothing and, to quote the X-Files, Trust No One.

Me, I'm off to disable my laptop and smart speaker before they turn on me.

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 JUNE EDITION OF LOCAL TALK BACK BY 15TH MAY.

THANK YOU.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

May

Thurs 4 th – Mon 8 th	Badminton Horse Trials
Mon 8 th	Acton Turville Parish Council meeting
Wed 10 th	Didmarton Rural Cinema - Living
Wed 10 th	Luncheon Club, Fox & Hounds
Wed 17 th	Badminton Parish Council meeting
Fri 19 th	Acton Turville Social "Drinks in the Pub", Fox & Hounds
Sat 20 th	The Bolt 5k Run, Badminton Estate
Sat 20 th / Sun 21 st	Steam Fair, Castle Combe Circuit
Sun 21 st	Annual Parochial Church meeting, St Marys Church, Acton Turville
Fri 26 th	Acton Turville Social Quiz Night, further details TBC
Sun 28 th	Car Boot Sale, Castle Combe Circuit

June

Mon 12 th	Acton Turville Parish Council meeting
Sun 25 th	Badminton House Open Gardens
Sun 25 th	Car Boot Sale, Castle Combe Circuit

July

Sun 2 nd	Rod Stewart, Badminton Estate
Sun 16 th	The Who, Badminton Estate

*****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

We received one anonymous donation this month for which we are most grateful.

We also received a donation from Mr Nick Beavington from Canada. It's good to know Talk Back has an international readership! Thank you Nick.

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 APRIL 2023

Caroline Gelinet
Jan Farmer
Mrs V Knight

Congratulations!



BADMINTON ESTATE

DETECTIVAL

9TH – 10TH SEPTEMBER 2023

The world's biggest metal detecting festival

Bringing together detectorists, traders, and manufacturers from across the globe for a great weekend of socialising, metal detecting, music, and fun all on the Badminton Estate, organised by Detectival.

For more information, see

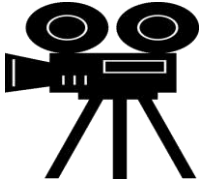
<https://www.badmintonestate.com/events/>

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WHAT'S ON



DIDMARTON RURAL CINEMA

Didmarton Village Hall,

WEDNESDAY 10th MAY 2023

*****Please note the date!*****

LIVING

(2022, Cert 12A) – Drama

Starring: Bill Nighy, Alex Sharp, Aimee Wood

Director: Oliver Hermanus

'Living' is the story of an ordinary man, reduced by years of oppressive office routine to a shadow existence, who at the eleventh hour makes a supreme effort to turn his dull life into something wonderful - into one he can say has been lived to the full.

Doors open at 6.30pm, film starts 7.30pm

Tickets £5, cash bar

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

jennybody@btconnect.com

FOX
& HOUNDS INN

Acton Turville, nr Badminton
GL9 1HW

01454 218224

Fox & Hounds Luncheon Club

Wednesday 10th May

Tea/Coffee on arrival

Two Course Lunch (main course + dessert)

£12.00 per head

Everyone welcome!

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



Castle Combe Steam Rally

20th and 21st May 2023

at Castle Combe Circuit

Supporting Jessie May Children's Hospice



Admission:

Adults - £10 per day

Senior Citizens - £8 per day

Children under 14 - Free

See www.castlecombesteamrally.co.uk for full details

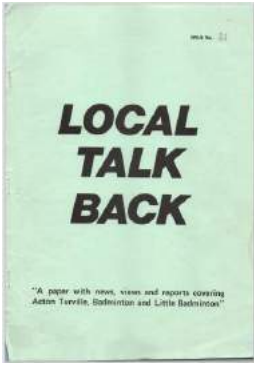


St Mary's Church, Acton Turville

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting will take place at 6.30pm on Sunday 21st May in the church, following the service of Evensong. Everyone is welcome – everytwo would be even more welcome. We would appreciate help with fund raising for urgent repairs to the guttering. The leaks are causing damage to the interior of the walls.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

45 Years Ago - May 1978



By May 1978 Local Talk Back was up to issue 31 and Les Rochester was doing a fine job as editor. It was quite a packed edition, with reports on the previous month's horse trials as well as announcements and more recollections of days gone by. One announcement reported that sales of the waste paper and cardboard, collected to raise money for extending the Badminton village hall, had reached £500 which was a significant milestone for this novel initiative. On a sad note, Talk Back announced the death of Mr Richard Boyce who was the pilot of the aircraft from which members of the local parachute club would jump on a regular basis. Richard was an experienced pilot who flew for 27 years with the RAF, but he lost his life when his aircraft went down in the Bristol Channel. His death was a great loss to the club.

On the social side, the Acton Turville Villagers Association was thinking of arranging a boat trip. The destination was still to be finalised – it was either “up the Amazon or the other way – towards Chippenham.” All will no doubt be revealed in the next issue. The price of the trip was similarly yet to be confirmed but the announcement did say it would be “reasonable”. I guess that would depend on whether they went for the Amazon or Chippenham option.

A couple of months ago we reported on the sad demise of Merlin's Disco who over the years had provided the sounds for many a local event. Well fear not. Spotting a gap in the market, local lads Adrian Knight and Nicky Capp had set themselves up as The Captain Apache Roadshow and were ready and waiting to take bookings for “parties, discos etc”. With a snappy name like that, success was surely a given?

As always, there were comprehensive updates from the local Guide and Brownie packs. The Guides in Badminton had been into Bristol to the Colston Hall (now called the Bristol Beacon after a hasty name change in 2022 aimed at reducing the chance of it being thrown into the docks) to see the band Hot Chocolate perform. Mrs Lane said the evening was a great success which it was hoped would be repeated next year. Sounds like everyone behaved themselves too:

“I was very impressed by the high standard of behaviour both in the theatre and outside, at times one could have heard the proverbial pin drop, which is not true of Pantomime audiences in general.”

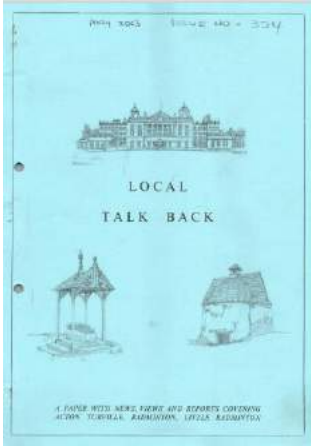
Many of the earliest editions of Talk Back contain articles written by older residents who recall how life used to be in our villages. This month it was the turn of Kath Gentry who recalled the various shops and outlets that existed in and around Badminton where she grew up. There was Mr Pinnells shop, where the smell of freshly baked bread wafted from the bakehouse and whose shelves were stocked with everything from “bootlaces and toffee apples to soap-flakes and bananas” while milk and eggs were available from Tom Ayliffe's smallholding which was situated next to the school. Elijah Russell ran the blacksmith's shop, and Jim Flint would sell ice-creams from his motorcycle combination. Something, thankfully, still very much with us is Drewetts Stores, but even there had been changes:

“Inside there were two counters – highly polished wood. On the right of the shop, drapery was sold, but on the left, large black canisters with gold lettering lined the shelves, each proclaiming its contents. Rice, tapioca, currants, raisins, sultanas etc, all sold loose of course. No fancy packaging in those days. Here the aroma of fresh ground coffee mingled with the scent of cheeses and bacon. Tins of biscuits lined the front of the counter, and of course some of the contents got broken, and were sold to children very cheaply. Happy days!”

On the sporting front, Ray Bird provided a review of the recent Badminton Horse Trials, which in those days were held in April before moving to May in the 1980s. Ray lamented the small number of starters, which at 43 was the lowest for some years, and was disappointed by the late withdrawal of several of the fancied horses and riders. He was more upbeat about the event's thrilling finale and the glorious sunshine which welcomed the record crowd. We'll let Ray take up the story:

“Tension mounted in the arena slowly on the final day as the survivors worked through the jumping in reverse order. Finally it came to the last three, and Richard Meade's chances of victory diminished with 15 jumping penalties dropping him to 6th position overall. Lucinda Prior-Palmer and Village Gossip went clear to secure the runner-up position, and the tension was electrifying as Jane Starkey and Warrior entered the arena. Two mistakes or a slow time would give Lucinda a record fourth Badminton win, a few heartbeats must have been missed by Jane's supporters as Warrior touched a fence or two, but her luck held and Jane it was who collected the Whitbread trophy from HM The Queen. For local folk at least, there could not have been a more popular winner than Jane (nee Bullen), the former Didmarton girl.”

20 Years Ago - May 2003



After a lack of resources prevented its publication for several months, Talk Back finally re-emerged in May 2003. The large number of donations (16!) made to the magazine demonstrated how much support there was in the community for the newsletter, but the editorial warned that without additional resources it would be not be possible to continue to publish it on a monthly basis; for the rest of the year it was likely to appear bi-monthly. Amongst the donations was a most welcome £100 from Vera Stevens who for many years ran a very popular monthly whist drive at the Badminton Village Hall, raising considerable sums of money for local good causes. Thanks Vera.

On first reading, there appears to be an unusually large number of new articles and announcements in May's Talk Back, but on closer inspection some of this might be material that was submitted for the issues that were never published as they are advertising events that have already taken place. An example worthy of mention is an advert for Pig

Racing at the Village Club in Badminton. Terry Tripp used to organise these events quite regularly in Acton Turville so we're guessing he was behind this one too. They were always great fun, with mechanical pigs racing against each other on a wooden track, but the event was at the end of April so by the time May's Talk Back hit the streets the pigs would have been returned safely to their pens.

The Badminton Village Club were once again offering a packed programme (even if most of the advertised events had already happened) with a monthly meat raffle, members draw and regular bingo sessions. There was live entertainment too with "female vocalist" LeAnn and the ever-popular singer Tony Graham making one of his many appearances at the club.



The Talk Back sports desk is still going strong, but by 2003 the reports are confined to football matches, and the "home side" is no longer Badminton AFC – it's Hawkesbury Hotspurs. That's not a bad choice actually as they seem to be doing rather well, putting ten past Wanswell, seven past Cashes Green and five past Frampton. They meet their match when they come up against league leaders Slimbridge who justify their position with two straight victories against the Hotspurs. Standout player for Hawkesbury is Charlie Preest who had scored 14 goals in just six matches!

It's good to see the considerable input from Trinity School including a series of poems penned by the children and news on fundraising activities such as a cake sale in support of the annual Blue Peter appeal. The big news from the school was that Year 3 pupil Louise Jackson had won her age group in the prestigious Royal Mail letter-writing competition. Earlier in the year, Louise was presented with a "personal learning computer" by local postman Steve Hamilton for coming first in the South-West heat. She followed this up with success at National level, travelling to London with her parents and teacher for a grand award ceremony:

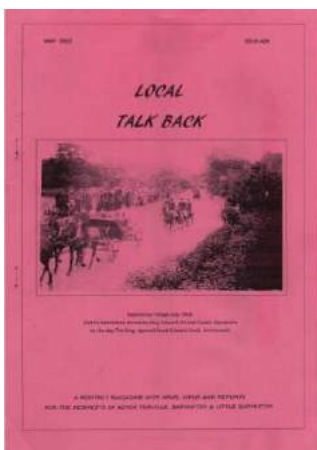
"Louise was accompanied by her parents and Jo Meggs, her teacher, to the award ceremony in London on Monday 10th March. Travelling by train on Sunday 9th, the happy band were able to spend a very enjoyable afternoon in London. Highlights of the afternoon included a "flight" on the London Eye and a boat trip on the River Thames. In the evening a special dinner was arranged in order to allow the winners to meet each other. On Monday, Louise was awarded her trophy, certificate and a laptop computer by children's TV presenter Tess Daley. Louise has also won £500 worth of books and CR ROMs for the school."

Sounds like a good time was had by all. Congratulations Louise.

Something that stands out amongst the regular content such as the Parish Council reports, the letter from the vicar and the results of the St Mary's 100 Club draws, is an article entitled "Why I Am Against This War" which argues why, in the opinion of the author, the invasion of Iraq by allied forces in 2003 was both unjust and against the wishes of the people. It's quite a surprise to see such an article in Talk Back as these days we tend to avoid covering contentious issues or taking sides in such circumstances. We like the quiet life. The article itself is beautifully written and presents a compelling case, but somehow I can't see us changing our editorial policy just yet.

Finally, a quick word about our advertisers. Back in 2003 you could have called on Beaufort Taxis and Minibuses or Herbie Rawlings at Herbie Hire to get you around, Rick Boulton in Yate for your decorating needs or Wiltshire Farm Foods if you were feeling peckish. Just one of those names from 2003 is still to be found advertising in Talk Back, and we raise our hats to the ever-reliable Mike Brazier from M&M Builders. Thanks for your support Mike.

10 Years Ago - April 2013



Adorning the cover of May 2013's Talk Back is a picture dating from July 1908. It shows King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra travelling through Badminton in a horse-drawn carriage accompanied by the 9th Duke of Beaufort and the Duchess of Beaufort. The King had travelled to Bristol the previous day to open the Royal Edward Dock at Avonmouth, and arrived at Badminton Station on the Royal train before taking the carriage to Badminton House for lunch with the Duke and Duchess.

Although there were no Royal visits to report on in May 2013, Talk Back was full of announcements of forthcoming events taking place locally. One not-to-be-missed event was an organ recital to be given by Daniel Cook, "a very high-achieving organist with a fine reputation" at St Mary's Church in Acton Turville. Having been refurbished in 2012, much effort had gone into finding someone capable of giving the organ a proper workout. As the organist and Master of the Choristers at St David's Cathedral and Artistic Director of Music at Salisbury Cathedral, Daniel Cook clearly fitted the bill. To

quote the announcement:

"Daniel will be playing a programme of keyboard works especially selected for our small, single manual pipe organ. Accustomed to huge Cathedral organs, he is excited about performing on ours and showing us its true potential."

The editorial, produced as usual by the Three Country Girls, reported that the Fox & Hounds had just reopened under the new ownership of Mark Hayward. The girls approved of the new décor which gave the pub "a lovely welcoming ambiance" and a much more light and airy feel. They wished Mark well in his new venture, and were happy to report that the future of the ever-popular Luncheon Club had been secured. The Luncheon Club wasn't the only event to look forward to; the Badminton Horse Trials were due to take place at the beginning of the month. Fingers were crossed this year after the cancellation of the 2002 event due to the huge amount of rain that had fallen 12 months earlier.

On a slightly smaller scale, there was a Jumble Sale at Badminton Village Hall offering "Books, White Elephant, Nearly New, Toys and Cakes." Presumably that's not nearly new cakes. Entrance was a very reasonable 50p. Do people still have Jumble Sales or have they been put out of business by eBay and car boot sales?

Looking slightly further forward, in June the Chipping Sodbury Festival was taking place, providing, it would appear, something for everyone. It started with a performance of Mozart's masterpiece Don Giovanni which was followed by a teddy bear's picnic with Punch & Judy show, and a car-based treasure hunt. We said it was eclectic, didn't we? Then you could choose between Jim Elsworth's "Ever Changing Sodbury" slide show, which by 2003 was in its 28th year, or Tim Brooke-Taylor (former member of the Goodies) in conversation with Chris Searle (former presenter of That's Life). Younger readers might need to google those last two references. Festivities drew to a close/the week reaches its climax (you choose) with a street fayre and carnival followed by a version of Last Night of the Proms, Chipping Sodbury style. Sounds like a fun week.

As well as adverts for future events, there were also reports on events that had already taken place. Christine Griffin had been to the Fashion Museum, housed in the Assembly Rooms in Bath which was hosting an exhibition called "50 Fabulous Frocks" to mark 50 years of the museum being in Bath. Christine was evidently very impressed by the exhibition, as well as the rooms used to house the exhibits, and vowed to return. If you want to follow in Christine's footsteps you'll need to do some homework – the museum vacated the Assembly Rooms at the end of 2022 and is currently in "temporary accommodation" while it finalises a move to a new home in the centre of Bath. We wish them luck.

We reported last month on plans to redevelop the play area at Acton Turville to provide "new and exciting equipment for tots to teens." Things were moving on, and the proposals presented at a public meeting at Trinity School received general support from those in attendance. Further updates were promised in future issues of Talk Back.

Finally the Hawkesbury Gardening Club continued to hold regular meetings. At their most recent one, they had enjoyed an evening of entertainment provided by a lady called Kate Williams who regaled members with verses, stories and songs about her gardening experiences. The group's report concluded with the following summary:

"Kate Williams came to talk to us, she talked and sang without a fuss. She made us laugh, she entertained us, then she left to catch the late bus."

Priceless.

J J'S GARDENING BLOG



There is an attractive small shrub with grey foliage and blue flowers, drought tolerant, good for a border or in a pot called perovskia, it is now renamed salvia atriplicifolia - hardly rolls off the tongue easily, but the useful bit is the "salvia" part, as it gives a good clue into how to look after this shrub.

Try This

Grow your own fertiliser from comfrey symphytum. Bocking 14 is sterile and therefore non-invasive, and it's also potassium rich. Pick the leaves, put them in a bucket to rot, dilute the dark liquid with water and use as a liquid feed.

Something to Think About

Prune the coloured stems of the cornus right down, keeping some for a vase and others to be made into a circle for a door decoration to your liking.

Libertia, a lovely plant with blade-like foliage, white sprays of smallish flowers from late spring and decorative seed heads.

The 8th of the 8th is an easy reminder that it is time to prune lavender. Use some trimmings as cuttings; trim off most of the leaves and push the cuttings into a terracotta pot of very gritty soil.

Dahlias, the tubers look like a cluster of small bananas, each cluster is one plant, so do not divide them.

Wait until all sign of frost has gone before planting outside or grow them in a greenhouse if earlier.

Penstemon need good drainage and a tidy up. The number one thing to keep on top of is to always keep on improving the soil, particularly as you will be filling the border with new, young, hungry plants. More grit, more humus.

Honesty (Lunaria) is a fun plant to share with the children, with purple flowers then seed discs which when rubbed between finger and thumb become silver pennies.

They also flower when there is the 'summer gap' and are easy to grow. Verbascums and Hollyhocks also flower at this time, and the latter do not need staking. If you have room, Baptisia is worth thinking about.

Blue to indigo pea-like flowers and easier than delphiniums.

Fritillaries and wood anemones have been marvellous this spring, remember to order some. They like a dampish area with dappled shade, they spread but good for a more natural area. Apart from the initial planting, they are trouble free.

This Month's Jobs

Vegetables to grow outside now - carrots, leeks, radish, beetroot, spring onions. Grow some lettuce in a seed tray and cover with grit, they will take about five weeks to show on a window cill.

To add interest to a cut arrangement just now, the hellebore will have made seed pods which means they will survive for several days without needing to have the stems seared with a flame.

Frost Free should be your mantra, though any frost in late May will be insignificant.

And Finally

What about a garden visit and a nice cup of tea?

Little Badminton - Twinned with The Lake District

You might have noticed we've had a bit of rain recently. Yvonne Nettles ventured out to capture these scenes in Little Badminton which for a few days looked like it had been transformed into a mini Lake District. Thankfully the drainage ditches did their job and the fields quickly returned to normal.



The Story of Aldom and Prudence Comely

Last year, Local Talk Back told the fascinating story of the Goulter family, explaining their links with Badminton, Acton Turville and the surrounding area which date back to the mid-1700s. The story was the result of research conducted by Judith Bush and James Goulter (right) from Victoria in Australia, who have spent many years investigating the history of their family. The article generated a huge amount of interest amongst Local Talk Back readers, so we were delighted when Judith and James offered us a further instalment, this time focussing on the lives of Aldom and Prudence Comely. We hope you enjoy this article as much as the first one.



We already know the story of James Goulter and Mary Comely that was published in Local Talk Back in December 2022, but there is another story that is very relevant to Acton Turville and Sopworth with Mary's family. As well as Mary and James Goulter's graves at St Mary's churchyard there are also Mary's parents, two of her brothers, three of her sisters and five other Comelys who were all buried there between 1831 and 1900. There have been five more known Comely burials between 1900 and 1936. No Comely graves have yet been identified.

Mary's father, Aldom was born c1768 and baptised at St Mary the Virgin Church at Sopworth in 1771. He was the third generation of Comelys to live at Sopworth. Prudence Smith was also born there in 1780. Her parents were Thomas & Sarah Smith. Aldom and Prudence married there in 1800 when Aldom was 32 years old - 12 years older than Prudence. The Comelys were on equal standing with the Goulters in Gloucestershire & Wiltshire and have been traced to the early 17thC with Robert (c1685-1762) & Lucy (1686-1729). Their name has been interpreted most commonly as Comely, Comley, Comly, Comeley and Cumly.

Aldom's grandparents, William & Jane, raised their family of eight children in Sopworth after their marriage in 1736. William and three of his sons wrote comprehensive wills before their deaths which provided a good indication of the families comfortable circumstances, their properties and goodwill towards their siblings, nephews and nieces - of whom there were many.

Aldom's father, John married Mary Baldwin in 1761. In turn, their family of nine children were all born at Sopworth and three of them died there as infants. When Aldom's father died in 1806 he left an estate that mentioned properties at Oldbury, Nettleton, Acton Turville, Luckington and Sopworth. He left £2,000 to Aldom and a further £6,000 between five other children - a substantial amount of money at the time.

There is a lovely memorial to John, Mary and their infant children in the Sopworth Church. It is similar to the grave of James & Mary Goulter at Acton Turville in its acknowledgement of the infant children:

"In Memory of John Comely, Gentleman, Late of this Parish, who departed this life 16th day of August 1806. Also of Mary, his wife, who exchanged this life for a better 29th May 1797, aged 63 years & was interred at Withington, Glos. Also of Thomas, Mary & Robert, their children, who died in their infancy"

Aldom and Prudence continued the family tradition. Their ten children were all born at Sopworth between 1801 and 1821. They were all baptised at Sopworth, even after their move to Acton Turville in 1814. Once they were at Street Farm they remained there for the rest of their lives.

Aldom appears to have been well loved by his siblings. He was the Executor and main beneficiary of his eldest brother, Joseph, a bachelor who lived at Luckington. He was also a beneficiary of his brother, William, a wealthy bachelor who lived at Bathwick in Somerset. He died in 1818 and his will listed a number of properties – two at Nettleton and one each at Acton Turville, Hawkesbury and Luckington.



An early image of Street Farmhouse, Acton Turville

Cont'd over

The Story of Aldom and Prudence Comely (cont'd)

He left one Nettleton property and £1,000 to his brother Joseph, the other, the 'Plume of Feathers' farm (later a pub) to his sister, Elizabeth Wickham. (Unclaimed dividends from William's investment in the Navy (5%) were claimed from the Bank of England by his heirs, nephews and nieces in 1850 - only to be told by the bank that they had been paid to Mary Ann Comely, his widow. It appears they were scammed).

To Aldom, he left his freehold property at Acton Turville, Street Farm (in 1769 a Thomas Dalby had sold the farm to 'William Comely of Bathwick'). He also left him his freehold lands at Upton in the parish of Hawkesbury, an estate at Luckington as well as £2,000.

Between 1814 and 1818 Aldom was paying tax on two properties at Acton Turville - a house owned by Henry Cambridge and land owned by Messrs. Comely, his brothers or uncles. In 1819, after his inheritance, he was only listed as paying tax on his own property, which we can assume was Street Farm.

By the time of the first Census in 1841 Aldom and Prudence had retired and were visiting their daughter, Ann and her family at Dursley. Their son, William and his family were farming independently in Acton Turville and remained there for the rest of their lives. Both were buried at St Mary's in Acton Turville. Many of the family were still at home at Street Farm where Aldom and Prudence's sons, John 35 and Joseph 25 were farming forty acres since their father's retirement. We learn later that John was deaf and possibly had been since birth. Their youngest daughter Charity, 15, was still at home, but also two of their married daughters, Elizabeth Southgate and Sarah Muckelwin who were both earning their keep working as dressmakers. Aldom died the next year, aged 74 and was buried at St Mary's in Acton Turville.

What circumstances brought their married daughters back home? Elizabeth had married in London in 1802 but her husband disappeared and she was listed as 'married', not widowed. She remained at home and never remarried. Sarah had married in 1836 but her husband died prior to 1841 which brought her back home for a short time before she married William Daw of Great Badminton in 1845. They had two children but nothing more is known of them or their first born son. Their daughter emigrated to South Australia where she married, raised a family and died in 1892.

In 1851 Prudence was listed as head of the household even though her son John, now 49 was farming the 40 acres. Because John was deaf he may have been treated unfairly. Prudence still had two married daughters at

home, Elizabeth, now doing millinery and their youngest daughter Charity, another widowed daughter, was dressmaking. Charity had married Henry Bridges, a publican at Great Badminton in 1845. She had a son in 1846 and was widowed in 1849 - the same year that her three-year-old son died. Charity died three years later in 1852 - she was only 31 years old. All three were buried at Acton Turville.

Their son, Joseph was no longer working the farm with his brother, John. He was now an innkeeper at Acton Turville and farmer of 27 acres in his own right. He had married Matilda Bridges in 1844 and they had three children. Their first born was the only one to survive. They moved to Jersey in the Channel Islands some time prior to 1871 where Joseph worked in a variety of jobs including general servant, station master and railway worker. He died at Point Marquet on the Isle of Jersey in 1889 and Louisa died a year later.

John finally became head of the household in 1861 but the farm has reduced in size from 40 to 25 acres and he only had one labourer. His mother, his sister Elizabeth and two of Prudence's grandchildren, Aldom and Maria Whitfield made up the household. There had been more tragedy for the family; another widowed daughter was back in the village. Matilda had married a miller, Thomas Whitfield in 1838, but he died in 1860 when he was 42. She was living independently in the village and working as a 'Schoolmistress'. On the night of the census she only had her youngest child with her. Her eldest, Prudence was already away working. This explains why the other two children were with their grandmother.

Prudence was 82 years old when she died in early 1863 and was buried at Acton Turville with Aldom. In 1871 her son John, now about 67 had retired from farming and was living alone in the village, but his life was about to change dramatically. That same year he married Elizabeth W P Ferris, a widow 19 years his junior. She had been living 'without means' in Badminton with two of her six children. Her daughter was 13 and her 11-year-old son was working as a labourer - probably her only income. This was probably a marriage of necessity as she would have been unable to support herself and the two children. Her four other children had already left home.

The 1881 census for John was the only one to specify that John was deaf. He and his wife Elizabeth had left Street Farmhouse and were living in a cottage, possibly one of the Street Farm cottages.

The Story of Aldom and Prudence Comely (cont'd)

John died two years later in 1885, age 83.

Elizabeth continued to live alone in a cottage at Acton Turville for the next twenty years. She died in 1902 at 81 years and was buried with John at Acton Turville.

Aldom and Prudence had seven daughters and three sons. Five of their daughters were widowed and only one remarried. Three daughters died young at 13, 27 and 35 years. All three of their sons survived to adulthood, married and had families, although John had no children of his own. Two of them lived in Acton Turville all of their lives and the other went to Jersey in the Channel Islands.

Street Farm has been witness to many lives. One now famous occupant was Sir James Dyson who purchased and lived at Street Farm from 1971 until 1978. It is where he invented and manufactured the 'Ball-barrow' and went on to invent the Dyson vacuum cleaner. The full story by Ray Bird is available in LTB October, 2021.

A very interesting aside with the Comely family comes from a letter written by Theophilus Goulter, from Malmesbury, in 1877 as a reply to a Mr John Comely regarding an ancestry enquiry. The origins of the original letter writer aren't known.

"Malmesbury, Nov 8th 1877

Dear Sir,

I have delayed my reply to your enquiries till I could see my mother who of course knows more about the antecedents of the Comely family than I do.

She can throw no more light on the matter than that her grandfather came from the Cotswolds first to Didmarton and then removed to Sopworth where her uncle also lived, her father coming to Acton Turville - from which it appears it is to the Cotswolds you must look for anything like an early date of the family.

Regretting my ability to give you any better information and with kind regards in which my wife includes.

*I am Dear Sir, Mr John Comely, Yours very truly,
Theo Goulter."*

No doubt this Mr John Comely could never have imagined that a similar quest would be undertaken nearly one hundred and fifty years later in Acton Turville. All his questions would have been answered on one website with the full text of Comely wills from 1638 to 1897, including one John Comely of Didmarton, 1806, Mary's grandfather.

by Judith Bush

Local Talk Back is very grateful to James and Judith for giving us permission to publish their article on Aldom and Prudence Comely. If you have any comments or feedback, please send them to us and we will forward them on to James and Judith.

A Day in Bristol Central Reference Library.

By John Stevens, found in the Feb 2023 'Avon History and Archaeology e-update' by Richard Elford, Acton Turville

"My haunt is the reference library upstairs. Lazily, I tend to eschew the grand sweep of the main staircase and walk to the lift at the end of the lending library. I may glance at the fiction shelves on the way or pause for tea at the reopened cafeteria. Then to the lift (the slowest in creation). To my right is the children's section, with its delightful pirate ship, and I briefly wish I was small again and could ascend to the crow's nest. Arriving upstairs, I call at the desk and collect the obscure volumes which have been retrieved from the old library or the gallery upstairs and have been put by to await my return. Perhaps a word, sotto voce, with the librarian on duty. These informed and helpful folk have helped many a local historian around a difficult corner. I find a space, hopefully with a desk light that works, and take my place with my fellow patrons: EFL students, some obvious eccentrics, one or two down-and-outs. Occasionally I catch the eye of another serious researcher; we do not speak but raise our eyebrows in mutual recognition. It is a sort of freemasonry. I am currently studying the voting habits of Victorian tradesmen and have before me the Bristol poll book for 1847, inscribed in copperplate with the original owner's name. It needs rebinding; I make a mental note to mention this at the desk. Looking up occasionally, I enjoy the huge vault of the building, perhaps at its best on a fine mid-winter's day when the sun shows itself through the upper windows. Just before closing time, a man comes along ringing a school bell and we begin to pack. But we shall return soon. The above vision may strike chords with some. Others will cry "Away with it!" and yearn for an all-singing, all-dancing facility elsewhere, perhaps in the old Debenhams building. It is something that goes deeper, touching as it does the two eternal halves of human nature."

Church Matters

May 2023 Letter from the Vicar

Dear all,

I very much hope you will be enjoying the Coronation on 6th May. One of the main themes of it will be the virtue of 'service' to the community. We are so fortunate to have Parish counsellors and the many good people who serve our villages in so many different ways serving our churches, community halls, tennis courts, cricket clubs to mention just a few. These amenities would not survive if it were not for the dedication of local people, giving their time free of charge to their community. In the church in particular, I am of course very aware of the hard work and commitment many Church Parish members make to their local church. The Churchwardens, treasurers and secretaries who carry the lion's share are real stars.

So whilst it is just one person who the Coronation is focussed on, I would wager that King Charles would have us all look to one another in gratitude and commitment for the service that goes on quietly in the communities of our land up and down the country. I am sure that is why he has chosen 'service' to be such an important aspect of his Coronation.

That said, I know we all wish him well as our Sovereign, with health and happiness, in spite of the heavy load that he must now carry. And we continue to pray for him every Sunday in our churches, as well as Queen Camilla his Consort and all the Royal family.

We are all deeply grateful to His Majesty for taking up the baton from his late mother, Queen Elizabeth, and doing so with such evident good grace and heart felt feeling.

With my best wishes for a Happy May,

Richard

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

Benefice website: www.badmintonbenefice.com

Email: revrichardthomson@gmail.com

Tel. 01454 219236

Church Services for May 2023

Date	Time	Parish	Service	Minister
7 th May Easter 5	9.30am	Lasborough	Matins	Churchwarden Led
	9.30am	Hawkesbury	Matins	Churchwarden Led
14 th May Easter 6	9.30am	Lasborough	Holy Communion BCP	Rev P Cheeseman
	11.00am	Leighterton	Holy Communion 1928	Fr J Wilson
	11.15am	Little Badminton	Matins	Fr J Wilson
	5.00pm	Hawkesbury	Evensong	Churchwarden Led
21 st May Easter 7	8.30am	Didmarton	Holy Communion BCP	Rev R Thomson
	10.30am	Hawkesbury	Family Service. Theme – Pentecost	Rev R Thomson
	11.15am	Sopworth	Matins	Rev R Thomson
	3.00pm	Acton Turville	Evensong	Rev R Thomson
28 th May Whitsun	9.30am	Lasborough	HC CW	Rev R Thomson
	11.15am	Little Badminton	Matins with HC	Rev R Thomson
	5.00pm	Hawkesbury	Evensong	Rev R Thomson

All readings and updates of services on website badmintonbenefice.com

ACTON TURVILLE PARISH COUNCIL

Please! No Dogs are allowed on the playing field or in the play area.
Your co-operation is appreciated. Thank you.

APRIL 2023

Items discussed at April's meeting included:

Playing Field Maintenance - We are always looking for extra volunteers. If you are 18 and over and would like to help mowing the playing field, even on a temporary basis during the summer when the growing season is more lively, please consider giving it a go and contact us.

Use of Playing Field - If you wish to use the field for a special occasion or specific event please contact the Clerk for a permission form. This is a standard requirement to comply with our insurers.

Community Speed Watch - Additional volunteers urgently needed. Please contact the Parish Council and we will pass your details to the local co-ordinator.

Jubilee Garden - We have now purchased and planted some replacement Hebes along with some additional hardy plants which we hope will last longer than the previous varieties. Thanks to those who were involved in purchasing and planting these.

Parish Notice Board - Work to build a raised bed adjacent to the Parish Notice Board was due to commence at the end of March however, the stone required was still on order which has caused a slight delay. The work has been re-scheduled to start at the beginning of this month (April).

Parish Councillors:

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

Date of Next Meeting:

Monday 15th May 2023 at 7 pm. Venue: St Mary's Church, Acton Turville.

Details on Parish Notice Board/Website

Parish Clerk: Sue Radford-Hancock Tel: 218675

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

Sudoku

May'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 !!

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

NOT SO EASY !!

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

Answers to the March puzzles:

'Easy'

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

'Not so Easy'

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



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Badminton House Open Gardens



Sunday the 23rd April saw a steady stream of visitors head to Badminton House to enjoy Tulip Day, traditionally the theme for the first open gardens event of the year. The hard work put in by Badminton's dedicated team of gardeners was deservedly rewarded when the day dawned warm, dry and sunny which helped create a nice, relaxed atmosphere and ensured the gardens looked their very best. We'll let the pictures do the talking which have been sent in by Gill Love from Acton Turville. The next Badminton Open Garden event is on the 25th June. Maybe we'll see you there?

