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January 2020



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Focal Point

January 2020

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Deadline for the January magazine is:

Friday 16 January 2020

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Cover story:

NEW YEAR—NEW LOOK

Everyone wants a fresh start for January

Joseph Davis and Melissa Chapman at

One Two 7 Hair and Beauty

gave Focal Point some ideas for 2020.

One Two 7—Hair and Beauty on Bitton's High Street has now been open for almost nine years, opening in March 2011. Joseph says: "There was nowhere catering for hair and beauty in the village or surrounding area when we came – we wanted to fill that gap – but in a unique way. We are stylish but it is a family environment here, without the corporate feel, and we cater for children as well as adults in a fresh, modern setting."

Working as a brother and sister team *One Two 7* aims to make its clients feel relaxed and to leave happy with their new look.

Melissa always knew she wanted to work as a beauty therapist, and after training at Brunel College she worked at a variety of health clubs and salons in Bristol. She is a qualified make up and nail artist and offers a range of treatments such as dermaplaning (a 'face scrape' which takes off a layer of dead skin) waxing and microblading – semi-permanent make-up for eyebrows.

Joseph is colour specialist and style director at *One Two 7*. "And a very good one" says Alison Hope who was having her hair cut while the interview was taking place, "I wouldn't go anywhere else, now," she said. And agrees when Joseph says that the most important quality of a hairdresser is to listen. "We have so many fantastic customers", he says. "It starts off as a professional relationship, but that barrier soon breaks down and we quickly build up a lovely relationship and become friends I find out what people are really looking for when they come in for a colour and cut, but also people tell me their problems and leave the salon not only looking better but feeling much happier.

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Because Melissa and I have a lot of life experience we really can help. Having some-one listen to you while having your hair done, a massage in the massage chair, a drink and a biscuit and then leaving looking great is a lovely and nurturing experience. I think that hairdressers should be taught these listening skills – I'm not sure many seventeen-year olds would know what to do if some-one started crying in the chair – it does happen – and it's nothing to do with the cut! We are very busy, but new customers are always welcome, and we work hard to fit everyone in."



Melissa says, "It has not been easy for us, we have lost our brother, our Mum died of cancer and my partner had a brain injury but we kept the salon open and won't turn anyone away – we really want our clients to be happy."

Customers come from Bitton and surrounding areas and a regular client even comes from Texas to the salon.

The salon is refurbished every four years to keep it looking fashionable and chic. The last refurbishment was done two years ago by Melissa and her father.

And plans for 2020? "We plan to keep up to date with more courses. I'm going on a Vitamin B12 injection course –which helps combat fatigue, boosting energy levels, giving you healthier skin, hair and nails, and improving sleep," says Melissa. Joseph plans to keep making his customers feel and look good and to continue supporting the village and the church – "giving back to the community as they give to us."

Sarah Heavens

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The Christingle: a symbol of Christ’s love and the happiness he brings



Shutterstock

In 1968, John Pensom, after much opposition, persuaded the Dean and Chapter of Lincoln Cathedral to hold a special service to support his charity, then known as the Church of England’s Children’s Society. This was the first Christingle service to be held in England although something similar had been developed in the Moravian Church following an event at Marienborn in Germany over two hundred years earlier, when, in 1747, Bishop Johannes de Wattville used a candle wrapped in a red ruff which he called a Christingle to explain the happiness that had come to people through Jesus.

John Pensom was something of a character. He once put “DGO” after his name on his printed letterhead because he felt it carried influence. When challenged, he said it was a decoration that he was awarded during the war in Yugoslavia. It was no such thing. It actually stood for *Damned Good Organiser*—which he was. He joined the Children’s Society as an organiser in the 1950s and devoted his life to its cause. Today there is hardly a parish that has not taken on his idea of the Christingle, an attractive form of worship, that continues to benefit the charity. Providing an event that is popular with children and adults and earning John not a DGO, but the nickname of “Mr Christingle”.

John adapted the candle and ruff into something that children could easily make themselves by decorating an orange with a red ribbon, dried fruits, sweets and a candle to create a new visual representation of Christ, the light of the world, celebrated by the lighting of the Christingle candles.

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Many churches hold Christingle services around Christmas time but at St Mary's it has usually held during the season of Epiphany, which is also appropriate as the commemoration of Christ's manifestation as a light to the world as represented by the visit of the Three Kings.

Our Christingles are made from an orange decorated with red tape, sweets and a candle. Each element of a Christingle has a special meaning and helps to tell the Christian story:

- **The orange represents the world**
- **The red ribbon (or tape) symbolises the love and blood of Christ**
- **The sweets and dried fruit represent all of God's creations**
- **The lit candle represents Jesus's light in the world, bringing hope to people living in darkness.**

Our Christingle also raises money for the Children's Society to support children and young people in the darkest situations imaginable. The charity supports vulnerable young people and children in the UK. Its work includes supporting young carers, refugee children, exploited children, and children in poverty. As well as providing services directly to children, it lobbies the government and researches issues affecting vulnerable children. In 2018, more than 6,000 celebrations raised almost £1.3 million to light up the lives of children and young people between the ages of 10 and 18.

This year's Christingle at St Mary's will be held on 12 January at 10.30am. You will be very welcome.



The Christingle Service at St Mary's in 2016
Picture Becky Feather

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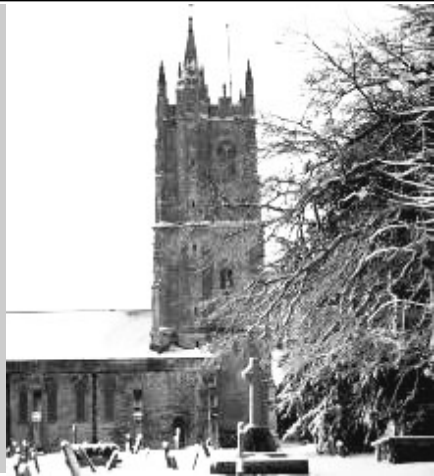
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- Churches & Services -



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Rev Jeremy Andrew
The Vicarage, Warmley
0117 967 2724

Ordained ministers:

Rev Richard Humphrey
Splinters, Kenilworth Drive
Willsbridge 0117 949 0502

Rev Susie Bishop

revsusiebishop.uk@gmail.com
07415 831488

Lay ministers:

Ken Gibson, 8 Church Road,
Bitton
0117 932 2122

David Bailey, Westover,
Bath Road, Bitton
0117 932 8949

Churchwardens:

Pete Midgley
30 Kenilworth Drive, Willsbridge
0117 932 6898

Jacqui Harris
29 St Anne's Drive, Wick
0117 937 4706

Services in December

Sunday 5 January

CHRISTMAS II

10.30am Parish Communion

Sunday 12 January

EPIPHANY I

The Baptism of Christ

8.00am Holy Communion

10.30am Christingle Family Service *followed by lunch at The Upton Inn*

Sunday 19 January

EPIPHANY II

10.30am Morning Worship

Friday 24 January

9.30 Celtic Communion

Sunday 26 January

EPIPHANY III

8.00am Holy Communion

9.30am Family Café Church

St Mary's flower rota 2020

Thank you to all who arrange such lovely altar flowers throughout the year, it is greatly appreciated. I shall be in Church on Saturday 11th January to arrange the rota for 2020, please join me for coffee and biscuits at around 10.30am. Look forward to seeing you all. **Judith Butson**

From the Register

17th November Holy Baptism

Artie George Frederick Brown

24th November Holy Baptism

Billy Blue Howells

6th December Funeral

Helene Katharina Macdonald



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UPTON CHEYNEY United Reformed Church



Sunday services are at 3pm

Services in January :

Sunday January 5th Service led by John Creech

Sunday January 12th Service led by Michelle Bates

Sunday January 19th Communion Service led by Steve Britton

Sunday January 26th Service led by Jenny Clarke

**In addition our coffee afternoon will be at 2pm on
Tuesday January 28th**



News from Upton Cheyney URC

Another election — Upton Chapel was the polling station for Upton and Beach villages. I thought you might be interested in what goes on behind the scenes to make this happen.

Firstly there is a lot of paperwork from the local authority. Because this election was late in the year there were additional questions about heating, salt for any ice and lighting. On the morning of the election I went to open the chapel at 6am. The two officers arrive about the same time. They have to be up even earlier to load up their car at Kingswood on route.



Stuart Turner

First action - get the heating on. Its very cold outside but even colder inside. That's a combination of electric and gas heaters and an open fire if they need it. Next they bring in all the supporting materials. The booth and signs have been delivered in advance, they go up next. By now everyone is ready for tea (hopefully I have remembered to bring the milk else its a quick scoot back home for some). At 7am on the dot the polling station is open and operational. It stays open until 10pm. A long day that isn't finished until everything is loaded back into the car, not forgetting the all important ballot box. Fires off, lights out hopefully by 11pm. I try to ensure I always thank the hard working couple who have spent the day running this for us.

Also that week we held our Christmas themed coffee afternoon, music courtesy of Natalie and Debbie. Lots of carols that everyone joined in with - very loudly - very rousing. Christmas cake, mince pies and crackers round a roaring open fire. This was the first time we have done this but it proved so successful I'm sure it will be repeated.

Continued overleaf

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I notice that we have one coffee afternoon in the New Year on Shrove Tuesday so that sounds like an excuse for pancakes!

Finally, in December we had our first bible study led by ourselves, well by Muriel. It went really smoothly and we are going to attempt to repeat the idea on December 28th. However its down to Adrienne and I to lead that one and we can already feel how much time and thought you need to devote to it's preparation. I'll let you know how it goes.

Until then a very happy new year from everyone at Upton chapel .

FAMILY CAFÉ CHURCH

4th Birthday Party
Sunday 26 January at 9.30

Yes, Family Café Church is four years old. Do come and join in the celebration.



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St Mary's Matters

On Sunday 8th December we held our first ever combined Family Parade and Café Church service at St Mary's. Combining aspects of each of the services under the theme "Preparing for Christmas" we dressed the Christmas tree, created sheep and stars in the craft and then placed our gifts of toys, books and food items under the tree. The food was donated to the food bank distributed by the Sisters of the Church in St Pauls and the toys and books were taken to the Upton Inn to be combined with presents from their reverse Christmas and donated to the Salvation Army. There was a tremendous buzz in the service and it seemed to be a great success. These types of service require a substantial input from quite a few people; many thanks to all who contributed. If you have any feedback about the service please let me know.



Pete Midgley

I am sad to have heard that the community choir is disbanding. Their performance at the carol service on 22nd December was their last. It has been a great blessing for the church to host the choir during its years of existence and has been an important link between the church and the community. We are thankful to those who have led the choir and those who have sung in it. Perhaps it will be reincarnated again in the future, who knows.

January can be a cold and dark month, so why not join us at our Christingle service on 12th January as we celebrate Jesus as the light of the world. You will be most welcome at this or any of our other services during January and beyond. May I take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy New Year.

CHRISTINGLE SERVICE

Sunday 12 January at 10.30am at St Mary's

Candles fill the Church for this historic service which has been revived by the Children's Society.

Gill Ford the Regional Secretary of The Children's Society will be our guest speaker.



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David Bailey—Lay Minister

Truth & Post Truth



I'm writing this before, and you are reading it after, the General Election result.

In the run up to the election, one of the areas debated in the television interviews of politicians was Truth. Can the electorate be sure that politicians are telling the truth? Can we believe the parties when they give their wish lists (manifestos) for spending tax-payers' money and can we believe the reforms they are promising?

Lord Carrington was Foreign Secretary when Argentina invaded the Falklands in 1982. He took full responsibility for the complacency of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in its failure to foresee this development, and for the misleading signals sent by the Foreign Office on British intentions for regaining control of the Falklands. Within 3 days of the start of the invasion he resigned. It was seen at the time as the right, honest & truthful thing to do & he was commended for doing it.

Post truth politics is a culture first described by the American playwright Steve Tesich¹. His writing was influenced by the Watergate scandal (1972), the Ira-Contra scandal (1985-7) and the Persian Gulf war (1990). Rather than drawing on the facts, the culture instead appeals to the emotions. It incorporates false news websites and a false balance in news reporting. In this culture, lies stop being treated as something inexcusable

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and start being viewed as acceptable. Rebuttals to these lies are treated as smears & scaremongering. The truth itself is treated as false news. False rumours are calculated to sway public opinion. The Internet, by allowing us to choose where they get our information, may reinforce our opinions, which may not be based on fact.

Jesus, in his earthly ministry was concerned about Truth. The line “*Let your yea be yea and your no be no*” we may attribute to the singer Jimmy Cliff but the words were first spoken by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount ². Jesus also claims to be the “*Way, the Truth and the Life*”³. These are claims, which, as Christians, we believe. Truth leads to honesty & trust. Trust shapes a happy, healthy community.

For further reading the following are referenced in the text:

- 1. Steve Tesich: A Government of Lies in *The Nation*, January 1992 (available on line)**
- 2. St Matthew’s Gospel—Chapter 5 verse 37**
- 3. St John’ s Gospel— Chapter 14 verse 6**



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Friday 17 January
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starring
**James Purefoy, Meadow Nobrega, Daniel Mays,
David Hayman and Tuppence Middleton**

Based on a true story, the film starts when a fast living, cynical London music executive reluctantly heads to Cornwall on a stag weekend. While there, his boss pranks him into trying to sign up a group of shanty-singing fishermen. He becomes the ultimate 'fish out of water' struggling to gain the respect or enthusiasm of the band who value friendship and community over fame and fortune.

What follows is a warm and boisterous, fun loving adventure full of humour and passion, filmed in the gorgeous Port Isaac and with the soundtrack of the band.

We loved it and we think you will too.

Doors open 7.30pm. Film starts 8pm.

The Church Hall, Church Lane, Bitton

Drinks will be available from the Licensed Bar, Choc Ices will be served in the interval and there will be time to chat with friends

Admission £2.50

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MID WEEK EVENTS FROM JANUARY TO ASH WEDNESDAY

A card with details of all the midweek events up to Ash Wednesday will be available in Church from the beginning of 2020 but highlights include -

Wednesday 10.30 am Morning Group on 8 and 22 January and 12 and 26 February

Wednesday and Thursday 7.30pm evening groups will have 6 sessions based on materials supplied by the charity Livability. Created with small groups in mind it draws on well-known Bible stories exploring the topics of emotional and mental wellbeing using the Bible as a guide. The Wednesday group gets under way at 8 Church Road on 8 January and the Thursday Group at 30 Kenilworth Drive on 9 January.

Celtic Communion followed by coffee and cake in the Lady Chapel at 9.30 am on Friday 24 January.

The **Benefice Prayer meeting** at 7.30 pm on Tuesday 7 January will be at the Vicarage and the monthly **Benefice Prayer Breakfast** will be at 9.00am on Saturday 18 January in Warmley Church.

A Benefice Ash Wednesday Service will be held on Wednesday 26 February at 7.30 pm. Venue to be announced.

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BITTON VILLAGE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

GARDENING CLUB
Our next meeting is

MONDAY 20th January

in the
Church Hall, Church Lane, Bitton
Doors Open 7.30pm

We will be celebrating the beginning of our eleventh Year.

Come along and join the Gardening Club, and this evening enjoy a free drink and nibbles, meet friends and check out your gardening knowledge with our annual Teams Quiz with prizes.

We will also present our new 2020 Gardening Club programme.

The programme for 2020 is, as usual, bursting at the seams, with eight meetings and four gardens to visit. Our speakers will cover such diverse topics as Choosing Trees for our Gardens; the History and Restoration of the Gardens at Prior Park; Tools and Techniques to make Gardening Easier for US; Making the Most of your Garden's Microclimates and Plants that Should be Better Known.

Garden visits are on different days of the week and include Cerney House, Gardens in the Cotswolds; Stoberry near Wells; Heale House near Salisbury and Hazelbury Manor Gardens near Box.

Bitton Open Gardens will take place on Sunday 7 June (*if anyone is interested in opening their garden that day please let me know*), and **Fonthill have invited us back in May to shop 'til we drop at their garden centre (with a 10% discount).**

The Garden Club Annual Membership Fee remains the same at £12 and all our meetings will continue to be FREE to members. Meetings are held in the Church Hall in Church Lane. If anyone would like to join the committee, please contact me asap before the meeting.

For more information, come to the meeting on Monday 20th January or contact Bridget Hetzel by e-mail

b.hetzel@btinternet.com

Everyone is welcome



Anna Palmer, left, with Jemma & James Smith by the defibrillator—Picture: Carolyn Russell

Defibrillator is installed with memorial to White Hart Customer

As previously reported in Focal Point , the defibrillator, funded by local donations, has been installed outside the White Hart in Bitton in memory of a pub regular who suffered a heart attack and died.

Ian Cook had been on a night out with his wife Judith and friends at the village pub on 24th March when he suffered a heart attack. Despite huge efforts to save him, the 78-year-old retired headteacher later died in hospital.

After hearing the sad news, resident Anna Palmer, with support from friends Carolyn Russell, Becky Feather, Claire Thorogood and Sue Wakefield, kicked off a fundraising campaign to buy the village an AED (automated external defibrillator).

A crowdfunding appeal raised £564.78, while a collection jar on the bar in the White Hart, along with the proceeds of a pub quiz night, yielded £1,047. Local resident Duncan Wilson also made a generous donation of £625.

The funds raised mean that as well as buying the defibrillator, which is now in a prominent position on the front of the pub, there was enough money for a brass plaque in Ian's memory, and money left over for training and ongoing maintenance of the defibrillator.

After retiring from his job as a headteacher in Dorset, Ian had worked for a time at the Citizens Advice Bureau in Bridport. The

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couple moved to Oldland Common from Dorset 11 years ago to be closer to family, and Ian did some voluntary casework for the Royal British Legion in Bristol.

Judith said that she and her husband, who was a father-of-two and a grandfather, had been enjoying a lovely time with friends at the pub before his sudden death that night. She said she couldn't thank landlord James Smith and others enough for trying to save him and that Ian would be absolutely delighted that something so positive had come about as a result of his death.

Anna Palmer said: "We are so proud that the whole community has come together to raise money for this vital lifesaving equipment, as well as its ongoing maintenance. Thank you so much to everyone who donated."

White Hart landlady Jemma Smith said: "It's amazing that everyone has pulled together to get the defibrillator. James and I are honoured and delighted to have been part of the Bitton defibrillator project. We hope that it will never be used but it is a true asset to the community."

A defibrillator delivers an electric shock to the heart when someone is having a cardiac arrest. Every minute without CPR and defibrillation reduces their chances of survival by 10%.

Callers to the emergency services will be given the code to access the defibrillator, which is easy to use, but to give people confidence, an event is being held by St John Ambulance in the church hall in Bitton on Saturday 8th February from 10am to noon. Places have to be reserved and there will be a list on the noticeboard in the village shop for people to sign up.

This is the second time in a year that people in Bitton have shown great community spirit. Last December, after mask-wearing robbers targeted the Premier Express in the High Street, a Go Fund Me appeal was set up to help the family who run it the shop. The £1,000 target was quickly smashed and in total more than £3,000 was raised.

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Bristol Diocese declares Climate Emergency

The Diocese of Bristol has declared a climate emergency and become the first in the UK to commit to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2030 (20 years earlier than the aim of the national church).

The motion was brought to debate at the Diocesan Synod by Revd David Stephenson, vicar of St Paul's and Cotham Parish Church. He said **“Declaring Climate Crisis challenges our own priorities and commits us as churches to work with others to respond to an emergency with global reach. Declaration is calling to others; it is also commitment to ourselves and to the gospel.”**

The declaration followed the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (an independent board of over 1000 scientists) which has warned that we have fewer than 11 years to drastically alter our path and reduce carbon emissions before it will be too late to avoid catastrophic climate change.

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Bishop Viv responded to the decision with the words: **“Care for God’s creation is key to our Christian faith. Climate change hits our poorest global neighbours first and worst, exacerbating migration, conflict over resources and the spread of disease. By declaring Climate Emergency, our practical action and collection voice will send a strong message. We must all act now.”**

The Climate Emergency declaration is supported by a new diocesan **Environment and Climate Justice Policy** that covers energy use and generation, travel, investments, plastics, procurement and recycling, advocacy and campaigning and integrating care for the environment into prayer and worship. It includes plans for more solar panels on church buildings and 100% renewable energy across the diocese.

The declaration comes at an important moment for St Mary’s Church as it contemplates and discusses the future use of the church and poses particular challenge for the grade 1 listed building that uses large amounts of energy, particularly in the winter, heat and light the building. As the plans are laid for change we will be looking to see what can be done to reduce the carbon footprint of the building both in the facilities it offers but also in the way in which it is used.

(Information sourced from diocese newsletter– with grateful thanks.)

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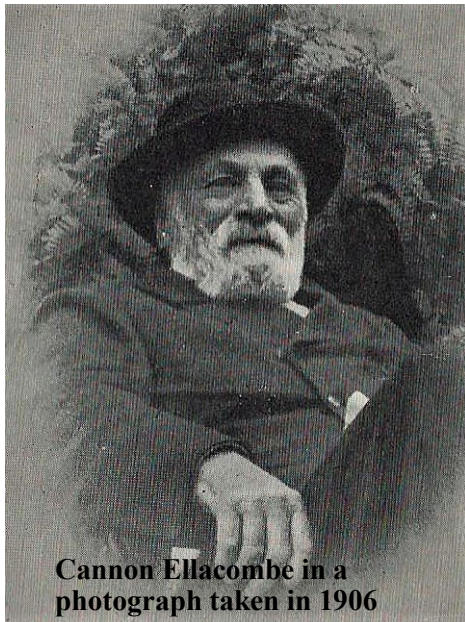
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Canon Ellacombe in a photograph taken in 1906

History Group hears of Bitton's Clergyman Gardener

Bitton History Group enjoyed an enlightening talk on Canon Ellacombe, the clergyman gardener, given by Wendy Smale at its November meeting. The talk was given in St Mary's Church where Canon Ellacombe and his father had served as vicars for a combined period of 99 years up to 1916.

Wendy explained how Canon Ellacombe delighted in sharing plants with other gardeners and regularly exchanged plants and knowledge with Kew Gardens, even sharing some of the soil from the Glebe field with Kew. But it was clear that this wasn't the only reason for the fame of Canon Ellacombe (and also his venerable father) but rather his great love and knowledge of plants. He rejected any notions of colour scheme or geometric arrangement and planted his new acquisitions in the right place to suit each particular plant.

One element in Ellacombe's success was due to the soil and those local attending learned just how lucky we are with our local soil (deep, alluvial with lime and magnesium), which is perhaps one reason for the past success of local market gardening.

Focal Point, January 2020

The group's next meeting will be in February when David Noble has kindly agreed to show a video and give a short talk on life in Oldland Common going back to how it was in his childhood in the 1950s.

The History Group has been a great success and grown significantly in the past few years attracting large numbers to its meetings. As a result, its Chairman Mike Gates has launched a consultation of members about the scope and content of future meetings. Members can respond using an online system *Survey Monkey* or, for those who find such surveys difficult to access, Mike is happy to receive responses directly by email. In both instances the results of the consultation will be confidential and anonymised.

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News from Bitton WI

On the 9th December amid the final preparations for Christmas Bitton WI members met for our Christmas party.

Committee members had decorated the church hall and prepared the meal, so that members could come, relax, enjoy the meal, chat with friends and enjoy the evenings entertainment. After the meal and the reading of the jokes in the crackers, presents were given out from Santa's sack.

Jean, our new president, then introduced the WI Ukulele band and song sheets were distributed, and we all joined in singing familiar songs. The evening came to an end with a raffle, and I think everyone agreed it was a very enjoyable evening.

We meet on the second Monday of the month, our next meeting will be on January 13th, and new members are always welcome.

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December's quiz answers

Last month's quiz was, appropriately, about Christmas. The correct answers are:

1. 7; 2. Bing Crosby's White Christmas; 3. Oliver Cromwell; 4. The Beatles in 1963, 1964, 1965 and 1967; 5. Home Alone 2; 6. Japan; 7. Bohemian Rhapsody; 8. 30,000; 9. £500,000; 10. 370 million; 11. 6 Million; 12. 227 miles; 13. 100,800; 14. 1938; 15. 521; 16. 25 million; 17. 8 million; 18. 957; 19. 27%; 20. £42 million

The Christmas break meant that Focal Point had to go to press before last month's closing date. Winners will be listed in the February edition.

The January Quiz

This month's quiz is an anagram quiz about garden plants to lift your mood and think about warmer days to come.

Clues

1. A Dog I Ill
2. A Such If
3. Age Bi No
4. Along Aim
5. Ape Units
6. Bub El Sell
7. Cat Slime
8. Dad I Blue
9. Day Hanger
10. Ear Sing Um
11. Early Wilt
12. Even Lard
13. Ibis Such
14. List Up
15. Odd Don Err Hon
16. Per I Mr So
17. Ponds Rows
18. Sad Lid Off
19. Sea Tonic
20. Seine Op

Name:

Contact:

Please send your answers to Carolyn Russell at Martin House, Church Road, Bitton (the yellow house) or email mrrussell@icloud.com by 15 January



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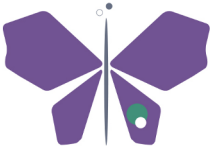
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The last word



Another new year and another new decade as we move into the “twenties” of the 21st century. How will things turn out we wonder? We make our resolutions and, as always, hope for the best. Reflecting on the concerns raised by David Bailey in this edition of *Focal Point*, if I have one hope it is that we emerge by the end of it as a less divided country: politically, socially, economically and perhaps, given the recent focus given to Islamophobia and anti-Semitism – religiously too.

It is a significant issue not only in Britain. You may remember the response given by Senator John McCain in the US election in 2008 in when he was challenging Barack Obama and someone made a disparaging remark about his opponent. No, ma’am,” he said. “He’s a decent, family man, a citizen that I just happen to have disagreements with.” Contrast that with Trump’s suggestion in 2016 that “Wicked Hilary” should be “locked up” and how far things have moved.

In this country, at the height of the EU Referendum, a Member of Parliament, Jo Cox, was assassinated. Of course, the perpetrator had mental health issues (assassins usually do) but how far was he fired up by the divisive rhetoric of that moment? Respecting the views and lives of others lies at the heart of the Christian message of love for each other. It can be a hard thing to do and ultimately is something that we will always fail to live up to – but there is no excuse not to try.

In their book *How Democracies Die* two American authors Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt sketch out their views on how democracy can be subverted and identify that one of the first indications of its breakdown is when disagreement with another’s views moves into a disrespect for them as people. Brexit has heightened that position not only in the way politics is sometimes conducted nationally but at a more domestic level too: people have told me that they have lost friends over their views about Brexit. We need to find a way back to a better place than that, for if we don’t, than this coming decade will be far more difficult than the last.

We should recall the words of Jo Cox in her maiden speech in 2015, just a year before her death, championing the diversity of her community that “we are far more united and have far more in common with each other than things that divide us”. It is a sentiment that should not be forgotten.

With best wishes for 2020 and beyond.—*Jim Heavens*

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