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August 2020

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Focal
Point
returns as
a print
edition



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August 2020

**Cover photograph—
Flowers on the Boyd
Bridge**

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*Deadline for the September
magazine is:*

Monday 17 August2020

In this month's Focal Point:

- Page 8 **Sorry if we missed you—** 3 months of Focal Point on line
- Page 13 PCC meets on Zoom
- Page 14** ***Lay Minister's Letter:***
"It's life, Jim, but not as we know it!"
- Page 17 Bitton bids farewell to Joyce Selman
- Page 18 **Covered for COVID—**
Lizzie Parker-Clarke and her face masks
- Page 20 Summer Draw—raffle tickets on sale.
- Page 21** Please hold a tea party - in place of the fête
- Page 22 Get your entries ready for the Photography Competition
- Page 24 *WI News*
- Page 28-29 **This month's quiz**
- Page 31 Last Word

Churches' news and information about acts of worship pages 10 to 12

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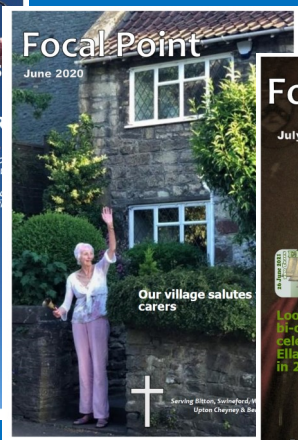
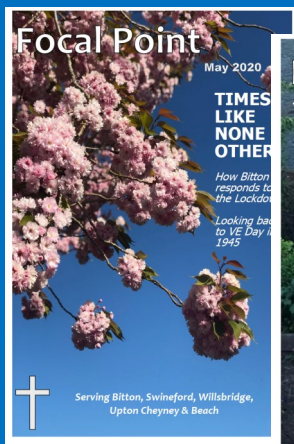
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Sorry if we missed you

It all happened very quickly. At the time the April edition of Focal Point went to the printers there were already some restrictions in place. By the time it had returned we were in lockdown. Most copies of the April edition were delivered, but our apologies to those who did not receive one as some of our distributors had already self-isolated.

In line with Church of England advice, it was decided that a printed version would not be produced and so the next three months' editions were all produced as on-line versions only, published on the St Mary's website or circulated as pdf to those on the church mailing list.

There was also no shortage of events to record an extraordinary and hopefully not to be repeated experience of living in lockdown. All three "lockdown editions" the covers of which are shown here, are available on the Focal Point area of the church website.

This month, Focal point returns to a print edition—a situation that we hope will continue.



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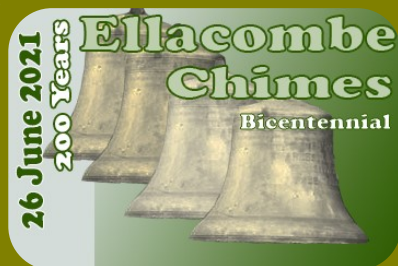
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Keep the date: 26 June 2021 - Ellacombe Chimes around the world

When the Rev Henry Thomas Ellacombe arrived as the new curate in Bitton in 1817, he was appalled at the behaviour of the church bellringers who, he complained, were drunk, failed to attend the church services and would ring the bells for no good reason. His engineering skills enabled him to outwit the ringers, by installing a chiming device. Through a system of ropes and pulleys, this apparatus could be operated by one person from the church porch. And could dispense with the bellringers.

Not only does this apparatus remain in use at Bitton, but devices based on his design were installed in many churches in Britain and around the world. To celebrate the 200th anniversary of the installation of the chimes, a major event is planned in Bitton on Saturday 26 June 2021, when Ellacombe Chimes will be rung around the world at 12 noon in the time zone where they are located. It will start in Timaru, New Zealand and end in Vancouver, Canada.

In Bitton the chimes will ring out at 12 noon and it is hoped to have a live link up to other participating churches.

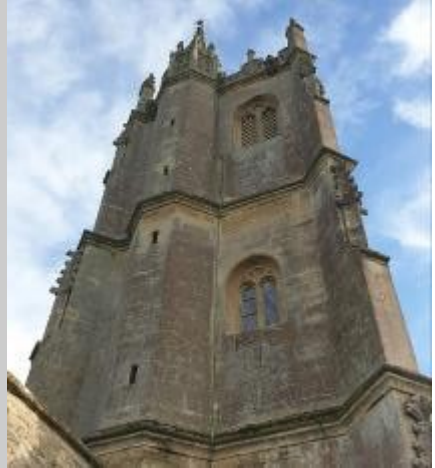


- Churches & Services -



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www.stmarysbitton.org.uk



Vicar:

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 August

Church services have recommenced at St Mary's with a weekly service of Morning Prayer at 10.30 each Sunday. Numbers are limited so if you intend to be there please send an email with the number attending from your family group to Jacqui Harris at timjaqui@aol.com or phone 0117 937 4706. Sunday and Mid-week services will continue to be available on line.

All details are at www.stmarysbitton.org.uk

Please note that, as we are now able to hold services on Sundays, the Saturday opening of St Mary's for private prayer has been discontinued.

We will continue to share mid-week and Sunday services through video links.

This month's church calendar

Sunday 2 August	EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY 10.30 Morning Prayer
Thursday 6 August	<i>The Transfiguration of Our Lord</i>
Sunday 9 August	NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY 10.30 Morning Prayer
Saturday 15 August	10.50 Commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of VJ (See separate notice) <i>Blessed Virgin Mary</i>
Sunday 16 August	TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY 10.30 Morning Prayer
Sunday 23 August	ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY 10.30 Morning Prayer
Monday 24 August	<i>Bartholomew the Apostle</i>
Sunday 30 August	TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY No service



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There are no
planned services
during August



Commemoration of the 75th anniversary of VJ Day

Saturday 15 August

The Royal British Legion hopes that this anniversary will be remembered at War Memorials all around the country.

Here, in Bitton, prayers will be said at the memorial in the Church Yard and a wreath will be laid by the Bitton and Oldland Branch of the Legion. Mr Mick Perkins of Oldland Brass will play last Post and Reveille.

If you wish to be present please arrive at 10.50 am and follow the directions of marshals who will invite you to stand in a circle 10 metres from the Memorial and 2 metres apart.



PCC Meets on Zoom

For the first time, St Mary's Parochial Church Council; (PCC) met on-line in July. This was the first meeting since before lockdown.

The two significant items on the agenda related to the purchase of sound equipment for the church and meeting the additional costs of archaeology.

Although not a complete new sound system, the purchase of some new equipment—microphones and speakers, including a small stand alone system is intended to improve the quality of sound in the church, which has been subject to breaks and interference over the past year. The new equipment will include a new wireless microphone headset. The proposal was accepted.

The PCC also welcomed the work that had been undertaken by the archaeologist and approved funds for some additional work to be undertaken and for specialist to review and assess some of the finds.

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This Autumn's mid-week house groups to study *Parables*

In September we are going to resume our mid-week meetings with a series of studies on the Parables. We do not know yet whether it will be possible for these meetings to be actual meetings. If not then with the aid of a Study Booklet we will be able to hold them on-line through Zoom or Skype.

There is a choice of three Groups –

Wednesday Mornings at 10.30 Westover, Bath Road, Bitton.

Start date 9 September

Contact David Bailey 0117 932 8949

Wednesday Evenings at 7.30 8 Church Road, Bitton.

Start date 2 September

Contact Ken Gibson 0117 932 2122

Thursday Evenings at 7.30 31 Kenilworth Drive, Willsbridge

Start date 10 September

Contact Pete Midgley 0117 932 6898

All are very welcome – just ring one of the contacts and we will arrange for you to receive a copy of the Study Booklet.

Ken Gibson

Lay Minister's Letter

**“It’s life, Jim, but
not as we know it!”**

Dear Friends,

I do so hope that this letter finds you all in good health and ‘COVID’ free.

It has been a very challenging few months for all of us and will continue to be so for some time to come I think. Everything has changed, the world has been turned upside down and the way we live our life will change too and we will have to adapt to whatever that is.

Quite a few years ago there was a hit record called ‘Star Trekkin’ and one of the lines in the song was;

“It’s life Jim but not as we know it, not as we know it, not as we know it”

I guess that just about sums up where we are now, in that nothing is the same, it is not the life I once had. I miss singing in the choir I belong to. I miss going to my drama group at Warmley Players. I miss going to watch Bristol City and Gloucestershire cricket. I miss having friends round to our house. I miss feeling safe enough to catch a bus! I miss going to the theatre and cinema. I miss socialising in church, sharing a coffee and a good old natter. But, most of all I miss being able to hug my grandchildren and those I love and hold dear.. It does not seem natural to be so distant from them all., it is so hard to bear. It is life, but not as I knew it.

Focal Point, August 2020

We also had to witness the murder of George Floyd in America. Murdered by policemen, people who were suppose to protect him!. It was without doubt one of the most distressing things I have ever seen. His death has given rise to the Black lives Matter movement and here in the UK we have to face up to the fact that there is racial prejudice and injustice in our society too and in our institutions.

So, as Christians where do we stand in all of this? When Jesus was here on earth, he turned the world upside down. His teaching was all about challenging the established way of life. Jesus was ushering in a new order, a new way of living. A way of life founded on love, love for God and love for one another. A Christian life is not a passive life, it is a very proactive way of living. Jesus wants us to be first in line to protect the poor, the weak, the sick and the persecuted. As Christians we cannot stand on the sidelines, we have to do what is right.

So, first of all we have to embrace this new way of living within the constraints of Covid19, look at the positives and not just the negatives. Such as clearer skies, less pollution, appreciation of our key workers, community spirit and much more. Be inventive as to how we can enhance things. Secondly, we must stand up against injustice, we must make our voices heard in the fight for racial equality. Challenge racism, and all other forms of discrimination, head on whenever and wherever we encounter it. It is not just what Jesus would want us to do, it is what he would expect us to do.

God bless you all

John Sibley

Lay Minister

Bitton bids farewell to Joyce Selman

On Tuesday 7th July at 11am Bitton gathered to say farewell to Joyce Selman, a much loved member of our village.

Joyce and husband David lived at Knights Folly Farm for around sixty years, during that time Joyce became famous for selling eggs 'at the door'. She was always ready to provide pies for the Harvest Supper, cakes for the Church Fête cake stall which we ran together for at least 20 years, also with David, hosted several Farmers Markets at the farm. In addition to this she helped with Sunday School for many years.

Joyce did all these things in a quiet unassuming way, she was just always there. Her funeral service and committal were so appropriate for her even with all the restrictions. Joyce was brought into church with her family with a piper playing who also led us out into the churchyard which was a moving and memorable tribute to her. Joyce and David enjoyed several lovely holidays in Scotland where I am sure a piper played many times.

Joyce's sons Victor and Hartley along with her grandchildren all spoke so beautifully with words and poems from the heart. To see everyone gathered in the Glebe field and all her family and friends around her was a fitting tribute and Goodbye that Joyce deserved and suited her so well. She will be greatly missed by so many.

Judith Butson



A selection of Lizzie Parker-Clarke's facemasks for all ages. Lizzie tries to match the fabric to the person.

Covered for COVID

Checked or plain, striped or spotted, floral or even quirky prints for children – if you're lucky enough to have one of Lizzie Parker-Clarke's face masks you can be smart as well as safe.

It all began when one of her daughter's friends who was nursing in an end-of-life unit in Keynsham told Lizzie just how uncomfortable her PPE was. Not only was it hot and stuffy, after a short while the elastic round her ears began to chafe. Lizzie thought she could help. She did some research and discovered on the internet 'button bandeaux' which solved

Focal Point, August 2020

the problem with a band round the forehead and buttons on which to fix the mask. Before long Lizzie had made two for every member of staff in the unit.

Other people began to ask for everyday masks. These could be less elaborate but needed to be made with quilters' cotton – material which gives good protection because it is closely woven but is so fine and soft that it is easy to wear even for a long period. Word got round and soon she was making them for friends in Bitton; to date she's made eighty-three.

Lizzie began sewing when she was only three years old, sitting beside her grandmother, a fur-machinist and hand-finisher at the royal furriers, who found time to make beautiful clothes for Lizzie's doll, Rosie. Lizzie was inspired, as she watched her grandmother create something lovely out of nothing much at all. Later Lizzie trained at the London College of Fashion where she majored in tailoring. After a few years working as a pattern cutter in the fashion industry she started making stage wear for rock bands and, when she moved to Bristol, she dressed those West Country favourites, the Wurzels – gingham shirts in different colours for each of them. In Bristol she also had a vintage clothes shop restoring tired garments to their former glory.

When she and David moved to Bitton with a young family Lizzie started her teaching career. She taught maths at Eastwood Park Prison, where she found young women who'd given up on hope. Lizzie's challenge was as much to give them self-esteem and confidence as to teach them the curriculum – to suggest to them that learning is power. She stayed at Eastwood for seven years, a long time in such a demanding environment. Then she moved to Filton college where her pupils ranged from those needing good mathematics in order to go into the services to groups needing basic skills.

Now she's back in Bitton running her business, Parker's Sewing Services. And, just like the lockdown rainbows in people's windows, Lizzie's masks are in different colours ranging from black to white through dark red, bottle green, sunshine yellow, pillar box red, pale blue, fawn and peach. Thank you, Lizzie, for brightening Bitton!

Nicola Bennetts

Summer Draw Launched

The popular raffle that is usually drawn at the Fête will take place as usual and it is hoped there will be generous support. Tickets cost £1 and available in books of 5.

The top prize is a *Merry Heifer Hamper* from the Bath Soft Cheese Company of Kelston (shown opposite). The hamper contains not only their award winning cheeses but cider and a range of scrumptious delights.



Please let Barbara Merritt know on barbaramerritt49@talktalk.net or 0117 932 3926 how many books you would like for selling to yourself and your friends?

Archaeological work finds evidence of ancient foundations

The archaeological digging that took place on the south side of the church has now ended for a short period . The work uncovered a large number of artefacts from many centuries past some of which have required special review by experts in particular fields.

The most interesting aspect, however, has probably been the uncovering of the church's

foundation layer which has uncovered stones that worked over many centuries and as far back as the Roman occupation .Further work is planned, so please follow any signage when visiting the churchyard



Instead of the Fête— hold a Tea Party

As reported in the July edition, this year's Church fête has been cancelled. It would not have been possible to run the event safely and managed social distancing, so reluctantly it was decided not to run one this year.

Nevertheless, the Fête Committee do hope with your support to raise some money for St Mary's by running the popular summer draw, the photographic competition (details on the next page) and through a number of



small private tea parties on the 29th August, when we were expecting to be meeting with friends at the fête.

Hosts will invite their own guests with a donation of £5 each or whatever the guest chooses. If you are willing to host such a tea party can you please let Sarah Heavens know on bathprint@aol.com or 0117 932 5376 and further details will be sent to you. You don't have to serve tea, of course, you can eat or drink whatever you like. Current guidelines restrict the number meeting together to 6 or 2 households.

The Committee are really keen to keep community spirit of the Fête going this year and into the future despite world events and all help in doing this is much appreciated.

Get your entries ready — for the 2020 Photography Competition



Clockwise from top left, some of the many varied winners from last year's competition:

Peter Harris (Bitton Scenes), **Carolyn Russell** (Happy); **Sarah Craddock** (Animals)
Sam Roberts (Animals)



Focal Point, August 2020

The Fête has been cancelled but the Photography Competition, will take place and is open to all. The photographs must be printed and be a maximum size of 200mm x 200mm, it must be your own work and been taken within the last two years. There are six categories (see below) and two sections, one for adults (entry fee of £1 per picture) and one for juniors under 16 (entry fee of 50p per picture). Colour or black and white photos accepted.

This year's categories are:

1. Bitton Scenes
2. Architecture
3. Animals/Wildlife
4. Life in lockdown
5. Weather
6. Holidays

Entries must be supplied in a sealed envelope together with the entry fee, your name, contact number, date the photo was taken and whether it's entered into the adult or junior section. Entries can be supplied directly to 2 Ceres Close, Longwell Green, BS30 9AR (by 6:30 pm on Friday August 21st at the latest).

All winning entries will be posted on the church website and a selection in the printed version of Focal Point. It is also planned to have a display in the Church Hall on Saturday 29th August, the day on which the fête would have been held.

David Harris

News from Bitton WI

At last I have some WI news, at the end of June the committee met at our president's house for a meeting. We all socially distanced, as we enjoyed the mugs of coffee we had brought with us, in Jeans garden.

The bad news is that at the moment we do not know when we will be able to meet again, as we have to wait for news on large social gatherings from the government. I do have some good news, we do not have to pay our WI subscription in January, we will now pay the subscription in April, and this will be the renewal month in future.

Liz Sloane has been kind enough to let me have her recipe for Whisky Tart.

Whisky Tart

2 eggs
2 dessert spoons caster sugar
8oz unsalted butter - melted
8oz plain chocolate - melted
2 tablespoons whisky
8oz digestive biscuits - broken into small pieces
4oz nuts - roughly chopped

Whisk the eggs and sugar until thick and creamy. Gradually add the melted butter and chocolate beating all the time. Fold in the whisky, biscuits and nuts. Pour the mixture into an 8 inch tin and chill until set.

I hope you will enjoy the Whisky Tart, I have it on good authority that it is very good, with a strong whisky flavour.

I am sorry that we will not be able to enjoy the planned summer outing, hopefully we will be able to go on the trip next year.

Focal Point, August 2020

Please keep your tickets for the postponed April group meeting, as we hope this will also take place in 2021.

Once again stay safe and be alert, until we can all meet again.

Lyn Coles



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July's Quiz Answers

Last month's quiz was about fruits.

The correct answers are:

1. Pomegranate; 2. Guava; 3. Orange; 4. Gooseberry; 5. Durian; 6. Jackfruit; 7. Grape; 8. Watermelon; 9. Cherry; 10. Mango; 11. Banana; 12. Pear; 13. Plum; 14. Elderberry; 15. Papaya; 16. Quince; 17. Grapefruit; 18. Kiwi; 19. Damson; 20. Pineapple.

Correct answers were received from:

Sue & Rod Nethercote; Jan & Diane; The Booths; Pam & Jon Heyes; Jill & Ken Gibson; Anne Burminster; and, Sarah Craddock.

The July winners are The Booths.

The August Quiz

This month we have a fun quiz, can you solve these riddles?

No. Clue

1. What has a neck but no head?
2. What has a face and 2 hands, but no arms or legs
3. What can you hold, but not touch?
4. What has to be broken before you can use it?
5. What 5 letter word becomes shorter if you add 2 letters to it?
6. What begins with T ends with T and has T in it?
7. What goes around the world, but stays in a corner
8. What must be used to change it, if you lose it you're out of it?
9. What are always fast, next to last, never there, everywhere?
10. What runs, but can't walk; has a mouth, but can't speak; has a bed, but doesn't sleep?
11. If you take 4 eggs from 9 eggs, how many do you have?
12. Where does yesterday come after today, with tomorrow in-between them?
13. What begins and ends with an E, but only has 1 letter
14. What type of cheese is made backwards
15. Which letter of the alphabet has the most water?
16. What starts with a P, ends with an E and has thousands of letters?
17. What kind of coat can only be put on when wet?
18. What is heavy forwards, but backwards it's not.
19. Can you name 4 days starting with T?
20. What is broken by saying it?

Name:

Contact:

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



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The last word

Thank you

This year seems to be one of “thank yous”—whether to NHS and care workers or simply for the many acts of kindness and concern that people have shown to others.

But this time it is a moment to say thank you to those readers who have continued to access Focal point in a variety of ways over the past 3 months. I hope that a return to print will make things a little easier from now on.



VJ is as important as VE

Earlier this year, the 75th Anniversary of VE Day was marked by a public holiday. Making the most of the situation caused by COVID 19 many Bitton residents sat in their front gardens and chatted with friends at a distance instead of the street parties that had been planned. Those who were old enough to remember recalled their own memories of the time.

In contrast VJ Day, marking the surrender of the Japanese on 15 August (some 3 months later) receives substantially less notice in this country even though it was equally important as the defeat of Germany. Partly, no doubt, this is because it is a conflict that sits less well with the ideal of a noble cause against fascism and the fact that Britain’s interests in the conflict were largely about defending its Empire; in which is it was only very partially successful. In Europe it emerged from the war as a liberator who had held out against a common enemy. In the Far East its reputation had been tarnished.

The fact that the war against Japan is a more complex historical subject than that against Nazi Germany should, however, not have reduced its importance and in this 75th Anniversary year it is only right that it should be commemorated. The laying of a wreath in Bitton churchyard on 15th August, should provide us with a moment to reflect and remember not only the loss of life , but a part of that war that receives less attention.

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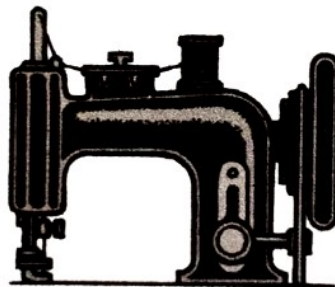
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