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September 2020

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the lives of
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September 2020

**Cover photograph— by
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***Deadline for the October
magazine is:***

Monday 21 September 2020

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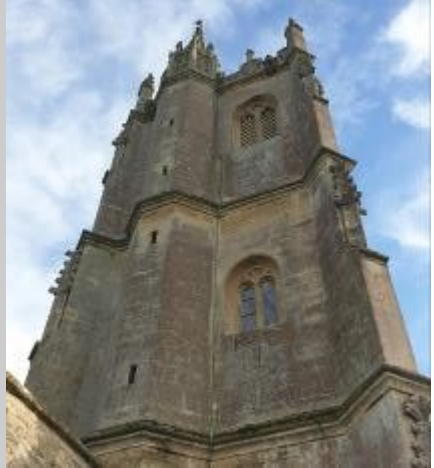
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- Churches & Services -



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Ken Gibson, 8 Church Road,
Bitton
0117 932 2122

Churchwardens:

Pete Midgley
30 Kenilworth Drive, Willsbridge
0117 932 6898

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

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

Services in September

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

This month's church calendar

Sunday 6 September	THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY 10.30 Morning Prayer
Sunday 13 September	FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY 10.30 Morning Prayer
Monday 14 August	<i>Holy Cross Day</i>
Sunday 20 September	FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY 10.30 Morning Prayer
Monday 21 September	<i>St Matthew the Apostle & Evangelist</i>
Sunday 27 September	SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY 10.30 Morning Prayer
Tuesday 29 September	<i>Michaelmas</i>

From the Register

7th July Funeral
Joyce Marina Selman RIP

10th July Funeral
Jean Mary Williams RIP

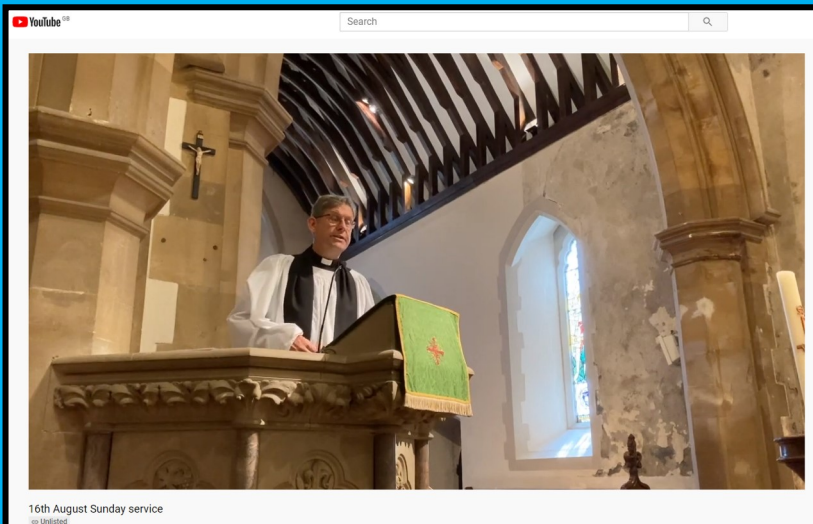


Focal Point, September 2020



UPTON CHEYNEY
United Reformed
Church

There are no
planned services
during September



If you are unable or do not wish to attend church for services, a benefice service is available on line both midweek and on Sundays. The service is recorded and available through YouTube. A link to the service is available on the front page of the St Mary's website www.stmarysbitton.org.uk



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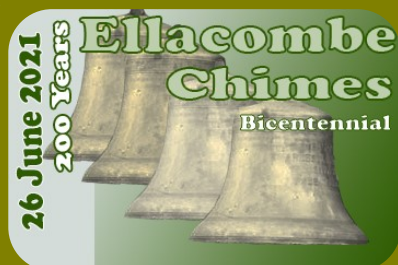
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Keep the date: 26 June 2021 - Ellacombe Chimes around the world

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.





Commemoration of Victory in Japan



On the morning of Saturday 15 August, a VJ 75 Commemoration service was held at the Bitton War Memorial in St Mary's Churchyard.

The event was organised by the Bitton and Oldland Branch of the Royal British Legion and was one of many held up and down the country.

Following a welcome from President Ken Gibson the short service attended by about 25 people was conducted by Branch Padre the Revd Steve Britton.

Branch Chairman Jeff Dando led the Act of Remembrance and Mick Perkins of Oldland Brass sounded Last Post and Standard Bearer Sergeant Rebecca Harrill of RAFAC lowered the Branch Standard.

Following the two minutes silence Reveille was sounded and before a final blessing Jeff Dando recited the Kohima Epitaph

“When you go home, tell them of us and say, for your tomorrow, we gave our today.”



Photo: David Harris

Preceding page: Representing the Bitton & Oldland Branch of the Royal British Legion (L to R) Ken Gibson *Legion President*, Mick Perkins of Oldland Brass *Bugler*, Revd Steve Britton *Legion Padre*, Jeff Dando *Legion Chairman*, Sergeant Rebecca Harrill *RAFAC Standard Bearer* and Captain George Harrill *RAMC*. (Photo: Dawn Harrill)

Above: Jeff Dando, *Legion Chairman*, Lays a wreath on Behalf of the Bitton & Oldland Branch of the Royal British Legion.

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

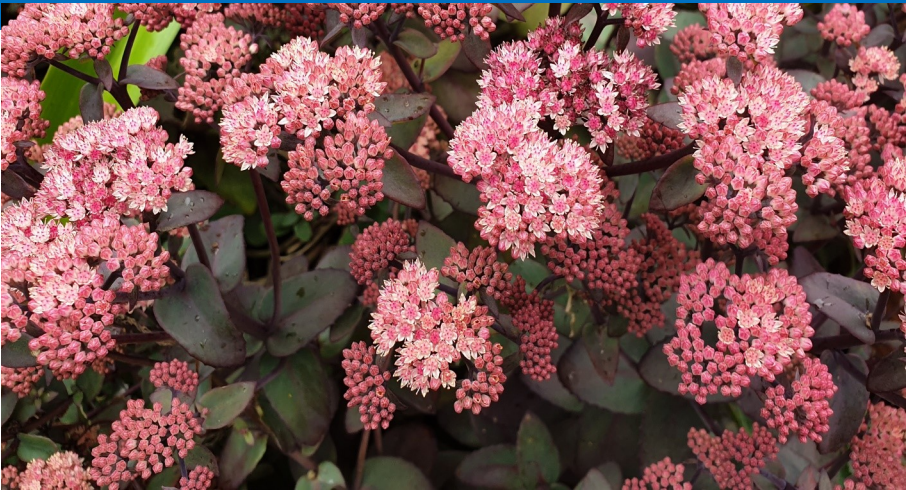
Contact Pete Midgley 0117 932 6898

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

September—A *Season of Creation*



Dear Friends,

As I write this we had been basking in Mediterranean weather with mid thirty degree temperatures during the day and hot sultry nights making sleep difficult. After violent thunderstorms and torrential rain we are back to normal British weather conditions with cool wet days wondering where the sunshine has gone. Whatever the weather we will always complain. These weather conditions which are unusually extreme we are told will become more and more usual as the earth's weather patterns change.

Focal Point, September 2020

Climate change has recently taken a less prominent place in the news bulletins as the Corona virus pandemic has rightly taken centre stage. Last month, in his letter, John alluded to the respite from pollution that less travel had provided and there is a feeling that perhaps we shouldn't (as conditions or government pronouncements allow) simply return to the previous status quo. A 'new normal' needs to be found.

In November last year the Diocesan Synod unanimously declared a climate emergency acknowledging and owning a commitment to do what it could to reverse the effects of climate change. As a diocese the church will make efforts to be carbon neutral by the year 2030. As parishes we should be looking to contribute in a significant way towards meeting this target. There is a suggestion that PCC agendas should have a standing item entitled 'climate emergency' at every meeting so as not to lose focus. Bishop Viv has said, 'We have got to look at every aspect of Church life and our own lives' to work towards this goal.

PCC's officers have received the offer of a financial incentive to carry out an energy audit. We are told that the typical saving from implementing recommendations is 20%. There is also an added focus on making changes in both Warmley and Bitton as both churches have boilers which are obsolete and in the event of a breakdown engineers won't be able to source replacement parts. Changes to greener and more sustainable energy use may come sooner than we expect throughout the whole benefice.

We are being asked to use September as a 'Season of Creation'. Christians around the world will use this period to renew their relationship with our creator and all creation through celebration, conversation and commitment. This year's Season of Creation is a time to consider the integral relationship between rest for the Earth and ecological, economic, social and political ways of living more in sympathy with God's created world.

Focal Point, September 2020

Usually in September and October we give thanks for the bounty of harvest and the gifts God has given us through nature. Because of restrictions on worship and meetings imposed by the pandemic regulations we are unlikely to be able to celebrate in the usual way. Instead, please can we listen to Bishop Viv and think, pray about how we make space to consider as a church and as individuals how we can respond the climate emergency.

With love,

Leslie Willcox

Lay Minister



Gloucestershire
Historic Churches Trust

Ride and Stride 2020

Gloucestershire Historic Churches Trust have helped Bitton Church and many other old churches in the area in the past and every year they make an appeal. At one time we had a sponsored walk but recently have asked for donations to this very important funder. People have been very generous in giving and we do hope that you will be this year. In these uncertain times it seems more important than ever to maintain the buildings that symbolize our faith in the landscape. Contact Barbara Merritt 01179323926 or Jacqui Harris

In another of our occasional series about the festivals and traditions of the past we look at one of the most significant that took place on 29th September

MICHAELMAS

Were it not for the restrictions of COVID 19, the end of September would see the holding of one of two traditional Mop fairs in Chipping Sodbury. The fairs have been held for centuries in the market town, as they have in other towns across the country. Chipping Sodbury is unusual in still holding a Mop fair twice a year, at the end of March and the end of September.

Both dates were originally connected to church feast days: the end of March with the Feast of the Annunciation on 25 March; and the end of September with Michaelmas, on 29th September, the feast day of St Michael, the Archangel.

By Michaelmas, traditionally, the harvest should have been gathered in and those labourers who no longer had employment would seek a new role at the fair. Mop fairs were so called as those who had no particular skill displayed or wore a mop to show that they were available for work during the winter months ahead. One might have thought that in pre-industrial society, the March event, coming as spring warmed the fields would have seen much higher number of workers recruited, but that was not necessarily the case. Agriculture has continuing year round demands, and often work inside was offered in the autumn. In those days, of course, there was little in the way of job security anyway – the Gig economy was not an invention of the 21st century.

Alongside the hiring of workers, the occasion was one at which goods were sold and exchanged and there was much festivity too, one aspect at least that has survived in the fun fairs of the modern Mop or Michaelmas fair.

Its Christian heritage is as the day of commemoration of St Michael, an archangel (arch meaning senior or leading) who appears first in the Old



Not all fairs were quite as riotous or debauched as the one in Southwark depicted by Hogarth. The Michaelmas Fair had an important place in society as an exchange for goods and labour.

Testament Book of Daniel and again in the New Testament in the Book of Revelation. St Michael's role is largely as a leader of forces on the side of God to defeat those of Satan and he is often depicted in armour or with a weapon. Legend has it that having cooked the Spanish goose by seeing off the Spanish Armada in the August and September of 1588, Queen Elizabeth vowed that she would feast only on goose on Michaelmas Day in the future. It sounds very much a legend, and is more likely to be a tale dreamt up by a seventeenth century butcher, trying to shift some goose. But the legend may also explain why some fairs held at Michaelmas were often called Goose Fairs of which Nottingham's is the most famous of those still surviving.

In profile:

Ken Gibson

The church, the law, the army, Africa and his family have been continuous threads throughout the rich and varied life of Ken Gibson, well known and loved by the community of St. Mary's and in Bitton.

Mau Mau tribe

After school at Monkton Combe, Bath, Ken decided to take a break before taking up a place at Clare College, Cambridge to read Law. He was offered the chance to join King's African Rifles by Field Marshall Lord Harding in Kenya. After establishing that this was in East, not West, Africa, Ken went out to join 5th Battalion No 9 Platoon, in 1954. In charge of 30 Africans who spoke no English this was quite a task for the 19 year old. He was instructed to search out the Mau Mau tribe, a militant African nationalist movement that aimed to remove British rule and European settlers, had taken refuge in the forest.. Ken encountered antelopes, monkeys, elephants, rhinos and most dangerous of all buffalo, in this search. He was there for two years and took part in the presentation of the new regimental colours in Nairobi – the illustration shows him holding figures in the new colours. On his return he worked selling curtains at a department store in Bath for six months. Both activities taught him the importance of working in a team and harnessing team members' different strengths – vital skills he has used with excellent results in many areas of his life since.

Cambridge

At Cambridge he enjoyed the supervisions method of study with two or three supervisions, or meetings in small groups with a tutor, a week with lively debate and discussion. He decided he wanted to become a solicitor. His father was a doctor, particularly interested in forensic medicine and often an expert witness in murder trials. His role in court was key – the



Ken in the garden in Bitton, proudly displaying models of three soldiers (inset) in regimental colours

accused could be sent to prison or hanged depending on his opinion. Ken often attended these trials with him in the holidays. He decided to become a solicitor to work as part of a team, rather than be a barrister and be self-employed.

Unfair Dismissal

Ken joined the Bristol firm of Wansbroughs, Robinson, Tayler and Taylor as an articled clerk. He was interested in contentious litigation, some criminal, but mostly civil, working for insurance companies in a wide range of disputes. He became interested in employment law in 1974 when unfair dismissal became illegal and took on many cases. He worked his way up through the firm and became Senior Partner. Now the firm is called DAC Beachcroft and has 240 partners and over 2000 staff.

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Jill

Both Ken and Jill's families were part of the Scottish diaspora: which is why they both dance so beautifully at the ceilidhs in Bitton! Jill's father was a dentist in Glasgow, who moved to Bath and Ken's father had studied at Glasgow university. Both families used to holiday on Isle of Arran, and attended the Presbyterian Church in the Paragon, Bath. They danced together at Caledonian Society Hogmanay Ball and St Andrew's Dance. They married in July 1964 at the Presbyterian Church in Bath and then lived in Wick for 3 years. A friend found them Rosewell House in Church Road, and there they had four children: Douglas, Liz, James and Mark.

Preacher

Ken became a preacher in the Presbyterian church, inspired by the preacher John Stott who at Cambridge had told him 'If you have a yen for public speaking, become a preacher' . They continued to attend the Presbyterian church but after 10 years were persuaded to attend St Mary's and in 1980 Ken became a lay reader – he has now been preaching there for 40 years.

AIM

At the age of 60 Ken was nervous about retiring. He was top earner at the firm but wanted a change. He and Jill sent out ten letters with their CVS to various charities, offering their different skills, Jill was a dentist. They decided to accept a post working in Windhoek, the capital of Namibia. Ken supported all the missionaries living in very remote areas in many practical tasks such as obtaining visas, and flights which had previously taken an exceptionally long time to arrange from such remote areas. He carried out such useful work, full time staff replaced him on their return.

Bitton

Since returning in 1998, Ken has worked unpaid and tirelessly for many charities, including Bitton Recreation Ground, British Legion – he has risen to the rank of Colonel in the TA, and St Mary's – which he describes as 'the centre of my life.'

Ken really enjoys living in Bitton. He has made an effort to get to know everyone in Church Road, something he says would not happen living in a city. He is a very well-known figure in the village and a key part of our community, both in the church and outside it. *Sarah Heavens*

The Upton Inn reopens— *under new management*



August 11th saw the re-opening of the Upton Inn in Upton Cheyney, under new management .

The Hall and Woodhouse pub is popular with locals and with the many passing walkers and bike riders, whose numbers may even have increased during the lockdown. .

There are two menus, with a special one just for Sunday lunch and, of course, a good selection of beers. There are special arrangements in place to keep customers safe. There is no service at the bar, but at your seat and tables are set a distance apart. The pub opened in time for the “Eat Out to Help Out” scheme in August—sadly this does not continue into September.

News from Bitton WI

Unfortunately I have some sad WI news this month. It has been decided that due to the economic situation and the continuing problems due to the corona virus, the WI has decided to close Denman College, and put the property up for sale. I know that several members have visited Denman, and some have been lucky enough to learn new skills after taking part in the courses that Denman College provided. It is sad that the decision has been taken to sell Denman, and shows the uncertain times we are now experiencing.

On a more cheerful note Mary Smale has again provided a recipe for you to try. Mary's late husband was born in Cornwall and the following recipe is how to make an authentic Cornish Pasty.

Traditional Cornish Pasty

Ingredients

2 x 1lb blocks of puff or shortcrust pastry
(cut down to 1 block if you only want to make 1 or 2 pasties)
1lb skirt or brazing steak
1 small Swede
1 onion
4 large potatoes

(you can adjust the ingredients if making less pasties)

Method

Roll out pastry to either the size of a salad or dinner plate (according to how hungry you are) Dice the meat until it is quite small as all the ingredients go in raw.
Dice the Swede or chop finely
Dice the onion

Focal Point, September 2020

Finally dice or slice the potatoes (I leave them to last so that they do not go brown) Layer up the potatoes, swede and onion, season with salt and pepper, then finish with the meat.

On top put a knob of butter, this will make a gravy. Wet the edges of the pastry and crimp together, place on a baking sheet making air holes in the pastry.

Bake at 200 degrees until pastry is brown then turn the oven temperature down to 150-160 degrees to cook all the raw ingredients. The pastry acts as an oven to cook all of the ingredients. It will take an hour or so to cook, test with a knife to make sure the potatoes and Swede are cooked thoroughly.

I hope you enjoy making and eating the Cornish Pasties, and a big thank you to Mary for sharing her recipe.

At the moment I cannot give any information on the restarting of WI meetings, but everyone will be informed when we have some news, until then please stay safe and keep well.

Lyn Coles



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August's Quiz Answers

Last month's quiz was a fun quiz of riddles.

The correct answers are:

1. Bottle; 2. Clock; 3. Your Breath or Your Opinion; 4. An Egg; 5. Short;
6. Teapot; 7. Stamp; 8. Your Mind; 9. Adverbs; 10. River; 11. 4; 12.
The dictionary; 13. Envelope; 14. Edam; 15. C; 16. Post Office; 17.
Paint; 18. Ton; 19. Today, Tomorrow, Tuesday & Thursday; 20. Silence
or Secret

Correct answers or very good alternatives were received from:

Pam & Jon Booth; Sue & Alan Murtagh; Catriona Kesterton & Family;
Pam & Jon Heyes; Pearl Evans & Girls; Jan & Diane

The winner of this month's prize is The Kesterton Family.

The September Quiz

This months quiz is about studies.

Note: all answers are a single word, ending with 'ology'

No. Clue—*the study of*

1. Past human life and activities, mainly through artefacts and remains (A)
2. Animal anatomy and behaviour (Z)
3. Ancient life, mainly through fossils (P)
4. Kidney functions and treatment of kidney diseases (N)
5. Mental processes and behaviour (P)
6. Weather and it's causes (M)
7. The Earth as a solid form, including it's physical structure and history (G)
8. Creatures whose existence has not been substantiated, e.g. the Loch Ness monster (C)
9. Honey bees (A)
10. The relationship between organisms and their environment (E)
11. Medical treatment of the heart and blood vessels (C)
12. Fishes, including their anatomy, processes and behaviour (I)
13. Mechanics and anatomy of human movement (K)
14. Making of cocktails (M)
15. The use of fingers and hands to communicate, sign language (D)
16. Bell ringing and bell casting (C)
17. The nervous system, including the brain and spinal cord (N)
18. All living things (B)
19. Humans, ranging from evolutionary history to society and culture (A)
20. The medical uses of x-rays and nuclear radiation (R)

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 September.



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The last word

September: is it the last of summer or the beginning of autumn? In many ways it depends on the weather and quite often the warm weather continues far longer than expected.

Let us hope so, because much of the relaxation in measures to prevent the spread of Coronavirus is dependent on events taking place outdoors, particularly for restaurants and pubs that have suffered many weeks of closure.

September also, of course, sees the start of the new school year. This year most children will not have seen the inside of a classroom for many months and will return to schools where special arrangements have been put in place. Young children in particular are very adaptable and take such measures in their stride. Hopefully, they will be able to look back on this as a short period of emergency rather than an enduring change.

This month also usually begins with the church fete, which sadly could not take place this year, the day (which was brought forward to the last Saturday in August this year) was to be marked by some tea parties and we were also able to hold the annual summer raffle and the photographic competition. The results were too late for this edition, but we hope to publish the winning items next month.



Jim Heavens

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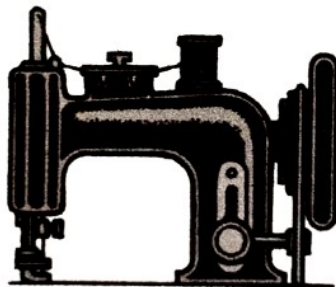
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