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October 2020

**Church Fête
Photographic
Competition
—winning
pictures
inside**



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Focal Point

Bitton Churches' Magazine

October 2020

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magazine is:*

Monday 19 October 2020

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Cover photograph—

Stacey Howell, overall winner of the Fête Photographic Competition. Photo by David Harris.

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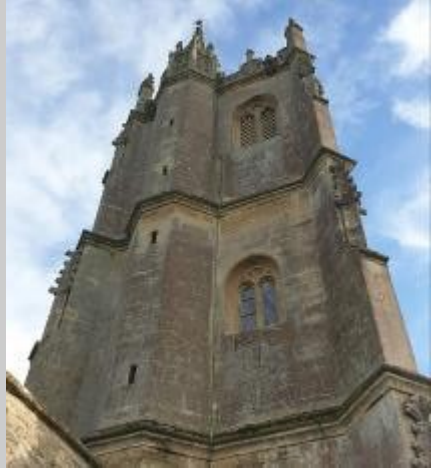
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- Churches & Services -



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Vicar:

Rev Jeremy Andrew
The Vicarage, Warmley
0117 967 2724

Ordained minister:

Rev Richard Humphrey
Splinters, Kenilworth Drive
Willsbridge **0117 949 0502**

Lay ministers:

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 October

Sunday church services at St Mary's are subject to continuing restrictions to ensure safety and social distancing. Those attending should wear masks. A weekly service of Morning Prayer now takes place at 10.30 each Sunday with a Parish Communion on the last Sunday of the month. 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 4 October	SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY 10.30 Morning Prayer & Harvest Festival
Sunday 11 October	EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY 10.30 Morning Prayer
Sunday 18 October	NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY <i>St Luke, the Evangelist</i> 10.30 Morning Prayer
Sunday 25 October	TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY 10.30 Parish Communion
Wednesday 28 October	<i>St Simon & St Jude, Apostles</i>

From the Register

Holy Matrimony

Anna Louise Powell

to

Robert David Skuse

On 11 September 2020





UPTON CHEYNEY United Reformed Church



Sunday services are at 3pm

Sunday 4th - Service led by Steve Britton

Sunday 11th - Service led by Michelle Bates

Sunday 18th - Service led by Steve Britton

Sunday 25th - Service led by Reverend Richard
Humphrey

News from Upton Cheyney URC



Stuart Turner

Well finally, at Upton Chapel, we have opened our doors again.....at last. We held our first service on the first Sunday of September led by John Creech. He was as magnificent and as popular as ever. He mentioned that he was due in April in answer to which one bright spark (not me) shouted out he was late.

I'd like to say a big thank you for all the people who helped us get the chapel ready for opening. All the unseen work, especially the cleaning, to tick off the 42 action points on our risk assessment. Anyway, getting back to the first service. Getting used to masks, gel, open doors and windows (I wonder how we will cope if we have a cold Winter) and reading hymns from our Methodist hymn books. Reading rather than singing may be a little less rousing however it does make you concentrate more on the words. We also tried a bible study which proved to be less popular. For the next five weeks we have services led by four different preachers, one of them coming for the first time.

When you approach the chapel you will notice one change. Our front stained glass window has been mended. I can hear bugles blowing and lots of cheering. The window was removed LAST September. We then awaited some wood work on the surround, then Covid and then more work on the surround before it finally went back into place. Dare we now talk about which window next?

Stuart

St Mary's Matters



Pete Midgley

The plan this year is to celebrate harvest across the Benefice on the first Sunday in October i.e. October 4th. At St Mary's our service will be similar to those we have been having thus far, but with a harvest theme. We will be collecting non-perishable food in church during September which will be our harvest offering and will be distributed appropriately after the service. If you attend church in September then please bring any contributions with you to any of the services. Otherwise please use the opportunity of the church being open between 10.00am and 11.30am on Sunday mornings to drop your contribution into the porch or get someone to bring it for you.

In further developments, the plan is to have a communion service on the last Sundays of September and October i.e. 27th September and 25th October. Obviously they will be somewhat different from the Communion Service we are used to. More details of how they will work will be available nearer the time.

Also, St Mary's bells are now being rung, albeit in a limited, socially distanced way. There will be a 15 minute ring at about 10am before services using just 4 or 5 bells. Also a short 15 minute practice will happen on Wednesday evenings around 7pm. Sometimes this may take place on the chimes.

Vicar's Letter

So what of thanksgiving now?



Dear Friends,

So, what of thanksgiving now? These have been, and continue to be trying times as, at the time of writing, we face another pandemic lockdown due to Corona virus. Businesses have fallen down and many now find themselves looking for work. Most have altered the way they work and the environment they work in. Those who have retired have stayed in at home for better or worse and school children have done their learning at home. Even worse, some have become ill and suffered the ill effects of the virus and for some this has taken long term effect and six months on are still in a state of long-term recovery. Some have lost loved ones prematurely and have been restricted in the way they were able to mark their passing. So, what of thanksgiving now? What have we got to be thankful for? I raise this question writing at a time when on the first Sunday of October we would traditionally remember Harvest and give thanks for all that has been gathered in, the fruits of whatever labouring we have been doing.

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Whilst we mark thanksgiving on this particular day, like so many other things, it is a virtue to cultivate in our everyday lives. That is, living a life of gratitude in the ordinary and every day is something to aspire to and, I would suggest is the Christian way. I say this because gratitude is not simply a feeling or a politeness or a matter of etiquette but rather a response to a loving heavenly Father God. A life lived in gratitude is a life lived in joy and hope.



Picture—Shutterstock

For some, the pandemic has provided an opportunity to find solace in our beautiful world.

I have been interested in my own response and “gratitudinal” disposition during the strange period of lock-down. As the world slowed down, was more contained and confined and the days stretched before us most have found solace in our beautiful world, most have had time to appreciate our environment, see, actually see the trees budding into leaf and flowers and plant blossom and fruit. And I, I have noticed, for some reason the abundance of acorns! Like no other year there seems to be so many more acorns on the ground. Whether it is the better air quality during lockdown or that it is a bumper year for Oak trees or that I have simply noticed them having

Focal Point, October 2020

more time and not rushing at life, there are more acorns on the ground. I love Oak trees and we have some amazing specimens at St. Barnabas church and one very old one in the vicarage garden and the acorns remind me of Jesus' parable of the mustard seed. Surely from small acorns do mighty oaks grow! A commentary on my meagre faith if ever there was one. Most of all I am pleased that whilst our daily lives have been turned upside down, nature has quietly carried on. The poet Gideon Heugh says it eloquently in his poem 'job description' where he pictures the wise trees that '...sway, perhaps a motion of pity, [for us] then quietly, slowly, continue the tender business of being themselves.'

We are grateful aren't we for the tide of gratitude that has risen during these Covid days? For the NHS, for carers, for neighbours whom we have met for the first time in some cases, for the phone calls, food parcels, deliveries of shopping, for time to just be, for time to discover ourselves again, for time to read and reflect, for time for the tender business of being ourselves.

The festival that Revd. R.S. Hawker invented will surely mean something greater this year, greater than wheat and cereal crops safely gathered in, silage dry in the barn. Gratitude for our neighbour and our environment, for our health and well-being, for our friends and family, '...come ye thankful people come. Raise the song of harvest home.'

*With every good wish,
thoughts and prayers,
Jeremy*

No fête for Bitton this year— but village celebrates the weekend at a distance

The St Mary's Church Fête—a key date in the Bitton annual calendar, could not take place this year due to the Coronavirus Pandemic. But that did not stop some of the activities taking place raising over £4,000 for church funds over the August bank holiday weekend.

As mass gatherings are not possible at present, people were asked to host small tea parties in their own gardens and seek a voluntary contribution (or entrance fee) from those attending. Instructions were provided (if needed) on how to run an egg throwing competition, (itself one of the closing highlights of the annual event) but few wanted to hold it in their own gardens.

As well as the tea parties, the annual summer raffle went ahead and tickets sold out. First prize was a beautiful *Merry Heifer Hamper* from the Bath Cheese Company, plus many other excellent prizes. Winner of the hamper was Kelly Lewis, a senior carer at Collingwood Care Home, who was delighted with her unexpected win. In a year when the whole country has paid tribute to the work undertaken by carers, the win could not have been more appropriate.

The Fête Photographic Competition also attracted a high number of entries (more details on the following pages) each entry requiring a small fee to be paid.

Including the early sale of Christmas cards, the final total raised was £4,438 all of which will go towards the upkeep and running of the church. A big thank you goes to the Fête Committee for organising and to all those who contributed and took part.

Let's hope that next year we will see everyone again on the Glebe Field for a proper fête.

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Above—Kelly Lewis, Senior Carer at Collingwood Care Home takes receipt of her prize.

Right—Becky Feather draws the winning ticket from the flower pot held by Raffle Organiser, Barbara Merritt. Jill Gibson holds up a picture of the hamper.



Fête Photographic Competition—the winners

Two sets of display panels were required to show all the entries for this year's Fête Photographic Competition organised by David and Jenny Harris. There were six categories: Architecture, Bitton Scenes, Wildlife, Weather, Holidays and (very topical for this year) Life in Lockdown. There was a special category for junior entries.

The entries were judged by Robin Allison-Smith who praised the high quality of entries and had to make some difficult decisions.

Overall winner was Stacey Howell for her brilliantly captured picture of Dyrham Park, the house closed during lockdown and the park sadly empty. Robin said "This picture is just lovely, and reminds one of how empty places were during lockdown." As the overall winner, Stacey was rewarded with the David Smith Cup, which was given to the church in memory of local resident Judge David Smith.

Sadly, not all of the pictures entered can be reprinted in Focal Point, but in the following pages we have printed all of those that won a prize. Space limitations also prevents some from being seen in their full glory, but they can be viewed on the church website where they can be seen in a larger format.



The entries on display in the Church Hall on Saturday 29 August. Visitors were able to enter in a socially distanced fashion.



1st place and overall winner, Stacey Howell, who was this year's recipient of the David Smith Cup.

Right—2nd place—
Jenny Harris, People
in Lockdown.



Below—3rd place -
Becky Purchase
reflects on
gardening in
lockdown

***Life in
Lockdown***





Above -1st Place, Andrew Russell for a picture of the Churchyard.
Below left—2nd place, R Skuse sets the church in the background with a rainbow overhead. **Below Right—3rd place**, Sarah Craddock for a special VJ commemoration picture.



Bitton Scenes



Above—1st place, Jane Clapp. Robin felt this had a lovely composition and clarity.

Right—2nd place, Kandeepan Ambigaipakan. There is a snail in the bird's mouth.

Below—3rd place, Sue Heath's owl in flight , “a hard shot to get”.



Wildlife



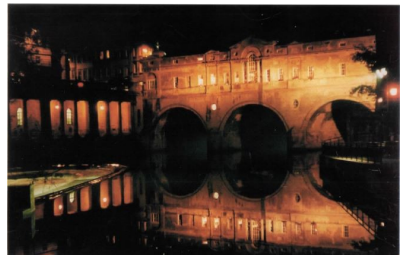
Architecture



Top—1st place, Judith Purdy with a “picture postcard perfect” shot.

Left—2nd place, Jane Clapp’s view from inside a disused mill.

Below—3rd place, Douglas MacDonald with a view of Pulteney Bridge at night.



Holidays



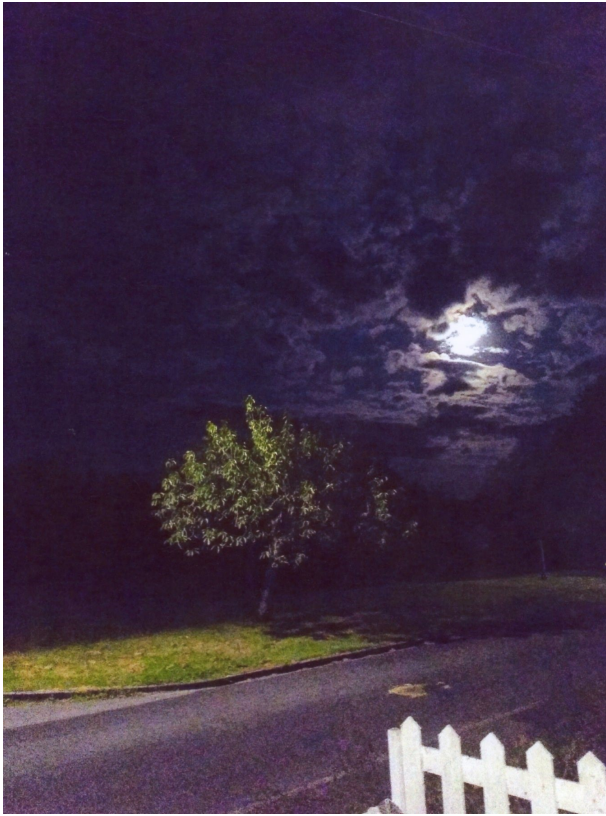
Top Right—1st place, Naomi Clapp.

Right and Below—Joint 2nd place, Iceland by Mike Purdy and Halong Bay by Judith Purdy,

Top Left—3rd place, Anne Carrington



Weather



Left—1st place, Sarah Craddock. Robin commented that shooting at night can be particularly difficult.

Below—2nd place, Two entries by Paul Rushforth. The second particularly impressed Robin, who commented on the good use of light and the position of the dog



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Weather (cont.)

3rd place, Jane Clapp
for a “pastelly” shot.



Junior Winners



The Junior Competition was set the same subject matter but judged as a separate block. **First Place** went to Ben Purchase for his interpretation of *Life in Lockdown* which Robin felt was really well framed.



Above—2nd place,
William Purchase's view of
cliffs against a blue sea.



Left— 3rd place , Peter
Harris

Congratulations to all winners and thanks to all for entering. Special thanks to David and Jenny Harris for organising the competition and to Robin Allison-Smith for the difficult task of judging.

Engagement Forum goes on line

South Gloucestershire's Engagement Forums (or "Fora" to be correct) were unable to meet, during lockdown, but have now been relaunched on-line. The forums bring together councillors, services and members of the public to provide an opportunity to pass on information about local activities.

Earlier this year, a new forum was developed specifically for Bitton, Oldland, North Common and Syston and its first meeting held on 15 September, open to all who requested a link to the meeting.

The meeting was given updates by the local police and fire and rescue services as well as from Public Health and South Gloucestershire Engineer's department.

The police reported that crime had fallen during the lockdown, but has recently seen a slight rise. The public health message of "Hands, Space, Face" was re-emphasised as well as the necessity of flu jabs for those over 65, with a medical condition or pregnancy.

Finally, if you have wondered what the roadworks on the A4174 are about, it is to put in a new style roundabout to allow through traffic to pass quickly through a signal controlled junction.

No flicks for the sticks!

It may come as little surprise, but there will be no *Flicks in the Sticks* this winter. The popular monthly event took place in the church hall with attendees enjoying a glass of wine and an interval ice cream, while settling down to a specially selected movie. Unfortunately, due to COVID 19 restrictions it won't be possible to run the event in the immediate future. Organiser Bridget Hetzel promised that "the moment the health of the nation improves and the restrictions are dropped we will be dusting off the projector and shouting action!"

Bellringing is back in Bitton

.....but not as we know it !!!

Not since WWII have the bells fallen silent across the UK, the only bells that may still be heard are those which have installed an electrically wound clock mechanism.

With lockdown restrictions in place, it is the first time in 75 years that bell ringers have been unable to visit churches and cathedrals to do what they do best.

Throughout history, bells have played a significant role in our lives by providing a soundtrack to many of the UK's key historic moments and personal milestones. Day to day, many of us – religious or not – delight in the sound of chiming bells from our local bell towers, whether it be during weekly bell ringing practices, or the call to attend weekend church services.

With the world coming to a halt during the global pandemic, busy roads have become much quieter and bustling town centres eerily dormant. The chimes we usually hear marking the time of day have also largely stopped. As the lockdown continues, the majority of clocks that are still hand wound have also been silenced with volunteer clock winders being denied access to wind the clocks.

The sound of church bells ringing is deeply embedded in British culture and the hearts and minds of its people, and bells have different meanings and purposes across the world. But no matter where you are – they are always there to inform us of something, to mark a beginning or an end.

Bells are also a sound of hope, freedom and peace and the only other time bells were silenced in British history was during WWII when it was agreed bells would only ring as a sign of invasion. However, the bells were then rung to announce the end of the war and to declare peace.

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“People have often sought peace in the sound of bells and in these unprecedented times, we are looking for symbols of normality. Once things begin to return to some semblance of normality, we urge people to appreciate bells and remember their historic significance and the fact that they are ringing for us.

“Bells are so very important globally and we must protect, respect and appreciate how much they mean to us in the UK and across the world.

Sue Elliott



The ringing chamber at St Mary's

Bitton Bellringers will be ringing a few of the bells on a Sunday morning at 10:05 for 15 minutes to call parishioners to church. We will also be ringing/chiming on a Wednesday evening at 19:00 again for 15 minutes.

Unfortunately due to Covid19 restrictions the numbers of ringers allowed per session is limited and we are unable to have guests in the tower.

As soon as the restrictions are relaxed further we will let you know and welcome new ringers and visitors to the tower.

In the meantime if you require further information please feel free to contact me.

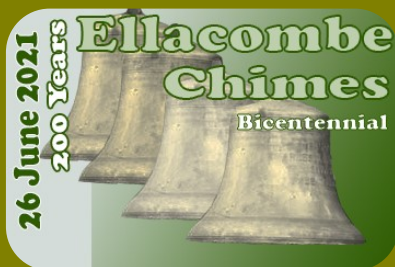
Sue Elliott, Tower Captain, Tel: 0117 932 2540.

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.



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Poppy Appeal 2020

Following the death of Graham Downing we are glad to report that Dawn Harrill has been appointed as the Poppy Organiser for our area. Dawn is taking over in a challenging year when the calls on Legion funds are increasing but raising income in the traditional way is going to be difficult. Every effort will be made to ensure that people will have opportunity to buy their poppies but with some of our senior

collectors shielding Dawn will be grateful for new volunteers who could give some help during the Poppy Appeal which gets underway on 24 October. Please give her a ring on 0117 932 6221.

Thanksgiving service for the life of Graham Downing

On Friday 23 October at 10.30 there is to be a half hour outdoor service at Payne Green, Craven Way, Longwell Green BS30 7EJ. Prior to the dedication of the Garden of Remembrance at 11 we will be giving thanks for Graham's life and if you wish to attend please contact the Chairman, Jeff Dando, on 0117 932 2608 as we will need to have a contact list.

Remembrance Sunday 8 November

The annual Service of Remembrance will take place around the memorial in St Mary's Churchyard. The service will begin at 10.45 with social distancing and all will be welcome. There will be further details in the November Focal Point.

Ken Gibson President and Jeff Dando Chairman and Secretary

News from Bitton WI

I am sorry to write that I do not have any good news to report about Bitton WI this month. The committee met on September 8th and it was decided that there would be no meetings until the new year, and that we will be following government guidelines as to when larger gatherings can resume. A few members have suggested that we hold our meetings in the afternoon, as this would mean that, if we could resume during the winter months, members would not have to attend meetings in the dark. If possible could members please let the committee know how they feel about this.

I now have some very sad news. Ann Coales sadly passed away after a returning illness. Ann was a long standing and highly valued member of WI, retiring recently as president. Ann was always kind, friendly and helpful to me and other members, and I know that she will be greatly missed.

On a lighter note the recipe this month comes from Sheila Jennings, and is a very good way of using all the blackberries that are now in season. I hope will enjoy making this pudding and I am sure it will be delicious. Once again I hope will all stay safe and well during this strange time.

Lyn Coles



Blackberry Spoom (Sorbet)

Ingredients

160g golden granulated sugar
250g blackberries or blackcurrants
2lb tbl lemon juice
2 large egg whites
75 caster sugar

Method

- 1) Put granulated sugar in pan with 160mls water, heat gently, stirring until dissolved. Add berries, bring to a simmer, cook for 2-3 minutes remove from the heat. Cool for 15 minutes.
- 2) Put berries and lemon juice in a blender, whizz, sieve to remove seeds and discard, cover and chill.
- 3) In a large clean bowl whisk egg white add sugar until sugar dissolved.
- 4) Fold in purée, transfer to a 1 litre container, top with parchment, cover and freeze (at least two and half hours). Soften in fridge before serving. It will keep for 3 months



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September's Quiz Answers

Last month's quiz was about types of study—the "ologies".

The correct answers are:

1. Archaeology; 2. Zoology; 3. Palaeontology; 4. Nephrology; 5. Psychology;
6. Meteorology; 7. Geology; 8. Cryptozoology; 9. Apiology; 10. Ecology; 11.
Cardiology; 12. Ichthyology; 13. Kinesiology; 14. Mixology; 15. Dactylogy;
16. Campanology; 17. Neurology; 18. Biology; 19. Anthropology; 20.
Radiology.

Correct answers were received from

The Booths, Anne Burmester, Sheila Read & Family, Mary Younie, Sarah
Craddock, Jon & Pam Heyes, Jill & Ken, Jan and Diane, Frank FitzGibbon
and co, and, Pearl Evans, Debs & Jo

This month's winner is Sheila Read & Family

The October Quiz

This months quiz is on opposites, (or very nearly opposite)! e.g. Category Bird, clue Sluggish, answer Swift

No.	Clue	Category
1.	The Tiger Queen	Children's Film
2.	Outside In	Children's Film
3.	The Dream After Easter	Children's Film
4.	Chickensock	Wild Flower
5.	Remember-you-so	Wild Flower
6.	Pinkknocker	Wild Flower
7.	Enemies	US Sitcom
8.	Boos	US Sitcom
9.	Won't & Harshness	US Sitcom
10.	The First Breakfast	Artwork
11.	The Whisper	Artwork
12.	The Death of Mars	Artwork
13.	Old Chaos	80's pop group
14.	Complicated Bodies	80's pop group
15.	Johnny Returns from Ivymetal	80's pop group
16.	Nothing Dull or Ugly	Hymn
17.	Evening Hasn't Fixed	Hymn
18.	Unimpressive Harshness	Hymn
19.	Weststarters	UK TV Soap
20.	Ivypine	UK TV Soap

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Contact:

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The last word

In its role as the Bitton Churches' Magazine, the first job of Focal Point is to report on church events and activities at St Mary's and the Upton Cheyney Chapel. We are also pleased to include other village news and the events of various local societies.

Since March, while it has been possible to record, to some extent how the village has coped with the extraordinary impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic, church news and the events of local societies has been in short supply.

I am pleased to note that in this edition we have not only had some events to report, in particular the way in which Bitton responded to the lack of a real fête, this year, but we at last have regular services taking place, once again in both church and chapel.

Hopefully, this improved position will continue and the experience of the "virtual fête" may spur us on to find other ways in which we can manage our church and community life as we prepare for more months of restriction in response to the COVID pandemic.



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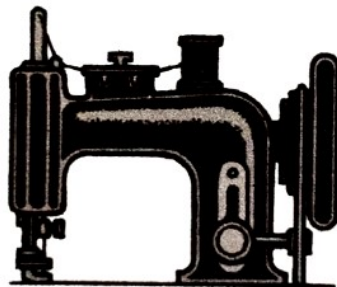
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