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November 2020



The Season of Remembrance



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Focal Point

Bitton Churches' Magazine

November 2020

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Editor: Jim Heavens

Phone: 07720 248534

Email:

jimheavens@outlook.com

Website:

www.stmarysbitton.org.uk

*Deadline for the December
magazine is:*

Monday 16 November 2020

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*The War Memorial in St Mary's
Churchyard*

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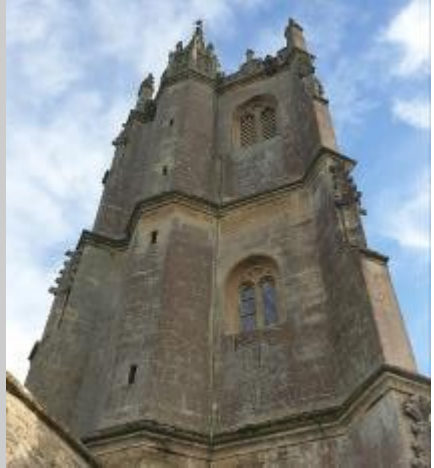
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- Churches & Services -



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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 November

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 now takes place at 10.30 each Sunday with a Parish Communion on the fourth 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 1 November

ALL SAINTS SUNDAY

10.30 Morning Prayer

Sunday 8 November

**THIRD SUNDAY BEFORE ADVENT—
REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY**

NO SERVICE

There will be a ceremony in the churchyard including the laying of wreaths (see separate notice on page 13)

Sunday 15 November

SECOND SUNDAY BEFORE ADVENT

10.30 Morning Prayer

Sunday 22 November

**FIRST SUNDAY BEFORE ADVENT
CHRIST THE KING**

10.30 Parish Communion

Sunday 29 November

ADVENT SUNDAY

10.30 Service for Advent Sunday



UPTON CHEYNEY United Reformed Church



Sunday services are at 3pm

Preachers for November at Upton:

Sunday 1st - Communion service led by Steve Britten

Sunday 8th - Remembrance service led by Ken Gibson

Sunday 15th - Service led by John Creech

Sunday 22nd - Service led by Michelle Bates

Sunday 29th - Service led by Steve Britten

News from Upton Cheyney URC



Stuart Turner

The Church is open again! Who did I miss? Who am I still missing? What did I miss? What's changed?

We have now held a full month's set of services. It's good to be back together. Or at least it's good for most of us to be back together. Sadly, several are still shielding either because they need to or because they feel too scared to come out yet. Plus, we miss John Short who passed away recently. He used to attend St Barnabas but was the main carer for his brother. He didn't want to leave his brother in the evening and so started coming to Upton for our afternoon service. Latterly, after his brother also passed away, he had been staying in St Monica's Trust. He will be missed by many in both churches. We asked you to keep all of these people in your prayers.

Our services have been led by Steve Britten and Neville Lintern, both providing a good mix of religious knowledge and humour. Harvest was particularly strange and different. So, we celebrated at a distance, all of the hard work of our farmers. We didn't want to wash our hands entirely of harvest and so had a few apples on the altar as a token to show that nothing masks God's natural bounty. Sadly, we can no longer have tea after the service or our coffee afternoons as we cannot find a safe way as yet to hold them. However, on November 1st we will be holding our first communion service again.

We also missed the famous Upton Inn Harvest Auction in aid of the British Legion. There was no way to hold a safe event. I am sure it will return in some guise next year however. Something we don't miss is the piece of wood covering part of one of our stained-glass windows. This was taken away in September 2019 to re-assemble in a more secure and stable frame. Then we waited the wood surround being replaced. Then we had Covid, and so finally it was replaced in September 2020. The last time it needed to be mended was 1952 so it has done quite well.

We were also very upset to hear that Ted Claxton had passed away. He was wonderful at supporting both Upton Cheyney and St Mary's food contributions to sisters in St Paul's. Ted has been making regular trips delivering these gifts over many years always with a good natured and caring smile. He will be greatly missed.

St Mary's Matters



Pete Midgley

It has been good to see life returning to St Mary's over the last weeks, albeit in a somewhat limited and sometimes frustrating way. Harvest festival was a very low-key affair compared with our normal celebration, and it was sad not to have the usual array of flowers and vegetables arrayed in the church. On the other hand, it was so encouraging to have such a positive response to our collection of non-perishable food showing that we still have the capacity to give to others despite, or maybe because of, the difficult situation we find ourselves in.

With the Ellacombe Chimes Bicentenary celebrations coming up in 2021 there has been some renovation work needed on the chimes at St Mary's. Those of you who live close to the church may have heard the chimes being rung on a Wednesday evening. The ringing of the chimes will be continuing over the next few weeks as the group preparing for the celebration put together a video of the chimes being rung, and the workings of the mechanism used for ringing.

As with harvest, our Remembrance commemoration this year will be comparatively low key. This is not to detract from the vital importance of this occasion and there is much information on the British Legion website about how to mark the day and be involved in this year's poppy appeal. Details of what is happening at St Mary's can be found elsewhere in the magazine and will be published on the website.

Inevitably our minds will now be turning to Christmas and we are all wondering exactly how it is going to work out. Plans are being put together to decide how we can make Advent and Christmas a time of preparation and celebration within the restrictions that are likely to be in place. Look for details in the December magazine and on the church website to keep up to date.

In the meantime, may we all be supporting one another in our actions and in our prayers.

Remembrance Sunday: 8 November

Due to Covid-19 the normal Remembrance service inside St Mary's will not take place this year.

However, there will be an Act of Remembrance around the War Memorial in St Mary's Churchyard. It will begin at 10.50, all will be welcome taking care to observe social distancing and the wearing of masks is advised by the churchwardens.

It will conclude with the 2 minutes silence and the laying of wreaths on behalf of Bitton Parish Council, our Member of Parliament, our Scout Group, the Army Cadet Force, the Royal British Legion and St Mary's Church.

To avoid congestion around the memorial you are asked to lay any personal tribute later in the day.

Continuing a tradition of many years the Last Post and Reveille will be sounded by Mark Wilkins.

***Ken Gibson President and Jeff Dando,
Chairman and Secretary***



Richard Humphrey

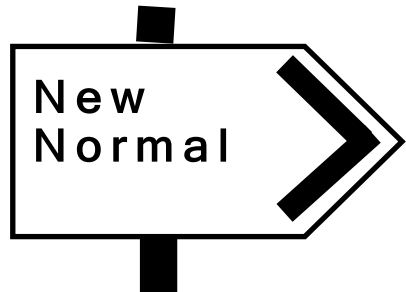
Where do we go from here?



Dear Friends,

As you read this, we will be not too far away from Advent and Christmas, and then of course the end of a year which has been for all of us like nothing we have ever experienced before. Along with the understandable questions, “How has this pandemic happened, and why?”, and the almost inevitable, “Where does God figure in all of this?”, people often ask me about the God of Old Testament; seeing him as angry and vengeful as he watched people rejecting him and then punished them severely for breaking the covenant they had together. And more than one person has said to me that this pandemic is the wrath of God, nature biting back for the way we’ve treated His gift of Creation.

But even in the Old Testament we see that God never abandoned his people—he always relented and brought them back into the fold. And in the New Testament, we see the vulnerability of God—the helpless child, dependant on human care and love; the young itinerant Rabbi relying on the help and hospitality of others; a man who cries inconsolably at the death of a friend; and a man who finally, abandoned by everyone, went humiliated, afraid and alone to torture and death; a man buried in a borrowed grave.



Focal Point, November 2020

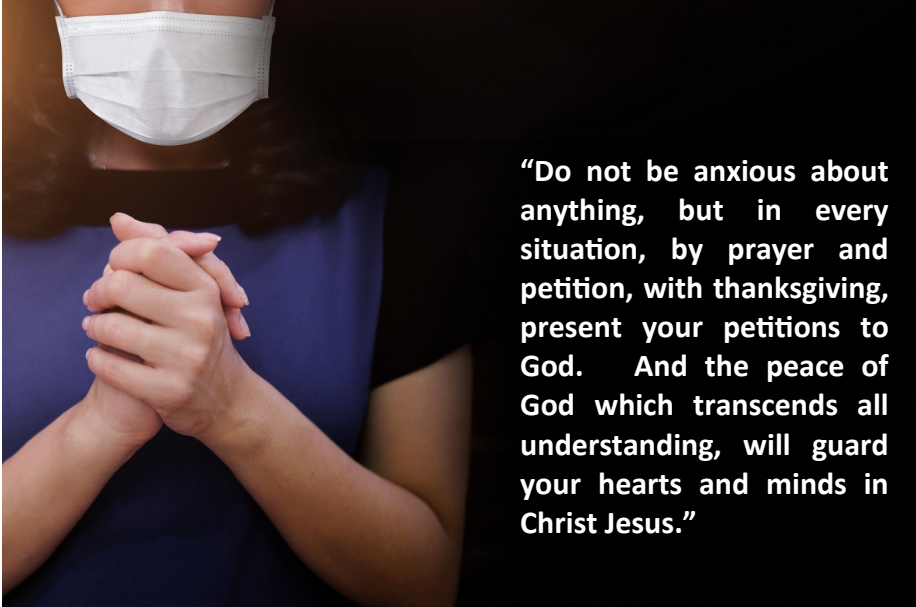
Yet it was in this extreme helplessness and vulnerability that he defeated, on our behalf, a greater enemy than we face today.

If you want to talk of the wrath, or the anger, of God, just look at the way Rabbi Jonathan Sacks described it in a conversation with Steve Chalke; “it is perhaps better, and far more accurate to understand God’s anger as his anguish—a dimension of his love, but never an emotion in opposition to it.” God grieves and suffers with us, because He IS love and his love is redemptive, not vindictive. He stands with us through every time of trial and sorrow and is close to those in anguish. As St Augustine said, “God is closer to us than we are to ourselves”.

In a world that sometimes threatens to overwhelm us it’s important that we don’t lose sight of the things we know as we try to get to grips with questions we can’t answer. I find a great deal of comfort today in some words that Paul wrote in his letter to the Philippians: “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your petitions to God. And the peace of God which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” (ch4: v6-7)

And we have been here before, haven’t we? The world has seen plagues, two major world wars, a Spanish flu pandemic, and now this. Once again the determination to overcome has surfaced.

Two thousand years ago, faith in Christ empowered ordinary people to do extraordinary things, and if there has been any kind of upside to this pandemic, perhaps it has been in the way that we’ve also seen ordinary people do extraordinary things: Captain Tom, Frank Mills, a 6 year old with Spina Bifida walking 10 metres a day to raise money for the NHS; the dedication of those caring for the sick and vulnerable; the selflessness that’s come to the fore in our benefice and our communities as people look out for each other. All are signs of hope that God will bring peace and calm to his troubled world, and that as he so often does, He will bring good out of evil. There is much talk of when we will “get back to normal”, but there is also a definite groundswell of opinion that the “old normal” is not fit for purpose.



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“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your petitions to God. And the peace of God which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”

So as we look towards Advent let’s keep our focus on those things we know. We know that our Carol Service and Christmas services won’t be the same this year, but in our hearts we will still welcome the Christ child as we have done in years past; we will still give thanks for the gift of salvation to a broken world. Christ calmed storms, cast out demons and healed the sick, and he was called Immanuel— “Christ with us.” And that’s something else we know-He is with us now and has been for always. His part is, and has always been, to save. Ours is to trust.

Richard

Zoom in to the Annual Parish Meeting

Having been postponed in April, due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, the Annual Parish Meeting of Parishioners was held on 28th September, online, via Zoom.

The meeting adopted the minutes of the previous meeting in April 2019, and the meeting moved to the election of the two churchwardens for the year. Both Jacqui Harris and Pete Midgley were nominated and agreed to stand again. They were elected unanimously and thanked by Jeremy for all the work they have done in this role. The meeting also received reports on the church's committees and areas of work during 2019-20.

Attendance

Church attendance is reported in calendar years so the report received was for 2019. Taking all Sunday services into account, the average attendance for normal Sundays (i.e. Sundays that were not special such as Easter) was 41 adults and 6 children or young people under 16. Family Café Church, held on the 4th Sunday has proved particularly attractive to young families. Attendance was very similar to 2018, overall. There was also a high attendance at Christmas services, in particular the Carol Service and the Christmas Eve Crib Service both attended by over 200 people.

Review of 2019-20

A number of reports mentioned the departure in September last year of our much loved former curate Anika. Services have continued to be led by Jeremy, our ordained Minister Richard Humphrey and the two lay ministers, Ken Gibson and David Bailey. Within the church community, last year, house groups were taking place regularly and 2nd Sunday

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lunches an open invitation to join in Sunday launch together proved popular. Jane Lings has taken over as music organiser. Her report set out the approaches to the selection of hymns for each service, traditional (on the first Sunday of the month for the Holy Communion Service) to more modern songs in the more relaxed services on other Sundays and those specifically for younger audience for Family Café Church. There is also a database of hymns recording when each one has been used so that there is a regular but not too frequent cycle.

The meeting received reports on the church's financial position and the accounts had been audited. Other than repairs to the boiler, there had been no other irregular expenditure on maintenance. Phil Vowles reported on the continuing difficulties he faces in obtaining light bulbs for some of the existing lamp holders, but had also carried out a number of ongoing maintenance tasks including the clearing of drains and gutters and (electrical) PAT testing.

There had been a number of social and fundraising events during the year, including a number of musical ones, a comedy evening, a fund raising afternoon tea and (just weeks before lockdown) a Burns Night Supper. Thus was in addition to the annual fête which in 2019 was a bumper event taking over £10,000 (compared to the much smaller virtual fête held recently)

Churchyard

The churchyard continues to be overseen by Barbara Merritt and Jacqui Harris. The grass was cut on 13 occasions during 2019 at the cost of £350 for each mowing (approximately one every fortnight from April to November). Donations to the churchyard fund are most gratefully received. During Lent, Ken Gibson had organised series of edge cutting Saturdays, which had re-established the edges to the church paths.

Future Group

The Future Group, looking at the development of St Mary's, had continued to plan and consult on future development for the church. An archaeological dig, had initially been postponed due to Coronavirus, but had now gone ahead on the south side of the church.

A date for next years APM has not been set

Virtual Church Fête 2020: FINAL RESULTS

With grateful thanks to all those who participated in or donated to the *Virtual* church fête this year, the final results have been revealed:

Photographic Competition	£136.00
Draw	£ 907.00
Cream Teas	£1,227.00
Handicrafts	£40.00
Donations	935.00
Christmas Cards	£1,000.00 (monies to follow)
Gift Aid	£321.75 (to be recovered)
TOTAL	£4,566.75

St Mary's Christmas Card

The card of the Christmas window in St Mary's has proved popular and at the time of going to press there are just 10 packs of 10 cards at £5 remaining. If you would like a pack or two please phone me on 0117 932 2122.



And many thanks to everyone who has supported this venture.

Jill Gibson

Gloucester Historic Churches Trust

Gloucestershire Historic Churches Trust have helped support us in keeping our church looking its best as they have many other old churches and every year they have sponsored walks and bike rides to raise money. We have not joined in with those although they have been held in a Covid Secure way. However, People have very generously donated and we have been able to send the Trust cheques for £285.

Barbara Merritt

In profile:

Eric Cooper

Eric Cooper, 91, is well-known to most in the village. Born in the small village of Newbold, near Ashby de la Zouche in Leicestershire, Eric was one of nine children. "Only two left now" he says, sadly.

Eric was sent to Trieste on National Service between 1947 and 1949, where he worked in a beautiful office overlooking the sea, had many fine Italian meals and managed to visit an empty Venice and go to Cortina in the mountains. On his return home he continued to sing in the choir ("You wouldn't like to hear my singing now!") at his local church and met up with Joyce who had recently become a Christian. He says she "took advantage of my youth" - she was a year older than him when they married on August 23rd, 1952. They could invite as many people as they liked to the service but the reception at the Royal Hotel was limited because of food rationing. However, they made up for this by inviting many guests to their 60th wedding anniversary at the same hotel, organised by their daughter Janet.

Eric worked for the Bristol office of National Coal Board, based in Longwell Green from 1961. He volunteered at Barton Hill Church and Youth Club. In 1966 he retrained as a Religious Education teacher, "I saw the writing on the wall about the future of coal and decided on a different career path," he says. His first job was as RE teacher at the Grange School in 1968, where he stayed until 1983. When he left, RE had the same status as History and Geography and was a popular subject. He took his class, now mixed, to Godspell to see David Essex, who kissed one of his pupils on the cheek, much to her joy. He bought the class to visit a Pentecostal church, and also organised many sporting activities, including Ten Tors with its rigorous training. Head of RE and a housemaster, Eric was responsible for the pastoral care of 180 boys. He had to help several boys with complex family situations and with kindness and common sense he changed the



*Eric at home in
the
conservatory*

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lives of many. “The qualities of a good teacher,” he says “are to be prepared to listen and to be able to discipline. A school must provide the best possible all-round education for the pupils.”

His experience at Grange School prepared him for his work at Eastwood Park Detention Centre, where he led evening discussions in personal relationships. Told to seat the boys in a semi-circle with his back to the panic button, Eric was able to help these 18 year olds from many walks of life who had to go through ‘short, sharp, shock’ treatment. This often involved scrubbing floors, which were then walked over by officers in dirty boots, but Eric helped the boys to make sense of life and prepare them to make the most of opportunities when they left.

In 1975 the family moved to Bitton, a much smaller village than it is now, with no large estates, and a butcher’s, general shop, post office and watch repairs in ‘Auntie Maud’s’ house. Joyce at this time was teaching at Upton Cheyney School and soon became Head Teacher. Eric, who had preached when living in Leicestershire, became a reader at St Mary’s and preached there and at Syston, Warmley, Wick, Dyrham and Doynton. He continued to be involved in youth work, the Worship and Witness committee and Tea Club. In 1989 he and Joyce joined the congregation at All Saints Weston and in 1994 he became church warden. At the same time, from 1984-1990, he was part of Frenchay Community Health Council and in 1990 he was Chair. A stressful job dealing with the major hospitals and being school governor and Chair at WASPs may have led to his heart problem, and in 1992 he had a triple bypass operation by the controversial Dr Wiseheart.

During lock down Eric really missed Joyce who is now at Gracefields Care Home. He says it is very important to keep talking to people: Janet calls him every day as do friends in Weston. Now he is able to see Joyce once a week. The home has been exceptionally good in looking after Joyce and she keeps everyone entertained playing the piano beautifully.

Eric says his secret to a long and happy life is exercise: “Get outside if you can, get some exercise, spend time in your garden if you have one, and eat a sensible diet – try to keep off red meat and stick to chicken, turkey, fish and salads.” His positive outlook, which led to his great contribution to the church and community in Bitton and Weston is surely equally important.

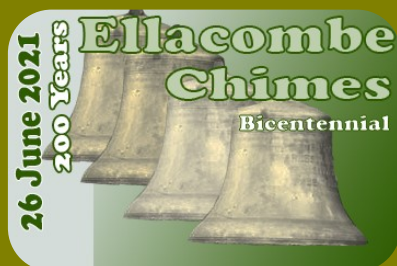
Sarah Heavens

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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News from Bitton WI

Another month has passed and I hope everyone is safe and keeping well. Unfortunately as you will know the situation with the Covid pandemic has not improved. We were hoping to have a committee meeting at the beginning of October, but unfortunately due to the government instructions and the new rule of no more than six people being able to meet together, this had to be cancelled.

November is normally the month when the Annual General meeting is held and new committee members are elected etc., even though this could not take place this year, the Finance and Secretaries reports were sent to WI house. We do not think at the moment that we will be able to resume meetings until well into the new year.

To keep us busy this month's recipe is another pudding from Sheila Jennings.

I know you will enjoy making and eating this pudding, thank you Sheila.

I hope you will all keep safe and well and that we will be able to meet in the new year.

Lyn Coles



Lemon Layer Pudding

Grated rind and juice of 1 lemon

50g (1oz) butter

100g caster sugar

2 eggs separated

50g self raising flour

300ml (1/2 pint) milk

Add rind to butter and sugar, and cream.

Add egg yolks and flour.

Stir in milk and 2-3 tablespoons of lemon juice.

Whisk egg whites until stiff, fold into the mixture and pour into an oven proof dish.

Stand in a Bain Marie (a shallow tin with water) and cook at 200c, mark 6 for about 45mins until the top is set and spongy to the touch.

The pudding will separate into custard layer with a sponge topping and serve 4 people.



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October's Quiz Answers

Last month's quiz was about opposites, or nearly opposites.

The correct answers are:

1. The Lion King; 2. Inside Out; 3. The Nightmare Before Christmas; 4. Foxglove; 5. Forget-me-not; 6. Bluebell; 7. Friends; 8. Cheers; 9. Will & Grace; 10. The Last Supper; 11. The Scream; 12. The Birth of Venus; 13. New Order; 14. Simple Minds; 15. Frankie Goes to Hollywood; 16. All Things Bright and Beautiful; 17. Morning Has Broken; 18. Amazing Grace; 19. Eastenders; 20. Hollyoaks.

Correct answers were received from:

Pearl & Debs; Janet Hillier; Jan & Diane; Terry Matthews; Anne Burmester; Jill & Ken; Sue & Rod Nethercote; Jon & Pam Heyes; Alan & Sue Murtagh; Alison Wride; Ros & Charles Knight; and Sarah Craddock.

The winner this month is Terry Matthews

The November Quiz

This months quiz is on albums, they are all a single word and I have provided the initial (s) of the artist or group

No.	Clue	Artist or Group
1.	An element or a colour (G)	B
2.	Collected by bees (N)	J
3.	Often spoken in whispers (R)	FM
4.	An additional piece at the end of a concert (E)	E
5.	Having courage to do something (D)	HL
6.	A belief in something (F)	GM
7.	A sinister book or film (T)	MJ
8.	A strong feeling of wanting (D)	BD
9.	What children like to do (P)	MJ
10.	A prime colour (R)	TS
11.	A mental image (I)	JL
12.	Release from guilt (A)	MJ
13.	Uncontrollable emotion (H)	DL
14.	A type of pistol (R)	TB
15.	An allusive or oblique remark (I)	Q
16.	A large American reindeer (C)	EJ
17.	A reason (P)	JB
18.	A mathematical operation (D)	ES
19.	A girl's best friend (D)	EJ
20.	Often left (L)	DB

Name:

Contact:

Please send your answers to Carolyn Russell at Martin House, Church Road, Bitton (the yellow house) or email mrsrussell@icloud.com by 16 November.



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The last word

The annual season of remembrance is usually quite an extensive affair. From mid October, poppy sellers locate themselves in high streets and stations raising millions of pounds each year for the Royal British Legion and its charities, and on Remembrance Sunday people gather in their thousands to pay respect for those who give their lives for their country. Wreaths are laid by members of the royal family and politicians and in London and in other large cities there is frequently a march past to remember the war dead.



This year it will be different. Exactly one hundred years since Lutyens' Cenotaph of Portland Stone was unveiled in Whitehall, the ceremonies will be partly muted. The effect of Coronavirus, once again reducing an event of mass participation to small, distanced and quieter ceremonies.

That should not diminish the significance of Remembrance Sunday, nor should it detract us from the simple act of respect that it allows. Indeed some may find it more poignant as a more quiet act of gratitude.

Jim Heavens

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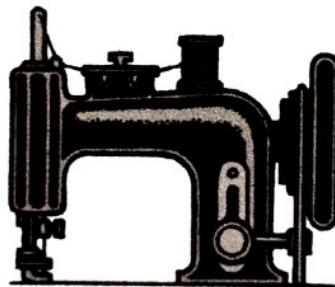
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