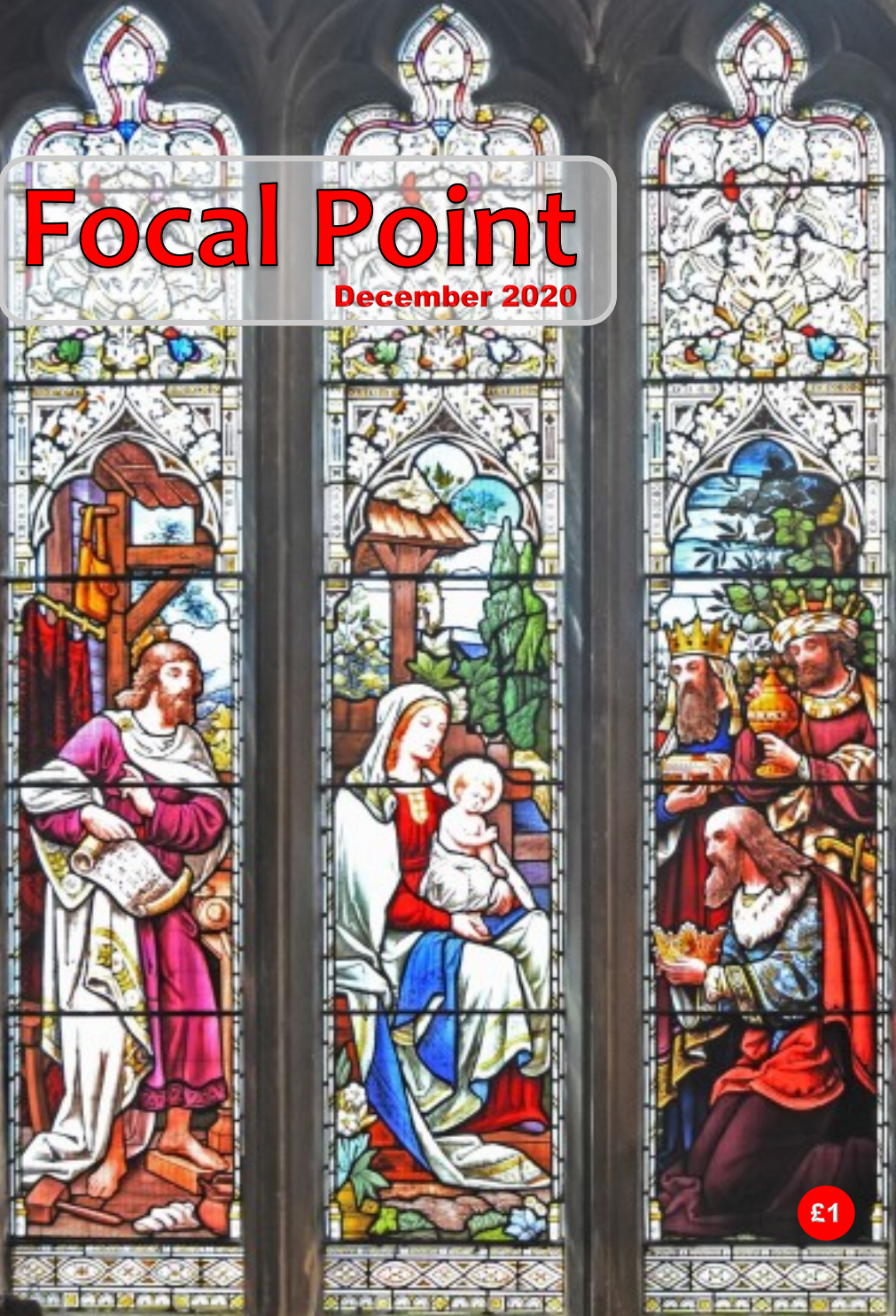


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Focal Point

Bitton Churches' Magazine

December 2020

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*Deadline for the January
magazine is:*

Monday 14 December 2020

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information about acts of
worship pages 8 to 20**

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The Lons**

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ancestor William Morgan

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Claxton

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Gallop—*Pride of Bitton***

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Page 39 Last Word

Cover photograph—

*The Christmas Window in St
Mary's Church*—photograph
created by David Harris, who
sadly died in November.

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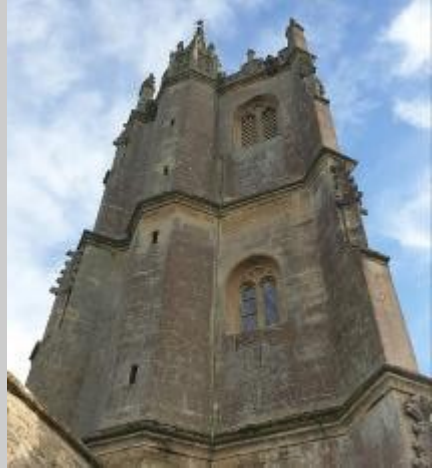
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- Churches & Services -



**ST MARY'S
CHURCH,
BITTON**

www.stmarysbitton.org.uk



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 December

A the time of going to press we do not know whether services in St Mary's will be able to resume in December. If we are allowed to resume then details will be posted on the noticeboards and on the St Mary's website.

All Sunday and Mid-week services, as well as special Christmas Services will continue to be available on line.

If they are permitted, all church services at St Mary's will be subject to continuing restrictions to ensure safety and social distancing. Those attending should wear masks. Numbers will also be 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.

All details are at www.stmarysbitton.org.uk

This month's church calendar

Sunday 6 December

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Sunday 13 December

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Special Christmas Service Online

Candlelit Service of Lessons and Carols

Sunday 20 December

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Special Christmas Service Online Nativity

Crib service at which we hope to welcome many families.

Thursday 24 December

CHRISTMAS EVE

Friday 25 December

CHRISTMAS DAY

Sunday 27 December

FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS



UPTON CHEYNEY United Reformed Church



It is currently not known what services can be held during December. As soon as possible, information will be provided.

No more feedback as St Mary's new microphones come into operation

At long last, the PA system in St Mary's has been replaced with modern microphones and systems to deliver clear and uninterrupted sound. Those whose teeth have been on edge with feedback, or strained to hear the sermon, can now rest assured that such pains will no longer be endured during church services, Just to add to the modernity, each of the microphones has a light to show it is on—so no need to tap and ask if you can be heard... you can!

As restrictions were eased this autumn, the new system was put to use in services. Let us hope it will be used more often in 2021.

News from Upton Cheyney URC



Stuart Turner

Richard Humphrey was confirmed on the same day at Bristol Cathedral as my son and my Mum over 20 years ago. He returned to Upton Chapel to lead his first service for a long time. We couldn't sing hymns of course however Richard played three "Be Still", "Speak O Lord" and "Abide with me" on DVD. There is no doubt that any sort of singing is very uplifting these days and it was a welcome change. Hopefully it won't be as long until his next visit.

Well, it was positive whilst it lasted. It was lovely to see many old friends again as the church opened up during September. Unfortunately like all other churches we are back in lockdown again and therefore closed until we hear otherwise. We ended on a flourish, with our first communion since February or March. So long ago we can't remember the specific date. Steve Britten led the service, and the communion process was straight forward enough, if a little different. It reminds me of the song by the Three Degrees "When will we meet again, when will we share special moments...?". Hopefully the answer is December and so not too long away. Let's make the most of our time and the fact that we are in such a lovely area. It may be cold and wet, but God's blessings are all around us for everyone to see.

And of course no preachers to announce until we know whether we are allowed to open in December or not.

Stuart

Thanks to those who gave for Remembrance

Our thanks to all who bought poppies during the four days we were able to be at ASDA. In that short time gifts to the Poppy Appeal totalled £4,500 and we are grateful too for all who have given on line.

An Act of Remembrance took place around the cross – beautifully decorated by Sarah Craddock – on Remembrance Sunday though attendance was limited to participants. And on Remembrance Day the Meadows held their own Act of Remembrance at the School when crosses for each of the 48 servicemen commemorated on our



Memorial were laid beneath a tree at the School and subsequently brought to the Churchyard memorial. Our special thanks to those who sounded Last Post – Mark Wilkins on the Sunday and Mick Perkins of Oldland Brass at the Meadows on Remembrance Day.



*Ken Gibson President and
Jeff Dando Chairman and Secretary*

Our Vicar writes

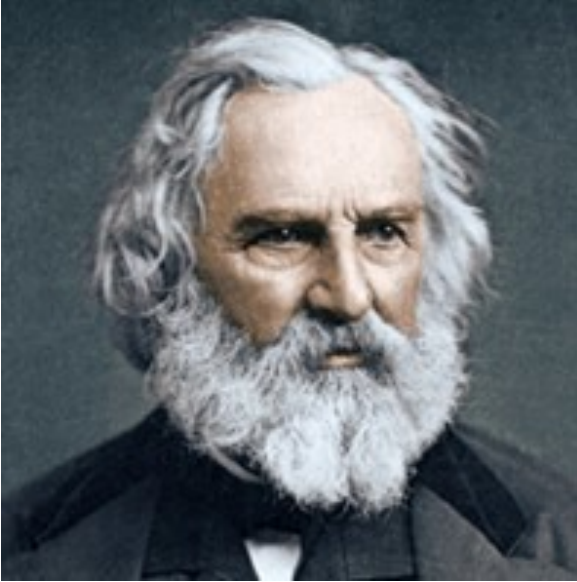
Christmas Bells



Dear Friends,

I wonder if you have come across Henry Wadsworth Longfellow before. Henry is someone who returns to my thoughts each year at Christmas as I reread his poem 'Christmas Bells'. The Poem is Victorian and feels very English although Longfellow was raised in Portland, Maine and went on to be professor of modern languages at Harvard university. I will admit that 'Christmas Bells' might not be his most famous poem and that he is better known for works such as 'The Wreck of the Hesperus' and more famous still, 'Hiawatha'. Whilst these are well known he considered his lesser-known religious trilogy, 'Christus' to be his greatest achievement.

What is most striking in 'Christmas Bells' is the determination for peace and goodwill which is surely a universal determination and especially at Christmas time. The poem's words are unchanging year on year, but I find, as with so much other writing, I bring to this poem a year's more experience and so the yearly reading of it offers up different insights and new treasure; incidentally this is the same as reading scripture again and again or repeating the prayers of the prayer book because we bring life in its fullness to the words, to the text. And so, it is with *Christmas Bells* with its refrain, 'peace on earth good will to men' as each year I ask what this means now after another year has passed.



*Henry
Wadsworth
Longfellow*

1807-1882

It has been a difficult year for us all and while writing this letter I could wish for nothing more than peace for all those who will eventually read this. Peace in a world free from war and conflict, peace in the uncertainty of political wrangling, inner peace from the anxieties, stress and mental health issues raised for us human beings through living in complex and difficult times, peace for those who are now at rest with God and for their families, peace of mind, heart and body in the face of Covid-19 and all that it has brought us and of course that peace of God which passes all understanding, the shalom of God. Peace especially as we gather as best-we- can this Christmas time with family and friends, physically, virtually, prayerfully, thoughtfully.

Longfellow's determination reminds us that St. Luke first offers these words on the lips of angels as they announce to the shepherds the good news ; and in an instant, we are offered both a glimpse of heaven and the promise of hope and peace as the angels both praise God and, at the same

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time, speak of the Prince of Peace, the one who is to come, Emanuel, God with us. That they spoke these words to the lowliest of people is significant, introducing as it does the priorities of the Kingdom of God and the character of Jesus' ministry.

This coming church year the gospel is Mark who carries no nativity story but rather encourages us to begin again. As we have seen heroic acts of kindness, community, goodwill and peace-making during this pandemic so we have also had time to stop and rest and think. The opening of Mark's gospel invites the story of Jesus to begin again with us. Would that this good news, beginning again in us as we read it, bring peace and goodwill to us all.

**Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
'God is not dead, nor doth he sleep!
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail,
With peace on earth, good will to all'.**

May I wish you all a peace-filled Christmas and a very happy and Covid-free new year.

Jeremy



The Bishop with Canon Dr Mandy Ford who was installed as Dean of Bristol in October. This is the first time in the country where both the Bishop and Dean are women.

Bishop seeks discussion for *Transforming Church*

The Bishop of Bristol, Rt Rev Vivien Faull, has published an open letter to the Bristol Diocese, starting a period of reflection and discussion about the church's calling and how to be a better church for all.

In her letter, *Ad Omnes*, the Bishop recognises that this work begins “in a complex world that is experiencing seismic changes”, but at a time when the numbers of regular worshippers are declining and the Church of England’s role is more contested than in recent history, “the need to shape our vision and priorities for coming years to “celebrate the best of what is, imagine what could be and co-create what should be”.

During 2021, she will be leading the process of discussions and intends for all to be involved. The process will be structured with a project board and delivery team and additional financial support has been provided to enable the archdeacons, in particular, to spend more time in conversation, praying and planning with people as much as possible.

Her letter ends with a reminder of the core mission of the Anglican Church to be a church for everyone.

PCC seeks retrospective approval

The St Mary's Parochial Parish Council met by Zoom in November to approve a retrospective faculty to cover the felling of a tree in the churchyard and to formalise the position of the Pearsall gravestone. Although, in the case of the tree, planning permission had been granted advice at the time , in 2013, was that no church authority would be required. Approval for both are now being sought.

Also discussed was a proposal to plant a row of lime trees along the edge of the Glebe Field alongside the main road. The PCC had already supported the proposal in principle earlier in the year, but since then a small working party had been established with representatives from the BVRA and advice had been sought from an arborculturalist on the most appropriate location. Permission now needs to be obtained from the Bristol Diocese.

After some delay, due to Coronavirus, Pete Midgley and Jacqui Harris had been confirmed in post as churchwardens for 2020-21, having attended an Archdeacon's visitation on line.

Thanks had also been received from the Sisters of Mercy for our harvest gifts.

The PCC is next due to meet in February.

Focal Point Subscriptions

The annual subscription for Focal Point will remain at £10 next year for 12 copies. As only 9 print copies were produced in 2020 due to Covid 19 restrictions, subscriptions will be collected with the distribution of the February edition and cover 12 monthly issues to January 2022, inclusive.

Community mourns the loss of David Harris



David pictured with the St Mary's Beavers before his recent illness

It was with great sadness that we learned of the news that David Harris died at the Bristol Royal Infirmary on Wednesday 11 November. David had contributed so much to the church and the local community, particularly in his leadership of the scouts, cubs and beavers. Over the past two years, David has inspired us all during his courageous battle with leukaemia. Our thoughts and prayers are with Jenny, Andrew, Chris and Peter.

David's funeral will take place on Tuesday December 1st. There will be a committal at Westerleigh Crematorium at 10.15am, followed by a celebration of David's life at St. Mary's at 11.30am.

Richard Humphrey writes: "I very much appreciate that if things were normal very many of you would want to be at that service, but unfortunately, of course, in the present circumstances numbers have to be strictly limited. But please do just stop for a few moments of silence

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during those times, perhaps around 10.30am if you can, to remember David, and to hold Jenny, Andrew, Chris and Pete in your thoughts and prayers.”

David’s family has set up a Just Giving page in memory of David with all of the proceeds going to the BRI Haematology department. They will be grateful to anyone who donates and you can also view a whole gallery of pictures from David’s life on the page.

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/andrew-harris94>

A more extensive tribute to David will be published in next month’s magazine.

Help take forward David’s initiative for a Christmas Card for 2021

Calling all Photographers!

The card for 2020 proved very popular and has sold out. The beautiful photograph of the Christmas window in St Mary’s (shown here and on the cover of Focal Point, this month) was taken by David Harris. He and his family will be in or thoughts as we give and receive the card.



Before David’s death I discussed with him what we could do for 2021 and the idea that we came up with is to have a competition through this winter for a photograph of ‘St Mary’s in Winter’. Entries will be free and the closing date is 31 March 2021. The plan is to produce a Christmas card for 2021 featuring the winning entry which will be sold in aid of St Mary’s.

Please send me your entries to 8 Church Road, Bitton, Bristol BS30 6HH or post them through our letter box by 31 March 2021.

Jill Gibson

Midweek meetings

Three groups have continued to meet online following a series based on the Parables. Probably the most valuable element of these meetings has been the chance to chat together and to pray for the needs of the moment.

For Advent and Epiphany we are going to read a book by Stephen Cottrell, who is now the Archbishop of York, entitled 'Walking backwards to Christmas'. It looks at Christmas through the eyes of 11 biblical characters ranging from Mary and Joseph to other more surprising choices such as Herod, Isaiah and Moses. We will spread these over 6 sessions – 3 in December and 3 in January - and discuss a couple of the characters in each session.

If you would like to join one of the groups then you will be very welcome - just give one of us a ring and we can get a copy of the book to you.

Wednesday morning group	David Bailey	0117 932 8949
Wednesday evening group	Ken Gibson	0117 932 2122
Thursday evening group	Pete Midgley	0117 932 6898

BIBLE READING NOTES FOR 2021

Would you like to order a booklet which provides a reading for each day plus some comments? Quite a few people at St Mary's find this helpful and I will be happy to order one for you covering a four month period starting on 1 January 2021. The cost is £4.70.

Ken Gibson 932 2122

Christian Aid at Christmas

What's on your Christmas hope list for the coming year? A family gathering? A party? A trip to the Olympics? A holiday? A vaccine? A solution to the climate change crisis?

Did you spot the really difficult one in that list? Even with Joe Biden's support of the Glasgow climate conference any solution is going to take a while.

But there are small steps that can be taken which will make a huge difference for those on the frontline of the climate crisis. In Ethiopia Christian Aid and their local partner are building community ponds which transform the lives of the villagers who no longer have to trudge anything up to five hours to fetch water.

Christian Aid's hope is for generous donations which will enable them to continue to support poor people in Ethiopia and in fifty countries throughout the world. There will be no envelopes in the pews this year but you can give online. Here's the link: <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/give/give-money/gift-aid> . If you'd prefer to give cash please give me a ring on 932 4696 and I'll make arrangements for you to do so.

However you make your donation, please give generously and please gift aid your donation.

Nicola Bennetts

See if you can find Kawite's story on YouTube:

<http://click.e-mail.christian-aid.org/?qs=787916ffff082f0104ff1f76d5590e3ca9ea01a58d35e4c60e23632cc7faa9e5b4a4fbe2ba5d0d3b8f2263da285e81fa>



History Group explores the story of *The Lons*

Members of the Bitton Parish History Group have embarked on a voyage of discovery, looking at significant local buildings, their history and the lives of those who occupied them. The first, to receive this treatment was The Lons, originally built in 1868 as a “comfortable and prestigious” home by James Frew Sommerville who ran the Bitton Paper Mill with his father and brother.



The Lons when a school

Delving into census records, electoral rolls and military records together with the stories of local people, the group has built up a detailed history of the building over its 150 year life, which included time as a school and a Country Club before being converted into privately owned apartments in the 1980s. These stories are being published in a series of weekly articles through November to January and which we hope to carry in some form in Focal Point.

In the introductory article Annette Rothwell wrote: “We were amazed by some of our findings. We certainly hadn’t been aware that Turkish Baths would have been an 1868 feature of the building; nor did we expect to discover that one of the children brought up there would come to have his portrait in The National Portrait Gallery. Entrepreneurship and sound business acumen enabled some inhabitants to afford the rent or purchase price – including the furniture maker with at least 24 children!



The Lons in the 1890s *Courtesy of Bristol Records Office*

Memories of life at The Lons are priceless. They include the story of a child refusing to wear a pig's head and photos of the school's theatrical productions and a squash game interrupted when Kingswood School was on fire.

Having collated their findings, the group are now ready to share them more widely starting with the timeline overleaf. They would welcome any feedback including any additional Information readers may hold.



The entrance to The Lons today from the Bath Road

Bitton Parish History Group
Contact: Mike Gates,
Secretary, 0117 932 8777
email: mg122@btinternet.com
www.bittonhistory.org.uk

The Lons - Timeline

Pre -
1868

- ❑ A field known as The Lons was exchanged by William Francis Cryer for some land belonging to James Frew Somerville.

1868-
1895/7

- ❑ James Frew Sommerville had The Lons built as a comfortable and prestigious home for his family. Together with his father and brother, he ran the Bitton Paper Mill.

1897-
1907/9

- ❑ Uriah Alsop, an innovative entrepreneur, who called himself a steam cabinet maker, built a successful furniture business in Broadmead.

1909-
1926

- ❑ The stylish Edwardian Nicholetts family had a banker head of household and an Air Marshall son who was knighted and gained a long distance flying record.

1929-
1931

- ❑ Charles Thornton Hall, his wife and son, spent two years developing the estate following a family tragedy.

1931-
1946

- ❑ George Lancelot Wood, a prosperous undertaker and sculptor of marble and stone ran his business in Bristol from The Lons at the age of 71.

1948-
1952

- ❑ Norman Hall and family - owners of Eezall a washing powder business

1955-
1969

- ❑ Hugh Butler Follitt: Vermipeat compost manufactured in Salford. His office was at The Lons, where his wife, Frances ran a school.

1974-
1984

- ❑ The Lons Country Club: owned by Graham and Anne Miller, offering squash courts, a swimming pool, receptions and a nightclub.

1985-
Current

- ❑ The building converted into a number of privately owned flats managed by The Lons Country Estate Management Company on behalf of the owners.

Family Archive leads to published history



While many of us may inherit a piece of furniture, most will be unlikely to contain a treasure trove of correspondence such as that left behind by William Morgan, an eighteenth century radical, mathematician and actuary and one of Nicola Bennetts forebears.

Although she had known of the letters for many years, when she came to read them, Nicola was charmed by their prose and content, which led to some 15 years of research into their author's life and times and to the writing of a book on his life which has recently been published by the University of Wales Press.

Born in Bridgend in 1750, Morgan's lifetime was one of significant change. Having failed in his first venture in medicines, and with no formal training, he became an actuary at the Equitable Assurance Company. Hard work and dedication, including early data analysis, led to him being viewed as the "*father of the actuarial profession*" establishing many of the key practices and principles on which actuary is based to this day. Politically radical and non conformist he was taken by new scientist ideas, experimenting with electricity and may possibly have constructed the first x-ray tube.

Nicola launched the publication with a Zoom interview, conducted by her daughter, Harriet Beveridge. It seems, however, that William Morgan is only one of Nicola's interesting ancestors, so there may be further fascinating life stories to tell.

Nicola's book is available from the publisher and all good booksellers.



**Ted
Claxton
1934 - 2020**

Friends of Ted and Brenda Claxton, residents in Beach for almost 20 years, will be sorry to learn of Ted's death at the beginning of November at the age of 86 following a short illness.

We send our love and sympathy to Brenda, to their children Julia, David and Anne and to their grandchildren Millie and Lola.

The congregations at St Mary's and at Upton Cheyney URC will specially remember Ted for his work for the Community of the Sisters of the Church in Bristol. Our two churches had gathered gifts for the Sisters' Food Bank but who would drive them in to St Paul's in the heart of Bristol? Ted was the person who volunteered and he continued to do so over the years.

And when Ted heard that the Bitton Recreation Ground was in peril through lack of Trustees he volunteered for the role not because there was anything in it for him but because he was thinking of all those in the community, young and old, who benefited from it.

Focal Point, December 2020

Ted was born on 6 September 1934. The youngest of 3 brothers, he grew up in South London through the war years and recalled spending much time playing on the bomb sites as a child. At the age of 11 he won a scholarship to Alleyns School in Dulwich and after National Service he joined the Midland Bank. Starting with the lowly job of winding up the lifts, Ted moved up through the Bank and enjoyed his role as Bank Manager in a number of London branches, ending up at one of the largest, 79 Piccadilly, until he retired at 55.



Ted met Brenda at the local tennis club and they married in 1960. They lived for much of their lives in South Croydon, moving twenty years ago to the West Country to be nearer their grandchildren. Brenda and Ted celebrated their 60th anniversary this year.



Always active, Ted played hockey for the Bank, helped set up a running club and completed two London Marathons. He loved the game of golf and had been Captain of the North Downs Golf Club and Seniors Captain at Kingsdown. He was still playing with his friends this summer. He maintained his joy of the outdoors throughout his life and until a few weeks before his death Ted was busy in the garden with Brenda.

Ted will be greatly missed by all his friends.

Stuart Turner and Ken Gibson

In profile:

Marlene Gallop

Pride of Bitton

If you are looking for someone who really knows about Bitton and who lives at its heart, who springs to mind but Marlene Gallop.

Born in Bath in 1944, Marlene lived in many of the best addresses in Bath including the Circus and Brock Street as her mother was housekeeper for several important Bath residents, including Hugh Roberts who became Mayor of Bath. Marlene, who from the age of six had wanted to be a nurse, attended Bath Technical College at 16, followed by 2 years at Bath & Wessex Orthopaedic Hospital. An extremely strict course followed by a general course at Royal United Hospital led to her qualification as a Senior Registered Nurse. “The sisters were real dragons,” she says, “and your self esteem was very low. However, you were taught essential skills like making people feel at their ease, and also how to organise – my airing cupboard is exquisite now!” she jokes. She excelled at the hospital, winning the Gynaecology Prize.

Blind Date

She met Christopher because of the hospital – a nurse friend and his sister, Julia, who was in RUH for treatment set her up on a blind date. In January 1964, living at Bath Spa Nurses Home (in what is now the Bath Spa Hotel), she arranged to meet him there. She waited outside for him, thinking that if she did not like the look of him, she would go back inside, but “he was out of his car like a rocket, and that was it!”

One month after meeting, Christopher took her to meet his family at The Beeches, 149 High Street, Bitton. Christopher’s family had lived a long time in Bitton. His grandfather Henry (known as Harry) Gallop was Chief Clerk at the Golden Valley Paper Mill and Churchwarden at the time of Canon Ellacombe's death and led the procession for the Canon’s funeral service. His maternal grandparents, the Bucklands, ran the Old Post Office, in the High Street,. His father was the organist at St Mary’s, while his mother was in charge of flowers in the church.

Engaged at Christmas 1965, the couple planned the wedding for Easter 1967. Very sadly Christopher’s parents both died in early 1966, so



Marlene and Christopher were married at St Mary's on 17th September 1966, "a lovely day after all the sadness" she says.

Rural Revels

Straight away they became quickly immersed in village life. One week after her honeymoon Marlene was making tomato soup, courtesy of Nestle where Christopher worked as a sales rep, in the Vicarage kitchen copper for the Fete, held in the garden of the Vicarage. She became involved with Social Activities Committee, raising money for St Mary's with many events including *September Afayre*, which had a 'Knobbly Knees' competition, Treasure hunt, Tractor rides, Croquet, Finals of Bitton Wimbledon and Beautiful Bitton Bathing Belle competition. There was a Donkey Derby in Beach, a Grand Bitton Hoe-down, and Rural Revels, with Christopher playing the drums. "Everyone was involved," she says, "with the church at the heart of the community."

"There was a lot going on," she continues, "with the King's Arms shop where the shop is now, a butcher's, Pullen's electrical shop, Mr Coles' garage as well as Stothert & Pitt, the Paper Mill which became the car seat manufacturers and Bush & Wilton's Foundry. There were lots of farms with potatoes and meat for sale and the Hawking's cows were milked in the parlour in Church Road. I loved volunteering in the Nearly Nu shop as well as flower arranging and making hassocks with Mrs Caisley."

Focal Point, December 2020

Christopher was Tower Captain and quickly taught Marlene how to ring.

“Everyone knew everyone,” she says. “And there were big families, so you had to be careful what you said! Now people have more dispersed activities, work further afield and not everyone goes to the local school. However, it is still a very friendly area. I still have many friends and meet up at the patchwork group Pam Heyes started. I like the new arrangement in Church now, and the Church services are more ‘user friendly’ than they were. Café church is excellent, and I love it, but I miss the vicar not living in the village anymore. The community here is brilliant, when I lost Christopher so suddenly on 13th April 2015 everyone was so supportive. It was a great shock to lose him, but I know he did not suffer and would have been an awful patient otherwise!”

Marlene worked as a school nurse for 17 years in Bath and 13 years in Frome. She belonged to the Red Cross and she jumped at the chance to set up a coffee morning for Macmillan Nurses with Pam Hacker which took place over 3 years, every year raising money for those nurses “who don’t get the recognition they deserve.” The fourth coffee morning raised funds for Forever Friends with a talk by Sr Lynne Howes for the Orthodontics and Facial Reconstruction Unit, where Marlene herself had been a patient.



Marlene rings her bell to encourage others to clap for the Carers earlier this year,

Pride of Bitton

Marlene took an active part in Bitton Development Committee which became Bitton Residents’ Association and now BVRA, of which she was Vice Chair and then Chair for one year. She is also Trustee for the Alms houses committee, wanting to pay back for the happy time her parents had spent there since 1977. She is involved in Flicks in the Sticks, History Society and Gardening Club, believing that ‘it’s the nurse in me, you do things to help because that’s what you do, not for any reward’.

She is proud of her supportive and lovely family, Andrew and Ian and her lovely daughters in law and grandchildren. But, she says, she does not want to live her life through her children, and instead, lead her own life to the full, brimming with humour and a positive attitude.


Focal Point, December 2020

No surprise then, although it was to her, that at the Zoom meeting of this year's AGM of BVRA she received the 'Pride of Bitton' Award. Richly deserved for one who gives so much to the village.

Sarah Heavens



Marlene with friends at the *Forever Friends Tea*, in May 2019



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News from Bitton WI

Well here we go again, as I am writing this, it is the beginning of the second week of the four week lockdown. Many of us have had to adapt to new routines after the brief glimpse of a life where we could have some socialisation and freedom.

It is comforting to know that some things have not changed, and that applies to the WI Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting should have taken place on Monday 9th November and although this could not happen, Ros has sent an email containing the minutes of last year's meeting and the annual report for 2019/2020. It seems a long time ago that we had our Christmas meal and attended the three meetings in 2020, before all future events were cancelled due to Covid-19.

Jean our president echoed our sadness at the passing of Marion Godden and our last president Ann Coales, unfortunately due to the virus restrictions no WI members were allowed to attend the funerals.

Barbara produced the Treasurer's Report, which showed that our bank balance was better than that of last year. Hopefully when we are able to meet again we will be able to have several fund raising events.

Now for something that everyone will be able to make during lockdown, Cheese and Onion Tartlets. I have Liz Sloane to thank for this month's recipe, taken from her 35 year old recipe book.

I am sure that if families can meet at Christmas, the Cheese and Onion Tartlets will be a great hit, thank you Liz.

I will leave you now with the names of the committee for 2020/2021: Janet Ballinger, Sylvia Brown, Lyn Coles, Barbara Cooney, Barbara Dearlove, Tegwen Harris, Jean Hook and Ros Knight. Until next month, please take care and stay safe.

Lyn Coles



Focal Point, December 2020

CHEESE & ONION TARTLETS

Ingredients

Oven temperature 200C, 375F, or gas mark 5

50g.	grated cheese (strong)	<i>For the pastry</i>
1/4	large onion (chopped)	100g. plain flour
1/8	teaspoon mustard	Pinch of salt
1	egg	25g. lard
	salt and pepper	25g. margarine
	milk to mix	Water to mix

Method

1. Rub lard and margarine into flour with fingertips, until mixture resembles fine bread crumbs.
2. Mix with water until a firm dough is made.
3. Roll and cut out and place in patty tins.
4. Mix cheese, onion, mustard and beaten egg with salt and pepper, add milk to a fairly still mixture.
5. Put cheese mixture into cases and bake for 15 minutes



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November's Quiz Answers

Last month's quiz was about albums.

The correct answers are:

1. Gold, 2. Nectar, 3. Rumours, 4. Encore, 5. Dare, 6. Faith, 7. Thriller, 8. Desire, 9. Play, 10. Red, 11. Imagine, 12. Absolution, 13. Hysteria, 14. Revolver, 15. Innuendo, 16. Caribou, 17. Purpose, 18. Divide, 19. Diamonds, 20. Legacy

Correct answers were received from:

The Booths, Jane, Kathryn & Diane, Sheila Read & Family, Mary Younie, Anne Burmester.

The December Quiz

This month's quiz is acronyms of Christmas films

- | No. | Clue |
|------------|-------------|
| 1. | AC |
| 2. | AIWFC |
| 3. | BJD |
| 4. | DTH |
| 5. | E |
| 6. | HA |
| 7. | HTGSC |
| 8. | IAWL |
| 9. | IBHFC |
| 10. | JATW |
| 11. | LA |
| 12. | LIS |
| 13. | MOTFS |
| 14. | N |
| 15. | NLCV |
| 16. | SC:TM |
| 17. | TMCC |
| 18. | TNBC |
| 19. | TS |
| 20. | WC |

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 December.



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The last word

While the church and chapel may not be the sole focus of the community at Christmas time, there is no doubt that they play an important role in the festivities. Last year's Service of Nine Lessons and Carols held on the Sunday before Christmas saw the church packed to overflowing. Most Christmas services were well attended with record numbers of children and parents joining in the carols around the crib on Christmas Eve, an indication of the number of new families that have moved to Bitton in the past few years.



This year, things will be very different and while there will be some relaxation of regulations to allow family gatherings, the idea of a crowded church in full song seems a distant memory. Although they will be no substitute for the real thing, St Mary's online version may at least provide some comfort at this time and the promise that with the news of new vaccines becoming available life will return to some form of normality in 2021.

May I wish all our readers the compliments of the season and thank the many contributors and advertisers who have continued to support Focal Point during this unusual year.

Jim Heavens

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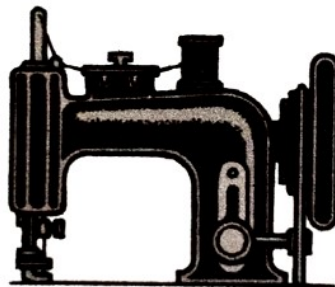
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