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Editor

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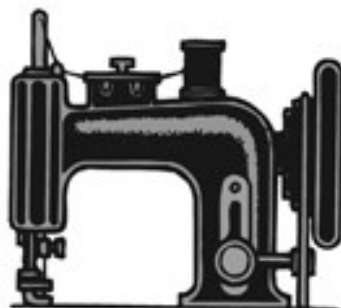


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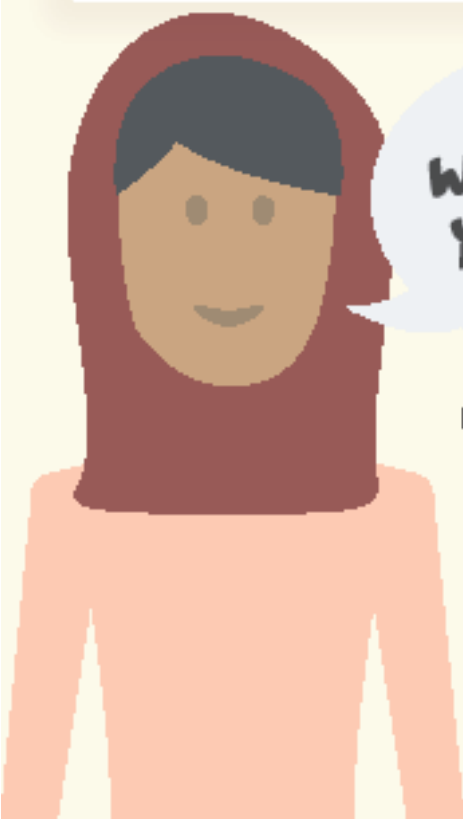
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USEFUL CONTACTS

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(Western League Premier Division)
www.pitchero.com/clubs/bittonafc

Bitton AFC Juniors

Contact: Dave Fletcher
Tel: 0117 932 2521
Email:
fletchandcarol@btinternet.com

Bitton Archers

Shoot at Bitton AFC
www.bittonarchers.com

Bitton Bellringers

Practice night Mondays
Tower captain: Sue Jay
Tel: 0117 932 2424

Bitton Combined Charities

Contact: Ken Gibson
Tel: 0117 932 2122

Bitton Community Choir

Contact: Nicola Bennetts
Tel: 0117 932 4696

Bitton Cricket Club

Bitton Recreation Ground
3 Saturday senior teams, 1 Sunday senior team and 5 youth teams
bitton.play-cricket.com

Chairman: Tim Dyer
Tel: 0117 985 9139

Bitton Flower Arranging Club

3rd Tuesday afternoon of the month at St Mary's Church Hall
Contact: Janet Ballinger
Tel: 0117 932 4728

Bitton Gardening Club

St Mary's Church Hall, 3rd Monday in the month (plus garden visits)
Email: b.hetzel@btinternet.com

Bitton Ladies Football Club

Bitton Recreation Ground
bittonlfc.weebly.com/

Bitton Lunch Club

Last Thursday of each month
Contact: Jill Gibson
Tel: 0117 932 2122

Bitton Parish Council

www.bittonparishcouncil.co.uk
Clerk: Sharon Robbins
Tel: 01454 868 102
Email: bittonpc@blueyonder.co.uk

Bitton Parish History Group

www.bittonhistory.org.uk
Secretary: Mike Gates
Tel: 0117 932 8777
Email: mg122@btinternet.com

Bitton Pre-School

www.bittonpreschool.com/
Tel: 0117 932 6042
Email:
bittonpreschool@googlemail.com

Bitton Road Runners

Every Tuesday & Thursday - everyone welcome!
www.bittonroadrunners.co.uk

Bitton Sports & Social Club

Tel: 0117 932 3222

(More overleaf)

USEFUL CONTACTS

Bitton Village Residents' Association

www.bvra.uk

Contact: Andrew Ward

Email: andrew@wardandrew.com

Bitton WI

Second Monday of the month at 7.30pm at St Mary's Church Hall

Tel: 0117 932 2059

Flicks in the Sticks

Free film nights in St Mary's Church Hall on the 3rd Friday of the month, September to April (not December)

Email: b.hetzel@btinternet.com

Girl Guide HQ, Cherry Gardens

Guides, Brownies & Rainbows

Contact: Gill Boyes

Tel: 0117 970 8056

Email: gill.boyes@blueyonder.co.uk

Kingswood MP: Chris Skidmore

www.chrisskidmore.com

Tel: 0117 908 1524 (Constituency)

Tel: 0207 219 7094 (Westminster)

Email: chris@chrisskidmore.com

Royal British Legion

(Bitton & Oldland branch)

Contact: Jeff Dando

Tel: 0117 932 2608

Email: jeffjeffdando@gmail.com

Scouts: 34th Kingswood/1st St Mary's

Beavers meet Monday evenings at St Mary's Church Hall. Cubs & Scouts Thursday evenings at The Meadows Primary School

Contact: David Harris

Tel: 0117 932 7755

Email: djaharris@hotmail.com

South Gloucestershire councillor for Bitton: Erica Williams

Tel: 0786 018 1215

Email:

erica.williams@southglos.gov.uk

St Mary's Baby & Toddler Group

(Wednesday mornings at St Mary's Church Hall)

Contact: Ali Smith

Email: alismith241@gmail.com

St Mary's Church

www.stmarysbitton.org.uk/

Vicar: Rev Jeremy Andrew

Tel: 0117 967 2724

Curate: Rev Anika Gardiner

Tel: 0117 932 5305

Churchwardens:

Barbara Merritt

Tel: 0117 932 3926

Jacqui Harris

Tel: 0117 937 4706

St Mary's Church Hall

Bookings secretary: Jill Gibson

Tel: 0117 932 2122

The Meadows Primary School

Headteacher: Joy Mounter

Tel: 0117 932 2203

Upton Cheyney URC

Minister: Rev Meryl White

Tel: 0775 914 6645

Email: Meryl.white@btinternet.com

Churches & services



UPTON CHEYNEY URC

Elder: Muriel Williams
0117 961 6843

Minister: Meryl White
0775 914 6645

Sunday services are at 3pm

December 2	Bible Study led by Meryl White
December 9	Service led by Des & Hilary Colchin
December 16	Service led by moderator Ruth Whitehead
December 23	Family Carol Service led by Meryl White
December 30	Service led by Ben Searle

In addition, on Saturday 15th at 5pm there will be Carols in the Barn at Manor Farm

ST MARY'S CHURCH

Vicar:

Rev Jeremy Andrew
The Vicarage, Warmley
0117 967 2724

Ordained minister:

Rev Richard Humphrey
Splinters
Kenilworth Drive
Willsbridge
0117 949 0502

Continued overleaf



Lay ministers:

Ken Gibson, 8 Church Road,
Bitton
0117 932 2122

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

Churchwardens:

Pete Midgley
30 Kenilworth Drive, Willsbridge
0117 932 6898

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

A Christmas message from lay minister Leslie Willcox

My son asked me what I want for Christmas. I never know how to answer that question, either for Christmas or my birthday. At my age (69) I have most of what I need or want, and have to rack my brains to think of something he would be glad to give me and I would be glad to receive; socks and handkerchiefs excepted.

An aunt of mine, in an effort to be charitable and show a good Christian attitude in the matter of giving, wrote to all her relatives to say that this year she wouldn't be giving Christmas presents as she was giving the money to charities that she would have spent on us. There was however, clearly an expectation that she was expecting to receive presents from us as usual. We were puzzled by her logic. It seemed we were the ones making the sacrifice, not her. But we did love her.

One year my brother asked me to give him a goat. On the face of it, it seemed a strange request as his garden isn't that big and being a systems engineer, has no experience in animal husbandry. As it turned out, the goat was to be supplied by Christian Aid to a village in an African country where it would be used in a project and would bring valuable employment and money and help an otherwise impoverished community. His idea was that since he had all he needed, someone else

should benefit from my gift, instead of him. Christmas is a time for giving. Only this morning when I opened my 'Reader' magazine, there were three charities making imaginative requests for me to support their Christmas appeals. I can buy 'gifts' to support Christian charities working in the Middle East; there are children in Guatemala who need birth certificates but can't afford the registration fee; as the number of Chinese people who are converting to Christianity grows, they need Bibles which are hard to obtain in China.

Perhaps I should ask my son which one of these he would like to support as his gift to me. At Christmas time in particular we are asked to remember those whose needs are desperate and there is good Biblical encouragement to do so.

Gifts can mean so much or nothing at all. If the gift is from someone we don't like, we may not want to accept it. If the gift is awful, but we love the person giving it, we may have to accept it with good grace in order not to offend. Often a gift can cost us quite a lot and we can be upset if the gift is rejected or abused. A gift is something given out of love and cannot be taken back, no matter how badly we think it has been used.

At Christmas (at any time really), Jesus is God's precious gift to us; His only son. 'God so loved the world that he **gave** his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life. Indeed, God didn't send His son into the world to condemn the world but that the world might be saved through him.' That gift has been given and can't be taken back. Have we accepted the gift with good grace and treated Him properly, or have we been careless or rejected Him? December will be spent preparing so much for the festivities, presents, parties, Christmas dinner, etc. Perhaps we should also spend some time taking care that we accept with grace that gift which God offers us in Jesus.

A happy and blessed Christmas to you all.

Leslie

Services at St Mary's in December

Sunday, December 2

10.30am: Parish Communion

Sunday, December 9

8am: Holy Communion

10.30am: Family Gift Service: please bring an unwrapped gift of new or nearly-new toys, books or toiletries or some biscuits, coffee or tins of soup, gloves or socks for needy families in the Bristol area. At the end of the service the Scouts will be selling cakes for group funds.

Sunday, December 16

10.30am: Morning Worship

Sunday, December 23

8am: Holy Communion

10.30am: A Christmas Reflection

6.30pm: Candlelight Carol Service with St Mary's Choir & Music Group and Bitton Community Choir

Monday, December 24
CHRISTMAS EVE



4pm: Family Crib Service:

Younger worshippers are invited to dress up as angels, shepherds or Wise Men - or even sheep and camels - to take part in the Christmas story and carols

11pm: Midnight Communion

Tuesday, December 25
CHRISTMAS DAY

8am: Holy Communion

10.30am: Christmas Praise

Sunday, December 30

10.30am: Benefice Communion Service at St Anne's, Syston
(No service at St Mary's)

St Mary's Matters

It was a great privilege to witness the exact 100th anniversary of the Armistice at St Mary's on 11th November at the Remembrance Sunday service. The service was very well attended and it was lovely to welcome people of all ages on such an important occasion.



Pete Midgley

With so many present, it was good to be able to clear the space at the back of the church and allow people time to mingle over tea, coffee and a biscuit after the service. Our thanks go to the many people who helped organise and contribute to the service to make it a fitting remembrance of the fallen in the Great War and in subsequent conflicts.

Looking ahead, December is of course a very busy time at St Mary's as we enter the season of Advent and anticipate the birth of Jesus at Christmas. You can find details of all the services on the opposite page, as well as in the December benefice calendar on our website.



One event which has grown significantly in the last few years is the singing of carols around the village. This will be taking place on the evening of Tuesday 18th December. Please join us to sing your favourite carols in the open air and then in the warmth of the White Hart with mince pies and mulled wine.

We hope to see you in church at some point over the Christmas period and you will be most welcome.

**Pete Midgley
Churchwarden**

Christian Aid Christmas Appeal

Peace – what could be a better gift at Christmas time?

Yes, peace is broken every day but it is also built every day through the tireless work of peacemakers across the world – through counselling, through arts and crafts therapy, through community dialogue, through training for teenage refugees.

This is the focus of this year's Christian Aid Christmas Appeal. Our gifts can help to build peace. Please give generously and don't forget to fill in the Gift Aid slip on the envelopes so that every £1 you give becomes £1.25.

Nicola Bennetts

Bible reading notes for 2019

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 a booklet for you covering a four-month period starting on 1st January. There is a specimen in church. Why not try it as you go into the New Year and if you like the booklet I can add you to the list of people for whom I get them three times a year.

Ken Gibson (Tel: 932 2122)

St Mary's flower rota 2019

If you would like to join me for coffee and biscuits on Saturday 12th January, I would be pleased to see you all. We can then plan the rota for the new year. I shall be in church from 10am.

*Judith Butson
Tel: 932 4986*



From left, Ada Thomas. Nigel Scudamore. Sally Perrett, Sue Elliott, John Leighfield, Mark Pillinger & Julie Scudamore

Let the bells ring out

Along with other communities across the country, the bells rang out in Bitton on Remembrance Sunday to mark the centenary of the Armistice.

Joining the bell ringers at St Mary's was eight-year-old Ada Thomas, whose grandparents Julie and Nigel Scudamore regularly ring the bells.

Ada learnt to ring for Remembrance Sunday as part of an initiative called Ringing Remembers. 1,400 bell ringers from across the UK died during the First World War and Ringing Remembers asked people to honour their memory by becoming one of 1,400 new bell ringers. To date more than 2,600 new ringers have come forward. All new ringers were awarded a Remembrance badge which Ada is wearing.

NOMINE

The choir supporting the Children's Hospice South West
presents a

Christmas Concert

at
St. Mary's Church, Bitton

on
Saturday 1st December at 2.45pm

Entrance is free!

*Retiring collection taken to support
the work of the*

Children's Hospice South West



Further details of programme on website

www.webjam2.com/nomine_bristol

Carol singing in Bitton



TUESDAY 18TH DECEMBER

Meet at 6.30pm at the Christmas tree outside the White Hart to sing carols around the village and bring a touch of Christmas cheer to the house-bound.

Carol sheets will be provided but wrap up warm and bring a torch.

**Then at 7.30pm at the White Hart
Community carols for everyone**

Mulled wine and mince pies available

Everyone is welcome

From the parish register

14th November

Funeral

Anne Boulton

Concert raises over £440 for St Mary's

The Gilbert & Sullivan concert that took place in October raised £448.50 for St Mary's Church.

News from Upton Cheyney URC

In November we had Bonfire Night followed by Diwali. Fireworks twice in one week. Plus the week before it was Halloween. That is always interesting for me because I come from Leeds. We didn't have Halloween or 'trick and treat' but we did have mischief night. I still remember painting door knobs with treacle, fastening dustbin lids to front doors and most fiendishly of all fastening a needle to windows. You could hear the tinkle so sharply inside but it was very difficult to spot when you went outside.



Also in November we held Remembrance at the chapel. We managed to find all the Christian names from our war memorial. It wasn't as easy as we expected. Even now we probably have one or two incorrect. Nevertheless on the 100th anniversary at least we made the effort to find them, learn a little about their story, and felt better able to relate to them as local, individual people.

Well done to Joy and Joan for boosting our funds through the Oldland table-top sale and for collecting so many stamps. They will be sold for the Helen Keller school in East Jerusalem to aid the education of visually-impaired children.

On the renovation front, the toilet is now complete. Lots of cheers. The heating in the chapel is also complete, even more cheers. The heating in the school room is next. Hopefully that will soon complete also.

So on to December. The Family Carol Service is on Sunday 23rd at 3pm. The moderator is coming again the week before on the 16th. And Carols in the Barn takes over Manor Farm on Saturday 15th from 5pm to 6.30pm. As always it's especially focused on young people. Music this year is from the Kingswood Fellowship Band. Please come and join us to get into the real Christmas spirit.

Stuart Turner

Bitton Parish History Group

Bitton Parish History Group thanks Bill Douglas for his informative and humorous talk held at Kingswood Heritage Museum on the Douglas Motorbikes.

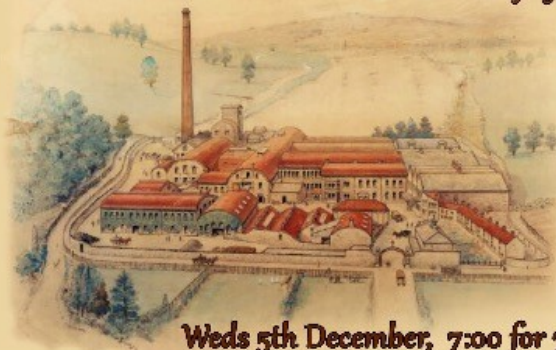
The story of the Douglas family involvement in motorbike design and manufacture in Kingswood highlighted how our local engineering was world-beating at that time.

Bill spared us the technical details and told us wonderful anecdotes about his family. Afterwards we saw the vintage bikes in the museum. My favourite was the reconstruction of a 'strap on engine onto a push bike', of 1905, which looks remarkably like our modern electric bikes.



Mike Gates
Secretary, Bitton Parish History Group

**Bitton Parish History Group are delighted to
invite you to a talk by Tony Wilmott
on the history of Bitton Mill**



**Weds 5th December, 7:00 for 7:30pm
St Mary's Church, Church Rd Bitton
Entry Free - Refreshments - everyone welcome**

Busy bees

A heavy white frost lies on the grass. A beautiful early morning sunshine is lighting up the trees; red and golden autumn leaves shine in the bright, warm light. Surprisingly, my garden is still full of blossom, food for the insects and especially late nectar and pollen for the bees to collect. The honeybees need to collect sufficient nectar to provide them with enough food to feed themselves through the cold winter days when they are unable to forage.

All around me, huge borage plants abound, spreading their untidy selves everywhere, each stem laden with energy-giving nectar. All these borage plants seeded themselves from last year's blossom and I am interested to see how long they survive into this year's end.

I also sowed some nasturtiums seeds, only about half a dozen, and now they are trailing their bright orange and yellow blossoms everywhere in a riotous mass. They are also alive with bees: the large queen bumblebees are busy all day long, delving into their deep petals as they can fly at lower temperatures than our honey bees. These plants seem to produce plenty of nectar all day long, regardless of the number of bees foraging on them..

I have been reading some interesting information in the newsletter of the British Beekeepers' Association for November, which I thought I could share with you. The first astonishing fact is the quantity of nectar the bees need to collect to produce a kilo of honey. Apparently to produce 10kg of honey, the bees need 80kg of nectar, which will take the honeybees two million flights to collect. Just think next time you spread your toast with honey how many thousands of bee flights it has taken to produce the jar of honey on your table. No wonder the front of my hives have always been so



busy, crowded with bees coming and going on warm, sunny days.

A colony of bees contains about 30,000 bees in summer and maybe a third are flying bees. The rest are working to keep the hive clean, feed their young, defend the hive against invaders, etc. A lot of the nectar collected is used to feed the bees working in the hive and the growing young bees, not forgetting they also have to keep their queen well fed. And they themselves need vast quantities of nectar to give them the energy to make these long foraging flights. So only a small percentage of the nectar is left over to make into honey. And after they have placed the nectar in the comb, they then have to evaporate the excess moisture to turn it into honey, which they do by using their wings to create an airflow through the comb.

This same article also compared the natural home of a bee, a hollow in a tree, with the modern wooden hives most beekeepers now use. The tree is thick and warm and the bees start building their nest at the top of the hollow which is warm and dry. Their nest is also often shaded by the leaves from the midday summer heat. In contrast the modern wooden hive gets very hot in summer and cold in winter, not having the insulation and shade of a tree. So the bees in our modern hives have to work extra hard, flexing their wings to create heat in winter and to cool the hive down in summer, all of which demands energy and uses up their honey stores.

So next time you spy a bee foraging on your flowers, bear a thought for how hard she is working just to keep herself alive and her world in balance. And sow lots of nectar-rich flower seeds next spring if you can. If you can bear the riotous borage and nasturtium plants, both give an abundance of nectar on late autumn days. You will also be feeding the bumblebees and other insects, all of which badly need our care and kindness in this modern day and age.

Brenda Claxton

Report from Bitton WI's AGM

The meeting held on November 12th at St Mary's Church Hall was the occasion of our annual general meeting, *writes Jean Hook*.

President Ann Coales welcomed everyone including Ann Bennett, a WI adviser who came to oversee proceedings.

Secretary Lesley Brain read the minutes of the last meeting and gave the year's report, after which Ann asked if anyone would like to join the committee. Barbara Cooney, Lynda Coles and Jan Staples said yes and were voted on, but Lesley is standing down.

The treasurer gave her report, and Ann was voted on to stay another year. She then summed up by thanking everyone for their support throughout the year.

We were then entertained by the Strummers, Strummers, a WI ukulele group. We were all given a song sheet so we could sing along and in between songs, the leader June Norton told us how the group started and the origins of the ukulele, a four-stringed Hawaiian guitar of the late 19th century, literally meaning 'jumping flea'.



After a great sing-along we finished the evening with cheese, biscuits and a glass of wine. It was a very enjoyable evening.

The next meeting is the Christmas party on December 10th.

Road closure

Golden Valley Lane will be closed from the A431 to Newpit Lane from 3rd December for an estimated three weeks.

South Glos Council says the closure is in connection with telecommunications ducting works.

Traffic concerns

Last month we ran a story about concerns raised at the local Community Engagement Forum that Bath's proposed clean air zone could see villages like Bitton, Swineford, Wick and Siston, and the lanes in the Golden Valley, become even busier with traffic avoiding the charge.

Other communities have also since voiced concerns about the CAZ, including Saltford and villages along the A37. And there is a petition on the 38 Degrees website calling for the proposals to be scrapped, which has more than 4,400 signatures. It says £9 for a car or van will really put pressure on those already struggling and the zone is huge and virtually impossible to avoid without creating gridlock on rat runs and smaller residential roads. "The traffic will be pushed out to already crippled roads ...There are other ways to lower pollution."

Residents campaigned for a long time for a reduced speed limit in the largely derestricted lanes between Bitton, Oldland and Wick, and a 30mph limit was introduced earlier this year. But many would like to see the speed limit lowered to 20mph. It is hard to get evidence to support that case though, with police beat manager Stuart Cumine telling the forum that there are problems finding a safe area in the narrow lanes to do speed checks. Councillors agreed they would talk to local land-owners to see if they would be prepared to allow the police to set up their cameras on private property.

Meanwhile South Gloucestershire Council carried out a traffic survey in the Golden Valley in August but as that was in the school holidays, Cllr Erica Williams has asked for another to get a more realistic reading.

And police also said they would assess whether to move the mobile speed camera they regularly place outside The Swan at Swineford to another location after concerns were raised about traffic speeds near Leaping Lambs nursery.

Christmas Shortbread

This fuss-free recipe for Christmas Shortbread is an old family favourite.

Ingredients:

100g plain flour
50g cornflour
50g caster sugar
100g butter

Cooking time:

30-35 minutes
170C, 325F, Gas mark 3

Method:

1. Sieve the flour and cornflour together, then add the sugar.
2. Rub in the butter until the mixture clings together.
3. Turn on to a lightly floured surface and knead lightly.
4. Roll out to a 20cm (8in) circle and place on a greased baking sheet.
5. Prick all over the top with a fork, mark into 8 or 10 portions and flute the edges.
6. Bake until the shortbread is cooked but not browned, then leave on the tray for about 10 minutes before carefully lifting it off and placing on a cooling rack.



Cranachan

I love the traditional Scottish dessert Cranachan and will be making it over Christmas with this recipe given to me by a friend. You can use frozen berries, and if you don't like whisky, you could use a liqueur instead, such as Cointreau or Grand Marnier.

Ingredients (serves 2):

50g jumbo porridge oats
25g soft brown sugar
150g extra thick cream
2 tablespoons whisky
250g raspberries (or blackberries)



Method:

1. Mix the oats and sugar together and spread out on a baking sheet. Place under a medium hot grill until the sugar has caramelised, stirring from time to time. Allow to cool.
2. Pour the cream into a large bowl, add the whisky and stir. Loosely break up the oat mixture and add most of it to the cream., keeping some back for the topping.
3. Put some of the berries in the bottom of two glasses. Spoon a dollop of the cream mixture over the top and then repeat the layers of berries and cream a second time, finishing with the remaining fruit.
4. Sprinkle the remaining oat mixture over the top and drizzle with a little more whisky if required!

A very Happy
Christmas to all
our readers from the
Focal Point team



November's quiz answers

The November quiz comprised cryptic clues to Bristol districts.

Here are the answers (with the alternatives that were allowed): **1.** Avonmouth, **2.** Cadbury Heath, **3.** Frenchay, **4.** Henbury, **5.** Mangotsfield (Kingswood), **6.** Patchway, **7.** Southmead, **8.** Stoke Bishop, **9.** Ashton Court (caught), **10.** Bedminster, **11.** Montpelier, **12.** Redland (Redfield), **13.** Sea Mills, **14.** Totterdown, **15.** Fishponds, **16.** Filton, **17.** Kingswood, **18.** Oldland, **19.** St George (Cribbs Causeway), **20.** Warmley.

Well done to Jan Wookey & Diane, the Perrett/Godwin family, Jon & Pam Booth, Bryan & Margaret Garlick, Jon & Pam Heyes, Alan & Sue Murtagh, Joe & Rose Bone, Judith & Robert Butson, the Butlers & the Houldings, Ken & Jill Gibson, Sue Nethercote & family, Anne Carrington, and Janet Ivens. The winners this month are Joe & Rose!

Have a go at the festive quiz on the opposite page - as usual there is an extra special prize to be won as it's Christmas.



The Christmas quiz



The quiz is a mix of factual and cryptic clues and anagrams, based on music, literature, panto, film and general knowledge, all associated with Christmas. Take the first letters of each answer and rearrange them into a seasonal 2-word message.

The quiz deadline is **15th December** and the winner will get their special prize in time for Christmas. Send to The Editor, 18 Church Road, Bitton, BS30 6HH or email me at bittonfocalpoint@live.co.uk

1. According to the carol, six of these were busy 'laying'
2. The boy's at home! (cryptic) (7)
3. He reputedly made the first cracker (surname only)
4. Author of 'The Father Christmas Letters' (surname only)
5. Composer of the 'Messiah' (surname only)
6. The Latin name for Poinsettia
7. Brenda Lee's popular Christmas song from the late 1950s (6,6,3,9,4)
8. What parents often hope for! (cryptic) (6,5)
9. Christina Rossetti wrote the words to this carol
10. Where it was 'always winter but never Christmas'
11. Cliff Richard's chart-topping single in December 1988 (9,3,4)
12. Re zoo grebe scene (anag) (8,7)
13. This is used as a Christmas decoration (6)
14. One of Santa's reindeer *
15. James Stewart stars in this perennial Christmas favourite
16. Tenor's bare bird (anag) (5,9)
17. Who is to 'rest merry', according to the carol?
18. Item of clothing associated with Christmas

** Only one of Santa's reindeer can be the correct answer in order to complete the festive message*

ANSWER:



Name:

Contact:



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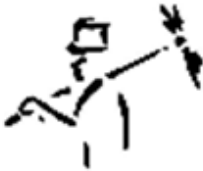
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