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USEFUL CONTACTS

Bitton AFC (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 Email: suehelliott@btinternet.com

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

January 6	Meryl's New Year Party
January 13	Service led by Janet Donnelly
January 20	Service led by Meryl White
January 27	Service led by Michelle Bates

In addition, there will be a coffee afternoon at 2pm on Tuesday 22nd

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 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**

Message from the minister

grew up with the old Ladybird books, and I remember in one, a picture of the Roman God Janus, with his two faces, one looking back at the old year, the other looking forward to the new. It is usually thought that it is he that the month of January is named after. I always thought him rather creepy! How would he know in which direction to walk?

At this time of year we are encouraged to reflect on the year that has passed, make new resolutions for the year that is to come. For most people the new year's resolutions last just a few days, or even a few hours into the new year, and then we go back to our old ways. It is just too hard to make those changes in ourselves that we know that we need. But January 1st is just one new year's day that we all live by; we also have the beginning of the financial year in April, and the school year begins in September. In our multicultural cities, each religious and ethnic group has its own year beginning and ending to be celebrated with eating and drinking, dancing and music.

Yet the Christian Church doesn't really do end of year, beginning of a new year. We talk about Advent as being the beginning of the church year, but in reality it is the beginning again of a cycle.

As Christians, we retell our faith story year on year, every year. We live again our faith story, and take it into our lives to make it real for the communities in which we live. The end of the cycle for us is not a low point, but the high point of celebrating Christ as King:

God the Father, help us to hear the call of Christ the King and to follow his service, whose kingdom has no end; for he reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, one glory.

Or if we are following the Book of Common Prayer, we end with 'Stir up' Sunday:

Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people; that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may of thee be plenteously rewarded; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

In these collects we are being asked to 'hear a call', 'to follow', 'to be stirred up' and 'to do good works'. This is not a time to sit back on our laurels and reflect, but to march onwards and upwards. Through Advent, we are building towards Christmas, the birth of a baby who means everything to us. We are not worried by the long darkness of the days around us, because we know that we are heading for a day when the darkness of the night sky is torn apart and the sheer glory and light of heaven breaks through, shining on our world, illuminating every single dark corner and crack, every place, every person, every soul.

Now in January we are walking in that light. We are following the path of the early years of Jesus. On 1st January we celebrate the naming and circumcision of Jesus. On 6th January we have the Epiphany, the celebration of the arrival of the Magi to kneel and worship at the feet of a tiny baby, destined in the stars they studied, to be a great king, and on 13th January we celebrate the Baptism of Christ, the point at which he is acknowledged openly by God for the first time, when he comes up out of the water having been baptised by his cousin John. ' *This is my son in whom I am well pleased'.*

(See overleaf)

From there we continue to walk with him through a continuous reading of one of the gospels, which rotate on a three-year cycle, though his ministry, death and resurrection. We then celebrate the beginning of the community which has strived to continue Christ's work across the globe for the last 2,000 years.

Our challenge every hour, of every day, of every year is to walk that journey more closely with the Jesus we love as our brother, our saviour, our companion, our friend; to live his words as he lived them, his actions as he lived them, growing closer daily to our God and Father with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Rev Jillianne Norman

Services at St Mary's in January		
Sunday, January 6	10.30am: Parish Communion	
Sunday, January 13	8am: Holy Communion 10.30am: Christingle Parade Service followed by lunch at the Upton Inn	
Sunday, January 20	10.30am: Morning Worship	
Friday, January 25	9.30am: Celtic Communion	
Sunday, January 27	8am: H oly Communion 9.30am: Family Café Church 's 3rd birthday	

Mid-week events during January and February

A card with details of all the mid-week events will be available in church from the beginning of 2019 but highlights include:

Wednesday Morning Group on 9th and 23rd January and 13th and 27th February will be hearing about Daniel's predictions and also about the Benedictine Order.

Wednesday and Thursday evening groups will have five sessions looking at the Letter of James, who is known for his practical advice.

Celtic Communion, followed by coffee and cake in the Lady Chapel at 9.30am on Friday 25th January.

Benefice Prayer Breakfast at 9am on Saturday 19th January in Warmley Church will feature a visit from Jimmy Rocks. Jimmy and his family are Warmley's Mission Link in Brazil.

Ken Gibson



St Mary's Matters

anuary is a time for new beginnings and making plans for the future. At St Mary's we are aware of the need to balance tradition with planning for

future generations, both in terms of worship and development of our wonderful building. I think this is reflected in our carol service, using modern technology to enhance a traditional 'lessons and carols' style service and allow it to take place entirely by candlelight.

This month sees the third birthday of Family Café Church on 27th January. Using a relaxed format accessible to young children, this service remains popular with young families. We are working hard to develop this style of service as well as providing more toys for youngsters at the back of church for all services. We really want to be family friendly! This service has also benefitted from the flexible space we have opened up at the back of the church. If you know of any families with pre-school aged children, please encourage them to give it a try on the fourth Sunday of each month at 9.30am.

Behind the scenes, much work has been carried out to develop plans for the interior of the church. It has been painstaking activity involving a number of different agencies and much credit is due to those who have been pushing things forward. It is likely that there will be a public presentation early this year, so if you are interested please keep an ear out for when this will be.

In the meantime we will be making minor alterations to the kitchen area to make it more useful for functions in the church. If you would like to use the church for an event of some kind then do not hesitate to get in touch with me or another church member.

> Pete Midgley Churchwarden



Prayer breakfast with Jimmy

S aturday January 19th will be the first prayer Breakfast of 2019, *writes Helen Willcox*. We will be joined by St Barnabas Link Missionary Jimmy Rocks who is home on leave from Brazil.

Here is a note from Jimmy: "We will soon be contacting supporting churches to arrange visits. We will be using that time to look ahead to the next phase of our ministry here in Florianópolis, building upon our initial three-and-a-half years here and wanting to be more intentional in training more leaders and church planters to start new churches within the area.

"As Bill Hybels, the pastor of Willow Creek Church, has often said: 'The local church is the hope of the world.' "It's been great to see the difference that Vineyard Floripa has made in people's lives who come along and the impact it's having in the local community and we want to see that multiplied around Florianópolis."

Come to St Barnabas and hear about the work Jimmy and his family have been doing. Breakfast is at 9am and the talk by Jimmy is at 9.30am. All are welcome.

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.

> Judíth Butson Tel: 932 4986

From the parish register

14th December *Funeral* Patricia Ann Brewer

Concert raises £516 for hospice

The Nomine concert that took place last month in St Mary's Church raised £516 for the Children's Hospice South West.

News from Upton Cheyney URC

hank goodness the heating is fully operational and effective at the chapel now that the cold spell has arrived. You can always tell winter has started when we enter into the barn for Carols in the Barn. It is never warm, it's just always cold; however, this year was probably the least cold it's ever been. We had the Salvation Army Band playing the



Stuart Turner

carols for the first time and the barn was absolutely full of

music. There were many more young people than we have had before. Several of **t**he families really helped out with the organisation and it showed.

The children seem to enjoy decorating and eating the biscuits, picking prizes from the bran tub and singing Meryl's new version of the 12 Days of Christmas.

Many thanks to this month's preachers Alan Tabard, Des and Hilary Colchin, Church coordinator Stephen Newell and finally special thanks to Steve Britten who stepped into the breach when the expected preacher was taken ill.

We wish you all an exceedingly happy New Year.

Stuart Turner

Allotment vacancies

Bitton Parish Council has two allotment sites at North Street and Redfield Hill in Oldland Common and if you are interested in renting a plot (£20 a year for a full plot and £14 for a half plot), contact the council's leisure officer Sarah Jones on 0775 7796155 or email sarahjonesbpc@hotmail.co.uk



Food collection point

Linden Homes, who are building the Bitton Mill development, are collecting for the East Bristol Foodbank. Non-perishable food items with a 'best before' date clearly on display can be dropped off at the sales and marketing suite until 6th January.

History Group news

Bitton Parish History Group heard an outstanding talk from Tony Wilmott on 5th December about the Bitton Mill. It was delightful to see that we had no less that 40 people who were new to the History Group who came to hear Tony. We can have no doubt that the talk will help their understanding of the long history of the site and hopefully will have helped them feel welcome in their new village.

Tony mentioned that at the time when automotive parts

were manufactured on the site, up to 500 people were employed.

Similarly, when it closed as a paper mill in 1961, it was a serious set-back for the locality as so many people from the surrounding area lost



their jobs. Hopefully it will now have a new chapter by providing much-needed homes.

Most of the slides shown in Tony's talk can be seen using the following link: http://www.bittonhistory.org.uk/intier/

Our next meeting will be 25th January (Burns Night) at 7pm for 7.30pm at North Common Village Hall, Millers Drive, North Common. We are planning this as a 'Show & Tell' based on 'What did your Grandfather or Grandmother do?'

> Mike Gates Secretary, Bitton Parish History Group Tel: 932 8777 or email: mg122@btinternet.com

Leek & Potato Soup

For your supper on Burns Night (25th January) try this Scottish (and the editor's) favourite

Ingredients (Serves 4):

4 leeks, trimmed & chopped 350g/120z potatoes, diced 850ml/1.5 pints of chicken or vegetable stock 55g/20z butter Salt & pepper to season Extra virgin oil for drizzling (optional)

Method:

- 1. Over a low heat, melt the butter in a saucepan . Add the leeks and cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes until softened.
- 2. Add the potatoes and cook for a further three minutes, sitting occasionally. Turn up the heat to medium, pour in the stock and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat, cover and simmer for about 35 to 45 mins, or until the leeks and potatoes are tender.
- 3. Remove from the heat and stir in the remaining butter in small pieces at a time. Season to taste.
- 4. Sieve the soup, or ladle straight into a bowl if you prefer a chunky texture. Drizzle with extra virgin olive oil if desired.



A magnificent response from our community after robbery

n Thursday 13th December, robbers targeted the Premier Express convenience store in the High Street, which is run by Kandeepan and Shyamala Ambigaipakan.

At about 5.45pm three men, who had been in the shop on two previous occasions during the day, came back wearing masks and one of them restrained Shyamala.

The others raided the till and stole alcohol and cigarettes from the shelves, along with a mobile phone.



The haul ran into several thousands of pounds. All three robbers made off in a black car.

Shyamala was uninjured but obviously shocked and distressed. Later that evening police, who responded quickly, stopped a vehicle in the St Werburghs area of Bristol and seized alcohol, cash and cigarettes.

A man in his 20s was arrested on suspicion of robbery and later released under investigation.

Kandy and Shyamala had buildings insurance but were not covered for contents. With people from Bitton and the neighbouring villages keen to show support for the couple, a GoFundMe page was set up by Sally Oliver from Church Lane.

She said: "These lovely people who work so hard from 6am to 9pm every day to provide us with everything we need do not deserve this misfortune at this time of year.

"Kandy and Shyamala are originally from Sri Lanka and having



recently visited the country myself, I was taken aback by how welcoming and friendly every Sri Lankan we met was and how nothing was too much trouble for them. It would be great to reciprocate this back here and show support for this hardworking family."

The response to the appeal has been incredible. As we went to print, more than 100 people had donated more than £3,000, smashing the £1,000 target. It included an anonymous donation of £500.

In a letter to the community, Kandy said: "Thank you all for helping us after this robbery. You all gave information to the police bravely and have been helping us in the shop. I am absolutely grateful and happy because of this.

"Thank you for the bouquets, cards and the many other gifts.

See overleaf

"Thank you, all this work and money that you have given is enough for us to continue working in the shop successfully.

"You have been a great help and an amazing and courageous community by helping us a lot after this incident. Sally Oliver, a heartfelt thank you for all that you've done."

The fundraising page can be found at https:// www.gofundme.com/kandy-and-shamila-in-bitton

Meanwhile anyone with information which could help the police is asked to call 101, quoting crime reference number 5218275783. Alternatively contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111. No personal details are taken, information cannot be traced or recorded and you will not go to court or have to speak to the police.

Recycling your Christmas tree

Before you recycle your real Christmas tree, remove all decorations, pots and stands.

If you subscribe to South Gloucestershire Council's green bin collection service, you can put your tree into or next to your green bin.

Alternatively you can buy a single use garden waste sack for £2 from your nearest library or Country Stores at 48



High Street, Marshfield. Just attach the sack to the tree for a special one-off collection after Christmas.

If your tree is over 6ft, it must be cut up into smaller sections for collection or taken to a Sort It recycling centre (our nearest is Mangotsfield).

Real Christmas trees need to go into the skip for garden (green) waste, not the wood waste skip.

Report from Bitton WI

his year's group Christmas fair was at Stonor Park, Henley-on-Thames, home of the Stonor family for 850 years. It 's a historic country house and private deer park with a private 12th century chapel.

When we arrived my friends and I looked around the house first, which took about two-and-a-half hours, and after lunch we went to the marquees where there were over 100 craft and food stands. It was a very enjoyable day.

The Federation held the Home Skills and Garden Day at Somerset Hall, Portishead. With two speakers in the morning, one on the history of hats and one on basket making, in the afternoon it was the turn of Mary Payne MBE and a Chelsea Flower Show Gold winner who gave a brilliant talk on 'Minimum Effort for Maximum Effect'. One of the many things she told us was how to get rid of bindweed; you take a bunch of it and put it into a polythene bag with weed killer (it must be bought ready to use), tie the top and attach to the fence. She showed us a slide that had killed hers and her neighbours.

Monday 10th December was our Christmas party; as members arrived they were given a glass of wine and the hall looked very festive with a red and white colour scheme.

After the meal, cooked and served by Ros Knight, Janet Ballinger and myself, Lesley Brain recited an extremely funny poem by Pam Ayres called Fifty Shades of Grey. After that everyone was given a secret Santa gift and the evening ended with the raffle and Ann thanking everyone. It was a very enjoyable evening.

Please come and join us at the next meeting on Monday 14th January. I wish you all a very peaceful and healthy New Year.

Bitton Village Residents' Association Invites you to Flicks in the Sticks

Friday 18 January when we will be screening Ocean's 8

starring Sandra Bullock, Cate Blanchett, Anne Hathaway & Helena Bonham Carter

Upon her release from prison, Debbie, the estranged sister of legendary conman Danny Ocean, puts together a team of unstoppable crooks to pull off the heist of the century. Their goal is New York City's annual Met Gala, and a necklace worth in excess of \$150m

This film, set in glitzy New York, is light, fun, and entertaining with a fabulous female cast

Doors open 7.30pm. Film starts 8pm. The Church Hall, Church Lane, Bitton Drinks will be available from the licensed bar, choc ices will be served in the interval and there will be time to chat with friends

Admission FREE

BITTON VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

GARDENING CLUB Our next meeting is

MONDAY 21st January in the Church Hall, Church Lane, Bitton Doors Open 7.30pm

We will be celebrating the beginning of our 10th year! Come along and join and this evening enjoy a free drink and nibbles, meet friends and check out your gardening knowledge with our annual Teams Quiz with prizes.

We will also present our Gardening Club programme for 2019 which as usual is bursting at the seams. Our speakers will cover such diverse topics as How to achieve a spectacular winter garden; The effects of climate change; Behind the scenes at the National Trust gardens; Everything you need to know about Hostas, Heucheras and Hellebores; The history and restoration of the gardens at Painswick, and a demo on quick and easy Christmas decorations to make using garden and hedgerow foliage.

Garden visits are on different days of the week and include Doynton House, Miserden in the Cotswolds, the American Gardens at Claverton and the gardens at Painswick.

Bitton Open Gardens will take place on Sunday 9 June (*if anyone is interested in opening their garden that day please let Bridget Hetzel know*) and Fonthill have invited us back in April to shop till we drop at their garden centre (with a 10% discount).

The Gardening Club's membership fee remains at £12 and all our meetings will continue to be FREE to members. Meetings are held in the Church Hall in Church Lane.

If anyone would like to join the committee, contact Bridget ASAP before the meeting. For more information, come to the meeting on Monday 21st January or contact Bridget by email b.hetzel@btinternet.com

Everyone is welcome

New year, new editor!

Some of you may have heard that I shall shortly be standing down as Editor of *Focal Point*. The February edition will be my last and in it I will reflect on the last nine years and introduce you to my successor.

A very Happy New Year to you all.



December's quiz answers

Becky

In the December quiz we supplied a mix of factual and cryptic clues and anagrams based on music, literature, pantomime, film and general knowledge, all associated with Christmas.

We asked you to take the first letters of each answer and rearrange them into a seasonal, two-word message.

Here are the answers: **1**. Geese, **2**. Aladdin, **3**. Smith (Tom), **4**. Tolkein, **5**. Handel, **6**. Euphorbia pulcherrima, **7**. Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree, **8**. Silent Night, **9**. In the Bleak Midwinter, **10**. Narnia (from The Lion, The Witch & The Wardrobe series), **11**. Mistletoe and Wine, **12**. Ebenezer Scrooge, **13**. Tinsel, **14**. Cornet, **15**. It's a Wonderful Life, **16**. Robin Redbreast, **17**. Gentlemen, **18**. Stocking.

The festive message you had to find was Christmas Greetings. Frank FitzGibbon & Co, the Booths, Hannah Moore & Gill Dugay, Jan & Diane, Jon & Pam Heyes, Alan & Sue Murtagh, Ros & Charles Knight and Catriona Kesterton got them all correct. Well done!

The winners of the Christmas draw were Hannah & Gill!

The January quiz

This one concerns drinks, alcoholic and otherwise. Most clues are cryptic, with a few anagrams thrown into the mix!

The deadline for entries is 15th January. Email *bittonfocalpoint@live.co.uk* or send to The Editor at 18, Church Road, Bitton.

- 1. Not the fastest method of entrapment
- 2. Brightly coloured racquet sport
- 3. What a German dog does?
- 4. rain daamps a cod (anag)
- 5. Citric assistance?
- 6. Kilted man near cliff-fall?
- 7. Ample
- 8. Sounds like a fake ache
- 9. Name of a famous singing group in the Seventies
- 10. Non-amateur with dry company
- 11. Very quick
- 12. Cricket ground for adolescent
- 13. green gribe(anag)
- 14. Uplifting Russian tot
- 15. Spoil young one
- 16. jim acute too (anag)
- 17. Very polite senior inflorescence?
- 18. Precious stone on left
- 19. mask thy wil (anag)
- 20. Sounds like a heated complaint

Name: Contact:

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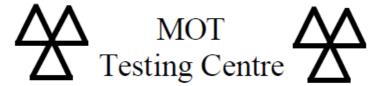




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