

FEBRUARY 2019

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Focal Point

*Maureen Perrett,
1923-2018:
tribute inside*



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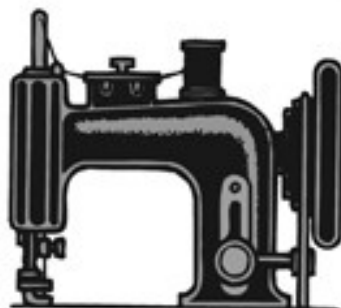


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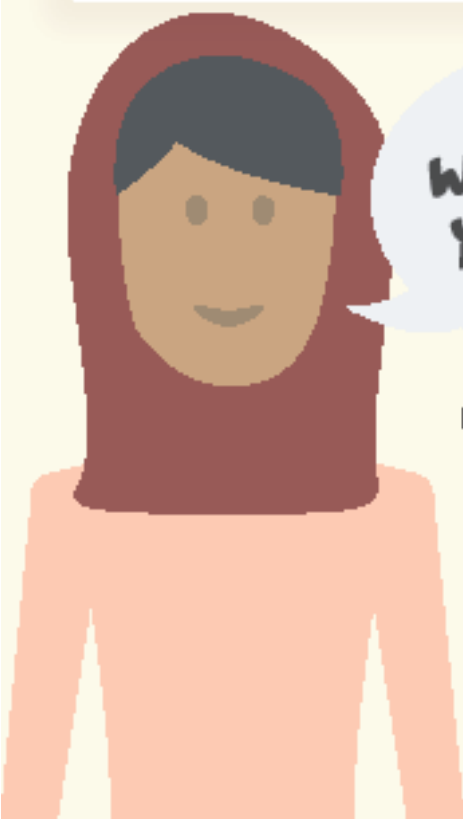
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Churches & services



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Elder: Muriel Williams
0117 961 6843

Minister: Meryl White
0775 914 6645

Sunday services are at 3pm

- February 3** Service led by David Jones
February 10 Service led by Meryl White
February 17 Service led by Norman Palfrey
February 24 Bible study led by Meryl White

In addition, there will be a coffee afternoon at 2pm on Tuesday 26th

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

Message from the curate

One month into the new year, and dare I ask you how your New Year's resolutions are going?

Hands up (no worries, no one will see) if you have already given up on not eating chocolates, being healthier, spending less time on your phone, etc.? I'm convinced that some resolutions have already slipped. At the time of writing this (only into the second week of the year) my resolution so far is going OK. It is not giving up chocolates - I would have already failed. No, for this year we have decided to not buy new clothes, books, gadgets, etc - if we can avoid it.

So if we need new things, we ought to try charity shops, or other ways of buying second-hand stuff. If really necessary, we will look at the best ethical option, should we have to buy something new. We made that decision due to a couple of reasons. One being that we already have so much stuff, we don't need any more. It is our way of fighting or at least standing against consumerism. And secondly, it is better for the environment. Feel free to ask us how we are getting on during the course of the year.

But for this month, the idea of (unsuccessful) resolutions has made me reflect on our spiritual habits. Maybe some of us in



Anika Gardiner

the benefice have made resolutions of reading through the Bible in a year, praying more, studying a particular book, etc. Those are great resolutions. And I'd like to use this month's article to encourage you. If you have already slipped behind with the daily Bible reading plan/app - don't worry. Don't beat yourself up.

My guess is that New Year's resolutions often don't work. They were often done in haste, and sometimes they were not thought through. Don't get me wrong, for some people this really works. But how many people sign up for a gym on 1st January and by the end of the month, have been once or twice? So then, how can we ensure our spiritual habits don't end like our other New Year's resolutions? Creating habits takes time. You might have heard that creating a habit takes 21 days - apparently it takes longer. Sixty-six days, according to Google. While I haven't done any research on this, I'd go for the longer time scale of creating a habit. Otherwise more New Year's resolutions would stick. But creating habits can take time. There are lots of distractions, or sometimes excuses.

It is not my intention to make you feel bad, far from it, actually. I'd love for us all in the benefice to have a closer relationship with Jesus at the end of the year; to have grown in our faith, to have adventures on our journey. That will happen if we set time aside to pray, to read the Bible, some call it quiet time. There are different ways of growing in our faith, of deepening our relationship with Jesus.

Some people put time aside each morning to sit in a chair and spend time in prayer or reading the Bible. Make it evening if you're not a morning person. But the idea of creating habits is to be intentional about it, to practice, to repeat. If you have ever learnt to play an instrument, it started off by trying it out. I used to play the trumpet; not the easiest instrument when you first try it. I was determined
(Continued overleaf)

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because my dad used to play the trumpet too. So I tried, I practised - a few times a week. Eventually, playing the trumpet became a habit.

The annoying thing is that it takes time and effort to develop a habit, but losing a habit doesn't take as much effort. When I moved to England, I didn't make the effort to find others to play with. And while if I pick up my trumpet now, I could still play a little, I am nowhere near as good as I once was. Saying that, I could pick it up again. It is not all lost. Habits require practice and repetition.

A habit to spend more time with Jesus requires us to be intentional, to repeat that, to practice. After some time (maybe 66 days), a habit is formed and we find it easier to stick with it. It becomes part of our routine, maybe even part of who we are. And remember, take one day at a time. Even the longest journey begins with a small step.

Can I encourage all of us then to think about our spiritual habits - maybe it is something you have thought about a few times. Do it. It is easier if you can share your journey with others, they can hold you accountable, or simply encourage you, ask how you are getting on. How encouraging could it be if, across our benefice, we shared and encouraged one another. I, for one, am excited about the adventures with God that this year holds. I hope you are too.

Rev Anika Gardiner

St Mary's flower rota

February 2	Janet Ballinger
February 9	Marlene Gallop & Pam Heyes
February 16	Ros Knight & Jean Hook
February 23	Sarah Craddock

Services at St Mary's in February

Sunday, February 3	10.30am: Parish Communion
Sunday, February 10	8am: Holy Communion 10.30am: Family Parade Service followed by lunch at The Chocolate Quarter
Sunday, February 17	10.30am: Morning Worship
Friday, February 22	9.30am: Celtic Communion followed by coffee and cakes
Sunday, February 24	8am: Holy Communion 9.30am: Family Café Church

FAMILY CAFÉ CHURCH

Sunday 24 February at 9.30am

A relaxed and informal service at St Mary's on each fourth Sunday. It is aimed at families with primary school and pre-school aged children although everyone is very welcome.

There is a café feel to it with refreshments available throughout.

We look forward to seeing you

Christian Aid Christmas Appeal

Peace – that was the focus of the Christian Aid Christmas Appeal. Our gifts supported the wonderful work of those who build peace through counselling, through arts and crafts therapy, through community dialogue and through training for teenage refugees.

This year's Christmas collections from St Mary's raised £252.36. Very many thanks to all who gave.

Nicola Bennetts

Lent 2019

Lent gets under way on Ash Wednesday which this year falls on 6th March when there will be a special service of Holy Communion at St Anne's, Syston, at 7.30pm.

In the following five weeks there will be a number of Lent courses, all of which will be meeting weekly. One is planned to be an outdoor course on Saturdays 'On the wild side' and in addition there will be Home Groups on Wednesday mornings and on Wednesday and Thursday evenings as we prepare for Easter. Details will be in all three churches from mid-February.

From the parish register

29th December

Marriage of Rebecca Lucy Stenner & Sean Esmond

12th January

*Thanksgiving service for Maureen Valerie Perrett and
interment of ashes*

St Mary's Matters

As has become our tradition we celebrated a Christingle service on 13th January which brought our Christmas celebrations to a close.

Some people are surprised that we have this service after Christmas rather than before. It does serve to brighten up what can be a rather dreary time of year and bring light into the darkness of those short January days.

Thanks to all those who helped by providing the necessary component parts for the Christingles.

After around 20 years of cleaning the church, Janet Ballinger has decided to hang up her dusters and put away the polish. I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for her dedicated service and wish her the very best for the future. She has said that she will be keeping in touch with what is going on in church and with the flower arranging.

The observant among you will have noticed that over the last few years the table tombs in the church yard have gradually been renovated and currently one close to the church is being worked on. This is important work to ensure that they are safe and to maintain the appearance of the churchyard.

Did you enjoy the Jazzbeanz concert last year? By popular demand they are returning to give another concert in church on the evening of 2nd March. Hope to see you there.

Last month I mentioned there would be a public meeting to present our plans for continuing to develop the space inside the church. This has now been scheduled for Tuesday 5th March (*details on page 21*). This will be an opportunity to drop in and see what is being planned. Everyone is most welcome.



Pete Midgley

Pete Midgley

'Jazz à l'Eglise'



The Jazzbeanz

invite you to 'Take Five'

on

Saturday 2nd March

When they will be playing their favourite Jazz & Blues music to entertain you while you enjoy a glass or two from the bar and feast on bread and cheese with friends.

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Bitton Community Choir

Doors open 7.30pm.

Music from 8 'til late (10.30ish)

St Mary's Church, Bitton.

**This will be a relaxed café style event
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(All profits to church restoration funds)

St Mary's Church - Your Community Resource

On **Tuesday 5 March** there will be a presentation at St Mary's giving details of the plans for continuing to develop the space inside the church.

Drop in between **6.30pm and 8pm** to view the display, have your say and enjoy a pancake (or two!)
Everyone will be most welcome

News from Upton Cheyney URC

This year Christmas and New Year have been as frenetic and children centric as they should be. As a warm-up after Carols in the Barn, we had a visit from the South West Moderator, Ruth Whitehead. She travelled up from Taunton just to lead our little afternoon service. It never ceases to surprise me just how much support we enjoy from the Synod, being so off the beaten track. Ruth will be back with us soon to help us look into the future and review where we want to be. We will also be giving thanks for the outstanding contribution of Meryl and Graham.



Stuart Turner

On the Sunday before Christmas we had a family service where we made paper chains to put up around the chapel. The children really got into this and all of them joined in. There is something very special about holding a service so close to Christmas at a time the children can participate. And the tree looked brilliant once more. Many thanks to all those who
(Continued overleaf)

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decorated it and the rest of the chapel.

We are now into 2019 and so we decided that on the first Sunday we would break with tradition and hold a New Year's party. We had party games, a few rounds of 'Beetle' and then three quizzes. It has to be said that I was quite good at the 'sweet shop quiz', average on the 'Christmas carol quiz' and then absolutely rubbish in the 'Carol the reindeer' quiz.

However, we had lots of fun and lots of laughter.

Now we're looking forward to what we have to get done this year. Probably we are going to switch our focus back to outside the chapel. We have to re-instate the external stairs, add a ramp to make it easier to get down to an enhanced patio an enhanced quiet garden. With some 'interesting' interactions with the council, we have now submitted a formal planning Application. Fingers crossed!

Stuart Turner

Christmas Eve 2018

One Sunday afternoon in late December, I walked along the lanes to join the carol service in Upton Cheyney Chapel, where I was warmly greeted by smiling faces., *writes Brenda Claxton.*

On the pews we found Bible readings which we were invited to read, mainly from St Luke's Gospel. Slowly the Christmas story came alive as everyone read with joy and meaning.

Quite suddenly I saw in my mind's eye a small new-born baby, a miracle beyond my imaginings, and I realised in that moment that every baby is a miracle. Later I listened in horror at how Herod ordered the killing of all the children under two years, driven by fear of losing his power to rule over the people under his domain. This also came as a shock because in this small chapel were four very young children, some

helping to build the Nativity scene with small wooden figures they discovered in a cloth bag. How could any sane person order the deaths of such small children as were there in front of us today? We also considered that this sort of destruction of people's lives and communities is still continuing 2,000 years later. Mankind seems not to have learnt anything about respecting the miracle of the life, of all human beings.

Later in the evening I attended another carol service, this time at St Mary's. The beautiful old church was filled with hundreds of worshippers who had come together to sing and welcome in the Christmas spirit. Candles illuminated the dark church, echoing in the vast dome overhead. The congregational singing filled the whole church with music, supported and led by the Community Choir. The service celebrated the coming together of a community in love with goodwill to all men.



We all have in our memories many other Christmases experienced throughout the years of our lives, creating a patchwork of what Christmas means to each of us individually. This Christmas I had the privilege of experiencing the celebration both on a personal level as well as being part of a larger community.

Now it is January and Christmas celebrations are past. We none of us know what the future will bring, neither for us in Britain nor in the world around us. Globally, refugees still look for shelter, risking their lives as they attempt to escape the slaughter around them and the destruction of their homes.

Of one thing I am sure. Next December the people of Bitton and Upton Cheyney will come together to celebrate the birth of a new-born baby and Christ's message will once again fill all our hearts as we sing our carols together. So I agree with the Christmas message received today - there is hope in this 21st century if we can keep the love and joy of Christmas in all our hearts and continue to celebrate together.

News from Bitton WI

The evening started with president Ann Coales telling us of the funeral of one of our oldest members, Maureen Perrett, and thanked several of us for our help with serving teas at the wake.

Several forthcoming events were announced and then Ann introduced the speaker, Bath tour guide Judy Wray-Biss. Her talk was called The Season –18th Century Bath.

The seasons started with Queen Anne, who was pregnant 17 times in 16 years without any survivors and was advised to come to bathe in the spa waters in Bath. With the influence of the royals, people flocked to the city. At that time it was very small with a wall around it, so new properties were built.

Ann gave the vote of thanks to Judy, then refreshments were served. I have to say Judy was one of the best speakers I have heard in a long time.

The next meeting is on Monday 11th February when the speaker will be Andy Townsend, from the Lifeskills safety education charity. Do come and join us at St Mary's Church Hall at 7.30pm.

Jean Hook

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be time to chat with friends**

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Remembering Maureen Perrett *1923-2018*

This is taken from the eulogy given at the Thanksgiving service for Maureen at St Mary's on 12th January



Maureen Perrett was born on 12th October 1923 in Liphook, Hampshire. She was the middle child of five.

The stories Maureen told of her childhood indicated an adventurous time, mainly with her younger brother, Mike, where they were left to their own devices and got into all sorts of mischief. This included various cycling trips; one that ended with her in A&E with a broken nose after swerving to avoid a dog.

Maureen started work in Southampton but this became too dangerous when the town was being bombed at the beginning of the war and so she joined her sister working at a nursing home. Sheila was no better influence than Mike had been and on occasions they climbed out of the window of the nursing home to go dancing.

Maureen went on to train to become a nurse at Southampton General and then trained to become a midwife in Ipswich. After a brief stint at The Royal Masonic Hospital in London she decided to train as a health visitor in Bristol.

There she joined a badminton club in Longwell Green where she met David Perrett. They married in 1954 at St Mary's

and had three daughters - Anne, Sarah and Ruth.

Maureen enjoyed cooking, and was often involved in major catering projects, such as the Church Flower Festival in 1968. On the very first day there were unexpected coachloads of visitors who ate all the food they had prepared to last the whole event! Everyone then spent the evening frantically baking and cooking to be ready again for the next day.

Maureen was involved in many organisations in Bitton, including the Red Cross, WI, of which she was secretary and president, St Mary's Church (including the AsNu shop) and the book stall at the annual fête to name but a few.

Maureen and David travelled extensively, including visiting Sarah working in New Zealand, and Ruth when she was working in Norway. Maureen also went on several holidays with her friend Pam Allcock - on one trip they left the hotel to explore but when they tried to go back, neither could remember the name of the hotel; they had to get the taxi to drive them around until they recognised it!

Maureen and David also travelled around the UK, being the back-up team for Sarah's long-distance walks. However, their favourite place was Pembrokeshire where the family spent many happy holidays over some 50 years.

Maureen's love of cats was well known. One special cat was Moses which some children found in a hedge along Golden Valley, many years ago. Maureen persevered and fed him with a tiny pipette every hour for several weeks and he grew into a fine cat.

The Perrett family would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone from near and far who visited Maureen over recent weeks and months and kept her spirits up.

They say the numerous letters and cards they have received simply confirm what they have always known, that Maureen was a very special lady.

Editor's reflections

I became editor of *Focal Point* at the end of 2009. My predecessor John Evans handed over the reins along with some good, sound advice.

Back in those days the magazine was printed on the church printer at Warmley and then collated by hand. In more recent years it has been professionally printed by Mitre Printing in Kingswood.

It's been a privilege to write about what goes on in our wonderful, kind community, highlighted just before Christmas by the response to the robbery at the Premier Express in Bitton and the way people came together to support our lovely shopkeepers, Kandeepan and Shyamala Ambigaipakan.

During the last nine years we've sadly lost many village characters, most recently Anne Boulton and Maureen Perrett from Church Road. And there has been great change. Bitton Methodist Church closed in 2010. The Chapel in Upton Cheyney fought the threat of closure and is now thriving. The White Hart went through a difficult time and closed for a while but is now a very popular watering hole again.

The redevelopment of the Intier factory site has gone from years on the drawing board to the growing housing estate that we see going up.

St Mary's itself has undergone big changes with the removal of pews to open up an incredible space which is being used for a



Becky Feather



Focal Point, February 2019



variety of events including concerts.

Sadly, Bitton Pre-School closed at Christmas after 40+ years, due to not enough children on their books. A great loss to the village. On a more positive note, Bitton Village Residents' Association are thriving - they contribute much to village life.

Highlights over the last nine years have included the Royal Wedding in 2011 and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012 - both celebrated with street parties in Church Road. It was also a great moment when the Olympic flame came through in
(Continued overleaf)

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2012, *see right*. Then in 2016 we welcomed the Tour of Britain.

We have also been so proud of our Olympic and Commonwealth sporting talent: swimmer Siobhan-Marie O'Connor who lives in Bitton and gymnast Claudia Fragapane, a former pupil of The Meadows Primary School. We've also been following the career of Bitton's very talented young jockey Mitch Godwin.



And we have a wonderful play area at Aubrey Meads in Bitton, thanks to George Friend who in 2011, aged 13, kicked off the campaign to get the scruffy equipment replaced when he wrote a letter to *Focal Point*. The park officially reopened in 2014 after a major, grant-funded transformation.

Thank you to EVERYONE from the church and community who has contributed in some way to *Focal Point* and supported me over the years. Whether it's been supplying articles, quizzes or pictures; giving IT support; collating, printing and distribution; helping with the advertising and collecting subscriptions, it's a true team effort. Big thanks in particular to the Gibsons and the *Focal Point* committee, especially Ann Willis. Thank you too to all our advertisers.



Jim Heavens

It's been an enjoyable and varied nine years but it feels the right time to be handing over to someone who can bring a fresh approach, and I am delighted that person is Jim Heavens.

Good luck Jim and best wishes to all our readers for 2019 and beyond.

Becky Feather

BITTON GARDENING CLUB

Invites you to

Our next meeting

on

MONDAY 18th February

in the

Church Hall, Church Lane, Bitton

Doors Open 7.20pm. Meeting Starts 7.30pm.

Our speaker at this meeting is

Pete Yeo

The title of his illustrated talk is

**Climate Change and its Impact
on Our Gardens**

Pete is a plantsman and plant historian with a special interest in climate change and how it will affect our gardens, now and in the future.

Contact Bridget Hetzel - email b.hetzel@btinternet.com
or just come along to the meeting

Village spring clean

Bitton Village Residents' Association are having a spring clean of the village on Saturday 16th February at 10.30am starting outside the White Hart. Anybody who fancies a productive walk round the village and socialising (usually in the pub afterwards) will be very welcome. All kit will be provided.

For further information call Jon Booth on 07973 505431 or email jonbooth@oakfield-property.com

Guided walks

The new Sunday walks programme for 2019 organised jointly by Bitton and Hanham Abbots parish councils using local footpaths has been announced. Walks are led by Clive Brett who can be contacted at clive@brett.org.uk or 07434 869429.

All walks (except November's) start at 2.30pm so arrive early enough to start walking then. Walking time will be between 2.5 and three hours and covers four to five miles. Walks are open to all ages but those under 16 should be accompanied by a responsible adult. The full list of walks is on Bitton Parish Council's website with the first on Sunday February 24th. Meet by the McBraida factory at Bridgegate for a hilly walk towards Wick, the Monarch's Way, Golden Valley and return.

January's quiz answers

Here are the January quiz answers with alternatives allowed (*some people said Bucks Fizz for No 9 but they weren't a '70s band!*) 1. Sloe Gin, 2. Orange/Lemon Squash, 3. Schnaps, 4. Campari & Soda, 5. Lemonade, 6. Scotch on the rocks, 7. Stout (Round, Lager), 8. Champagne, 9. Hot Chocolate, 10. Prosecco, 11. Espresso, 12. Ovaltine, 13. Ginger Beer, 14. Vodka & Tonic (Moscow Mule, Vodka & Red Bull), 15. Martini (Marmite), 16. Tomato Juice, 17. Elderflower Cordial, 18. Ruby Port, 19. Malt Whisky, 20. Mulled Wine (Red Wine).

The following got full marks: Jon & Pam Booth; Jan Wookey & Diane; Penny, Kim & Jenny Scudamore; and Joe & Rose Bone. The winners of the draw are Jan & Diane!

A huge thank you to Wendy Smale who is stepping down this month after setting brilliant Focal Point quizzes for more than 10 years!

The February quiz

This month's quiz is all about cakes and puddings and they are all anagrams. Please send your answers to our new quiz setter **Carolyn Russell**, at Martin House, Church Road, Bitton (the yellow house) or email mrsrussell@icloud.com by **15th February** which is also the deadline for articles/ adverts for the March edition.

1. induced grip
2. Lifter
3. I ace one blowtorch
4. piqued funds gone
5. wishers enliven
6. wet ball taker
7. decay lark
8. cease cheek
9. meets son
10. I upped as ace down link peep
11. ace aid maker
12. radio brotherliness male
13. knead deuce
14. dud interrupted bad bang
15. proudly lying pod
16. aging creek
17. curl me beer
18. patio coverings
19. a car rocket
20. deck tip dots

Name:

Contact:

Running for Leukaemia UK

Jenny Harris is running the Bath Half Marathon with friends in March in aid of Leukaemia UK after husband David was

diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia in November. To sponsor her go to

<http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/djharris>

Already more than £1,300 has been raised. The Bath Half is on 17th March.



More fly-tipping in the Golden Valley

Statistics show anyone fly-tipping in South Glos is five times more likely to be successfully prosecuted than anywhere else in the country and the council's award-winning envirocrime team have a 100 per cent record of securing successful prosecutions for this type of offence.



Let's hope they catch whoever is responsible for this latest assault on the Golden Valley. This lot was dumped at the bottom of Beach Hill, right next to the river, in January .

If you see fly-tipping report it at www.southglos.gov.uk/flytipping, email streetcare@southglos.gov.uk or call the StreetCare helpdesk on 01454 868000.

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