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# Focal Point

***What future for  
St Mary's?***  
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on 5th March**



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# Focal Point

**March 2019**

*Cover photograph by  
Becky Feather*

**FOR ALL FOCAL POINT  
INQUIRIES**

**Editor: Jim Heavens**

**Phone: 0117 932 5376**

**Email:**

[jimheavens@outlook.com](mailto:jimheavens@outlook.com)

**Website:**

[www.stmarysbitton.org.uk](http://www.stmarysbitton.org.uk)

*Deadline for April magazine is  
15 March 2019*

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# **What future for St Mary's?**



**N**ot that many years ago, Focal Point covered three places of worship: the parish church at St Mary's, the United Reform chapel in Upton Cheyney and the Methodist chapel in the centre of the village. Sadly, the Methodist chapel had to close and, had it not been for some dedicated local support the same fate would have awaited the URC chapel. Now we need to focus our attention on St Mary's itself.

Compared to many parishes, St Mary's is well supported. It has a regular congregation of around 40 and has further support from the wider village community. Over the past 18 months, the number of additional events other than church services has increased, but there is still much scope for further use of the space and facilities it offers.

Historically, St Mary's is an important building. There has been a church on this site for over a thousand years; before the Norman conquest in 1066 and almost certainly before even the first king of all England, Edgar, was crowned at Bath Abbey in 973. There are only fragments of the pre-conquest church still in place, but it still attracts visitors from around the world. Its grade 1 listed status and historical importance may lead to its continued maintenance in some form or another. But it is surely worthy of

*Continued overleaf*

**All Bitton residents are invited to a meeting in the church on 5 March when the plans, drawn up by George Chedburn, a local architect will be available. It's a drop-in meeting from 6.30 to 8.00 pm.**

being more than a national monument or a museum with an attractive visitors' centre?

Since 2012, the Parochial Church Council has been looking to find a way forward that not only can maintain and develop the building's rich heritage but also make sure that it can continue to serve as a place of worship and as a facility for the whole community in the years to come. There has been a lot of painstaking research, visits to other churches and much discussion. Recently the choir stalls at the front of the church and some pews at the rear were removed to open up more space and functionality but there is only a temporary licence for this which means that the current arrangement cannot continue indefinitely. The next step is a comprehensive plan for the future of the church building. Which will be on show on March 5th.

Please come and give your support and views.

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Jill Gibson PCC Secretary  
8 Church Road, Bitton BS30 6HH  
[jillandkeng@gmail.com](mailto:jillandkeng@gmail.com)

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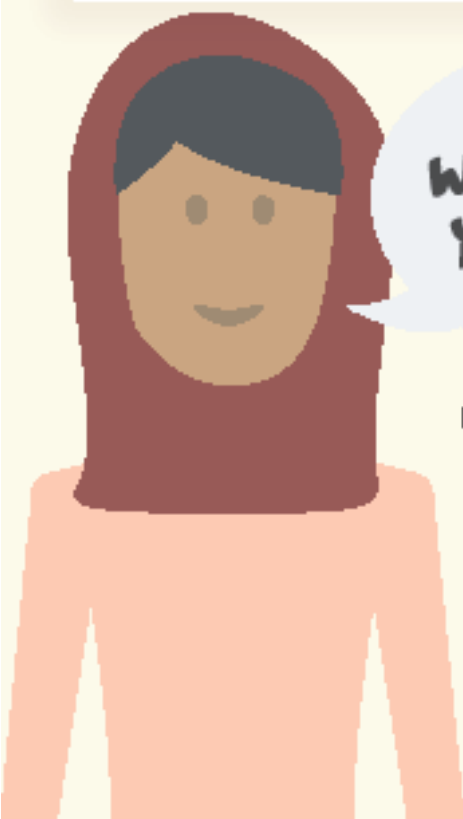
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## Churches & services



### UPTON CHEYNEY URC

**Elder:** Muriel Williams  
0117 961 6843

**Minister:** Meryl White  
0775 914 6645

**Sunday services are at 3pm**

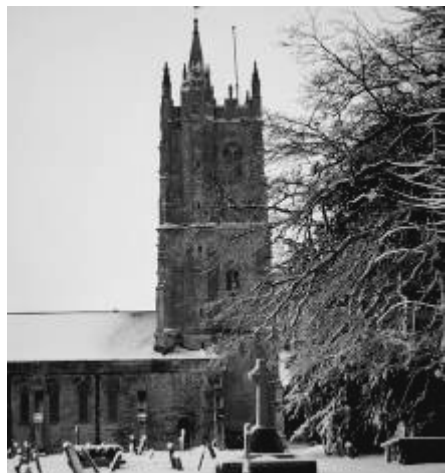
**March 3rd** Service led by Phillip White  
**March 10th** Communion Service led by Meryl White  
**March 17th** Service led by John Creech  
**March 24th** Bible Study led by Meryl White  
**March 31st** Mothers Day. Kathleen White talking about our collection for children in Romania.

**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

## Lay Minister's Letter

# Paul the Apostle

*By David Bailey*



**P**aul was an amazing character. Born Roman, he persecuted the Jewish disciples of Jesus and was much feared by the Early Church. His life was turned upside down as a young man when, whilst walking on the road from Jerusalem to Damascus, a dazzling light blinded him. It led to his conversion and from that day on he preached the message that Jesus was, in fact, the long-awaited Messiah, the Son of God.

Many of the books of the New Testament (NT) are written by Paul, some of them whilst he was on house arrest or in a prison cell. In one of the most famous passages in the NT, Paul describes the 'harvest of the Spirit' (1), a state of mind filled with love, joy, patience, kindness, goodness, fidelity, gentleness and



self control. Paul places love first because all the other qualities are simply characteristics of a loving disposition.

"I wish you all joy in the Lord" (2) derives from the belief that God is in charge and has a purpose for each of us in our journey of faith. Further, that each of us is precious in the sight of God. "Have no anxiety, but in everything make your requests known to God" (3). Human reason can explain most things that happen in our world, but will not necessarily bring us peace. This peace described by Paul is a state of mind, which has assurance that God is working his purposes out. In our church services, we offer each other God's peace. It carries responsibility; that we have forgiven and been reconciled with each other and that we respect our differences.

Patience, long-suffering or endurance, is important in all our lives. When things are difficult we may find ourselves in a dark place. There seems to be no answer to our prayers; we may not even *be able* to pray. On these occasions, we can still trust in God, trust that he is still there for us. We can then wait patiently until shown His light.

The word 'kindness' originated from our expected behaviour towards our own family. If we display this level of kindness to others, we will be happy to welcome others into our homes, share goods (where and when appropriate) and help others in times of need. A recent example of collective kindness was the village response to the Justgiving appeal to help Kandeepan and Shamel in their time of need.

Being gentle with people is an expression of kindness. It means we don't make hasty judgements; we try to help those in distress and are not too proud to accept help from others.

Throughout his writings, Paul stresses again and again that God's love for us is shown in Christ's redemptive sacrifice on the cross. By demonstrating kindness ourselves, we can show Christ's love for the world, a love, which respects each other within our community.

(1)Galatians 5; (2) Philippians 4:4; (3) Philippians 4:6-7

**LENT 2019**

**5 COURSES TO CHOOSE FROM!**

Sign up for the course of your choice on the lists in each of our churches



**Wednesday mornings at 10.45 – 11.45**

**St Barnabas Church Warmley  
13, 20, 27 March, 3, 10 April  
A Churches Together Lent Course  
'The Mystery of God.'**

**Wednesday mornings 10.30 – 12 noon**

**Westover House, Bitton  
13, 27 March, 10 April**

**A York Lent Course : 'Great events, Deep meanings.'**



**EITHER Wednesday evenings 7.30 – 9.00**

**8 Church Road, Bitton 13, 20, 27 March, 3, 10 April**

**OR Thursday evenings 7.30 – 9.00**

**30 Kenilworth Drive, Willsbridge 14, 21 28 March, 4, 11 April**

**A York Lent Course : 'Daring to see God now'**

**Sunday afternoons 3.15 – 4.15**

**Outside St Barnabas Church Warmley**

**10, 17, 24, 31 March, 7 April**

**Wild Lent : Discovering God through Creation**



**St Mary's flower rota**

**March 2**

**Sandie Mackay**

**No flowers in church during Lent  
Easter decoration falls on 20 April**

## Services at St Mary's in February

Sunday, March 3	10.30am: Parish Communion
Sunday, March 10	8am: Holy Communion 10.30am: Family Parade Service followed by lunch at Avon Valley Railway
Sunday, March 17	10.30am: Morning Worship
Friday, March 22	9.30am: Celtic Communion followed by coffee and cakes
Sunday, March 24	8am: Holy Communion 9.30am: Family Café Church
Sunday, March 31	10.30am: Mothering Sunday Family Service during which there will be a Baptism

## **FAMILY CAFÉ CHURCH**

**Sunday 24 March at 9.30 am**

A relaxed and informal service 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 at St Mary's  
on 24 March at 9.30***

# BVRA goes litter picking



*The litter pickers outside the White Hart—dressed for action*

Thirty keen volunteers turned out on a Saturday morning (16<sup>th</sup> Feb) to help clean up the village for spring, organised by the BVRA. This was a very successful event, with numbers growing each year which makes it a lighter task for all. It was especially nice see some new faces. Many thanks to all.

A pile of some 30 - 40 bags were collected, so a big thank you to all concerned. Next year we will make sure the pub is open in time for the finish!

*Picture and report—Jon Booth*

## St Mary's Matters

**F**or many years now St Mary's has been committed to giving financial support to a variety of causes both locally and further afield. For seven years we have supported Corrie Verduyn, a consultant gynaecologist working at Kiwoko hospital in Uganda, through the Church Mission Society (CMS). She has been committed to helping reduce both mother and infant mortality in childbirth in this rural hospital.



Pete Midgley

During February Liz and I had the privilege of visiting her and seeing the work that is being done prior to her permanent return to the UK in early March. The experience was both fascinating and humbling as we witnessed the commitment of many people to the work being carried out in very difficult circumstances. Those who know Liz will not be surprised to know that she has taken a lot of photographs. Hopefully we can find a time in the near future to share our experiences.

On a more practical note, I can reveal that we have managed to find a replacement cleaner in the form of Pam Hacker – thanks Pam for taking this on.

If you are reading this early enough in the month I can remind you that there is an open meeting in church between 6.30 and 8.00pm, on 5 March, to discuss plans for the reordering of the church.

**Pete Midgley**

# 'Jazz à l'Eglise'



## **The Jazzbeanz**

invite you to 'Take Five'

on

**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

*Plus vibrant vocal jazz from the*  
**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  
using the new open space.**

**Everyone welcome. Admission on the door, £5**

**(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

**A**n icy wind blew through Upton last month. Out came the shovels to put some sand and salt onto the most hilly parts of the lanes. It was too bad to hold one service. We seem to have just one every year when health and safety says the ice is just too risky. However this time we escaped without any burst pipes in the toilets. That's mostly thanks to Graham.



**Stuart Turner**

Janet Donnelly and Michelle Bates made January with special services in January. Janet focussed on "water", "naming" and spirit words. We also had some people joining us for the last time before moving to London. It was especially interesting when we found that their children and many of ours at been in the same class at the Meadows. Sharing where they all were now showed just how mobile young people are nowadays.

Next month looks just as interesting. One of our most popular preachers, John Creech, is returning to lead a service for the first time in maybe two years. It was as though he had completely disappeared yet we kept hearing of appearances at churches around Bristol. But no one ever actually saw him. We

also host Kathleen Taylor on Mothers Day. She will be talking to us about the many children in Romania who are still having a very hard time. I remember the issue of these children being raised years and years ago and had assumed the problems had been addressed by now. It would seem absolutely not.

For our Anniversary service on September the 8<sup>th</sup> we are delighted that Paul Davies and his male voice choir are returning to Upton chapel. Paul lived in the village for many years at Fountain view with Les Hall.

Finally I have mentioned before that we use a small computer for our music. Most of the time it is very easy to operate. However on odd occasions it just wont connect to the speaker via blue tooth. And its always at an awkward moment especially if we have a new preacher with us. Now we have found the problem. If anyone leaves their phone on with bluetooth, even if on silent, it sends the speaker into a flat spin. We all know this but new preachers don't and hence the problem.

**Stuart Turner**

# **BARN DANCE**



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## **Sharon Robbins retires**

The clerk of Bitton Parish Council, Sharon Robbins, retired last month after serving the community for 20 years.

A farewell party was held for her at the new Oldland Community and Youth Building where a room is named after Sharon in recognition of her efforts in getting the facility built.

The new clerk is Kelly Fry.

## **News from Bitton WI**

I was very pleased to receive this month's W.I. magazine with the new 100% compostable potato-starch wrapping a switch from polythene. I hope more businesses will adopt their use.

This month's speaker was Andy Townsend, who has worked for the last 19 years for the Lifeskills charity.

Lifeskills was opened in January 2000 by Princess Anne. Since then, over 175,000 people have received safety education and training. Accidents kill about 14,000 people a year and seriously injure more than 700,000 a year in England alone.

We were shown a virtual film of the 4th floor of the Create centre ( located in the old tobacco factory) in Bristol. It was incredible how it has been divided up to simulate a street, beach, train lines, building site and a home; all places where the volunteers could demonstrate problems and how to deal or avoid them. In the home, there was even a room with a fire .

Every year Lifeskills educate over 11,000 children about how to stay safe in their every day lives and avoid accidental injury. The charity cannot continue without the support from businesses. They are also looking for new volunteers.

The vote of thanks was given by Georgina Bond.

Our next meeting will be Monday 11th March.

**Jean Hook**

# **Bitton Village Residents' Association**

Invites you to

## **Flicks in the Sticks**

on

**Friday 22 March**

when we will be screening

## **Murder on the Orient Express**

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**Sumptuously filmed and beautifully portrayed, you can simply sit back and enjoy, as the best detective in the world sorts things out! We loved this film and we think you will too.**

**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 in the snow



***St Mary's Parish Church and the view beyond to Kelston Knoll***

The first week of February saw winter come to Bitton as the village was covered in snow. A peace settled on the place as few ventured out until the snow had stopped falling and the sun began to shine. It was soon over, however, and after three days milder air and rain saw the snow melt and normal services resume.

***Pictures by Carolyn Russell***

## **Focal Point, March 2019**

---



***Bitton Village in wintry covering***



***Church Road***

## **History Group “Show & Tell” reveals past links**



**Mike Gates writes**—Many thanks to all the contributors to the ‘show and tell’ on ‘What did your Grandparents do?’ It was amazing that so many of the grandparents in the photos were related to other grandparents shown in other photos. In those days everyone must have known everyone else’s business.

One of the highlights of the evening was Penny Deverill’s account of how her grandmother, Nanny Worlock, as a midwife, had brought hundreds of babies into the world; then to be prosecuted for not having a license and have to undertake training, when there is little doubt that she could have written the training manual. Penny has kindly written up the account of Nanny Worlock and this is available from the home page of our site [www.bittonhistory.org.uk](http://www.bittonhistory.org.uk)

Since then, Penny has been introduced to a number of local people who were helped into the world by Nanny Worlock.

Many local grandparents worked at the Paper Mill and are shown in this photo, when the Mill closed in 1961 (photo courtesy Ray Coles).

# **BITTON GARDENING CLUB**

Invites you to  
**Our next meeting**  
on  
**MONDAY 18<sup>th</sup> March**

in the  
**Church Hall, Church Lane, Bitton**  
**Doors Open 7.20pm. Meeting Starts 7.30pm.**

Our speaker at this meeting is

**Dominic Hamilton**

**Garden Director of Painswick**

The title of his illustrated talk is

## **The History & Restoration of Painswick Garden**

Dominic Hamilton became the Garden Director in 2016. He is passionate about the restoration of the eye catching follies and his talk with encompass the history of the garden.

This talk is linked to a planned visit to Painswick garden later in the year.

For more information  
contact Bridget Hetzel - [b.hetzel@btinternet.com](mailto:b.hetzel@btinternet.com) or  
just come along to the meeting

**New members and guests always welcome**



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## February's quiz answers

The following are the correct answers for February's quiz:

- |                                |                              |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Rice Pudding                | 11. Madeira Cake             |
| 2. Trifle                      | 12. Millionaire's Shortbread |
| 3. Chocolate Brownie           | 13. Dundee Cake              |
| 4. Queen of Puddings           | 14. Bread and Butter Pudding |
| 5. Viennese Whirls             | 15. Roly Poly Pudding        |
| 6. Bakewell Tart               | 16. Ginger Cake              |
| 7. Lardy Cake                  | 17. Crème Brulee             |
| 8. Cheesecake                  | 18. Victoria Sponge          |
| 9. Eton Mess                   | 19. Carrot Cake              |
| 10. Pineapple Upside-down Cake | 20. Spotted Dick             |

**Those achieving full marks were: Catriona Kesterton, Joe & Rose Bone, Alan & Sue Murtagh, Pam & Jon Booth, Jon & Pam Heyes, Ros & Charles Knight, Kim Scudamore, Mary Younie, Margaret & Bryan Garlick, Sandi & Roger Cole and Chrissie Cullimore, Jan Wokey & Diane.**  
**The winners of the draw are Pam & Jon Booth**



## **The March quiz**

This month we have cryptic clues for songs that reached number 1 in the UK singles chart. To help I have given the decade that the single first hit number 1. 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](mailto:mrsrussell@icloud.com) by **15th March** which is also the deadline for articles/adverts for the March edition.

1. 1990s Remain for one more turn of the earth.
2. 1980s Do not lecture me Dad.
3. 1970s Gyrating Royal
4. 1960s A church-goer may say this.
5. 1950s Price of a puppy?
6. 2010s Grateful and not last
7. 2000s Shucks, it's a repeat.
8. 1980s Light male sibling.
9. 1970s Spans over perturbed liquid ice.
10. 1960s Ahoy Toodle-oo
11. 1950s Large sports equipment burning
12. 2010s Not slightly pondering.
13. 2000s Needs a wash with added R.
14. 1990s Males in dark clothing
15. 1960s Common card message.
16. 1950s Group playing music of precious metal.
17. 2000s Bumped into special service at a church.
18. 1960s Wave a white flag.
19. 2010s Phone me perhaps.
20. 1960s Unable to obtain gratification.

**Name:**

**Contact:**

# SIMNEL CAKE

This month's recipe is for one of the most traditional of all cakes and one that dates to medieval times, when it would have resembled something more like a bread than the fruit cake made today, and used yeast as a rising agent. In later times, it may also have been boiled so that it resembled something more akin to a pudding. The origins of its name are also uncertain but are certainly not linked to Lambert Simnel who in the 15<sup>th</sup> century claimed to be one of the princes murdered in the Tower of London. Most likely the name derives from the fine wheat flour that was used to make it called *similia* in Latin.

The cake was often associated with Refreshment Sunday, the fourth Sunday in Lent, or Mothering Sunday, when people were supposed to return to their "mother church" where they had grown up taking the cake as a present for their mothers. Today, the fourth Sunday in Lent is Mothering Sunday.

This recipe (there are many) is based on one provided in an edition of Mrs Beeton's Family Cookery re-issued about 100 years ago.

## Ingredients

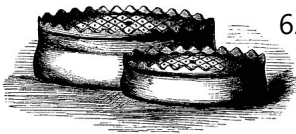
225g caster sugar  
190g butter  
4 eggs  
225g plain flour  
190g currants  
60g shredded candid peel  
1 tsp cinnamon (optional)

## For the almond paste

190g caster sugar  
90g ground almonds  
1 egg

## Method

1. Beat the butter and a sugar to a cream and then beat in the eggs. Stir in the currants candid peel and cinnamon.
2. Work the sugar, ground almonds and egg to a stiff paste. (Alternatively use ready made marzipan which is entirely acceptable as an alternative and a lot less work!)
3. Put half the cake mixture in a lined a buttered cake tin and roll out half of the almond paste and place it on top so that it forms a neat layer. Put the remaining half of the mixture on top.
4. Bake in a moderate oven (140C/GAS 2) for 1½ hours or until done (test with skewer).
5. Leave to cool and then roll out the remaining almond paste into a round the shape of the cake and place on top (You may find that this is easier if you use a little jam to glaze the top of the cake first. You can mark with a traditional cross pattern or if you have sufficient past decorate with small balls of paste.
6. Place under a hot grill for a matter of a few minutes to slightly brown the almond paste and leave to cool completely before serving.



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# The last word

In my working life, I have often envied those who are given the turnaround job. That's the one where things are looking pretty bleak and the organisation is in a bit of a mess. In goes a new management team and things improve – often quite rapidly. It's usually clear about what needs to change and there is a will behind it.



## **Focal Point- Where do we go from here?**

Much more difficult is the job of the person who takes over the well run and well established. Changes are usually much less welcome and innovation more risky.

Taking over from Becky Feather after her 9 years as editor certainly puts me in the second group and wondering how to develop Focal Point any further. It is quite a daunting prospect and just putting my first edition together on time and in a readable format has been quite a job. So where does one go from here?

Focal Point needs to serve the local community both as a church magazine and, as a record of local life and interests; as it does now and as it has done on the past. I don't want it simply to be simply repetitive with fixed sets of reports and messages. These are all welcome, but what else does it need to attract the reader and provide real interest?

The most effective communications tend to be stories. The best are mostly those about people, with people's stories and their views; but they can equally encompass history, ideas and interests. IN particular, I would like to see more articles that reflect what is going on in Bitton through people's stories and interests. But what else? Should we, for example, have a letters

page? Are we covering things that people are interested in or is it too selective? Would you like to contribute articles?

Let me know your views and if you are willing to help expand and improve Focal Point you will be most welcome. One thing is sure, that in a village like Bitton there is no shortage of things to write about.

**Jim Heavens**

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