

May 2019

£1

Focal Point

Pam Hacker—
Join her and
Marlene Gallop
for Afternoon
Tea on May
18th
(See page 7)



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Focal Point

May 2019

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The Meadows School Lollipop Lady, Pam Hacker, has lived almost all her life in Bitton. This month she and Marlene Gallop are running a special afternoon tea in aid of *Forever Friends* at Bath's Royal United Hospital. Pam tells Sarah Heavens more about herself and about the teas on May 18th.

Apart from a two-year spell in Longwell Green, Pam has lived all her life in Aubrey Meads. Her house was built in 1950s and her parents were the second residents there. Pam went to school at Upton Cheyney County Primary school, when Mrs Exon was Head teacher and then Mrs Cooper. She remembers there were only about 13 pupils, and she really enjoyed the school.

The village has changed quite a bit since her childhood: "There was a butchers' in the High Street, this then changed to an outdoor clothing shop and there was an electronic goods shop too. My Dad worked at the post office as the local post man. The post office branched out into a newspaper shop as well. There have been new houses and the village has evolved, the pub and the shop have all changed hands several times. But its still a nice quiet area with really lovely neighbours – very few people leave Aubrey Meads once they have moved in!"

Navy spotty wellies

Pam spent twenty years working as a cashier for Commercial Union and then Midland Life in Bristol in different departments after taking maternity leave when her son Matthew was born. When Matthew was about six Pam's mother had to go into a nursing home and Pam's life became more Bitton based. Her first cleaning job was for Mrs Perrett at Eastover and she has had quite a few others since then.



Focal Point, May 2019

She also did babysitting and childcare, taking children to school in the mornings and back to her house after school. She says: "This was really enjoyable, although now all the children I helped across the road are grown up now and wave at me as they drive past!"

Pam has been the school lollipop lady for fifteen years now: "It's my social life!" she says, "I'm still in contact with a lot of the people who have left. My hours are 8.30 – 9.05 am and 3.15 – 3.45 every school day, rain or shine. A big plastic coat keeps my dry and I love a colourful pair of wellies. My favourite pair now are black with red roses, and I have a navy spotty pair as well. Anything colourful, pretty and on eBay are good!"

MacMillan coffee mornings and Forever Friends tea

Pam was cleaning one day for Marlene Gallop when an advert for MacMillan coffee mornings came on the television. Pam said she would love to organise one and together they both made it happen. They have organised 3 very successful MacMillan coffee mornings in the church with the help of Judith Butson, Barbara Merritt, Gwynne Clark, Zena, Matthew and his partner Joanne.

The last one had about eighty visitors and raised in excess of £1000. This time they want to do something different and plan cream teas and cakes on May 18th in the church from 2pm. They have already been promised 100 scones as a donation and will be delighted to see as many people as possible in the church for a cake, a cuppa, a chat in return for a donation to the Forever Friends Appeal raising funds for Bath's Royal United Hospital. There will be live musical entertainment from Jenny, Nathalie and Liz.

Doggy friends

Animals have always played a big part in Pam's life. As a child she had rabbits, goldfish, cats and dogs. Recently she had a dog called 'Heinz', "he was 57 different varieties," she says. Now she has Tia, a well-known sight in the village, a shy, pretty Yorkshire terrier from Bath Cats and Dogs home.

Pam's Secret

Pam's smile brightens up Bitton life. When asked about her secret to always being cheerful she says: "I've always been a positive person and try to keep cheerful. Mrs Adams around the corner used to call me 'smiler!'"

Pam and Marlene's Afternoon Tea will be held in St Mary's Church between 2 and 4pm on May 18th. See page 30 for more details.

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Church Fete 2019

Plans are already underway for this year's popular church fete to be held on Saturday 7 September. It is a date for everyone's dairy for an afternoon of fun, activities and bargains

from all the many stalls and attractions. It's a great afternoon that aims to bring the whole village together and raises essential funds to maintain the church. Already booked for this year are some regular favourites, including the White Elephant, Plants and Handicraft stalls; a coconut shy, the football game and the famous egg throwing competition. Returning once again, will be the Companions of the Longbow to demonstrate their ancient skills and, for a second year, we hope to welcome the Somerset Morris Dancers. Of course, there will be a licensed bar, barbeque and some delicious teas in the church and at Church Farm.



Scenes from last year's fete:

Top—The Somerset Morris Dancers.

Right— Fete goes outside the bar

Put this date in your diary: Saturday 7 September

CAN YOU HELP?

We are always looking for new ideas and new helpers. There are so many ways you can assist both before after and during the fete – even for just an hour or so. There's the heavy gang to set up and dismantle the tents on the Friday and after the fete closes, programme sellers and stall helpers. If you are able to spare some of your time please contact Ann Willis 431-0270 or Ken Gibson 932-2122.

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Churches & services



UPTON CHEYNEY United Reformed Church



Elder: Muriel Williams
0117 961 6843

Minister: Meryl White
0775 914 6645

Sunday services are at 3pm

- May 5th** Service led by Ken Gibson
- May 12th** Service led by Janet Hawkins
- May 19th** Service led by David Jones
- May 26th** Bible study led by Meryl White

In addition the coffee afternoon will be at 2pm on Tuesday 28th May.



ST MARY'S CHURCH, BITTON

Vicar:

Rev Jeremy Andrew
The Vicarage, Warmley
0117 967 2724

Ordained minister:

Rev Richard Humphrey
Splinters
Kenilworth Drive
Willsbridge
0117 949 0502

Services at St Mary's in May

Sunday 5 May

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

10.30am Parish Communion

Sunday 12 May

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

8.00am Holy Communion

10.30am Family Parade Service

followed by lunch at The Upton Inn

Sunday 19 May

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

10.30am Morning Worship

Friday 24 May

9.30am Celtic Communion

Followed by coffee and cakes

Sunday 26 May

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

8.00am Holy Communion

9.30am Family Café Church

Thursday 30 May

ASCENSION DAY

7.30pm Benefice Ascension Day Service at St Mary's



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

St Mary's flower rota

4	May	Anne Carrington
11	"	No Volunteers
18	"	Ros Knight & Jean Hook
25	"	Judith Butson

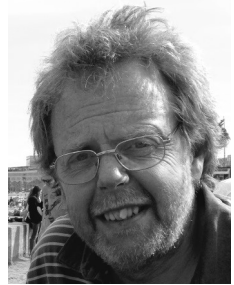
From the Register

31st March Baptism of Guy William Rogers



St Mary's Matters

With the arrival of British Summer Time the church is now being opened during the day again. A big thank-you is due to those who willingly open and close the church during the summer months on a rota basis. Do take the opportunity to go into the church during the week and if you have visitors why not take them to have a look round. If you would like to join the rota please let me know.



Pete Midgley

The Palm Sunday procession on 14th April took place in fine weather although we were missing a donkey this year. It was suggested that in future we might use a Shetland pony to represent the donkey which Jesus used to ride into Jerusalem. Does anyone know where we might find one? During this service the keyboard with organ voices was used for two of the traditional hymns as it is now connected through the sound system. This provides more versatility for having organ style accompaniment in services when the organ itself is not available.

As I write we are looking forward to receiving Jeremy back at the beginning of May from his secondment in the diocese. Welcome back Jeremy! At the same time we are remembering Richard Humphrey and his family in our prayers as he is in hospital with pancreatitis. Hopefully by the time you are reading this he will be well on the way to recovery.

News from Upton Cheyney URC

Recently I was on holiday in Chile and visited several churches, some in cities and some out in the country side. It is an interesting thought as to which were more spectacular. The ones in Santiago could compare to some of the best in Europe both for size and opulence. Incidentally it was very sad to see the fire ravishing Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. We have had many family anniversaries in Paris and always visited this wonderful church and monument.



Stuart Turner

However, going back to Chile I was hugely impressed when coming across churches in the country. Still packed for end to end services on a Sunday and during the week with local folk cleaning and tending their obviously much loved focal point.

Coming back home we have had two outstanding preachers. Firstly Jenny Clarke talked of choices. For example doing what everyone expects with a little spark doing something completely different. Jenny has been a caver for many years . Recently she squeezed into a crack at Burrington Combe. The very same crack that the Reverend Augustus Toplady squeezed into during a storm where he had been inspired to write the hymn “Rock of Ages”. Two people, same choice.

Then there was Steve Britten. Always different. Always interesting. Always insightful. He talked about Palm Sunday or is it part of Passion week and whatever happened to Septuagesima Sunday. He remembered as a child parading round Hanham waving palm crosses always hoping that one day they would follow a real life donkey. Finally one year they did. However they had failed to anticipate the logistics nightmare this proved to present. I wonder if the parade still happens or when it finally stopped.

Could you be a Scout Leader?

The local 34th Bitton Scout Group have desperate need for new leaders for the Beaver and Scout sections ideally from June as our current leaders will no longer be able to run their sections from September and without any leaders the relevant sections would obviously have to close. Whilst we have contacted our local district for support, it is highly unlikely that they will be able to supply any new leaders, so we are therefore appealing locally to see if these positions can be filled.

If you are interested or know of anyone else who would be interested please contact David Harris at DJACHARRIS@HOTMAIL.COM for more information.

David Harris (Scouter in Charge)

The Way of the Monarch



King Charles II

Picture: Shutterstock

A new sign has appeared at the end of Church Lane directing walkers along the *Monarch's Way*, a walking route that wends its way from Worcester to Shoreham on the south coast following that taken by Charles II on his escape to France after the Battle of Worcester in September 1651.

It is a long walk. 625 miles from end to end and was devised by Trevor Anthill in the 1980s and 90s who published three walking guides. Trevor died in 2010, but an enthusiastic team of dedicated supporters maintain a website, issue certificates to *end to enders* (those who manage to cover the whole route – there are not many of them) and make sure the route is well marked. The story of this route is fascinating and one that gripped the young Trevor Anthill, both in its historical significance but also its daring.

Worcester was the last battle of the Civil War. Following the execution of his father, the young Prince Charles returned to Scotland in 1650 and with the support of the Scottish Committee of Estates (effectively the Scottish Parliament) was crowned King at Scone, raised an army and moved south. Worcester was the last battle of his campaign, where his largely Scottish force was outnumbered and defeated by Cromwell's forces mainly of English and some Irish troops.

After the battle the king needed to escape which was difficult when there was a reward for his capture of £1000 and the country was largely under military control. Charles was also difficult to disguise. At 6' 2" he was much taller than most men would have been at that time and was difficult to find clothes that were suitable for a disguise as a servant. It was entirely impossible to find suitable shoes which meant that they had to be slit, and he found them very painful. He learned to talk and walk more as a countryman and evaded recognition repeatedly.

Of course, the route taken by the Monarch's Way is not exactly that taken by the king. It follows the route as far as records show, particularly the towns or houses where he is known to have stayed. Much is guesswork, but it is based on a good body of research. The roads have themselves changed a lot in the past 350 years. Many of those we use today were built in the centuries that followed and the route tends towards footpaths and by-ways rather than main roads.

Whether the king set foot in Bitton is unknown but likely. The king is known to have crossed the Avon near Keynsham, but not by the bridge which may well have been guarded. It is quite probable that he dropped down from Lansdown through the lanes around Upton Cheyney and found some way across the water at Bitton. His intention was to board a ship at Bristol for the continent. That mission proved futile as Bristol was fortified by the Parliamentarians and there were no ships due to sail. So, with a good deal of luck and further disguise, the king finally boarded a ship from Shoreham in Sussex in October. It took him to France and nine years of exile before his return.

As is often the case with ramblers and country walkers there is an element of anarchy in the way the route is supported. It is not a recognised National Trail (even if its proponents would like it to be). But as it celebrates a time of challenge to authority, time may be on their side as it was for Charles II.

The new metal sign directing walkers at the corner of the High Street and Church Lane



Close Farm Surgery Volunteer Driver Scheme

Did you know that registered patients of Close Farm Surgery are now able to access a volunteer driver scheme to enable them to attend routine, pre-booked appointments at the Surgery in Victoria Road, North Common?

The Surgery is working with the Retired Seniors and Volunteer Programme to offer this facility. To access the service patients will need to sign a consent form enabling the practice to pass on their details to the driver co-ordinator for this scheme. When patients book their appointment they then contact the co-ordinator giving the date and time and the co-ordinator will arrange for a driver to collect them, take them to the surgery and return them home again.

Whilst the service is offered by volunteers, they do ask for a small contribution towards the cost of petrol which the surgery passes on to the volunteers. They are also looking for additional volunteer drivers to help with this service. Full training is offered and there will be no increase in car insurance premiums. The role is very flexible and can bring great rewards to both the volunteer and the patient.

To find out more about the service contact Close Farm Surgery on 0117 932 2108.

Board Games in St Mary's Sunday 20 May from 2.30 to 5.00pm

There are games to suit players of all ages. If you or your family have a favourite game why not bring it along. Come on your own or come as a family – everyone is welcome. Cakes and drinks will be served to maintain our energy levels!

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Vicar's Message



Dear Friends,

I am delighted to be returning to parish ministry after eight months working in the ministry development team at the Bristol diocesan office. It has been a good opportunity to understand better the work of the Diocesan support staff and how its work helps the mission and ministry around the diocese. With new opportunities comes a new perspective and I certainly return with new eyes and

excitement and enthusiasm to take forward the plans and address the challenges of parish life together.

I wanted to thank the parishes and the many people that do so much behind the scenes to further the work of the church. I want to thank the ministry team; church wardens and lay ministers as well as clergy for their important ministry while I have been away, and I especially want to thank Anika for leading the churches and guiding things along with wisdom, care and a sense of humour. We continue to be blessed with her ministry which has allowed me to be a blessing further afield.

In the church calendar we are now entering into the long summer months of Trinity which is a time when we rediscover and learn what it means to be a follower of the Risen Christ in today's world. We have now left Easter and our Sunday Bible readings take us into the ascension of Jesus and the birth of the church at Pentecost and

Focal Point, May 2019

the growth of the early church across the known world. At Pentecost the early disciples were gathered together in Jerusalem and were filled with the Holy Spirit which enabled them to witness and share the good news. As we begin a new season of ministry my prayers is for God's blessing upon us and for the same Holy Spirit to continue his work of enabling disciples to witness and share the good news. This is an amazing privilege and joy to be part of God's mission to His world equipped by the Holy Spirit, sharing in fellowship in church and inviting others to join us on our journey.

**Holy Spirit, sent by the Father,
ignite in us your holy fire;
strengthen your children with the gift of faith,
revive your Church with the breath of love,
and renew the face of the earth,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**



The traditional circuit of the village took place this year on Palm Sunday 14th April. The family parade service was hosted by the Scouts who joined the congregation in a circuit from the church hall, along the High Street and back to the church along Church Road.

Bath Half Marathon Success



Photo left to right: James Mulready, Kate Mulready, David Harris, Jenny Harris and Charlotte Mulready.

After a lot of training we ran the Bath Half Marathon on 17th March. A big Thank you to all those people who supported us. We raised £3780.75 (with Giftaid) for Leukaemia UK. David is currently undergoing treatment and will hopefully be having a bone marrow transplant at the end of April.

FAMILY CAFÉ CHURCH

Sunday 26 May 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 26 May at 9.30

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In the second of a series of articles on the charities we support, Nicola Bennetts encourages us to give to this year's Christian Aid Week appeal and looks at some of the charity's work around the world

The birth of a baby – son, daughter, brother, sister, grandchild – what could be more exciting? Who does the new baby look like? What's their name? What was the birth weight? Then there are the cards, flowers, baby clothes, baby shower.

It's different in Sierra Leone – the world's most dangerous place to become a mum. Mothers die in childbirth and many of the babies do not survive. That's why Christian Aid is there to build a hospital where women can give birth in clean, safe surroundings. It's one of Christian Aid's community health programmes and the focus of this year's fundraising week.

But it's only a small part of the amazing work which Christian Aid does in thirty-seven countries. Only last month they were there in Mozambique, Malawi and

Zimbabwe for the victims of cyclone Idai. Working with local partners they provided immediate help – shelter, clean water, food – and they will continue to give support for the long term so that people can rebuild their lives.

What else and where else? As well as Africa, Christian Aid works with partners in Asia (they've been in Afghanistan for over thirty years), the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean. Except in emergencies they don't give handouts. Anyone who's given a goat, a cow, or a pig is expected to breed from the animal



Peru—A simply constructed greenhouse protects the seedlings from the sun. *Photo: Christian Aid*



Nigeria – they're smiling because the pig in the background will produce piglets and its poo is already creating gas for cooking in the pig poo digester

Picture: Christian Aid

to repay the debt. In the case of the pig they'll be shown how to create gas for cooking by means of a simple pig poo digester.

Through education and training they help people to understand their rights and challenge discrimination. They help people to become more resilient to shocks and disasters such as drought, climate change and hurricanes.

Sierra Leone is one small piece of a big humanitarian jigsaw. For the expectant mothers it's hugely important. Our gifts in Christian Aid week will help to build a hospital and provide the basic healthcare which we take for granted.

Christian Aid Week runs from 12th to 18th May. Please give generously and don't forget that you can increase your donation by filling in the gift aid form on the envelope.

I have a wonderful team of collectors but with a growing population in the village I'd be grateful for more volunteers. Yes, it's a bit of a trudge round the houses but you do see some beautiful gardens – and you'll be helping some of the world's poorest people to help themselves out of poverty.

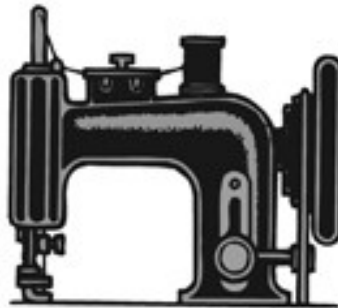
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Marlene and Pam are holding an

Afternoon Tea

at St Mary's Church, Bitton on
Saturday 18th May 2pm to 4pm
in support of

The Forever Friends Appeal
at the Royal United Hospital, Bath.

Offers of cakes welcome.

**Call in for a chat, a drink, a cake and make a
donation.**

News from Bitton WI

The Kingschase group had their spring meeting hosted by Hanham afternoon W.I.. The hall was made to look like a casino. After a very organised meal the entertainment was Elvis. Apparently it is 42 years since he died at the age of 42. Lots of ladies joined with the singing and dancing, a joyful evening was had by all.

A local walk around Upton Cheyney, organised by Lesley Brain, ended at the Swan Inn Swineford for lunch.

The April meeting was chaired by Janet Ballinger as our president was on holiday.

The speaker, Ann Freeman, gave an illustrated talk on the history of herbal plants. She told us that the berries of mistletoe are poisonous but the leaves are good for blood pressure. Rosemary was used in the sick room. We also learned that the Rush Service on Whit Sunday at St. Mary Redcliffe is one of the highlights of the civic calendar upholding a tradition which goes back 500 years of putting aromatic herbs on the floor. Among other useful tips, burdock is good for arthritis and John Wesley's cure for baldness was to rub the head with a cut onion until is red then cover with honey. So if any gentlemen are smelling of onions or suddenly have long hair we will know what you are up to!

Next meeting is Monday 13th May at St. Marys church hall 7-30pm .Sarah Harris will tell us about the history of knitting patterns.

Jean Hook





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April's quiz answers

Last month's quiz was about countries. The answers are:

1. Australia; 2. Japan, Samoa, Nauru,; 3. North Korea; 4. Denmark; 5. Canada; 6. Brazil; 7. Ireland; 8. Iceland; 9. Mozambique; 10. Finland; 11. USA; 12. Ecuador; 13. China; 14. Gambia; 15. UK; 16. Costa Rica; 17. Kazakhstan; 18. France; 19. Russia; 20. Belgium.

Congratulations to Alan & Sue Murtagh and Sue Nethercote for getting 20/20. This month's winners are Alan and Sue Murtagh.

Apologies to Sheila Read and Mary Younie for getting their names wrong in the April edition.

Mary Younie was the winner of the March prize.

The May Quiz

This month's quiz is on compound words, Can you find a word which combines with each of the clues to make new words?

Example: Coat / Lap / Knot, the answer is Top creating:
Topcoat / Laptop / Topknot

1. Air / Light / Band
2. Work / Fibre / Maker
3. Step / Stop / Trap
4. Wood / Book / Hole
5. Camp / Works / Place
6. Friend / Cow / Tall
7. Hand / Sand / Nose
8. Bull / Green / Gold
9. Land / Work / Hard
10. Grand / Under / Head
11. Friend / Battle / Leader
12. Turtle / Band / Lace
13. Time / Top / Spoon
14. Broker / Take / Room
15. Food / Water / Bed
16. Light / Way / Tail
17. Rail / Hall / Side
18. Home / Shop / Station
19. Sail / Card / Walk
20. Port / Pet / Pool

Name:

Contact:

Please send your answers to Carolyn Russell at Martin House, Church Road, Bitton (the yellow house) or email mrscrussell@icloud.com by 15 May.



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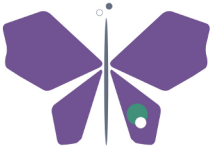
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The last word

May has arrived and the spring is truly sprung. The village has turned green at last and a glorious Easter weekend of sunshine gives hope of warmer weather to come.

Thank you for all the comments and suggestions received about Focal Point and all contributions are very gratefully received.



Apparently some people found last month's copy difficult to read in some sections due to the small size of the print. So I have tried in this copy to keep to a minimum of 11 points (which is the size you are reading this) and set as the standard. Some articles will be in larger print anyway to fill the page. If you have particular difficulty, a large scale copy can be run off (if there not too many, of course).

No complaints, but when I took over editorship, my concern was that there would not be enough to fill the space. The reverse seems to the case— but keep it coming. We can always add a couple more pages.

Jim Heavens



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