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Focal Point

June 2019

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FOR ALL FOCAL POINT INQUIRIES

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Deadline for the June magazine is 13 May 2019

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Bitton Open Gardens has become an annual event, but its origins are quite recent. *Bridget Hetzel* recounts how the Gardening Club and Open Gardens came about.

I can hardly believe it but it was about now, ten years ago, when Wendy Smale and I came up with the idea of starting a gardening club.

We talked to several friends in the village, who seemed to think it was a good idea, and we asked other gardening clubs for their advice on how to go about it, then bingo, by early September a group of us set about planning a programme for the following year.

Our first members' meeting was on Tuesday 26 January 2010 at 8pm, when we hoped that thirty or so people might like to join. It was, for us, the most amazing evening, we were completely overwhelmed, over 100 people came along to the hall and paid their membership fee.

During the evening we talked about our plans for the Gardening Club and outlined the speakers and garden visits that we had booked for the year. Most of our ideas were warmly received though during the meeting the new members made it clear that Tuesday evenings were not ideal and 8pm was rather late. So we quickly rescheduled our meetings to the third Monday in the month at 7.30pm, which we have kept to ever since.

In fact the formula for that first year worked so well, we have changed very little. Even the membership fee of £12 has remained the same. We always start the year in January with a sociable AGM when we enjoy a drink, discuss the programme that has been planned for the year and end with a good humoured garden quiz. During the year we have a mix of about 12 speakers and garden visits and now the Gardening Club committee have taken on the planning of Bitton Open Gardens.

The lovely summer event of Bitton Open Gardens was started in 2008. It was the brainchild of Ann and Tony Boulton, both very keen gardeners who were on the BVRA (Bitton Village Residents' Association) committee. The very first year we did it, it was hugely popular. Everyone enjoyed walking around the village from garden to garden, meeting friends and having a chat, buying a plant or two and having a cream tea.

Focal Point, June 2019

The event has always been free, and the money made now, from both the plants and the teas, is held by the Gardening Club and used to support the flowers on Bitton Bridge. However with the help of grants and the support of Linden homes, the cost of the bridge flowers has been kept to a minimum and weekly volunteers have kept the planters watered. Thank you everyone for your help and support.

So this year Bitton Open Gardens is on Sunday 16 June, which happens to be Father's day. What better way to make your Dad feel special, than to spend an hour or two together, enjoying the village gardens, followed by a yummy cream tea. Heaven!

Below is the Bitton Gardening Club programme for the remainder of this year. New members are always welcome. We look forward to seeing you at one of our meetings or at Bitton Open Gardens. For more information contact Bridget Hetzel 932 9932 or email b.hetzel@btinternet.com

Bitton Gardening Club Programme 2019

June 13 Thursday 2.30pm	Visit: Doynton House, Doynton
June 16 Sunday 12 - 5pm	Event: Bitton Open Gardens
July 1 Monday 10.30am	Visit: Painswick Rococo Garden
July 24 Wednesday 10.30am	Visit: Miserden Garden, Miserden near Stroud
August 19 Monday 7.30pm	Talk: The making of Winter Gardens
September 19 Thursday	Visit: The American Museum Claverton Bath
October 21 Monday 7.30pm	Talk: Behind the scenes at NT Gardens
November 18 Monday 7.30pm	Demo: Quick and Easy Christmas Decorations

Annual Membership £12. All meetings, apart from visits, are FREE and held in the Church Hall, Church Lane, Bitton, on 3rd Monday in the month.

Doors Open 7.20pm. Meetings commence at 7.30pm. Visiting Guests £4. Ticket price for each garden visit varies.

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Bitton's first open garden

The annual event of Bitton Open Gardens, though recent origin, has a much earlier predecessor in the vicarage garden of Cannon Henry Nicholson Ellacombe, vicar of Bitton from 1850 until his death in 1916. He had succeeded his father who had been in post since 1817. Being a vicar in the nineteenth century was a little different from today and the canon enjoyed not only the relatively wealthy living of the parish, but, also, as not uncommon in the nineteenth century, was a man of private means.

Publicly, the Ellacombes' had a significant impact on the life of Bitton and the surrounding villages to which the parish then extended. Privately the passion of H N Ellacombe was for horticulture. He was the author of numerous books and pamphlets on plants and gardens, had a close working relationship with Joseph Hooker, the renowned plantsman and botanist who led Kew Gardens for over 20 years and many other leading horticulturalists of the time. He also wrote regular gardening features for a wide range of popular magazines. As a result he became well known within gardening circles as a sort of Monty Don of his day. His book, *In a Gloucestershire Garden* is still in print and describes his own garden that surrounded the vicarage. His contacts meant that he was able to obtain many unusual or recently discovered plants. Consequently, the garden received many visitors; no ticket was required but no doubt one had to be of the right class and with the ability to provide a generous tip to one of the two or more full time gardeners that were employed. In 1897, Ellacombe was one of the first recipients of a gold medal from the Royal Horticultural Society for his services to gardening

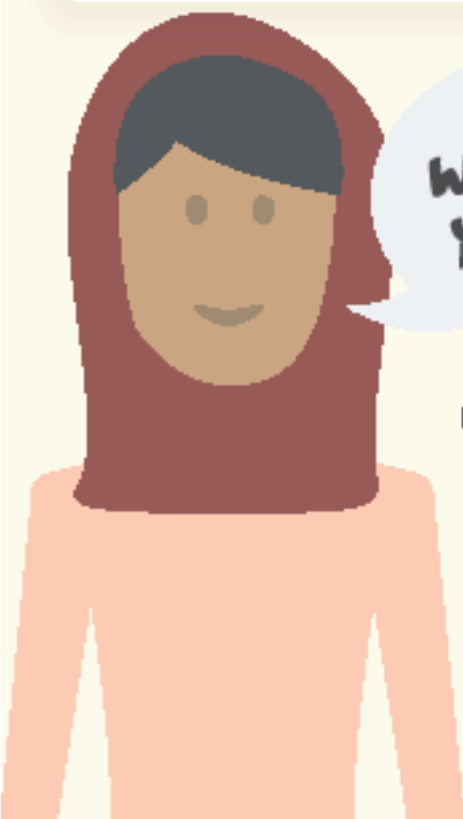
Ellacombe's vicarage garden did not survive him. His successors did not have the same means to support such an enterprise and a sizeable portion of the garden was separated to build a new vicarage in the 1950s when the old one was sold.



**Cannon Rev Henry Ellacombe in his garden with a
Ferula Glauca—the giant fennel**
*from A W Hill's Memoir— Henry Nicholson Ellacombe,
published in 1919*

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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

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| June 2nd | Service led by Chris Perkins |
| June 9th | Service led by Phillip White |
| June 16th | No Service as we are visiting Oldland URC |
| June 23rd | Service led by Michelle Bates |
| June 30th | Service led by Neville Lintern |

In addition our coffee afternoon will be on Tuesday 25th at 2pm



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 June

Sunday 2 June

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

10.30am Parish Communion

Sunday 9 June

PENTECOST (Whit Sunday)

8.00am Holy Communion

10.30am Family Parade Service

*followed by lunch at The Crown Inn,
Keynsham*

Sunday 16 June

10.30am **TRINITY SUNDAY**

Morning Worship

Sunday 23 June

TRINITY I

8.00am Holy Communion

9.30am Family Café Church

Friday 28 June

9.30am Celtic Communion

Followed by coffee and cakes

Sunday 30 June

10.30am **TRINITY II**

Benefice Holy Communion at St Mary's
*followed by a bring and share lunch in the
church*



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

1 June	Judith Butson
8 June	Wedding
15 June	Wedding
22 June	Sarah Craddock
29 June	No Volunteers

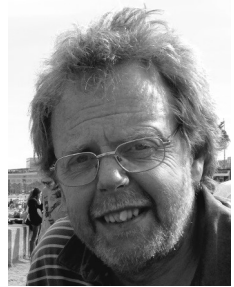
From the Register

27th April Wedding: Gemma Gibbs and Mathew Paramore



St Mary's Matters

As I write we have just enjoyed a return visit of the "Westerly Winds" band to the church. This was an epic concert which was enhanced even further by the contributions of Natalie Morton and Jenny Harris as piano and flute duo. As if that were not enough the concert also featured the dulcet tones of the Bitton Community choir expertly led by Jane Lings. It was a great evening and successfully raised over £300 each for the church and the "Westerly Winds" band. Thank you to everyone who came and made the evening so enjoyable.



Pete Midgley

As you will probably be aware, Jenny and Natalie play with Liz Wilson (who plays with Westerly Winds) and me to lead the worship in our Family Service on the second Sunday of the month. Natalie, Jenny and Liz also lead the singing for family café church on the fourth Sunday of the month, and Jane plays the piano to lead worship on the third Sunday. The music group also played at the Meadows fete on the Saturday preceding the concert. I mention all this to point out how links between the church and the community are clearly developing in a very encouraging manner, especially through music.

This gives me the perfect opportunity to draw your attention to another important church/community event. On Sunday 7th July, by invitation of James and Jemma, the White Hart Inn will be hosting the inaugural Bitton alfresco Songs of Praise, with barbecue, in the pub garden. Music will be provided by the Oldland Brass Ensemble and the St Mary's music group. The barbecue will begin at 4pm and singing will be from 4.30 until 6.00. This is something you really shouldn't miss.

In the meantime do join us at one of our many and varied services or pop over for a cream tea any Sunday afternoon in July and August between 3 and 5.

News from Upton Cheyney URC

Commitment comes in many guises. Here are but two that are pertinent to the chapel.

Firstly this month is a very sad one for everyone at the chapel. This month on Sunday 26th Meryl will lead her last service at the chapel. Together with Graham they have been stalwarts in turning the chapel around and their commitment has been second to none. They are taking a well earned break after six years with us. We will miss their energy, ideas, enthusiasm and mostly their friendship. It will take us some significant time to refocus our efforts and reprioritise what we do in the future.



Stuart Turner

Commitment of a different type entirely has been demonstrated by one of our number who has inherited a guinea pig. Said guinea pig became very distressed and was having a problem with their toilet habits and therefore had a visit to the vet. The first observations from the vet were that it was male and old. It would seem that old male guinea pigs often have this problem. The member of our congregation has had to undergo training in the skilful use of cotton buds and a special applicator to alleviate the problem thereby displaying commitment over and above.

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)

A Bitton Family Business



“We would be hard pushed to beat this Easter; it was a record one!” says Nick Morgan, the owner of the popular Fonthill Garden Centre in Bitton.

This year's *Open Gardens* event provided the spur for Sarah Heavens to visit and talk to Nick Morgan at Fontill Garden Centre.

Fonthill Garden Centre is truly a family business. It all started about 50 years ago, when Scotts of Merriott, a very famous nursery decided to branch out into, what was then, the 'new-fangled' business of garden centres. Robert Morgan, Nick's father, was a manager and he started work managing the garden centre in Bitton.

Later, Scotts of Merriott changed direction and Robert had the opportunity to buy the business in the late 1980's, with his wife who was a member of the Scott family. "I literally came to the garden centre in nappies," says Nick.

After studying at Writtle Agricultural College in Essex he worked as a management trainee at Wyevale Garden Centres in 1990's and then seized the opportunity of working in Bitton when a job came up at the Garden Centre. In the last 5-10 years Robert has taken a back seat and Nick is now running the business, ably assisted by Matt Pullin, the manager and Luke Gotts, Assistant Manager. Now Matt's wife Dawn works here, and Luke met his partner here, and six years ago Julia, Nick's wife, joined the business after 17 years as a teacher.

Garden Trends

Nick has seen many changes in fashions and attitudes to gardening since he took on the role. Alan Titchmarsh and the garden makeover were a trend in 1990s and then 'Grow your own veg' was a popular movement about ten years ago. The interest in gardens is growing, but the size of the average garden is shrinking. There has been a huge growth in sales of indoor plants, especially 'clean air' plants which bring the outside in. A passion for gardening has permeated through the generations, rather than traditionally being the preserve of older people.

Nick says: "Gardening is now seen much more as a leisure activity, so a cup of tea and a piece of cake are a very important part of our offering, and our café, the Pine Tree Coffee shop in Bitton is very busy. We have rebuilt the coffee shop at our second site, Lakeside, Crockerton near Warminster, to take advantage of the spectacular rural setting. We aim to take out the spikes of seasonality by selling gifts all year round and having a spectacular Christmas display."

Continued overleaf

Bestselling plant

“At this time of year our best-selling plants are geraniums, and lavender is also extremely popular. We grow these at our own nursery in Cranway in Somerset. Patio and herbaceous plants are always on everyone’s shopping list too.”

Bitton

“I have been here nearly all my working life, and my father loves to pop in and have a chat with the customers that know him. Bitton is at the heart of the way we do business,” says Nick.



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**Bitton Village Residents Association
invites you to**

BITTON OPEN GARDENS

On Sunday 16 June 2019

**Gardens will be open to view from 12noon
to 5pm**

**We hope the sun will be shining and the gardens
will be looking their best. There will also be a
Plant Stall and Cream Teas serving from 2pm in the
garden at Church Farm.**

**Programmes with a list of 7 open gardens and a map, will
be available from the end of May at the Village Shop, the
White Hart, the Church, Fonthill Garden Centre, the Swan at
Swineford and the Upton Inn.**

**We will also e-mail the programme
to you if you are on the BVRA mailing list.**

**If you have any plants that you could donate to the
plant stall, we would love to have them. Please can
you clearly label them with the plant name and bring
them along to Church Farm in the morning.**

**For more information contact
Sue Murtagh Tel 932 6232 or e-mail**

Sue.murtagh@btinternet.com

Gabriel Frankcom Tel 932 6158 or e-mail

gabriel01.wood@gmail.com

**Everyone is welcome so do bring your
friends.**

This event is Free.

There is Good News— So let's shout it from the rooftops!

Well June has arrived and we are halfway through the year. June is often referred to as 'flaming June', let us hope so this year.

So how have the first 6 months been for you?

There have been some tragic and some extraordinary events. The tragic events have occurred in Christchurch, New Zealand and in Sri Lanka where Muslim and Christian worshippers were targeted. Then we had the natural disasters in Mozambique and India. There has been political breakdown at home and abroad. Who would have thought that a comedian could be elected president but that is what happened in Ukraine. Then there is the resurgence of far right wing parties in Spain, Germany, France and Italy. And if that wasn't enough our own political system is in absolute melt down caused by the Brexit crisis.

On the plus side, ISIS has been defeated, we have a new Royal baby and both Liverpool and Spurs achieved sporting miracles to reach the Champions League final. (This will have been played by the time you read this, I hope my team won.)

Cricket's world cup will be in full swing in England. And finally we seem to have woken up to the threat of global warming and there is a desire to change the way we live.

It has been an interesting 6 months in our family what with a birth (our great niece Faye) and two weddings, our niece Katie to Luke and our son Kevin to Lucy. So now we have a new daughter in Lucy which is something to celebrate.

How do you rate 2019 so far, is it a glass half empty or a glass half full year?

However you feel about it there is one thing for sure the world lurches from crisis to joy and back again brought about by man's inability to work together and corruption, greed and self interest. Nothing seems to be stable or safe.

Well we can be sure of one thing and that is God's love for us and in the hope that is Jesus Christ. Although Easter has long passed, as Christians we must never forget the Easter message. God loved us so much that he sent his son, Jesus, to die upon the cross and be raised from the dead to conquer sin and death. It is such good news. There is a news organisation called 'rooftop' which only prints good news stories. It is such a good name because of the phrase 'shout it from the rooftops'. We should be doing that shouting it from the roof tops that Jesus is alive.

So although it is hard, try not to worry about the future, if we put our trust in Jesus then God's love will see us through. Because when you see love in action you see God. In Christchurch as well as tragedy, there was love in the way that people responded and supported their Muslim brothers and sisters. In Sri Lanka there was love as Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim people supported their Christian brothers and sisters.

So let us go through the rest of the year strong in faith because wherever there is love there also is God.

John Sibley





The new housing at Bitton Mill is expanding rapidly.

Picture by Carolyn Russell

Spring comes to Bitton



Bitton Village from a less than usual angle above the church tower

Picture; by Carolyn Russell

Focal Point, June 2019



The sun comes out and the flowers begin to bloom

Picture by Carolyn Russell

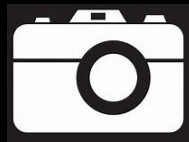


Easter Sunday and the Great Easter Egg Hunt was underway in the church yard. No one went away empty handed.

Pictures by Jim Heavens



Photography Competition



It has never been easier to take a photograph. Most of us now walk round with a mobile phone in our pocket or bag, ready in an instant to record a moment. So if you are just a snapper or someone who takes photography more seriously, here is a competition just for you.

This year's annual fete, will include a photographic competition, open to all and like most of the fete competitions it is intended to be fun and inclusive. How you take the picture, doesn't matter, but it must be your own work and have been taken within the past two years..

The entry fee is £1 per picture. The photograph must be printed and be a maximum size of 200mmx200mm. Entries should, if possible, be supplied in a sealed envelope, and must have attached your name, address, contact number and when the photo was taken. Entries should be received by 6pm on 6 September at the church (further details to follow). There are six categories: for which prizes will be given for the best photo:

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Happy | 4. Architecture |
| 2. Bitton Scenes | 5. Animals / Wildlife |
| 3. Mad Moment | 6. Food |

There will be a junior section for those under 16 (entry fee 50p), but all entries on these themes will be welcome in colour or black and white.

So what are you waiting for?

CAN YOU HELP AT THE FETE?

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.

St Mary's Church Fete Saturday 7th September 2019

Although September seems far away, plans are already underway for this year's annual church fete on 7th September. Stallholders are already starting to receive items, so if you are having a clear out or would like to make a donation of an item, all will be gratefully received.

Books	<i>Sarah Heavens</i>	0117 932 5376
White elephant	<i>Nicola Bennetts</i>	0117 932 4696
Nearly Nu (clothes)	<i>Annette Vowles</i>	0117 932 6352
Bottles	<i>Sarah Craddock</i>	0117 932 8644
Raffle & Tombola	<i>Ann Willis</i>	0117 431 0270
Cakes & Jams	<i>Janet Ballinger</i>	0117 932 4728
Plants	<i>Jean Hook</i>	0117 932 8693

Forthcoming Dates for your diary

Saturday 7 September	Annual Church Fete
Saturday 21 September	Comedy Evening
Sunday 13 October	Harvest Festival
Saturday 19 October	Adrian Snell- piano evening concert

During July and August, Cream Teas will be served each Sunday in the church between 3 and 5 pm

Police stop more than 50 drivers at checkpoint



Police set up a checkpoint last month to raise awareness of speeding and inconsiderate driving through the lanes of Bitton, Upton Cheyney, Beach and the surrounding area.

Volunteers came to help the Parkwall and Bitton Neighbourhood Police Team at their morning of action on Brewery Hill, which runs up from the A431 through Bitton to Upton Cheyney.

More than 50 vehicles were stopped in the layby at the bottom of the hill and drivers were given advice about speeding and erratic driving through the lanes. Further police checks are planned.

Statistics show that 60% of people killed on Britain's roads die on rural roads, and new research shows many more drivers are needlessly putting themselves at risk of an accident. 25% of drivers report having had a near miss on a country road, while 40% have been surprised by an unexpected hazard, such as an animal.

Local people say the introduction at the end of 2017 of a 30mph limit in the network of narrow lanes has not deterred the speed at which some drivers navigate them and that the school run clearly has a significant knock-on effect on traffic as there was a significant decrease during the Easter holidays.

Pc Phil Busvine said the checkpoint had been met with very positive comments from residents and other road users. One vehicle was seized due to no insurance and the occupant reported for numerous driving document offences. A couple of other drivers were advised in relation to their vehicles' lights and road worthiness.

In their letter to motorists, the police team say: "We have been receiving numerous complaints of dangerous driving through the country roads. There are no footpaths through the lanes, leaving pedestrians vulnerable to careless and inconsiderate drivers coming around corners too quickly.

"Residents are also experiencing aggression following poor and inconsiderate driving. Please be courteous to other road users and follow the guidance given by the Highway Code. Please do remember that these lanes are streets that the local residents live along.

Please consider the danger which you are putting yourself, your passengers and other road users in when driving at speed down the lanes. Police will be conducting checks on vehicles in these lanes in coming weeks and months; any offenders will be dealt with."

Newly re-elected councillor Erica Williams thanked the police for their support, adding: "The residents who have been so concerned about speeding in our lanes and the village must be so heartened by such a positive step forward to educate road users who use the lanes daily and are unaware of the danger to themselves and others that they risk by speeding/ driving recklessly."

Becky Feather

FAMILY CAFÉ CHURCH

Sunday 22 June 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
22 June at 9.30***

Charity Focus

Afternoon tea raises money for *RUH Forever Friends*



On Saturday 18 May, Marlene Gallop and Pam Hacker organised a special tea party in St Mary’s Church in support of the Forever Friends Appeal at Royal United Hospital or more correctly the group of hospitals now making up the RUH group.

The charity, which started 20 years ago in 1999 has now raised over £23m for the hospital. While the hospital is maintained and funded by the NHS, but the charity aims to fund additional equipment, research and innovations, as well as finishing touches and ‘extras’ that complement the existing high quality care at the hospitals.

One of the two major campaigns being run at present, is to support the new Dyson Cancer Care Centre, aiming to provide one of the best



cancer care units within a district general hospital. Part of that centre will be the new Facial Surgery and Orthodontics Unit for which the Forever Friends Appeal is aiming to raise a minimum of £200,000 to enhance what the NHS can provide and improve the clinical vision and patient care at the hospital. Marlene is herself a patient at the current clinic and those present heard of the importance both of the unit's work and the future vision from Lynn Howes, the Senior Sister.

All worthwhile and worth a cup of tea and cake and the event proved very popular with the church filled and music for the event provided by the church music group. An amazing £1,288.88 had been raised from the event by the time of going to press with more coming in.

For more information, visit the charity's website:

www.foreverfriendsappeal.co.uk





**Sunday 7 July
4.30 to 6.00**

**James and Jemma invite
everyone to join them for
Songs of Praise in the White
Hart Garden**

**with Oldland Brass and
the St Mary's Music Group**

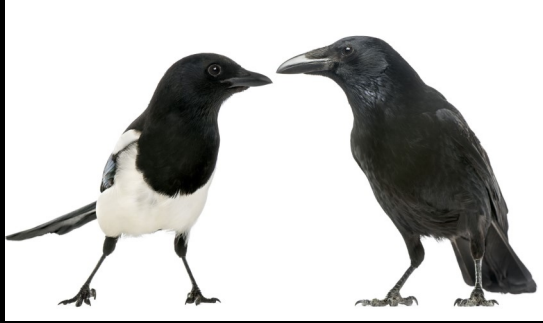
**Barbecue available
from 4.00pm**



Out and about

with Brenda Claxton

**Crows &
Magpies in
my Garden**



Picture: Shutterstock

There has been lot in the news recently about whether farmers should be allowed to shoot crows and magpies because they eat small baby birds, some of which are becoming rare. I love all birds and have been fascinated to read how intelligent crows are, how quickly they learn, and it does seem atrocious for anyone to shoot them.

Unexpectedly I have found myself personally involved in this debate:

We have four bird feeders in our garden - 2 peanuts, 1 mixed seeds and 1 for niger seeds to feed the goldfinches. At this time of year the adult tits can be seen collecting nuts and seeds to feed their growing chicks and I love watching as the blue tits fly from the feeder into the bird box on the house wall, where no doubt the newly hatched chicks are waiting with open mouths.

However, to our consternation, every early morning this spring the crows have dominated the feeders. Unbelievably, as I watched, they have learnt to balance on the peanut feeder and peck out the nuts. Slowly over the past month they have become more adept at this manoeuvre. On the ground beneath prowl the magpies collecting fallen food, their attempts at balancing on the feeder have been unsuccessful.

This has not happened before to my knowledge and as a result of the crows dominating the feeders the small birds are disappearing from the garden. This is a real loss as usually in May we find lots of small baby tits, both great tits and blue tits, start to cluster round the feeders, watching their parents and learning how to feed themselves.

My daughter who lives outside Bath tells me that her garden is filled with baby birds at present but this year I haven't seen any in our garden. Are the crows eating them or just frightening them away, I ask myself?

I also wonder if there is a change happening in the universal crow world since I know from reading the literature that crows first learn new skills from watching each other and then, when a certain number has been reached, the skill can spread intuitively to other crows in other areas without any physical learning taking place. This can also happen within the monkey population.

Is this is what is happening with crows in the UK at present, I ask myself, and I would be interested to hear if anyone else has noticed crows dominating their bird feeders.

I find all of nature beautiful but this change in the bird habits in my own garden both surprises and distresses me for its future implications.

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News from Bitton WI

On Thursday, 11th April one double decker and two single coaches left Keynsham on a federation trip to explore Hereford. Arriving 2 hours later we were met by tour guides and first taken for coffee and then a walking tour of the city. After lunch we went to the cathedral, where a statue of Sir Edward Elgar stands outside. He lived in Hereford between 1904 and 1911 writing some of his most famous works during that time. It was a delightful day although extremely cold.

Our speaker, Sarah Harris, gave a talk at our April meeting on the history of knitting patterns. The oldest knitting was found in Egypt dating back to the 11th century BC, when socks were made through nalbinding an early form of knitting that used one instead of two needles. In the 16th century the English invented the method of pearl stitch. Men were then the main knitters and sea farriers would knit while on watch making windproof thick jumpers. Particular patterns became popular. Each fisherman had their own pattern and if drowned they could be recognised by the pattern on the jumper. All items of clothing were knitted from vests to swimwear. With TV and Woman's Weekly magazine it became very popular, but by the 1990's many wool shops had disappeared. It is coming back into fashion and is recommended for mental health.

Come and join us for our next meeting on the 10th June. at St. Mary's Church Hall 7-30pm

Jean Hook



Bitton Parish History Group: Sir Bernard Lovell and Hat Making in Oldland Common

Two fascinating talks are promised at the June and July meetings of the Bitton Parish History Group.

In June, the meeting will hear a talk on the life of Sir Bernard Lovell, our most famous local person of the twentieth century. Sir Bernard who was born in Oldland was responsible for establishing the Jodrell Bank Observatory, and constructed the then-largest steerable radio telescope in the world, the Lovell Telescope. Appropriately, the meeting is being held at the academy that now proudly bears his name.

The life of Sir Bernard Lovell

27 June 7:00 for 7:30pm at SBL Academy, North St, Oldland Common, BS30 8TS

By contrast the July meeting looks at the local hat industry. In the early nineteenth century, half of the population of Oldland Common were engaged in hat making. Many of the hat-making cottages and workshops still survive. Mike Gates will be our tour guide taking us on a virtual guided tour and talking about the lives of the hat-makers.



The lost industry of hat-making in Oldland Common

23 July 7:00 for 7:30, location to be advised

New Councillors Elected in May Poll

Congratulations to those who were successful in the recent local elections. Elected for South Gloucestershire District Council for Bitton and Oldland were:

Paul Hughes and Erica Williams.

The new council is made up of 33 Conservative Councillors, 17 Liberal Democrats and 11 Labour.

Elected for the Bitton Parish Council for the South Ward were:

Sue Hawking, Erica Williams, Pete Collins and Kim Scudamore.

Politically the new council is made up of 4 Conservatives, 4 Liberal Democrats and 2 Labour members.

Parking restrictions proposed for Bitton and Willsbridge

Consultation is underway on a review of parking restrictions in South Gloucestershire.

Two areas in Bitton are highlighted. In Willsbridge parking restrictions are proposed in the area around the junction of Bath Road, Willsbridge Hill and Keynsham Road, as well as the junction with Kenilworth Drive.

In the centre of Bitton village, parking restrictions, including the imposition of double yellow lines are proposed for areas around the junction of the High Street and Church Road and in parts of Golden Valley Lane.

While there are clear benefits in terms of visibility to pedestrians and motorists, and in addressing complaints voiced by local residents about anti social parking, there are also concerns about the degree to which this is creating further urbanisation within the village, how local business might be affected and the consequences of any parking restriction moving a problem from one location to another.

Local residents wishing to comment on the scheme need to do so by 4 June through an online questionnaire at www.southglos.gov.uk/consultation. A paper copy is also available to those without internet access by contacting the council on 01454 864673.



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May's quiz answers

Last month's quiz was on compound words. The answers are:

1. Head / Wave; 2. Glass; 3. Door; 4. Worm; 5. Fire; 6. Boy; 7. Bag; 8. Finch; 9. Wood / Line; 10. Stand; 11. Ship; 12. Neck; 13. Table; 14. Stock; 15. Sea; 16. High*; 17. Way; 18. Work; 19. Board; 20. Car.

Sorry, I can't accept Back for no. 16 although Backlight and Tailback are great, neither Way Back or Back Way are allowed as a single word.

Correct entries:

John & Debbie Evan

Pam & Jon Booth

This month's winners are **John & Debbie Evans**

The June Quiz

This month's quiz is on British Prime Ministers. How many can you name?

1. The youngest PM to enter office.
2. First female PM.
3. A monument in London recognises him in victory. He fought a duel in Battersea Park.
4. The NHS was set up during his tenure
5. Was PM for only 4 months.
6. Started the transformation of the Tory party into the Conservative Party. Repealed the Corn Laws.
7. Led Britain during World War II.
8. The only PM to be assassinated.
9. His wife loved Byron and he shares his name with an international airport.
10. Confessed to running through fields of wheat.
11. Signed the Treaty of Versailles.
12. Resigned due to a canal problem. Became Earl of Avon.
13. Paid £150 3s 6d to have a bath with hot and cold water installed in 10 Downing Street.
14. Was nicknamed "Super....." after a cartoon image.
15. The only PM to serve under 3 kings.
16. The oldest PM on original appointment.
17. He died while resident in Downing Street.
18. Resigned PM role then 2 days later returned to the role.
19. First PM to become a peer after ending their PM term.
20. The last PM NOT to fight a general election to gain office or while they held office (at time of going to press).

Name:

Contact:

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



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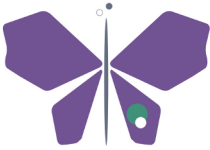
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The last word

The garden appears in the Bible as much as a symbol as a reality. The allegorical creation of man begins with Adam and Eve coming not out of a wilderness but in a garden from which they are later banished. When Christ is arrested before his trial and crucifixion, it takes place not in public but in the Garden of Gethsemane where he has sheltered to pray. In his first encounter following his resurrection he is initially mistaken by Mary Magdalene for a gardener.



Throughout history gardens are places that are distinct from other areas, where things are ordered, tamed and nurtured. They can be places of calm and refuge, a source of food and of beauty and are something of an obsession to the British, not uniquely, but certainly differently. What other country, for example, has so many gardening clubs and horticultural societies; where else do you find competitions for extraordinarily sized vegetables?

Bitton has some beautiful gardens and the Open Gardens event each year has given the opportunity to visit and enjoy a wide range of styles and techniques. There have been some large beautifully landscaped gardens alongside smaller and more intimate ones all brushed up to look their best on the day. It seems difficult to believe that it is only in its twelfth season as it has become such an established event and has provided the theme for this edition. Thank you to all those who have contributed and to those who will be opening their gardens on 16th June.

Next month, it is intended to look away from local matters and to the work that has been undertaken by the Church Missionary Society in Uganda, where Corrie Verduyn, (who has been partly supported by St Mary's) has transformed maternity services in a remote part of the country. We are hoping that Corrie, who has now completed her time in Uganda, will be visiting Bitton in July to tell us more about her work in person.

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