

Focal Point

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December 2019

This was the real light—the light that comes into the world and shines on all people. *John 1.9*



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Focal Point

December 2019

Cover—*The real light.*

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please contact the editor.

**FOR ALL FOCAL POINT
INQUIRIES**

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*Deadline for the January
magazine is:*

Friday 6 December

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Advent & Christmas Services at St Mary's

- | | | |
|--|---------|--|
| Sunday 8
December | 10.30 | Family Parade and Café Church
Christmas Special <i>(see also page 23)</i>
<i>Café style service with coffee. Please bring
an unwrapped gift of new or nearly new
toys, books or toiletries or some biscuits,
coffee or tins of soup, gloves or socks for
needy families in the Bristol area.</i> |
| Sunday 22
December | 10.30am | Christmas Reflections
A quiet service of pre-Christmas reflection
and prayer. |
| | 6.30pm | Candlelight Carol Service
<i>A traditional service of lessons and carols
with St Mary's Choir and Music Group and
the Bitton Community Choir</i> |
| Tuesday 24
December
CHRISTMAS
EVE | 4.00pm | Family Crib service
<i>Younger worshippers are invited to dress
up as angels, shepherds or wise men – or
even sheep or camels – to take part in the
Christmas story and in the singing of
carols.</i> |
| | 11.00pm | Midnight Communion
<i>Welcome Christmas with a traditional
service of communion.</i> |
| Wednesday
25
December
CHRISTMAS
DAY | 8.00am | Holy Communion |
| | 10.30am | Christmas Praise
<i>A service aimed at all the family with a
special Christmas theme.</i> |

NOMINE

The choir supporting the Children's Hospice South West
presents a

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featuring

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at

U.C.L.G. Longwell Green

on

Friday 13th December at 7.30pm

Entrance is free!

Retiring collection taken to support the work of the
Children's Hospice South West



Further details of programme on website

www.webjam2.com/nomine_bristol

A message from the Vicar



Shutterstock

The rich tradition of contemplation at Christmas

The other day I found myself whistling the tune to “Sitting on the Dock of the Bay” a song made popular by the soul singer Otis Redding. I normally associate this with the summer; hot lazy days sitting and watching the world go by, so it seemed odd to be whistling it in the winter on a day which started with snow. I am not surprised by this as on summer days I can be found sometimes absentmindedly humming Christmas carols. At least this second admission gives a bit of a Summer/winter balance. As I whistled, I was suddenly struck by the words at the end of the chorus which are, “sitting on the dock of the bay, wasting time.” The words caught my attention because these days we hear a lot about waste and its corollary recycling. On the one hand time is so precious (or are we too busy?) that to waste time seems a minor offence or even a sin. But what if “sitting on the dock of the bay”, or your equivalent of that, is not wasting time but recycling it?

There is a rich Christian tradition of recycling time. Sitting and contemplating the world around you is not wasting time but being mindful

Continued overleaf

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of your surroundings. Mindfulness is the contemporary title for this activity which is ancient in its practice. Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises*, Teresa of Avila's *Interior Castle*, John of the Cross' *dark night of the soul* and St Francis' *Canticle of the Sun* all speak of this mystical and contemplative tradition; all were proponents of recycling time.

We know that recycling is good as we load up our tins and cardboard in the proper receptacles and put it outside our front gates on the right day. A spirituality that recycles time, that is, doesn't waste it by sitting and contemplating the world, but uses it to develop the inner life, to stop and take stock, is a healthy spirituality.

It seems to me that this is the very spirituality we need as we begin to prepare ourselves for Christmas during the season of Advent. Granted you will have to be determined about it, but it will lead you to a richer and deeper celebration of Christmas if you do. Rev. Susie Bishop offers the ideal time for this on 30th November as she leads us in an Advent quiet day. (Contact Susie for details)

Advent is a time for "sitting on the dock of the bay, [and]wasting time".
With every good wish for advent and Christmas.

Jeremy

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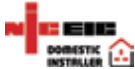
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- Churches & Services -



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CHURCH,
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Vicar:

Rev Jeremy Andrew
The Vicarage, Warmley
0117 967 2724

Ordained ministers:

Rev Richard Humphrey
Splinters, Kenilworth Drive
Willsbridge 0117 949 0502

Rev Susie Bishop

revsusiebishop.uk@gmail.com
07415 831488

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

Services in December

Sunday 1 December	ADVENT SUNDAY 10.30am Parish Communion
Sunday 8 December	SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT 8.00am Holy Communion 10.30am Family Parade and Café Church Christmas Special
Sunday 15 December	THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT 10.30am Morning Worship
Sunday 22 December	FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT 8.00am Holy Communion 10.30am A Christmas reflection 6.230pm Candlelight Carol Service
Tuesday 24 December	CHRISTMAS EVE 4.00pm Family Crib service 11.00pm Midnight Communion
Wednesday 25 December	CHRISTMAS DAY 8.00am Holy Communion 10.30am Christmas Praise
Sunday 29 December	CHRISTMAS I NO SERVICE AT ST MARY'S 10.30 Benefice Communion Service at St Anne's Syston

For further details about all Advent and Christmas services, please see page 7

St Mary's flower rota 2020

Thank you to all who arrange such lovely altar flowers throughout the year, it is greatly appreciated. I shall be in Church on Saturday 11th January to arrange the rota for 2020, please join me for coffee and biscuits at around 10.30am. Look forward to seeing you all. Wishing you all a Happy Christmas. **Judith Butson**

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UPTON CHEYNEY United Reformed Church



Sunday services are at 3pm

Services in December :

December 1st	Service led by Michelle Bates
December 8th	Service led by Janet Donnelly
December 15th	Service led by Jeremy Andrew
December 22nd	Carol Service led by Steve Britton
December 29th	Bible Study



Come to our Christmas themed

Coffee Afternoon

2pm on Tuesday 10th December. Music will be provided by Jenny and Natalie.



News from Upton Cheyney URC

We have just had Remembrance day itself. At Upton our service was led by Ken Gibson with Jeff Dando reciting the words we all recognise. For the past few years we have been especially remembering the local people from our war memorials who died in World War One. Missing from our memorial are the names of all the other people who went to war. Those who were injured. Those who came back spared, to return to their old way of life. Those who had been doing their bit on the home front for example farming to provide food, making armaments and carrying out other essential work. Perhaps for future years, we should try to find out more about them and remember them too.



Stuart Turner

There are no names on our war memorial for World War Two, nor indeed for any subsequent war. How can we remember them?

World War Two: how did it impact Upton Cheyney, Beach, Golden Valley and Bitton itself? Yes some people went off to fight. Les Hall was mentioned on Sunday. He evidently joined the Somerset Light Infantry and some people were directed to other work. But what of the people who stayed here, how did their life change? Again, last Sunday three examples were discussed. Firstly, the searchlight and Nissan huts situated in the field opposite the bottom of Brewery Hill. How often did the light break the night sky? Who operated it?

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Secondly, there were all the Italian prisoners of war who were dropped off every day to work in the farms and fields around here. How many were there? How did they interact with the locals? Evidently one fell off the truck and was killed going round the sharp bend in Mill Lane. Do we remember him? Does his family in Italy remember him as we do?

Finally, what about the night Upton Cheyney was bombed? There were two bomb shelters in Upton. One at the school and one behind the memorial seat at the Upton crossroads. They were only needed once when Upton had five bombs dropped on the village. Probably just left overs they got rid of on their way home after bombing Bristol? Five bombs. One near Fifteen Acres farm, one near the close, one up Marshfield Lane, One up Lansdown field where the chilly farm is now and one at Chetwynds. No casualties, but it brought the war literally to the garden gates of our villages.

These memories come from talking to just a couple of local people. How many other local people should we talk to and listen to so that we can remember more of their memories on future Remembrance Days?



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St Mary's Matters

.The Adrian Snell concert in St Mary's turned out to be a great success and raised a substantial amount of money for The Life Project in Bath. This charity is doing amazing work with children with learning disabilities. Do find out more about them from their website www.lifeprojectbath.org.uk.

Many thanks to all those who helped to organise this.

As always it was a privilege to host the Remembrance Sunday service on 10th November. The fact that this service continues to be well attended by people of all ages shows that there is still deep respect for those who have died in past conflicts. May we all remember in our prayers

those areas of the world where conflict is still continuing and for those who are working to relieve suffering and work for peace.

December is of course the time when we anticipate the coming of *The Prince of Peace*. As always there will be a wide variety of services taking place in St Mary's during Advent and Christmas. This year we are taking a new approach to the Gift Service on the 8th December. We will be combining elements of the usual parade service with a café church style. The theme will be "Preparing for Christmas" and as well as collecting toys, games and food to be distributed locally there will be an opportunity to decorate the Christmas tree, get involved in a craft activity and hear about why it is that we give Christmas presents.

More information about all our Christmas services is available here in the magazine and on our website. Everyone will be most welcome



Pete Midgley

BVRA elects new committee members and chair

In last month's Focal Point we incorrectly reported that Becky Feather was the new chair of Bitton Village Residents' Association. Becky was in fact elected as a new committee member at the AGM. Sue Wakefield and Anna Palmer also joined as new members. At the BVRA's November meeting, Andrew Ward was re-elected as chair for a further year, with Anna Palmer elected as vice-chair.

COME CAROL SINGING IN BITTON

THURSDAY 19 DECEMBER

6.30 for 6.45: Meet at the Christmas Tree outside the White Hart

To sing carols around the village and bring a touch of Christmas cheer to the house bound. Carol sheets provided but wrap up warm and bring a torch.

7.30 in the White Hart

James and Jemma invite the whole Bitton community to sing carols in the White Hart. Mulled wine and mince pies will be available.



The new Area Dean



Rev Jeremy Andrew—taking on new role as Area Dean

It is now 5 years since Jeremy left Cornwall to return to the Bristol area and to the benefice of Bitton, Syston and Warmley as vicar of all three parishes. One might have thought trying to juggle the needs of three quite different parishes would be enough, but he has now, at the bishop's invitation, taken up a wider role of Area Dean for the Kingswood and South Gloucestershire Deanery. I talked to him about his new role and what it would mean for the three parishes and for the deanery area he now covers.

It is clear that Jeremy is looking forward to his new responsibilities taking shape and is very positive about the benefits. It is still early days for the new position which usually runs for 5 years and it was clear that Jeremy was still finding his way in. The role usually comes with some additional administrative support, but that has been lacking as the secretary to Jeremy's predecessor, Si Jones decided to retire when Si came to the end of his appointment. As a result, the process of handover has been slightly more complicated, but Jeremy hopes to have a new administrator in post soon. Once that happens, he expects the new role to take up about a day a week of his time.

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So, what is an area dean exactly. Jeremy explained that it is really one of those jobs that is largely what you make of it. Looking at the job specification that is quite true, as like many job descriptions these days, it doesn't set out a list of duties, so much as context, purpose and responsibilities – in many ways more visionary than specific. Undoubtedly it is one of leadership rather than management, creating connections between the bishop and the diocese and the clergy and church in the parishes within South Gloucestershire and that part of Kingswood that is within Bristol itself and which defines the boundaries of the deanery. The area dean leads the deanery chapter – the meeting of all the ordained clergy and the deanery synod, a much wider group of elected members from each parish within the deanery area. In that way much of the role is really about communications and ensuring that they are two way – from the bishop and the diocese to the parishes and the parishes to the bishop, but also in the round enabling greater fellowship and shared experiences from amongst the group of parishes.

The other side of the role is really about pastoral responsibilities, supporting colleagues in other parishes, helping to develop new lay and ordained ministers and supporting the process of filling vacancies when parish clergy leave. Clearly such activities will vary according to need and could take up more than the one day he expects to devote to the role – but Jeremy feels well supported by the ministry teams he has in all three parishes.

It is also a role for which he is well suited. Having spent much of the past year supporting Bishop Viv on secondment to the diocese and, both in Cornwall and Bristol, mentored and developed new priests for the ministry, Jeremy has a wide understanding about the needs of the clergy and of the administrative aspects of the diocese. He feels he can bring that experience to bear in his new role, but acknowledges it is still early days for him and he is more in the period of identifying what he needs to do.

One thing he is clear about is that his new role will be a significant benefit to the local benefice and the three parishes. "It gives the benefice a much closer connection with the Bishop and what is going on," he said. It also gives the three parishes a slightly higher profile within the diocese too. But it also provides much greater connection with other parishes and the opportunity to learn and share about new developments and practices. One key aspect of the new role is the Creating Connections initiative within the Bristol Diocese that seeks to connect people, growing

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leaders, connecting with others and developing plans that make the church more accessible particularly to new generations.

One service that has seen substantial growth in Bitton has been Family Café Church, a once a month service aimed at families with young children, that has attracted people who might not otherwise have come to church. Much of its structure and its name was due to Jeremy and his concept of it although he feels its development was more organic, something whose time had come in replacing the former Sunday Funday which took place in the church hall, bringing it into the church. He feels his role was much more one of him “giving permission” to others who were keen to do something along those lines. It was helped too by the temporary removal of the pews which has meant that the service has more room and that the young children and adults who attend have the opportunity to make use of the space for craft and other activities.

What is much more of a challenge is to maintain that connection with older children and teenagers where opportunities are currently lacking. In large towns and cities it is possible to take on a youth worker and put on large events and services aimed at that age group, but that is much more difficult elsewhere and joining with others across a deanery can be more effective – putting on trips or events that are attractive to such an age group that they may come again.

Making connections and growing congregations is not easy anywhere, but with a diverse and complex area like Kingswood and South Gloucestershire, it is clearly a challenge that Jeremy looks forward to.

Jim Heavens



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BIBLE READING NOTES FOR 2020



Would you like to order a booklet which provides a reading for each day plus some comments? Quite a few people at St Mary's find this helpful and I will be happy to order a booklet for you covering a four month period starting on 1 January 2020.

There is a specimen to look at in Church. Why not try it as you go into the New Year and if you do like the booklet then I can then add you to the list of people for whom I get them 3 times a year.

Ken Gibson

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Family Parade and Café Church Christmas Special



**Sunday 8 December at 10.30
at St Mary's**

Please bring an unwrapped gift of new or nearly new toys, books or toiletries or some biscuits, coffee or tins of soup, gloves or socks for needy families in the Bristol area to be placed beneath the tree which we will decorate during the Café style service which will also feature craft.

Coffee, tea and soft drinks will be served throughout and at the end of the service the Scouts will be selling cakes for Group Funds.



Date for the Fête

The date for next year's annual St Mary's Fête has been set for **Saturday 29th August 2020**. A date for your diary only at this point as no fete activity or planning takes place before the end of April, but anyone willing to help make next year's fête a success should contact Helen Pugsley on 07767 777019 .



Help mothers use their God-given gifts to escape poverty

Mothers like Ranjita are strong, determined and resourceful.

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Christmas Appeal 2019

'Suffer little children to come unto me'

– and their mothers too! At Christmas we remember how Mary journeyed to Bethlehem and gave birth in a stable. Too many women are still denied decent medical conditions because of poverty and, all too often, when children are born it is their mother who struggles to support the family. It's a battle against poverty, inequality, violence and injustice.

Christian Aid seeks, through local partners, to support women in their attempts to liberate themselves, their families and others from oppression and that's the focus of the Christmas appeal. The envelopes will be in the pews over the Christmas period. Please give generously.

Nicola Bennetts



History Group hears of devastating Civil War

Bitton History Group was treated to a lecture by Professor Ronald Hutton of Bristol University on the subject of the English Civil War. At a very well attended meeting (there was standing room only for the last to arrive), the professor gave an overview of the war, with interesting accounts from his study of the period over many years.

Dismissing the idea that the war was the inevitability of social changes in the years before the conflict, he argued that the war began because of collapse at the centre, that divided Parliament, raised suspicions about the motives of the King and led to people in the country taking sides on the basis of their own personal interest or beliefs. It led to the most bloody conflict in British history, with proportionately more casualties and fatalities than any of the wars that followed including the First World War.



Sir Bevil Grenville after an unknown artist

Line engraving, mid 18th century
NPG D27006© National Portrait Gallery, London

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A good portion of his lecture was given over to the Battle of Lansdown fought in July 1643 near Hanging Hill between the Royalist forces under Sir Ralph Hopton and the Parliamentarians under Sir William Waller. Although it was not a victory for either side, the most notable event being the successful storming of Lansdown by Sir Bevil Grenville's Cornish infantry, in what must have seemed an almost suicidal attack on Hopton's forces that were dug in at the top of a steep escarpment. Sir Bevil himself was fatally wounded and died later at Cold Ashton, but it is his monument that stands on the top of Lansdown now close to where the battle took place.

The professor also recounted how parts of England were devastated by the war as food and any items that could be used by the army was commandeered. While great landowners such as Sir Bevil Grenville could raise vast armies in the name for the King or Parliament, it placed an enormous burden on landholdings and their tenants who were expected not only to volunteer to fight, but indirectly to pay for the conflict.



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Odd collection sheds light on parish magazine of the past



The leather bound collection from 1881

Fancy a Focal Point Annual for Christmas? You may be relieved to know that we don't do one. Focal Point is available on the St Mary's website - stmarysbitton.org.uk -and there is a large, though far from complete collection, dating back to the 1950s. The earliest copy being one from 1948. As far as we know, no-one has ever thought it worth binding them into an annual library collection.

Other parishes seem to have taken a different approach, or so it would seem through an interesting collection of parish magazines from the parish of St John's Rownham, from 1881, bound together as a single volume. The parish and its church, which exist to this day, are situated on the outskirts of Southampton.

The collection was given as a present to Anna Watling, a self-confessed collector of odd things and was shared with Focal Point. Like many church magazines of the period the local element of the magazine was wrapped round a national publication called New & Old which is really of little interest. The real gems come in the wrap around section that seems largely to have been written by the parish priest.

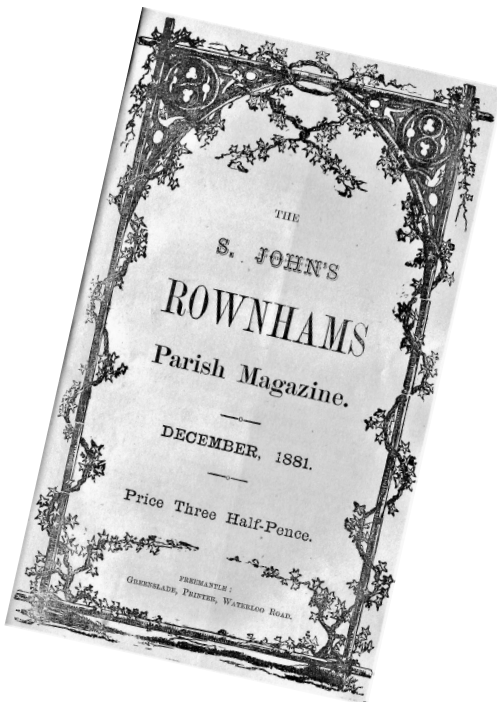
It was an exciting year nationally – one that saw the introduction of the postal order and when Godalming became the first town in Britain to have its streets lit by electricity. It was also the year of the death of Disraeli and the founding of *The People* newspaper and *Tit-Bits* magazine.

Perhaps it was the competition from such journals that led the vicar to decide not to keep publishing, for he seems to have failed to produce an edition for January and had done so in February after a clamour of popular demand. His subjects were less racy than those in the new press such as the Coal and Clothing Charities, the local delights of school treats, the cricket club and rats!

The collection, however, has a poignant end with the announcement that the vicar of 19 years standing is to be “going away”. He was 73 years of age and, as was the case with incumbents at that time, had the job for life. He was not it seems giving up the parish but taking a break and takes his leave through the pages of the magazine. Was the magazine continued by his replacement? Alas we do not know.

One thing that is apparent is the change in prices. A new heating system was installed in the church for the sum of £21. The price of the magazine itself was three halfpence (for those not old enough to remember the pre 1971 currency that amounts to about ½ penny in today’s money), but still most likely bought only by the most well-heeled of the parish at a time when a craftsman could earn little more than the modern equivalent of 20p per day.

Thank you, Anna, for sharing this with us and may your collection of such fascinating things grow.



The decorated cover for the December edition

You are invited to a
BURNS' SUPPER
on Saturday 1 February 2020 at 7.30pm



at St Mary's Church Bitton

Piper and Scottish Dancers
Two course haggis supper
Bar available

Tickets Adults £10 Children £5
from the Gibsons 932 2122
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News on the Defibrillator

The defibrillator is now installed on the outside wall of The White Hart Pub.

It is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Anyone phoning 999 in an emergency will be provided with the passcode to unlock the cabinet.

A huge thank-you to everyone that contributed to the defibrillator including:

- The fundraising committee
- The staff and patrons of The White Hart Pub
- The White Hart Pub quiz group and curry chef
- People who donated through the fundraising website
- The electrician that installed the defibrillator
- And a huge thank-you to Church Road resident, Duncan Wilson, who donated an amazing £625

There will be a 2 hour first aid demonstration covering the use of a defibrillator at St Mary's Church Hall, Church Lane, Bitton on Saturday 8th February 2020. Time 10:00am - 12 noon

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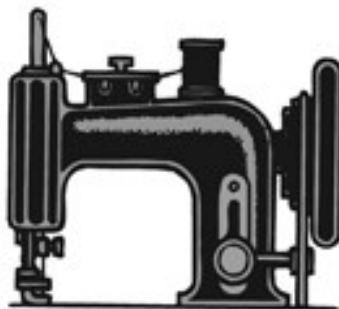
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News from Bitton WI

November is our General meeting and at it, Ann Coales ended her three years as president. She has done a splendid job.

After Ros Knight had read the minutes and Ann had given her report for the year, it was time to elect a new president, with the help of Laura Tarr W. I. adviser (see below).

After refreshments of cheese, biscuits and wine, Ann and Lesley Brain read pieces from the Upton Cheyney W.I. scrap book for 1965, as follows:

“The village consists of fifty houses and cottages, with a population of one hundred and fifty five. Industry is provided on farm and horticulture for the large part of the community.

This year there have been three births and there are now more than a dozen children school age in the village.

Several years ago piped water supply was brought to parts of Upton Cheyney. The village has a telephone kiosk and mail box, but no post office, letters are delivered each morning from the post office in Bitton: the main part of the village has afternoon delivery. Newspapers and periodicals are brought with unfailing regularity and at an hour which could do credit to many urban rounds.”

We found it very interesting and not a great deal has changed. ***Oh! and I was voted new president.***

I wish you all a very Happy Christmas.

Our next meeting is our Christmas party on 9th December.

Jean Hook





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November's quiz answers

Last month's quiz was on fifty pence pieces. The correct answers are:

(1) 7; (2) 4; (3) 1997; (4) Christopher Ironside; (5) 1982; (6) olive branch; (7) Isaac Newton; (8) Roger Bannister; (9) Benjamin Britten; (10) Sherlock Holmes; (11) Sir Isaac Newton; (12) marmalade sandwich; (13) Girl Guiding; (14) Samuel Johnson's; (15) 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow; (16) Kew; (17) Beatrix Potter; (18) Public Libraries Act; (19) Paddington; (20) Peace, prosperity and friendship with all nations 31 October 2019.

There were two entries with correct answers from:

Pam & Jon Booth and Sheila Read. Sarah Craddock was very close with 19 correct answers.

This month's winner is Sheila Read

The December Quiz

This month's quiz is all about Christmas This quiz is mainly about having fun, so I have bought a box of Christmas biscuits this month for a randomly chosen entry, correct or not. This is in addition to the regular prize for most correct answers, so Merry Christmas and Good Luck!

1. How many official UK white Christmases happened in the 20th century?
2. What is the bestselling Christmas single ever ?
3. In the 17th century who banned Christmas pudding and mince pies in England ?
4. Which group have had most UK Christmas number 1 singles ?
5. Which Christmas movie does Donald Trump make a short appearance in ?
6. In which country do people traditionally eat KFC for Christmas dinner ?
7. What is the only single to twice get the UK Christmas Number One single ?

For the questions below, I'll accept answers to the nearest:

- | | |
|--|------------|
| 8. The number of participants in the largest ever secret Santa? | 1,000 |
| 9. How much does Slade make in royalties each year from <i>Merry Christmas Everybody</i> ? | £10,000 |
| 10. How many mince pies are sold in the UK over the Christmas period? | 10 million |
| 11. Number of rolls of sticky tape sold in the run up to Christmas in the UK? | million |
| 12. Length of Christmas wrapping paper used in the UK each year in miles? | 50 miles |
| 13. How many Lego sets are sold every hour in the Christmas period? | 10,000 |
| 14. I what year was Rudolph the red nosed reindeer first thought up? | decade |
| 15. When was the first Christmas celebrated? | century |
| 16 The number of Christmas puddings sold in the UK each year? | million |
| 17. How many Christmas trees are sold in the UK each year ? | million |
| 18. Number of calories in an average UK Christmas dinner? | 100 cals |
| 19. % of families in the UK that watch the Queen's Speech? | 5% |
| 20. The estimated cost of unwanted Christmas presents each year in the UK ? | £ million |

Name:

Contact:

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



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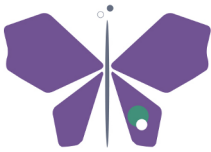
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The last word



The December edition of Focal Point is usually one to reflect on the year past and the special occasion of Christmas. But as this edition goes out the country has yet to go to the polls for the third general election in less than 5 years and the fifth national poll if the referendum and the European elections are included. Let us hope that the Christmas that follows enables us to seek some reconciliation in the celebration of the birth of the Prince of Peace.

It was around this time last year that I agreed to take on the editorship of Focal Point and while I have yet to produce a full year's worth of editions, it is as good a moment as any to reflect on what has been and could be. First, I am grateful for the many positive comments that have been made about the few changes and content that I have made. The magazine had, long ago, ceased to be a purely church focused publication but one that also tried to reflect the various events and activities that make up the life of the community. We are fortunate to have a number of community groups and activities, some of which I have been able to include, but I recognise that there are others that fail to gain adequate cover. So, here is an open invitation to anyone who wishes to write about their group or area of interest to come forward and tell us about it.

Second, criticism can also be useful, and while making significant change to layout and content takes time, I recognise that there is an appetite for a calendar of events and a plea (that I hope I have been able to address) to ensure that the typeface is easily readable.

With the end of the year too, we will be asking for your subscriptions for 2020 and I am pleased to tell you that there will be no increase this year and the magazine subscription will remain £10 for the full 12 issues.

Finally, may I apologise for the error in the November edition which contained an error about the election of the chair of the BVRA. This was corrected in the edition on the website and a correction is published in this edition, but we will strive for greater accuracy in the future.

With best wishes for Christmas and the new year,
Jim Heavens

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