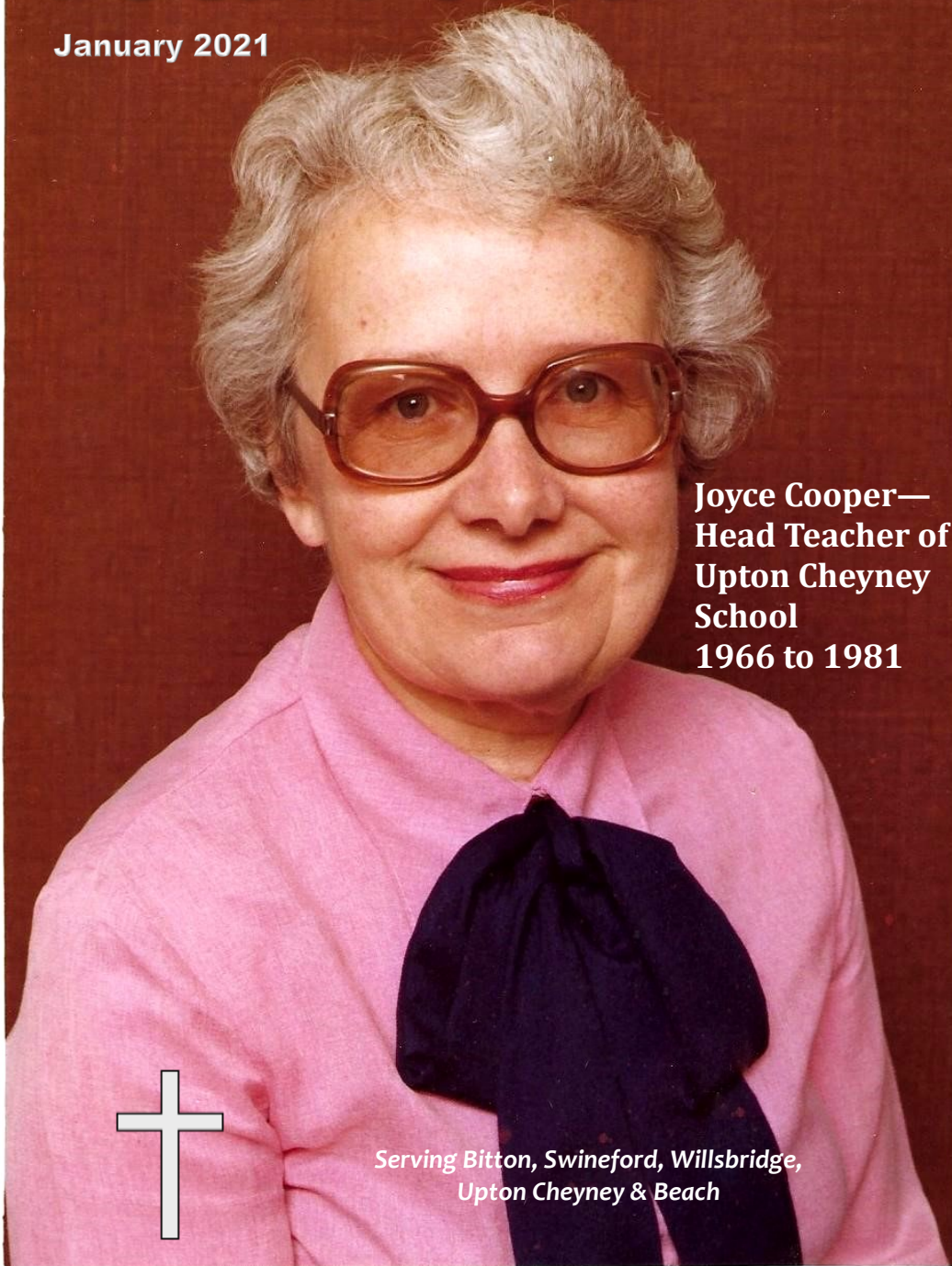


Focal Point

£1

January 2021



Joyce Cooper—
Head Teacher of
Upton Cheyney
School
1966 to 1981



*Serving Bitton, Swineford, Willsbridge,
Upton Cheyney & Beach*

KNOWLEDGE. INTEGRITY. RESULTS.

When it comes to moving home, you need professionals who are trained and trustworthy, with in-depth local knowledge and the technology and connections to market your property.

As exclusive Members of The Guild of Property Professionals we can meet your needs and clearly stand apart from the competition in both sales and lettings.

Contact us for a free confidential marketing appraisal

DAVIES & WAY

CHARTERED SURVEYORS • ESTATE AGENTS

SOLD

SUBJECT TO CONTRACT

0117 9863681

daviesandway.com

Keynsham Office

1 High Street, Keynsham

Bristol, BS31 1DP

0117 9863681

keynsham@daviesandway.com

Saltford Office

489 Bath Road, Saltford

Bristol, BS31 3BA

01225 400400

saltford@daviesandway.com

www.daviesandway.com



Your property in Park Lane

Showcase your property to the
lucrative London market



By instructing your local Fine & Country agent, your property will not only be marketed locally and regionally, but nationally and even internationally via Fine & Country's Head Office and Showroom located at one of the most prestigious addresses in the world – 121 Park Lane, Mayfair, London W1.

With over 40ft of window display on Park Lane, we not only reach a lucrative buyers' market other agents cannot, we also market all Fine & Country properties 24/7 through touchscreen technology, enabling customers to browse the details of Fine & Country properties from around the globe, even when the office is closed.

For more information on promoting your property in our Park Lane office or for a free valuation, please contact:
Homes of Bath Fine & Country, 36 Gay Street, Bath, Somerset, BA1 2NT
01225 320032 | bath@fineandcountry.com
homesofbath.co.uk | fineandcountry.com



FONTHILL
garden centre



A family run business that's been growing since 1967.

www.fonthill-lakeside.com



BATH ROAD, BITTON. 0117 932 3110
OPEN MON-FRI 8.00-5.00 SAT 9.00-5.00 SUN 10.30-4.30



Focal Point

Bitton Churches' Magazine

January 2021

Serving Bitton, Swineford,
Willsbridge,
Upton Cheyney & Beach

To advertise in Focal Point
please contact Roger Tiller
rogj.tiller@hotmail.com

FOR ALL FOCAL POINT INQUIRIES

Editor: Jim Heavens

Phone: 07720 248534

Email:

jimheavens@outlook.com

Website:

www.stmarysbitton.org.uk

*Deadline for the February
magazine is:*

Monday 18 January 2021

In this month's Focal Point:

- Page 6 The Last Word—First
- Page 15 *Jillanne Norman*
Coronavirus Reflections
- Page 18 An online Christmas
- Page 19 Joyce Cooper—A life well
lived—David Bailey**
- Page 22 *The History of The Lons—
The second part of the
researches of the Bitton
History Group*
- Page 25 ***In profile: Richard
Humphrey***
- Page 28 ***Martin Hetzel—Taking
part in Covid Vaccine
Trials***
- Page 30 A Thank You from Uganda
- Page 31 **David Harris - Tribute**
- Page 35 Consultation begins on
South Gloucestershire Local
plan
- Page 36 *WI News*
- Page 42 **This month's quiz**

**Churches' news and
information about acts of
worship pages 10 to 13**

The last word— first



Welcome to the first Focal point of 2021. Like every new year, we look forward with hope and the promise of better things to come. To those of us who have been fortunate to survive the past year well, that may simply be the hope, not so much of better but that things might just return to normal. With the prospect and the reality of a vaccine we can surely look forward to a time when a mask is no longer required to enter a shop, when journeys on public transport do not have to be meticulously planned and when one can simply go to church or a pub because they are open to all and without booking a seat.

There are very many who have been far less fortunate and for whom normal will require for more than the reduction of pandemic restrictions. For those who have lost family members, or whose jobs or livelihoods have disappeared, it probably won't seem like back to normal for quite some time and they will need continuing support.

Looking back through the 2020 editions of Focal point, not only did I find something of a record of the way in which the year changed us and the way we live our lives, but perhaps too some images of how a community has and could continue to pull together. Four, shown opposite, stand out:

The first is a blustery Saturday in February when the BVRA organised its annual litter pick. This took place only a few weeks before lockdown and few of us had any inkling of what was about to come. I expect many have been even more appreciative of our environment in the months that have followed.

Two months later and the first lockdown saw rainbow pictures appear all over the village, representing hope but also gratitude for those working in the NHS which was shown in many other ways too, including the weekly clap for carers. This particular mosaic rainbow is my favourite.

My third picture is one snapped online, and it really requires to be heard rather than seen. It shows the St Mary's Minstrels, our highly talented church music group, who, when excluded from the church, started playing music online. They were not the only ones to make their activities virtual. Church services, group meetings and a whole host of other events found itself on Zoom or Teams.

Focal Point, January 2021



The last picture shows Becky Feather drawing the raffle as part of the St Mary's virtual fete. It wasn't possible to hold our annual fete, but we found ways round it. Tea parties were held instead in people's gardens and there was a sell out in the raffle tickets.

If there is a new normal after the pandemic, then one can hope that our experience during the pandemic will help keep that community spirit alive. For those who for all sorts of reasons have not been able to weather the storm of the pandemic as well as others, it may be the essential element.

Jim Heavens, Editor

Focal Point Subscriptions

The annual subscription for Focal Point remains at £10 for 12 copies.

Subscriptions for 2021 will cover 12 monthly issues to January 2022, inclusive and may be paid now or collected with the February distribution. Payment may be made by cash or cheque payable to

Bitton Churches' Magazine.

S M Wilkins Electrical Services

- ◆ **FREE QUOTES**
- ◆ **COMPETITIVE RATES**
- ◆ **FULLY INSURED**
- ◆ **SIX-YEAR WARRANTY**
- ◆ **OVER 20 YEARS' EXPERIENCE**

- Testing & inspection
- Landlord certs (EICR)
- Fault finding/repairs
- Fuse board replacement
- Extra sockets/lights
- Cooker/shower installation
- Smoke alarms
- Security/outdoor lighting



Mobile: 0771 218 9118



Email: smwilkins.electricalservices@gmail.com

A small and friendly practice providing
the very best care for animals and their owners

OLDLAND HOUSE Veterinary Surgery

Stephen Pullan, BVSc, MRCVS
103 High Street, Oldland Common, Bristol
Monday-Friday 8am-7.30pm: Saturday 10-12am
Tel: 0117 932 3100



E. C. Alderwick & Son Ltd
Funeral Directors

Serving Bristol since 1945

Kingswood - 11 Regent Street, Kingswood, Bristol, BS15 8JX
Tel: 0117 967 3609

Hanham - 71 High Street, Hanham, Bristol, BS15 3DG
Tel: 0117 935 3746

HRD Hardware

**New owners Jim & Janette
look forward to welcoming you**

Plumbing & electrical supplies
pet foods - paints - tools - gifts
fabric dyes - paraffin

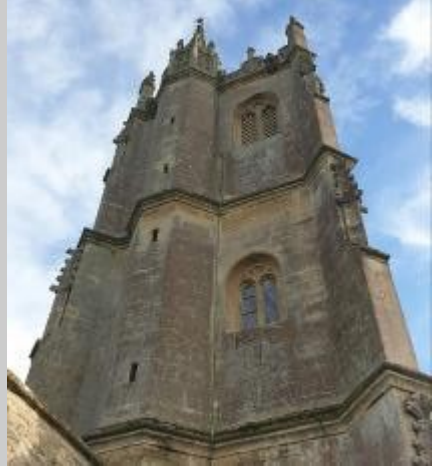
20 Westcourt Drive, Oldland Common

- Churches & Services -



**ST MARY'S
CHURCH,
BITTON**

www.stmarysbitton.org.uk



Vicar:

Rev Jeremy Andrew
The Vicarage, Warmley
0117 967 2724

Ordained minister:

Rev Richard Humphrey
Splinters, Kenilworth Drive
Willsbridge **0117 949 0502**

Lay ministers:

Ken Gibson, 8 Church Road,
Bitton
0117 932 2122

Churchwardens:

Pete Midgley
30 Kenilworth Drive, Willsbridge
0117 932 6898

David Bailey, Westover,
Bath Road, Bitton
0117 932 8949

Jacqui Harris
29 St Anne's Drive, Wick
0117 937 4706

Services in January

All Sunday and Mid-week services will continue to be available online. Church services at St Mary's may be suspended subject to local restrictions and those attending are required to wear masks and follow guidance to maintain safety and social distancing. Numbers will also be limited. If you intend to be there please send an email with the number attending from your family group to Jacqui Harris at timjaqui@aol.com or phone 0117 937 4706.

All details are at www.stmarysbitton.org.uk

This month's church calendar

Sunday 3 January	Second Sunday of Christmas Parish Communion
Wednesday 6 January	The Epiphany
Sunday 10 January	First Sunday of Epiphany — <i>The Baptism of Christ</i> Morning Worship
Sunday 17 January	Second Sunday of Epiphany Christingle Service
Sunday 24 January	Third Sunday of Epiphany Morning Worship
Sunday 31 January	Fourth Sunday of Epiphany Morning Worship

From the Register

Funeral

1st December

David Harris RIP





UPTON CHEYNEY United Reformed Church



It is currently not known what services can be held during January. As soon as possible, information will be provided.



ROYAL BRITISH LEGION POPPY APPEAL 2020

Many thanks to all who supported the Poppy Appeal in this difficult year.

The total raised by the Bitton and Oldland Branch to date is £7,909.14.

While this is only one third of what we aim for in a normal year it was a magnificent effort in the face of all the restrictions we and our supporters faced. We are hopeful that in addition many will have responded to the Legion's appeal for online gifts as we seek to meet the calls for help from veterans and their dependants.

Dawn Harrill
Poppy Appeal Organiser



Midweek meetings

Three groups have continued to meet online following a series based on the Parables. Probably the most valuable element of these meetings has been the chance to chat together and to pray for the needs of the moment.

For Advent and Epiphany we are reading a book by Stephen Cottrell, who is now the Archbishop of York, entitled 'Walking backwards to Christmas'. It looks at Christmas through the eyes of 11 biblical characters ranging from Mary and Joseph to other more surprising choices such as Herod, Isaiah and Moses. They are spread over 6 sessions – 3 in December and 3 in January - and discuss a couple of the characters in each session.

If you would like to join one of the groups then you will be very welcome - just give one of us a ring and we can get a copy of the book to you.

Wednesday morning group	David Bailey	0117 932 8949
Wednesday evening group	Ken Gibson	0117 932 2122
Thursday evening group	Pete Midgley	0117 932 6898



Absolutely Feet

Caring for your feet, in your own home.

Professional treatment of corns, callus, fungal infections, painful or thickened nails, diabetic foot care, nail trimming etc.

Joanne Nash MCFHP MAFHP

Insured & Registered Foot Health Professional

07881 530600

absolutelyfeet@hotmail.com

St Mary's Matters



Pete Midgley

The start of the New Year is an opportunity to look back and take stock of the strange year that was 2020 as well as looking forward with hope and optimism in anticipation of what 2021 will hold.

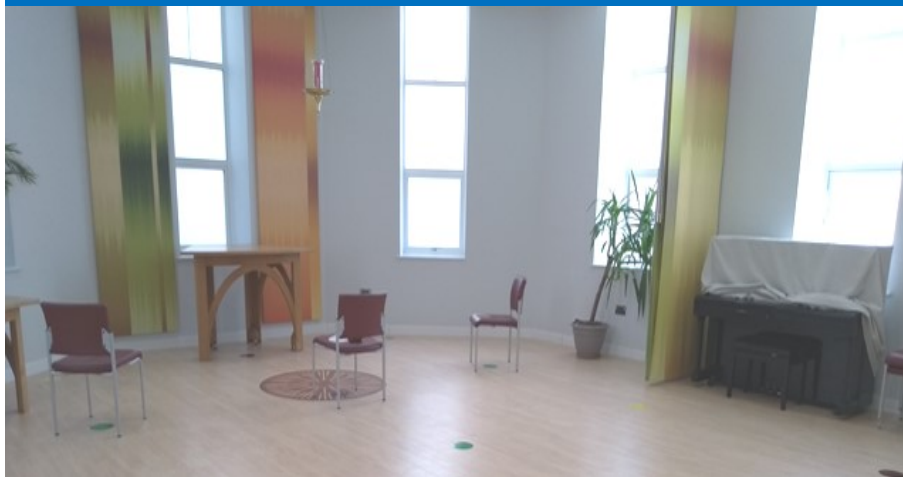
The sudden arrival of the Coronavirus pandemic last March and the associated restrictions which came with it brought many unexpected challenges for St Mary's. From complete closure of the church building to arranging services within the strict guidelines of social distancing; from keeping in touch with members of the congregation to producing services available online; from holding house groups on Zoom to holding a virtual APM in October, everything was different. Not to mention that rules were changing from week to week. Resilience and adaptability have been the key to survival and the ministry team, churchwardens and all members of the congregation have played their part. I would like to thank everyone for their positive attitude and community spirit.

Things look more hopeful for 2021 with the arrival of vaccines, and as I write some members of the congregation have already been invited to receive theirs. As you read this, I have no doubt many of the older and more vulnerable members of our congregation will have had theirs or been invited to do so. All of us will be anticipating receiving ours in due time. We are, I am sure, hoping for things to return to normal as soon as possible. But what will the "new normal" look like? I'm pretty sure Pandora will not fully go back into her box. We will all be longing to worship in church, being allowed to sing and mix freely, but there may well be a place for online services for some. Meetings will be so much better in person, but sometimes Zoom may be more convenient. Who knows, we may even learn how to "live stream" our services.

As we anticipate things being so much better in 2021 may we remember our role as the church to represent Christ in the community. As we emerge from these strange times may we remember to reach out to everyone with the good news of Jesus. Happy New Year!

Jillanne Norman

Coronavirus Reflections



I have recently been told the ancient Indian story of the blind men and the elephant. A group of blind men are led to an elephant and are asked to explore the part of it nearest to them with their hands, and then describe to the others what they think this animal looks like. The man at the tail end describes a rope like tail, the man near a leg describes something the size and shape of a tree trunk. The man near to the ear describes a large fan, and the man near to the trunk describes it as a hose pipe. Between them and the small bits they can feel and describe, they cannot put together a picture of this strange creature, it just seems to preposterous.

Covid is the elephant in all our rooms at the moment, yet for everyone the only bit of this disease and its impact we can understand is that which is directly in our experience. We can read of other peoples' experiences of the disease and its effects, and we can build up a picture, but frankly a lot of the pictures do not seem to lock together to make a complete picture that we can understand. As with the descriptions of the elephant there are many parts of this story which are currently out of our grasp, and will not be seen or told for many years yet.

The beginning of the first lockdown produced an immediate reaction in the hospital as patients were transferred out and the wards emptied to take the

Focal Point, January 2021

expected Covid cases, which in the case of Bristol did not really come in the numbers expected. There were several weeks when the hospital was eerily quiet as we waited with baited breath for the rush to happen. Even before we realised that the expected numbers of people with Covid were not going to come, we wondered where all our patients were. I cannot imagine that the A&E Department missed the drunks and the fight victims who haunt the place on a regular Friday and Saturday night, but where were the frail elderly with their multiple co-morbidities, where were the cancer patients, where were the Heart Institute patients?

As with all places of worship our Sanctuaries (Chapels) closed immediately, and we spent a lot of time discussing how we could reopen them for private prayer in a sensitive and safe manner. In particular in the BRI, where we are providing a prayer space for different faiths, who have different requirements for praying, from the Christian chair to the Muslim mat via the Buddhist cushion we came up with socially distanced spots on the floor. As long as people are on spots with whatever their prayer arrangements are, then they are the required 2m apart.

We have had time in the Chaplaincy office over the last few months to discuss and share our experiences, both of the churches we are linked to, and what is happening within the hospital. One big question has been 'What is a gathered community?' It is a really big issue for our Imam that the brothers are not gathering together on a Friday for Friday Prayers. They are a religious obligation for all Muslim brothers. For our Roman Catholic Deacon the struggle has been that the Catholic church mandates that every Catholic should attend Mass weekly to be a good Catholic. In all religious communities people have been gathering online. It is all we have been allowed to do, but is this a gathering of the people? I had a conversation with a senior clergyman for whom an online service is an anathema. The congregation is not gathered in the building that is dedicated to God, they are not raising up their praises to heaven together in one place, they are not meeting together and supporting each other. I did suggest that meeting online was meeting, that by live streaming they were probably reaching more people than would set aside time to come to the building. He countered by saying that they had no idea how many people were actually staying for the whole service, and getting the full experience. I thought that any time spent with God was good, particularly if it was more than they would spend otherwise, and perhaps we needed to make each moment of each online service count. For some patients in hospital during these last few months, the online services have been a God send, literally, allowing them to see their friends and their churches and remain as part of the gathering of the people in their own churches.

The other question that has been exercising the Christian Chaplains mostly is how does God work through technology. There is no theology of celebrating



the Eucharist over the internet. If the service is live streamed and someone at home has bread and wine in front of them does it become for them the body and blood of Jesus via the words spoken on Zoom or whatever platform is being used? What if someone watches on YouTube later? What if someone watches from the far side of the globe as opposed to within the parish? The church authorities have allowed Zoom services to happen, but there is no agreed theological principle. It does appear that the online services are meeting a need and that they are places where God is working.

For Chaplains providing a telephone only service outside of hours for much of these last few months, we have not only been talking supportively with patients over the phone, but praying with them as well, and commending them to God at the time of their deaths. The Trust still does not allow ministers of any faith to come into the hospital. Even outside of specific lockdown periods, patients have only been allowed one nominated visitor with a booked appointment. The rites and rituals of death have been severely curtailed. I regularly tell our Nursing Assistants as I teach them about Chaplaincy and caring for people of faith, that people only die once; we have only one chance to get it right for them. By all that our faiths hold holy we are failing, yet we are where we are, and we cannot do anything else.

Only time will tell the impact that Covid has had, on the planet, on the global population, on the individuals who have suffered, on those who have died and those they have left behind. For every individual there is a story, an experience, every individual is contributing to our picture of the elephant in the room, but it will be a long time, if ever, before we can look at it squarely and see it for what it fully is.

***Jillanne Norman, who is a member of the Benefice Ministry Team ,
works as a hospital chaplain***

An online Christmas for Carols and Crib Services



South Gloucestershire remained in Tier 3, with the highest restrictions in the West of England for Christmas. Small services were able to take place on most Sundays with a Christmas Praise planned for Christmas Day. Special online services were provided for the Carol Service and the Crib service.

Above—the Vicar, Rev Jeremy Andrew leads the service of carols and readings from St Barnabas. Below—Rev Richard Humphrey leading a midweek service of Holy Communion from St Mary's.



Former Head Teacher of Upton Cheyney School

Joyce Cooper

A life well lived



Joyce, with her husband Eric, in 2019

Joyce was born in South Wales and moved to Newbold, Leicestershire when aged 7. She used to play with Eric's sister in her happy childhood, and after finishing school went on to teacher training at Leicester College. Eric, after leaving school, did 18 months National Service in Trieste and came home, fell in love with Joyce and they married in Worthington, Leicestershire in 1952. By coincidence, my parents knew Joyce and Eric through the Baptist church in nearby Shepshed. Eric tells me that having a strong Christian faith has been a big influence in their lives. At this time Eric worked for the National Coal Board and after securing a job in Bristol they moved to Longwell Green in 1961.

Upton Cheyney School was "like a large happy family". Joyce joined the



Picture: Tony Boulton

Joyce (left) dressed as Lea Comely in the 2005 Son et Lumiere in St Mary's, with Maggie Ferguson and Anna Watling The Millennial Quilt on which she and others worked is behind her.

team in 1961 and became head teacher from 1966 to 1981. Edna Nelmes was the cook and Eric and Joyce would grow vegetables from their garden for the children's school lunches. Joyce took a course in ceramics and got funding to build a kiln at the school in 1974 for the children to learn and make stoneware. In 1979, the school won a silver shield for a model village in pottery at the Oldland Flower show. A few years ago, at Manor Farm, Bitton Parish History Group arranged for a school reunion at which Joyce gave a talk about her life as Head Teacher to an audience of over 80, including 3 generations of attentive former pupils.

Joyce and Eric were members of St Mary's church between 1975 and 1989, and since then of All Saints, Weston. They helped to start prayer and home groups and were generally active in church ministry. For many years Eric and Joyce were season ticket holders for The Old Vic and knew the best seats in the house at the Colston Hall (Bristol Beacon). Their daughter Janet is married and lives in Kingswood.

Focal Point, January 2021

Joyce took a City and Guilds course in Embroidery 1981-4 and exhibited her work in Bristol and Bath, many of which she sold. She also gave talks on embroidery to the WI and other groups throughout the Bath and Bristol area. Joyce embroidered the central star on the Millennial Quilt displayed in the Lady Chapel of St Mary's. She was also a member of Bitton bellringers' group and was involved with the Son et Lumiere in St Mary's.

In 2017, Joyce showed signs and symptoms of dementia and in 2019, following a water infection, was admitted to Gracefield Care Home in Downend. We visited Joyce in the Home and she was as happy as ever. She asked Eric to bring in her home-compiled song book and would play "I like to teach the World to Sing" and "Somewhere over the rainbow" and other songs on the piano to residents. At Christmas last year she played carols and was once asked to improvise on the piano when the Home activities coordinator failed to turn up.



Joyce (right) with two of her predecessors as Head of Upton Cheyney School

On 7th Dec Joyce developed a chest infection and was admitted to Southmead Hospital. She was tested positive for Covid-19 on admission and died peacefully in the early hours of Thursday Dec 10th, age 92.

Joyce lived life to the full. She had a strong personal faith, a good marriage and a sense of humour. She made a great contribution to village life.

David Bailey

Bitton History Group

THE LONS

and the people who lived there



Part 2

The Bitton Parish History Group has continued to investigate the history of the Lons or Lons Court as it is now known, and the people who lived there. In the last edition of Focal Point, the scene was set by a brief overview of the building since it was built in the 1860s. Since then, there have been further releases of research looking at the origins of the site and the first two occupants of the house: the Sommervilles and the Alsops, revealing possible scandal in the late nineteenth century .

DESIRABLE FURNISHED RESIDENCE to be LET.—“The Lons,” Bitton, Gloucestershire, about six miles from Bath and a similar distance from Clifton, and about five minutes from Bitton Station, M. R., and 15 minutes’ drive from Keynsham Station, G.W.R. This modern residence is handsomely furnished, with south aspect, commanding extensive views, and the accommodation comprises attractive entrance hall, dining and drawing rooms, and library, with ample kitchens and servants’ offices on ground floor, while the bedroom accommodation, approached by two staircases, is ample for a gentleman’s family. There is also a Turkish bath; and the gardens and pleasure grounds, tennis grounds (two courts), and glass are in thorough order; and the stabling is excellent. Within reach of the Duke of Beaufort’s and the Berkeley Hounds; packs of harriers hunt the neighbourhood. Rent £200. — Apply to G. Bush and Bush, solicitors, 9, Bridge Street, Bristol.

Advertisement in the Army & Navy Gazette, 8 June 1895
The Lons was advertised for rental as a fully furnished property with a surprising array of mod cons.

It was **James Frew Somerville**, the owner of the Bitton Paper Mill who acquired the land and built The Lons in 1868. The new development at Bitton Mil is accessed via Sommerville Way named in his memory. James was of Scottish descent, his family having operated a papermill at Auchindinny near Edinburgh and who had purchased the mill at Bitton in 1849. The land for the Lons was obtained through a swap of land with a Mr Cryer of Knights Folly Farm and the house was built with all the modern conveniences of a house of that era, to be occupied by an extensive and wealthy family. This included a Turkish Bath which was becoming a popular and hailed as invigorating for gentlemen and ladies of

the time. There were also stables, servants quarters and tennis courts.

James had been married in 1865 in Bristol to the daughter of a wealthy Bristol merchant at the Buckingham Chapel in the Whiteladies Road. The wedding was a fashionable social event. But the Somerville's were non-conformist and so had nothing to do with the Parish Church in Bitton and were more closely linked with the chapels of Oldland Common, where many of their workers lived.

The paper mill was increasingly prosperous and the Somervilles played a leading role in the local community sponsoring events including the celebrations in Oldland Common for Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887. Sadly, James Frew Sommerville died in 1895 aged only 58. His sons, the eldest of whom, also named James Frew Sommerville, carried on some aspects of the business. There was certainly enough money to enable most of his children to live independently for the rest of their days (one of his daughters living on these private means until 1962). Soon, however, The Lons was offered, fully furnished, for rent, although soon after all the furniture and main effects were auctioned off. The full list of furnishings included a refrigerator, though as such a device was yet to be invented, it is thought that this was simply a zinc plated ice box.

It is possible that the auction took place because the new owner had no use for the furniture, as he was himself a furniture maker or (as he referred to himself) a steam cabinet maker.

Uriah Alsop was a successful businessman with extensive premises in the heart of Bristol and had been well known in Bristol commercial society for some years. He was in his 70s when he came to The Lons with his "wife" Selina. Selina was, however, also the younger sister, by 12 years, of his former wife, Ann.



Union Street shops opposite Fry's offices

The Alsop's premises in Union Street, Bristol between the wars—*Courtesy, Keynsham & Salford Local History Society.*

Focal Point, January 2021

Ann was the mother of his 18 children, and who, in 1889, had attempted to divorce him on the grounds of his incestuous relationship with her sister (it being incestuous for a man to marry his wife's sister until the early twentieth century). It is not clear whether a divorce took place (something that would have been particularly scandalous especially if it involved a relationship with a sister in law).

By 1897, when the Alsops moved to The Lons, Ann was living separately in Hornsey on the outskirts of London and Selina moved into The Lons with Uriah as Mrs Alsop.

Whether there was such scandal is not clear, but as wealthy residents the Alsops soon became established playing a part in the local community supporting the Bitton and Oldland Horticultural Society whose annual flower show and fetes were held on a field close to Bitton station. His sons also played cricket for the Bitton Cricket Club and records have been found of their attendance at committee meetings in the White Hart. Uriah was not of course a young man. When he moved to the Lons he was already 68 and he died in 1906 aged 79. His funeral was a grand affair with his entire workforce turning out for the event before interment at the fashionable Arnos Vale cemetery, where James Frew Sommerville had himself been laid to rest some years earlier.

As for Ann and Selina, they both died within the next two years. Probate for Selina was in the name of *Miss* Selina Nash-Alsop.

Bitton Parish History Group

Research on this part of the History of The Lons was undertaken and described by Mike and Annette Rothwell and Nicola Bennetts in an extensive set of papers.

The full sections of The Lons History are available online at the email address below.

Mike Gates is also happy to provide printed copies for readers without access to the internet.

Contact: Mike Gates, Secretary, 0117 932 8777
email: mg122@btinternet.com

In profile

Richard Humphrey



“I was pretty useless at school,” says Richard Humphrey, surprisingly, St Mary’s popular and engaging Ordained Local Minister. However, he enjoyed living in London, attending Woolwich Military Hospital and then New Cross School.

At 16 his family moved to Eastbourne, as his father was store manager for the Co-op. This was not so agreeable for the young Richard, describing the town as “geriatric city.”

Keen to move, he began his career as a Graduate Trainee for Clarks in Street, enjoying student life and training for the British Boot and Shoe Institute qualification. He worked for Clarks in Plymouth and then moved to Bristol to work for GB Britton of Kingswood, and later at Marks & Spencer’s Lingerie company.

Show Biz and Fashion

He thoroughly enjoyed joining Mulberry and Roger Saul when the company was just starting in the early 1970s. The products were all made by home workers and Roger oversaw development, buying and

Focal Point, January 2021

production. He loved going to Paris and meeting actors like Richard Heffer and models, such as Monty, who became Roger Saul's wife. Richard was working seven days a week and relishing it, but his role changed. Roger wanted him to travel to America, South Africa, and Australia to develop the brand. Richard realised that would be the end to his family life, so declined.

Christine

By this time, he was married to Christine, who he had first met when he was 16 in Eastbourne. A tennis playing friend of his asked him to take his cousin Christine from Edinburgh off his hands, a task Richard did not in any way find onerous! He later hitched up to Edinburgh to see her and they then married in 1967 and had two daughters.

Hanham Post Office

After Mulberry, Richard worked for several other companies but then realised that these businesses were contracting as all their goods were imported. He decided he wanted "to steer his own ship" for a while and bought Hanham Post Office in 1987. It was a very demanding job with long hours, but a way of life Richard really enjoyed. Christine was a huge support to him, she continued working as a Special Needs teacher. He says it was particularly important to like people and want to look after them – the ethos of service was key. However, over the years this ethos changed, with profit being a driving force for the Post Office. The 'Post Office scandal' also affected Richard as the computer systems installed were faulty and he lost money. Business which was formally exclusive to Post Office employees was given to others and he felt he was not operating on a level playing field. In the end he sold the business in 2013, but still has fond memories of his time there.

The Church

Richard was not brought up as a Christian, although occasionally attended Sunday School, but was not interested. After his mother died his father remarried a committed Christian and his father was confirmed and taught in Sunday School. Richard was amazed at the effect this had on his father but did not really realise the effect it had on himself until later in life.

Then, much later, his younger daughter wanted to get married, but most of the churches they looked at were not interested in holding the

wedding. Christine, who had been to St Mary's with Ann Willis at Christmas, suggested they try this church. "George Mitchell was so welcoming, open and gracious," says Richard. He and Christine started to attend church and found John Underwood, Hazel and Christopher and George so welcoming. Their daughter called off her wedding, but he and Christine continued to attend at St Mary's, and in 1995 both became confirmed. "We felt so welcomed and comfortable, we understood the service and it felt very homely."

Paul Denyer proposed that he become a Lay Minister, which he did over 2 years. Then Maria Shepherdson suggested he became ordained. This took Richard 6 months to come to terms with, but in 2013 he joined Trinity College, Bristol to train for the ministry. "It was amazing!" he says. "It allowed me to do all the studying I had missed out on at school and I loved it – it was totally inspirational. There were 7 in my cohort, we were all very close, all became ordained and I keep in touch with all of them. There is not really a huge difference between a Lay minister and an OLM – I preside at baptisms and weddings and the eucharist – I can say the 'magic words!' he says modestly. "Many Lay ministers are amazing – Ken, David, John and Lesley are hugely committed and make an immense contribution to the Church, and the Church really values and benefits from their support." On 1st August 2015 Richard married his younger daughter in St Mary's – a very happy, proud day.

Pandemic

Although keeping in touch by telephone has been possible it has been extremely hard as a minister not to see people face to face. He says: "Funerals are particularly sad, the physical contact of shaking hands or a hug are so important. It is also very hard to engage with people in face masks." However, over 70 people attended David Harris's funeral recently on Zoom, so technology has helped a lot.

"There are a lot of uplifting things going on – people are knocking on each other's doors and saying hello. I think the pandemic will make us better people, there is a different slant on how we treat each other and the environment. That said, I won't be sorry to see the back of it – I've never done so many jigsaws in my life!"

Sarah Heavens

Taking part in Covid vaccine trials



The Pfizer vaccine in production. This was the first vaccine to be licensed for use in the UK, but it is more likely that most people will be offered the Oxford Astra Zeneca vaccine for which Martin Hetzel volunteered for the clinical trial as he explains:

In September I volunteered for the Oxford/ Astra Zeneca Covid vaccine clinical trial. This is a “double blind” trial so neither the volunteers being vaccinated nor the doctors treating them know if they have had the vaccine (treatment group) or a placebo (control group). This is the most robust type of clinical trial; ensuring there is no bias in interpreting results. If the placebo vaccination was just an injection of saline (salty water) however, there would be no reaction at the injection site so volunteers might guess if they were given the placebo. Therefore the “placebo” is a meningitis vaccination, which is very safe, but will produce a similar mild reaction after vaccination. The trial compares how many volunteers get Covid-19, or have no symptoms but get a positive Covid swab test, between the treatment and control groups.

After completing an online health questionnaire, I attended the BRI, which is one of the centres in the trial. Once they were satisfied that I was fit enough, I signed consent forms and had baseline blood tests. The nurses

then gave me the first vaccination, followed by observations for 15 minutes. For the next 7 days I did daily online symptom questionnaires and temperature readings. The only symptom I had was slight tenderness at the injection site for a couple of days. After 1 month I had a second vaccination with really no symptoms at all.

The trial is planned to last 60 weeks for each volunteer. Every week I get a symptom questionnaire to complete and send in a Covid nose and throat swab test by post-all negative so far. Periodically I have follow-up consultations with further blood tests to measure antibody levels to the vaccine. When eventually I am offered NHS Covid vaccination, sometime next year, I will be “unblinded” so that, if I was in the control group, I could still then get vaccinated.

Limited supplies of the Pfizer vaccine (95% protection in preliminary results) mean that most people may be offered the Oxford/ Astra Zeneca vaccine instead. Both vaccines attack the Covid virus spike protein, which it uses to get into our cells; forcing them to reproduce it and cause Covid -19 disease. The vaccines train our immune systems to recognise the spike protein and then destroy the virus.

In the Oxford vaccine the spike protein is delivered to the immune system by attaching it to an adenovirus (the family of viruses which cause common colds) which has been genetically modified to make it harmless. Because we have some natural immunity to human adenoviruses, which might make our immune systems “ignore” this virus, the Oxford team have used an adenovirus which normally affects chimpanzees, to make sure that our immune system reacts to it.

Some people worry about the safety of these new vaccines and may also be concerned about the lower early result of an average 70% protection from the Oxford vaccine. We don't know yet with either vaccine how long the immunity will last or whether people who have been vaccinated could still pass on the virus without being ill themselves. It's difficult to compare them until the full data from these trials is available. My advice therefore is to accept whichever vaccine you may be offered when your turn comes; because my experience as a volunteer patient is that both vaccines have been carefully assessed in well conducted and comprehensive clinical trials. While some people may get short term side effects from vaccination this is a much smaller risk than catching this potentially life threatening and disabling disease.

Martin Hetzel

A thank you from Uganda



In Uganda a nationwide lockdown has been in place since March with all churches, schools, bible colleges and universities closed. The Ugandan government does not have the means to provide a furlough scheme and as clergy are paid purely from what their congregation donate on a Sunday many who have no land to fall back on are struggling to eat. Bible Colleges have struggled to support their staff.

One report from the President suggested that hospitals were unable to cope with coronavirus cases though there have been no recent reports so hopefully the spread has been contained. Corrie Verduyn, who was our mission link at Kijoko Hospital until a year ago, reports that due to lockdown it is currently very difficult for patients to travel to the hospital. In addition the situation in Uganda is exacerbated by political riots in advance of next year's Presidential election.

Each year the Deanery invite parishes to contribute 0.25% of parish income to the Deanery's Uganda Fund and this we did in October.

In normal times the Fund is used to support students and to enable Ugandans from our twinned diocese to visit the Deanery. This year this has not been possible but the Link did want to help at a time of crisis and sent donations totalling £2,750 to help two small Bible Colleges to provide some pay for their staff.

Please continue to remember both the pandemic and political situations in Uganda as you pray.

Ken Gibson



David Harris
1964-2020

Family and friends gathered at St Mary's on 1 December for a service of tribute for the life of David Harris. As the service was live streamed, many more were able to join the service online. It followed a funeral at Westerleigh Crematorium.

The service was led by Richard Humphrey but was in large part a series of warm reminiscences from his two eldest sons and old friends, including

Focal Point, January 2021

his fellow scout leader Becky Purchase.

Born in Cardiff, in 1964, David's family moved to the Bristol area when he was 5 settling in a house in Whittucks Road in Hanham.

From an early age David showed a sense of adventure and interest in the things around him and how they worked, a fanaticism for sport of all kinds and a passion for trains. It was on a train, travelling to a university interview at Cardiff, that he started talking to Jenny, and although she went to Brighton and David to Cardiff, they continued to see each other and eventually married in 1987. Andrew was born in 1994 followed a couple of years later by Chris and then latterly Peter. Using his degree from Cardiff, David worked in IT, mostly for the Nat West Bank and cycled to work daily. Before his illness he was, in Andrew's words, "one of the fittest 54 year olds I know."

Rugby was an enduring part of his life and particularly his support for the Welsh Dragons, as well as Bath, which he followed through all weather conditions in an open stand. But where he excelled was in badminton and he was a member of a number of local clubs. A gentleman on the badminton court, he reserved his strongest shots for those who could respond in kind. On one memorable event, on holiday, he astounded Andrew by allowing a mother and daughter to win a tournament that they could easily have taken. It was only one of many reminiscences of a man who put others first, who would give money to those who needed it more than he did and wanted to help others.

Always willing to volunteer, he was always first to step forward not just to help but frequently to provide leadership. He was a school governor at The Meadows, and when it was apparent that there was no-one to lead the St Mary's scouts, David stepped forward and undertook the training and development to become Akela. Recently, and in spite of his illness, he organised photographic competitions for the last two fetes and by photographing a window in the church was able to create a Christmas card that was sold for church funds. None of this was too much trouble. David loved both life and other people and lived his life seeing the best in others and in the context of a deeply held faith.

Just over two years ago, David was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic

Focal Point, January 2021

Leukaemia. Chemotherapy and bone marrow transplants enabled him to beat the cancer and he was described as the perfect patient, concerned for others rather than himself and keen to help with the understanding of the disease. But he was left at risk of serious harm from other health problems and although he managed to throw off other viruses, he finally fell victim to Adenovirus.

David's time battling the illness was as much an inspiration for his courage and compassion as he had shown in his life. Our sincere condolences go out to Jenny, Andrew, Chris, and Peter.

The family are raising money in David's memory for the Haematology Department at the Bristol Royal Infirmary as a way to say thank you for all of the care, support, and world leading knowledge they have provided. As Focal Point went to press donations had reached £4,836 well beyond the £1000 target. If you still wish to give you can do so online at <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/andrew-harris94>

Help take forward David's initiative for a Christmas Card for 2021

Calling all Photographers!

The card for 2020 proved very popular and has sold out. The beautiful photograph of the Christmas window in St Mary's (shown here and on the cover of Focal Point, last month) was taken by David Harris. He and his family will be in or thoughts as we give and receive the card.



Before David's death I discussed with him what we could do for 2021 and the idea that we came up with is to have a competition through this winter for a photograph of 'St Mary's in Winter'. Entries will be free and the closing date is 31 March 2021. The plan is to produce a Christmas card for 2021 featuring the winning entry which will be sold in aid of St Mary's.

Please send me your entries to 8 Church Road, Bitton, Bristol BS30 6HH or post them through our letter box by 31 March 2021.

Jill Gibson

BITTON GARDENING CLUB

Invites you to

2021

Happy New Year to you All,
from
The Gardening Club members.

After the last year, when most of our programme was cancelled, the Gardening Club committee is travelling hopefully into 2021. We have our fingers crossed that with spring approaching, along with vaccination, life might get back to the normal we love.

We have planned a full programme for 2021 focusing on outdoor garden visits until August then introducing indoor speaker meetings in the Autumn - hopefully by then we might be able to meet indoors.

Our programme starts as usual the third Monday in January, but instead of meeting up we will be emailing our members, with details of our 2021 Programme, The Quiz and the AGM stuff.

Then in February, if possible, we will have our first visit, to a snowdrop garden.

For our existing members, we are carrying their membership over to 2021, but we are welcoming new members, who will be asked to pay the usual £12 membership fee.

If you would like to join our Gardening Club please email me at b.hetzel@btinternet.com or ring 932 9939.

Hope to see you all soon

With every best wish from

Bridget and the Gardening Club Committee.



The clatter of hooves may have been a welcome sound on your rooftop over Christmas, but there is less magic in these deer that have been invading Sue and Alan Murtagh’s garden. This is one of a number of pictures that have been posted online by Gardening Club members over the past three months in effort to provide some additional cheer.

Consultation begins on South Gloucestershire Local Plan

Consultation on the first stage of preparing a new Local Plan 2020 is now open.

The consultation document ‘Phase 1 – Issues and Approaches’, has been published for consultation from Friday 27 November 2020 until Monday 1 March 2021.

This stage is all about exploring and discussing the issues, challenges and approaches that could inform the new Local Plan and the council will be seeking people’s views on priorities, growth and planning. The Council is looking not for detail but early ideas, discussions and suggested approaches which will inform future stages.

To get involved and have your say, visit www.southglos.gov.uk/Localplan2020 and send your comments by Monday 1 March 2021.

The council has also prepared a number of short videos to explain what a Local Plan is and what is contained in the consultation document. These videos will also be available to view on the website (see link above).

News from Bitton WI

It is hard to believe that I am writing my last piece of WI news for 2020. Unfortunately due to the coronavirus we were only able to hold three meetings before the first lockdown, and at the moment we do not know when we will be able to meet again.

We have lost several members during 2020 but I hope to see all of our remaining members when we are allowed to resume in 2021. I would like to welcome Tegwen to the committee, I know that she will enjoy our committee meetings, which we hope to resume in the near future.

I hope everyone had a good Christmas, even though it was not the same festive occasion that we usually experience. Next year we hope to be able to host the postponed Christmas carol service in St Mary's, and hold our usual Christmas party.

Will all of you please keep your program for 2020 which gives the committee members telephone numbers in case you need to contact any of us. Due to the uncertainty of the future, at the moment we are not having any new programs printed, until we know when we can resume meetings and arrange speakers.

I have Mary to thank once again for this month's recipe.

I am sure we will enjoy making and eating Mary's chocolate and orange bars. I would like to end by wishing you all a happy new year, and I hope it will not be too long before we can all meet again in 2021.

Lyn Coles



Chocolate and Orange Bars

INGREDIENTS

4oz butter
2oz caster sugar
3oz quaker oats
1 tablespoon cocoa

ICING

4oz icing sugar
1 tablespoon cocoa
1 tablespoon orange juice or squash

METHOD

Melt butter in microwave or saucepan and stir in dry ingredients. Press into a square sandwich tin and cook at 360 degrees or gas mark 4 for 25-30 minutes. Make icing and spread over mixture whilst still hot. Cool and cut into slices. ENJOY!



Soot n Sweep

For all your chimney sweeping needs

All types of chimneys flues &
AGAs swept and cleaned

Contact Nick Wilcox

07983 215312 or 0117 949 2258

NACS qualified & certificates issued





collingwood
care home for the elderly

“Home from home”

Our new bedrooms have underfloor heating, large fitted wardrobes and en-suite shower rooms

Make an appointment with Wendy or Lizzy and they will be delighted to show you round

Collingwood Care Home
78A, Bath Road
Longwell Green
BS30 9DG

0117 932 4527

www.collingwoodcarehome.co.uk

Just **KIM**
*Unisex Hairdressing with
Beauty Room & Solarium*

*188 High Street
Oldland Common
Bristol
BS30 9QQ*

Tel: 0117 932 3539



Bendrey Bros

TIMBER RETAILER SINCE 1890

Your local stockist of:

- Fencing Materials
- Graded Building Timber
- Timber & Composite Decking
- Sleepers & Landscaping products
- Gates - Residential & Agricultural
- Timber Claddings
- Fast Local Delivery Service, or collect from our yard

Opening Hours:

Monday - Friday:
8.00am - 5.00pm

Saturday Morning:
9.00am - 12.00pm

www.bendreybros.co.uk

☎ 0117 9674382

The Sawmills, Bath Road, Bridgegate, Warmley, Bristol, BS30 5JW



Based in Keynsham

Fully trained and registered member of the
Guild of Master Chimney Sweeps

Contact Hugh on 0117 9868936
or 07824 508758
www.bristlesweep.co.uk



Robert Pearce has over 40 years' experience
plumbing in the local area



Available for
general plumbing
and repairs

Tel: 07814 607974

Email: robsuep@btinternet.com

Hanney Welding Limited

For all your Welding & Fabrication
requirements

Eastover Works, Golden Valley Lane, Bitton

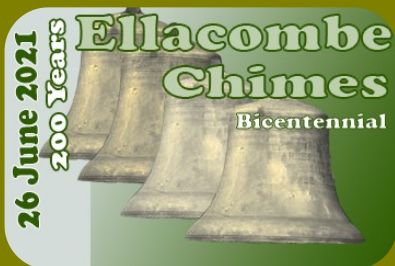
Tel: 0117 932 2647

Keep the date: 26 June 2021 - Ellacombe Chimes around the world

When the Rev Henry Thomas Ellacombe arrived as the new curate in Bitton in 1817, he was appalled at the behaviour of the church bellringers who, he complained, were drunk, failed to attend the church services and would ring the bells for no good reason. His engineering skills enabled him to outwit the ringers, by installing a chiming device. Through a system of ropes and pulleys, this apparatus could be operated by one person from the church porch. And could dispense with the bellringers.

Not only does this apparatus remain in use at Bitton, but devices based on his design were installed in many churches in Britain and around the world. To celebrate the 200th anniversary of the installation of the chimes, a major event is planned in Bitton on Saturday 26 June 2021, when Ellacombe Chimes will be rung around the world at 12 noon in the time zone where they are located. It will start in Timaru, New Zealand and end in Vancouver, Canada.

In Bitton the chimes will ring out at 12 noon and it is hoped to have a live link up to other participating churches.



Acupuncture with Alison Pickering

(BSc LicAc MBAcC)

Five Element Acupuncture, Ayurveda treatments, Nutrition advice, Reiki

Please contact: Alison@theleafclinic.co.uk
Or text 07775 854341 to make an appointment

Covering Bath, Keynsham, Bitton, Kelston, North Stoke and surrounding areas

Fully insured through the BAcC



Graduated from the
College of Integrated Chinese Medicine,
one of the leading colleges in the country.



**Matt Bressington
Plastering Services
Friendly & Reliable**



All types of Plastering Rendering Pebble Dashing
Dry Lining Coving
Fully Insured Over 25 years experience
Competitive Rates Free Quotations

Tel: 0117 9830108 Mobile: 07905 474 966
Email: matt_bressy@yahoo.co.uk

December's Quiz Answers

Last month's quiz was acronyms of Christmas films.

The correct answers are:

(1) Arthur Christmas / Almost Christmas; (2) All I Want for Christmas; (3) Bridget Jones's Diary; (4) Deck the Halls; (5) Elf; (6) Home Alone; (7) How the Grinch Stole Christmas; (8) It's a Wonderful Life; (9) I'll be Home for Christmas; (10) Jingle all the Way; (11) Love Actually; (12) Let it Snow; (13) Miracle on 34th Street; (14) Nativity / Noel; (15) (National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation; (16) Santa Clause: The Movie; (17) The Muppet Christmas Carol; (8) The Nightmare Before Christmas; (19) The Snowman; (20) White Christmas

Correct answers were received from:

The Booths, Bryan & Margaret Garlick, Mary Younie, Sue & Rod Nethercote, Sheila Read & Family, Pearl & Debbie Evans, Richard Howell.

This month's winners are Pearl & Debbie Evans.

Last month's winner was Mary Younie.

The January Quiz

This months quiz is anagrams of cheeses

- | No. | Clue |
|-----|----------------|
| 1. | rub rata |
| 2. | means rap |
| 3. | cad herd |
| 4. | adogu |
| 5. | fort orque |
| 6. | zoo Long rag |
| 7. | lost tin |
| 8. | member act |
| 9. | zorm zalela |
| 10. | romance spa |
| 11. | nail search |
| 12. | ell paper zen |
| 13. | me can hog |
| 14. | mental me |
| 15. | newly leased |
| 16. | limo hula |
| 17. | tree sled rice |
| 18. | via hart |
| 19. | trout slap |
| 20. | cat trio |

Name:

Contact:

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



- Design and build
- Building Maintenance
- Renovation
- Refurbishment
- Roofing

K P Wilton & Son Ltd

11/12 Brighton Place, Kingswood, Bristol BS15 1QY

Tel: 0117 967 1207

Email: info@kpwilton.co.uk



ROY PREDDY FUNERAL DIRECTORS

2 Cossham Street, Mangotsfield BS16 9EN (0117) 9562834

We are at your service 24 hours a day

We will help and guide you every step of the way

We will guide you through our choice of funeral plans

We can help and advise you choose a memorial

We are members of the National Association of Funeral Directors

Our other Bristol businesses can similarly help you -

Roy Preddy - Kingswood (0117) 9446051

TB & H Pendock - Hambrook (0117) 9566774

Stenner & Hill - Shirehampton (0117) 9823188

R. Davies & Son - Westbury-on-Trym (0117) 9628954

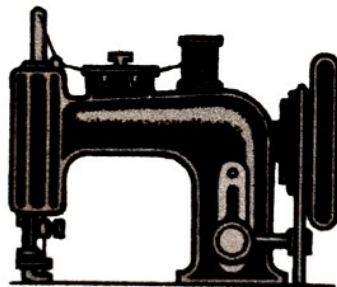
R. Davies & Son - Horfield (0117) 9424039

R. Davies & Son - Bishopsworth (0117) 9641133

Whitchurch FS - Whitchurch (01275) 833441

Part of Dignity Ltd, a British Company

Parker's Sewing Services



**Clothing alteration
and repairs**

Soft furnishings

**Specialist projects
and commissions
undertaken**

Telephone Lizzie : 01179326662

Mobile : 07837126945

Email :

lizzieparkerclarke@rocketmail.com

Steve Painter Decorating Services

A family business for three generations offering professional exterior and interior painting and decorating services locally

- ❖ Traditionally trained
- ❖ Quality workmanship
- ❖ Paperhanging specialists
- ❖ Friendly and reliable
- ❖ Competitively priced
- ❖ No VAT added

Contact Steve on 07853 250035

or 0117 956 5190

M.C AUTO REPAIRS

- *MOTs *SERVICING**
- *CLASSES 4 + 5 + 7**
- *REPAIRS *WELDING**
- *BODYWORK**

Telephone: 0117 947 7405

Unit 4d Kingsfield Lane

Longwell Green, Bristol BS30 6DL

NORTON **TAX SHOPS LTD** **ACCOUNTANTS & TAX SPECIALISTS**

Are you.... Self Employed?
A Company Director?
A Landlord?
An Investor?

Then we can help!

We offer: Accurate high quality work
Competitive fees
Up to date advice
Friendly qualified staff
Local offices in Keynsham & Kingswood
Help to reduce paperwork
Help with 'Making Tax Digital'

Please call us on **0117 9860960** to arrange a free appointment.



Website: www.nortontaxshops.co.uk

Bitton Motor Company

Bath Road Bitton
Bristol BS30 6HY



MOT
Testing Centre



Cars Bought and Sold

Servicing Repairs Engine Tuning
Welding Tyres Exhausts Cam belts

Telephone: (0117) 932 8686