

Focal Point

April 2022



**Easter 2022 in Bitton—
peace in a time of conflict**

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Focal Point

Bitton Churches' Magazine

April 2022

*A monthly church newsletter serving
Bitton, Swineford, Willsbridge,
Upton Cheyney & Beach*

*Published by St Mary's Church, Bitton and
the United Reformed Church, Upton
Cheyney.*

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*Deadline for the May
magazine is:*

Tuesday 19 April 2022

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Cover photo by Becky Feather

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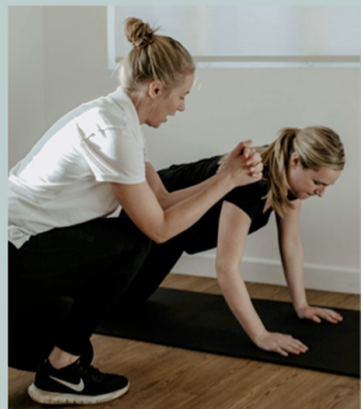
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Westerly Winds
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A Platinum Playlist



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The Magpie Singers

St. Mary's Church, Bitton
Saturday 14th May 7.30 pm
£6.50 / £5.50

Tickets sold via [eventbrite.co.uk](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk) (search for: Westerly Winds A Platinum Playlist)
Or email: westerlywindssh@gmail.com for further information

Proceeds to be split between St. Mary's and charities supporting victims of the conflict in Ukraine





UPTON CHEYNEY United Reformed Church

www.e-voice.org.uk/uptoncheyneychapel



Services for April 2022

Sunday services are at 3pm

| | | |
|--------------------|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| Sunday | 3rd | Service led by Steve Britton |
| Palm Sunday | 10th | Service led by Jenny Clarke |
| Easter Day | 17th | Service led by Steve Britton |
| Sunday | 24th | Service led by Neville Lintern |

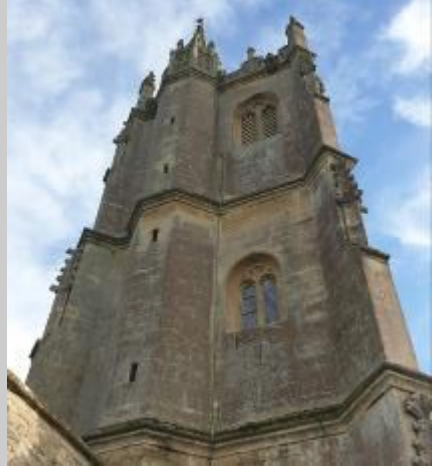
There will be no coffee afternoon this month

- 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 for April 2022

Services at St Mary's

You will be very welcome at all services at St Mary's . For those who are unable to attend some services are provided online .

More details on our website:

www.stmarysbitton.org.uk

Sunday, 3 April

Fifth Sunday of Lent
10.30am Parish Communion

Sunday, 10 April

Palm Sunday
10.15am Palm Sunday procession with Palm Crosses – meet at Church Hall
10.30am Palm Sunday Family service with the Scout Group and the St Mary's Minstrels. Followed by a cake sale in aid of Scout funds



Thursday 14 April

7.30pm **Maundy Thursday**
Communion of the Last Supper followed by a vigil

Friday 15 April

Good Friday
2pm Service of meditation as we remember the last hour before Jesus died

Sunday, 17 April

Easter Sunday
8.00am Holy Communion
10.30am Easter Celebration Communion followed by an Easter Egg Hunt



Sunday, 24 April

Second Sunday of Easter
8.00am Holy Communion
9.30am Family Café Church

Thursday, 28 April

9.30am Celtic Communion followed by coffee and cake

From the Register

6th March

Holy Baptism Emily Sylvia Rose Miller

10th March

Funeral Steven Harry Cox RIP



Midweek Home Groups

New series 'The Acts of the Apostles in 7 Chunks'

The three midweek groups who meet in homes around the parish are always delighted to welcome new participants. These informal sessions give us a chance to enjoy an hour of refreshment and chat on a variety of themes.

Earlier in the year we read the gospel of Luke in 5 chunks and at our meetings compared notes as to what had struck us. This proved a success so starting after Easter we are going to do the same with the second book Luke wrote which tells the remarkable tale of the early church as we read **'The Acts of the Apostles in 7 Chunks'**.

If you are interested do have a word with David Bailey 932 8949 (Wednesday morning group), Ken Gibson 932 2122 (Wednesday evening group) or Pete Midgley 932 6898 (Thursday evening group).

Sisters of the Church combat poverty in Bristol

Those attending the Family Special Service at St Mary's on 13 March were moved by the talk given by Sister Teresa of the Community of Sisters of the Church, in Bristol.

Although the community was founded over 150 years ago, their present work, called the Loaves and Fishes Ministry, began in the early 1990's when four Sisters from the Community moved to Ashley Road in Bristol. The sisters began giving out small food parcels to about 12 people a week - this has now grown to 250-300 a week, many of whom are living on the streets.

The sisters provide a food parcel to anyone who calls> No one is judged and no questions are asked. The food bag usually contains: tinned meat or fish, vegetables, baked beans, soup, custard, fruit, pasta, milk and tea..

Those attending the service completed a quiz to guess which were the top ten items. Two things that are needed in particular are a tin opener and soap (which is not often donated). The sisters also give out a small amount of cash to top up mobile phones etc.

The community in Ashley Road consists of only two nuns now, plus a number of associates and supporters. Donations come from a variety of sources, including supermarkets or other suppliers .

From Bitton, Helen Pugsley provides volunteer help as an associate and at Harvest and Christmas our gifts go to the community.



Sr Teresa visited on the weekend of the Mice Fest and can be seen showing a special gift from the day—a Sister Mouse, she has named "Mary".

Dates for your Diary

Monday 4 April
7.30pm

Annual Parish Meeting
In the church

Saturday 9 April
10am—4.30pm

Get to know your Sewing Machine
With Barbara Merritt
In the church. See page 24 for details

Saturday 14 May
7.30pm

Westerly Winds
Concert Band returns to St Mary's for
an evening of music

Saturday 21 May

Canon Ellacombe 200 Exhibition
Opening of an exhibition focusing on
the life and work of Bitton's late 19th
century, vicar, horticulturalist and
traveller.
Open view 22 May-4 September

Thursday to Sunday
2-5 June

Queen's Platinum Jubilee Weekend
BVRA Jubilee Picnic in the Park
Thanksgiving Service at St Mary's

Saturday 3 September
1.30pm—5.30pm

Annual Church Fête
In the church and Glebe Field

Saturday 29th October

Autumn Fayre—Stallholders' Fair
with an emphasis on Christmas items

Church & Church Hall Bookings

The church hall is available for hire and is a popular location for children's parties as well as regular events.

For larger events such as community meetings or concerts the church itself may be more suitable.

For Church Hall bookings contact Jill Gibson on **0117 932 2122**. Rates from £12.50 per hour.

For Church bookings contact the Social Secretary, Jenny Harris by email on **djacharris@hotmail.com**
Rates from £25 per hour (2 hour minimum hire).

**The
Children's
Society**

**Bitton
boxes raise
£377**

Jenny Harris writes: "I'm the new box co-ordinator for The Children's Society and I've recently counted and banked the money collected. The total amount raised was £377.00.

This money will go towards supporting young people through serious challenges like poverty, abuse, exploitation and mental health problems which will help to keep children safe and make sure they always have somewhere they can turn for help.

If you would like a box, then please email me: djacharris@hotmail.com"

Vicar's Letter

The Easter Story is one of Hope



Dear Friends,

It is hard, as I sit and type this magazine letter to think about any other topic than war. These last few weeks we have stared into the abyss of war and violence in Ukraine and at a moment when our own country is bursting into life, as each tree and flower is pregnant with potential, and we would be thinking of hope and new life as we continue to emerge from Covid little by little, and on Easter day celebrate the new life that is offered in Jesus' resurrection, the situation in Ukraine casts a shadow over us. Those who remember the last war in Europe hear echoes of rhetoric from those times in the speeches of the politicians and newscasters of today and there is much suffering in Ukraine and nobody wins when there is war and violence.

The Christian story of Easter is one of hope and it is not trite to say this in the current situation because our Easter hope is born out of much suffering and ultimately the laying down of life so that we might live. The problem of suffering for Christian believers has become a hot topic for Christian apologetics and a sticking point for some who can't believe in a God who allows suffering. It is always salutary for me to remember that Jesus never promises a suffering free, easy life if you become a Christian, in fact quite the opposite, one of the strands of Lenten discipline comes in the words of Jesus, "take up your cross and follow me." Taking up our cross means loving our enemies and praying for our persecutors.

Our Easter journeys, this year, bear the greater mark of suffering as we stand in solidarity with the people of the Ukraine, in prayer and in action. It is in prayer and action that we find the God of hope, who promises abundant life in Him in this world and the next. I have seen this solidarity and hope as communities have rallied, sending food and clothes, offering a home to refugees, working together for the good of our neighbours in the Ukraine. And there has also been an outpouring of prayer for all the people and situations caught up in this conflict.

Jeremy

Three Churches Lenten Pilgrimage

On Sunday 20th March 2022, a small band of Pilgrims stepped out from St. Marys Church, Bitton on a short Pilgrimage which would take in the three churches of the Benefice of Warmley, Bitton and Syston.

After coffee and a hot cross buns, they traversed a field or two before setting out on the cycle track to Warley, picking up more walkers on the way.

Arriving just in time for the 10.30 Climate Day Service at St. Barnabas Church, Warmley, the band were able to worship together and listen to an inspiring talk from Rev John White from Hazlenut Community Farm Church. John spoke about his journey in faith and the nurturing of a green community with a community garden that aspires to give away a big proportion of its produce with a generous heart. More information can be found on its website: hazelnutcommunityfarm.com

Coffee, tea, picnics and an environment quiz were then enjoyed in the church hall before the group, with a further increased number of Pilgrims, headed back into the sunshine to complete the journey. They negotiated the muddy fields and paths along the way to St. Annes Church in Syston.

There they were greeted by the echoes of a piano and singing coming from the church hall where they were offered a much welcomed cup of tea and some delightful cakes.

This was a truly joyous day and Nicola and Sally would like to thank all who helped in any way with the planning, service and refreshments.



Archbishops' Prayer for Ukraine

God of peace and justice,
we pray for the people of Ukraine
today.

We pray for peace and the laying
down of weapons.

We pray for all those who fear for
tomorrow,
that your spirit of comfort would
draw near to them.

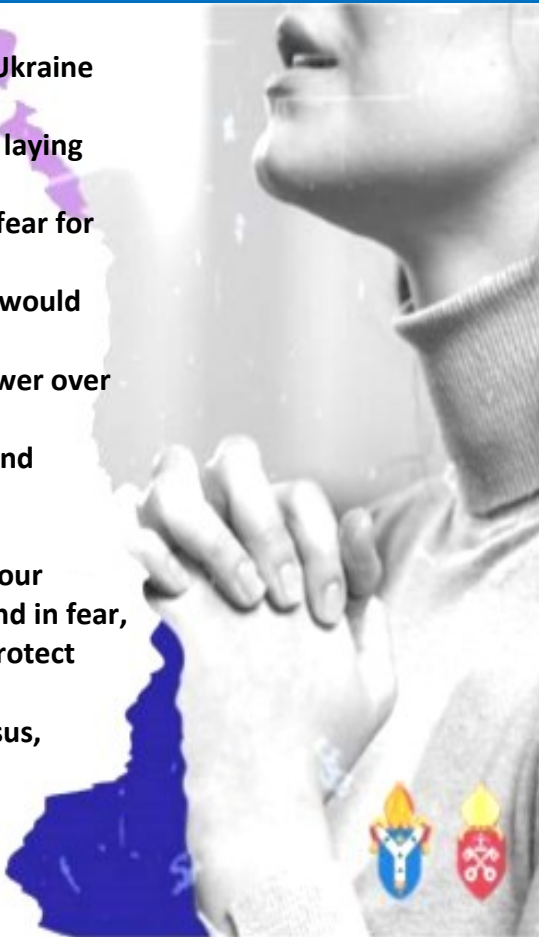
We pray for those with power over
war or peace,
for wisdom, discernment and
compassion
to guide their decisions.

Above all, we pray for all your
precious children, at risk and in fear,
that you would hold and protect
them.

We pray in the name of Jesus,
the Prince of Peace.

Amen.

Archbishop Justin Welby
Archbishop Stephen Cottrell



As we celebrate Easter let us pray for
the people of Ukraine

Focal Point, April 2022

South Gloucestershire Council has approved spending of £50,000 for events to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee weekend this summer— with events in the civil parish of Bitton being awarded one of the largest combined totals. The three Bitton projects to receive funding were:

- **Bitton Parish Council QPJ Afternoon Tea £1,800**
- **Bitton Village Residents Association Picnic and concert in the Pound Ground £1,000**
- **Avon Valley Railway QPJ street parties £1,160**

In total, 33 local events will receive a grant from the Council. South Gloucestershire Council Cabinet Member for Public Health and Equality of Opportunity, Cllr Franklin Owusu-Antwi, said: "The Jubilee is a remarkable milestone in the Queen's historic reign. I am delighted we are able to support so many local events like street and garden parties, fetes, picnics and festivals which will really bring people together."

S. Glos approves funding for Bitton Jubilee Events



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We know spring is coming when it is time to cut the churchyard grass again. Seb from Avon Valley Landscapes will be starting mowing again this month, and so Jacqui and I are asking for your support and help in maintaining our churchyard as a place to enjoy. Where we can stroll and be at peace with the birdsong and trees, and run into friends with their children and dogs. Our churchyard is an always open reflection of St Mary's itself with its beauty and peace.

It is a lovely place, but it doesn't look after itself. Many people like to see a tidy churchyard with mown grass, but keeping it in this state costs money. Maintaining the churchyard costs in excess of £5000 each year.

The churchyard is open for all to use and its maintenance and costs are entirely separate from church funds. Any small contribution is most welcome or if you can give your time to help tidy and maintain the area that is also appreciated.

Contact Barbara Merritt 01179323926 if you would like to help or donate. Cheques made payable to ST MARYS BITTON CHURCHYARD FUND.

Mouse Fest is the Cat's Whiskers!



A mouse tableau of the annual fete—more helpers required!

A series of tableaux of knitted mice representing various local groups proved an absolute winner on March 12th and 13th at St Mary's. Nearly 300 visitors came to see the mice. They marvelled at the history group with a bewhiskered Canon Ellacombe, a Wedding group with bride, groom, vicar and the Church Cleaners, the Bell Ringers in action, the Fete group with many mice in charge of popular stalls including an egg throwing mouse, the Music group, the Gardening club, the Scout group, the Knitting Club group and the Carol Singing group which was the first group to be knitted.

Julie Scudamore's brilliant idea was carried out by the hard work and ingenuity of Janet Ivens and her knitting group – Lin Coles, Jacynth Baber, Marlene Gallop, Linda Crossling, Sarah Craddock, Debbie Fryer and Nicola Eton. "We began knitting in October," says Jacynth "and have made about fifty mice in total."



The mice, highly decorative, but not toys, sold incredibly well, and over £1000 was raised for the Church Development fund. The bakers of Bitton provided many delicious cakes for the onlookers and very grateful thanks to Susan Grant who supplied tea and coffee from Asda and also generously stepped in to help. Several of the visitors came to the church for the first time and there were many children who took part in a mouse hunt, organised by Julie, finding mice holding letters which spelt out a cheese, hidden in the church as well.

Will this successful event take place next year? “We are a bit moused out now,” says Jacynth “ and will go back to our charity knitting for the moment.” However, yet again the Church has been used as a community space in a unique and unexpected way with great success, and perhaps they can be persuaded again soon....



*Left– The Scouts.
Above From Bitton’s past came a mining mouse and a Canon Ellacombe Mouse.*

Garden Club



A Palatial Task

If you haven't been to the Bishop's Palace Gardens in Wells, then a talk by James Cross, the Head Gardener would have given you something to whet your appetite.

James was invited to the BVRA Gardening Club's April meeting in the church. James has been the Head Gardener at Wells since 2005 and in that time, he has hugely expanded the amount of the garden under cultivation taking account of records of the garden's past layout and looking to make the garden fit round the ancient buildings including the disused ones. It is a very large site, and few bishops were particularly interested in the state of the gardens, although there were two notable exceptions including Bishop Bickersteth who planted an arboretum to celebrate the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977.

Gardening on a site with springs rising in the middle and a moat are not without challenges, but the talk certainly meant that members looked forward to the excursion to the garden planned by the club in September.

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

This year's Annual Parish Meeting will be held at 7.30pm in St Mary's Church on Monday 4 April. .

It will be the first in person APM since 2019.

This meeting is open to all parish residents and, as well as receiving reports from various committees, also elects the churchwardens and new members of the PCC.



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BITTON

Easter

EGG HUNT

raising money for The Meadows Primary School

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Saturday 9th – Saturday 23rd April

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Win an Easter Egg!

Buggy friendly route

You just need to be able to scan a QR code on your phone

Friends of the Meadows

Next Generation of Bell Ringers



On Easter Monday (18th April) we are welcoming the Bristol and Gloucestershire Diocesan youth bellringing team to Bitton and Warmley. At Bitton we are lucky to have 2 bellringers who are members of the youth team which encourages good striking and friendship with other young ringers.

These young people are the future of bellringing, especially after the challenges of the pandemic and the loss of many older ringers.

If you are interested in learning to ring or would like to see what it is about, please contact bittonbellringers@outlook.com or visit the churches on a **Monday night at Bitton 19.30-21.00, Wednesday night at Warmley 19.30-21.00.** You will be most welcome.



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Never too young to get involved. Eloise prepares to litter pick, while her brother, Sebastian, gets to grips with the grabber.



Great turnout for the Litter Pick

Some 30 people came out on a fine Saturday morning in late February to clean up the village in the annual Bitton Litter Pick organised by the BVRA. There was no shortage of items to collect either producing a large pile of 30 bags and assorted rubbish.. It was a great community event with a get together in the pub afterwards. Many thanks to all who helped.

Among the helpers was Eloise Zerk pictured opposite with her younger brother Sebastian. This year the Meadows School set the students the task of a half term fund raising project. Eloise chose the litter pick as hers and raised £70 for school funds contributing to a total of £1099. Well done Eloise!



Photographs by Jon Booth

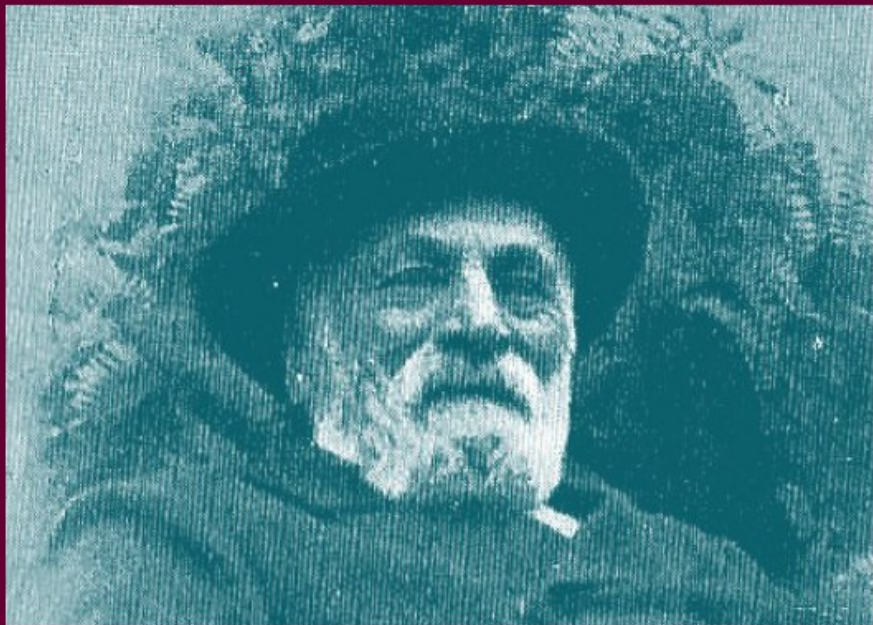
Could you share a passion for G&S?



Looking for something new to do in 2022? How about singing and performing the works of one of musical theatre's most successful and enduring partnerships?

The award-winning **BATH GILBERT & SULLIVAN SOCIETY** is one of many around the globe who regularly stage the 14 comic operas of **WS Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan** and in May will be starting rehearsals for ***The Gondoliers***, full of memorable tunes including the classic 'Take a pair of sparkling eyes'. The show will be staged at **The Mission Theatre, Bath, 6-10 December** and they are seeking new members to come along and join the cast! The group rehearse on Friday evenings at the Southdown Methodist Church Centre, The Hollow, Bath, BA2 1NJ.

If this has sparked your interest and you want to find out more, you can visit their website www.bathgands.co.uk. You can message us via the contact page or email us members-_bathgands@aol.com. Alternatively, call the Director Juliette Coad on 07847 926545.



ELLACOMBE 200

*Celebrating the life and times of Rev Canon Henry Nicholson Ellacombe,
Vicar of Bitton, Gardener, Writer and Traveller 1822-1916*

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| <p>BITTON. BAZAAR.</p> <p>A SALE OF STUFFS AND ORNAMENTAL WORK and other articles for sale at the VICARAGE GARDENS, TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY, 2nd and 3rd September, 1916.</p> <p><small>The Proceeds are to go to the FUND for a BAZAR ORGAN- ized by the Bitton Church.</small></p> <p><small>ADMISSION on Tuesday at 10.00 o'clock, on Wed. 10.00 o'clock. Refreshments at 10.00 o'clock on the after-noon day.</small></p> <p><small>A BAZAR WILL BE AN AFTERNOON, AND refreshments will be provided on the evening.</small></p> | | <p>TEN POUNDS REWARD.</p> <p>STOLEN On MONDAY NIGHT or TUESDAY MORNING last, from a Field SITUATED at BITTON, A FAT EWE SHEEP, The Property of Mr. Alfred Sperrin.</p> | |
|--|--|---|--|

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22 May—4 September 2022**

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News from Bitton WI

Thanks to all my WI new friends who gave me such lovely encouraging feedback on my February contribution. I gather the cake recipe has been tested by a member and was delicious.

March Meeting

Our meeting on 14 March started with the usual welcome from our President and the Minutes of the previous meeting in February were read and agreed as a correct record. The result of the vote for the proposed change of venue was announced – the majority of members chose to stay at the Church Hall in Bitton for our future meetings.

One of our talented members had taken part in the Mice display held the weekend before in the Church where the handcrafted mice were also sold. The display had been a great success and had raised a whopping £1,120 so far with some further money yet to be collected. This year is going to be a busy time for our members who like to enjoy the outings arranged by WI with plenty to do and see throughout the summer. Fonhill have also arranged a summer hanging basket demonstration for members in early May. All members were reminded that subscriptions are due in April and will be collected at our April meeting.

Talk by Susan Symonds

This month we were lucky enough to enjoy a talk by Susan Symonds who has written a number of books about the colourful personal life of Queen Victoria. Susan's obsession with the Queen started when she found a portrait of the Queen in her attic. At our meeting she spoke of the Young Victoria who was born as a result of a race to get an heir following the death of Charlotte when giving birth to her son. This left no legitimate heir to the throne and so the race began! Alexandrina Victoria was the daughter of Prince Edward, Duke of Kent and Princess Victoria of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld.

Focal Point, April 2022

From birth Princess Drina as she was known, was brought up to become Queen under the Kensington System. She had a very close relationship with her mother, though lost her father when she was very young. Alexandrina was raised under close supervision of her mother when growing up and was not allowed friends or to do the normal things children or young women did. Despite this lonely upbringing and the influence of her mother and her mother's comptroller, John Conroy, Alexandrina became a very independent young lady.

The King died around a month after her 18th birthday when she became Queen in waiting. She was crowned on 20 June 1837. We heard she made many mistakes at first, but these were quickly forgiven because she was young and had reached into the hearts of the people who had taken to her straight away. Finally we heard about the love of her life, Prince Albert and how she wasn't particularly enamoured by him when she met him at the tender age of 16. However, a few years later he was presented to her as a likely husband and she fell in love immediately. The rest, as they say, is history! Susan's books can be found online to purchase.

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be held in the Church Hall, Church Lane on 11 April 2022 at 2 pm. Do please come along if you would like to see what WI is all about. You can have a couple of "taster" months before you decide if you like us or not. You'll be most welcome and you will get cake!

This month's recipe is one for you to try, especially for the forthcoming Easter holidays. This WI recipe is a good one to get the little ones involved in. I know they will really enjoy decorating them as much as they will eating them!

Karen Davidson



Easter Biscuits (WI Recipe)

Serves: 10-12

Preparation: 15 mins + 40 mins for icing and 15-20 mins cooking

Ingredients

For the biscuits

- 30g light brown soft sugar
- 60g butter (room temperature)
- 90g plain flour
- 1 tsp mixed spice
- 1 egg yolk

For the decoration: Fondant Icing and Icing Writing Tube

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 150°C and grease a large baking tray.
2. Cream together the butter and sugar, with an electric mixer or wooden spoon.
3. Sift in the flour and mixed spice, then stir in the egg yolk, until the mixture comes together and forms a ball. Knead briefly until smooth, and pop in the fridge for ten minutes.
4. Dust the work surface with flour and roll out your dough. If it sticks, sandwich between sheets of baking paper and roll to a thickness of about 3mm.
5. Use shaped cutters to stamp biscuits out, and transfer to the baking tray with a palette knife.
6. Bake for 15-20 minutes until golden but still slightly soft. Remove, and cool on a wire rack till hardened.
7. Use the fondant and writing icing to make bright and cheerful decorations on your biscuits. Leave to dry.

Enjoy.

The April Quiz

The theme of this month's quiz is Chemical Elements

No. Clue

1. The lightest element, first on the periodic table
2. Often found in balloons, to make them float
3. The only metal that is a liquid at room temperature
4. This element makes up over 75% of the air, by volume
5. Discovered in 1669, used in matches, conducts electricity, but it's not a metal
6. It makes Jupiter's moon (Io) yellow, has a bad odour and is found in volcanoes
7. Essential mineral found in oysters, many cereals and suspension bridges
8. You can smell this poisonous gas at swimming pools
9. Named after Calx, the Latin name for lime, found in nails and shells
10. A Swedish chemist discovered this element in 1869, he named it after his homeland
11. Named from German word kobold, meaning "goblin ore."
12. Shares it's name with the 5 cent coin in USA
13. Unlucky for some, has no function in Biology, named after the Latin word Alumen meaning bitter salt
14. Low value loose change or slang for a police officer
15. Smells horrible, named from the Greek word bromos, meaning stench

Name:

Contact:

Please send your answers to Carolyn Russell at Martin House, Church Road, Bitton (the yellow house) or email mrscrussell@icloud.com by 14 April (Maundy Thursday).

Focal Point, April 2022

- 16 All living things contain this element, the 4th most abundant element in the Universe
- 17 The rarest naturally occurring element on earth, there are about 28 g of it in the Earth's crust.
- 18 Used to kill the former Russian spy, Alexander Litvinenko in London, 2006
- 19 The only element named in Cluedo, PB may use this weapon
- 20 A solid, but when it is heated, goes straight to a purple gas, it's needed in the human diet, too little can cause goitre

March's Quiz Answers

Last month's quiz was on space.

The correct answers are:

1. Solar System; 2. Supernova; 3. Saturn; 4. Pulsar; 5. Galaxy; 6. Red Giant; 7. Asteroids; 8. Moon; 9. Constellation; 10. Comet; 11. Quasar; 12. Dwarf Planet; 13. Nebula; 14. Dark Matter; 15. Venus; 16. Triton; 17. The Black Arrow; 18. Milky Way; 19. Andromeda Galaxy; 20. Black Hole.

Correct answers were received from:

The Booths; Terry Matthews; Jan & Diane; Frank & Co; Ken, Jill & Joshua; Mary Younie; Alan & Sue; Sue & Rod Nethercote; Sarah Craddock; Hannah Moore & Gillian Dugay; Martin Hetzel; Tony & Carol Sheedy.

This month's prize goes to:

Hannah Moore & Gillian Dugay

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The last word



In *The History Boys*, Alan Bennett updated the words often ascribed to Churchill that “*History is one damned thing after another*”. He had to, because, as I can well remember, young men in the 1980s when the play is set, would no longer have used the word *damned* – so a more Anglo Saxon word was supplemented. We certainly seem to be stuck in a series of things following one after another: A Brexit that seemed to drag on interminably (elements still aren’t really done) then a global pandemic and now a war in eastern Europe. What’s next?

There are some conflicts in the world in which it is difficult to identify who is at fault. But there can be no doubt here about the wrongfulness of the aggression of Putin and his cronies against the people of Ukraine—and that is not to forget the thousands of young Russian men who are dying in battle in this unnecessary war.

We hope and pray for peace, but at this point it is difficult to foresee what of a negotiated peace would work? Some would even ask whether we are right to supply more arms, would it not be better simply to save lives and let Putin do what he wants?

As a history boy myself, I have been reminded of the parallels of the current situation and those of Britain in 1940-41 when America decided to become the Arsenal of Democracy. President Roosevelt’s fireside chat explaining to the American people why they needed to provide Britain with arms for their own American future safety has arguments that would not be out of place today. One cannot imagine a modern politician setting out their reasoning in a broadcast of as long as half an hour, as he did; and you could say that didn’t end well either. But leadership and decisiveness is now needed if the next “*damned thing*” isn’t far worse. *Jim Heavens*



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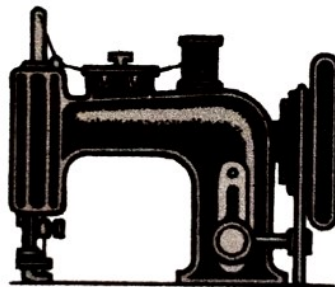
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