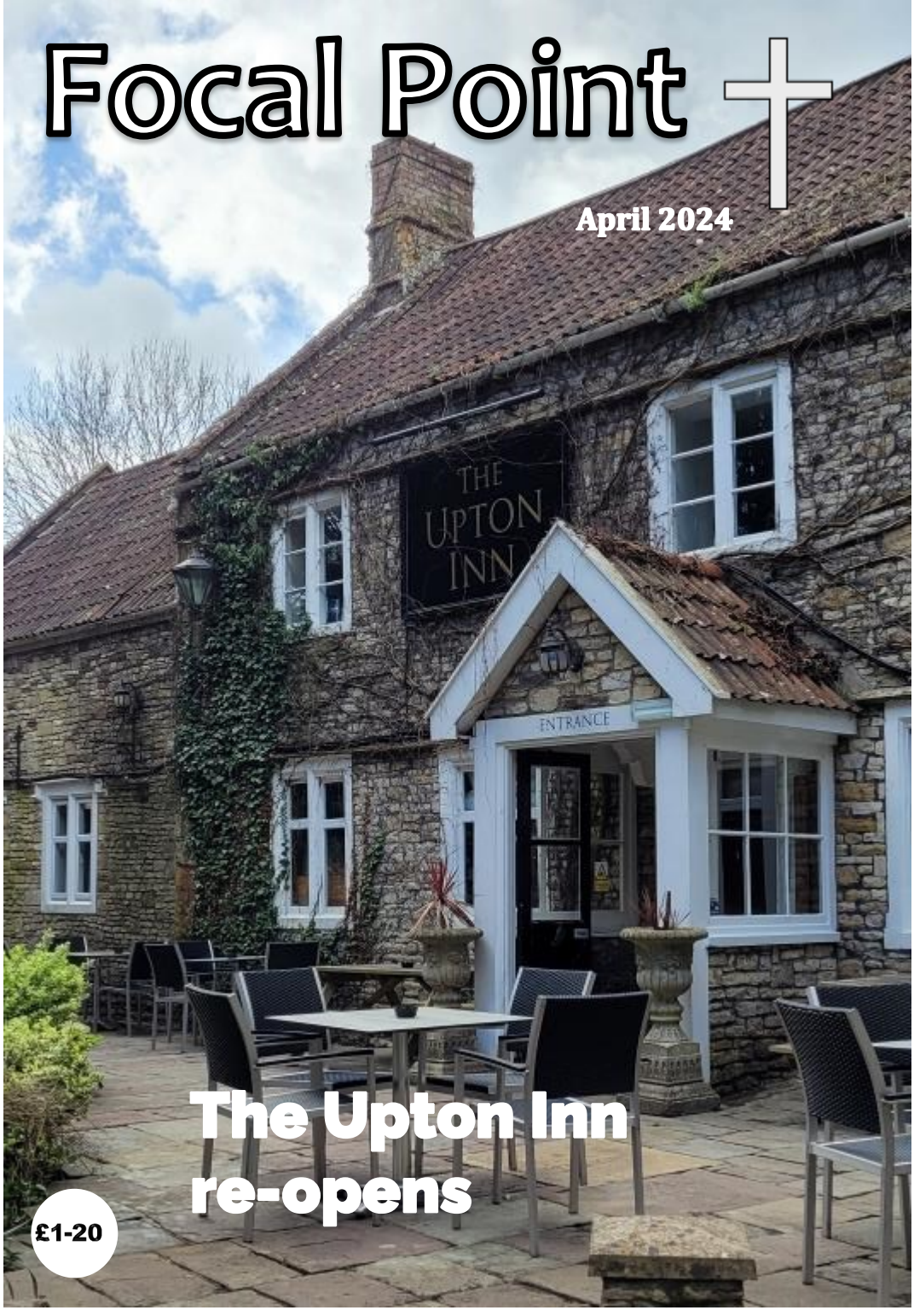


Focal Point

April 2024



**The Upton Inn
re-opens**

£1-20

The Upton Inn (cover picture)



The Upton Inn which closed last year, reopened on 20th March. It is having a soft opening to allow the new team to get used to serving and with a reduced menu.

But it is all good news for Upton Cheyney, and the parish, that the pub, which seemed lost for all time has come back to life.

We wish Julian and the staff at the Upton well for the future.

There's more to discover—

Our website is full of information about what the church has to offer today, its fascinating history and plans to renew its role as an active centre for the whole community.

Make use of its community pages and calendar of local events:

www.stmarysbitton.org.uk

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Focal Point

Bitton Churches Magazine

April 2024

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*Deadline for the May edition is:
Wednesday 17th April*

In this month's Focal Point:

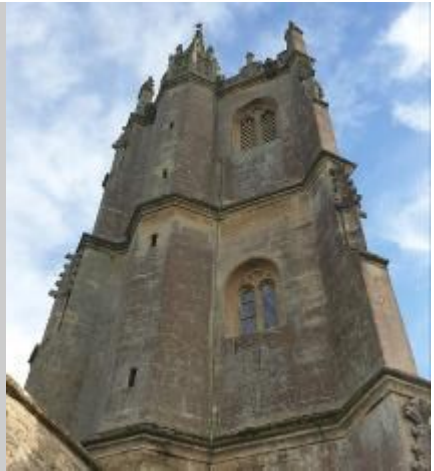
- Page 12 **The Water of Life**
Rev Rosemary Radcliffe
- Page 19 Meadows School wins First Place
at Eisteddfod
- Page 20 Palm Sundays Sandwich Services
- Page 24 **Ellacombe's Lost Sketchbook—
Church Brasses**
- Page 31 **Public Information**
From Dan Norris
- Pages 32 **WI News and Recipe**
- Page 36 **Puzzles**
- Page 38 **Prize Quiz**
- Page 41 Last Word

**Church news and
information about acts of
worship pages 6 to 11**



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CHURCH,
BITTON**

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0117 932 2122

David Bailey
Westover, Bath Road
Bitton
0117 932 8949

Churchwardens:

Simon Harris
41 Combe Park
Weston
BATH
07714 615817

Vacancy

Services for April 2024

**Sunday,
7th April**

Second Sunday of Easter
10.30am Parish Communion

**Sunday
14th April**

Third Sunday of Easter
10.30am Family Special with the
Scouts and St Mary's
Minstrels



**Sunday,
21st April**

Fourth Sunday of Easter
10.30am Morning Worship

**Thursday
25th April**

10.00am Celtic Communion
10.30am St Mary's Tea and Coffee
Morning



**Sunday
28th April**

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



Benefice Prayer Opportunities

Sunday 7 April

10.00 to 10.15 am in St Mary's Lady Chapel

Saturday 13 April

9.00 to 10.00 am in St Mary's Church Hall

Tuesday 23 April

from 7.00 to 8.00 pm on Zoom

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 SISTERS OF THE COMMUNITY OF THE CHURCH LOAVES AND FISHES MINISTRY

Gifts may be left in St Mary's Church Porch between 10.15 and 11.45 on the First Sunday of each month and will be delivered to the Sisters on the following Wednesday.

The Sisters have made a special request for toiletries:

Shower gel, toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo, conditioner, shaving gel, sanitary towels, nappies, wet wipes, toothbrushes.

St Mary's Matters

Simon Harris—Churchwarden



I was once posted to the Middle East for a couple of years and lived on the outskirts of a city hundreds of miles from the coast with very little natural water available. What we had came from de-salination plants and then piped or trucked to its destination. What a precious resource. At the time I really missed never seeing a river or a stream or the sea with summer temperatures peaking at 50c. I made a pact with myself then to try never to complain about the rain in the UK. So, I will just say - what a wet Winter. The picture below was taken looking from the River, North West towards the Church, whilst out walking with Mel and Monty-Dog. The following week the lake had gone.



Continued on next page

Focal Point, April 2024

The search for our new vicar has moved on a step with each of our benefice churches, St Annes at Syston and St Barnabas at Warmley finalising their draft Parish Profiles which summarise what they are about. This will be combined with our Profile and then sent off to the Archdeacon by Easter who will then mark our homework and advise us on the next steps. In my experience, few people read all the way through a 30-page document but rather look for the Executive Summary so we have tried to boil it all down to a couple of sentences. I would like to say a big THANK YOU for the many inputs and suggestions that have been received, all of which have influenced the end product. An extract of the summary is pasted below:

"We do not wish to over-prescribe our vision of whom our new incumbent will be, but we do need a leader with drive and energy and a passion for the role. Someone who will enthusiastically engage in community events and be able to face outwards towards our local communities. We have a determination to attract the younger generations with new expressions of worship as well as continue to develop more traditional forms of worship. We have recently created a post of benefice administrator to coordinate weddings, baptisms and funerals, as well as more general correspondence under the guidance of the incumbent."

We go on to emphasise that the job comes with a good-sized vicarage at Warmley in a great location nestled between Bristol and Bath. So, fingers crossed that we can attract some interested candidates. The plan is to hold interviews in July.

It seems like ages since we have been able to throw the doors of the church open during the week, but with the coming of British Summer Time, the church will again be open for walkers and passers by to come and enjoy this beautiful space in the heart of the village. So please, whether you join us in worship or not, take a few moments and enjoy the peace and tranquillity of St Marys.

Spring Home Groups

People who met Jesus'
by Rebecca Manley Pippert

'From April to June our three mid-week groups will be following a 7-part series written by a friend of Stephanie and David Bailey. It looks interesting and while some of the 7 people are well known Becky has also made some unexpected choices. Each of our three groups will be delighted to welcome new participants so please do make contact with the group whose time and location suits you best.

Tuesdays at 10.30am at Westover, Bath Road, Bitton
Contact David Bailey 0117 932 8949

Wednesdays at 7.30pm at 8 Church Road, Bitton
Contact Ken Gibson 0117 932 2122

Thursdays at 7.30pm at 31 Kenilworth Drive, Willsbridge
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Rev Rosemary Radcliffe

The Water of Life



Dear Friends,

Whilst having Spiritual Direction (a time where you are lead in prayer and reflection by a qualified practitioner) the following version¹ of Psalm 23 was read to me. I'd never heard it before and it was exactly what I needed in that moment.

"Yahweh is my best friend and my shepherd.

I always have more than enough.

He offers a resting place for me in his luxurious love.

His tracks take me to an oasis of peace near the quiet brook of bliss.

That's where he restores and revives my life.

He opens before me the right path and leads me along in his footsteps of righteousness

so that I can bring honour to his name.

Even when your path takes me through the valley of deepest darkness,

fear will never conquer me, for you already have!

Your authority is my strength and my peace.

The comfort of your love takes away my fear.

I'll never be lonely, for you are near.

You become my delicious feast even when my enemies dare to fight.

You anoint me with the fragrance of your Holy Spirit;

you give me all I can drink of you until my cup overflows.

So why would I fear the future?

Only goodness and tender love pursue me all the days of my life.

Then afterward, when my life is through,

I'll return to your glorious presence to be forever with you!"

The run up to Easter is particularly busy for all members of the church; as a member of the ministry team there are multiple additional services to prepare for as well as the regular Sunday ones, and I'm reminded of when I worked in an office and March was Year End and incredibly busy. The importance of deadlines and practicalities that must be sorted cannot be underestimated.

This passage reminded me of the equally important need to pause, be still and rest. To be refreshed and renewed.

Continued on next page



I have a potted plant on my desk, that I was given as I left my church before I was ordained in 2022. I was pleased when it was still alive three months later, and somehow it still is; although recently I thought my neglect had killed it. It was definitely sad: flowers were drooping, leaves shrivelled up and yellowing. I nearly threw it out, but at the last minute decide to give it some

Focal Point, April 2024

water instead, and see what happened. Two days later the flowers were upright, leaves were glossy and bright and it is bringing more joy to me than I can express.

It's reminded me that we all need this water of life in our lives. That's the whole point of Easter. It's a time to focus on Jesus on the cross and his resurrection. Somehow, Jesus opens up his arms, and takes all our burdens, our shame, our guilt, those things that stop us from living joyful lives, and transforms it into something lifegiving.

We don't have to do anything. We don't have to be any special, Jesus loves us just as we are, with all our faults and failings, and with all those wonderful things that make us unique.

All we have to do is accept that love, that gift of grace and life, and we too can flourish, like my plant.

I pray that you will take time over Easter to reflect on the Passion Translation of Psalm 23. Where does it take you?

Where do you find your "oasis of peace near the quiet brook of bliss", where you are restored, renewed, and instead of being in deficit, find yourself in a place of abundant love.

God bless, Rev Rosemary



St Mary's Church, Bitton

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Monday 15th April 2024

at 7.30pm

in the Chantry Chapel

Annual Meeting of Parishioners

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

All welcome

This meeting is open to all parishioners



WESTERLY WINDS PRESENTS:

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Saturday 13th April at 7.30pm

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Meadows Choir wins First Place at Eisteddfod

More success for the Meadows School in March when the school choir, consisting of children from years 3 to 6, won first place in Eisteddfod performing arts competition, choir category, in Thornbury! What made the win even more astounding was that this was their first competition.

Their choir teacher Cara Clark said “ I was absolutely delighted with how well the children performed both in their singing and deportment. They have worked so hard during the past weeks and I was extremely proud of every single one of them. Lovely comments from the adjudicator included ‘This was polished and musically aware singing’ and ‘A poised and evocative performance’.

They sang Double Trouble from Harry Potter and The Rose by Bette Midler.

Daisy Stone in year 5 was thrilled and says ‘I love being part of the school choir and was so happy to have won our first competition!’



Palm Sunday's sandwich of services

This year, Palm Sunday fell on the fourth Sunday of the month, when the main service is the increasingly popular Family Café Church. To maintain the yearly tradition of a procession through the village on that day a sandwich of services was held, starting with a good turnout at Family Café Church, followed by the procession and then a more traditional service of praise for Palm Sunday. This was all in addition to the early morning service of Holy Communion.

The procession around the village, which marks the beginning of Holy Week, commemorates Christ's journey into Jerusalem riding on a donkey—an occasion when he was acclaimed and branches of palms were strewn in his path. This acclamation proved short-lived and soon afterwards he was denounced and crucified.

On Easter Sunday, as this edition of Focal Point is being distributed, we will celebrate his resurrection with a traditional Easter Service followed by the very popular Easter Egg hunt,



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towards costs would be welcome

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Have you ever wondered about the Alms Houses in Church Lane, Bitton?

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John Dugay – johndugay50@gmail.com

Ellacombe's lost Sketchbook: -an early interest in church brasses



What would a young undergraduate do in their vacation or free time in the 1840s?

As we open the church daily for the summer season, it may be timely to reveal a recently discovered sketchbook recording some of the church visits of the young Henry Nicholson Ellacombe, then the son, but later himself to be Vicar of Bitton. The sketches, which date from the early 1840s, when he was in his early twenties are of memorial brasses, all dating from the late medieval period.

Whether the young Ellacombe pursued this a dedicated hobby or just as a pastime is unclear. The churches visited are across the south of England but seem to be either within daily reach of Bitton or Oxford, or to places where his relatives lived in Kent (the Nicholsons) or Exeter (the Ellacombe

At the time the sketchbook commenced, Ellacombe was studying Divinity at Oxford University. He was relatively well-off as the family had a private fortune and income, and it meant that he could take full advantage of the new railways that were being built to pursue his interest.

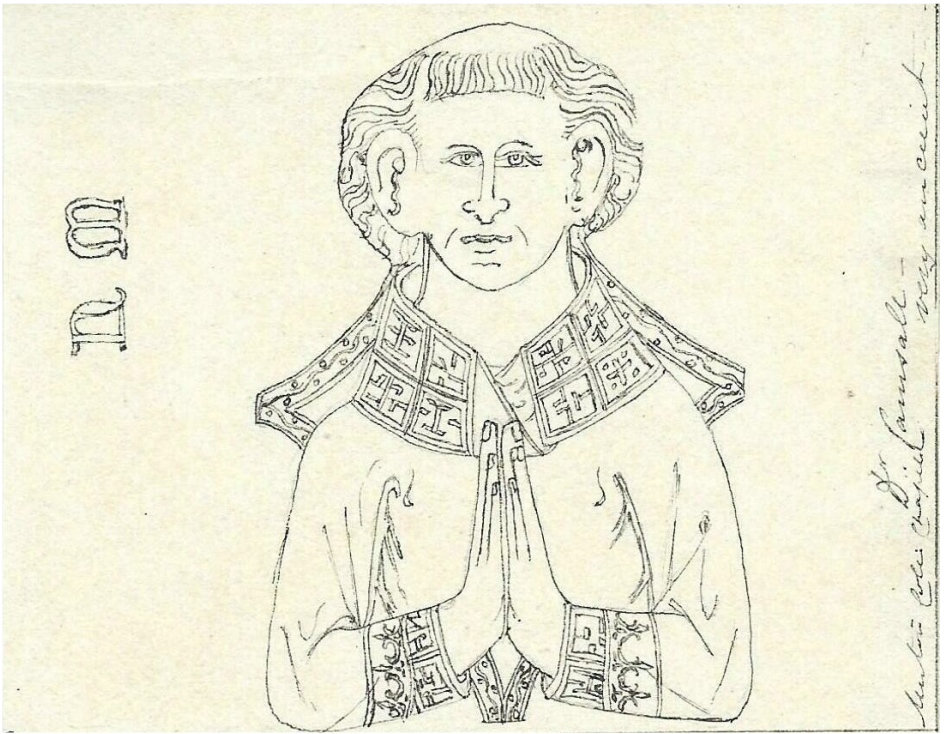
It was very much the fashion of the time to study and collect items from the medieval period. The mid nineteenth century saw a renaissance of medieval architecture and other art forms. The new churches that date from this period (and there were many) are almost all of a gothic design often elaborate and ornate, inspired by the designs of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Brass memorials were particularly attractive, particularly for those without artistic talent as brass rubbings, could be made by placing paper over the brass and recreating the image using a wax crayon.



**Above; Richard Malford,
Warden of New College,
Oxford**

**Richrd Bewforerester and
wife—Dorchester Abbey, Oxon**



Ellacombe may have taken rubbings, but in this sketchbook he used his artistic skills to draw the brasses. He was clearly a good draughtsman, if not as naturally skilled as his father, nonetheless the drawings catch the fine details of his subjects. An advantage of copying brasses is of course that they are flat, so any perspective has been provided by the original artist.

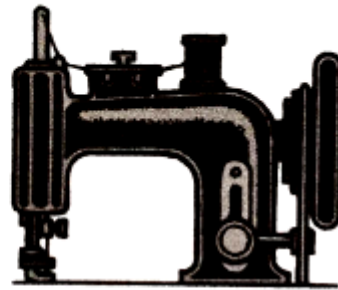
From the date inside the front cover, Ellacombe started his sketches in July 1842 when he was 20, although it is not clear what period the sketchbook covers, but the quality of the drawings improves in later pages as he developed his art.

Opposite:
The identity
of this head is
difficult to
decipher, but
it comes with
the statement
that it is "very
ancient".

This page:
Lord & Lady
Berkley from
St Mary's
Wooton
under Edge.



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PUBLIC INFORMATION

Update from Dan Norris, Mayor of the West of England

nbusiness@westofengland-ca.gov.uk



Knife Crime

At the annual Mayor's West of England Schools Summit, 100 local West of England youngsters were trained in life saving skills so they know what emergency steps to take if someone has been stabbed.

WildscreenARK

I was delighted to launch WildscreenARK alongside Chris Packham last month. WildscreenARK is a new online nature resource, aimed primarily at children aged 13 – 18. It has amazing high quality photos and videos of the natural world and is ideal to support the new Natural History GCSE. Take a look at: <https://www.wildscreenark.org>

Help for Communities for Green Energy Projects

The West of England Local Energy Scheme is open for community groups who would like to set up energy projects- think solar panels or a wind turbine!

Find out more here: <https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/local-energy-scheme/>

Avoid the April Showers and hop on the bus

Residents with a birthday in April can now sign up for free bus travel throughout their birthday month. Evade the April showers whilst travelling around the West by signing up for a birthday bus pass at: www.birthdaybus.co.uk

News from Bitton WI

Our March meeting started as usual with a hearty welcome from the President, recognising some of our group are still away through illness and wishing them a very speedy recovery. Karen recognised the recent celebration for International Women's Day with an inspirational quote: "A Women is like a teabag – you never know how strong she is until she gets into hot water".

This year in June, our WI Group will be celebrating its' 85th birthday with an Afternoon Tea, kindly hosted by our previous President, Jean and we are in discussion to visit a local Open members and we are hoping to get confirmation from the venue soon. Lots of other events already coming through from our Avon Federation and Royal Chase groups, from afternoon tea, a pub quiz and even a boat trip in Windsor. We always like to plan in advance and are now looking at speakers for our 2025 meeting calendar! Karen had researched what speakers some other WI groups have had and we were in awe of the group whose speaker got them prepared for cold water swimming and would be taking them on a sunset swim in Clevedon pool very soon. We agreed we would much rather watch than embrace the chill!

We welcomed back Susan Symonds as speaker this month who was giving us her second instalment in the life of Queen Victoria. This focussed on the years of plotting her marriage to Albert, her 9 children and an insight as to why Albert died at such an early age.

She told of how both the families of Victoria and Albert had arranged for them to marry right from birth and how their families, the Saxe Coburg's, were well known for arranging marriages into the aristocracy to amass "thrones". Whilst this union was not welcomed by the aristocracy or the people, Victoria fell completely in love with Albert the moment she met him and they were married just 4 months later. Albert was considered not good enough for Victoria as he had no royal title. Albert, himself, was displeased not given a title immediately and had to wait 17 years before Victoria granted him the title of Prince Consort.

Shortly after their honeymoon, Victoria found herself to be pregnant and she did not like this at all, as it ruined her ability to party and travel.

Focal Point, April 2024

She apparently didn't really like children, especially babies through Albert was absolutely smitten with all of their children, and more particularly their first born, Victoria. Susan showed us some images of pictures of the children that Victoria herself had painted and it was hard to believe she wasn't what we would consider to be a natural mother. In all, Victoria and Albert had 9 children within 17 years, and whilst Victoria was furious at times to have found herself pregnant she still idolised Albert with a passion.

We heard how Albert was eventually allowed to take on more and more royal duties, especially when the Queen was indisposed through pregnancy. As the children grew up, many things weighed on Albert's mind. He was distraught when his daughter married her Prussian Prince, Keiser Bill, and moved away. His youngest son was found to be suffering from haemophilia and Albert was known to be strict and push their eldest son, Bertie to work hard, knowing he would one day become King. Albert was never really a well man and when he found out Bertie had a dalliance with a young actress it pushed him over the edge. Victoria often blamed Bertie for his fathers' illness and subsequent death!

Victoria sadly lost her mother with whom she had formed a better bond of late, shortly followed by her beloved Albert at the age of just 42. Typhoid was blamed for his death at the time, but it is now believed it was probably cancer or colitis. Victoria was grief stricken, staying away from her royal duties for some 10 years. She never remarried and once back, concentrated on her role as monarch until her death at the age of 82.

We certainly enjoyed this instalment of the story and are looking forward to the next one!

Our next meeting will held on Monday 8th April 2024, 2 pm, St. Mary's Church Hall, Bitton.

Our WI recipe this month is said to be one of Queen Victoria's favourite cakes.

Karen Davidson



Chocolate Biscuit Cake (No Bake)



Serves: 25

**Preparation: 15 minutes + 10 minutes
cooling and 2–3 hours chilling**

Ingredients

100g Butter
100g Dark Chocolate (70% Cocoa), broken into pieces
100g Milk Chocolate (32% Cocoa), broken into pieces
3 tbsp Golden Syrup
150g Rich Tea or Malted Milk Biscuits

Optional – add pistachio nuts, Maltesers or Marshmallows

Method

1. Put the butter, dark and milk chocolate and golden syrup in a large mixing bowl and set it over a saucepan of gently simmering water. Leave until melted, stirring only occasionally.

Focal Point, April 2024

2. Meanwhile, cut a square of non-stick baking paper a little larger than a shallow 20 cm cake tin, snip into the corners diagonally then press the paper into the tin so that the base and sides are lined.
3. Break the biscuits into rough pieces with your fingertips and stir into the chocolate mixture with the pistachios, if using.
4. Take the bowl off the heat and allow to cool for 10 minutes or so.
5. Stir the Maltesers and marshmallows into a slightly cooled chocolate mixture then spoon into the lined tin and press into an even layer.
6. Chill in the fridge for 2–3 hours until firm, then lift the paper from the tin, cut the cake into small squares and lift off the paper to serve.



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Puzzle Pages

SUDUKO CHALLENGE

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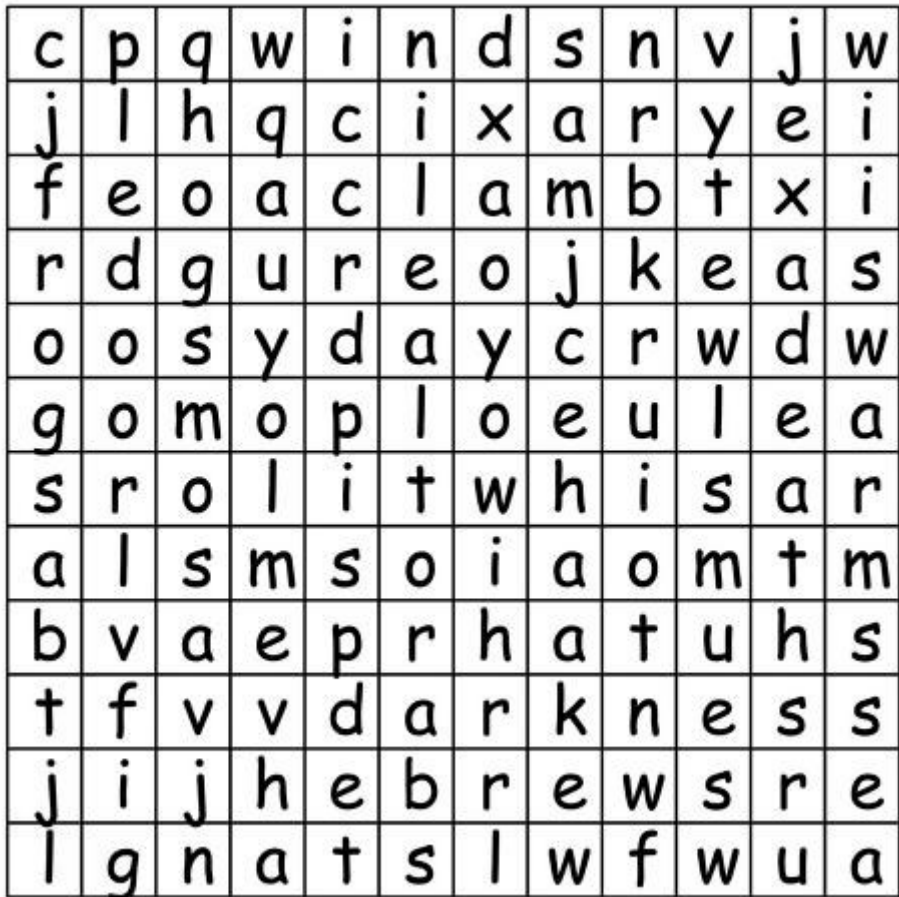
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Answers to both puzzles are available on the church website www.stmarysbitton.org.uk - click on **News & Focal Point** or use this QR code



WORD SEARCH

This month's word search continues the story of Moses.



You are looking for:

- | | | | |
|---------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Nile | Family | Swarms | Egyptians |
| Locusts | Darkness | Hebrews | Pharaoh |
| Army | Door | Frogs | Hail |
| Slaves | lamb | Livestock | Blood |
| Gnats | Wind | House | Cloud |
| Sea | Water | Power | Death |

April Prize Quiz

by Kim Scudamore

Recognising that Bitton is home to a great little railway company, most (but not necessarily all) of the questions are linked to the trains.

GOOD LUCK!

1. How did Flanders and Swann reach Kirby Muxloe, Mow Cop and Scholar Green?
2. Which train brought 'letters for the rich, letters for the poor, the shop at the corner, the girl next door'?
3. Where did Edward Ratchett die?
4. Which train took Rod Stewart into the charts in 1990?
5. Who was usually 'at the throttle of the Cannonball Express'?
6. Which train did Hero Boy and Billy the Lonely Boy board on Christmas Eve?
7. Who is the patron saint of children, jobs and health?
8. Which train left from Track 29?
9. In which city will you find the National Railway Museum?
10. What was 'Slow and Dirty' until it closed in 1966?
11. In 1966, The Monkees encouraged a girl to take which train?
12. *The Ghost Train* by Arnold Ridley was a play inspired by the writer being stranded at which local station?
13. Who pulled Annie and Clarabel?
14. On film, divorcee Rachel Watson is known as what?
15. Which train departs from platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ at Kings Cross?
16. What took place at Bridego Railway Bridge on August 8th 1963?
17. Which train was taken by the man who 'dreamt he'd be a star (but he didn't get far)'?

Focal Point, April 2024

18. What was name given to a new express service between London and Glasgow inaugurated in 1936, which was also used as the title of an orchestral piece composed by Vivian Ellis and used as a radio theme tune?
19. If Isambard Kingdom Brunel's was 7ft and ¼ inch; what was George Stephenson's?
20. Which 1962 film starring Jason Robards was an adaptation of an F. Scott Fitzgerald 1934 novel?

Please return your answers by Friday 15th April by email to
bittoncm@outlook.com

March Quiz Answers

In the March Quiz, most (but not all) the questions referred to those magic ingredients that add flavour and interest to our food.

Answers:

(1) Colonel Mustard; (2) Parsley; (3) Sage; (4) Rosemary; (5) Newsweek; (6) Herbie; (7) Ginger Rogers; (8) Saffron; (9) Old Spice; (10) Pepper; (11) Nigella Lawson; (12) Cayenne; (13) Cinnamon; (14) John Curry; (15) St Basil; (16) The Mace; (17) Saffron Walden; (18) The Spice Islands; (19) The Royal Mint; (20) Nutmeg.

Correct answers

Correct answers were received from Celia Mosley, Ros Knight and Frank Fitzgibbon.

This months winner is: Celia Mosley

Apology: An apology for last month when a set of correct answers from Alan and Sue Murtagh was overlooked. A compensatory prize is on their way to them.

Prize Quiz winners receive a £10 John Lewis voucher.

All entries with fully correct answers are listed and the winner is than chosen at random.

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firas

The last word

Hooray—it's spring



This is an oddly timed Focal Point, written and circulated just before Easter, but covering the month that follows – but as the church considers the weeks following to still be a part of the Easter celebration you can, if you are able to resist, to simply pick at your Easter eggs and enjoy the chocolate over a longer period. In our house, resistance is low and if any chocolate is left beyond Easter Monday, it may be the sign that someone is not feeling well – possibly from overindulgence. I am told that there is no such thing as “too much chocolate” – but I am not convinced.

Those reading this month's edition carefully may have noticed advertisements for two Annual Parish Meetings. They are not happening on the same day and should not be confused. One is for the civil Bitton Parish Council and the other relates to the church parish and is an annual meeting of parishioners. Perhaps their scheduling, in April each year, has something to do with the fact that they were once one and the same. Until the 1830s, there was no local government as such and responsibility for matter of parish maintenance, the roads, the poor law (social care) and public order, were the responsibility of the local vestry – a meeting of the leading members of the parish with the vicar, that also decide on church matters too. Everyone is welcome at both meetings.

You are welcome too at St Mary's – everyday as the arrival of British Summertime means that the church will now be open daily for those who wish to visit.

Jim Heavens



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