

Focal Point

October 2024



£1-20

**Egg Throwing at
Bitton Church Fête**



**Saturday 26th October 2024
11am to 3pm**

ST MARY'S CHURCH, BITTON, BS30 6LJ

**A wide range of stalls selling local food, crafts, jewellery,
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Focal Point

Bitton Churches Magazine

October 2024

A monthly church newsletter serving
Bitton, Swineford, Willsbridge,
Upton Cheyney & Beach
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**ST MARY'S
CHURCH,
BITTON**

www.stmarysbitton.org.uk



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Bitton
0117 932 8949

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41 Combe Park
Weston
BATH
07714 615817

Vacancy

Services for October

**Sunday, 6th
October**

Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity
10.30am Parish Communion

**Sunday, 13th
October**

***Twentieth Sunday
after Trinity***

10.30am Benefice Communion
at St Barnabas
Warmley with the
Bishop of Bristol,
the Right Reverend Vivienne Faull
No service at Bitton



**Sunday, 20th
October**

Twenty-first Sunday after Trinity
10.30am Morning Worship

**Thursday, 24th
October**

10.00am Celtic Communion
10.45am Village Coffee Morning



**Sunday 27th
October**

***Twenty-second Sunday after
Trinity***
8.00am Holy Communion
9.30am Family Café Church



Benefice Prayer Opportunities

Sunday 6 October at 10.00 to 10.15am
in the Muniment Room

Saturday 12 October at 9.00am
Prayer Breakfast in St Mary's Church Hall

Tuesday October at 7.00 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

Communication is the key

It is so easy to forget to communicate. Whether due to wider pressures on time, other priorities or just plain forgetfulness. The way we are able to transmit our thoughts and ideas, how we want to achieve them or perhaps the part that we would like others to play. Comms often get strained within large organisations and bureaucracies where the right hand appears to operate independently from the left. Whether getting a Squadron of technicians and aircrew to generate a flying programme, or for a Headquarters to deploy, task and support Operations on the ground, in my experience communication is the key.

Our Benefice colleagues at St Barnabas, Warmley were interested to see a family moving into the Vicarage at Warmley, so went to say hello and discovered that they were talking to the new tenants who had taken out a 6 month lease. Clearly this was a surprise as we had hoped to place a new vicar in the house in the near future.

We met with Diocese representatives at Warmley on the 17th September to try to clarify who was doing what in our bid for a new vicar and most importantly what is the timeline for re-advertising the post. It is fair to say that we enjoyed a full and frank exchange of views and I am very grateful to all of those that turned out to make their opinions heard. It now looks like the advert will go out again in the new year so all of those stalwart volunteers who make things happen need to pace themselves for a longer haul.

On the plus side, the income to the Diocese from renting out the Vicarage and not paying a Vicar, can help to subsidise wider good works. This also helps to relieve the pressure on the annual contribution expected from the Benefice.

Continued on next page

Focal Point, October 2024

We have a joint Service arranged at St Barnabas Warmley on **Sunday 13th October** with the Bishop of Bristol, the Right Reverend Vivienne Faull. It would be great if we could get a good turnout to welcome the Bishop and hear what she has to say. So please put the date in your diary.

HANHAM UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
invites you to

**A LEISURELY
AFTERNOON
ENTERTAINMENT**

**With the Magpie Music Group
on Saturday 5th October
at 2.30pm in the Church Hall**

With refreshments

**Entry free with
Donations to the Church
Windows Fund**



Benefice Midweek Groups

Focus on St Mark's Gospel

During September and October all three groups are studying St Mark's Gospel in 8 sessions. This is shortest of the 4 gospels comprising 16 chapters. New members are always welcome.

The **Tuesday Morning Group's** 10.30am at the home of David and Stephanie Baily at Westover, Bath Road, Bitton.
For further details phone 0117 932 8949.

The **Wednesday Evening Group** at 7.30pm at the home of Ken and Jill Gibson at 8 Church Road, Bitton.
For further details phone 0117 932 2122.

The **Thursday Evening Group** at 7.30pm at the home of Pete and Liz Midgley at 31 Kenilworth Drive, Willsbridge.
For further details phone 0117 932 6898.



KIM

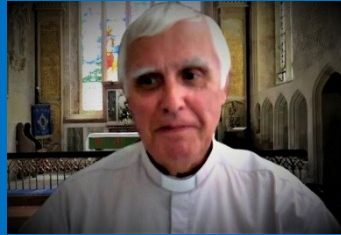
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Rev Richard Humphrey



The Way We Were

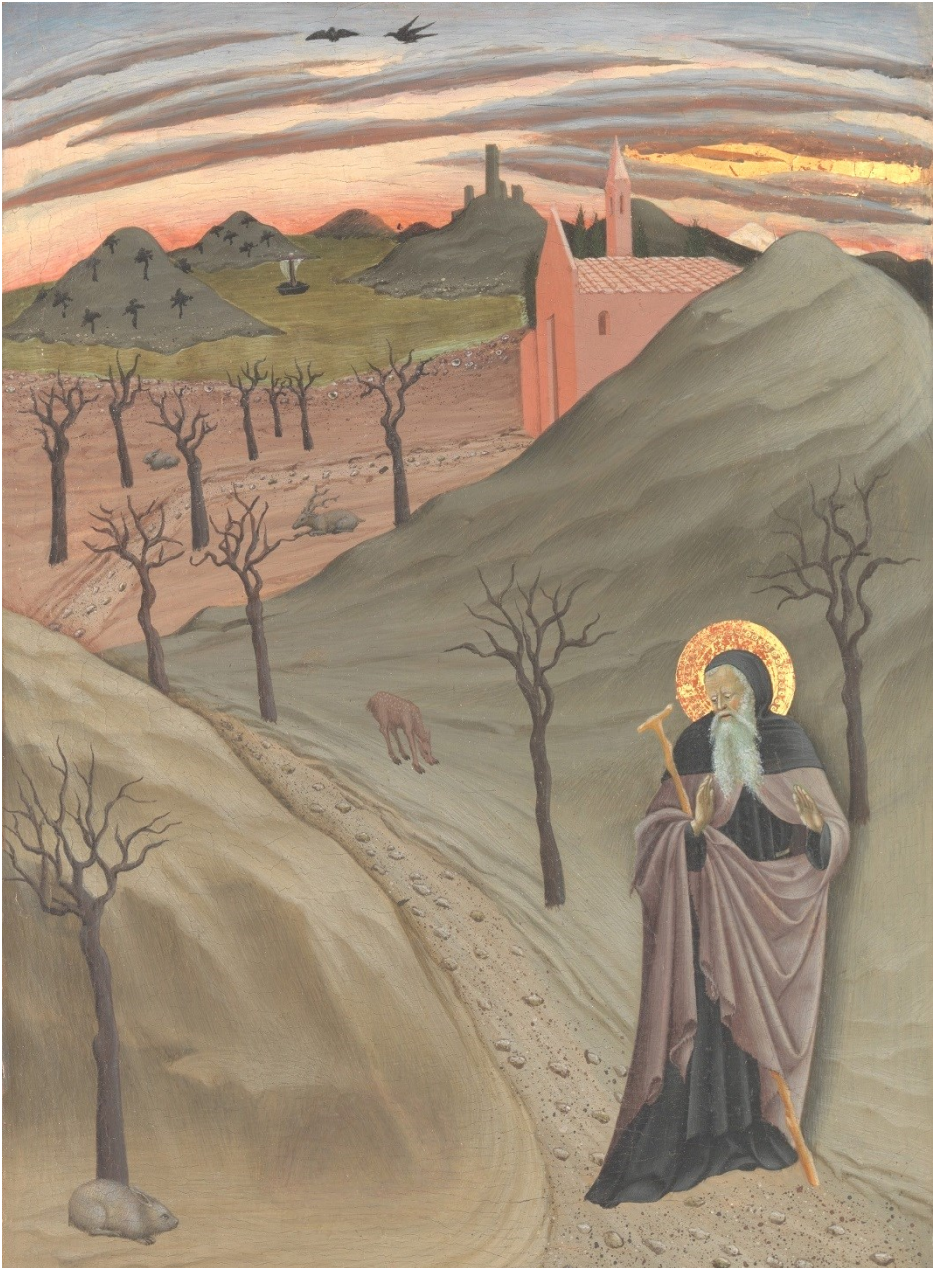
Does it seem to you these days that life has become incredibly complicated; that nothing seems simple anymore? Certainly the life of our churches seems to be increasingly complicated and frustrating, with Gordian knots cropping up everywhere, including the one surrounding our search for a new leader!

Perhaps that's why I'm often told how much people enjoy the simplicity of our midweek services, like the Wednesday morning Communion at Warmley, our Celtic Communion at Bitton every month, and of course our home groups. Services to which everyone in the benefice is welcome. So, how, I wonder did the church begin the journey that has brought it where it is today, and what can we learn from that journey?

In the early centuries of the Church's history places of worship actually were the homes of believers or in the open air, or sometimes wherever they could meet in secret because of the risk of persecution. That remains unchanged today in some parts of the world.

Then, early in the 4th Century, along came the Roman Emperor Constantine, who made Christianity the state religion in about 313 AD, and suddenly, after three centuries Christians were accepted not persecuted. But believe it or not this caused problems as an increasing number of people thought that making Christianity a state religion actually compromised it through nominalism -the outward show of belief without the inner conviction- often with social standing, not love of Christ becoming the reason for faith; and the church becoming increasingly enmeshed in bureaucracy and regulations that detracted from its true mission. And the response to this was the 'call of the desert'- a retreat if you like from what was seen as the complications and compromises that arose from Constantine's edict to Christianise society.

Continued on page 14



**Saint Anthony, Abbot in the Wilderness by Osservanza.
Metropolitan Museum of Art New York**

So the Desert Fathers --and Mothers-- retreated to the outskirts of the cities and into the deserts of Egypt, Syria and Palestine to find different, more meaningful ways of being a Christian in this new world.

What happened then was that so many people came to them for spiritual guidance, help and instruction that within 50 years the population of the desert equalled that of the towns and became the beginnings of communities! But the Desert Fathers still wanted solitude, so they withdrew too from these new communities, so the cycle repeated itself, with even more remote desert communities springing up everywhere. The original desert father is generally regarded as Antony of Egypt, who was an Anchorite living in isolation as a hermit, from about 285 till his death in 356 and he is generally regarded as the father of monasticism, although community life in a monastic sense didn't appear until the Coenobites in the 4th Century came together as 'a community of hermits', who lived alone in their own cells but came together for work and worship. Athanasius' work "The Life of Anthony" was hugely influential for hundreds of years inspiring people to take up the life of a hermit.

And so there is very much a link today between the Celtic spirituality of communities like Iona and Lindisfarne and desert spirituality and monasticism. And Celtic spirituality very much embraces the meaning of the desert both symbolically and metaphorically. Look at Mark 6:31 where Jesus says, 'Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest', and how often do we read of Jesus going into the desert or the wilderness to pray. In Luke 4:42 for instance; 'At daybreak Jesus went to a solitary place'- a place of privacy, solitude, spending whole nights in close company with his Father, single mindedly focussed on God's will. The Greek word often used was "eremos" which carries with it a sense not only of desert but of stillness and solitude. So Jesus used the term 'desert' not as a reference to the desert dryness or the uninhabited waste but rather to that deep sense of calm and stillness, of being alone with God without any distraction whatsoever. And the Temptations of Jesus in the desert resonated strongly with the monastic movement because it was a place of testing and discovery. There is also a strong tradition that Jesus (like John the Baptist) spent many of the so called hidden years in the desert regions. Jesus spent only 3 years in public ministry, so there's probably 18 or so years we know nothing about.

So in the words of the Northumbrian community "the desert" was not just a place, a physical location but a type of Christian experience. It was-and is- a journey; an inner journey back to the beautiful simplicity of the Gospel. The Bible begins in a Garden and ends in a City but much of the terrain in between is a desert. This was the ethos of what became monasticism – the inner journey of peace, of stripping away, a place of encounter and discovery, of identity and vocation, of testing and preparation of heart for the life God has for us. This, in the constant theme of Psalm 27, is our "raison d'etre." "One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life. To behold the beauty of the Lord and to seek Him in His temple." In the Celtic morning office the opening call to prayer is "who is that you seek?" And sometimes, in the maelstrom of modern day life, I wonder if we are really clear on who it is we are seeking and why? And more importantly perhaps, how are we going about it? Do we also perhaps need to embrace that desert mentality and find simpler and more meaningful ways of being Christian?

Richard

Autumn Fayre – great opportunity for Christmas gifts



St Mary's will be holding its third annual Autumn Fayre on 26th October and has a great line up of stalls – some at the fayre for the very first time. Among them will be Oggi Placido, with a stall selling some of his fascinating collection of exotic plants. Oggi was recently featured on BBC's *Gardeners' World* (still available on iPlayer – episode 19 3rd August).

There will also be the usual church stalls including handicrafts and the Jam and Pickles stall which proved very popular last year. Refreshments including tea, coffee and cakes plus a light lunch will also be available.

In the church from 11am to 3pm— Last Saturday in October

And don't miss the quiz!

Our celebrity Quizmaster, Kim Scudamore, has devised a special *Walkabout Quiz* to be held in the church on 12th October. There is also a harvest supper. Details opposite.



St Mary's Church Bitton

Saturday 12th October 2024

Walkabout Quiz and Harvest Supper

Teams of up to 6, or join a team
on the night

Quizmaster: Kim Scudamore
Doors open at 7pm - Questions posted at 7.30pm

Adults £10 Children £5

Tickets online at

www.stmarysbitton.org.uk

(use QR code below)

Venue:
St Mary's Church,
Church Road, Bitton, BS30 6LJ
Tel 07970 325927 or 0117 932 2122



Focal Point, October 2024



PEW WORK CONTINUES

If you have been into the church recently you will have noticed that work continues on changes to our pews. Work is proceeding according to plan with the main carpentry having been completed on 6 pews by the time Focal Point went to press, with an anticipation that the whole project will be complete by early November.

Unfortunately, the work does get in the way of those visiting as the chapel is currently being used as a workshop and areas are out of use for health and safety reasons. All should be revealed soon with new cushions on order.

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Bitton: Then & Now

Two photographs the same spot taken over a century apart. Buckland's Stationers and Post Office in The High Street was photographed about 1910, a lady cyclist having just completed her business.. The view in 2024 shows the same buildings—some more altered than others





Weather holds for the Fête—just!

A big thank you to all who turned out and helped at the church fête. After a run of dry summers, the unsettled summer weather of 2024 meant it was likely that this would be a wet year. But fortunately, the rain held off for most of the afternoon – just a few drops towards the end – which meant we had a great time on the field as well as in the church and Church Farm garden where, once again, there were some delicious cream teas on offer.

The fête was officially opened by local celebrity and Daily Mail columnist, Bel Mooney. On the field a large crowd were able to enjoy the wide range of stalls and an expanded range of food including some delicious pizzas cooked to order.

Taking us back to the ancient origins of the festivities was a former vicar – Henry Ellacombe– played by another former vicar, Paul Denyer. He took us back to the Holme Mead revels and the tradition of shooting the meads.

And of course, the day could not end properly without the Great Bitton Egg Throwing Competition.

The weather undoubtedly affected turnout and therefore takings, but over £9000 was raised towards church funds.

Next year's fête will be held on Saturday 6th September—if you would like to help, get in contact on our website or email stmarysbitton@outlook.com

For more pictures and the results of the Photography Competition—please visit our website :

www.stmarysbitton.org.uk

Focal Point, October 2024



Clockwise: Henry Ellacombe (Paul Denyer) lectures; Skittles run by the Scout Group; Egg Throwing Competition; the Tea Team and top left—Bel Mooney opening the fête.



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St Mary's Playgroup needs your help!

Can you spare some time on a Wednesday morning to help with one of these jobs?

- *Opening up and/or setting up the hall for toddlers (as part of a team)?
- *Helping with refreshments?
- *Making a cake for the grown-ups?
- *Making music and Singing songs at the end?
- *Provide a craft activity for young children?

We need a team of people who could help regularly once a month to enable the local children and their grown-ups to have a safe space to meet, play and chat together.

Please contact Reverend Rosemary Radcliffe on RevRosemaryRadcliffe@gmail.com or 07341396695

St Mary's Playgroup would normally run in the Church Hall on a Wednesday from 10 until 11:30 during term time.

Unfortunately, due to changes in circumstances we aren't currently able to run it weekly, but will be holding two special seasonal sessions on

*Wednesday **6th November, and on 27th November.***

Please contact Reverend Rosemary for more information.

Bitton Gardening Club

invites you to
our next meeting
on

Monday 21 October

in

The Church Hall, Church Lane Bitton

**Doors open 7.15pm
Meeting starts at 7.30pm**

Our speaker at the meeting is

Margie Hoffnung

and the title of her illustrated talk is

Rosemary Verey - Garden Designer

Her Contribution and Legacy to C20th Gardening

Rosemary Verey, the well-known plantswoman, author and garden designer, created the notable garden at Barnsley House, near Cirencester and so much more.

Our speaker Margie, worked with Rosemary in her garden for over a decade until her death and much of the material in her talk, comes from Rosemary's personal papers.

**For more information
contact Bridget at b.hetzel@btinternet.com
or just come along to the meeting**

New members and guests are always welcome

This meeting is **FREE** to members. Guests £4

All Residents of Bitton

You are invited

Bitton Village Residents Association Annual General Meeting

and enjoy a complimentary glass of wine

The White Hart

Sunday 27th October at 12:30

Any questions for the BVRA or nominations to join the committee are most welcome...

Contact Andrew Ward

07809-761538

andrew@wardandrew.com



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Eric Cooper

1929-2024

Following the Second World War, parts of Europe remained disputed territories. One of these was Trieste, on the border between Italy and Yugoslavia, which for 9 years after the war remained administered by the allied powers. Many British soldiers served there during that time and one was Eric Cooper, who died in August after a short illness. His time in Trieste, which took up most of his period of National Service, was the subject of frequent reminiscences – so frequent that it would elicit the response from family members of *"Oh, were you in Trieste? I never knew!"*

Eric was undeterred, of course. He was a man of many stories but also of strong convictions and with an unswerving faith that remained steadfast through a very long life. He and his wife, Joyce) lived in Bitton from 1975 and became well known within the community. Joyce was the last headteacher of Upton Cheyney School and Eric, as he had elsewhere, threw himself into local activities mostly connected with the church.

Both he and Joyce came originally from Newbold in Leicestershire . They had married in 1952 and Eric, for much of his working life, worked for the Coal Board. It was to secure a job on promotion that the family (which now included their daughter, Janet) came to the Bristol area and eventually to Bitton. Eric later retrained as a teacher of religious studies. In the 1980s, both he and Joyce found themselves being offered early retirement when the school at Upton Cheyney closed. Eric took on other roles on the Community Health Council and became a lay reader at St Mary's. This position became more crucial after the decision was taken to integrate Bitton into a wider benefice with Warmley and Syston.

A few years later there was a significant disagreement between Eric and the then vicar, George Mitchell, which led to Eric and Joyce worshipping at All Saints Weston, although they later became regulars at the Celtic Communion Service, in Bitton, each month. All Saints provided new friends and, in particular, a group of "strollers" -the stroll included a good lunch but also kept him active.

Continued on page 28



Eric in his conservatory, being photographed in a socially distant manner during the Covid Pandemic



Eric and Joyce enjoyed cruises visiting many parts of the world

Eric enjoyed a very lengthy retirement – longer indeed than his working life; about as long as the production of the *Last of the Summer Wine*, a tv programme he particularly enjoyed. His retirement was filled with community and religious work, but there was much time for enjoyment and relaxation. He and Joyce particularly enjoyed a cruise and became gold star customers of Saga Holidays, enjoying many additional benefits as a reward for their loyalty. Joyce was well known for her beautiful needlework and Eric was a keen gardener, with a great knowledge of plants, managing to grow a large bougainvillea in the conservatory in which he and Joyce spent many happy hours.

Eric was younger than Joyce and was jokingly called her “toyboy”, Joyce moved into a home in 2018 where she was visited by Eric every day until the pandemic. Unfortunately Joyce herself contracted the virus and died in 2020. Since then, Eric had lived alone, supported by Janet, and although getting more frail, in seemingly good health until just a few weeks before his death -three days before his 95th birthday.

Those who attended his funeral and memorial services went out to the *Last of the Summer Wine* theme. Eric will be greatly missed.

Bitton Village Residents' Association
Invites you to

Flicks in the Sticks

on

Friday 18 October

when we will be screening

Inside Man

starring

**Denzel Washington, Jodie Foster, William Dafoe,
Clive Owen and Christopher Plummer**

Set in Manhattan, an enigmatic bank robber has orchestrated the perfect heist. Shortly the bank, along with dozens of hostages, will be his to command. As time passes, the police hostage negotiator finds he is always one step behind, while the Bank's silver-haired founder is overly concerned about the safe deposit boxes!

The plot thickens to a shocking conclusion...

We loved this film, it is one of the best *edge of your seat* heist films we have seen, it's very entertaining.

Doors open 7.30pm Film starts 8pm
AT THE CHURCH HALL, CHURCH LANE, BITTON
Drinks will be available from the Licensed Bar,
Choc Ices will be served in the interval and
there will be time to chat with friends

Admission £3
Everyone is welcome

Some Remembrances of Gary Lake

We are sure that many local people will remember, with affection, Gary Lake, who, sadly and recently, passed away. Gary we are told never went to a doctor or had a vaccination!

We understand Gary started life in Cadbury Heath. He and Gary Carpenter (homeless Gary) hung around The Slab in their youth. I think this was a community centre or youth club. They salvaged fallen trees and cut them into logs and sold them to pubs etc. for firewood.

Gary was a 'character' and made himself very useful in lots of ways. He could turn his hand to many things; haymaking, lambing, potato picking, wall building, gardening and other things rural. He was a dab hand at carving mushrooms from wood and selling them at fairs and fêtes. He was a most honest and trustworthy person, a private man in his personal life and a good friend to many. I recently had a good catch up with him about his days working for us in North Stoke and his friendship with my step son Tim.

I'm sure there are many other things to be said about Gary who came and went quietly and was always happy to help out with gardening advice particularly. He loved to work in the woods at Marshfield, shoot squirrels from his bedroom window with an air rifle and watch the birds who made their homes in and around his shed. He lived quietly on his pension, never bought anything new and was a good friend to a lot of folk in and around Bitton, North Stoke and Upton Cheyney. RIP.

Janet Ivens and Roz Burmester.



PICNIC IN THE PARK 2024

If you wanted to relax after the fête, there was a great opportunity the following weekend when the Bitton residents' association held their annual *Picnic in the Park* on the Poundfield.

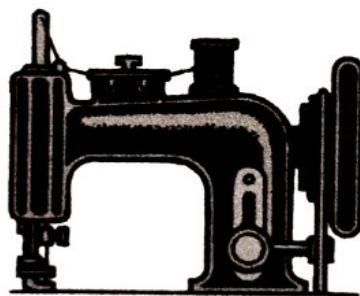
The weather held for the afternoon and the picknickers enjoyed an afternoon of live music entertainment from local bands. The event was so popular it continued into the early evening. A great afternoon for all.

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Gloucestershire Historic Churches Trust



Every year, on the second or third Sunday in September, Gloucestershire Historic Churches Trust (GHCT) organise a *Ride and Stride* fundraising event. So soon after our fête is not a great time for us, but at their suggestion we've set up a just giving page www.justgiving.com/page/bitton-1725353605062 where we can make gift-aided donations, or use the QR code below.

We owe GHCT a huge debt of gratitude. They have given £19,000 to the current appeal and, through an introduction to Rausing Trust, have enabled us to raise another £5,000. They have previously given very generously to other restoration and repair appeals.

It would be very nice if we could make some repayment for their generosity to our current appeal.

Nicola Bennetts



St Mary's Church, Bitton
presents

A TWO PIANO MUSICAL RECITAL

Featuring

PETER BLACKWOOD & NATALIE MORTON

Playing Rachmaninov's Suite No.2 Op 17
and selected works

Saturday 9th November 2024 at 2.30pm

Admission Free with retiring collection for Church Funds
Tea and Cakes available

Local Life

WILLSBRIDGE CUT OFF FROM KEYNSHAM

For nearly ten days in September the Keynsham Road (A4175) was shut between the Bath Road and Avon Mill Roundabout while emergency repairs were carried out to a burst water main. The burst caused considerable damage to the roadway which had to be repaired. Fortunately, the disruption to water supply was not as serious as a previous burst nearby in 2017.

SWINEFORD ACCESS TO SALT FORD

Meanwhile, at the other end of the Bath Road, on September 18th, pedestrian access was officially opened on the new Wessex Water Bridge. Parish Councillor and Focal Point Quizmaster, Kim Scudamore, cut the ribbon on the Bitton side.

The project, which has been controversial, is principally to allow access to the Meda land Water Treatment Plant, so that vehicles from the plant can access the A431. The impact of the scheme in terms of increased traffic was judged by South Gloucestershire Council as being minimal.

WEST local New 532 Bus

Thanks to Nick Watson and the Parish Council, we have a new bus Route from the White Hart in Bitton to Keynsham in one direction and to Yate in the other,

The journey to Keynsham takes just 8 minutes and departs from the White Hart in Bitton. In the opposite direction it goes to Yate; this journey takes 45 mins via Oldland Common, Cadbury Heath, Bridgegate, Pucklechurch, Westerleigh and Emmersons Green.

Timetable Monday to Friday:

Bitton -White Hart (to Keynsham)

07:17 09:35 12:22 14:24 17:36

Bitton The White Hart (to Yate)

10:06 12:50 15:12 18:16

For easy access to the whole timetable, use this QR code



History Group

EDWARD LONG FOX & THE BRISLINGTON ASYLUM

If you have ever waited in traffic in Brislington, you may have noticed a rather grand gatehouse opposite the Park & Ride. As the Bitton History Group learned at its September meeting, this was in fact the former entrance to the Brislington Asylum, established by the radical and mental health pioneer, Dr Edward Long Fox and was pioneering in its treatment of the mentally ill.

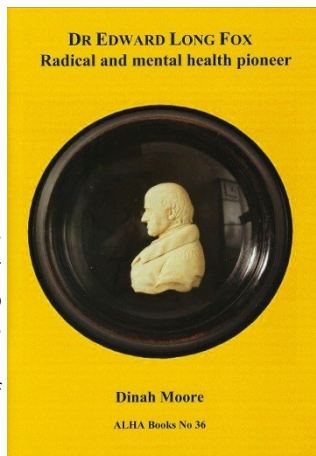
Dinah has made an extensive study of Dr Fox and written a short biography*, which was available for purchase. Fox was a Quaker who qualified in medicine in Edinburgh having been barred from universities in England..

Originally from Falmouth, he set up practice as a doctor in Bristol in the 1790s. He campaigned actively for the abolition of slavery and was appalled by the treatment received by people caught up on the Bristol Bridge riots of 1793 establishing his own committee of enquiry and taking evidence. While it achieved very little it did give prominence to him and his medical practice both privately and at the Bristol Infirmary, one of the very few hospitals then providing free care.

His particular interest was in the mentally ill for which treatment of any sort was very limited and largely consisted of locking people away and restraining them. Fox's approach was quite different, looking to calm the patient and provide environments in which they could flourish. It was this approach, which led to the establishment of the asylum at Brislington, based around a number of houses in which patients lived and gardens where they could find peace. . A pioneering approach which became the model for later mental institutions. Indeed this flourished and a particular interest was in the treatment of the mentally ill.

The next meeting is on 8th October when Jonathan Holt will talk about the Architectural Follies of the West Country. To be held at Unity Oldland, Methodist Church, West Street, Oldland Common, BS30 9QS (7.00pm for 7.30 start)

*Dinah Moore's book DR EDWARD LONG FOX Radical and mental health pioneer is published by the Avon Local History Association (ALHA Books No.36)



News from Bitton WI



I don't think any one of us could believe the summer has ended and we are back in the hall for our September meeting already! All of our summer events done and dusted so quickly! It was lovely to see our members had brought along friends to our meeting for them to enjoy an afternoon with us.

With the September St. Mary's Church Fête fresh in our minds, I thanked our bakers for their donations for our WI stall. It was a huge success again this year with queues forming to buy our goodies long before the Fête officially opened. This year the Bitton Baker of the Year competition brought more junior entries than adult which was lovely to see. The standard of the entries was amazingly high and our guest Judge, David, found it difficult to make a decision in both categories. The junior entries, particularly, both tasted and looked so good it was difficult to choose an outright winner. The adult chocolate cake entries looked and smelled delicious and a queue to buy a piece of these had grown before judging finished! A big thank you also goes out to all those who entered and donated their bakes to sell on the day. Congratulations to our winners, Edie - 3 Cupcakes and for the Chocolate cake - Carol Sheedy, who was our returning 2023 champion! Thanks also to David, our very knowledgeable Judge.

It is with great sadness that a few days after the Fête, our fellow WI Member and friend, Barbara Dearlove suddenly passed away. I know we, as a Committee, and the members of the Bitton WI will miss her greatly. She was always there to help anyone in need and she played a huge part in our WI group throughout the years. Our thoughts are with her husband and family.

We've already got quite a few events lined up throughout the Autumn and already Christmas celebrations are on our minds and eagerly anticipated. This month WI celebrates 70 years of Keep Britain Tidy. The WI movement has a long history of campaigning to convince past Governments and manufacturers to adopt the Keep Britain Tidy campaign which they did back in 1954.

Our speakers this month were Sue and Martha from the Forever Hounds Trust SW. They brought along their own greyhounds, Tam, Pilgrim and Hugo to meet us all. While Sue and Martha told us about the background of the Trust, Tam, Pilgrim and Hugo wandered amongst us to say a personal hello and have their ears tickled! I must say, they were so well



Jean Hook with the jams at the fête

behaved and so gentle and it is unbelievable to hear of some of the ill-treatment that befalls them as racing greyhounds! Sue and Martha spoke of some of the horrors inflicted on the greyhounds that come into the rescue homes. How the dogs are raced until they no longer win and then disregarded or neglected, some with horrific injuries which is when the Trust steps in to rescue and heal the dogs ready to rehome. This is not always the case, and more often now they find trainers surrendering

Focal Point, October 2024

greyhounds to the Trust for rehoming. They said it is a myth that these hounds enjoy racing, they don't! In truth, whilst the greyhound does enjoy a run, and they can run up to 46 mph, they do this for a very short amount of time, then they enjoy nothing more than to curl up for a sleep. Fortunately, many of the greyhound tracks have closed, but the greyhound racing continues across the UK and particularly in Ireland. There are campaigns to put a complete stop to greyhound racing, though it's difficult because it does bring in money and taxes for organisations and governments who are loathe to agree to a ban.

The Trust, formerly known as Greyhound Rescue, was set up back in 1996 when animal welfare visits to greyhound tracks showed how some greyhounds were being badly treated, left in squalid conditions and abandoned when they were no longer useful. This then changed in 2016 to the Forever Hounds Trust to encompass all hounds who were mistreated. The Trust is financed by donations and fundraising and much of the money is spent on vets bills.

Martha and Sue emphasised how greyhounds make fabulous pets. They love a cuddle as well as curling up on a soft bed or sofa. They also like a nice warm coat or jumper during cold weather as we were told hounds only have one layer of fur unlike most other dogs. Despite living most of their lives in kennels and on the track, they love to be in a home environment and can live happily with children and other pets. Some not so much with cats or small fluffy dogs though! If you would like to know more or how to adopt a greyhound, you can look them up on at <https://foreverhoundstrust.org>

It was lovely to see the greyhounds and get to know them during the interesting and informative talk.

Our meeting this month will be held on Monday 14th October in the Church Hall, Church Lane, Bitton at 2pm. Do feel free to come along, see what we do and share a cuppa and some cake. Our speaker for the meeting is Bernard Merrick who will be telling us about Cats! Thank goodness we didn't have them together this month!!

Our recipe this month is courtesy of WI Recipes. This is one of the more popular recipes at this time of year!

Enjoy

Karen Davidson, President.

Damson Jam

Makes about 5kg (10x 1lb jars)

Ingredients

2.4 kg damsons
750ml to 1.25 litres water
3 kg sugar



Method

1. Sterilise the jars and set in a warm oven until ready.
2. Wash the fruit and place in a preserving pan with the water.
3. Simmer until tender, the skins soft and the contents are reduced by a third.
4. Remove as many stones as possible as they rise to the surface.
5. Remove from the heat and test for pectin.
6. Add the sugar and stir until dissolved.
7. Return to heat, bring to the boil and boil rapidly until setting point is reached (Place 1 teaspoon of jam on the plate and return to the fridge for 1 minute. If the surface wrinkles when you push your finger through, the jam is ready to jar).
8. Clean the filled jars and label with details of contents and date of making.
9. Store in a cool, dry, dark, well-ventilated place.

Puzzle Pages

SUDUKO CHALLENGE

			5					
		8	7	4			5	
	4	9				6	1	
		1					8	
			4		5			
	7					3		
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	6			7	8	4		
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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

All Hallows Eve: Modern Halloween

celebrations have their roots in paganism with the lighting of bonfires and performance of magic rites to ward off the dark supernatural powers of oncoming winter. The Christian tradition is one that remembers and gives thanks for departed loved ones and for others on All Souls or All Hallows Day (1 November)



All
Hallows
Halloween
Druid
Priests
Festival

Samhain
Bonfires
Magic
Dark
Supernatural
Powers

Winter
Christians
Prayer
Charms
Deeper
True

Eve
Closer
Christ
Thanks
Loved
Death

October Prize Quiz

by Kim Scudamore

The theme of this month's quiz is 'Paws for Thought' where almost all the questions or answers refer to a man's best friend.

1. Snowy was the dog companion of which young reporter?
2. What was the name of the dog that contributed to the success of Warner Brothers by appearing in 27 Hollywood films?
3. What was the name of the first Blue Peter dog?
4. Which group of islands were named as a result of the wild dogs that were found there by early settlers?
5. Which dog joined Julian, Dick, Anne and George on their adventures?
6. Which breed of dog connects Charles Darwin with Charlie Brown and Kingswood planetary scientist Colin Pillinger?
7. Which cartoon law enforcer often exclaimed 'Dagnabit Muskie'?
8. In 1923, who was confirmed as patron saint of The Alps?
9. Name two of the three dog breeds named after Canadian provinces.
10. A statue of which famous listening dog can be found at the junction of Park Row and Woodland Road, Bristol?
11. What was the name of the St. Bernard adopted by the Newton family, and whose story was told in eight films starting in 1992?
12. What was the name of the dog biscuit company General Manager who organised his first dog show in 1886?
13. In Greek mythology, what was the name of the multi-headed dog who guarded the gates of the underworld?
14. In Dickens' *Oliver Twist*, what was the name of Bill Sykes' vicious dog?
15. Whose life in politics was assisted by Lucy, Ted, Ruby and Offa?

Focal Point, October 2024

16. Which breed of dog is named after the German tax official who first bred them?
17. Surprisingly, what is the largest state in Mexico?
18. Zuma, Rubble, Chase, Rocky, Skye and Marshall are all members of what?
19. William of Baskerville is the central character in which novel?
20. Nana was the nurse for which family's children, despite being a dog?

Our quizmaster will also be in action this month at our WALKABOUT QUIZ on Saturday 12th October. If you like quizzes its an event not to be missed. Details on page 18,

Please return your answers to this month's quiz by Thursday 17th October by email to bittoncm@outlook.com

September Quiz Answers

The September Quiz theme was *Highways and Byways* where most (if not all) the questions or answers refer to various thoroughfares.

Answers: (1) Paradise Row; (2) Lambeth Walk; (3) A street called; (4) Route 66; (5) Ramsey Street; (6) Sesame Street; (7) 77 Sunset Strip; (8) The Streets; (9) Rocky Road; (10) Zed Alley; (11) The Fosseway; (12) Penny Lane; (13) Yellow Brick Road; (14) The Road to Hell; (15) M6; (16) Watford Gap; (17) Brookside Close; (18) Street; (19) Kirsty Alley; (20) Wigan Pier.

A number were caught out by Britain's first strip of motorway—The Preston By-Pass which became the M6. The question did ask which motorway it became..

Correct answers

Correct answers were received from Celia Mosley and Lynne and Tim Gamble. Out of the draw came:

Lynne and Tim Gamble who are this month's winners.

Prize Quiz winners receive a £10 John Lewis voucher.

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

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firas

The last word

QR if you want to ...or not



I have noticed that there are at least three QR codes in this edition of Focal Point. There may be more and I am not at all sure if that is a record. If it is, it is one that may soon be broken.

In printed material it is the easiest way to enable the reader to link to an online source and in the last few years they have become not only ubiquitous but an almost essential part of daily life. Only, of course, if you have access to a smart phone reader.

New technology is always daunting – and people have had the same attitude to earlier advances that some profess today. Consider how strange a telephone must have been in the first instance and I am sure there were many who hesitated before getting on the first trains (perhaps with good reason).

But unless we are open to change to new technology and new ways of doing things we get stuck in our ways as others move on. One day, the QR code will be out of date, replaced by something far simpler. But until that time they will have to be..



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