



Shirenewton

Parish Magazine

March 2019

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FROM THE VICARAGE

Julian E LI White

Dear People of the Parish,

The other day, by chance, I encountered a photographer outside Shirenewton Church who been making a pictorial record of places of worship which were now redundant. I was anxious to discern whether he knew something about Saint Thomas a Becket that I didn't!! He put my mind to rest on this account although I was saddened when he went on to tell me about ecclesiastical sites now closed to public worship.

It got me to thinking about churches with which I had been linked to which no longer existed. When I was an Assistant Curate in Newport, the Vicar gave me (under the eagle-eye of the Churchwardens, of course) oversight of the Victorian Mission Church within the parish. For largely sentimental reasons this building, and what it represented, lay close to my heart.

It has long gone and a block of flats now stands upon the site.

It was ministering in this building which gave rise to my habit of preaching without notes from floor level. There was no option really. I was warned that the pulpit (constructed from old railway sleepers) was riddled with worm and unsafe to use. The Vicar gave me a stark choice: risk stepping up into the pulpit and expect serious injury from the certain collapse of this furniture, or, preach from the floor and wouldn't you look stupid, Julian, if you were encumbered with notes to assist you? With hindsight, I now see that this line of argument was a small mercy to the benefit of long-suffering worshippers.

It was here also that the Churchwarden put me firmly in my place when he became aware of my despondency when faced with the Spartan nature of the building. "Remember", he said, "That the Garden of Gethsemane didn't have stained-glass windows either."

I remember clearly being let out to preach for the first time on my own. The service was held at Saint Luke's, in Bridge Street, Newport. It is now, I believe, part of the car park opposite the railway station.

|When I served in the Lower Wye Valley, I built up a rapport with those who attended the church at Whitebrook. For some years now, following a conversion to domestic usage, it has served as home to, ironically, one of those who worshipped there and acted as an altar server.

Other than suggesting that a goodly portion of the churches I have ministered at soon shut, it is interesting – if a little sad – to reflect on the fate that appears to have fallen on many churches in general.

The poet Phillip Larkin, a few years ago, mused in one of his works on what would become of church buildings in the future. Unfortunately, I don't have a copy of his piece *Church Going* to hand and so I am unable to quote accurately. I do recall, however, that somewhat sardonically, he asserts '*I reflect that the place was not worth stopping for. And yet, stop I did*'. He goes on to speculate what former church sites will be used for in the future. In part, he envisages them as a magnet for the superstitious. Well, based on the above, I have to report that the evidence is that their destiny can be seen in more prosaic terms.

Do not treat our church buildings lightly. Many of them have been at the epicenter of community lives for centuries. It sounds too bland to say that 'they are part of our history' but it should be appreciated that such history directly involved (and continues to involve) a vast number of people in all stages of life.

It is good to end on a comment from the Archdeacon with whom I was having a conversation the other week. He declared himself impressed with the number of worshippers present when he visited (unannounced) Shirenewton Church recently. Shirenewton Church is centuries old and has served the community for all of this time.

In like manner we should state that Mathern Church (it has been around since sometime in the 7th century) is supported by a not insignificant congregation; Mounton Church (a medieval foundation) attracts a congregation in double-figures despite ecclesiastical attempts to shut it down some twenty years ago ('it's a bit small, can't they go to a neighbouring church?') whilst St. Pierre, which has been in existence since shortly after the Norman Conquest, consistently boasts the highest regular attendance within the group.

Do not treat history lightly otherwise it is simply that. History.

With every good wish and blessing;

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE DECEMBER WINNERS OF THE 200 CLUB:

Congratulations to the February winners of the 200 Club draw:

1. Sue and John Williams
2. Nansi Davies
3. Terry Walters
4. Olivia Ashby

Thanks for your continuing support.

Mothering Sunday

There will be a Family Service to celebrate

Mothering Sunday in our church on

March 31st at 10:00am

Everyone is invited

PLEASE COME

UPDATE ON SHIRENEWTON 800 – ACTION NEEDED PLEASE

Our parish church appears in records as having been founded in circa 1220 - so it seems fitting to mark the 800th anniversary of this event in some way. Current thinking is that we should arrange a year of events to celebrate. These would be community events – not fundraisers (but we must consider how they are to be funded if necessary), probably launching the year of celebration at the Fete in June 2019 and closing with the Fete in June 2020. It would need to provide a mix of events that offer something for everyone, but events that the community wants

What has happened so far?

The concept has been discussed and the History Society, Church volunteers and Community Council and a number of individuals are supportive. A Questionnaire was circulated in August and Sept 18, seeking ideas for events that the community would support. Small community grants are being applied for as seed-corn funding (experience shows that it is very competitive and so we may not be successful) and an open 'social' evening was held at the TA at the end of January to gather more views/ideas. Thank you to all who have contributed so far.

Most popular ideas

Taking feedback from Questionnaires and voting at the open evening, the following seem to be most popular;

- An 'Art Safari' – inviting local artists/art groups to come and paint/sketch at locations around the village with viewing of creations in progress and finished, with tea and cakes for visitors
- The creation of a something permanent to mark the event; ideas include
- The creation of a viewing point over the Severn estuary and bridges
- Map of the village showing house names
- Permanent Heritage/visual history trail with plaques
- Sculpture of some sort (located by the Well/Spring, or in the Church or elsewhere)
- Souvenir booklet (make sure each child gets one)
- A Performance of a special Shirenewton 'Horrible History' or 'The Murder at the Hall'
- Big-Band/Jazz concert and/or involvement of a specially created community choir/orchestra
- Treasure Hunt – for all ages
- Parachuting Teddies from the church tower
- Guided walks
- Bike ride around the village with routes for families and for enthusiasts
- Rounders/5 a side walking football tournament
- Incorporating some of the other excellent ideas into regular events that happen already (e.g. Super Saturday and the Fete – Medieval theme, Big Village Picnic or Campfire, Festival and Fireworks, Aerial photo of as many of us as possible on the Rec, Shamble 2)
- Creation of a logo

So what now?

We need your help and involvement to make this happen. If a number of people will take responsibility for working in small teams to deliver one of these events, the work gets shared, and we will all benefit for a fabulous year. If you would be prepared to get involved and especially if you can bring a small team of friends to deliver one of these ideas (or indeed another idea not on the list), please contact the special email address; shirenewton800@gmail.com or call Janet on 641783.

Life Changes

COFFEE MORNING

at the **TREDEGAR ARMS**
Shirenewton

1st FRIDAY OF EACH MONTH

Friday **1st March** (St David's Day Special)

Friday **5th April** From 10 am to about 12.

SHIRENEWTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Extracts from the minutes of the February 2019 meetings

Co-opted vacancy on the Community Council

There is a vacancy for a co-opted member to represent the Shirenewton ward. If you are interested in the community and would like to become involved with the Council, then please contact the Clerk (details below)

Planning application considered:

DM/2018/02066 Land adjacent to Clearview Court, Shirenewton

Outline planning permission for the construction of 11 dwellings and associated works. Council recommended refusal for the following reasons:

1. The Community Council was concerned about the proposed sewerage connection to the public system. The system serving the village is known to overflow, and has done on two occasions recently at the Holy Well, with raw sewage running down the road. There is a known problem of overcapacity on the line from Shirenewton to Pwllmeyric, Mounton and Mathern. It should be verified with Dwr Cymru that the public system has design capacity for the proposed 11 additional dwellings.
2. The pipework for surface water drainage also needs to be examined as it is unrecorded beyond No. 7, Clearview.
3. A further point of concern was that the protrusion of the gardens to plots x y and z into farmland beyond the LDP envelope is a loss of that farmland and carries the expectation that, as garden land, it will nevertheless be built upon subsequently by the householders. We would wish the houses on those plots to be repositioned so that there is no protrusion onto the farmland. If not, a change of use application would be required before plans could be approved.
4. There is inadequate parking provision for visitors to the affordable housing and a communal parking area at least should be provided.
5. The Design Statement appears to suggest there is a bus link to Caerwent which is not correct. It should also be noted that the bus service has been counted in both directions – there are only 3 buses from and to Chepstow every working day each way, and one less on Saturdays.
6. The transport Statement appears to underestimate the number of vehicle journeys given that families have at least two cars as a result of the sparsity of public transport and the need to travel outside the village through lack of shopping, medical and schooling facilities.

2. DM/2019/00062 2 The Laurels, Mynyddbach.

Single story oak frame extension. Council recommended approval.

3. DM/2018/02028 Ty Cubby, Old School Hill, Mynyddbach

Retrospective planning permission for wooden summer house with Perspex windows.

Council recommended refusal of the application as the structure is not in keeping with the countryside. Although not situated on the horizon the building is on stilts and prominent in its position. Council recommended that it be reset into the bank and painted dark green to blend in and make it less intrusive. Council noted that it would be prepared to attend a Delegated Panel meeting.

Other items of interest

Ms R Rawlings attended the meeting to inform Council about Mon CC's strategies for reducing loneliness and social isolation within the County, which would, in turn, reduce the demands on health and social services. Mapping of what is available in Monmouthshire is currently taking place to understand where the good practice and gaps are for the 'Connected Monmouthshire' plan, which can be viewed online at <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/a-connected-monmouthshire>. One example of good practice mentioned was the monthly 'Life Changes' coffee mornings that take place in Shirenewton. Ms Rawlings explained that five companies have been funded by the Government to look at transport and communication issues in rural areas. Hard copies of a survey to assess levels of loneliness were distributed. The survey can also be completed electronically at <http://bit.ly/Monloneliness>.

Ms J Langdon, Mon CC, attended to inform Council that the Chepstow Cluster meeting potentially intends to develop a cluster wide plan involving the town council and local community councils which would result in a combined area planning process which could be adopted as local planning guidance, although would be subsidiary to Mon CC's Local Development Plan. The two prongs of Place Planning involving spatial planning would set the framework for the local area and Community Led Planning would allow for broader engagement with the local community.

Chepstow Town Council has engaged Planning Aid Wales for training which, when available, will also be open to Community Councillors.

The next Cluster meeting will be held on 13th February and this Council has a representative attending.

Play area equipment – as a start to updating the play equipment a home multi seesaw has been ordered to replace the rocking horse in the play area. It will be delivered at end of February and installed by Mon CC.

Village planters at Redd Landes and Owl Barn are both disintegrating. They are to be replaced, with additional planters positioned at the other two entrances to Shirenewton. The damaged concrete one at Blethyn Close is also to be replaced with a wooden planter.

Mynyddbach bench: A bench with cast iron sides and oak slats will replace the bench that was removed last year.

Flooding on Ditch Hill Lane – an urgent report was made to Highways on 28.1.19, Report No: 3176593. Run off water was running down the hill towards the Usk Road, which could cause a problem if it froze over as this a well-used pedestrian 'Safe Route to School'.

Dates of future meetings –Monday 4th March and Monday 1st April at 7.00pm at the Recreation Hall, Shirenewton. Members of the public are welcome to attend and may speak with the Council for the first 15 minutes of each meeting.

Find more information in draft copies of the minutes on the Community Council notice boards. Previous, approved minutes of meetings can be found on the Council's website www.shirenewtoncc.org.uk

Contact the Clerk to the Community Council - Mrs Hilary Counsell
Tel: 01291 421307 E-mail: Shirenewtoncc@gmail.com

SHIRENEWTON WI

February saw the ladies of Shirenewton WI enjoying a fun filled hour of Chair Zumba. Shirley Ayres took us through a warm up, exercise routine and warm down to some great Latin American and Reggae music. Shirley's enthusiasm was infectious and great fun was had by all.



Our next WI meeting will be our 67th Birthday Party on Thursday 14th March at 7:15pm with a speaker from Women's Aid coming to us in April. All are welcome. Please contact Diane Ashton Smith (01291 628838 or Jane Butterworth (01291 641704).
Dr Jane Lane.



Earlswood Village Hall AGM

All are welcome to the Earlswood Hall Committee AGM
on Wed 3rd April 7:30
in the Earlswood and Newchurch West Memorial Hall



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New course of lessons starting April 2019

Contact Pip Penney
01291 650653 / 07714537314
pippenney@hotmail.com

FAIRTRADE NEWS



When in 2017 Sainsbury's announced that it was planning to develop its own 'fairly traded' mark, more than 100,000 people (including me!) signed a petition condemning the move. Now most supermarkets have followed suit. This means that most consumers have little sense of which organisation is doing what to protect the rights of developing world workers. This Fairtrade Fortnight is focusing on chocolate. 6 million people depend on cocoa production in Ghana. When cocoa prices were high in the 1970s the beans accounted for nearly half the value of a chocolate bar. Today producers receive around 6% of the value of the final product. In 2018 the year after the price of cocoa paid to farmers in the Ivory Coast fell by a third, the Swiss-based Barry Callebaut, the world's biggest supplier of chocolate and cocoa products, posted a 12% jump in profits to \$288m.

The cocoa villages in Ghana are desperately poor. Some have no access to a water pump, few have sanitation or drainage. Electricity is still a limited and miraculous thing. Illegal felling of a single hardwood tree on the edge of the farms yields money equivalent to 3 years hard work from a cocoa farmer.

It would be optimistic to imagine that the Brexiteers' vision of a 'global Britain' has, at its heart a desire to reset imbalances in the value chain of commodities like cocoa. In 2016 Fairtrade, along with all other development NGOs, lost ALL its partnership funding - £16.5 million over 5 years - from the Department for International Development (DfID). Boris Johnson's recent gloss on the idea of global Britain involved disbanding the poverty-reduction programmes of DfID entirely.

Small acts can be symbolic. For the past 20 years in Fairtrade Fortnight farmers from co-operatives have come to Britain, to visit schools and generally raise the profile of FT. 2 women cocoa farmers from Ghana were due to come this year, but despite every assurance from the FT foundation and a letter of guarantee from Will Quince MP (co-chair of the all-party group for FT), the Home Office refused to grant them visas: the reason given was that neither woman could demonstrate personal means of support and therefore there was a risk of them 'absconding'.

Reading an interview with Joan Baez in The Observer (24/2/19) I found myself in agreement with her view on the current state of the world 'When I was 15 I thought of myself as a realist. But now I have to remain in denial for a good portion of the time because otherwise I would go crazy. You have to measure what you do in little victories that reintroduce compassion and empathy.' I have truly never felt so despondent. The temptation of course is to turn away, to concentrate on one's own little patch - family, garden, whatever.

How can it be possible that producers of a luxury like chocolate should have to live in such appalling poverty? And you can add to this every other commodity sourced from the developing world. Fairtrade helps, of course it does. I simply cannot grasp why so few people actually buy it.

Marion McAdam 641316 msm316@gmail.com
Oxfam Chepstow now sells some FT products and some supermarkets offer a limited range. FT goods are available from the 'shop' in the café in the Methodist Hall (opposite M&S). Of course I can also supply via Traidcraft. Or see the Traidcraft or Ethical Superstore websites. There really is no excuse!
Much of this article is sourced from The Observer 24/2/19

SHIRENEWTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 1090167

We held our meeting at the Recreational Hall, as is our tradition in January. Members of the committee had helped compile a quiz and we were joined by Peter Strong to be our Quiz Master for the evening. Our members were thin on the ground, they were forgiven as it was a cold dark night and staying at home by the fire was very appealing. The hardy few who did turn up had good fun finding out how little they knew on the various subjects contained in the quiz.

We held our Annual Dinner in February and had a very enjoyable dinner and after dinner talk in the Huntsman Hotel. Naylor Firth gave us an amusing after dinner talk on his eventful professional life as a civil servant at the Welsh Office.

Dates for your Diary:

Monday, 11th March Archive Meeting at the Recreational Hall,
2.00pm -5.00pm

Tuesday, 26th March Meeting at the Huntsman Hotel
A Talk entitled: 'From Work House to
St Woolos Hospital' given by Peter Strong

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Shirenewton Babies and Toddler Group

Thursdays 1.30 – 3p.m. (term time only)

Shirenewton Recreation Hall



**Great toys, good company – everyone welcome
(please bring your Carers too!)
Contact Jackie Broughton (01291 641797)
for further**

UNICEF, Sue Baldwin and the Clipper Race.



On Saturday 9th February, Jane and I held a coffee morning for Sue Baldwin because in August she will be setting off to race around the world in a Clipper and raising money for UNICEF. She gave us a talk about this adventure and showed us video clips of the tiny boat, the enormous waves and the huge distances she will be sailing. No motors - it's all sailing, using the wind and the currents and considerable skill. It will take her about 11 months all told and we all think she is very brave to be setting off on such a trip. She described how the crews work in shifts, four hours on and four hours off. And to be honest the idea of hot-bunking doesn't sound much like my idea of a luxury cruise. And it's not a trip for those of us who suffer sea sickness going over to the Isle of Wight. Sue was asked about the toilet arrangements. Not going over the Solent of course but on the Clipper and they seemed both primitive and perilous.

But none of us were put off and we did our bit to help Sue on this frankly scary trip. We all ate an enormous amount of cake and drank gallons of coffee and we raised £519:34p for UNICEF. We wish Sue well. And we also decided that in 18 months' time we would all meet up again and Sue would tell us what it was really like. More cake anyone?



Glynis MacDonald

STAN AND OLLIE.

Rick Hayes

Recently my wife and I went to the cinema to see the film Stan and Ollie. The film was more for my better half than myself, I usually like action and fantasy. But I must admit I was rather taken with the gentle way in which the latter life of Laurel and Hardy was captured in the film. **(Next comes a high level spoiler ALERT).**

Think back, I would suggest that most of us have seen a Laurel and Hardy film sometime in our lives, no matter how young we are.

The main theme of the film, apart from the serious illness Stan had with his heart, was that they embarked on a UK tour to get exposure and which would help with the film Ollie told Stan they were being signed up to do.

There was regret from both on things they had done. Firstly Stan did not stand by Ollie when he asked for an increase in fees when his contract was up for renewal; this is because the film company gave them contracts that were six months apart, so when one was ready for discussion, the other was only six months into their contract. Secondly Ollie assumed they would get a film contract in their twilight years, and it was his dream. In the end no sponsorship, but he never let Stan know the truth until the end.

So what can we take from this? In the Bible we can read:

Proverbs 27:9 New International Version (NIV) *Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of a friend springs from their heartfelt advice.* Or, **Proverbs 17:17 New International Version (NIV)** *A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity.*

Many written texts including the Bible rate friendship, where we are told two are better than one. A true friend sticks by me no matter what. Friends should be open and honest with each other, not like Stan and Ollie, where the truth of the possibility of starring in another film after 16 years was kept secret so one of them could dream the dream. Or a true friend will stand with me, even though it may make them vulnerable and unpopular.

We as members of Christ, should be friends to all people, even those we may not have time for in the general aspects of life. We should be on a mission to be friends with all, sharing Christ's love with all, not pick and choose who we believe is in and who is out of the church community. As proverbs 17:17 states, a friend loves at all times, which means we are to stay by a person whether they are in good times or bad, we should not be just fair weather friends.

Sometimes at work I see true friendships and acquainted friendships.

True friendships are where the team will stick together and protect each other no matter what. This reflects the team I am currently working in.

Within the acquainted friendships everyone is friendly with everyone else while they are in the same room working or conversing together, but as soon as one leaves the area, the others open up saying what they feel is wrong about the person who is not present, or what they feel about the person. They are all smiles and good cheer when they are together but as soon as they can they attack whoever is not present with them. Have you ever come across an environment like this?

I can remember a few years back where the hierarchy came up to me during a meeting and asked what was happening in a certain area. They didn't ask the person in charge of the establishment, they asked me. Guess what I said?

'Why don't you ask the person concerned directly?' Was I being a true friend to someone in need or was I just taking the easy option of not wanting to be part of the situation? In answer to this, I didn't want them to use me to get to the other person. I wanted them to take ownership and tackle the problem they saw themselves. And that was the type of tone I used in my reply.

Remember a true friend is a friend indeed.



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DATES FOR 2019
OPENING HOURS
10.30 – 12.30**

16TH MARCH 2019

20TH APRIL 2019

18TH MAY 2019

15TH JUNE 2019

20TH JULY 2019

AUGUST 2019 – NO MARKET

15TH SEPTEMBER 2019

19TH OCTOBER 2019

16TH NOVEMBER 2019

21ST DECEMBER 2019 –

CHRISTMAS MARKET

**YOUR MONTHLY ONE STOP SHOP FOR
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GARDENING CORNER

I wondered how best to start this month, and in the end I decided to go with the same as many conversations start. With the weather! I'm sure you will be one of the many who are probably fed up with being reminded that this time last year we had the arrival of the 'Beast from the East'. Instead, we now have an up-thrust (I'm sure there must be a technical term for it) of warm(ish) tropical air coming all the way from the Caribbean. I'm not going to pontificate whether this is due to global warming or not, other than to acknowledge that you don't need to be an expert to accept that the weather is more unpredictable than ever, and there must be a reason! For now I'm just going to accept that we are having an unseasonably warm and dry spot of weather and I intend to make the most of it. As a result I have been concentrating outside on the flower beds nearest the house and the raised vegetable beds 'down the garden'. Everything that needs cutting down and anything that needs digging is being. I use the term 'digging' loosely when it comes to the flower beds as really it is more of a twisting action of the fork rather than turning over of the soil. All this does is loosens the soil up after winter has compacted it down, and frees the weeds so they can be pulled out and disposed of. This will either be on the bonfire or the compost heap depending on whether they are perennial weeds like couch grass, docks or dandelions (the bonfire) or annual weeds, such as groundsel, bitter cress or similar. As regular readers might know I'm a bit of a 'stainless steel and wood' kind of tool man, and I do have a special long handled fork for this job, referred to as a 'Dixter Fork'. This was designed by the gardeners of Great Dixter in Sussex and made by a Dutch company. It is fantastic for easy pronging through a flower or vegetable bed during the summer, but not so good this time of year as it is quite light, and cannot cope with the compacted soil. So it is down to the traditional border fork – stainless steel and wood handle of course!

So I'm making the most of forging ahead with the groundworks and making as much use of the dry weather as I can. If time permits (and a bad cold which we are all suffering from at the moment!), I'll bring down some manure / compost from our top field and get this spread over the soil as well. I'll leave it on the top for now as I won't be doing much planting for a few weeks yet. I will then turn it all over with a small rotovator attachment that fits on the end of a strimmer, before planting. There will be one exception to this, and that is the shallots, both cooking and pickling. I had quite good success last year, despite the weather, with shallots that I had saved for use in the kitchen but which started to sprout out. This year I've repeated the exercise, but put the shallots into pots in the smaller tunnel, earlier than I did last year. These have all started to sprout out and so will get planted in the next couple of weeks, weather permitting. They are pretty hardy, so even if it turns cold, they should be fine outside, if not, I'll simply cover them with some horticultural fleece and then they will be pretty snug. I am tempted to sow the parsnip seeds, as the old fashioned way was to get them in the ground as early in the year as possible. I always have mixed success with parsnips and the majority of years they have not been a great success. I have actually toyed with stopping growing them and just buying when we want them, but I have not capitulated yet as there is always something satisfying about picking fresh from the garden and then cooking within half an hour – the vegetables do taste so much better. I have decided to give up on garlic though. Whether it is that they are just not suited to our soil or what, I don't know, but I have never had a great deal of success with them. They always grow, but never to any size, and so they have been difficult to use in the kitchen. So from now on we're just going to buy them as and when we need them! I've also told myself

that I need to cut back on the numbers of onions I grow. There is only so much passata sauce you can make and only so much liver and bacon casserole you can eat too!

So whilst I'm not planning on much planting in the coming month, things will be moving on apace in the propagating greenhouse. The hot-bench has been turned on for several weeks now and the first seeds have been sown. This includes those crops that need a long growing period, such as tomatoes and peppers (both hot and sweet), as well as the early greens such as cauliflower, broccoli and summer cabbage. I always grow a good number of these to start the year with as when these mature, they will be what we turn into cauliflower cheese and broccoli gratin, destined for the freezer. Later maturing crops will be in a lot smaller numbers, such as say ten seeds every fortnight. Hopefully this way we will get a steady trickle of maturing crops – there is after all only so many greens you can eat in a week! Also on the hot-bench, I've sown the sweet peas and the first of the perennial or half hardy border flowers, such as aquilegia and antirrhinums.

Gradually I will pot on the seedlings as they grow, into small individual pots, so they are ready for planting out later in the season. As gaps are created on the hot-bench, further seeds will be sown, so this facility will always be full up. IT isn't cheap to run for the few weeks that it is turned on, so we have to make the most of it. It is very similar to electric underfloor heating, but it is very effective at what it does. The coming weeks until probably end of April will therefore see a permanent sowing regime in place – and hopefully this year I will not forget some seeds. Looking this morning I note that the first greens need potting on, so need to get this done and decide what replaces them on the bench.

The warm weather is a bit of a worry from the bee-keeping perspective. I mentioned at the end of last year that, apart from a couple of hives, there were an awful lot of bees in most of the others and I was worried that they would eat their way through all of their stores. One nice sunny day I took the opportunity to have a quick run through to see what was going on. I had taken several supers (the part of the hives that they store their honey in) off the bees, but for various reasons I had never got round to spinning any of the honey off. I expected the honey to now be set solid in the frames and assumed that I would simply have to put these back on the hives for the bees to strip down. Remarkably when I checked a lot of the honey was still quite viscous, so I had a go at uncapping some and spinning the honey off. Fortunately I have an excellent electric powered extractor that I inherited from my dad. So much better than trying to turn the spinner by hand, and taking nine frames (double sided) at a time, it means you can get through them in no time. So once this job was done, I could put the supers on the hives for the bees to clear them off and take the supplies down into the hive. Once these were gone, I checked the remaining hives and to those that felt as though they were starting to run low on supplies, I added a kilo pack of fondant icing, which the bees will soon take down. So hopefully the hives will be ok for now. The two small colonies had died off, so I brought the empty hives down and have cleaned these up and sterilised them ready for using again. Hopefully the weather will not have a sting in the tail for March and it won't turn cold and wet. This is about the worst as the bees can't fly. With this warm weather as well the queen may have already been tricked into thinking it is later in the year than it actually is and so will have started laying in earnest. I did notice that there were bees bringing in good supplies of pollen from the early flowers and catkins which is a clear indicator that there is young brood in the hive

Continued on page 20

Continued from page 19

I always take great pleasure in feeding the birds during the winter and we have a weeping beech tree opposite our lounge which is an excellent feeding station. The numbers of birds appear to have been less this year, although it might be due to the fact that the weather hasn't been too hard and so they have made use of what nature supplies instead. When driving down our lane, we often see a sparrow hawk. It suddenly appears over a gate and glides in a zig-zag fashion down the road in front of the car, waiting for any small birds to get up off the road with the approaching car. It takes some degree of intelligence to learn that trick, which presumably gets taught to young in the next generation. Recently the same pair (at least we assume it's the same one's) have started making regular attacks on our feeding station. Mainly the male, it glides down the hedge alongside our drive and suddenly bursts out at the tree where the birds are feeding. The little birds re-act in different ways depending on whether they think they can escape or not.



The greater woodpecker is the first to re-act and its quick exit usually warns the others that trouble is rapidly arriving. If there was ever a bird on Valium, then I think the Woodpecker would have to be it. It seems to spend its entire time living on its nerves, as it lands at the top of the tree, spends five minutes or so looking every which way it can, before descending backwards down the tree, forever looking up and down, left or right. Hopefully the birds scatter in time, but some get caught in the tree branches, where they sit and watch the sparrow hawk as it lands on the top of the tree. The blue or great tits can't hold their nerve and invariably make a fly for it. Most get away but not always. The long tail tits usually have nerves of steel and we have watched individuals hop from one branch to another, whilst the hawk does the same, the tit safe in the knowledge that the bigger bird can't spread its wings among the tree branches. Invariably the hawk gets fed up with playing cat and mouse and usually clears off elsewhere – usually



a neighbour who keeps ducks and the wild birds get attracted to the loose feed. Recently the hawk has tried a new tactic, by flying below the roof line of the house, swooping up and over the roof and then dropping straight onto the feeding tree. This gives it a distinct advantage and one we'll have to keep an eye on. A number of times we have chased it off, but we aren't always about, so we may have to just move the feeding site elsewhere where the hawk doesn't have such an advantage.

Happy gardening until next month.
Steve and Felicity Hunt.

PUPIL COMMITTEES

Pupil voice is very strong in our school with eight pupil committees in total made up of two pupils per class from Year 1 to Year 6! They include School Council, Eco Committee, Healthy Schools, Criw Cymraeg, Digital Leaders, Community Ambassadors, Prefects and the Pupil Leadership Team! In the January meeting of our Governing Body two of these committees, Healthy Schools and Eco, attended and presented their projects from the last year. They all spoke eloquently and confidently and were justifiably very proud of all their achievements ...



CARDIFF MUSEUM



All three Foundation Phase classes enjoyed their visit to Cardiff Museum to look at the Tim Peake exhibition. They saw the actual space craft that he came back down to earth in and the parachute that slowed the spacecraft down! They had their photograph taken in a real space suit and enjoyed several activities including creating their own spacecrafts from Lego. Although not related to their current "Space" topic, while at the museum they obviously couldn't resist looking at the dinosaur exhibits too!

YEAR 6 RESIDENTIAL TRIP



Year 6 had the time of their lives last week when they spent three days at Gilwern ... caving, canoeing, climbing, team building and geocaching on the Blorenge in the snow! Their behaviour was exemplary and they made memories that will last forever!

CRIW CYMRAEG MASTERCLASS

Criw Cymraeg have led two masterclasses so far this term teaching support staff useful Welsh phrases in answer to the questions "Sut mae'r tywydd?" and "Beth wyt ti eisiau?"

Bendigedig blant!

S.A.R.A LIFEBOAT VISIT

To conclude last term's topic about "People who help us" Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils learned all about the amazing work of the S.A.R.A life boat crew who bought one of their lifeboats to school and all their equipment for the children to use!



Nerys's Natty Nosh



Lamb is an excellent source of protein, easily absorbed iron, zinc and vitamin B group. Of all the farmed animals, lamb is the least likely to have been fed antibiotics and the most likely to have grazed on open pasture. Considered lighter and more easily digestible than beef, the amount of fat lamb contains depends on how it's prepared and cooked. Roast leg of lamb has the least fat, whereas grilled chops have the most. North African and southern Mediterranean methods of cooking lamb are often the most delicious and the healthiest. This is a Moroccan lamb dish with apricots, almonds and mint.

Moroccan Lamb.

Serves 4

Ingredients.

2 tablespoons olive oil
550g lean lamb, cubed
1 onion, chopped
2 garlic cloves, crushed
700ml lamb or chicken stock
Grated zest and juice of 1 orange
1 cinnamon stick
1 teaspoon honey
175g ready to eat dried apricots
2 tablespoon chopped fresh mint
25g ground almonds

Garnish

25g toasted flaked almonds
1 tablespoon chopped fresh mint

Method

1 Heat the oil in a large flameproof casserole dish. Add the lamb and cook over a medium-high heat for 3-4 minutes until evenly browned, stirring often. Remove the lamb to a plate, using a slotted spoon.

2 Stir the onion and garlic into the casserole and gently cook for 5 minutes until softened.

3 Return the lamb to the pot. Add the stock, orange zest and juice, cinnamon, honey, salt and pepper. Bring to the boil then reduce the heat, cover and cook gently for 1 hour.

4 Add the apricots and 2 tablespoons of fresh mint. Cook for 30 minutes until the lamb is tender. Stir in the ground almonds to thicken the sauce. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

5 Garnish with the toasted flaked almonds and chopped mint.

Tips

Serve with couscous, or rice with steamed broccoli and carrots.

Chicken Tagine. Serves 4



Ingredients

- 4 chicken breasts
- 1 tbsp harissa paste
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 onion
- 2 garlic cloves crushed
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp ginger
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp chilli flakes
- 450ml/16fl oz chicken stock
- 100g/3½ dried apricots
- 1x 400g tin chopped tomatoes
- 1x 400g tin chickpeas, drained
- Seasoning
- 2 tbsp freshly chopped mint

Method

- 1** Cover the chicken breasts with the harissa paste, seal with cling film then leave to marinade in the fridge for 2 hours.
- 2** Heat the oil in the tagine and fry both sides of the chicken breasts for 2 minutes each side. Remove and put to one side.
- 3** Fry the onions for 5 minutes, then add the garlic and spices.
- 4** Add the chicken, stock, apricots and tomatoes, simmer for 45 minutes then add the chickpeas. Cook for a further 15 minutes.
- 6** Add the herbs.



Tips

Serve with cooked rice or couscous, Greek-style yogurt, topped with almonds and a little green salad

Enjoy!



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As now is the holiday booking period I thought I'd remind everyone about the use of cookies. Someone we know was trying to book flights for a weekend getaway and every time they went back to check prices they'd gone up!! My wife reminded her to clear her cookies and, sure enough, after she did that and returned to the booking site, the price returned to its original offer. Why is this? The answer is, of course, because the individual was being tracked, the website knew she was interested and kept raising the price in an attempt to bounce her into booking to avoid further price rises. Most sites these days have dynamic pricing algorithms that adjust prices based on the information they have. Some of that information is 'you' and some internal (i.e. how many people are looking for the flight/crossing/item, etc.).

So, when shopping around for flights, etc. make sure that you clear your cookies (and web history) and use several browsers. By default I have Opera (my default), Chrome, Firefox and both IE and Edge installed. You can think of them almost as separate individuals making the query – as if you asked your Aunt/Kid/Brother/Sister, etc. to make the same query. I say 'almost' because the query will come from the same IP address. The IP address is the unique internet address allocated to your router (by your internet provider = ISP) when you fired it up. This is available to external websites so it is possible they could track you by IP address thus negating the multiple browsers and cookie deletion you've deployed. So, if you want a belt and braces approach, reboot the router.

The way most ISPs work is to randomly allocated an IP address to your router once it fires up and requests to connect. So, by rebooting, you release back to the pool the IP address you had and, when the rebooted router connects, it is randomly allocated another IP from the pool. Clearly you could get the same IP address but there isn't a high chance. If you want to test this yourself, simply google 'what is my IP address' and make a note of it. Reboot your router and rerun the search. The two IP addresses should be different.

If you are not sure how to clear your cookies just google it for your specific browser or use the free version of CCleaner. Note: if you clear your cookies you will lose things like persistent log-ons you've set-up. This means sites you log onto automatically. To avoid this use a different browser when searching for flights/etc. and clear the cookies in that one.

Finally, I thought I'd up the temperature a bit. It seems that an old favourite scam is making the rounds again. They basically tell you (via email) that they have evidence that you've been watching online porn and, unless you pay them a fee, they are going to send a video of you to all your contacts. This is, of course, a complete scam. In common with many other scams, to achieve this they would have had to really compromise your computer and, if they have compromised your computer (i.e. by installing malware) there are almost certainly easier way of getting cash than this approach (i.e. by emptying your bank account).

On a final note: please use Shirenewtonchop.com to book your flights. However, remember when you clear your cookies you are clearing the tracking information which gives us our fee for introducing you. Therefore, once you've done your research and are on the point of booking, make sure you click through from www.shirenewtonshop.com so that the tracking is alive and well!

STARGAZING IN MARCH 2019

At around 10pm mid-month, the Constellation of Leo the Lion can be seen to the South. It is one of the few constellations that looks like its namesake. It commemorates the giant lion that Hercules slaughtered as the first of his labours. Leo is dominated by his head, which looks like a back-to-front question mark. The bright blue-white star Regulus is at the base of the question mark.



In the evening twilight, the planet Mars lies to the West – it has a slightly orange colour. It is joined by the crescent Moon on the 11th.

Before dawn the very bright planet Jupiter lies to the South just above the horizon. As the month progresses, the planet Saturn which is dimmer and a lighter shade of yellow, appears to the left of Jupiter. The Moon is very close to Jupiter on the 27th and Saturn on the 29th.

In March 1781, William Herschel of Bath was observing stars in the constellation Gemini when he discovered a new planet. This was the first new planet to be seen since the beginning of history and resulted in Herschel being knighted and given a royal pension. In gratitude to the king he wanted to call the planet George! However good sense prevailed and it was named after the god Uranus, conforming to the tradition of naming the planets after characters in classical mythology. Incidentally, Herschel's house in Bath is open to the public, and well worth a visit.

The Vernal Equinox occurs on 20th March, when day and night are equal, with exactly 12 hours between sunrise and sunset. This is a useful day for getting your bearings right as the sun rises due east and sets due west wherever you may be.



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A photograph of a dog, possibly a Weimaraner, walking on a dirt path that leads into a field. The path is surrounded by trees and foliage, suggesting an outdoor setting. The lighting is bright, possibly from the sun being high in the sky.

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LOCAL DIARY DATES

March	Event	Location
1st 10:00am	Life Changes	Tredegar Arms
4th 7:00pm	Community Council Meeting	Recreation Hall
11th 2:00pm	Shirenewton Local History Society	Recreation Hall
16th 10:30am	Village Market	Recreation Hall
26th 7:00pm	Shirenewton Local History Society	Huntsman Hotel
April	Event	Location
1st 7:00pm	Community Council Meeting	Recreation Hall
3rd 7:30pm	Earlswood Hall AGM	Earlswood Hall
5th 10:00am	Life Changes	Tredegar Arms
20th 10:00am	Village Market	Recreation Hall

DEFIBRILLATOR LOCATIONS

(Cabinets do not require codes, they are unlocked although they have a key pad)



Carpenters Arms (on the Usk road)

Huntsman Hotel (on the Usk road)

Tredegar Arms (Shirenewton village)

Yr Hed STORŌ
 (House half way between
 Blethyn Close and the
 School in Mynyddbach)
 Earlswood Hall
 (Earlswood)
 Shirenewton School

Readers and Sides Persons St Thomas a Beckett Church, Shirenewton		March 2019	
March	Sunday Service	Readers	Side Persons
3rd March	Sunday next before Lent	Bill Clarke Janet Horton	Bill Clarke Janet Horton
10th March	First Sunday of Lent	Mark Broughton Andrew Baker	Mark Broughton
17th March	Second Sunday of Lent	James Leaney Diane Marlow	Diane Marlow Claire Lewis
24th March	Third Sunday of Lent	Aileen Doggert Paul Morcombe	Aileen Doggert Paul Morcombe
31st March	Fourth Sunday of Lent	Group Service at St. Pierre	

BIBLE STUDY GROUP

The Shirenewton Bible Study Group is a friendly group who meet on one evening a month in the home of one of our very hospitable members to study the bible.

We focus to the readings from the lectionary for the Sunday preceding our meeting, so you can come along at any time, you won't have missed anything! Although many benefit from attending regularly, there is no obligation to do so and many members come when they can.

Meetings in 2019 are scheduled for the following dates:

Thursday 3rd January

Thursday 31st January

Thursday 28th February

Thursday 28th March

Thursday 25th April

Thursday 30th May

Thursday 27th June

Thursday 1st August

Thursday 29th August

Thursday 26th September

Thursday 31st October

Wednesday 27th November

If you would like to join the group or to be kept informed of the location of meetings, please ask to be added to our distribution group by contacting me via lem.shirenewton@gmail.com or calling 01291 641175.

LOCAL CONTACTS

*If you know of any changes or omissions please contact the Editor Terry Walters
Telephone 01291 641338 or email terencewalters@hotmail.com*

Church of St Thomas à Becket, Shirenewton

Rector	Revd Julian White Jel.white@btinternet.com	01291 622317
Parish Priest	Revd Nansi Davies CBE	01633 400 519
Lay Eucharistic Minister	Gilly Lambert	01291 641 175
Parish Visitor Coordinators	Revd Nansi Davies CBE Diane Marlow	01633 400 519 01291 641 407
Church Wardens – Rector’s – People’s	Sally Saysell Andrew Baker	01291 641 369 01291 641 925
PCC Secretary	Bill Clark	01291 641 783
PCC Treasurer	Graham Lambert	01291 641 175
PCC Members	Aileen Doggett Charles Eickhoff Janet Horton James Leney Jane Smith-Haddon Frances Gray Paul Morcombe Kevin Bounds	01291 641 459 01291 641 716 01291 641 783 01291 641 271 01291 641 525 01291 622 465 01291 641 671 01291 641 818
Gift Aid Secretary	Ruth Savagar	01291 641 411
Organists	Karen Millar Ruth Savagar James Leney	01291 650 521 01291 641 411 01291 641 271
Sunday Club	Lynn Morcombe	01291 641 671
Tower Captain	Mike Penney	01291 650 653
Saysell Centre Booking	Glynis MacDonald	01291 641 818
Safeguarding Officer	Andrew Baker	01291 641 925
Church Flowers	Maureen Moody	01291 641 524
Parish Magazine Editor	Terry Walters	01291 641 338
200 Club	Graham Lambert	01291 641 175

Church of St Tewdrics’s Mathern

Secretary and Church Warden Monnica Williams monnica.williams@virgin.net

MP/Monmouth CC & Community Council Representatives

Community Council Clerk	Hilary Counsell	01291 421307	shirenewtoncc@gmail.com
Shirenewton Ward:	Bryn Price	01291 641217	brynprice@gmail.com
	Michelle Davies	01291 641583	michelledavies100@yahoo.co.uk
Chair	Ben Allen	01291 641150	ben@greenpool.org.uk
	Vacancy		
	Philip Butterworth	01291 641704	philip.butterworth2@gmail.com
	Dr James Grose	01291 641690	j.grose@hotmail.com
	Mrs Jane Smith-Haddon	01291 641525	dolly.shirenewton@gmail.com
Mynyddbach Ward	Louise Brown	07598979719	louisebrown@monmouthshire.gov.uk
	Jayne McKenna	01291 691774	jaynemckenna@hotmail.co.uk
Newchurch West	Ian Martin	01291 650014	longmeadow@outlook.com
Earlswood Ward	Ken Morton	01291 650268	ken.morton@hotmail.com
	Bryn Price	01291 641217	brynpricecc@gmail.com
MCC for Shirenewton	Louise Brown	07598 97971	louisebrownbrown@monmouthshire.gov.uk
Member of Parliament	David Davies	020 7219 8360	daviesd@parliament.uk

Police Neighbourhood Watch Contacts

Neighbourhood Police Officer Matt Scree matthew.screen@gwent.pnn.police.uk
Neighbourhood CSO Andrew Jones Andrew.jones@gwent.pnn.police.uk

Other Local Organisations

Beavers Julie Hitchcock 01291 650548
Church Fete
Earlswood Hope Mrs Sylvia Jeremiah, Mr Raymond Jeremiah 01291 641726
Earlswood & Newchurch West Memorial Hall
Glynis MacDonald 01291 641818
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Earlswood Valley Methodist Chapel
Avril Smith 01291 627677

Gaerllwyd Baptist Mrs E Remnant Brooklands, Usk Road NP16 6SA
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