



Shirenewton Parish
Magazine

December 2022/
January 2023

Price £1:50 —£2.00 from January 2023



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FOR THE REGISTERS

On Thursday 3rd November 2022 the funeral of David Brian Hopkins (1938-2022) took place. The funeral was conducted by the Reverend Philip Avery.

On Monday 14th November 2022 the funeral of Diane Grace Nicholas (1938-2022) took place. The funeral was conducted by the Reverend Philip Avery.

LIZ DRAKE

Liz, Mike, Natalie and Stephanie Drake would like to thank the villagers of Shirenewton and Mynyddbach for their love and support during Liz's continuing hospitalisation in the stroke unit at the Royal Gwent. She is making progress albeit somewhat slow. Your support has been and is much appreciated. Many, many thanks.

Liz, Mike, Natalie and Stephanie

SHIRENEWTON FOOD BANK

Thank you to the many people who leave donations for the Bulwark Food Bank. Donations can be left in the church but sometimes the church is not open and so the donations can be left under my veranda or by my front door or in the plastic box on my bench and then I can take them down to The Food Bank. Now more than ever, things are getting tight and your generosity is hugely appreciated by the people who operate the Food Bank from The Bridge Church in Bulwark. Thanks again,

Glynis MacDonald, The Chantry, 641 818

Congratulations to our 200 Club winners in November:

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Nick Carpenter | 2. Emily Ashby |
| 3. Olivia Ashby | 4. Aileen Doggett |

CHURCH SERVICES

Please note that all Church services start at 10 a.m. on Sunday mornings in the church of St Thomas à Becket, Shirenewton. Times may vary for Remembrance Sunday and the periods over Easter, Christmas and New Year, but they will be reported in this magazine.

CHURCH SERVICES ON ZOOM

Some services will be available to join via Zoom, if you cannot attend in person. Please contact Gilly Lambert (see contact list) if you would like to be included on the distribution for Zoom service invitations.

COST OF THE PARISH MAGAZINE

At a recent PCC meeting it was agreed that we will need to increase the annual subscription for the parish magazine from £12 to £15 in 2023.

The reason for this is that the various costs incurred in producing the magazine have increased. This increase in the annual subscription for the magazine is in line with that, so that we continue to cover our costs.

SHIRENEWTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL (SCC) GRANTS TO THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL (PCC)

The PCC is delighted to report that Shirenewton Community Council (SCC) approved the following grants at their meeting on Monday 8th August 202:

£500 contribution to the Parish Magazine printing costs

£800 contribution to grass cutting and maintenance of the churchyard and grounds

£80 contribution to the Christmas Event

The PCC is very grateful to the SCC for these grants.

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Shirenewton Community Council

Includes updates from the November Community Council Meeting

Planning Application Considered in November

DM/2022/01070 Wentwood Mill, Buckwell Road To Gaerllwyd Baptist Chapel, Earlswood

Refurbishment and extension to existing cottage and erection of new detached garage and associated extension to residential curtilage.

Recommendation: Objection on the grounds that the proposed new building is not sympathetic to either the existing cottage or the local landscape, the colour/finish to the walls and the materials and the colour of the roof is unspecified.

Shirenewton Community Council require further clarification, (as requested by Landscape Green Infrastructure Urban Design) and the opportunity to comment further when this clarification is available.

Remembrance Sunday 13th November 2022

Wreaths for Remembrance Sunday were ordered from the Royal British Legion Chepstow and laid by Shirenewton Community Council, Shirenewton church and Earlswood hall. There was a large gathering at the memorial of villagers from both Shirenewton and Mynyddbach. Flag bearers and members of the local Scout and Cub Scout groups attended and laid a wreath and children from Shirenewton Primary School laid wreaths they had designed and made. The weather stayed dry with some sun and just before the wreaths were laid a robin flew in and watched from the top of the memorial.

New Noticeboard Earlswood Village Hall



Shirenewton Community Council took delivery of a new noticeboard on Wednesday 19th October, and it was installed on 29th October at Earlswood Village Hall (see above photo).

County Councillor Report November 2022

County Councillor Brown advised:

Joint Scrutiny Meeting-11th of October 2022

The above meeting considered various reports including the current LDP annual monitoring report and the month 4 revenue and capital report. ***It is of major concern that at month 4 there is a £8.8m revenue budget shortfall for Monmouthshire County Council.***

The revenue and capital budget report states in paragraph 2.1. of the report:

“2.1 That Cabinet recognises the significant over-spend forecast at Month 4 against the Authority’s revenue budget of £8.8m, which is primarily as a result of:

- £3.5m forecast over-spend in Children’s services due to the increasing numbers of high cost placements and continued use of agency staff;
 - £1.6m forecast over-spend in Adults care services following a dramatic influx of clients requiring services post-pandemic, with some clients requiring more intense services due to delayed health care during the pandemic;
 - £0.5m forecast over-spend in Additional learning needs budgets due to the increasing cost and number of out of County placements;
 - £1.3m forecast over-spend in meeting the needs of the Homeless following national policy change initiatives and where inadequate funding has been provided;
- £0.5m forecast over-spend in MonLife services as income levels are failing to meet targets in the areas of Leisure and Outdoor education;
- £2m forecast over-spend in relation to the expected outcome of workforce pay negotiations which is expected to be significantly above the 3.5% budgeted.

Together with a number of other over and under spends summarised in paragraph 3.7 detailed in appendix 1 to this report.”

Paragraph 4.2. of the report goes on to explain that:

“4.2 The Cost of living crisis is having a significant impact on our communities, with a growing need for additional Council services, the impact upon demand for the Council’s income generating services and risks around future debt recovery. Alongside this, the wider economic and inflationary environment continues to impact service delivery, both in respect of cost and supply chain disruption, and in presenting continued recruitment challenges.”

Several Local Authorities in England and Wales are reporting budget shortfalls.

The link for the further report to Cabinet on this shortfall on the 9th of November is reported under that heading.

The links to the reports for the above committee can be found here, including the revenue and capital month 4 report:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=246&MIId=5371>

County Council on the 27th of October 2022

There were various reports to County Council including the Social Care, Health and Safeguarding Annual report, Safeguarding Evaluation Report and the Community and Corporate Plan. It was agreed that more detail on the Community and Corporate Plan would be provided in January 2023. The link to the County Council reports can be found here:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=143&MIId=5011>

Cabinet Committee on the 9th of October 2022

The Cabinet Committee reports including the Budget report and timetable for consultation and setting council tax can be found on the following link;

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=144&MIId=4982>

Monmouthshire RLDP- New Preferred Strategy

The new strategy aims to make provision for up to 2,200 new homes by 2033 in addition to the 3,700 homes already in the pipeline or completed since 2018. On new site allocations, approximately a third of the new homes will be social housing for rent and another 17% will be affordable housing available at less than market price. The Plan will also make provision for 6,240 jobs and will be accompanied by an Infrastructure Plan, updated Local Transport Plan and an Economic Development Strategy.

The Council has appraised all the sites which have been offered for development and the new strategy proposes three strategic sites for future housing. These sites will be:

- Abergavenny East – 500 homes together with employment, retail, leisure, education and community uses
- Caldicot East – 925 homes together with employment, retail and leisure uses
- Bayfield Chepstow – 145 homes

The new Preferred Strategy will be reported to Council on 1st December 2022 to seek agreement to commence public consultation. If agreed, this will run from 5th December 2022 to 30th January 2023. There will also be a non-statutory consultation on the Candidate Sites Register at the same time.

Dates of next meetings - Monday 5th December 2022 and 9th January 2023 both at 7.00 pm, by public meeting in Shirenewton Recreation Hall.

Find more information in a draft copy of 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 Natasha Jones

Tel: 01291 650133 E-mail: shirenewtoncc@gmail.com



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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

December

Sunday 4 th 11.00 to 12.00	Advent Fair Shirenewton Church Room
Monday 5 th 7.00 p.m.	SCC meeting Recreation Hall
Sunday 11 th 6.30 p.m.	Carols round the Christmas Tree Tredegar Arms car park
Monday 12 th 7.30 p.m.	Ministry Area Praying Together St Christophers Church, Bulwark
Wednesday 14 th 7.00 p.m.	Chepstow Choral Society Christmas Celebration, Arts Centre, Chepstow Leisure Centre
Saturday 17 th 7.00 p.m.	St Woolos Sinfonia Christmas concert St Deiniols' Church, Itton
Sunday 18 th 10.00 a.m.	Christmas Praise service St Thomas à Becket Church
Tuesday 20 th 7.30 p.m.	Shirenewton Local History Society John Upton – Rogue and Genius Shirenewton Church Hall
Saturday 24 th 4.00 to 5.00 p.m.	Christingle Shirenewton Church room
Sunday 24 th 11.30 p.m.	Midnight Mass St Thomas à Becket Church
Sunday 25 th 10.00 a.m.	Christmas Day service St Thomas à Becket Church
Monday 26 th 7.30 p.m.	Ministry Area Praying Together St Christophers Church, Bulwark
January	
Monday 9 th 7.00 p.m.	SCC meeting Recreation Hall
Monday 9 th 7.30 p.m.	Ministry Area Praying Together St Christophers Church, Bulwark
Monday 23 rd 7.30 p.m.	Ministry Area Praying Together St Christophers Church, Bulwark
Thurs 26 th /Fri 27 th /Sat 28 th 7.30 p.m.	SODS panto—The Emperor's New Clothes Earlwood Hall
Tuesday 31 st 7.30 p.m.	Shirenewton Local History Society Nelson's State Funeral by Susan Amis Shirenewton Church room

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***Sunday Lunch, Parties or Functions only**

with food available on our established takeaway evenings plus Saturday & Sunday lunchtime or pre-booked parties etc

**Christmas Takeaway Ready Meals to collect
Christmas Eve @ £30 adult £15 child**

Dessert selection from £5

ooOoo

**Opening times Monday to Friday 5pm to 9.00pm,
Saturday 12 noon until 2pm & 5pm until
9.00pm, Sunday 12 noon to 7pm**

ooOoo

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Roaring Fire in the Shed

**OUR LOUNGE IS OPEN FOR SUNDAY LUNCH and
OR PRIVATE FUNCTIONS.**

Are you putting your online shopping to good use?

The **Lions Club of Chepstow and Caldicot** are raising funds for the local community even during these lockdowns. With us all being confined to home for work and play, most of us have had to utilise online shopping, and this is looking set to continue as the new normal.

The Lions Club of Chepstow and Caldicot serve local communities including our own, and like everyone else have had to modernise through the use of technology. Some of their fundraising used to take place in supermarket doorways, but now a number of online mechanisms support their fundraising efforts.

One such fundraising tool is **Amazon Smile**. Every time you shop online at **smile.amazon.co.uk** Amazon will donate a percentage of the purchase to The Lions Club of Chepstow and Caldicot.

To find out more about this and other ways to support The Lions Club of Chepstow and Caldicot including **Amazon Smile**, **Easyfundraising** and **Just Giving**, please go to: www.chepstowcaldicotlions.org.uk/page-8.php



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When you shop online at **smile.amazon.co.uk**, Amazon donates to the **Lions Club of Chepstow and Caldicot**.

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SHIRENEWTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 1090167

Please find below the society's programme for the coming year:

Date	Title of Talk	Speaker
Tues 20 th December	John Upton, Rogue & Genius	Dr Naylor Firth
Tues 31 st January	Nelson's State Funeral	Susan Amis
Tues 28 th February	Annual Dinner	
Tues 28 th March	Henry VII	Prof Ronald Hutton
Tues 25 th April	Paddle Steamers of the Bristol Channel	Richard Clammer
Tues 30 th May	Tour of Churchyard, St Mary's	Susan Amis
Afternoon Visit	Chepstow	
Sat 17 th June	The Tombs in Abergavenny	Prof Maddy Gray
Afternoon Visit	Priory	
Tues 25 th July	Raglan, Troy & Badminton	Dr Ann Benson

Meeting at the Church Room, St Thomas a Becket Church at 7.30pm, unless indicated otherwise.
Everyone is very welcome

To advertise in this magazine contact

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The editor reserves the right to print free content and free advertisements in black and white

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Full page £100

Half Page £50

Quarter Page £25

Advertising for Local and Charity organisations is free.



CHEPSTOW CHORAL SOCIETY

Conducted by Graham Bull
Piano — Richard Kubiak

Christmas Concert

Join us for our popular selection of
festive music & readings!

Wednesday 14th December

7.00pm

Chepstow School Arts Hall

£8 per adult, U18s & Students FREE

Includes light refreshments

Tickets available from Choir members, Chepstow
Bookshop, on the door or by logging on to
www.eventbrite.co.uk



CCS is affiliated to Ty Cerdd,
Music Centre Wales and is also a
Registered Charity (No: 1127098)

www.chepstowchoralsociety.org.uk



Shirenewton W.I. Line Dancing with Noreen



November saw the W.I. members donning their cowboy hats and learning how to do a 'hitch and a grapevine' – yes this month's new skill was line dancing.

We were expertly led through some 'beginner line dances' including the Charleston by Noreen and her team. We all had tremendous fun ... even those of us who have difficulty telling our right from our left and consequently spent some of the evening facing the wrong way to everyone else. I think we all agreed that line dancing is a good laugh, good exercise and good for the brain. If you fancy giving it a go, Noreen runs a beginner class on Monday 10-11 a.m. at Mathern Village Hall.

Our next W.I. meeting will be our Christmas meal at the Woodlands Tavern in Llanvair-Discoed on Thursday 8th December. On 14th January we will be kicking off the New Year with a Pilates evening. If you would like to join us, then please contact Jane Butterworth at janeb247@gmail.com or Diane Ashton Smith (01291 628838)

Jackie Broughton



**Carols Around the Village
Christmas Tree**

With the Chepstow Town Band!

Sunday 11th December @ 6.30

Tredegar Arms Car Park.

The Collection will go to

'Medicins sans Frontieres'

Bring a torch. And some gloves.

A warm hat. And loud voices!

Mince Pies & Mulled Wine afterwards





Advent Fair

In the Church Room

Sunday 4th December

11:00 - 12:00

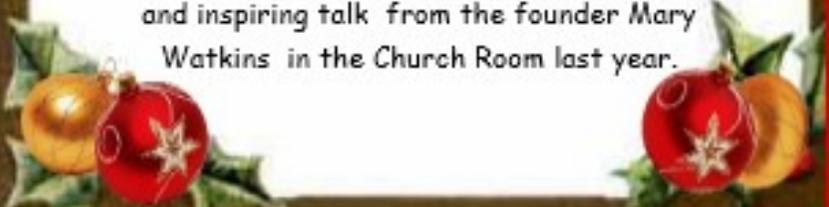
Hand crafted Christmas goodies

Cakes, Biscuits, Mincemeat, Jams,
Jellies and Marmalades

And of course, a raffle

Coffee and mince pies.

The money raised will go to 'The Friends of
Rwandan Rugby' after we heard an amazing
and inspiring talk from the founder Mary
Watkins in the Church Room last year.



Nerys's Natty Nosh



Happy Christmas

Having a few friends around for a Christmas celebration? Here are some suggestions for you. Enjoy!

Menu

Selection of sandwiches

French stick

Bread sticks

Hummus

Pork pie,

Selection of cheese

Goat, Camembert

Cranberry stilton

Smoked cheese

Cheddar

soft cheese

Blue cheese

Selection of pickles

Olives with feta cheese

Figs wrapped in Parma ham

Biscuits for cheese

Grapes

Cucumber sticks

Cherry tomatoes

Garnish with sprigs of fresh sage.

Serve with a glass of port or red wine.

Delicious

Figs Wrapped in Ham serves 4

Ingredients

4 fresh figs

4 slices Parma ham

4 oz(100g) unsalted butter

4 tbsp soft brown sugar

4 tbsp balsamic vinegar

4 tbsp port



Method

- 1 Wrap the Parma ham around the figs.
- 2 Gently melt the butter on low heat in a medium frying pan.
- 3 Fry the figs until the ham begins to crisp and the figs soften. Put to one side.
- 4 To make the sauce add the brown sugar and balsamic vinegar into the pan, reduce the heat, then simmer for 2- 3 minutes.
- 5 Pour the port into the pan and reduce for further 2 minutes.
- 6 Remove from the heat ready to pour over the figs.

Tips

A cocktail stick can always be placed into the fig wrap to secure the ham. Once the wrap is cooked the cocktail stick can be removed. Drizzle the warm sauce over the figs. Serve immediately.



Suggestion for a sweet treat.

These biscuits are gluten free and keto friendly.

Chocolate and Cranberry Biscuits

Ingredients

- 200g almond flour
- 100g butter
- 50g stevia
- 1 tbsp cocoa powder
- Handful dried sugar free cranberries
- 1 egg

Add all the ingredients into a food processor and pulse until a ball forms.

Refrigerate for half an hour.

Pre heat the oven Gas 5.

Roll the biscuit between grease-proof paper and cut into desired shape.

Place on baking trays and cook for 15/20 minutes.

Leave on the trays for a few minutes until the biscuit firms up. Decorate as desired. I used Nick's sugar free chocolate and edible Christmas glitter. **Enjoy!**

Gardening Corner

The rule of three has hit again, but fortunately for us – unfortunately for Felicity's sister, it didn't happen in this house. Not content with the three things at a time Pam and her husband were hit twice running! I can't remember what started it all now, but let's say it was the car and ended with the brand-new cooker. They then had a few days to get things organised before starting again with the kettle and ending with the toaster. I didn't say anything at the time – I knew if I did then the dreaded jinx would merely pass back to us. There are times when you learn to say nothing, and this was one of them!

I mentioned the seed catalogues arriving last month. After several sessions pawing through the various catalogues and marking the initial selections, it was a case of drafting a list for each supplier, then cross referencing to make sure there were no duplicates or triplicates. Sounds like a major exercise, but with cut flowers, general border flowers, vegetable varieties and then 'show' varieties of everything to select, it has increasingly become a major seasonal event. There was a time when produce heading for a show literally happened to be any old thing that had matured or bloomed at the right time. This is no longer the case, as some varieties are grown specifically for shows – in this case, breeding is everything! There are some serious show growers out there, but our trouble is that we try to do something of everything, but we don't really have the time to give everything the attention that they really need. The weather and pests don't help. As last season with the heat, the seemingly never-ending drought and the apparent invasion of every moth and caterpillar known to man demonstrated only too well. I'm afraid our philosophy is that we are in it to win it – if we possibly can. Yes, the taking part, especially at the Chepstow show which isn't that well supported, is important, but that isn't what drives us on! The Usk show is at a different level, altogether, and the Royal Welsh or Three Counties shows are at another level again. We don't compete at either of the last two, as we simply don't have the time – or the amount of manure(!) – to ensure the results we can achieve are anywhere near good enough. We know our limitations. Anyone that wins a 'card' at these shows really are at the top of their game. We look on in amazement at the winners, and you have to admire the skill and dedication that goes into growing flowers and vegetables at this level of showing. It isn't just the growing but the timing that is important. It is no good growing cauliflowers for example that are at their very best a week or two before the show. They must peek on the day, or within a couple of

days either side, and these experts manage their seed sowing to the day, relying on years of records to help them. Nature still has a final say in what happens, but several sowings over a set period will help ensure that they have the best selection to choose from when the time comes.

So, with duplicates and triplicates removed, with garden varieties and show bench varieties selected, it was online I went. Orders were placed, and probably for the first time, I managed to secure everything that was listed. I'd read that some favourite varieties would be in short supply, due yet again to more paperwork as a result of Brexit, so maybe it was just luck. What wasn't luck was the cost. As with everything these days, prices had escalated and some specialist show seeds were a ridiculous price. Yes, we are in challenging times, due to a certain Russian, and a seemingly endless list of crises, one after the other. But I can't help but think that suppliers in particular, are taking advantage of the current turmoil to hide profiteering.

But less of that, if I want to right the wrongs of the world, then perhaps I should take my soap box to Hyde Park Corner! So, what of the garden? Well, the seemingly constant rain has slowed activity down outside, so time has been taken up by sorting out the various tunnels and greenhouses, removing old crops and replacing them with new, or just preparing things for next year. We remain, as always, desperate for a good supply of manure. We are maximising what we can put into our six compost bins, but currently only three of them are actively 'working'. Even with a productive garden of over half an acre, there is never enough material rotting away to make much of an impact. The continuing mild weather is allowing some crops to continue producing food. I don't think that we have ever, for example, still picked tomatoes and peppers in the third week in November. Unfortunately, the downside is that there is a lot of moulds and rots to contend with as a result of the mild, moist air, so management of airflow and removal of infected plants is part of the daily ritual. As I write this, it is pitch black outside (being early one morning), but it has been drying for a couple of days, and the plans are to get outside at first light and make the most of a good day, weather wise, ahead. There are some flower borders to weed that currently look like a forest nursery. One of the joys of having mature ash and sycamore trees in the boundary hedgerow. Fortunately, with the soil being quite moist, the young trees are relatively easy to pull out. It is possibly just a little too moist, as the soil will be compressed by heavy feet. But we don't have a lot of clay in our soil,

so a quick forking as you retreat, is all that is needed to put things right. Next job is to start to cut back and then to dig up the dahlias and chrysanthemums. Each plant has been named, or their colours identified. We will remove as much of the soil from the dahlias, and the swollen roots will then be placed on the floor of the small greenhouse to dry off, and will then be over-wintered. Next spring, they will be divided up and then re-potted into fresh compost, allowing them to start shooting out, ready for the whole process to start again. We have too many of some varieties, and one or two have not produced very exciting flowers, so these will be put on the bonfire and burnt up in a few weeks-time. The chrysanthemums will be treated slightly differently, in that the plants will be dug up, most of the soil will be shaken off, but they will then be placed into compost in wooden trays in their various colours. They will be kept just moist over winter, and when they start to shoot out next spring, we will take cuttings and these will then be rooted, and will provide the new plants next year. The old 'stools' will then be left to dry out and again added to the bonfire. None of these or the dahlias are suitable for adding to the compost heaps. These are priority jobs, as the first frosts (assuming that they do arrive) will irretrievably damage the roots, causing them to rot off. Other priority jobs will be the fruit cage – cutting down the raspberries, thinning the strawberries and potting up any new plants that are suitable and generally weeding the beds. There is also a peach tree and two large honeyberry plants to find room for as these have outgrown their spaces in the greenhouse. All these jobs should have been completed by now, but unfortunately, the wet weather has prevented these from happening. As weather conditions allow, it will also be a case of cleaning up the vegetable beds, as and when.

Other jobs on the list include cutting the grass – this hasn't been done for several weeks, and I really do need to make the 'final cut' of the year. I then need to start clearing up the leaves that have fallen thus far. They always pile up in the wrong place, and always too deep, as like snow, the autumn winds tend to blow them into deep drifts, usually across our driveway! None of these will be wasted though as every leaf that gets caught by the rake will end up in the compost bin. One job that will be nice to do is to tidy up all of the hedges. They have all been cut, but have shot out again due to the mild weather, so a quick trim will not go amiss. This can be done any time now until spring, so very much a 'nice to do' but certainly not an essential.

The bees are now all tucked up for winter, except for placing the netting around each to stop woodpeckers attacking them.

Fortunately, the green woodpeckers responsible have plenty of food available at present, so fingers crossed, this is another job that I can fit in when I get time. The mild weather means that the bees are still flying, but at least there are still some food sources available for them, and they are not hitting the foot stocks in the hives. As I said last month, I have left plenty of food in each hive so hopefully a lack of food will not be an issue. If I run out of jobs outside, I have loads of jobs inside the garage, such as cleaning out a couple of hundred bee frames, and sterilising them, as well as the hive parts that they are sitting in. This is a slow and laborious job, but it has to be done. Currently my entire work room is taken up with these and I really do need to reclaim it, so I have room to work. I need to make time to get back to the wood turning lathe, as I want to make a number of items for Christmas, and it isn't that far away. We are keeping our fingers crossed that this Christmas will be much better than the last three, all of which were impacted by Covid. We have various nativity plays (with grandchildren involved), and carol singing opportunities identified. These all culminate with a trip to the Millennium Centre for a rendition of 'Les Miserable' just a few days before Christmas Eve. Hopefully by then, we really will be in the spirit of things. We hope that you are making similar plans and wish you well for a good Christmas. Everyone has certainly earned it.

Best wishes to you and your families and happy gardening until next year, *Steve and Felicity Hunt.*



The image shows a business card for Eileen O' Dwyer. On the left is a square portrait of a woman with short, wavy blonde hair, smiling. To the right of the photo is the Homecare logo, which consists of a red heart shape with a white house icon inside, and the word "HOMECARE" in blue capital letters below it. At the bottom of the card, on a dark red background, the name "Eileen O' Dwyer" is written in white, and "Private Carer/Home help" and the phone number "07795 689791" are written in white.

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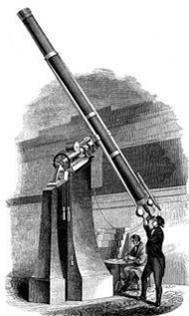


Orion the Hunter, many people's favourite constellation, lies to the south-east. Four bright stars represent his shoulders and legs whilst a further three form his belt. Orion demonstrates different types of stars. If you look at Orion's belt it is possible to see a well-defined sword hanging from it. In the middle of the sword there is a slightly odd- looking star – it seems smudged to the naked eye. This is the Great Orion Nebula, a vast cloud of gas and dust that is lit up by stars within the cloud. The nebula is a stellar nursery – new stars are forming inside it as the dust clumps together. Rigel the star forming the hunter's left foot is the brightest star in the constellation. It is a blue supergiant that will pass its supergiant stage soon (on an astronomical timescale), either collapsing in the case of a supernova or shedding its outer layers and turning into a white dwarf. Betelgeuse, the star at Orion's left shoulder is a massive red supergiant star nearing the end of its life. When it explodes it will even be visible during the day.

The W-shape of Cassiopeia lies to the north-west, whilst the seven stars forming the Plough can be seen in the northeast.

Orange-coloured Mars lies in the East and to the left of the bright star Aldebaran at the start of December and by the end of January has moved to the South by the end of January. The bright planet Jupiter can be seen in the South-West. The Full Moon is close to Mars on the 7th December and 3rd January. The Moon is near Jupiter on 29th December and 25th January.

21st December is the Winter Solstice, our shortest day, often called mid-winter.



Joke: Sirius, the dog star, is moving closer to Earth at a rate of nine miles per second. This means someday we could be in Sirius trouble!

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FAIRTRADE NEWS November 2022

As I write delegates at COP27 in Sharm el-Sheik are attempting to find a vague enough form of words that can be issued as a final agreement.

An article in the New Scientist (23/8/22) describes the under-reported heat wave in China this year – of extreme intensity, extreme length over a vast area resulting in widespread

drought, a collapse of some major hydro-electric infrastructure, massive loss of crops. 'There is nothing in world climatic history which is even minimally comparable to what is happening in China'. Europe experienced its worst drought for 500 years, and similar disasters occurred in the US and the Horn of Africa. And of course, a third of Pakistan is under water. A third! Think of a comparable situation in Britain!

A key criticism levelled at rich developed nations is that many are still enabling or indeed encouraging new fossil fuel exploration. This is true of our own government. The North Sea Transition Authority is expected to issue 100 new licences. BP chief executive Bernard Looney is registered as a delegate from Mauritania where BP has major investments. BP made £7 billion in profit in the third quarter of 2022. The number of delegates representing large oil and gas firms has grown by 25% since COP26 in Glasgow! There are more fossil fuel lobbyists than total delegates from the 10 countries most affected by climate change. The biggest single delegation is from the UAE the hosts of COP 28 - 1073 (170 last year).

In 1998 the Energy Charter Treaty's investment arbitration courts were set up to protect energy firms operating in the countries of the former Soviet Union from government expropriation and regulation. They gave companies the right to seek compensation if legislation or policies were enacted that could be seen as hostile. This is a most complex and opaque set of arrangements (see Guardian article 14/11/22). A former ECT executive has said 'The main goal of the ECT is to promote and protect fossil fuel investment, which is not at all the goal of the Paris agreement.' Countries' efforts to curb fossil fuel led development can be overturned. The UK oil firm Rockhopper was recently awarded \$190 million in a case it brought against Italy, which is contesting the decision.



Well, what has COP27 got to do with Fairtrade I might hear you ask?! Readers of my regular harangues will know that a key criterion for the award of the FT mark is environmental sustainability. I urge you all to consider the provenance of your purchases, particularly in the build-up to the festive season, for example, choosing to buy FT chocolate coins helps the cocoa farmers radically improve their lives but also enables them to farm sustainably. Buying FT is a simple way to back green causes.

Do look at the Traidcraft website- there is a wide range of food (rice, pasta, nuts, dried fruits, coffee, tea, muesli, olive oil, etc) and gift items available, or contact me for info or to sample some goods.

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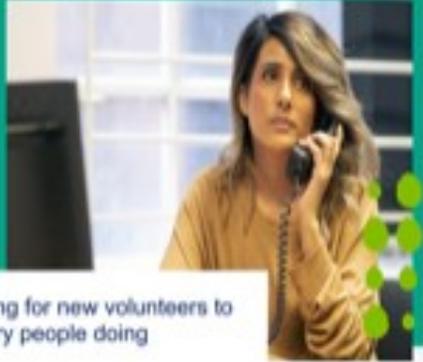
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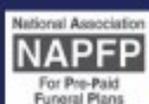
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