

# Shirenewton Parish Magazine



**July/August 2025**

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## SHIRENEWTON FETE—THE VICAR’S DAY OF SECONDS

Once again Barney, Finwe and I enjoyed ourselves at the Shirenewton fete this year. As soon as we arrived we headed over to the dog show tent and signed Finwe up for two classes. Firstly for prettiest girl (She’ll always be a winner for us there!), and secondly... despite my slight protests... Barney entered myself and Finwe into the “dog that looks most like its owner” class!! ‘Just have your long red hair hanging down’ he argued, ‘... plus you’ve both got your dog collars on!’ Well, quite.

Next we headed over to the Welly Wanging pitch. Barney’s competitive spirit took over and he discussed at great length with Mrs Burbidge, previous women’s champion, various approaches and techniques – the greatest debate being Overarm or Underarm? Barney, this year, went for overarm. Two throws over the boundary meant the third throw was too conservative and nowhere near far enough. Dejected, Barney departed to cheer himself up with some cake from the cake stall.

Finwe didn’t place in the prettiest girl, but later on she and I entered the ring for the dog and owner competition. John Montague cast his meticulous eye over each one of us, stopping to ask how we were similar not only in looks but in personality... this caught me unprepared and I mumbled how perhaps we were both quite calm... as Finwe strained at the end of her lead, pawing at John, rolling in the grass, and lunging at the competitors’ owners in case they had treats. Astonishingly, we came second!

After enjoying the live music, tasty burgers, and picking up some plants and books, Barney and I returned for a final ‘fling’ at Welly Wanging. Silently analysing his competition and putting into practice all he had learned thus far, he had three more goes... and finally placed second! So for our second ever Shirenewton fete, we came away with a blue second place rosette for Finwe, and a second place on the welly boot leaders board for Barney. The only second I didn’t manage was a portion of ice cream as I only purchased one near the end of the festivities... but all in all a very good day!

Very special thanks to John, Andy and team for taking it on this year and for every single volunteer, cake baker, book and bottle donor who made the day the success it was.



## SHIRENEWTON FETE

In my eyes a British summer is epitomised by the Shirenewton Church Fete. Village folk coming together to celebrate a tradition. A day when children can run wild, dogs can meet old friends and David Cornwell reunite a pink pony purse with a proud owner. Only six months earlier we were questioning whether it was still relevant.

The forecast was grim on Friday eve as heavy storm clouds rolled in from the west. David and his merry team with practiced skill erected the marquees in record time. Matt Smith arrived and softly laded his helicopter on the field—fascinating for adults and children to look over the next day. Chairs and Fridges were cleaned, beer kegs delivered, tables dropped off and as the light dwindled, the weary helpers retired to their respective village inns.

Saturday, overcast and blustery did not augment well, however by 0900 hrs the field was abustle. A jungle of plants sprung up, a welly wanging pitch, the required 64 m set out, cakes, jellies and jams and burgers appeared. 96 toilet rolls , 15 L of Pimms, 72 L of Lemonade, a scoop of ice cream cartons. 20 bales of straw and mountains of sweets were distributed. The field took shape. The bottle stall groaned under the weight of a village largesse. Jeeps, skittles, coconuts , books and toys, glitter paints and burgers joined the melee. A mad Irish fisherman, Yeats like and 5 Kg Salmon allegedly caught in the brook added to the hullabaloo.

The WI decorated tables and laid out their enticing wares and still the wind and rain threatened to ruin all the planning.

Then a stilted butterfly, a carnival king and queen, heralded the start of the Village fete and the sun shone and kept shining.

It was a day to remember. Old friends reunited. Dogs barking delighted with rosettes better than any cruff's offering. Children and mothers of a certain age hovering over the pick and mix stall forcing gummy bears down into plastic cups. Gardeners fought over dahlias and Greyhound cabbages. A trio of vicars joining in. Some people never left the straw bales by the Pimms/Beer Hall mesmerised by The Wild Birdseed Band.

It was a joyous fete made possible by so many different people who had come from far and wide. Who had given time, money, advice, mallets, vehicles, rope and a sense of community fun.

There are so many people to thank publicly but not the print room to do properly. We will keep it for the thank you in the Church room on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> July for cheese and wine to which all who made it possible are warmly welcome. Please see Shirenewton Facebook page for further details.

Then too soon it was over. The raffle prizes distributed (so many people had been generous in their offerings). Like a well drilled engineering unit the tents were lowered, the car park cleared, the rubbish collected, tables, straw, BBQ, gazebos returned for another year.

The fete was a success not because of the money raised which will keep

the roof on the historic church and the peaceful village churchyard maintained, but because it joined us together with many happy memories. At a time in history of great change we were in a corner of Britain with swifts overhead, in the sun, sipping a beer or pimm's, watching dogs, children and adults play, simply enjoying a moment of nostalgia and happiness.

So we start planning again for next year. 96 Toilet rolls proved a little generous, only 9 were used. Prior planning obviously is a village thing. Please come along to the thank you event with cheese and wine with ideas and commitment for the Shirenewton Fete 13<sup>th</sup> June 2026. An opportunity to raise new ideas, take on new stalls or just enjoy a glass with village folk and be thanked for the incredible effort which so many provided.

Thanks Andrew Baker

Peoples Warden

*Pictures from the fete appear over the next four pages and page 11*

### **Congratulations to our 200 Club winners in May:**

1. Amanda Jones
2. Paul Owen
3. Tom and Lizzie Lewis

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# SHIRENEWTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 1090167

Our May meeting saw our chairman, Les Ashton Smith give a talk entitled '*Auguste Piccard, his Life and Legacy*', we all turned up, fascinated by the name, who very few of us knew anything about. He was a Swiss physicist and explorer and the first man to reach the stratosphere, his legacy continues with his son and grandson who continued to explore the depth of the sea as well as space.

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Tuesday	8 <sup>th</sup> July	Visit to St Fagans (note, change of usual meeting date)
Wednesday,	9 <sup>th</sup> July	Archive Meeting
Tuesday,	29 <sup>th</sup> July	July Meeting, title of talk ' <i>The Great Civil War</i> ', Prof Ronald Hutton

Our meetings are held at the Church Room, unless otherwise stated, we start at 7.30pm.

Archive meetings start at 2.00pm – 4.00pm and everyone is welcome, Drop in session.

## FROM OUR ARCHIVE

**July Book of the Month** from our Archive is:

*Mounton Brook Paper Mills*, Ivor Waters

Very local history, this tells us about the brook that runs down the parish border between Itton and Shirenewton, in its heyday it was churning out paper in huge amounts, even paper for the large five pound notes, the valley was a hive of industry, the proceeds, built Shirenewton Hall that you see today.

**August Book of the Month** from our Archive is:

*The Port of Chepstow*, Ivor Waters

The title tells you all you need to know about this book, Chepstow, must have been a very busy port in its day, at one time a free port with wine shipped in from all over Europe.

## MAGAZINE CONTRIBUTORS WANTED!

Due to Nerys Wilson moving out of Shirenewton to Cardiff, and Steve Hunt about to move out of Earlswood for Somerset, we need contributors for our monthly **recipes** and our monthly **gardening tips**. If you feel you have sufficient expertise or experience to fill either of these positions, please contact the editor of the magazine at [parishmagshire-newton@gmail.com](mailto:parishmagshire-newton@gmail.com)



## HIRE OF THE SAYSELL CENTRE, CHURCH ROOM

Glynis MacDonald has decided to stand down from her role as booking secretary for the Saysell Centre Church Room.

This was a job Glynis has done for well over a decade and the Church Council thank her for such committed service over so many years. We are most grateful to Will Smith-Haddon who has agreed to take over the role.

The Saysell Centre is a valuable community resource in the centre of the village and is available to hire on a regular booking basis or for one-off events.

All enquiries should be addressed to Will on 07977 281147 or by e-mail at: [churchroombooking27@gmail.com](mailto:churchroombooking27@gmail.com)

## SERVICES AT SHIRENEWTON CHURCH IN JULY AND AUGUST

Sunday 6 <sup>th</sup> July	10.00	<b>Eucharist</b> with Hymns
Sunday 13 <sup>th</sup> July	10.00	<b>Eucharist</b> with Hymns
Sunday 20 <sup>th</sup> July	10.00	<b>Morning Praise</b> with Hymns
Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup> July		<b>No Service at Shirenewton Church</b>
	10.00	MA Sabbatical Service at the Priory Church, Chepstow for Reverend Philip Avery as he starts his pilgrimage to Rome
Sunday 3 <sup>rd</sup> August	10.00	<b>Morning Praise</b> with Hymns
Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup> August	10.00	<b>Eucharist</b> with Hymns
Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup> August	10.00	<b>Eucharist</b> with Hymns
Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup> August	10.00	<b>Eucharist</b> with Hymns
Sunday 31 <sup>st</sup> August	10.00	<b>Eucharist</b> with Hymns <b>Group service</b> at Shirenewton

All are welcome to join us and enjoy refreshments in the church rooms after Sunday morning service

*Information of all services at eleven local churches that make up the Severn-Wye Ministry Area is at [www.severnwyema.co.uk](http://www.severnwyema.co.uk)*



## **SHIRENEWTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

Please find extracts from the minutes of the monthly meeting held 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2025.

**Public participation**, PCO Toby Wall arrived to discuss his police report.

I Discussed his report, regarding 10 crime incidents and he confirmed that 9 were low level driving incidents, including broken down vehicles in dangerous positions on the roads.

II One gentleman was detained after a report of smoking cannabis.

III Cycling incident regarding no visibility whilst travelling to work– police have provided a high vis jacket and informed cyclist to wear it.

IV Speed monitoring was carried out on Sunday around 3.30 with the average speed recorded being 17.2 mph and the highest 24 mph. This may be due to drivers being alerted and Sunday being a quieter day. Cllrs confirmed faster speeds had been witnessed at other times.

V Parking issues around the Carpenters Arms, discussed issues with landlord and no further issues reported.

VI Reminded Residents to continue to report seeing anything suspicious, or drug related sightings and Police will continue to act.

### **Actions –**

To continue to monitor speeds in the village at various locations, and high volume times of day

Training a new officer in the locality.

Cllrs thanked Toby Wall for attending and his proactive reporting.

**Items for Planning – No new matters were** received however planning recommendation DM/2025/00486 – Rhewl Cottage received. Cllrs had no further comments agreed to MCC Recommendation

**Clerk to notify Planning officer.**

**Street Lighting** – Cllrs discussed the recent emails regarding the street lighting that had recently been reinstated in the village and were in support of the residents. **Action awaiting response from MCC Highways.**

**Cllr Vacancies** = Vacancies for Shirenewton and Mynyddbach advertised on website and local notice boards.

**Clerk to contact Shirenewton School.**

**Audit** The SCC 2024 / 2025 accounts were read approved, accepted and signed.

**Grants** – The annual grants for local organisations are now open until 26<sup>th</sup> June 2026 – **Applicants to email the Clerk for an application form.**

**Meeting Dates** – Cllrs agreed the meeting dates for 2026

**Planters** – Mrs. D Brabon confirmed she has kindly re-filled the War memorial planter, and the new Planter by Crick sign. **SCC are most grateful to Mrs. Brabon for her continued efforts, especially in this challenging dry season.**

## **COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT JUNE 2025**

County Councillor Brown advised:

### **Cabinet – 21<sup>st</sup> of May 2025**

The Cabinet meeting considered various reports including the Place Making Grant Programme for the town centre regeneration projects, entering a sport development partnership in the Gwent region; the Marches Partnership programme; digital and data technology collaboration through shared resources; a report on a shared apprenticeship construction scheme as a limited company by guarantee; and the letting of the Old Library Abergavenny as a Mosque and community centre. The Cabinet reports can be found at the following link:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=144&MIId=6102>

### **Place Scrutiny Committee – 22<sup>nd</sup> of May 2025**

The meeting covered scrutinising the Active Travel presentation. Unfortunately, the legislation and funding for active travel schemes centres on urban towns rather than rural areas. The forward work programme shows that the RLDP is currently expected to be scrutinised on the 25<sup>th</sup> of September 2025 prior to going to the next meeting of full Council on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October 2025.

The Committee report can be found at the following link:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=303&MIId=6166&Ver=4>

### **Performance and Overview Committee on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June 2025**

This Special committee meeting covers reports on Additional Learning Needs and can be found at the following link:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=305&MIId=6368>

### **AOB and ward reports**

**Cllr Todd raised the following :-**

i. Cllr Todd shared an email shared from Mr C Smith regarding a manure heap, **Clerk to contact Environmental Health**

- ii. Raised concerns of speeding traffic on B4325, especially two near misses involving a tractor and a motorcycle and Cyclist and car. **Action to discuss at Multiagency Meeting**
- iii. Looking at putting a mirror near this junction. **Action Cllr Todd**

**Cllr Butterworth raised the following**

- i. Email received from Gwent police (having received some additional funding) discussing the possibility of an ANPR camera that would assist in picking up vehicles trying to evade cameras on main roads. (these are not speed monitoring cameras).  
Shirenewton has been identified as 1 of 3 potential areas. SCC is keen to discuss and be considered. A camera would only be installed where the outcome of that consultation is one of community support.

**Cllrs agreed the date of the next meeting as Monday 7th July 7:00pm 2025 by public meeting in Shirenewton Recreation Hall or remotely.**

**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](http://www.shirenewtoncc.org.uk)**

**Contact the Clerk to the Community Council**

**E-mail: [shirenewtoncc@gmail.com](mailto:shirenewtoncc@gmail.com) Mobile: 07410 580961**



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## Vacancy on Shirenewton Community Council

Shirenewton Community Council has 2 vacancies for Councillors in the Shirenewton & Mynyddbach ward

If you think you would like to be a Councillor and are over 18 years of age, contact the Clerk by email at [shirenewtoncc@gmail.com](mailto:shirenewtoncc@gmail.com)

### What is a Councillor?

Councillors are elected to represent an individual geographical unit on the council, known as a ward or parish. They are generally elected by the public every five years. Between the elections if a Councillor seat becomes available it can be filled by the Council Co-opting the applicant onto the Council. 2 seats for Co-option are now available.

### What do Councillors do?

Councillors have three main components to their work.

1. **Decision making** – Through meetings and attending committees with other elected members, councillors decide which activities to support, where money should be spent, what services should be delivered and what policies should be implemented.
2. **Monitoring** – Councillors make sure that their decisions lead to efficient and effective services by keeping an eye on how well things are working.
3. **Getting involved locally** – As local representatives, councillors have responsibilities towards their constituents and local organisations. These responsibilities and duties often depend on what the councillor wants to achieve and how much time is available, and may include:
  - Going to meetings of local organisations
  - Going to meetings of bodies affecting the wider community
  - Taking up issues on behalf of members of the public

### How much time does it take up?

Quite often councillors say that their duties occupy them for about an hour a week. Obviously, there are some councillors who spend more time than this – and some less, but in the main, being a community councillor is an enjoyable way of contributing to your community and helping to make it a better place to live and work.

You will be supported in your role and will be expected to undertake training. You should be comfortable working electronically. You should have a positive outlook and a can-do attitude and be willing to work as part of a team. If after reading this notice you are interested in applying, please contact the clerk to the council using the above details.



Shirenewton  
Community Council

# Holy Communion in the Welsh language



*O ddydd Sadwrn Gorffennaf 12fed ac yn fisol bob ail ddydd  
Sadwrn am 9.30 y bore, ymunwch â ni ar gyfer Cymun Bendigaid  
yn yr iaith Gymraeg yn eglwys y Santes Fair Cas-gwent.*

**9:30am on the second  
Saturday of the month  
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Starting on 12<sup>th</sup> July**

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practice listening, reading  
and speaking skills!**

For more info please contact  
[Zoepimentel@cinw.org.uk](mailto:Zoepimentel@cinw.org.uk)



## Swift Action Needed!



It feels like summer has only just arrived but as this article drops on your doormat we will be into July and for a swift, that is nearly job done, you can almost set your calendar by them as they almost disappear overnight from our skies as July turns into August. Swifts only have one brood, they arrive back at the same time, waste little energy finding a nest site as they are just returning to the ones they used previously, they catch all their food on the wing, returning with balls of insect protein. Therefore, the young grow fast and fat. Most amazingly the adults migrate back to Africa first, leaving their fat youngsters in the nest, as they must slim down, strengthen their wings before they leap into the unknown from their nesting hole about a week later and immediately set off for their wintering grounds in Africa with no parents to guide the way. How they do this is not known but probably has something to do with magnetic fields. These young swifts will not touch down again until they start nesting in 4 years' time, probably close to where they were born and having already returned 3 times without breeding, covering thousands of miles.

The mainly sunny and dry weather this year has meant that our swifts have stayed close to the village this year. In the morning and evening just before dark they have been giving a great display over the villages. I hope you have had a chance to see these screaming parties; you can hardly miss them if you are out and about at this time. As for numbers, the highest total we have seen is 15 birds at roof top level one evening, this is encouraging, but the few nest sites appear to be congregated around just 3 houses, which is a worry. This makes them very vulnerable to unintentional damage. It also makes them obvious to predators. Swifts are very fast flyers and there is little that could take them in direct flight, so any predator is reliant on ambush. Swifts are very good at avoiding predation (80% of breeding adults making it successful home each spring), but a concentration of birds is still a tempting quarry for predators. It is with sadness that we can report that

one such incident occurred this year near one of the breeding sites. As you can see from the picture this magnificent bird has been taken by something.



*Dead swift found in Shirenewton June 2025*

We will never know what took it, but we asked a raptor expert about it and the missing head is a sign of either a sparrowhawk or possibly a collision mortality then the dead bird has been picked up by fox or cat. If it was a sparrowhawk, this is natural predation but does illustrate why expanding the nest site distribution is important to protecting our swifts for the future.

### **Our hopes for a Shirenewton Community Swift Group**

**Aim:** to stop of the decline of swifts, not just in our villages but through our actions nationally. We will do this by protecting existing nest sites, while providing as many new nest box sites as possible through community action.

There are a few of us that are keen to be the voice of swifts in our villages, Swift groups are common elsewhere throughout Britain, both Chepstow and Usk have one. We would welcome as many people as possible to support swifts and to facilitate the installation of swift boxes. We would also like people to record sighting and confirmed nest sites. A couple of us plan to have an informal gathering outside the Tredegar Arms pub (with a pint in out hand) at 20:15 on **Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> July**. Hopefully the weather will be dry and the swifts will put on a display for you to see. It is always a gamble with the weather but all we can do is try. It will be a good

opportunity to ask anything swift related and hopefully offer to help these iconic birds.

One thing we do lack is the skills and equipment to install the boxes, they are normally fixed to the wall by a couple of long bolts and that is it, but we need people with the appropriate skills and equipment, to help install boxes for people willing to have a swift box on their house (I have a supply of 5 ready to go). Please get in contact if you can help with this. Some houses are more suitable for swift boxes than others, the most suitable ones are those with a clear unobstructed flight path for swifts, these are easy to identify by watching the screaming parties of an evening. We plan to walk the village and identify the most suitable houses this way, but we would be happy to advise anyone who would like to accommodate a swift box. If we are oversubscribed, we will prioritise installations of boxes on what appears to be the most suitable houses until more boxes can be sources.

Because of swifts strong site fidelity, if they are lost from an area, it is unlikely they will return, so we literally require **SWIFT ACTION NOW**.

This is the last in our short series of articles on swifts, we hope you have enjoyed them. We might be tempted to continue an ad hoc bird-focused article in the Parish Magazine, if people want it?

If these articles have inspired you to learn more about these spectacular birds, please see the additional resources below which we recommend and if you would like to help please send an email to [shirenewtonswifts@outlook.com](mailto:shirenewtonswifts@outlook.com)

**Websites:**

British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) website <https://www.bto.org/understanding-birds/birdfacts/swift>

Action for Swifts <https://actionforswifts.blogspot.com/>

Swift Conservation <https://www.swift-conservation.org/>

**Books:**

Swift in a Tower by David Lack

Swifts and us, Sarah Gibson

Nature Needs you: The Fight to save our swift by Hannah Bourne-Taylor



# ST. MARY'S CHORAL EVENSONG

With Cardiff Chamber Choir

FRIDAY 15<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST  
6:30PM

To celebrate the feast day of St. Mary, join us for a truly special service of prayer with superb music, in the stunning setting of St. Mary's Priory, Chepstow, followed by drinks and nibbles.

Free, all welcome



## THE BELLS, THE BELLS

On the day of the church fete we had visiting ringers from Builth Wells who opened proceedings between 10.30-11.30 am. We then rang again for the opening of the fete from 1.00-1.30 pm.

We are now preparing for our annual Summer Tour which this year is over the weekend of the 27<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> June, visiting the Lincolnshire Wolds. Included in the itinerary is a ring at the Boston Stump, one of the most spectacular churches in the UK. There will be a full report of the Tour in the next edition of the Parish Magazine.

We are always looking out for future ringers to maintain this ancient tradition. Ringing is a combination of a physical skill (controlling the bell) and a cognitive skill (mastering the arcane art of Change Ringing).

The best time in life to start ringing is when young (ten years old plus), just as this is the best time learn a musical instrument; most established universities have active ringing societies for under graduates. However, providing one is physically fit (to climb spiral stairs and gently pull on a rope) and mentally active (to master Change Ringing) then learning at any age is possible. We are a friendly, open and inclusive group, so if you might be interested or your child might be, then please come along on a Friday evening from 7.30 to 9.00pm to see what it entails. Climb the spiral staircase and enter the ringing room. It is magical.

M.D.Penney.

June 2025

### LIFE SAVING DEFIBRILLATOR

**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)
- Recreation Hall (Shirenewton village)
- The Tredegar Arms (The Square, centre of Shirenewton)
- Great House Farm complex (off Old Road), Earlswood (north)  
[repair.decrease.fussy]
- Earlswood Hall (Earlswood)
- (House half way between Blethyn Close and the School in Mynyddbach)

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Wildlife Trust

# The Great Big Balsam Bash!

Join Gwent Wildlife Trust for a day of pulling Himalayan Balsam from our beautiful meadows! Himalayan Balsam is highly invasive and each plant produces hundreds of seeds, so we need all the help we can get to remove them this summer!



**July 5<sup>th</sup> 2025**

**Shirenewton Meadows**

Please use the QR code to register interest on eventbrite

SINCE 1861

# TREDEGAR ARMS

SHIRENEWTON



Now Open  
Wednesday to Sunday  
12pm to 11pm  
[tredegararms.com](http://tredegararms.com)  
01291 783600

## WHAT A COINCIDENCE!

How lucky it was that I decided to catch up on reading the last few issues of WI LIFE, the WI magazine, whilst on holiday, basking in the Cretan sunshine. I read, in the April 2025 issue, that the 'Resolution' to be voted upon at the Annual meeting on June 4th was...

**"We call on WI members to work together to increase public confidence and training in the delivery of CPR and to work with local organisations to help to improve access to defibrillators in their communities to give every person the best chance of surviving a cardiac arrest" ....**

and so I was reminded of my intention to write a report on the latest successful event at Earlswood Hall which was a.....

### **Defibrillator and CPR training session.**

There are a number of defibrillators in the area of Shirenewton, Mynyddbach and Earlswood. The one in Earlswood is attached to Earlswood and Newchurch West Memorial Hall.

Do you know where your nearest one is located?

Do you know how to access it?

Should one rush for a defibrillator some distance away

Or

Should you stay with the patient?

When should a defibrillator be used?

Can damage be done if not used correctly or at the wrong time?

Does the use of a defibrillator make a difference to a person's chance of recovery?

Well, the questions are endless....

So, the committee decided to organise a training session. What a coincidence that the WI are encouraging this very thing!

It's all very well having a defibrillator at the hall, but people need to know how to use one. You have perhaps been told "the machine talks you through it", but would you be confident enough to help someone out by using one?

On Sat morning, June 30th, we welcomed three members of the St John's Ambulance (trained in teaching the course) who came to deliver a free, two hour training session to 29 members of the community who had 'signed up' for the session.

The first part of the session was all about CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) and we heard how this is vital for maintaining life - before defibrillation and post defibrillation until professional help arrives. The statistics

relating to survival rates with or without CPR (outside hospitals) are astonishing and especially surprising for women (men are reluctant to apply CPR on a woman).

Following discussion and videos about CPR and some tuition and video clips regarding defibrillators and how they work, the group were invited to practice CPR on the five dummies the team had brought.

It was helpful to feel for oneself just how hard one needs to press for efficient chest compressions (don't worry about broken ribs!) and the speed of action required - to the beat of the tune "Staying Alive" at 103 beats per minute (hard work).

Next came a demonstration of the use of a defibrillator, on one of the dummies as the demo machine is designed to do this. We had the chance of applying the pads ourselves.

The knowledgeable team were very open to answering an array of questions, they patiently explained, in laymen's terms, some of the complexities of dealing with someone who has collapsed, and some ill-founded ideas were corrected.

Most importantly they impressed on us the increased likelihood of survival if CPR is maintained on a person and a further improvement is likely if a defibrillator is used.

There are some interesting but alarming statistics regarding heart attacks / cardiac arrests. UK fares less well than comparable countries around the world and figures for Wales are even more disheartening. Hence St John's ambulance are running free training campaigns in the hope of educating the wider population.

The article in the WI Life, April Issue, (if you have chance to get hold of a copy) is full of interesting facts and guidance and includes references to accessing further information e.g. The British Heart Foundation offers a free online training tool that can teach CPR and the correct steps of defibrillator use in just 15 minutes. However, the course run by the St John's Ambulance gives so much more depth and is well worth a couple of hours of your time.

**We hope to run another course. If you are interested in coming along, please let a member of the hall committee (07929880415) know or look out for the advert for next time.**

**FOR THE LOCATIONS OF THE DEFIBRILLATORS IN SHIRENEWTON, MYNNYDBACH AND EARLSWOOD, SEE THE BOTTOM OF PAGE 22 IN THIS MAGAZINE**

## Value of the Month

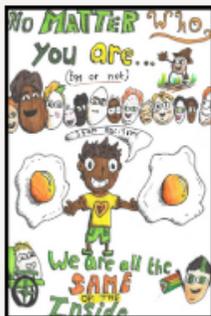
## Equality & Unity

### Bore da from Shirenewton Primary School!

A little while back, we used to share a section of our school newsletter in the Shirenewton Parish magazine. It's been a while since we last did that, but we thought it might be nice to reconnect and let the local community know what our amazing pupils have been up to lately. We're excited to share some of the wonderful things happening at our school!

### Celebrating Success in the Anti-Racism Competition!

A huge congratulations to Maddie (Year 2) and Angela (Year 6) for their outstanding achievements in the Anti-Racism competition organised by Race Equality First. This was a whole-school initiative, and we're incredibly proud to share that Shirenewton Primary School's entries truly stood out among the many submissions received this year



### Reception Class - Marvellous minibeasts

Looking at the new topic of minibeasts, Reception children have shared their knowledge and have been thinking about some great enquiry questions.



In literacy children have been listening to the story 'The Very Busy Spider' and have written lovely descriptions and also thought of some questions for the spider.

They have also been learning about team games in their PE lessons



### Year 1 Habitats Topic

We have started our new topic on habitats and have created our topic pages, ready to explore different types of habitats.

In literacy, we have been reading The Bog Baby, which connects perfectly with our new topic. Year 1 has learned the story with actions and can now retell it confidently from memory.





## Year 2 Vegetables

Year 2 have been learning about the importance of fresh vegetables and how not everyone has easy access to them. As part of their learning, they've been growing a variety of produce and are kindly sharing it with anyone in the community who may be struggling to grow or afford fresh vegetables.



Year 2 had a wonderful first week back, starting with our new topic, Teganau trwy amser (Toys through time) where we are hoping to find out how toys have changed over time. The children loved bringing in and sharing their favourite toys and we had a lovely speaking and listening session, learning why they were important to them. Mrs Burbidge visited the Shirenewton Museum to look for historical photos of children playing with toys.



## Places Available for Reception 2025

If you are looking for a Reception place for your child for September 2025, we have spaces available.

Please email [shirenewtonprimary@monmouthshireschools.wales](mailto:shirenewtonprimary@monmouthshireschools.wales) or call 01291 643774 for further details.

Next month we hope to share a glimpse of what our older year groups have been working on. Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter, we are glad to be back in the Parish Magazine.

## 63 Chepstow | Usk | Pontypool | Cwmbran

Monday to Friday except Bank Holiday Mondays

	Sch	HOL		Sch	HOL	
<b>Chepstow</b> Bus Station	0805	1040	1320	1525	1526	1820
<b>Chepstow Comprehensive School</b>	0809	1044	1324	---	1530	1824
<b>Shirenewton Road Junction</b>	0817	1051	1331	1537	1537	1831
<b>Earlswood West End</b>	0825	1059	1339	1545	1545	1839
<b>Llangwm Bridge Inn Road</b>	0834	1108	1348	1554	1554	1848
<b>Usk Twyn Square</b>	0843	1117	1357	1603	1603	1857
<b>Usk Coleg Gwent Main Road</b>	0848	1122	1402	1609	1609	1901
<b>Little Mill Bridge</b>	0855	1129	1409	1616	1616	1908
<b>Pontypool Town Hall</b>	0903	1138	1418	1625	1625	1916
<b>Pontypool Park Road</b>	0904	1139	1421	1626	1626	1917
<b>Pontypool opp Town Hall</b>	0905	1140	---	1627	1627	1918
<b>Croesyceiling Edlogan Square</b>	0913	1147	---	1635	1635	1925
<b>Cwmbran Bus Station</b>	0917	1151	---	1639	1639	1929

**Sch** Operates on schooldays only

**Hol** Operates school holidays only

**Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays**

Sorry, there is no Sunday service on route 63

Timetable from 1 September 2024

via Chepstow Community Hospital, Shirenewton, Earlswood, Gaerllwyd, Llangwm, Gwernesney, Coleg Gwent, Croesyceiling

### Saturdays

0805	1040	1320	1526	1820
0809	1044	1324	1530	1824
0817	1051	1331	1537	1831
0825	1059	1339	1545	1839
0834	1108	1348	1554	1848
0843	1117	1357	1603	1857
0848	1122	1402	1609	1901
0855	1129	1409	1616	1908
0903	1138	1418	1625	1916
0904	1139	1421	1626	1917
0905	1140	---	1627	1918
0913	1147	---	1635	1925
0917	1151	---	1639	1929

## 63 Cwmbra | Pontypool | Usk | Chepstow

Timetable from 1 September 2024

via Croesyceiliog, Coleg Gwent, Gwensney, Llangwm, Gaerllwyd,  
Earlswood, Shirenewton, Chepstow Community Hospital

### Monday to Friday except Bank Holiday Mondays

	Sch	HOL						
<b>Cwmbra</b> Bus Station (Stand H)	0712	0712	0922	1200	---	1650		
<b>Croesyceiliog</b> Edlogan Square	0717	0717	0927	1205	---	1655		
<b>Pontypool</b> Town Hall	0725	0725	0935	1213	1420	1713		
<b>Pontypool</b> Park Road	0726	0726	0936	1214	1421	1714		
<b>Pontypool</b> opp Town Hall	0727	0727	0937	1215	1422	1715		
<b>Little Mill</b> Pont-y-pia	0734	0734	0944	1222	1429	1722		
<b>Usk</b> Coleg Gwent Main Road	0741	0741	0951	1229	1436	1730		
<b>Usk</b> Twyn Square	0747	0747	0957	1235	1442	1736		
<b>Llangwm</b> Bridge Inn Road	0755	0755	1005	1243	1450	1744		
<b>Earlswood</b> West End	0803	0803	1013	1251	1458	1752		
<b>Shirenewton Road Junction</b>	0813	0813	1023	1301	1508	1800		
<b>Chepstow Community Hospital</b> Main Road	---	---	0820	1030	1308	1515	1807	
<b>Chepstow</b> Comprehensive School	0820	---	---	---	---	---	---	
<b>Chepstow</b> Bus Station	0825	0824	1034	1312	1519	1811		

### Saturdays

	0712	0922	1200	---	1700
	0717	0927	1205	---	1705
	0725	0935	1213	1420	1713
	0726	0936	1214	1421	1714
	0727	0937	1215	1422	1715
	0734	0944	1222	1429	1722
	0741	0951	1229	1436	1730
	0747	0957	1235	1442	1736
	0755	1005	1243	1450	1744
	0803	1013	1251	1458	1752
	0813	1023	1301	1508	1800
	0820	1030	1308	1515	1807
	---	---	---	---	---
	0824	1034	1312	1519	1811

**Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays** Sorry, there is no Sunday service on route 63

## Gardening Corner

We have lived here at Barn Farm for nearly 40 years. The original 2 up 2 down cottage hadn't been lived in for some 25 years before our arrival and it was in a sorry state. There was no electric, but there was a cold water tap outside! The access was so grown in you could only reach the cottage on foot. Over the years, we have worked hard, and gradually brought it back to life extending things as money allowed, making it a home for us and our two daughters not to mention the two dogs and 6 various cats over the years. Regular readers of this page will know that we are hopefully moving to pastures new, provided everything goes to plan. It is going to be hard leaving here, and the many friends we have made over the years. This may or may not be the last 'Gardening Corner' that I write. I have always been amazed at the number of people that actually read it and for the many nice comments that have been made over the years. After some 30 years of writing it, you probably need a rest from us now! Like many people who come to the end of a working career, I have often thought about writing a book – my memoirs of a working life spent in the countryside. After some 50 years I have met and worked with some wonderful people and have noticed a major change in attitudes towards our environment generally. The title of the book should I ever write it, will be 'A Hundred and One Ways to Hang a Gate'. Odd title I hear you say, but after working with farmers for over 45 years and having to gain access to their woodlands to offer advice on management or plant new woodlands on the farm you might begin to understand where I'm coming from. Occasionally, you might come across a gate that was hung right – a 'proper job', as they say in Cornwall. But 99 times out of a 100, you would come across something that you weren't sure whether it would open, or whether you should go over, under or more commonly (and safely), around the said gate. Baler twine especially, and old bits of tree often featured in many new designs. I promise it won't be a book on gate design, but more the stories that go with the owners and country life in general. Time will tell – keep an eye out in The Times best book list, you never know!

On the 10<sup>th</sup> June, we actually heard the cuckoo, whilst working in the garden here at Barn Farm, the latest ever and sadly the only time that we have heard it this year whilst at home. It is probably now too late to hear it again this year. The House martins on the other hand seem to be thriving in the warm weather. As well as our eight artificial nests, we now have two self-builders sharing our house. The benefits are clear to see, as I mentioned previously. The original arrivals in the artificial nests already have their first brood on the wing and are currently sitting on the next batch of eggs. The two more recent arrivals after building a nest each, have their first brood, but only recently hatched. Four of the nests are sited alongside our 'Juliet balcony' bedroom door. We love nothing more than opening the door first thing in the morning and listening to the martins chattering away to each other whilst we have a cuppa in bed and decide what job to do first. One of life's simple pleasures! One of the first

jobs will be to get the hosepipe out later to clean the slabs below the nests of bird poo, but a small price to pay for the pleasure these little visitors bring each year.

The garden is still struggling, especially in the extreme heat we have been facing this last week. The little rain that we have had in recent weeks, was just about enough to keep the main flower garden going. But we now desperately need a good dose as even well-established plants are starting to struggle. The vegetable beds and pots have almost had to be watered daily. I don't like doing this at the best of times, not just because of the cost of the metered supply, but also because of the vagaries of our 'modern' composts. I'm sorry, I know I have moaned about them at length, but I find that they vary so much now, even if you buy the same type of compost, each batch you buy, seems to behave completely different from the one before. This is mostly down to the quality of the composted material used in manufacture, but can also be down to poor storage. Some bags can be so heavy you can hardly pick them up, whilst some are as light as a feather when you purchase them. This variability is almost inevitably carried over to the product when in use. We have been watering plants for some 50 years each, so fairly experienced, yet immediately after watering, you can find pots that are absolutely sodden, and so probably didn't need watering in the first place, and ones next to them, that are absolutely bone dry. Even standing the latter pots in a tray of water, doesn't seem to make much of a difference. The product we buy generally has a feed in it which is meant to last for 4 months, but with poor storage probably only lasts for no more than 4 weeks. The best solution we found was to mix professional compost (still manufactured from peat alone), with the poorer composts manufactured from just about everything else bar peat. Unfortunately, these composts have to be bought by the pallet full, and with a move on the horizon, we didn't want to invest a large sum of money on compost that we might then have to pay to move. So, we are stuck with the poorer compost for the time being. That said it is very easy to get the watering wrong, and over watering is much more of a risk than under watering even in open ground rather than pots. I always think it best to under-water, which tends to make plants grow 'harder' rather than over water and make the plants grow too soft. Plants grown too soft only increases the level of damage and does run the risk of the plants rotting off. This has happened to our onions and shallots this year, which is a big disappointment.

Once in the ground, the plants have generally done well, apart from those susceptible to damage by slugs. Despite the dry hot weather, slugs have been a real problem again this year. Even varieties that aren't normally damaged such as chrysanthemums, and Aстранtia have been damaged

beyond recognition this year. I was reading an article in the Country Living magazine last month that said it was only one variety of slug that caused the damage, and that the others had different, but specific diets, eating decaying material rather than living material. One or two varieties even ate other slugs. Well, I'm all for the latter, as the article went on to say that various animals and of course birds, all eat slugs. Well, I'm sorry but I think the jury is out on the latter facts. I haven't seen a hedgehog for many years in the garden, and despite encouraging frogs and toads, I haven't yet seen one of them enjoying a nice slug snack. The same holds true with birds. Mistle thrushes and snails maybe, but they are few and far between these days – a bit like the cuckoo. As for going around the garden and picking slugs up in a bucket and taking them elsewhere for release we will give that a miss, especially as they are able find their way back 'home'. We will carry on with our own method of trying to control the numbers thanks!

For the first time ever, we managed this year to carry on eating our own 'old' potatoes right up to the point where we started to eat our first early crop of this year. This is only possible because we have greenhouses and tunnels that can extend the growing season. We have for example, been eating French beans, salad leaves and baby carrots for several weeks and a couple of weeks ago we had our first cherry tomatoes and courgettes. This week will see our first sweet pepper heading to the kitchen. With no real late frosts everything is so much earlier this year, so I have decided to experiment further, by planting the last of our old stored potato crop. Sage advice is that you should never plant shop bought potatoes and use them for seed potatoes. Generally, we only buy seed potatoes every three or four years, and then use our own stock for the years in between. This avoids any disease building up, but saves a lot on the cost of buying the seed potatoes. The old potatoes were now starting to sprout well, so these were planted into pots of compost. These are now starting to shoot well. The variety of potato in question is called Casablanca, which is classed as a first early and one which is meant to mature in just 16 weeks. The intention is to plant these out in a few weeks-time in the large tunnel, in the ground that is currently growing our garlic. The latter is just starting to dry off, so will be due for pulling up in another week or so ready for storage. We will then hopefully have new potatoes ready to dig in late summer or early autumn. They will be removed for storage, and the ground will then be replanted with a crop of calabrese or cauliflower for over-wintering, which will hopefully then be ready for harvesting in May or June, allowing us to have a continuous cropping cycle for the year. With land limited in most gardens, it is amazing what can be achieved with a little thought, and of course the necessary, suitable cover. It should be possible to have at least two crops from the same land in one year. Give it a go, you will be amazed at what can be achieved with just a little thought and correct choice of crop.

If you are wondering about the bees, we have gradually been reducing the numbers of hives by selling off both empty hives and hives with bees in. Fortunately for us, many beekeepers lost their hives last Winter and have been looking to start again. We have sold some locally and some will stay here for the new owners of Barn Farm. I'm giving up beekeeping altogether. One of the reasons for moving is to hopefully have more time to do what we want and bees can be very time consuming! I'll be sorry to leave them behind, but am looking forward to having more time to go fishing, walking across Exmoor together, and doing new things.

This morning has seen a drop off in the high temperatures that we have endured over the last week, so it is time to get back outside and sort out some of the jobs that have had to wait. If this does turn out to be the last Parish Mag for us, we would like to take this opportunity to wish you all well, both our friends and those of you we have never met, but who still read this article avidly, every month. May your gardens continue to give you all pleasure and be productive. Hopefully we are moving to another cottage in rural Somerset, with a big garden and a little wooded area as well. There are too many trees, too few flowers and nowhere at present to grow vegetables. We feel new challenges are just around the corner, where the main issue might be deer rather than slugs, but may turn out to be both! As usual, *happy gardening until next month, Steve and Felicity Hunt.*





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## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

### **JULY**

- Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup>  
7.45-9.00 p.m. Ministry Area Prayer Group  
St James's Church, Devauden
- Friday 4<sup>th</sup>  
7.30 p.m. Cheese and wine fete thank you  
Shirenewton Church Room
- Saturday 5<sup>th</sup>  
10.00 a.m. to 1.00 pm Great Balsam Bash  
Shirenewton Meadows
- Monday 7<sup>th</sup>  
7.00 p.m. Shirenewton Community Council meeting  
Shirenewton Recreation Hall
- Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup>  
tbc Shirenewton Local History Society visit  
St Fagans
- Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup>  
2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Archive meeting  
Shirenewton Church Room
- Thursday 10<sup>th</sup>  
2 p.m. to 4 p.m. WI Summer Outing  
Newport Ship
- Thursday 10<sup>th</sup>  
7.45 to 9.00 p.m. Ministry Area Prayer Group  
St Mary's Church, Penterry
- Saturday 12<sup>th</sup>  
09.30 a.m. Holy Communion in the Welsh language  
St Mary's Priory Church, Chepstow
- Thursday 17<sup>th</sup>  
7.45 to 9.00 p.m. Ministry Area Prayer Group  
St Mary's Priory Church, Chepstow
- Thursday 24<sup>th</sup>  
7.45 to 9.00 p.m. Ministry Area Prayer Group  
St Peter's Church, Newchurch
- Sunday 27<sup>th</sup>  
10.00 a.m. Service of Blessing for Reverend Philip Avery  
St Mary's Priory Church, Chepstow
- Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup>  
7.30 p.m. "The Great Civil War" by Prof Ron Hutton  
Shirenewton Church Room
- Thursday 31<sup>st</sup>  
7.45 to 9.00 p.m. Ministry Area Prayer Group  
St Peter's Church, St Pierre

### **AUGUST**

- Monday 4<sup>th</sup>  
7.00 p.m. Shirenewton Community Council meeting  
Shirenewton Recreation Hall
- Thursday 7<sup>th</sup>  
7.45 to 9.00 p.m. Ministry Area Prayer Group  
St Deiniol's Church, Itton

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY** (continued)

### **AUGUST**

Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> 7.45 to 9.00 p.m.	Ministry Area Prayer Group St Tewdric's Church, Mathern
Friday 15 <sup>th</sup> 6.30 p.m.	Choral Evensong with Cardiff Chamber Choir St Mary's Priory Church, Chepstow
Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup> 7.45 to 9.00 p.m.	Ministry Area Prayer Group St Arvan's Church, St Arvans
Thursday 28 <sup>th</sup> 7.45-9.00 p.m.	St Arvan's Church, St Arvans St Thomas a Becket Church, Shirenewton

### **SEPTEMBER**

Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> 7.00 p.m.	Shirenewton Community Council meeting Shirenewton Recreation Hall
Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> 7.45 to 9.00 p.m.	Ministry Area Prayer Group St Andoenus' Church, Mounton
Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> 7.45 to 9.00 p.m.	Ministry Area Prayer Group St James's Church, Devauden
Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> 7.45 to 9.00 p.m.	Ministry Area Prayer Group St Peter's Church, St Pierre
Thursday 25 <sup>th</sup> 7.45 to 9.00 p.m.	Ministry Area Prayer Group St Christopher's Church, Bulwark

[severnwyema.co.uk](http://severnwyema.co.uk)



[www.shirenewtonchurch.com](http://www.shirenewtonchurch.com)

Unfortunately, this month, time ran away from me and it's Sunday evening, the deadline is tomorrow at 9am, I'm in London having had a heavy weekend in Dublin. So, how do I write an article? Answer: AI. So, I decided to test three AI engines with the request: "150 words on most common travel scams"

This is what ChatGPT offered:

Travel scams are a common threat to tourists worldwide. One of the most frequent is the *taxi scam*, where drivers overcharge or take longer routes. *Pickpocketing* in crowded areas, especially on public transport or near attractions, is also rampant. *Fake tour guides* may offer deals that vanish after payment. Another scam involves "*helpful locals*" who offer unsolicited advice or assistance, then demand money. *Currency exchange scams* often occur at unofficial booths or with tampered machines giving poor rates. Some scams involve *fake police officers* who ask to check your wallet for counterfeit bills. *Accommodation scams*, such as fake listings on rental sites, are rising too. In popular tourist spots, "*closed*" *attraction scams* lure travellers to other shops or tours for commissions. Always stay alert, research destinations beforehand, and avoid deals that seem too good to be true. Trusting your instincts and using official services can help you stay safe.

Microsoft copilot said:

Traveling to unfamiliar destinations can be exciting, but it also exposes tourists to scams designed to exploit their trust or inexperience. Here are some of the most common travel scams to watch out for:

- **Fake Taxi Drivers:** Dishonest drivers charge inflated prices or take longer routes. Always confirm fares before starting a trip and use official taxi services.
  - **Free "Gifts" or Bracelets:** Vendors may offer a "free" item, then demand payment once it's accepted.
  - **Bumped Hotel Rooms:** Scammers claim your hotel is overbooked to redirect you to a pricier or unsafe alternative.
  - **ATM Tampering:** Skimming devices steal card information. Use ATMs inside banks for safety.
- Distraction Techniques: Teams may distract you while a pickpocket steals valuables.  
Stay vigilant, research local scams, and trust your instincts to ensure a safe journey.

While Google Gemini said:

Travel scams can quickly turn a dream trip into a nightmare. Among the most common are **taxi scams**, where drivers claim broken meters or take circuitous routes to inflate fares. Always agree on a price beforehand or insist on the meter.

**Fake booking websites** and **fraudulent vacation rentals** trick travellers into paying for non-existent accommodations. Stick to reputable platforms and verify URLs.

**Pickpocketing** remains prevalent in crowded tourist areas, often using distractions like a dropped item or spilled liquid. Keep valuables secure and be aware of your surroundings.

Beware of "free" gifts like **friendship bracelets** forced upon you, followed by aggressive demands for payment. Politely but firmly refuse and keep walking.

Finally, "closed attraction" cons involve a seemingly helpful local directing you to an alternative business where they receive a commission. Always verify information directly with the attraction or your hotel. Staying vigilant and doing a little research can help you avoid becoming a victim.

Not quite the pithy, well researched article you are used to, but it is interesting to compare the engines' output.

And, remember the car hire 'scam' I posted on the community Facebook page: a number of European car hire companies (including RecordGo in Spain and, I assume, elsewhere), say that you must have a International Driving Permit (when a UK license is entirely legal in the country) and use your lack of one to sell you their expensive inclusive insurance.

Safe travels

David Cornwell  
Webmaster  
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## 80<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF D DAY

To mark the 80th Anniversary of VE Day, Jenny Bonner was invited to school by Y6 on 8th May to talk to them about her experiences of the 2nd World War and VE Day, and to look at the artifacts they had collected from family members to make a class museum. Jenny was 9 when the war started and 14 when it finished. Here are some photos and thank you letters Jenny received from class members, for whom her visit and stories will stay with them for the rest of their lives.

Shirnewton Primary  
Shirnewton  
Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2025

Dear Jenny,

Thank you for coming to our school on Thursday and providing information to us about your experiences in WW2. I am grateful that you took an interest in what we had done for the day and looking at the artifacts we brought in.

I found it so surprising that you were in the middle of a test and the air raid siren went off and you had to hide under the table when it stop you continued the test I would have been in a corner screaming.

I especially found the orange committee funny. I can't believe you missed church's special collecting oranges!

Once again, thank you for coming. I hope you enjoyed it and want to come again.

Kind regards,  
Abe

Shirnewton Primary  
Shirnewton  
Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May

Dear Jenny,

Thank you so much for taking the time out of your day to come to our school. I thoroughly enjoyed your visit and found your experiences in WW2 fascinating! I am so grateful that you took an interest in mine and my partner's work.

I found it interesting how you slept in air raid shelters and worked in boarding school while looking after your little sister! You sounded like the best big sister ever. I really enjoyed your stories and I hope you liked telling them to us! 😊

I especially appreciated how you brought in your precious party shoes with the well-preserved symbols. I am thankful that you visited and am so glad I had the opportunity to talk to such an amazing person who has seen and done so much.

Thank you Jenny!

Kind regards, Angela 😊



Shirenewton  
Primary School  
9th May 2025  
09.5.25

Dear Jenny

Thank you so so much for coming in and talking to the class about your interesting experiences. I especially liked when you talked about the bombings and how you had to hide under your table for protection. Your very kind and caring. Thank you for coming round to see are museums.

with many thanks  
max Iles.

U



Shirenewton Primary School  
Shirenewton  
Friday 9th May 2025

Dear Jenny,

I really valued your visit on VE Day and telling us all about your experience of World War 2 and taking a look at our virtual museum. We really appreciated it!

Listening to your talk, I learned all about your experience of the 8th May 1945. I heard how you were listening to the wireless all day, but because you were in the Orange Committee, you had to go and collect the oranges, but what you saw then, the war was officially over in Europe.

I felt proud to share my work with you because I know you would understand and maybe recognise some of my artefacts in my pictures. I was fascinated by your story because I have never heard of a police box.

Thank you so much for coming to talk to us!

Kind regards

Flora Kipp



## 25 places of international or world significance within 25 miles

### **6. *The Liner* – the SS Great Britain, Bristol (1845)**

Last month we looked at Isambard Kingdom Brunel's Clifton Suspension Bridge and the project to photograph his historic bridge in line with the equally historic Severn Suspension Bridge which was opened 100 years later. This month the subject is Brunel's historic steamship *SS Great Britain*, launched in 1843, commissioned in 1845, and still exists - 16 miles from Shirenewton.



So why is Brunel's **SS Great Britain** of world significance? It wasn't the first iron ship, or ocean-going iron ship, and it wasn't the first to have steam propulsion or screw propulsion rather than paddles?

In its day (1840s) it was the largest ship in the world and from 1845 to 1853 it was the world's largest passenger ship at 3,500 tons, 1,000 horse power engine (about 750kw), 322 feet (98 metres) long, 250 to 360 passengers and 120 crew. It was the first ocean going liner to be photographed (by William Talbot) and is generally regarded as the first 'modern' transatlantic liner as it was the first iron ship with a steam driven propeller to cross the Atlantic Ocean (in 14 days in 1845) from Liverpool to New York – the model for all the great transatlantic liners to follow but it wasn't long before Brunel himself was planning his Great Eastern Steam Ship, 5 times the weight of his SS Great Britain and twice the

length but that is the subject of another article later in this series because that enormous ship, known also as 'the Leviathan' also has a significant link with another place within 25 miles of Shirenewton.

For a while the luxury of the SS Great Britain, its size, and its technological combination of iron structure and propeller propulsion made it the leading ship in the world – and a world that was increasingly reliant on the great ships and mastery of the oceans. People and empires were on the move in ever increasing numbers and at this stage Brunel and his great ship built at Bristol, in the dock where it stands today, was at the forefront of the world.

But its hey day was not to last for long. In 1846 this great ship ran aground on a sandbank in Dundrum Bay, near Newcastle, County Down, Northern Ireland which created financial problems for the company although the ship made many further transatlantic crossings. After 1852 it became an emigrant ship to Australia and in 1855-56 a troop ship in the Crimean War - as was Brunel's earlier ship, the Great Western. By 1882 its engines had been removed and it was a sail ship and took coal to San Francisco via Cape Horn. There was a fire in 1886 and it docked in the Falkland Islands and became a coal hulk.

In 1970, Sir Jack Arnold Hayward (1923-2015) paid for the Great Britain to be raised and repaired sufficient to bring it back to the dock where it was built on the Floating Harbour at Bristol 15 miles from Shirenewton.

Prince Albert, husband of Queen Victoria was present on 19 July 1843 at the launch of the SS Great Britain (he had travelled by train with Brunel from London in 2 hours 40 minutes), and Prince Philip, husband of Queen Elizabeth II, was present at the return of the SS Great Britain, from the Falkland Islands 8,000 miles away, when it returned down the Avon Gorge, under Brunel's Clifton Suspension Bridge, 127 years later

The SS Great Britain was a ship of world significance, and is still a ship of world significance because of its age and its history and it is a remarkable ship to visit today, only 16 miles from Shirenewton.

John Burrows                      Next month (September issue) – 'The Railway'.

*The Railway is an article Celebrating the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the world's first railway – the Stockton to Darlington Railway, 27 September 1825 – but South Wales got there first, 20 years earlier!*

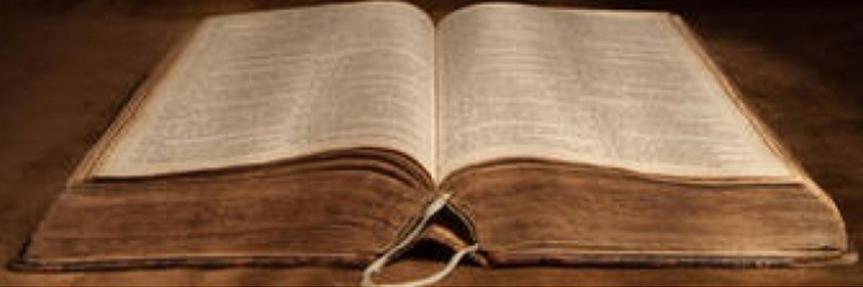
## Severn Wye Bible Study Group

We are a small group of Christians enjoying a warm and nurturing fellowship together. We read scripture and talk about what it means and how we can apply it to our daily lives. We are learning together and there is no such thing as a silly question. If you're even a tiny bit curious, come along. Give it a go....you may love it as we do!!!!

**Where: Shirenewton Church Room**

**When: 14.45 Tuesday afternoons**

**Why: Because it's encouraging, uplifting and good for the soul.**



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Ysgol Gynradd Shirenewton

Shirenewton Primary School are currently advertising for two positions. If you are interested in either or both positions, please email [shirenewtonprimary@monmouthshireschools.wales](mailto:shirenewtonprimary@monmouthshireschools.wales) or call 01291 641774

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## Amazon Smile may be gone but you can still support Chepstow and Caldicot Lions with Easyfundraising!

We have some important news regarding the Amazon Smile program. Unfortunately, Amazon has discontinued this program, which means that we can no longer receive donations through it. However, we have some good news too! You can still continue to support Chepstow and Caldicot Lions by signing up for Easyfundraising. By doing this, you can help us raise funds for our community projects and initiatives, without any extra cost to you.

All you have to do is sign up through our Easyfundraising page at <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/chepstowandcaldicotlions> and shop online as you normally would. The retailers you shop with will then make a donation to us, at no extra cost to you. It's as simple as that!

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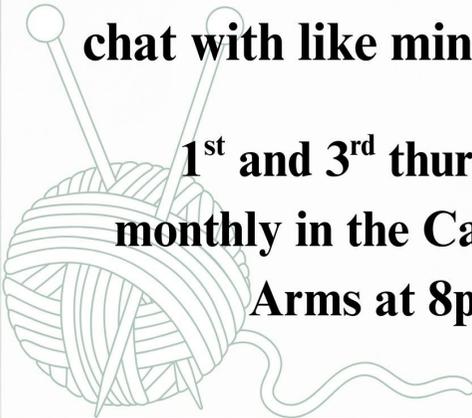


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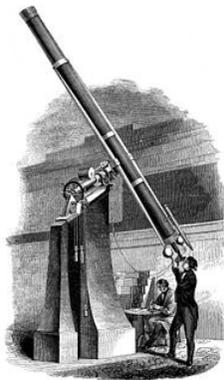
## STARGAZING



The constellation of Cygnus the Swan lies pretty much overhead. Its brightest stars form a cross against the background of the Milky Way. The familiar pattern of Ursa Major, the Great Bear or Plough, is to be seen in the north-west, with the "W" of Cassiopeia climbing into the north-eastern sky. The constellation of Sagittarius can be seen low in the southern sky. The ancient Greeks could see an archer with the head and chest of a man and the body of a horse in this pattern of stars, but it also looks rather like a teapot with the handle to the left and the spout to the right! On a larger scale, the Summer Triangle made up of the bright stars Deneb, Vega and Altair dominates the sky to the South. Deneb forms the head of Cygnus.

At twilight, the orange planet Mars lies to the West, following sunset. Saturn is slightly yellow in colour and appears to the East, rising around midnight in July and rather earlier in August. The gibbous Moon (between half illuminated and full) is close to Saturn on 16<sup>th</sup> July and 12<sup>th</sup> August.

You may be lucky enough to see some Noctilucent Clouds. They appear after 11pm to the north. These wispy clouds are formed at heights of over 60 miles – normal clouds are much lower. Noctilucent Clouds are formed when ice particles in the atmosphere, gather around the dust produced by meteors. They can be seen because they are illuminated by the already set Sun.



## SHIRENEWTON W.I.

### Cheese Making and Tasting, Flowers and Chat

Food tasting, learning about the art of cheese making, dancing cows and flower arranging, all made for a thoroughly varied and enjoyable W.I. June meeting.

Hannah from Brookes Dairy gave us a most entertaining and interesting talk about her family business at Panta Farm near Tintern. Hannah runs the cheese making side of the business at Brookes Dairy, explaining that their dairy herd of 100 pedigree jersey cows produces a very creamy milk which is perfect for making ice cream and cheese.



Brookes Dairy was set up by Hannah's parents, who have been dairy farming in the Wye Valley since the 1970s. In the 1990s, they decided to start making artisan ice cream, for which they have won many Great Taste awards. In taking over the cheese making side of the business, Hannah learnt the art of cheese making with a food technologist in Ceredigion and in 2017, she produced her first cheese, Angiddy, a soft cheese similar to a Brie. Hannah modestly told us that this cheese won Gold in the World Cheese Awards in that same year. What a start! Brookes have expanded their cheese making and now also produce Fedw, a fresh tasting cheese like a feta, and Blue Wenallt, a smooth, buttery blue cheese. In 2024 the business won The Wales Food and Drink Farm to Fork – Producers of the Year.



Hannah gave us a lovely presentation with some superb photographs and videos of her very affectionate cows. Yes, they do dance when they first come out of their winter indoor barns into the lush spring fields and who can blame them. Look out for 'Dancing Farm Days' at Open Farms. Hannah is convinced that their cows like playing 'Grandmother's Footsteps' as they follow her around closely wherever they can.

The W.I. members were also treated to some delicious samples of Brookes' chocolate ice cream and elderflower sorbet – perfect for this hot weather, and Angiddy and Fedw cheeses, paired with a glass of wine. Brookes sell their ice cream and cheese at local farm shops at Chepstow Garden Centre and Hanley Farm shop, also Devauden shop and Taurus Crafts. Definitely worth trying if you are not already a convert.

It's a very busy life being a cheese maker, farmer and Mum, and we thank Hannah for giving up her time to come and talk to us.

Once Hannah had left our meeting, we set about arranging flowers to decorate the Recreation Hall in preparation for the Shirenewton Fete. It has become a tradition for Shirenewton W.I. to run the tea and cakes café at the village fete. We are very grateful to all of our members who contributed to another successfully run 'Fete Teas', by decorating the hall beforehand, serving the drinks and cakes on the day and many more who produced the flower arrangements to decorate the tables. Thank you all.



Please note that our next meeting on Thursday July 10<sup>th</sup> will be our Summer Outing - a visit to the Newport Ship. **Please note that this is a day time event from 2-4p.m. Please could you contact Jane at [jane-b247@gmail.com](mailto:jane-b247@gmail.com) if you intend coming to this event. We are aiming to share lifts to Newport.**

## FAIRTRADE NEWS JUNE 2025

'The Commercial Reality of doing the Right Thing' – So begins my most recent newsletter in my organic veg box written by Riverford founder Guy Watson :

'Peat is a reliable, consistent and cheap growing medium for raising plants and mushrooms. However, draining peat bogs is ecologically disastrous. There are alternatives, but they are much more expensive, and, so far, not as reliable or easy to work with – but we are determined to make it work.' He goes on to outline the added cost of producing peat-free mushrooms and tomatoes. Re – the latter 'So far our trials suggest that we will lose 12% of the yield.'



'Similarly this summer at least 65% of our deliveries will be made by electric vans. Our sums suggest that investing in electric vehicles to replace diesel costs us 15p more per mile initially, diminishing over time thanks to their efficiency – although in reality, finding premises with adequate grid connections, and re-arranging our delivery routes to accommodate the restricted range has cost us more.'

He goes on to mention the Real Living Wage and Riverford's care of its small and medium scale suppliers – Riverford is a certified B Corp – as I have described before; this means that it is recognised as a business that meets high standards of social and environmental performance, accountability and transparency.

The public need to see some certification, otherwise we can reasonably question the ethics of companies whose sole stated aim is to maximise profit. The Rainforest Alliance is also one of the world's most recognisable certification schemes with its green frog seal appearing on 240 brands, although its criteria are less specific than those required for the award of the Fairtrade logo. However, the Kenyan government has told its tea factories to stop working with the Rainforest Alliance because, it says the costs involved in securing the ethical label don't add up for farmers. A recent Fairtrade Foundation poll found only one in 5 tea growers and farmers in Kenya are earning enough each month to support their families with essentials. Critics complain that while buyers for western markets only want to buy certified tea THEY RARELY OFFER TO PAY A PREMIUM FOR IT. So the producers have to bear the extra cost! There's the rub! Consumers like to feel they're doing the right thing , BUT...

I can only urge you to actually DO the right thing and buy products with the Fairtrade mark!

Don't forget there is a celebration of Chepstow's commitment to Fairtrade at the Riverside on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> July. Bring a picnic!

Marion McAdam 641 316 [msm316@gmail.com](mailto:msm316@gmail.com)

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GambleAware 

### In Season Now with Leigh Ayland of Oakfield Vegetable Boxes

BBQ'd peppers and beefsteak tomatoes are second to none - and if you can grow your own, you can pretty much forget about the meat!

However, I've had a problem with germinating peppers for a couple of years now - probably because I have an unheated nursery greenhouse and we have had very cold Spring nights, although bright days. Also, I have been forbidden to have seed trays in the house... so I went to visit Adam Alexander in Itton (aka The Seed Detective). He gave me some varieties from mountainous regions in Albania. Varieties help, but his most useful advice was to 'chit' seeds. This involves putting bare seeds between a couple of sheets of damp kitchen towel and plonking into a cheap heated seed germinator. The secret is to obsessively check for dampness and, in 2-3 days, germination. When you see the little white points of the roots popping out of the seed, plant as normal into decent seeding compost. I tend to either buy this in, or make my own using good compost, mixed with vermiculite for water retention and sand which improves the texture. I mash up lumpy compost - it needs to be fine to minimise air pockets. I've had 90% success using this method and I've done all the tomatoes that way too. The seed of both these are so expensive now I think it's worth all the messing about!

The pictures show inside my two 20x4m polytunnels - nothing's ready quite yet but we're close! By the way, I had several years with inadequate string for the weight of the tomatoes and it's such a massive nightmare when strings start to break and you have to rehang them! I do around 200 plants, so I need 400m of twine! I got some huge balls of thick baler twine last year which should take the strain - never use hemp for burying around the root ball as it rots! I pretty much leave pepper plants to do their thing, but some people prune to make two main stems which may increase your yield. I'm going to do some that way this year. I often need to put in short bamboos to stop peppers falling over which lets the slugs eat at them. I'm trying 2 feet apart - I've done them 18" up to now but I feel they're too close for my level of attention and some fruits rot. Always with peppers, water them loads, all the time, especially when the fruit are starting to form and hopefully, you'll avoid that annoying black end on the fruit called blossom end rot - mostly caused by underwatering. Enjoy!



Looking for a new way to celebrate your summer produce? Why not try Escalivada – Catalan roasted vegetables? Delicious hot, warm or cold.

#### Servest 2-3

2 aubergines  
2 peppers  
2 onions  
6 tomatoes  
1 tbsp olive oil  
2 cloves garlic  
Thyme sprig

Dressing:  
1 tbsp olive oil  
1 tbsp lemon juice  
Salt and pepper

Fresh basil or parsley

Heat oven to 180°C fan/200°C/GM6.

Prick the aubergines well and toss with the vegetables, herbs, oil and a good sprinkle of salt in a large roasting tin. Roast for 1 hour until the vegetables are charred all over and very soft. Remove the garlic and squeeze out the cloves. Whisk together the dressing with the roasted garlic. Remove the inedible stalks from the vegetables and scatter over the dressing. Dress with herbs before serving.

Try with toasted almonds, crumbled [goats](#) cheese, anchovies or black olives scattered over.

Serve with crusty bread. Delicious on its own, or as a side to grilled or barbequed meat.

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## LOCAL CONTACTS

### **Severn Wye Ministry Area**

Ministry Area Leader	Zoe and Barney Pimentel	<a href="mailto:severnwyema.co.uk">severnwyema.co.uk</a> 07754 306229
Team Vicar	Fr Michael Gollop	01291 622 064 <a href="mailto:frmichaelgollop1@gmail.com">frmichaelgollop1@gmail.com</a>
Team Vicar	Reverend Philip Averay	01291 620980 <a href="mailto:revphilipaveray@gmail.com">revphilipaveray@gmail.com</a>
Associate Priest	Reverend John Waters	07836 585 250
Ministry Area Leader's Warden	Ros Downes	
Ministry Area People's Warden	David Carne	<a href="mailto:david-carne@outlook.com">david-carne@outlook.com</a> 07887 853479
Ministry Area Lay Co-Chair	Hilary Hillier	
Ministry Area Treasurer	Kevin Higgs	

### **Church of St Thomas à Becket, Shirenewton**

Lay Eucharistic Minister	Gilly Lambert	07821 725 690
Church Warden	Aileen Doggett	01291 641 459
Church Warden	Andrew Baker	01291 641 925
LCC Secretary	John Montague	01291 329 481 <a href="mailto:jmontyvet@hotmail.co.uk">jmontyvet@hotmail.co.uk</a>

LCC Treasurer	Graham Lambert	01291 641 175
LCC Members	Janet Horton	01291 641 783

	James Leney	01291 641 271
	Wendy Montague	01291 329 481
	Sally Saysell	01291 641 369
	John Burrows	01291 641 845
	Jane Smith-Haddon	01291 641525
Organists	Karen Millar	01291 650 521
	James Leney	01291 641 271
Tower Captain	Mike Penney	01291 650 653
Saysell Centre Booking	Will Smith-Haddon	07977 281 147 <a href="mailto:churchroombooking27@gmail.com">churchroombooking27@gmail.com</a>

Safeguarding Officer	Andrew Baker	01291 641 925
Church Flowers	Maureen Moody	01291 641 524
Parish Magazine Editor	Bill Clark	01291 641 783
Parish magazine distribution	Jane Smith-Haddon	01291 641 525
200 Club	Aileen Doggett	01291 641 459

### **Ministry Area Council Representative**

Wendy Montague 01291 329 481

### **MP/Monmouth CC & Community Council Representatives**

#### **Shirenewton Community Council**

Clerk: Jan McLagan [shirenewtoncc@gmail.com](mailto:shirenewtoncc@gmail.com)

#### **Shirenewton and Mynyddbach Ward**

Philip Butterworth (Chair)	01291 641704	<a href="mailto:philip.b@shirenewtoncc.org.uk">philip.b@shirenewtoncc.org.uk</a>
Catherine Martin (Vice Chair)	01291 329610	<a href="mailto:cathie.m@shirenewtoncc.org.uk">cathie.m@shirenewtoncc.org.uk</a>
Gary Mitchell	07979 913555	<a href="mailto:gary.m@shirenewtoncc.org.uk">gary.m@shirenewtoncc.org.uk</a>
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#### **Earlswold and Newchurch Ward**

Ian Martin	07467 176977	<a href="mailto:ian.m@shirenewtoncc.org.uk">ian.m@shirenewtoncc.org.uk</a>
Geoff Todd	07855 301806	<a href="mailto:geoff.t@shirenewtoncc.org.uk">geoff.t@shirenewtoncc.org.uk</a>

#### **MCC for Shirenewton**

Louise Brown 07598 979719 [louisebrown@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:louisebrown@monmouthshire.gov.uk)

#### **Member of Parliament**

Catherine Ann Fookes [catherine.fookes.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:catherine.fookes.mp@parliament.uk)

#### **Member of the Senedd**

Peter Fox MS 01291 674898 [Peter.Fox@senedd.wales](mailto:Peter.Fox@senedd.wales)

## **Police and Neighbourhood Watch Contacts**

**Neighbourhood Police Officer** Matt Sree [matthew.screen@gwent.pnn.police.uk](mailto:matthew.screen@gwent.pnn.police.uk)  
**Neighbourhood CSO** Andrew Jones  
[Andrew.jones@gwent.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Andrew.jones@gwent.pnn.police.uk)

## **Other Local Organisations**

**Beavers** Julie Hitchcock 01291 650548  
**Church Fete** John Burrows [shirenewtonfete@gmail.com](mailto:shirenewtonfete@gmail.com)  
**Earlswood Hope** Mr Raymond Jeremiah 01291 641726  
**Earlswood & Newchurch West Memorial Hall**  
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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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*If you know of any changes or omissions please contact the Editor Bill Clark  
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## **SHIRENEWTON PARISH MAGAZINE EDITORIAL INFORMATION**

Published: by The Church of St. Thomas à Becket Shirenewton

Editor: Bill Clark 01291 641783 email: [parishmagshirenewton@gmail.com](mailto:parishmagshirenewton@gmail.com)

The cost of the Magazine is £1.50 per issue/10 issues for £14.

Copies are delivered free by local distributors to those who have pre-paid.

Monthly copies are available at the Church.

Previous editions of the magazine are available online on the Church website at [www.shirenewtonchurch.info](http://www.shirenewtonchurch.info).

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**Deadline for the September 2025 issue is  
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