

Shirenewton Parish Magazine



July/August 2026

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NEW EDITOR FOR THE SHIRENEWTON PARISH MAGAZINE

Dear Readers

When Bill advertised the fact that he was retiring and the village needed a new parish magazine editor, no-one was expecting a rush of applicants. However, there were precisely zero applicants and, rather than let the magazine die (as I believe it provides an important reference and information source for the village), I reluctantly put myself forward to take over.

I have to tell you that the interview process was brutal. I was concerned that I may lose a few bodily parts in the rush to bite my hand off. However, my typing fingers survived and here I am introducing myself as your new editor. Bill has prepared copious handover notes, and I will try and apply myself diligently to the task in hand. I expect to take over the Gmail address (parishmagshirenewton@gmail.com) for magazine affairs so not much should change from that perspective. I have no plans to change editorial policies.

It only remains for me to thank Bill for the years of hard work he has put into the parish magazine. It is an 'institution' which relies on goodwill of a lot of people, not least of which is the distribution network. I hope and expect that it will continue for the foreseeable future.

David Cornwell
New Editor

SERVICES AT SHIRENEWTON CHURCH

JULY

Sunday 05 th July	10.00	Morning Praise with Hymns
Sunday 12 th July	10.00	Eucharist with Hymns
Sunday 19 th July	10.00	Eucharist with Hymns
Sunday 26 th July	10.00	Eucharist with Hymns

AUGUST

Sunday 02 nd Aug	10.00	Morning Praise with Hymns
Sunday 09 th Aug	10.00	Eucharist with Hymns
Sunday 16 th Aug	10.00	Eucharist with Hymns
Sunday 23 rd Aug	10.00	Eucharist with Hymns
Sunday 30 th Aug	10.00	GROUP Eucharist service at SHIRE NEWTON

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

Information of all services at eleven local churches that make up the Severn-Wye Ministry Area is at www.severnwyema.co.uk

AN AMAZING TWO WEEKS

Hopefully this magazine edition will be chock-full of joyful photos from yet another successful church fete; we were lucky with the weather but even luckier with all the hard work of our fete committee, stallholders and volunteers, and the excellent turnout from the community too. A fantastic day was had by all and we are so grateful for the amount that was raised.

The very next day as a church family we had even more to celebrate - 11 year old Ava approached me at the beginning of the year asking to be baptised. She has spent many Sunday evenings attending our Youth Bible Study in Chepstow learning more about the faith that means so much to her, and she was finally able to publicly declare and celebrate it on Sunday 14th June with her Godparents, family, friends and church community surrounding her. Just like the birth of a new baby in a family unit, an adult baptism at church signifies a new member of our church family, which always brings us joy.

Finally on Saturday 20th June Shirenewton church hosted a teddy bear parachuting event off of our church tower! I'm pleased to report that no teddies were harmed, due to the excellent supervision of nurse Jane and Glynis, and all rescue missions from accidental roof landings were a success! Even more smiles, cakes and cups of tea were shared and yet another joyful family event is notched up on our calendar.

All these events couldn't happen without our wonderful hard working volunteers, but significantly, none of the joy could be shared with you our readers without the exceptional hard work of one volunteer in particular. Bill, who has edited this magazine is now taking a very well earned rest, and handing on the baton. Without him we couldn't have shared all our good news stories and advertise our upcoming events, and I just want to personally thank him for all he has done, and wish him a very blessed rest; and also say a huge thanks to David for taking up the mantle and ensuring our precious magazine can continue.

Blessings

Rev Zoe





The Baptism of Ava





Teddies and soft toys are parachuted from the church tower, aided and abetted by Rob Miller and John Montague as Aileen Doggett and Janet Horton look on in amazement



SHIRENEWTON FETE—A BIG 'THANK YOU' TO ALL WHO CAME AND TO ALL WHO MADE IT HAPPEN

Well, we had great weather, and beer, wine, Pimms, cakes, teas, burgers, jacket potatoes, ice cream, the Dog Show, Steve Bray and his band, and George Siddall on the saxophone, a stilt walker, balloon man, skittles, coconuts, the stocks (or pillory), a new splat the rat machine made for us by Tony Prout, the Widders, the Kestrels gymnastics display watched by hundreds, and all the regular stalls, and visits from the Coastguard and the Police, Mike Penny's Morgan cars, and Alpacas. Plenty to do and enjoy and it looks like everyone did.

So many thanks to all of you who came and made the atmosphere and event successful and to those who did so much behind the scenes to make this and previous fetes successful. It was a great village occasion and relies on the goodwill and time of so many people. It is important to have a village event like this and it has been so for many decades. We don't have a procession from the Tan House as we used to do for safety reasons and there are things that are different but it is an event that fits in with the scale of the village. It's not Glastonbury but it works for what it is – if the sun shines and the bar and teas don't run dry.

The Fete Committee meets every month or every other month throughout the year, usually in the Carpenters Arms or the Huntsman, as many things have to be booked many months in advance, some nearly a year in advance. We still use Janet Horton's helpful planning notes.

Posters and banners start to go up a few weeks before the Fete and the first public stirrings of the Fete is the bottle collection on Tuesday and Thursday of Fete week. Many thanks to all of you who gave so generously and to the collectors some of whom have done it for many years - Nic and Bella Carpenter for over 30 years. Thanks to Karen and Alan and family. As always, the big day begins the night before when Dave Cornwell and Tony Prout and a dedicated band of helpers descend on the Rec Ground on Friday evening to put up the marquees for the following day. They hope for no rain and no high winds overnight because the Rec. is open to the Severn Estuary and winds from the South West. You can draw a line from the Fete marquees south westwards across open water for 4,000 miles to the coast of South America! It is very exposed, so we need no wind on the Friday night as well as sunshine on the day of the fete- and we got both. Marquees up, the team retired to the TA.

On the morning of the Fete the field is full of vehicles, deliveries, and people setting up stalls ready for the new start time of 1pm instead of 2pm. The Carnival Parade in Fancy Dress, organised by the Shirenewton School and in particular Jane Eickhoff, began at 12.50 with a parade around the field led by the Stilt Walker who then judged the Fancy Dress Parade. The Carnival King and Queen have a special tea in the WI Tea Room in the Recreation Hall. In the weeks before the Fete school pupils have worked on designs for posters which you will have seen around the village and the front of last month's magazine.

At 1 pm the Fete was declared open by the Stilt Walker and beer, burgers, teas and treats can flow. Dave Cornwell, as Master of Ceremonies, the man on the microphone, announces the forthcoming events. The afternoon began with Steve Bray and his Band and this was followed by the Widders demonstration of Morris Dancing and then by a big gymnastics display by young people, the Kestrels based in Bulwark. Hundreds of people stood around the display area. It was a great sight to see. Many thanks to Derek Selwood (Dicko) without whom this would not have been possible because he was willing to pick up all the large mats and equipment from Bulwark with his lorry and return them after the Fete. It couldn't have been done without him and his lorry.

Steve Bray and Band came on again, then the young George Siddall on the Saxophone who gave another performance at the end of the Fete. The Widders and Kestrels and Steve Bray and George were all booked by Angela Hambly-Smith 6 months to a year before the Fete.

Around the field many things were happening in addition to the stalls. The Dog Show was underway. The Welsh Welly Wanging competition was underway. Skittles, coconuts, splat the rat and the stocks were entertaining children and adults alike.

Many thanks to all of you for buying raffle tickets and many thanks to Aileen Doggett who organised the Raffle which achieved even more than last year with a massive £2,878. Aileen says it is her last year of doing this so any volunteers would be welcome. Get in touch.

All too soon it was the end of a busy afternoon and a successful Fete at 5pm and within moments Dave and Tony and their team of volunteers were back on site to dismantle the marquees before winds pick up and they end up miles away. Fortunately, they are back in the shed ready for next year.



Last year, Fete 25, excluding the Raffle, made £2,380 surplus (£5,833 income minus £3,453 costs) and this year, Fete 26, excluding the Raffle, made £3,365 (£7,262 income minus £3,897 costs). Taken together the Fete and the Raffle in 2025 made £4,812 (£8,265 income minus £3,453 costs) and in 2026 made £6,243 (£10,140 income minus £3,897 costs). These are provisional figures, but well done everyone – for those on the stalls and those spending at them. The money raised stays in the village and goes towards meeting the significant costs of maintaining the fabric of the 800 year old Grade 1 Listed church, and maintaining the churchyard, which helps support the environment, history, and the look of the village. Other events during the year raise money for various other charities.

Although funds are raised for essential works to this historic building and for grass cutting and maintenance of the churchyard, the Fete has a value all of its own as a point of community gathering and enjoyment. The annual summer village get-together Fete has been going a long time over many many decades and works well – especially if the sun is shining – and because of all the time and effort put into it by so many in the village and those who donate bottles, cakes, and time and come to the Fete and spend money as well.

Many thanks. Next year, Fete 27, will be on Saturday **12 June 2027**.

Fete Committee

Pictures from the fete appear on the next five pages













STARGAZING



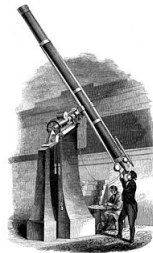
Later in the evening the Summer Triangle is overhead. This is a prominent triangle formed by the bright stars Altair, to the South of the triangle, Vega, closest to the Western horizon, and Deneb, to the East. Deneb forms the tail of the cross-shaped constellation Cygnus, the Swan. From our perspective the three stars have similar brightness. However, they lie at different distances from Earth. Deneb is an extremely luminous star at 1400 light years from Earth whilst Vega and Altair are less luminous and are both much closer to Earth at a distance of about 20 light years.

The familiar seven stars of Ursa Major, the Great Bear or Plough, are to be seen in the north-west, with the "W" of Cassiopeia climbing into the north-eastern sky.

At the beginning of July, you may get a glimpse of the planet Venus in the West just after sunset. The planet Saturn can be seen in the East throughout August. On 3rd August the Moon is above Saturn and is nearly Full and once again above Saturn on 31st August.

Fifty-seven years ago, on July 20, 1969, the Apollo 11 Lunar Lander descended to the surface of the Moon and Neil Armstrong became the first man to set foot on its surface.

James Bradley was vicar of the parish of Bridstow, near Ross-on-Wye in Monmouthshire until 1721, when he changed vocation and became a full-time astronomer. Isaac Newton considered him to be the "best astronomer in Europe" and he was eventually made Astronomer Royal. Bradley carried out measurements that proved the Earth orbits the Sun, and that led to the first estimates of the distances of stars.





SHIRENEWTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Please find extracts from the minutes of the monthly meeting held 1st June 2026 7.00 pm Shirenewton Recreation Hall

No Planning matters were discussed:

Other items:

To Co-opt Hilary Berry as Councillor for Shirenewton & Mynyddbach by unanimous vote.

Memorial Clock repair – Response from Church regarding additional works, the Church will not be making any repairs and assisting with a faculty from the Diocese that the clock works can go ahead, **Action** Church to confirm with Clerk.

Earlswood field rental – Not heard back from potential grazers, Field is available for rental. **Action:** Clerk to chase and if no response contact Powells regarding advertisement and also look at cutting the field.

Traffic events, (speeding etc) 1 x incident reported near the Spar on the Chepstow to Shirenewton road, with one vehicle turned upside down, and road closed for a period of time. **Action** None

Cllr Vacancy – The new vacancy for Shirenewton and Mynyddbach is now being advertised with democratic services. **No Action**

No Parking” sign quotes – Ongoing **Action** Clerk to confirm correct Welsh translation

Grant applications - are now open till 24th June 2026, charities/groups are encouraged to email clerk for an application form.

Annual Return 2025-26 discussed read and signed **Action** Clerk to submit with Full Audit.

Planters and plants – The Scouts have made 4 planters (1 spare) for the Village, and are keen to plant flowers within, **Action** Clerk

Meetings attended – Cllrs P Butterworth and G Todd attended a positive walk through the village with MCC and are awaiting a plan to address traffic safety. Cllr G Todd attended the MDT meeting online; he was not present to update

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT JUNE 2026

County Councillor Brown advised:

Note that all the Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) meetings below can be found and watched on You Tube by pressing Your Council at the top of the Monmouthshire County Council website and then press meeting Calendar and adjusting the date and pressing the relevant meeting.

County Council 14th of May 2026

The above committee dealt with the appointment of the Labour Leader of the Council, The Chair and Vice Chair of the Council, the political representation on the different council committees and appointment to outside bodies. It also approved a local resolution protocol which deals with low level complaints between members.

People Scrutiny Committee on the 28th of May 2026

The meeting considered a report on an investment package to improve Caldicot Leisure Centre. This involves a refurbishment and reconfiguration of the fitness studio and the first-floor areas of the Leisure Centre. The cost is £601,429 with £300K capital funding and the rest borrowing based on the assumption that the 10-year loan repaid at £40K per year with the expectation that will be matched by a similar amount of approximately £41,400 by 100 extra members.

Governance and Audit Committee 4th of June 2026

The meeting reports on the internal audit report which had an overall opinion of reasonable assurance but with 6 limited and 1 no assurance audit opinions issued for 2025/6. The committee also covered a whistleblowing report. In the last 5 years Monmouthshire County Council has dealt with 5 whistleblowing cases in the area of 4 employee conduct concerns and 1 safeguarding concern.

A Freedom of information report shows an increasing number of FOI requests from 992 in 2022/3 and 1058 in 2025/6 with an increase in internal reviews from 19 to 41 from 2022/3 to 2025/6. Internal reviews are where the timescales in legislation to reply has not been met or where the requester believes that inaccurate or incomplete information has been sent.

Public Services Committee 8th of June 2026

The meeting is scheduled to have an update presentation at the meeting itself by the National Highways on the Severn Bridge HGV restrictions, a six-monthly update presentation. The meeting can be watched on you tube.

Let's Talk Public Consultation on Active Travel- Walking, Wheeling and Cycling in Monmouthshire- closes on the 30th August 2026

There is currently a consultation on the above subject with the Active Travel Network Map (ATNM) shows existing routes and highlights future routes planned for upgrades or development over the next 15 years. It's part of a Wales-wide effort to make local journeys healthier and more

sustainable, supported by the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013.

Monmouthshire's current map was approved in 2022, and it is now time to update it to reflect recent progress and plan for the future with your input. All Welsh councils are required to regularly review and improve their active travel networks. Improvements may include creating new routes or upgrading existing ones. For example, resurfacing paths, widening footways, or adding features like dropped kerbs and tactile paving to improve accessibility.

Monmouthshire Council website states as follows:

"Please help us ensure these routes work for everyone who want to use them and have your say before the consultation closes on Sunday 30 August."

To find out more and add your feedback directly to the interactive map, visit www.letstalkmonmouthshire.co.uk/atnm-2026

If you have any questions, you can email activetravel@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Police report: No report received prior to meeting due to date.

AOB and ward reports:

Cllr I Martin –	No issues to report
Cllr G Todd –	No new issues to report
Cllr Butterworth -	Reports of Dog walker not complying with the picking up of dog waste on the Recreation field. This has been reported.
Cllr S Todd –	No new issues to report
Cllr G Mitchel -	No new issues to report

**** Clerk reported that anyone/groups wishing to apply to SCC for a grant or donation can email shirenewtoncc@gmail.com for an application form, which need to be completed & returned by 26th June 2026**

Agreed the date of the next monthly meeting

Councillors agreed the date of the next meeting on **Monday 6th July 2026 at 7.00pm**, by public meeting, in Shirenewton Recreation Hall or remotely via Google meet

Contact the Clerk to the Community Council E-mail:

shirenewtoncc@gmail.com

THANK YOU, BILL

Bill Clark has been compiling the parish magazine for the last 7 years and is now handing over the baton. It's no mean feat to chase pages of content and advertisers and then to format all this into each month's magazine so professionally - since Bill took over, he has been responsible for collating ten issues per year - so around 70 editions of the magazine and about 4,200 pages!

Thank you, Bill, for your dedication and work on the magazine for so many years. The church and community are incredibly grateful.

Shirenewton Church Council

FUN FOR ALL AT SHIRENEWTON CHURCH

Thank you to all those who supported parachuting teddies and soft toys from the church tower. Very brave children who allowed their teddies to explore their parachuting skills. It was also an enjoyable afternoon for all.

There is now a permanent children's area in the church. Looking for something to do? Then go along to the church, play with toys or share a book together.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

JULY

Monday 6th
7.00 p.m.

Shirenewton Community Council meeting
Shirenewton Recreation Hall

Thursday 9th
at 7.30 p.m.

WI Meeting: Jenny Morgan, Floral Artist 'Wild Heart' - Shirenewton Recreation Hall

Wednesday 8th
2.00 p.m.

Shirenewton History Society Archive meeting
Shirenewton Church Room

Tuesday 28th
7.30 p.m.

History Society visit to the Transporter Bridge
Festival of Britain—Professor Ronald Hutton

severnwyema.co.uk

Value of the Month

Confidence



Harry, Y6



Shirenewton Village Fete
Da lawn to Harry in Year 6 who's village fete poster was chosen for the Shirenewton Parish magazine. We had some amazing entries from all classes and it really was difficult for Mrs Eickhoff to pick the winners.

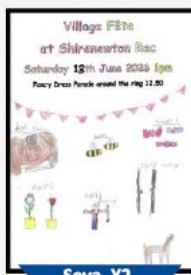
Mrs Eickhoff chose the winners for each class and they were all presented with the prizes in assembly.



Alice, Rec



Robin, Y1



Seya, Y2



Freya, Y3



Jemima, Y4

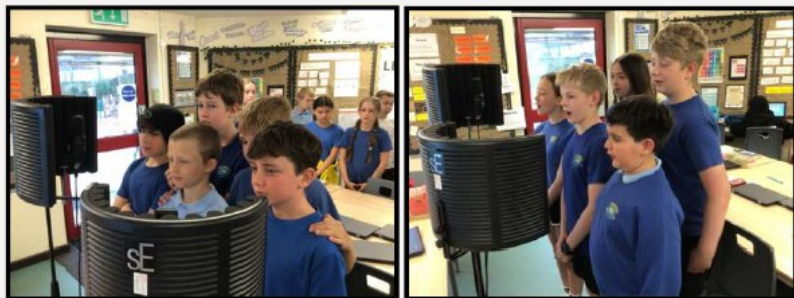


Jacob, Y5



Alexander, Y6





Year 6 Final Half term

Our final half term at Shirenewton Primary has arrived! We have been sharing our memories, and reflecting on our learning journey and realise how far we have come in such a short time. In We have also had the opportunity to record the song which we wrote for the school with help from Ragsy and Chris from Gwent Music. This is the legacy that we will leave behind and we can't wait to perform it during our Leavers Assembly. We will also be teaching it to the rest of the school!

Reception Information Event

Monday 9th November 2026

4:00pm Start

Is your child due to start Reception in September 2026? If so please join us at our information event for a chat and look around our school.

If you would like to attend this event, please complete the following form

[Reception Information Event Registration](#)

If you have any questions you would like answered in the meantime, please email shirenewtonprimary@monmouthshireschools.wales or call 01291 641774



Reception 2027 Information Event
- 9th November 2026



**THE KING'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS LIST
RELEASED 13th JUNE 2026
PIP PENNEY TO RECEIVE AN MBE FOR SERVICES TO
CHURCH BELL RINGING AND YOUNG PEOPLE**



Pip started ringing in 1998, recruited as part of the Ring in the Millennium project which provided matched funding for the restoration of the bells in Shirenewton Church, which had remained silent for many decades before. She quickly noticed that her teachers had very little knowledge of how skills (such as bell handling) are developed. This knowledge was familiar to Pip coming from a professional life in physiotherapy.

In 2003 she started teaching some new young ringers applying evidence based methodologies, much of which is derived from research completed in the field of sport science. Then in 2004 she established a young ringers group called KIDS.RING.OUT. with the aims of gathering young ringers from different towers together to develop a social life between them, to broaden their ringing experiences and to have fun. The group organised ringing outings, ringing courses, social events and charitable fundraising events. With respect to the latter, in November 2006 £900 was raised for The Archbishop of Wales Fund for Children and in February 2011 £1,752 was raised for Help the Heroes.

In 2005 she started entering KIDS.RING.OUT bands into the local striking competition, coming in 2nd with the under 16s and 3rd with the under 13s.

In 2006 KIDS.RING.OUT was awarded a £500 Founders Prize for the Encouragement of Young Ringers sponsored by the Livery Company - The Worshipful Company of Founders.

KIDS.RING.OUT became a model for other youth groups and in 2011 the Ringing World (magazine for bellringers) held its first National Youth Striking Competition in Pimlico in London. KIDS.RING.OUT came second out of the 12 teams which entered! The event has grown and grown and is now in its 15th year.

In 2005 Pip became the representative for the Monmouth and Llandaff Diocesan Association of Church Bell Ringers to the Central Council of Church Bellringers and joined the Education Committee. Pip wrote a book for the Committee, published in 2008, on the subject of teaching bell handling – “Teaching Unravelled” - an evidence based approach to the teaching of bell handling.

In 2009 Pip was approached by some young adults (ex-members of KIDS.RING.OUT) who wanted to start teaching new ringers using these evidence based methods. She decided to work with them and mentor them through their first recruits. This mentoring process became a corner stone of the future Teacher Training courses. Pip also produced a simpler version of “Teaching Unravelled” called “Teaching Tips” for them which was published later that year.

By 2010 the demand for these courses was growing and the Ringing Foundation Charity supported the scheme and encouraged Pip to found The Association of Ringing Teachers (ART) in March 2012. The teaching scheme was accompanied by a 5-stage progressive pathway for teachers to use with their learners – “Learning the Ropes”. In 2013 she produced an instructive DVD titled “Learning the Ropes”.

Pip became the first chairman of ART. More tutors joined the scheme and to date 675 courses have taken place, as it has been rolled out all over the country and internationally including to Australia and New Zealand. It is now the approved scheme for teaching all over the ringing world. The ART methods are deemed to have revolutionised the teaching of bell handling and bell ringing.

Following her chairmanship of ART, Pip wrote 2 further books. “The Ringers’ Guide to Learning the Ropes”, first edition published in 2016, second edition published in 2022 over 8,000 copies have been sold to date. “The Teachers’ Guide to Learning the Ropes” followed in 2017.

Jason Wood the most recent recruit to Shirenewton bell ringers has recently gained his level 1 certificate on the Learning the Ropes scheme.

Another photo on page 40



EVER INCREASING FUEL BILLS - IS THERE A SOLUTION?

More increases on 1 July 2026, when the Energy Price Cap will rise by 13% on average. The Cap limits the maximum amount a supplier can charge you for gas and electricity.

What do you pay? *'The average energy bill for a 3-bed semi-detached house with EPC D is around £182 per month, or £2,184 a year.'* ([RightMove.co.uk](https://www.rightmove.co.uk)). Add to that *'the cost of driving 12,000 miles in a diesel car, will cost you between £1,450 and £1,960 in fuel a year.'* ([RAC.co.uk](https://www.rac.co.uk)) Making a massive £3,600+ a year or £300 a month.

"On average, UK households spend roughly 20% of their total expenditure on housing fuel and transport. Domestic energy bills account for about 6% to 7% of household income, however, these figures rise to 10% for the lowest-income households. While transport claims approximately 14%." (Ref; Office for National Statistics and Institute for Government).

So what are the alternatives? There are many green energy routes that reduce family fuel bills. I mentioned previously that we pay £0, in fact last year, we had a surplus of over a thousand pounds, after all our fuel usage, for the home and the car.

Electric Vehicle (EV) is a car choice. You don't have to buy new, our 4 year old Kia, in terms of range 240 max is still as good as when we bought it, by this I mean we haven't noticed any deterioration, any more than if it was a petrol or diesel car. The proviso with an EV, is you need a car park space outside your property. Installing a car charger *'A fully installed car charger can cost £12.54 a month.'* ([SmartHomeCharge.co.uk](https://www.smarthomecharge.co.uk)) We installed one in our rented property with our landlord's permission, so you don't have to own the property. This option also reduces your household electricity bills too.

Owning and charging an electric car at home, gives you access to cheap power, 7p electricity during the off peak periods saving roughly 70% of normal rates

How much does it cost to charge the car? On an Off-Peak Electric Vehicle (EV) overnight tariffs (e.g., Octopus Intelligent Go at roughly ~7.5p/kWh), our Kia Niro EV fully charged has a range of 200 to 240 miles, costs us about £5.00 (62kWh battery X 7p). 12,000 miles costs us roughly £350 a year. Travel from home accounts for 95% of our travel, so no expensive service station chargers. This would save most families a significant fuel cost alone.



Adding a House battery. Yes there is a cost, but in return you will get a 70% reduction of your house electricity bills. It might even be worth getting a loan and comparing savings versus pay back. I suspect you will find the savings will more than pay back the loan payments. Our experience of this payback is around 4 years, but it depends on your power usage.

More options. Heat pump and solar panels.

Heat pumps get a lot of very bad press most of which is untrue. A well designed and installed heat pump is cheaper to run and much more comfortable, while using about 20% of the energy that a gas boiler uses. There are heat pump only tariffs, so you don't need an electric car to get the lower tariffs, you can make significant savings, over 70% typically.

Often heat pump installers come from a gas and oil boiler installation background and over size the heat pump, which is not good. Also there are a pile of imaginary barriers and complexities put in the way of making the change. Micro bore piping, old heating system, cost of moving radiators, house is not insulated, etc. Our first installation in 2009, was in our 1885 coach house in one of the coldest parts of Scotland, Killiecrankie just outside Pitlochry.

There is currently a £7,500 heat pump grant available (£9000 if you are replacing an oil boiler). If you have an EV and access to 7p electricity, it costs 1.9p/kwh, whereas heat from gas is more than three times this $0.574/0.85 = 6.8\text{p/Kwh}$. The heat pump typically reduces your heating bill by around 70%.

Solar Panels are remarkably inexpensive these days, costing less than £100 each. Modern solar panels can generate in the order of half a kilowatt peak. Based on our experience each solar panel will earn you on average of about £50 each per year at the current export rate of 12p/kwh. So eight panels should generate about £400/year towards reducing your household energy bills. They don't have to be south facing, east, west works well too.





My brother and I are retired Mechanical Engineers, we are very happy to share our experiences and knowledge with anyone who is considering this transition. We are not experts, but have experience of making the transition to cheaper bills. We don't sell anything nor have any interests in any companies. We just want to make as many people as possible aware that there are alternatives to the never ending bills from the mega rich fossil fuel industry.

If you would like to chat with someone who has been through this process, get in touch. There are alternatives to the never ending oil, gas, petrol, diesel bills. Change is always difficult. James Rattray, Aysgarth, Shirenewton NP16 6AQ jhrattray@gmail.com 07721 306323

Best wishes,

James

James and Kathleen Rattray

J:- 078 2828 6995 & K:- 07721 306 323

Aysgarth, Shirenewton NP16 6AQ

Congratulations to our 200 Club winners in June:

1. Marian Harris
2. Clair Johnsey
3. Ollie Chapple

A 'Bring and Share' in Shirenewton Church Room

A couple of weeks ago Robyn and Ryan came along and gave a great talk about bee keeping. They are passionate about bee keeping! In fact, I was almost tempted to try it myself, but it did seem like a lot of hard work, so I decided against it. Ryan brought along some frames. Frames persuade the bees to make their honey in a hive. This makes it so much easier to take some (not all) of the honey out at the end of the season rather than tackle the problem of getting the honey from where bees might otherwise like to live, holes in walls, roofs, trees, churches.

There are three types of honeybees in a hive - the Queen who gets well pampered and fed special food but then she does lay all the eggs. Then we have the workers who forage for nectar and pollen, they keep the hive clean, they air condition the hive by fanning their wings, they protect the hive from marauding intruders, they tend to the Queen, and they look after and feed all the baby bees (larvae). Yes, the workers do all the work. And then we have the drones. They just spend all day lazing about, pretty much doing nothing. Basically, their job is to make whoopie with the Queen and mate with her. I expect we've all met a few drones in life.

It was a fascinating talk, and we were able to buy some honey! Oh, and another bonus is that as the bees forage locally, local honey may help alleviate some of the symptoms of hay fever. So, if you want to buy some of this lovey honey, you can buy it in the shop in Devauden and also in the shop in Llanishen. I can really recommend it! Glynis MacDonald
Oh and if you need advice about keeping bees, rogue swarms, purchasing swarms in the spring or honey, contact:

crookedhillshoneyuk@gmail.com

SHIRENEWTON NATURE

The importance of a walk round our Shirenewton and Mynydd-back Meadows shouldn't be underestimated. Did you know spending time in nature provides immediate psychological restoration, lowers systemic physiological stress, and bolsters immune function? Research demonstrates that regular outdoor immersion significantly changes our body chemistry and brain activity to support lifelong health. (www.uclahealth.org)

Our gardens are a critical component of the meadows, an important extension supporting local wildlife and biodiversity. Every little bit we do, no matter how small, makes a difference.

The 1st level for life on our planet are plants, they are not optional. They are the only organism capable of capturing the sun's energy, creating oxygen for life, while playing a primary role in the food chain, for us humans and our fellow creatures, insects, birds, reptiles, mammals,....

The greater the diversity of indigenous or native plants the more diverse our biodiversity, the greater the opportunity for our fellow creatures. The BSBI (Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland) has recorded 3,445 plant species, of which only 1,692 were native to Britain and Ireland - therefore non-native plants outnumber native plants in Britain and Ireland's flora. <https://www.nonnativespecies.org>

So what we choose to grow in our gardens, patios, balconies has a direct impact. Choosing native plants which have co-evolved with local insects, birds, and other animals, makes a significant difference by providing essential local food sources and habitat.

Bumblebee expert Professor Dave Goulson of the University of Sussex and other scientists have compiled the Database of Pollinator Interactions, it's a great resource. (Ref 'Database of Pollinator Interactions. Uni



iversity of Sussex'). By inputting the plant or pollinator name, a list of interactions will come up which have been recorded between species. Here's the link <https://nbnatlas.org/>

Butterflies are good environmental indicators, if butterfly populations are going up or down, we get a good sense of how well the rest of the environment is doing. Butterflies and moths aren't doing too well at the moment, with many species declining in recent years.

Gwent supports over 30 regularly recorded butterfly species, native populations and seasonal migrants. Here is a list of butterflies and which plants support them.

Comma - Stinging nettle, hop, currants
Common blue - Bird's-foot-trefoil
Dingy skipper - Bird's-foot-trefoil, horseshoe vetch
Green-veined white - Hedge mustard, cuckooflower, nasturtium
Holly blue - Holly, ivy
Large skipper - Cock's-foot, false brome
Large white - Cultivated varieties of Brassica oleracea, such as cabbage and brussel-sprouts, nasturtium, wild mignonette
Marsh fritillary - Devil's-bit scabious
Meadow brown - Grasses: fescues, meadow-grasses and bents
Orange-tip - Cuckooflower, garlic mustard, honesty
Painted lady - Thistles, stinging nettle
Peacock - Stinging nettle
Red admiral - Stinging nettle, hop
Ringlet - Cock's-foot, false brome, tufted hair-grass, common couch
Small copper - Common sorrel, sheep's sorrel
Small skipper - Yorkshire-fog
Small tortoiseshell - Stinging nettle, small nettle
Small white - Cultivated varieties of Brassica oleracea, such as cabbage, nasturtium, wild mignonette, hedge mustard, garlic mustard
Wall brown - Cock's-foot, false brome, Yorkshire-fog, wavy hair-grass



Growing host plants for caterpillars in the garden is not necessarily guaranteed to attract the relevant butterflies, but butterflies do breed in gardens, so it is worth experimenting with different host plants to see which species might find your garden suitable. (www.wildlifetrusts.org)

We are wilding our garden, we are no experts, but realise our fellow creatures need a helping hand if they are going to survive. Please use the public footpath at the bottom of the garden and look at the different habitats we are attempting to create. James Rattray, Aysgarth, Shirenewton NP16 6AQ jhrattray@gmail.com 07828286995



SHIRENEWTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Registered Charity No: 1090167

A very pleasant day was had by our members when we visited Llanfyangel-tor-y-Mynydd Church in the morning, lunch at the Star Inn and then on to Llansoy Church in the afternoon. The weather was kind for us and we enjoyed a glorious sunny day. Both ancient churches are tucked away in deepest Monmouthshire, forgotten by time but alive with history.

Llanfyangel church still has the pre reformation alter, obviously overlooked by Henry VIII laws, the base of a preaching cross and remains of wall painting in the chancel.

Llansoy church has been completely renovated, new stone roof every surface has been completely restored, both are well worth a visit.

We had a warm welcome at both churches, with guided tours and a full history of both building, with welcoming afternoon tea and cakes.

Dates for your Diary:

June Meeting, Tuesday, 30th June, Visit to Treowen House, 2.00pm

July Archive Meeting, 8th July, 2.00pm Church Room

July Meeting 28th July, 'Festivals of Britain', 7.30pm, Prof Ronald Hutton

Our meetings are held at the Church Room, unless otherwise stated, Summer months 7.30pm

Archive meetings start at 2.00pm - 4.00pm and everyone is welcome.

www.shirenewtonchurch.com

I finished last month with a nod to digital sovereignty which is, not surprisingly, a very complex area.

There is a worldwide move by governments towards digital sovereignty as geopolitics become more complex and old alliances are fracturing. The EU has a 'strategic initiative' primarily around cloud storage and not relying on US based providers. The Guardian recently provided the example of the need for this by covering the case of Beti Hohler (a Slovenian national) who is a judge at the international criminal court (ICC), and who was sanctioned by the Trump administration. She therefore lost access to all US based services such as Apple's app store, her amazon account, credit cards issued by Visa and Mastercard, etc. The article notes that the EU relies on non-EU countries for more than 80% of its technology and 70% of its cloud computing. The article is here: <https://tinyurl.com/ynd3h57y>. It's not only the EU. Other western countries such as Australia & Canada are also making moves in this direction.

The UK doesn't have a digital sovereignty strategy and a recent proposed amendment to the Cyber Security and Resilience Bill, which required only that the Government assess the need for a digital sovereignty strategy, was rejected.

The power of companies such as Google is enormous. In the April magazine, I explained that I thought someone made a fairly sophisticated phishing attempt on me when I received "very plausible emails informing me that my business profiles had been disabled". I further explained that, While I initially thought that they were from Google. I then decided that they weren't and deleted them. I was wrong, they were from Google.

I was alerted to this about six weeks later when a padel centre member commented that the padel centre had vanished from Google maps. It had. It was as if the business didn't exist. If you entered "Welsh Padel Centre" into Google maps it took you to the Tennis Wales HQ in Cardiff. I had to appeal and submit evidence, etc. Luckily, I was able to get the business profiles reinstated and we are now back to normal. However, this simply emphasises the power that companies such as Google have over our day-to-day lives.

Digital sovereignty is made more complex due to the, some would argue, the overreach of government organisations. We may feel that it is unreasonable that a judge on the ICC loses her access to services we take for granted because of a US administration ruling but, as I mentioned in last month's article, our own Ofcom is locked in battle with USA websites over their imposition of fines for breaching the OSA (Online Safety Act). One high profile example is Ofcom's imposition of a £520,00 fine on 4chan for non-compliance with the UK's Online Safety Act. 4chan is a US based corporation/website and has refused to comply with the legislation and has

made it clear that it will not pay any of the fines citing First Amendment Protections. In fact, they have “launched a case in a Washington D.C. federal court seeking to permanently restrain Ofcom from enforcing the UK law on American soil”. Meanwhile Ofcom maintains its jurisdiction over overseas platforms that reach a UK audience, emphasizing that companies providing services to UK citizens must adhere to local child and user safety rules, regardless of where they are situated.

This has led the US government warning countries not to try and regulate US businesses and to assert that rules such as the OSA are a threat to constitutionally protected speech. It’s not hard to see why the topic of digital sovereignty is moving up the agenda.

The problem is, of course, that the internet is global (except for China and others tightly controlled regimes) and this means the easy way to bypass country specific restrictions is to use a VPN to ‘pretend’ to be accessing the internet from another country. Governments are now talking of banning or regulating VPNs. In the UK, there is talk that, following the announcement about the social media ban for under-16s, the government plans to regulate or ban VPNs. The BBC reports that ministers have said details about action alongside the social media ban, including regarding VPN use, will come in July. So, by the time you read this there may well be a further information.

As I mentioned briefly last month, it’s generally easy enough for a website to identify whether someone is using a VPN but, as a result, there is a VPN arms race with, for example, AmneziaWG (an open-source product designed to bypass internet censorship) disguising VPN traffic as standard HTTPS and other standard protocols. Governments are slow to legislate, and technology is fast to react. We are in for a wild ride.

Going back to Google briefly, another massive change coming down the track is Google’s move to AI search. The simple Google search box which has been a feature of the internet for more than 25 years is transforming into a “new, intelligent AI-powered Search box, marking its biggest upgrade in over 25 years”. The list of links will become an afterthought akin to the reference sources in an academic work. It is unclear whether the adverts will be separated out or incorporated in the AI generated results. Either way, it seems that the simple search box is dead and going forward Google search will be AI search.

This will have a massive impact on the SEO (search engine optimisation) industry and most information providers and websites. Since Google introduced it’s AI overviews at the start of the search results the number of users subsequently clicking through to a website has dropped dramatically. In fact, it is now estimated that approximately 70% of all Google searches now end without a click through. I’ve certainly noticed this in my own behaviour and I have to admit to clicking through less often. It will be interesting to see how this develops.

In the meantime, happy holidays and safe browsing. Remember to look at eSims for travel if free roaming is not included in your plan. Also remember that there are very suspect Wi-Fi connections out there so never connect to a system without being 100% sure that it is legit.

Safe browsing

David Cornwell

Webmaster

www.shirenewtonchurch.com

THE BELLS, THE BELLS

Two main events have occurred during the past month. The first is the award of MBE to Pip Penney in the King's birthday honours list. This is covered elsewhere but I can personally vouch for the enormous effort Pip has put in to revolutionising the teaching of bell ringing. Controlling the timing of a single bell is a physical skill which needs to be taught and practised until it becomes a natural and almost unconscious act. Only then can the complexities of change ringing be attempted and progressed. Pip's scheme "Learning the Ropes" is over 5 Levels, commencing with attaining the physical skill and ending with the mastering of relatively simple change ringing. The scheme lays the foundation for attempting more complex change ringing on a higher number of bells.

This brings me onto the second event – the award of Level 1 on the "Learning the Ropes" scheme to our newest recruit Jason Wood. Jason has made excellent progress since he commenced training in March. So far over the years 10 ringers at Shirenewton have enrolled in the scheme and 6 have attained level 5. Achievement at Level 5 results in an invitation to ring in Birmingham – arguably the centre of advanced ringing in the world, with an introduction to ringing on higher numbers of bells – 8, 10, 12 and even 16.

As is our tradition we rang the bells before the opening of Shirenewton Fete. We rang a quarter peal 1260 changes of Grandsire Doubles in 43 minutes. Cheri Oliver (Level 3) rang the treble bell. Arrangements are well advanced for our annual Summer Tour which will take place over the final weekend of June

M.D.Penney

June 2026

25 places of international or world significance within 25 miles

16a The Castle - and the Greatest Knight

5 miles from Shirenewton is one of the finest castles in the country but very few castles can claim to be of *international* or *world* significance. The Tower of London, Windsor Castle and Edinburgh Castle have international recognition and significance, and the 13th century castles of North Wales have World Heritage Status as a group but most of our wonderful castles are of great national significance but not of *international* or *world* significance. Chepstow Castle, an C11th and C12th castle, however, could claim to be of *international* significance on two counts.

The original 1195 Gates of Chepstow Castle are said to be the oldest castle gates in Europe. The original gates to the Castle were on the Gatehouse and in use for 767 years from 1195 to 1962! The Gates are now inside the Castle, on show, and are now 831 years old. I don't know whether older gates exist outside Europe (in the Middle East or India, China, or Japan) but its European credentials are enough for designation in this list as being of '*international*' significance.



Marshal's Gatehouse, Chepstow



Chepstow Castle's Original Gates

Chepstow Castle's second claim to international significance is through its principal builder, William Marshal, who not only put the Gatehouse there and those gates (which he would have walked through many times) but he increased the size of the stone castle 10 fold between 1189 and 1219 and most of what you see today at Chepstow is Marshal's castle.



Chepstow Castle pre 1189 wooden stockade



Chepstow Castle by 1219 - all stone

The Castle, the Priory and the Town of Striguil (later called Chepstow) were founded in 1067 by William FitzOsbern who was William the Conqueror's co-deputy for the Norman invasion. FitzOsbern, as the new Earl of Hereford, may have started works for the stone castle but he was killed in Flanders in 1071 and so the completed tower dates to later in the Norman period.

When Marshal inherited the castle in 1189 by marrying the 17 year old Countess Isabel De Clare of Striguil (daughter of Richard De Clare - known to history as 'Strongbow' - a name which may have been a corruption of 'Striguil', the name for Chepstow before the C14th) - the central tower or Keep was the only stonework. Almost everything else in stone we see to day are the walls of William Marshal's massive new castle 1189-1219. Some parts of the Marshal castle have been adapted or rebuilt or added to, since his time by Marshal's 5 sons and by Roger Bigod son of Marshal's eldest daughter, and then by Bigod's nephew who took over the castle in 1270 and built the domestic wing, the second banqueting hall in the castle as well as the town's Port Wall.

It is William Marshal himself who is of international significance and between 1189 and 1199 his only title was Lord of Striguil (Chepstow). From 1199 he became also Earl of Pembroke and Lord of Leinster and is generally known to history as Earl of Pembroke but he remained Lord of Striguil throughout his life, and Striguil (Chepstow) remained his principal castle.

Prior to coming to Chepstow, Marshal was famous as Europe's leading tournament knight. In a career of 20 years in Northern France he dominated the tournament scene and had taken 500 knights captive in these huge tournaments. He had made himself a lot of money but he had no land or title until King Henry II at the end of his reign allowed him to marry the 17 year old Countess Isabel De Clare of Chepstow and she was the wealthiest heiress in the land. King Richard 1st confirmed the arrangement and Marshal became Lord of Striguil (Chepstow) in 1189 until his death 30 years later in 1219. Everyone feared Marshal as a fighter and this was in the days when every man had to fight and fighting wasn't a sport but a job and fighting skills were truly a matter of life and death in battle. To be recognised as Europe's top fighter was of huge significance and he was tournament tutor to the King's eldest son and heir. Marshal's formidable reputation was to stand him in good stead in later years. No Baron would ever challenge Marshal to trial by combat – and they knew it and he knew it!



Marshal's tournament career was the subject of book written in 1225 which is held in the Morgan Library, Madison Avenue, Manhattan, New York City, two blocks from the Empire State Building.

The History of William Marshal was acquired by the banker J P Morgan in the late C19th. It is the only book written about a real tournament knight and much of what we know about Medieval 'chivalrous' knights and tournaments comes from this source and is influenced very much by the top winning knight of the last quarter of the C12th William Marshal. Marshal was not connected then with Chepstow so we can't claim his tournament achievements and its impact on Medieval Europe as Chepstow's! However, what Marshal achieved later when he was Lord of Chepstow was of even greater international significance (to be continued next month).



William Marshal with his wife Isabel, Lady of Striguil (Chepstow), Countess of Pembroke, and Lady of Leinster.
Mural in the town of New Ross, County Wexford, SE Ireland - founded by Isabel and William in 1210.

John Burrows Next month – 16b *The Castle – and the first Earl Marshal, and Regent of all England, Ireland, and South Wales, and the saving of the Magna Carta and the Nation.*

Gardening Corner

I was planning on doing some strimming this morning and then cut the grass, but looking out of the window it is raining. Hard to believe that there is a heat and health warning for the next couple of days or so, so it is going to be back to temperatures more than 30 degrees. That will bring a dead stop to any gardening activities during the hottest part of the day. I have loads of woodturning to do instead, so that will keep me out of the sun. For years I have suffered from Carpal tunnel, due no doubt to a working life of chainsaws, hedge cutters and various other items of vibrating (and noisy) machinery. At long last, I am due to be going into hospital to have both wrists treated. It is a relatively straightforward operation lasting about 20 minutes each hand, but it will slow down any hard work for the next few weeks. I hate sitting down for long, so no doubt I will be struggling with this new concept and getting into untold mischief, but I have promised that I will behave myself!

At least this time, we won't have to cover over most of the plants, as they will be 'hard' enough not to be damaged as much by the intense rays of the sun, when the heat does arrive. Even with covers on the last time, I had to dig up and remove several tomato plants as the tops had been completely burnt off. Even the squash and one or two potatoes were slightly scorched, but they have since recovered. We are now digging our new potatoes, cut our first crop of calabrese, which we turned into gratin ready meals in the freezer (there are only so many days you can have fresh calabrese on your plate!) and tasted our first cauliflower. The new carrots are certainly sublime, picked and steamed within five minutes, they must be one of the sweetest and most flavoursome of crops.

The last autumn green crops have now been pricked out into larger pots and are steadily growing away. These will be planted out in another three or four weeks' time, either in the large tunnel, or under special net covered cloches. These are around five feet long and three feet high and are designed for the plants to grow to maturity, whilst being safe from the various insects that would really like to attack them. This will end any sowing or planting out for this year. We still live in hope that someone will come along to buy this property, so that we can move on to our retirement home, closer to family. With so much uncertainty in the housing market at present, there is very little selling, or even coming to the market. Politicians continue to make wild statements over what will be taxed next, and with a system that allows buyers (or sellers for that point) to even withdraw on the day of contract exchange with no comeback, it currently takes a brave person to even consider a move to a new home. Talking to someone a few days ago, one of their friends was sitting waiting for the removal van to arrive, when they were told that their buyers had withdrawn from the sale. Having been on the end of similar (but not quite so cruel) circumstances, we can honestly say that such a situation can be crushing and upsets your lives for months and even years. We heard yesterday that the Government is to introduce new legislation to stop all this nonsense. It can't come soon enough.

So, with all the sowing and planting completed for this year, we are very much into maintenance mode. This can be pleasurable work as I have alluded to above, the picking of flowers, and the pulling or cutting of vegetables just before mealtime. As I write this each main room has at least one vase of flowers, Alstroemerias in the dining room and lounge, sweet peas in the hallway and sweet Williams and mixed bunches elsewhere. Thinking of a stir fry later we will be harvesting mangetout peas, courgettes, sweet pepper, baby carrots, a couple of florets of calabrese, a few cabbage leaves, and the first French beans, all tossed in the pan, maybe with a garlic and ginger sauce or as they come. Are you feeling hungry yet! Other jobs are strangely satisfying, such as deadheading the roses. This can be a seemingly never-ending job, but the scents are out of this world, the roses look much better for it, and of course it encourages in some varieties, the next crop of flowers. The newer 'English' roses, produced by David Austen are superb. Most are strongly scented, some are extremely healthy (no black spot on these), others are very vigorous and floriferous, but nearly all will flower all summer long, given the right pruning. At the other end of the scale are those jobs that it takes a lot of effort to enthuse over – weeding being one of them! Strangely, I quite enjoy cutting the grass, strimming and hedge cutting. I think because these bring an instant result of tidiness to the garden.

Don't get me wrong, I love the gay abandonment that a mixed 'cottage' border of flowers can bring. We have plenty of that here! It is just that well-manicured lawns, and hedges seem to frame the flowers and 'set them off'. Yes, I agree, very old fashioned, but that just about sums me and the under – oops sorry, the assistant head gardener, up. Both our fathers were exceptionally good gardeners and installed all the good and bad habits, that we now carry with us. My dad had a big garden in London suburbia, along with an allotment. Our garden was all flowers, especially chrysanthemum's which he spent hours looking after, with earwig's public enemy number one, and each bloom protected by its own little grease-proof paper bag to avoid rain damage! The allotment was for vegetables only, and we ate, froze or pickled everything. Felicity's dad was a farmer turned forester in Hampshire's glorious countryside. There were a few flowers, but necessity meant that vegetables were the big thing, alongside the pen of chickens. The chickens were moved between three pens, and the ebb and flow of what vegetables would be grown and when moved with those chickens. Once chickens had used a pen, it would lie fallow for a season, as the chicken poo was too strong for the plants to cope. The following year it would be grow everything in the rested pen and boy did things grow. In the third year the hens would be let loose to clear the old growth out and to eat all the pests. A very simple but successful three-year cropping cycle, with a pen that always saw a crop every year, a pen full of chooks, and a pen lying fallow. Felicity's mum always fought hard for a few flowers, which she got outside of the pens in the remaining garden, but food on the table was essential.

It's no wonder we are like we are! People are often surprised when they hear I come from London. You must remember that things have changed

a bit since then. We live on a main road, yes, but every morning I went to school, I walked past green fields, with cows grazing. Apparently, it was the closest farm to central London at the time, run by a convent. I very much helped dad as well. Every minute of every day when I wasn't at school or helping dad, I would be off out playing, climbing trees or fishing, often traveling miles on my own. Turning up at home only when I was hungry. How times change! Talking of change, I'm not sure whether this might be the last edition of the Parish magazine that I will be writing for. If it is, I would just like to thank every reader that has supported the magazine during the last twenty or more years that I have submitted a few lines almost every month. Regular authors were allowed a couple of months off each year for good behaviour. Occasionally it might be an extra month as I missed a deadline on occasion. An end of an era – maybe, but I hope not for the magazine.

As usual, happy gardening for another month, we might be back, or we might not, either way, we wish you all of the best. Steve and Felicity Hunt.



Zoe congratulates Pip Penney on her award of the MBE

SHIRENEWTON W.I. A WALK THROUGH TIME—TRELLECH



Each Summer Shirenewton W.I. arrange a summer outing for its members. This June we were treated to a very special walk led by archaeologist, Katie Churchill, who explained some of the fascinating history around Trellech.

Katie is a commercial archaeologist who conducts surveys and archaeological excavations before any construction goes ahead on new development sites. She has a particular interest in Trellech as she lives there and has led community digs there.

Our walk began at the Harold Stones (above), Bronze Age standing stones that can be seen from the road running through Trellech. They are not, as legend has it, stones thrown by the devil, but stones brought from the Brecon Beacons to a significant site where lightning struck the ground, as evidenced by fulgurites (tubes formed by minerals fusing together with soil under intense heat) that were excavated at the site. There is evidence of earlier Neolithic enclosures in Trellech with flints being unearthed, but not much is known about these early periods in South East Wales. Much of the research has focused on the medieval history of Trellech.

There is much evidence showing that Trellech was an important medieval settlement. The 'Tump' is believed to be the Mott of an early castle or watch tower. The 2018 floods in Monmouthshire revealed a moat around Trellech that was larger than the moat at Caerphilly Castle. Fish ponds pre-dating 1500s existed in the village and excavations of these have uncovered pottery and leather footwear from the 13th Century. Evidence of building plots in Trellech for this period shows that Trellech had a larger population than both Chepstow and Cardiff. The buildings in Trellech at this time would have covered 48 football pitches.

The mystery around Trellech in the medieval period is why it had become such a prominent town/ city and what had caused its decline. In the 13th Century Trellech was owned by the De Clare family who controlled the iron and charcoal production in the Forest of Dean area.

So one theory is that Trellech was an 'Iron City' and that it's sudden decline was due to the Black Death.

However, Katie has suggested another theory for Trellech's expansion and decline during this period. She suggests that Trellech may have expanded as a pilgrimage site aiming to rival Tintern. The size of the Church of St Nicholas in the village certainly supports the theory that Trellech was an important religious site. In the 13th Century Richard De Clare's widow, Maud, owned the land in Trellech for about 20 years. She was a formidable and extremely wealthy woman who had a strained relationship with her mother, Margaret De Quincy. Margaret had very close connections to Tintern Abbey and Katie's theory is that Maud ownership of Trellech coincided with it being developed as a religious centre to rival Tintern, in competition with her mother. On Maud's death Trellech was passed to her son and the building projects ceased, causing a decline in population.



It was a fascinating historical walk and we are very grateful to Katie for her enthusiasm and extensive knowledge. It was a very memorable event. Who would have known that there was such a wealth of history almost on our doorstep?

The evening concluded with a lovely meal at the Lion Inn in Trellech where we were joined by more W.I. members who were unable to join the walk.

Our next meeting will be a talk on **Flower Growing and Arranging by Amy Morgan from Wild at Heart on 9th July at Shirenewton Recreation Hall at 7.30 p.m.** Please note that for the summer months, we shall be starting our meetings at the new time of 7.30p.m. If you would like to know more about Shirenewton W.I., please contact either Angela Gray at angela.deepweir@btopenworld.com or Jane Butterworth at janeb247@gmail.com (641704) or come along to a meeting.

Jackie Broughton

DOG FOULING IN THE CHURCHYARD

The volunteers who care for our village church and churchyard give many hours of their time each year and juggle the spending of significant funds to keep these much-loved surroundings maintained and welcoming for all.

Unfortunately, the grounds maintenance team has recently reported an increase in dog fouling within the churchyard. As consecrated ground, and a place of remembrance for many families, we ask that the churchyard and its memorials are treated with the respect they deserve.

Dogs are welcome in the churchyard, provided they are kept on a lead and under close control. We ask all dog owners to clear up after their pets and take any waste home or dispose of it appropriately off church premises.

Thank you for helping us keep the churchyard a clean, peaceful, and respectful place for everyone.



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- 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)
- Shirenewton School



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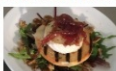
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You can find us at **USK ROAD, SHIRENEWTON, NP16 6BU**

You can check out our website **HUNTSMANHOTEL.CO.UK**

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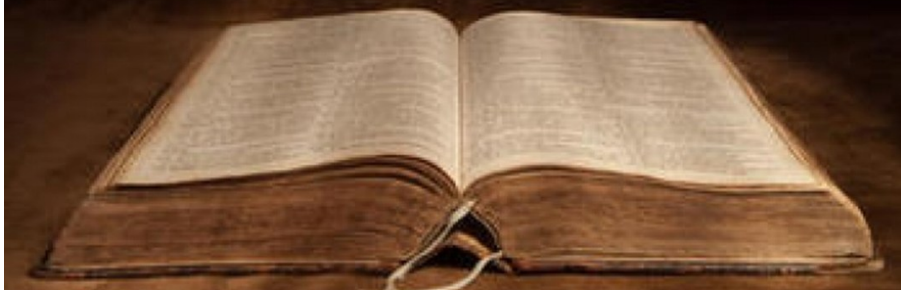
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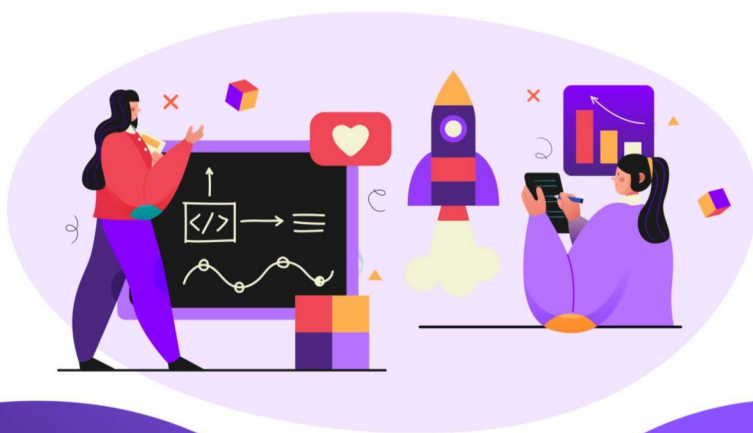
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Severn Wye Ministry Area

Ministry Area Leader	Zoe and Barney Pimentel	severnwyema.co.uk 07754 306229
Team Vicar	Fr Michael Gollop	01291 622 064 frmichaelgollop1@gmail.com
Team Vicar	Reverend Philip Averay	01291 620980 revphilipaveray@gmail.com
Associate Priest	Reverend John Waters	07836 585 250
Ministry Area Leader's Warden	Ros Downes	
Ministry Area People's Warden	David Carne	david-carne@outlook.com 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	Wendy Montague	01291 329 481
Church Warden	Andrew Baker	01291 641 925
LCC Secretary	John Montague	01291 329 481 jmontyvet@hotmail.co.uk
LCC Treasurer	Graham Lambert	01291 641 175
LCC Members	Janet Horton	01291 641 783
	James Leney	01291 641 271
	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 churchroombooking27@gmail.com
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 (as at October 2025)

Shirenewton Community Council

Clerk: Jan McLagan shirenewtoncc@gmail.com

Shirenewton and Mynyddbach Ward

Philip Butterworth (Chair)	07786 735950	philip.b@shirenewtoncc.org.uk
Gary Mitchell	07979 913555	gary.m@shirenewtoncc.org.uk
Sophie Todd	07766 524709	sophie.t@shirenewtoncc.org.uk
Hilary Berry	07801 472520	hilary.b@shirenewtoncc.org.uk
Vacancy		

Earlswood and Newchurch Ward

Ian Martin	07467 176977	ian.m@shirenewtoncc.org.uk
Geoff Todd (Vice Chair)	07855 301806	geoff.t@shirenewtoncc.org.uk

MCC for Shirenewton

Louise Brown 07598 979719 louisebrown@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Member of Parliament

Catherine Ann Fookes catherine.fookes.mp@parliament.uk

*If you know of any changes or omissions please contact the Editor Bill Clark
Telephone 01291 641783 or email parishmagshirenewton@gmail.com*

Members of the Senedd

Donna Cushing MS
Peter Fox MS
Laura Anne Jones MS
Matthew Jones MS
Lynne Neagle MS
Stephen Senior MS

donna.cushing-ms@senedd.wales
peter.fox-ms@senedd.wales
laura.jones-ms@senedd.wales
matthew.jones-as@senedd.cymru
lynne.neagle-ms@senedd.wales
stephen.senior-ms@senedd.wales

Police and SPCO Contacts

In an emergency 999;
To report an incident to the Police 111
To contact the Local SPCO Toby Wall email:Toby.Wall@gwent.police.uk

Other Local Organisations

Beavers	Julie Hitchcock	01291 650548
Church Fete	John Burrows	shirenewtonfete@gmail.com
Earlswood Hope	Mr Raymond Jeremiah	01291 641726
Earlswood & Newchurch West Memorial Hall		
Chairman	Becca Allen	07889762840 chair@earlnew.com
Treasurer	Geoff Todd	07855301806 treasurer@earlnew.com

Earlswood Valley Methodist Chapel

The Reverend Gordon Gresswell 07570992890

Gaerllwyd Baptist Recreation Association

Mrs E Remnant Brooklands, Usk Road NP16 6SA
Beverly Lyndsay 07798 780971
beverlylindsay@btinternet.com

Recreation Hall booking St Peters Church Newchurch

Beryl Saysell 01291 641637 saysellberyl@gmail.com
Enid Heritage 01291 622708
enidheritage@gmail.com

Shirenewton Local History Society

Dorothy Brabon 01291 641376
brabonn1@hotmail.com

Gwent Wildlife Trust Shirenewton and Mynyddbach Meadows (previously SAMFAL)

01600 740600

Shirenewton Preschool Shirenewton Primary School

Morgan Baker morgan@shirenewtonpreschool.com

Mr Nick Penn, Head Teacher 01291 641774
shirenewtonprimary@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Shirenewton Toddler Group

Sarah Parker 07971 783434

Shirenewton Tennis Association

Andy Orrell shirenewtontennis@gmail.com

Fairtrade

Marion McAdam 01291 641316 m316@gmail.com

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Monthly copies are available at the Church.

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**To order your regular copy, contact Jane Smith-Haddon
01291 641525/07816 233554 dolly.shirenewton@gmail.com**

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Monday 28th September for the October issue

Monday 26th October for the November issue

Monday 23rd November for the December/January issue

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