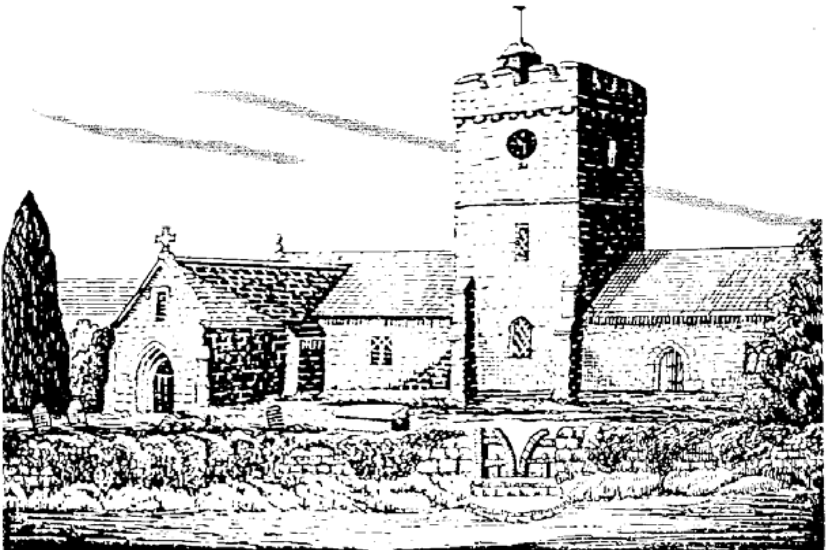


April 2008

Price: 50p

THE CHURCH OF ST. THOMAS A BECKET SHIRENEWTON



Parishes of Shirenewton and Newchurch
Magazine

READERS AND SIDES- PERSONS ROTA FOR APRIL

DATE	SERVICE	READER	SIDES-PERSON
6th April	3rd Sunday of Easter 9.45 a.m.	Jean Jones Peter Jones	Jean Jones Peter Jones
13th April	4th Sunday of Easter 9.45 a.m.	Kevin Bounds Alistair Bounds	Kevin Bounds Alistair Bounds
20th April	5th Sunday of Easter 9.45 a.m.	Family Service	The Children
27th April	6th Sunday of Easter 9.45 am.	Auriol Horton Barbara Davies	Auriol Horton Barbara Davies
4th May	7th Sunday of Easter 9.45 a.m.	Margaret Lock Diane Marlow	Margaret Lock Diane Marlow

St Peter's Newchurch first and third Sunday of each month at 2.30 p.m.

Priest in Charge.	The Revd Nansi Davies	01633 400519
CHURCH WARDENS:	Sally Saysell	641369
	Andrew Baker	641925
	Mrs Kath Whittington – Newchurch	641600
	Mrs Susan Lenthall – Newchurch	626389
PCC SECRETARIES:	Andrew Baker - Shirenewton	641925
	David Heritage- Newchurch	641549
PCC TREASURERS:	Kevin Bounds - Shirenewton	641818
	Enid Heritage - Newchurch	641549
GIFT AID SECRETARY	Ruth Savagar	641411
CHURCH MAINTENANCE & SAFETY OFFICER	John Nicholas	641368
ORGANISTS:	Karen Millar	650521
	Ruth Savagar	641411
	Kath Whittington	641600
SUNDAY SCHOOL:	Jane Smith-Haddon	641525
TOWER CAPTAIN:	Mike Penny	650653
MOTHERS UNION:	Auriol Horton	641844
CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER:	John Waters	641449
CHURCH FLOWERS:	Maureen Moody	641524
PARISH MAGAZINE:	Bob O'Keefe	641686
200 Club	Pauline Dutton	641677

NAMES TO NOTE

COMMUNITY COUNCIL	John Harvey (Chairman)	641279
Clerk to Community Council	Carole Jones	641791
WI:	Jenny Bonner	641929
SCOUTS:	Dave Richardson	620356
GUIDES:	Helen Cann	650835
BROWNIES:	Jackie Broughton	641797
BEAVERS:	Becky Lewis	650304
POLICE CONTACT:	P.C. Andrew Mason	01633 838111
REC. BOOKING SECRETARY:	Beryl Saysell	641637
TRAI DCRAFT:	Marion McAdam	641316
NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH CO-ORDINATOR		
S'NEWTON & MYNYDD BACH -	Beverley Moore	641532
Earlswood	Jayne Kirby	641217

Please send your notes, discs or emails for inclusion in the May magazine to Bob O'Keefe at: 15 Newton Manor, Shirenewton, (641686) or email to bobandwenche@aol.com by Monday 21st April.

SOME DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

3rd April	Whist Drive—7.30 Recreation Hall
7th April	Community Council Meeting Recreation Hall—7.30
10th –12th April	"SORTED" Earlswood & Newchurch West Memorial Hall
14th April	History Society—Resource session—Recreation Hall 2.00
17th April	Earlswood & Newchurch West Memorial Hall AGM—7.30
19th April	'Police Surgery' The recreation Hall from 10 a.m. Around the village.
20th April	Netherwent Singers – Mass for Peace Shirenewton Church 7.00 p.m. (see advert for details).
26th April	History Society –Visit National Museum of Wales (see notes)
27th April	Beating the Bounds Walk—Meet at the Church for 2.00 p.m.
29th April	History Society—Roman Medicine—The Huntsman 30 (see notes.
1st May	Whist Drive—7.30 Recreation Hall
10th May	Shirenewton School 'Promise Auction' Hood Memorial Hall Devauden 7.00p.m.
14th June	The Church Fete—Recreation Field from 2.00 p.m.

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Dear Friends,

I hope you all enjoyed Eastertide whether you were away on holiday or stayed at home. I did and so did all those Christians who celebrated together in thanksgiving to God for his overwhelming love for all his creation.

On Good Friday, with scripture readings, meditations and prayer, we remembered the suffering of our Lord Jesus as he endured his arrest, trials and death on the cross but we did so from the other side of the cross, in the resurrection light. We heard the words from St. John's gospel which celebrate the light of the world which cannot be overcome by darkness and the life that is promised to all who believe in the light's power to redeem and save. Jesus Christ is that light of the world, "he lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's son, full of grace and truth." The light shining in the darkness was made very immediate to us at the Easter Vigil and Service of Light when the Pascal candle was lit in the dark church and from which we all lit our candles progressively lighting up the church as the new Pascal candle passed. This also reminded us of that blazing life and light that radiated from the tomb in which our Lord's body had been laid. There had never been a dawn such as before or since.

On Easter Day we celebrated the power of the Resurrection with great excitement and with wonderful hymns of joy, triumph and praise. But how do we feel afterward when our daily lives resume the normal routines, when the news through the media so often seems dark and despairing, or our lives are caught up with our own problems? We need to remember our risen Lord's words of reassurance, "Do not be afraid" and "I am with you always."

Lord Jesus, you were dead but now you are alive: transform the terrors of this world that we may see your radiant glory. May the truth of your resurrection live in and through us as we continue your work of building your Kingdom of justice and peace. Amen.

With blessing and peace,
Revd. Nansi Davies.
Priest-in-Charge.

SHIRENEWTON SUNDAY CLUB

Dates for the next couple of months

Date	Time		Venue
6th April	9.45	Sunday Club	The Chantry
13th April	9.45	Sunday Club	The Chantry
20th April	9.45	Family Service	The Church
27th April	9.45	Sunday Club	The Chantry
4th May	9.45	Sunday Club	The Chantry
11th May	9.45	Sunday Club	The Chantry
18th May	9.45	Family Service	The Church

***Shirenewton Sunday Club welcomes
all children from 3 years. Do come and join us.
Jane Smith-Haddon 641 525***

Shirenewton Church 200 Club

The result of the March draw was:

Ticket No	Winner	Prize
219	John Nicholas	£40
188	Jean Howe	£30
172	Veronica Remnant	£20
113	Gareth Davies	£10

asparagus pea. If you have the facilities for growing your own plants then the coming few weeks will be busy. I find this aspect of gardening to be the most satisfying of all as you nurture the young plants and watch them develop and mature.

I need to get on with digging the large bed in the tunnel and getting this manured as well, ready for the summer crops such as tomatoes and melons. I had hoped to have got some early potatoes in this bed by now but have not had the time. Still, as the weather hasn't really started to warm up yet I don't think that this later than intended planting will affect the eventual cropping time. Things will soon catch up as they usually do.

I planted some apricots and peaches in the tunnel last winter and the first of these are now coming into full bloom. As the number of insects are still low for pollinating purposes, both myself and the under-gardener will be spending ten minutes a day with a soft paintbrush wandering between trees lightly brushing the flowers. The trees have really flourished with the extra protection that the tunnel has to offer and with this extra bit of attention, will hopefully produce a bumper crop this year.

I sowed some pea seeds a few weeks ago in lengths of guttering. Because they were growing almost too well, I moved the sections to the outside to harden off. These are really looking well now and I aim to plant these out in one of the raised beds in the coming days. Fortunately I have recently been lopping some birch trees and the branches of these will provide a superb supporting structure for the peas, whilst the larger material will end up in the wood burner to keep us warm. Nothing goes to waste around here! Still time to take the under-gardener a cup of tea in bed – see, I even have to look after her as well!

Happy gardening until next month.

Steve Hunt.

you might say, but it was just that this greenhouse was perched on two wooden beams that extended out completely over the said gully and stream! Now I'm not an engineer by any means, and I don't know very much about the laws of physics, but I sure have to admire the ingenuity of some mad gardeners! The whole thing seemed to be very finely counter-balanced and I can only presume that the heaviest yielding crops were planted on the left side of the greenhouse and the rest on the right! Not the sort of place to be on a windy day.

Anyway less ramblings and more on the state of the garden here at Barn Farm. One problem with seeing to other people's hedges and trees is that your own get left until the very last, so over the coming few weeks I intend to finish trimming all of the hedges and prune the many fruit trees that we have. There is still time for these, especially the hedges, but these should ideally be completed by the middle of April. The earliest birds, especially if the weather is good, will already be nesting but hedge trimming by hand held machine, will not generally disturb these and they will soon return to building or laying duties. Not so if you are intending cutting a hedge back really hard or completely, in an effort to let it re-grow and thicken up. It is now too late in the season to do this without causing problems, and more to the point potentially breaking one of many wildlife laws, so leave well alone until next winter.

The main duties over the coming few weeks will be to finish tidying the greenhouses up and getting them ready for a new growing season. Although I have already sown some early crops in the larger greenhouse bed, I still have to dig over the rest and get the bed manured ready for a lettuce and French Bean crop, before the planting of the cucumbers in early May. If I get the timing right these quick maturing crops will be ready for harvesting just at the time the cucumbers need to be planted out – give or take a few days. I have started seed sowing on the propagating bench in earnest over the last few days and this will continue. This year we are growing very few flower plants, so we are concentrating on vegetables. This has allowed extra space on the bench for trying something new and crops that we will be trying for a first time this year are celeriac, aubergine and

SHIRENEWTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING

HELD ON MONDAY 3RD MARCH
Reported by – Glynis MacDonald

P.C. Cowburn's Report for February:

- 1st A dead badger in the road.
- 5th The temporary traffic lights on the Usk Rd not working. Again
- 6th And again.
- 6th House alarm - fault.
- 6th A report of a possible abandoned car by Recreation field.
- 12th Air rifle causing damage - Earlswood.
- 16th House alarm - fault.
- 18th Van crashed into hedge near Shirenewton.
- 22nd Another report of the same possible abandoned car by Rec.
- 24th Road accident Usk Road - Car on roof. Wall struck.
- 25th And yet another report of the same possible abandoned car by Rec. (Finally, the possibly abandoned car gave up and disappeared)
- 27th Neighbour dispute over a hedge/ trees being cut.
- 28th Minor mud slide, Usk Road. A rock was found in the road.

PC Cowburn also issued warnings about bogus Water Board Officials who have been in the area – tricking people out of their money. The Crime of the Moment. The theft of household heating oil is unfortunately continuing, mainly in Rural Areas. So secure your oil tanks. Scrap metal has also become a thief's 'must-have'

PC Cowburn will be at the Rec on Saturday 19th April at 10.00 to meet members of the public who might have concerns. Mrs Sally Saysell, the rota member of the community council will also be there. Later, they will go on a walk-about. Feel free to stop them for a chat.

Planning:

- 15, Clearview, Shirenewton
Erection of a new porch and first floor extension to rear
Approval recommended.
- Itton Field, Mynyddbach
Raise height of existing garage and replace flat roof with pitched
Approval recommended

Prior Cottage, Mynyddbach
Erection of sun lounger – sorry sun lounge
Approval recommended

Land at Hillside Paddock, Usk Road, Shirenewton
Smallholding (hobby farm) development for to be used for the
housing animals for milk, meat, and fibre; wash facilities, kitchen
and toilets
Refused

Matters of local concern:-

Local Elections. These will be held on Thursday 1st May. Nomination papers and guidance were distributed.

The Environment Sub-Committee: It was suggested that the council should produce a 'Top Ten Tips' on recycling issues and a 'Ten Top Tips' for household issues.

'Donations and Grants to Local Bodies Sub Committee' There was a report from this snappily named group and misunderstandings were cleared up as to what was agreed the previous month. It seems the groups who had received the monies in the past will continue to receive these donations but will be required to say what the money was spent on. The total sum for the 9 recipients (the two halls, the two churches, the three chapels, the CAB and the purchase of the village Christmas tree) amounts to £1200.

However, it was also suggested that a further sum of money could be allocated next year which could be made available to those groups, or indeed any other groups in the community who might have a 'capital project' for which they need match funding. Terms and conditions will apply.

The Damaged Bus Shelter at the bottom of Mynyddbach. The council agreed to seek tenders for its repair or replacement. However, this should be done quickly before the swallows return to their bus shelter nest for their summer holidays.

Information:

For updates on local road works you can go to:
www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/roadworksreport—where you can find

GARDENING CORNER

With Easter fast approaching many people's attention turns to the garden for the first time in the year. Traditionally the main "Do It Yourself" weekend of the year no doubt many will be wishing for a fair forecast and a few days of frenetic activity, which will leave many suffering with a bad back or worse! Listening to the radio the other day whilst stuck in yet another traffic jam on the M5 the presenters were talking about how Easter is a moveable feast due to the stage the moon is at. Apparently it can fall any time within a six-week window and this year happens to be nearly the earliest possible within that period, falling short by just one day. With this in mind, not to mention the possibility of snow showers being forecast, I'm hoping that many of you will have restricted activities in the garden to general maintenance tasks such as weeding, hedge cutting and general digging, rather than too much seed sowing and planting out. One thing that really winds me up if I get the opportunity to wander around a nursery or garden centre is the sheer volume of young plants available for purchase. A large percentage of these are frost tender and many innocent, new gardeners are tempted to buy these, only to stand them outside when they get home, or worse still plant them in the garden with the inevitable results following a cold night. I'm sure many new, keen gardeners begin to lose interest as a result. I also know that many garden centres are keen to sell more plants as replacements – cynical or what!

Talking about keen gardeners, we recently snatched a few days up in the Lake District staying with number one daughter on the edge of Lake Windermere. Out for a walk one day we came across an example of extreme gardening that has to make you think! Now I don't go around looking at other people's gardens when out walking. Well not generally anyway! My kids think I'm sad, but not that sad! Trees and woodland yes definitely, as these have been my life for 35 years, and it was whilst looking over the fence at a nice native woodland that I noticed the case of extreme gardening. I pointed this out to the under-gardener who to begin with couldn't see what I was trying to point out! Far below in a very steep river gully was a greenhouse. Ok, nothing unusual in that

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ANDREW W GRIFFITH AMIH BSYA (IRID)

The 'green lane' next to the recreation field has been ploughed up, the hedges removed and it has been tarmaced. (As has the footpath down to Dinham Castle). MCC are to be contacted.

The Clerk's Report:

Allotments:

It seems that MCC are considering selling the land at Bleddyn Close which had been considered for allotments. The Community Council has registered its interest in when and how it comes up for sale.

Open Area at Mynyddbach:

Cllr Down explained that MCC have chosen not to designate this land as Owain Glyndwr land – as this would mean that the land would have to be kept open in perpetuity and therefore they would not be able to develop it – if in the future they decide to do so. Their second best option is to long lease it to the Fields Association.

The CEDS Grant:

The council recognise that the existing horse is so lame it needs to be put out to grass and they have therefore put in an application for a grant to buy a brand new horse and a picnic bench for the Recreation playground. But it was suggested that all the playground equipment has become shabby and outdated. It was agreed to look into the possibility of getting a big new grant perhaps from the Lottery Fund to replace the whole lot.

Grass Cutting:

MCC have now decided to defer the decision to cease free grass cutting. There will be no charge for 2008/2009

The next meeting will be Monday 7th April, at 7.30 at the Recreation Hall. Members of the public are of course, welcome to attend as observers.

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SHIRENEWTON



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On behalf of St. David's Foundation Hospice Care I would like to thank all those that generously contributed to the recent envelope collection.

Ove £350 was raised which will help St. David's to continue it's invaluable work in this community.

Many thanks also to those who helped with the collection, which can be a difficult and unrewarding job.

With grateful thanks,

Ruth Savagar,

p.p. Emma Saysell
Chief Executive / Director of Nursing.

Shirenewton

Community

Council

Annual Meeting

Monday May 12th 2008

7.30 pm

At

The Recreation Hall

Shirenewton W.I.

Shirenewton WI celebrated 56 years since the first meeting in March 1952, with a splendid meal organised by the committee. Our two guests, introduced and welcomed by Jennie Bonner, were Jo Dawson our W.I. Adviser and past Chairman of Gwent Federation of W.I's, and Therese Casemore our previous W.I. Adviser and Chairman of the Music & Drama Committee of Gwent Federation. Mrs Winnie Jones gave the toast.

After the meal the Shirenewton W.I. Players performed a short play "An incident in Spain", followed by two recitations from Mrs Jones. It was an entertaining evening and the players will perform a longer play for the November meeting.

In April some members will be visiting the Wormtech site in Caerwent, the Tutankhamum & Terracotta Warriors Exhibition in London and the two day Wales Conference of W.I's in Tenby with speaker Trevor Fishlock.

Next week a group of Shirenewton WI members will be going to The Narth WI's third birthday.

Last month 3 members joined a WI walk near Llantilio Crossenny.

For more information on ACWW visit www.acww.org.uk

SHIRENEWTON WHIST DRIVES:

33 players enjoyed the Drive on the 6th March. Our next Drive will be on the 3rd April being the first Thursday of the month. The Drives commence at 7.30 p.m. promptly. be in use as a Polling Station.

The May Whist Drive will be held on the evening of the 1st May.

The Whist Drives raised £450 for the Hall Funds during the 2007/8 accounting period. A few more players and we might reach £500 next year!

Auriol Horton 01291 641844.



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present

'SORTED'

A new play by Glynis MacDonald



A comedy about confusions, clothing and
Lady Chatterley's Lover in the back room of a charity
shop.

Earlswood Hall at 7.30pm

Thursday 10th, Friday 11th and Saturday 12th
April

Tickets £6.00 & £4.00

Tel: Barbara Walters 01291 641338 or
email: barbaraw@lters.org.uk

THE CHURCH FETE

IS ON
14TH JUNE
AT THE RECREATION FIELD

Once again the village is preparing for this year's Church Fete.

It is again the aim to make this the best ever, this is a tough task as with each Fete exceeding the success of the previous year.

The Fete Committee are always looking for new ideas and new committee members—do you have any ideas for improving the Fete? - They are all welcome, so come along to the next meeting on 28th April—8o/c at The Huntsman.

We would particularly like to include an interesting 'Pets Corner'. Do you have any pets that you would like could be shown?

For more information
Contact : Steve White on 01291 641 641804

SHIRENEWTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Shirenewton Promises Auction

Saturday 10th May 2008 - 7:00pm

At The Hood Memorial Hall, Devauden

Bar available

Auction to begin at 7:45pm

Can you help? Best Kept Village Competition 2008

The Community Council will be entering Shirenewton in this competition again this year. The local pubs, the Church and the Recreation Hall are all part of this competition. In 2006 the Church won the Best Kept Churchyard award. In 2007 the Recreation Hall won the Best Kept Village Hall award. This year we hope to make a concerted effort to go for all four awards.

Judging for this competition will be in June and from past judgements we know that we need to pay more attention to public areas in the village.

We are looking for some **volunteers to pinpoint any problem areas**. We have split the village into 13 smaller areas and are looking for volunteers in each area. We will be holding a meeting for further information at **7.30 on Monday the 14th April at the Tan House** . Alternatively If you can help in any of the following areas or have any suggestions please telephone the Clerk on **641791** or Cllr Moore on **641532**

1. Tan House Court, Orchard Rise
2. Clearview
3. The Row down to the Tan House and up to Post Office
4. Olive Cottage to Caerau House including grass triangle
5. Road down to Cox's Well and Friends Burial Ground
6. Kirrin House to Newton Manor
7. Newton Manor including footpath up to back of Newton Brae
8. The Barn to Redd Landes including footpath to back of Newton Brae
9. The Recreation Field and Play area.
10. Upper House to Newton Lodge including lower entrance to the Recreation field
11. The square up to Caepercella to include right of way to the Recreation field.
12. Lane at side of Shirenewton Hall to Newton Edge
13. The Shop area to include houses and two barns opposite.
14. Entrances to Village including signs

SHIRENEWTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 1090167

Our February meeting held at the Huntsman Hotel was well attended with the speaker for the evening Elizabeth Walker giving her talk entitled 'The Early Prehistory of South Wales'. Elizabeth is head of the Mesolithic and Prehistory Department of the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff, she has visited this area on a number of occasions with her colleagues researching certain fields in the parish for evidence of habitation by early man. She produced evidence that Shirenewton was a good place to live even thousands of years ago! The National Museum in Cardiff has opened a new exhibition entitled 'Origins' and members of the society were invited to visit, Elizabeth Walker kindly offered to personally give us a tour of the exhibition, which I'm certain members are going to accept.

BEATING THE BOUNDS Once again we shall be walking a section of the Parish Boundary as part of this ancient tradition defining the limits of the Parish that takes place on Rogation Sunday - 27th April. We shall be meeting at the Church at 2.00 p.m. for this walk, that will cover about 5 miles and take 2—3 hours. This could involve some muddy paths if the last walks are any guide, so please wear appropriate footwear and clothing.

Dates for your Diary: -

Monday, 14th April:

Resource Afternoon, at the Recreation Hall at 2.00pm.

Sunday 25th April:

Rogation Sunday—Beating the Bounds of the Parish Walk

Saturday, 26th April:

Visit to the 'Origins' exhibition at the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff.

Meeting at the main door of the museum at 2.15 pm.

Please ring 641376 to book, as numbers are restricted. Lifts can be arranged.

Tuesday, 29th April:

'Roman Medicine' a talk given by Roger Evans, Huntsman Hotel at 7.30

Caroline's Cookery Corner.

I adore starters, I'm afraid that when I go out for a meal I am one of those people that prefers two starters to a main course.

I don't think anyone can go wrong by serving a tomato salad: -

Slice beef tomatoes and mozzarella, put in layers in a flat dish. Mix good olive oil with chopped parsley, mint basil, basil chives and garlic, a pinch of castor sugar and salt and pepper. Spoon over the tomato salad and serve with a crunchy french baguette.

I remember my mother making the following recipe about forty years ago, I think it came from a restaurant in Ireland.

Snaffles Mousse:

I can't remember the exact quantities, I just do to my taste.

Mix together Philadelphia cheese with crushed garlic and a tin of jellied consommé add a few chives or parsley. Leave to set and serve with toast.

I like to leave large flakes of mackerel in pate to add texture. Cook smoked mackerel in the microwave until hot and it flakes. In a food processor blend half the mackerel with good amount of butter, squeeze of lemon juice, a dollop of crème fraises and a small amount of horseradish sauce. Remove from the bowl and add the rest of the mackerel.

Another recipe for smoked mackerel: - Cook 2 fillets in the microwave and flake. Mix the mackerel with chopped chives, a couple of sticks of celery and a couple of ounces of button mushrooms (all chopped). Add juice of a 1/2 lemon and 5 fluid oz carton of soured cream. Serve on a bed of lettuce with brown bread.

Finally place 2 racks of spare ribs in a baking tray. Cover with 10 tablespoons tomato sauce and 6 tablespoons white wine vinegar and 4 tablespoons each of honey and soy sauce.

Add 1 pint of stock or water and cook in a moderate oven for a couple of hours basting as you go. More frequently at the end when the juice is thick

Our thanks once again to Caroline Davies



1ST SHIRENEWTON GUIDES

As I write we are nearing the Easter holidays – a very short term this year. The girls provided a very successful evening for their mothers. Instead of making cards or presents for Mothering Sunday they made sandwiches, tea and cake and provided musical accompaniment. We had a good turn out of mums, who all enjoyed the novelty of being waited on (and the washing up done)! As leaders we are still trying to work out who has achieved any of the badges we have been working towards – some have got lots so be prepared to teach them how to sew them on themselves!

Thoughts are turning towards camp but no definite plans have been made yet. A night hike is also possible – parent helpers needed for that one please. Our “not so Young Leaders” are walking over the Easter weekend as a practise for their Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award. Both have completed their leadership training and Bee was presented with her Camp Permit last week – Bumble is taking hers over the Easter weekend. So now Kitten and I can retire and leave it all to them – only kidding, they may be qualified but we know them rather too well to desert them.

Yours in Guiding,

Kestrel Helen Cann 650835

Kitten Amanda Turner 650763

Bumble, Bee and Koala

THE PARISH MAGAZINE.

Very many thanks to all those that take the time to collect the magazine subscriptions and deliver them each month.

If you haven't yet paid your subscription £5.00 for the 12 months, please contact your distributor.

BROWNIE REPORT

1st Shirenewton Brownies

This week at Brownies we have been making Easter bonnets. Everyone got into twos and threes. We had lots of fun making them and it got a bit messy too! Every group made unique hats and everyone's were great, but some people went a bit mad! When everyone had finished we did a catwalk, one person from the group modelled the hat, and the rest commented at the end. The best hat won a prize. It was a good day. We all enjoyed making and modelling the hats. We had lots of fun and would love to do this again.

Molly, Millie, Grace and Issy

Jackie Broughton – Guider in Charge (641797)

John Cann

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the tragic death of John Cann, Helen's husband. As many of you know, Helen plays an important part in the life of this village and the surrounding district. She is involved in many activities, including Guider in chief of 1st Shirenewton Guides, Governor of Shirenewton Primary School, Treasurer of St James' Church, Devauden and in many unsung roles. The Guiders, Guides and Brownies are sure that everyone will join us in offering Helen, Tom, Bethany and Jonty our heartfelt sympathy and remembering them in our prayers.

Shirenewton Guides and Brownies

Shirenewton Mothers Union

Our next meeting is on Wednesday 12th March at Shirenewton Recreation Hall commencing at 2.30 p.m. Our Speakers will be Ken and Coralie Payne telling us of the work of the "Mercy Ships". Visitors are welcome to join us at 3 for Talk and Tea. Members please remember your Overseas Boxes and Subscriptions.

Branch Leader: Auriol Horton 641844

The Bells.....The Bells

March 8th this year was Commonwealth Day. This is celebrated by "An observance" in Westminster Abbey in the presence of the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh. Every nation and every national flag from all the Commonwealth countries is paraded up the aisle at the beginning of the ceremony.

This year's theme of Climate Change was introduced by the Queen. There were then other speeches interspersed with singing and dancing from various national groups. A choir of African children from the Ankole tribe sang a rhythmical and lively song and the New Zealand contingent performed a stunning Maori welcome which included the "haka".

A group of ringers in London managed to obtain sufficient tickets to offer 5 of them to members of Kids Ring Out.

Mike and Pip Penney accompanied by Jenny Millar, Claire Eickhoff and Tom Mitchell left South Wales at 6.00am and drove to Stanmore in North London. Here we met with other young ringers and after ringing the bells travelled in their mini-bus to St Giles, Cripplegate in the Barbican where we rang the 12 bells, Claire rang the 34cwt tenor, the Londoners were well impressed.

It was then on to central London, a quick bite for lunch and on to Westminster Abbey where the security was very strict, just like going on a flight with body scanners and x-ray machines to check hand luggage. During the procession some of the stewards escorted our kids down to the front so there were only about one metre from the Queen.

After the ceremony we went to meet the Westminster Abbey ringers and see the bells. We did not ring there as the ringing is by invitation only. However we did get permission to ring on the 12 at St Martins –in-the-field in Trafalgar Square which was a great privilege and very enjoyable.

It was a long enjoyable day and we eventually arrived home at about midnight happy but tired.

Pip Penney

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CHURCH WEBSITE & SHOPPING PORTAL

As you start booking your summer holidays please use the Church shopping portal. There are many flight comparison sites and many of the major airlines available. I personally travel a considerable amount for business and use all the hotel comparison sites extensively. These sites have saved me hundreds of pounds over the years. For example, I had a conference in Miami to attend in February. The rate I got for the hotel was about \$75 per night cheaper than the 'conference rate' which itself was a discount from the rack rate - for exactly the same hotel!

The other site I use all the time is Holiday Extras for discounted airport parking. Its so much cheaper pre-booked! All these sites are under the travel section of the shopping portal. Remember - it costs you nothing to click through from the Church site.

On another subject I'm in the middle of another 'Be a whizz' feature - this time on how to test the real broadband speed you are getting. It will be on the church site under the 'be a whizz' section by the time this magazine goes to press (or that is the plan!).

Happy browsing

David Cornwell
webmaster

EARLSWOOD & NEWCHURCH WEST
MEMORIAL HALL

AGM

THURSDAY 17TH APRIL 2008

AT
7.30 P.M
ALL WELCOME

Stargazing in April'08

The seven stars of the Plough lie pretty much overhead. It is one of the "circumpolar" constellations that are always above our horizon. Its classical name is Ursa Major, the Great Bear.

American slaves in the southern States of the USA were taught a song in childhood. The first verse runs:

*When the Sun comes back
And the first quail calls
Follow the Drinking Gourd
For the old man is a-waiting for to carry you to freedom
If you follow the Drinking Gourd*

The song gave a time, after the December solstice, when the Sun begins to climb higher into the northern sky and the calls of migratory quail can be heard in the southern United States, and a direction – the Drinking Gourd is the Plough and lies to the North. This gave slaves the vital information which allowed them to escape to the North and to freedom.

The second star from the left of the seven stars in the Plough is called Mizar. On closer inspection it can be seen to have a close companion called Alcor. Like many other stars, Mizar is a double star. It is a true double star since the two stars orbit each other under the influence of their gravity. Some doubles appear to be close together but are at very different distances from us, and are called optical doubles. Some true double stars vary in brightness because as they rotate about each other, one of them obscures the other periodically and so reduces the overall brightness.

The slightly yellow planet Saturn can be seen shining brightly to the south-west in the constellation Leo. It is close to Regulus, the brightest star in Leo. At the end of April, Mars can be found in the constellation of Gemini, where it is in line with the twins Castor and Pollux. Jupiter can be seen to the south in the early morning sky.

The Moon can be used as a useful pointer to the planets. It is near Mars on 11th April, Saturn on the 15th and Jupiter on the 27th.

Dave Thomas

At our meeting on Wednesday 12th March at Shirenewton Recreation Hall, Ken and Coralie Payne told us of the work of the "Mercy Ships". Voluntary doctors, physicians, dentists, nurses and many others work among the people along the war torn countries on the West African coast. The work they faced was often harrowing and they could not help many hundreds of the people who queued for help when the Ship came near their shore. It is a cause well worthy of support.

We are sorry to lose Fenella Isitt as a member. We will miss her and hope that her health will improve sufficiently for her to carve a new life with her sister at Underwood.

Our winter savings boxes raised £110.41 for the overseas work of the MU.

April is a busy month for the MU – the Spring Council held at St.Johns Newport on the 11th is open to all members; the Celtic Pilgrimage on the 22nd April starts at St.Cadocs, Trevethin with Morning Prayer and continues with Midday Prayers at St.Cadoc's Raglan. Evensong will be at 4.00 p.m. at St.Arvals then Evening Prayers at St.Thomas', Redwick finishing with a meal at The Rose Inn Redwick. Members can join in the Pilgrimage at any point but numbers are required for the final meal. On the 23rd April we have our own Deanery Roadshow at Rogiet Church Hall from 10 – 3. This is open to all who are interested to see what the MU is about in a very informal setting – please come.

At our next Branch Meeting on Wednesday, 9th April (2.30p.m. at The Recreation Hall) we will be welcoming Mike and Mandy Scott to up date us on the trip by members of Caerwent Church to Uganda and the project that the Church has supported.

ADVANCE NOTICE FOR MAY - All parents and other interested persons are invited to an evening meeting at Caerwent Village Hall when John Hall will speak on "Equipping Parents in the World of Drugs". On the 19th June we are running a coach trip to Cardiff – there is likely to be 10 seats available at £6.00 each for ANYONE who would like to spend five hours in Cardiff on that day. Please help us fill the coach. If you are interested please contact the undersigned.

Visitors are welcome to join us at our monthly meetings at 3 for Talk and Tea.

Branch Leader: Auriol Horton 641844.



Spring Cleaning at the Marsh



The following is a report from one of our local nature reserves, and a real haven for wild life on the wetlands of the Severn Estuary, located on the marsh lands behind the village of Magor. You don't have to wallow in mud, there are plenty of board walks to keep your feet dry, but the wet stuff is there if you feel compelled. Why not pop down and see some of the rarer wild life.

In like a lion, and out like a lamb" – March has been true to its character. As usual at this time of year – nature has a habit of clearing out the deadwood and this year was no exception at Magor Marsh. We lost a large chunk of our hybrid black poplar tree complete with its mistletoe clumps, one of the willows threatened to take out the Orange transmitter at the edge of the reserve and many of the other trees certainly look slightly lopsided now! But none of the deadwood is wasted here – its all put to good use – to create log piles for our many amphibians, insects, fungi and small mammals and larger homes for otters.

Clearing deadwood is not the only job that needs doing here during Spring. Unfortunately, Nature Reserves can not just be left to nature! The land management of the reserve here at Magor Marsh is vital to sustain all the different habitats and associated biodiversity. Whilst the small herd of cows do some of the work for us in grazing the meadows, our team of rangers and volunteers still have lots of jobs to do. They clear areas in the coppiced willow to ensure that the undergrowth can re-establish, cut down some of the reeds on the pond to prevent it growing over completely, mend the boardwalks and chicken-wire and keep the paths clear for people. They have also been busy preparing another field for grazing by slashing the reeds (by hand!) before bringing some ponies in to do the rest. As if they haven't got enough work to do - they have also designed and started to prepare a wildlife garden near the car park area. This will help to show everyone examples of native plants and flowers and ways to garden for wildlife.

Kathy Barclay
Community Education Officer (Magor Marsh)
Tel: 01633 889048

SHIRENEWTON , MYNYDD BACH & EARLSWOOD NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH.

A couple of crimes that are being committed across our area as a whole:

1. The theft of fuel from storage tanks in significant quantities. This will require bulk vans with multiple large cans, or even tankers. We are advise to ensure that tanks are secure and where possible hidden or disguised.
2. We have been informed that a distraction burglary took place in Bulwark, where £500 was taken. A dark haired man posed as a water company official and stated that he needed to check out a leak, he was wearing what could loosely be described as a uniform (nothing too official) and he was accompanied by two men in their 20s.

Similar incidents have occurred in Rogiet and Ross on Wye, therefore it is recommended that people are vigilant.

There will be a "Police Surgery" on 19th April at the Recreation Hall followed by a walk around the village with a member of the Community Council.

Nick Bruce

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THIS GLOBAL VILLAGE

Some Food for thought

If you could fit the entire population of world into a village of 100 people, maintaining the proportions of all of the existing populations on Earth that village would consist of:

57 Asians
21 Europeans
14 Americans
8 Africans

52 Of which would be women and 48 men.
30 Caucasians and 70 non Caucasians
30 Christians and 70 non Christians
89 Heterosexuals and 11 Homosexuals

6 people would possess 59% of the wealth
and they would all be American.
80 would live in poverty
70 would be illiterate

50 would suffer from hunger and starvation
1 would be dying—while 1 would be being born
1 would own a computer
1 (yes only 1) would have a university degree.

If we looked at the world this way the need for acceptance and understanding would be obvious.
But consider the following:

If you woke up this morning in good health, you have more luck than one million who won't live through the week.

If you've never experienced the horrors of war, the solitude of imprisonment or the pain of torture; were not close to death from starvation then you are better off than 500 million people.

If you have a full fridge, clothes on your back, a roof over your head and a place to sleep you are wealthier than 75% of the Worlds population.

If you have money in the bank, in your wallet or a few coins in your purse, you are one of the 8 privileged few amongst the 100 people in the world

If your parents are still alive and married, you are indeed a rare individual

FAIRTRADE NEWS REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL

In 2007 Starbucks were forced to concede that Ethiopia had a right to trademark some of their speciality beans :(Sidamo, Yirgecheffe and Harrar): Starbucks had no legal right to the trademark (nor the extra profits).

Starbucks is the largest purchaser of Fairtrade labelled coffee. It buys 14% of the global supply. (2006)

REASONS TO BE MORE CAUTIOUS:-

14% of the global supply of fairly traded coffee represents 6%, yes 6% of Starbucks' coffee purchases. Starbucks likes to portray itself as homely and caring and yet 94% of its coffee is NOT fairly traded! Fairly traded coffee is available IN PACKETS in store but very few of Starbucks' in-house coffees come with a fair trade option. They have their own farmer welfare package CAFE: Coffee and Farmer Equity. Yet almost 70% of Starbucks' farmers fail to meet even these vague and watered down guidelines. (These comments were taken from a much more detailed article in the April edition of the New Internationalist magazine)

As I have said before : Caveat Emptor: the customer must insist on the FAIRTRADE mark if he/she wants to be sure the product meets all the requirements of Fairtrade.

As ever contact me for a Traidcraft catalogue or go directly to:
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