

**THE CHURCH OF ST. THOMAS A BECKET
SHIRENEWTON**



**Parishes of Shirenewton and Newchurch
Magazine**

READERS AND SIDES- PERSONS ROTA FOR DECEMBER

DATE	SERVICE	READER	SIDES-PERSON
Dec 7th	2nd Sunday of Advent 9.45 a.m.	John Nicholas Cynthia Smith	John Nicholas Cynthia Smith
Dec 14th	3rd Sunday of Advent 9.45 a.m.	Barbara Davies Auriol Horton	Barbara Davies Auriol Horton
Dec 21st	4th Sunday of Advent 9.45 a.m.	Winnie Jones Ernie Jones	Winnie Jones Ernie Jones
Dec 24th	Christmas Eve 4.00 p.m.	Nativity & Christingle Service in the Church	
Dec 24th	Christmas Eve Midnight Mass 11.30 p.m.	Sally Saysell Kevin Bounds	Alan Saysell John Nicholas
Dec 25th	Christmas Day 10.00 a.m.	Family Service	
Dec. 28th	1st Sunday of Christmas	Group Service—Caerwent—11.30 a.m.	

Note That from 1st January Sunday Service in Shirenewton Church will start at 9.30 a.m.

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

READERS AND SIDES- PERSONS ROTA JANUARY

DATE	SERVICE	READER	SIDES-PERSON
Jan 4th	Christmas 2 9.30 a.m.	Jean Jones Peter Jones	Jean Jones Peter Jones
Jan 11th	Epiphany 9.30 a.m.	James Leney Ruth Savagar	Bernice Bowen Claire Lewis
Jan 18th	Epiphany 2 9.30 a.m.	The Children	The Children
Jan 25th	Epiphany 3 9.30 a.m.	John Nicholas Cynthia Smith	John Nicholas Cynthia Smith
Feb 1st	Epiphany 4 9.30 a.m.	Bob Grattan Mike Pierce	Bob Grattan Mike Pierce

Note That from 1st January Sunday Service in Shirenewton Church will start at 9.30 a.m.

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

PRIEST IN CHARGE.	Revd. Dr. William Ingle- Gillis	424984
CHURCH WARDENS:	Sally Saysell	641369
	Andrew Baker	641925
	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	ROBIN MITCHELL	
Clerk to Community Council	Carole Jones	641791
WI:	Jenny Bonner	641929
SCOUTS:	Dave Richardson	620356
GUIDES:	Helen Cann	650835
BROWNIES:	Jackie Broughton	641797
Cub Scouts	Geoff Marlow	641407
BEAVERS:	Becky Lewis	650304
POLICE CONTACT:	P.C. Mike Cowburn	01633 838111
REC. BOOKING SECRETARY:	Beryl Saysell	641637
TRAIDCRAFT:	Marion McAdam	641316
Local History Society	Shirley Bonsey	641362

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH CONTACTS

COMMUNITY POLICE OFFICER	MICHAEL COWBURN	01633 642068
	E MAIL: michael.cowburn@gwent.pnn.police.uk	
S'NEWTON & MYNYDD BACH -	Beverley Moore	641532

Please send your notes, discs or emails for inclusion in the February magazine to Bob O'Keefe at: 15 Newton Manor, Shirenewton, (641686) or email to bobandwenche@aol.com by Friday 23rd January.

SOME DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- 4th Dec. Whist Drive—the Recreation Hall—7.30 p.m.
 5th Dec. Barn Dance Itton Village Hall—See inside for details
 7th Dec. Sunday Club Advent Fair—The Church Hall 11.00
 8th Dec. Carol Service—Gaerllwyd Chapel—7.30 p.m.
 9th Dec. Shirenewton School Infants School Christmas Concerts
 10/11th Dec Infant School Christmas Concerts Shirenewton Church
 12th Dec. History Society—Resource Session The Rec. Hall 2.00pm
 12th Dec. Community Council Meeting—The Rec. Hall 7.70 pm
 14th Dec. Carols Around The Christmas Tree TA Car Park—7.30 p.m.
 16th Dec. History Society meeting—Itton Church—7.00 pm
 17th Dec. Carol Concert—Shirenewton Church 7.30 p.m.
 21st Dec. Carol Concert—St. Peter's—Newchurch— 2.30 p.m.
 21st Dec. Nine Lessons & Carols Caerwent Church 7.00 p.m.
 24th Dec. Nativity & Christingle—The Church—4.00 p.m.
 24th Dec. Midnight Mass— Shirenewton Church—11.30 p.m.
 25th Dec. Family Service—Shirenewton Church—10.00 p.m.
 25th Dec. Eucharist Service St Peter's Newchurch 11.00 a.m.
 28th Dec. History Society—Solstice Walk—7.30am Woodland Tavern
 1st Jan. Whist Drive—the Recreation Hall—7.30 p.m.
 12th Jan. Community Council Meeting—The Recreation Hall 7.30 p.m.
 14th Jan. Local Neighbourhood Watch Meeting - The Huntsman 7.30
 22nd-24th Jan Puss in Boots—Earlswood & Newchurch West Memorial Hall
 27th Jan History Society Meeting The Huntsman 7.30 pm
 5th Feb. Whist Drive—the Recreation Hall—7.30 p.m.
 6th Feb. Shirenewton School PTA- Fish & Chips—Family Quiz night
 27th Mar. Shirenewton School PTA- Race night with curry.

Dear Friends

And so the world awaits. If my schedule is correct, you shall be reading these words right at the outset of Advent. Christmas is only weeks away! (How many more shopping days?!) And the world awaits.

But the question is: awaits *what?* *What* does it await? The excitement of the children on Christmas morning? The unwrapping of the prezies? The shiny paper everywhere and the music playing softly in the background? The mad-dash, last-minute preparations for all those relatives who are coming? The smell of the roasting turkey (or even tofu if, like my family and I, you're a vegetarian!)? The gathering of families and friends who, in this increasingly busy world, see less and less of each other throughout the rest of the year? Perhaps even the Queen's Speech -- or, at least, one of the excellent Christmas night films that Auntie Beeb shows each year and the inevitable Doctor Who Christmas Special?

Yes, the world awaits all of these -- with baited breath. And, in all likelihood, so do you. Certainly, I do. I just cannot wait to see Isaac and Eli's faces as they open their presents; I cannot wait to see how *excited* they will be with their toys -- and, at the ages of two and four, perhaps even more so with the boxes! For, despite our obligatory moaning each year about how over-commercialised Christmas has become these days, I honestly believe that, on the whole, we rather *like* all the hub-bub that surrounds Christmas. Otherwise, we wouldn't *keep doing* it year upon year. It all goes to build Christmas Day up into something *big, big, big* -- and most of us await it almost as eagerly as our children and grandchildren. What's more: to my mind, actually, there is everything in the world *right* about this. We *should* be excited about the coming Christmas -- and the coming Christ. We *should* be prepared to celebrate his birth in all of the frenzied joy we can muster. To my way of thinking there's little on earth more boring than the dour-faced Christian who comes up to the vicar in the midst of the festivities complaining "Oh, woe! They've forgotten what it's all about."

And yet, of course, whilst I insist that there should be joy, there is a point here, as well: in fact, there *is* something else the world awaits at Advent. Indeed. And, for the most part, the world doesn't even know it. What it awaits, of course, is a *Saviour*.

To be sure, most folks in Britain (but, surprisingly, not all!) know perfectly well who that child is that was born on Christmas Day: Jesus Christ, the Son of God, of whom the angels sang, whose birthplace was lit for the Magi by the stars themselves. Yet, most of the time, they -- and perhaps we, too (me as much as anyone else) -- forget what that *means*. We forget how much we *need* someone to make right all our human frailties and struggles. Someone to touch our lives with a divine serenity. Someone to bring the homeless and the starving to an ongoing feast. Someone to build a world that no longer lives in fear of global warming and natural disaster -- or even man-made disaster. Someone to put an end to war and dissension between tribes of peoples. Someone to make all of humanity into one great tribe in the unity to which God calls us.

The truth is: as much as we and the world can work now towards building God's Kingdom, what we *need* is *Christ himself* to finish it -- to make it perfect. This is precisely what we ask each week when we pray, 'thy kingdom come, thy will be done'. *That* is the Saviour the world awaits. *This* is the Saviour that the world may not even know it needs -- even if, perhaps, it already knows the name of Jesus.

But the Good News is that he *has come*. The babe born in the manger is *indeed* that Saviour: he who healed the sick, who taught God's will, who proclaimed forgiveness of sin -- and who died and rose again, so that all the world might follow him. When this same Jesus, then, comes again in glory, he will bring in his wake a new heaven and a new earth. In fact, by the power of his Holy Spirit, he is at work, even now, to start building them.

Where we are blessed as Christians, and challenged, is in this: it is our job to let the world know that its Saviour is come. It is our job to remember not only 'the reason for the season' -- but more importantly what it *means* for God to have come to live amongst us. And, most important of all, in the midst of the Christmas frenzy, it is our job to invite our world inside for a cup of our own special kind of holiday cheer.

Blessings,
Fr. Will

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Dominic - The Bishop of Monmouth flanked by Curate Nansi Davies and the Rev. Dr. William Ingle-Gillis at the recent opening of the New

FROM THE REGISTERS

A Funeral Service was held on Wednesday 12th November in memory of Sarah Ann Price followed by Internment in the Churchyard.
 Born 1926—Died 2008

SHIRENEWTON CHURCH 200 CLUB

The winners of the November draw were:

Ticket No	Winner	Prize
148	Linda Davies	£40
3	Len Baldwin	£30
44	Sebastian Cornwall	£20
159	Ruth Savagar	£10

SHIRENEWTON SUNDAY CLUB

Date	Time	Venue
7th Dec	9.45 am	Nativity Rehearsal— Church Room
14th Dec	9.45 am	Nativity Rehearsal — Church Room
21st Dec	9.45 am	Dress Rehearsal—The Church
24th Dec	4.00 pm	Nativity Christingle Service—The Church
		New Term
18th Jan	9.30 am	Sunday Club — The Church Room
25th Jan	9.30 am	Sunday Club—The Church Room
1st Feb	9.30 am	Sunday Club—The Church Room
8th Feb		No Sunday Club
15th Feb	9.30 am	Sunday Club—The Church Room
22nd Feb	9.30 am	Sunday Club—The Church Room

Please Note the change of time!

From January 1st our Church services and Sunday Club will start at 9.30 am and finish at 10.30am. If we aren't there when you arrive—please give us a ring to wak us all up!

Shirenewton Sunday Club welcomes all children from 3 years. Do come and join us.

Jane Smith Haddon 641 525

Glynis MacDonald 641818

will actually store fairly well. Coxs' always spring to mind, but I understand that there are some good modern varieties now. I'll have to get a fruit tree catalogue or two and while away an odd hour in my leather recliner chair whilst I decide! Preferably with a nice log fire in front of me, and a large glass of rum in my hand. These cold evenings, it is very difficult to drag yourself out to do anything in the garage. Most chores can wait until the days get longer, but I do find it difficult to sit down and do nothing, whereas the under-gardener finds it very difficult this time of year to do anything, other than sit down and do nothing! Most chores are restricted to DIY projects and at the moment I'm building some framed nets to sit over the small ponds and prevent the heron getting at the fish. Whilst measuring up I watched the fated Koi going around in their "ten second circles". Maybe its now time to try and catch them and put them back in the large pond, where they almost met their maker. That would be a nice Christmas present for them, as with their short memories, they would never again see things that they had seen before! Well a month off now! We hope you all have a very good Christmas and I look forward to continuing my ramblings for a further year come 2009.

Happy gardening until next year. Steve Hunt.

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never eat the fruit. The blackbirds do make a mess with their pecking but at least they keep on at one fruit!

Continuing with the fruit theme, I need to really concentrate on sorting out the fruit cage. I have been really disappointed with the results this year. We didn't help ourselves in that we never got around to tying the new raspberry canes in so many were bent over under the weight of fruit and therefore spoiled before we could pick and freeze them. For some reason the canes never really grew properly, despite the warm and wet conditions being ideal. The canes are only some four years old and should be OK for at least fifteen years. I need to get these sorted therefore and put the effort into weeding and manuring to see if this makes any difference. If not, I may have to consider digging them all out this year, and starting again. I also need to sort the netting out over the top. This was destroyed in a wet snow fall last winter, and needs sorting before the squirrels get in and eat all the fruit again.

With the weather being bad, I've persuaded the under gardener to spend her time usefully in the tunnel and large greenhouse. The last frosts finished off all the salad crops, so these all need clearing away now, and the ground lightly forked over. This will then be smothered deep in manure ready for next year's cropping to begin in earnest. Amazingly the calabrese that I spoke of last month is still cropping like nobody's business, so this, combined with the different root crops, is really extending our fresh vegetable intake, far beyond what we have been able to achieve previously. I'm hoping that I can enrich the ground so much, that we will continue to get bumper crops next year. This is the main problem with our soil here at Barn Farm. It is very hungry and you need to throw as much feed and compost type material at it as you can. The calabrese is planted in soil that grew early potatoes, but hadn't cropped previously to that, ever. Hopefully next year will then produce the same sort of crop! A break in the weather allowed me to get some asparagus crowns planted in a raised bed. I'm keeping my fingers crossed that these survive the Winter as most died last year. Asparagus crowns aren't cheap to buy, but just looking forward to those lovely succulent stems has got to be worth it – assuming they survive of course.

It came as a shock this week to actually have to start buying apples again. We have been self sufficient since middle of August, but the varieties that we have aren't keepers, so they cannot be stored for the winter. Most of our fruit trees "are up the field", where we keep the bees, but several plum trees have never really got going. I think what I will do is pull these out and replace them with some good apple varieties that ripen later and

Shirenewton's Church Christmas



Come to the Sunday Club's

Advent Fair

Sunday 7th December 11.00 in

The Church Room

We are raising money once again for the Tiger's Club which helps street children in Uganda.

Homemade Mincemeat, Christmas Cakes, Lucky Dip, Recycled Christmas Cards and Tags, Candles and more!

Refreshments available



Carols Around

the Christmas Tree

Sunday 14th December 6.00pm

Tredegar Arms Carpark

Come and sing some well loved carols

Collection for the Tiger's Club

With thanks to Julie of the TA and Chepstow Town Band

Gardening Corner

Come to the Sunday Club's Advent Fair

Sunday 7th December 11.00 in The Church Room

We are raising money once again for the Tiger's Club which helps street children in Uganda.

Homemade Mincemeat, Christmas Cakes, Lucky Dip, Recycled Christmas Cards and Tags, Candles and more.

Carols Around the Christmas Tree

Sunday 14th December 6.00pm

Tredegar Arms Car park - Come and sing some well loved carols
Collection for the Tiger's Club

With thanks to Julie of the TA and Chepstow Town Band

Shirenewton Church Carol Concert

Wednesday 17th December at 7.30

An informal mix of carols, readings and poems.

Shirenewton Church

Sunday Club proudly presents:

TardisTimeZone

The Nativity and Christingle Service

Christmas Eve at 4.00pm

Shirenewton Church

Another month almost gone, and by the time you read this Christmas will literally be just around the corner. Things are really beginning to quieten down in the garden now, although looking around there is plenty that needs doing. Main jobs I'm looking at are the hedges to finish off and starting some winter digging. The hedges won't spoil for several months yet, but I need to avoid running out of time otherwise they will be out of hand and take three times as long to get them back in shape again. Fortunately all the hedges At Barn farm are native deciduous, mainly beech or thorn, so these are pretty forgiving and can be cut at any time. For those of you that are unfortunate to have conifer hedges, you need to be a little bit more careful. Certainly never cut them when there is a danger of hard frost, as this will burn the cut edges, and make the green, turn brown! Conifer hedges can make some excellent barriers, but they do need regular cutting – at least once a year and ideally twice. Unfortunately many tend to leave them to be cut "next year", but of course next year never comes along and they soon get out of hand. Again the benefit of a native hedge is that you can cut them back to wherever you like, if they outgrow their plot, but not so conifers. You must always cut into green growth. If you don't they will never re-grow (unless you have western red cedar as this is a little more forgiving). I've also noticed in recent years that there are a lot of conifer hedges, many of them well tended, that have suddenly gone brown and died. This is generally the result of an aphid (greenfly), which has sucked the sap and caused the foliage to die. On occasions they will shoot out again if the attack hasn't been too severe, but normally they will just die!

Another job that needs doing is pruning all of the non stone fruit trees, this obviously means anything other than plums, almonds, apricots etc. To do these species this time of year will increase the likelihood of disease entering the branches. So all the apples and pears will get a good haircut soon. The trees are well established now so it is more a case of thinning out branches, removing diseased or damaged ones whenever possible. The main objective is to maintain an open shape, with plenty of light and air reaching the branches. We had good crops of apples this year, but pears were limited. Unfortunately many apples seem to fall off prematurely, well before they are ready. There is no obvious reason apart from Jay birds. These are always around and land in the fruit trees. I have seen them pecking like no tomorrow, so I can only think they knock the fruit off. I'm sure its out of boredom or something because they

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Christmas Eve at 11.30 pm

St Thomas A Becket—Shirenewton

**Christmas Morning Family Service in
St Thomas A Becket—Shirenewton**

Led by The Rev Dr Ingle-Gillis

Nine Lessons and Carols

Sunday 21st December at 7.00pm

At Caerwent Church

With The Netherwent Singers

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CAROL SERVICE

3 pm

14th DECEMBER 2008

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A COUPLE OF NOTES OF THANKS

I would like to thank all the people who clean the Church, who clean the brass-ware and those who are always there to support in every way possible.

A very special thanks again this year to Maureen Moody who looks after the flowers. They are always beautiful throughout the year.

I know Andrew our other Warden appreciates our prayers and our thoughts that are with him as he spends Christmas in Afghanistan.

I wish a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Sally Saysell
Church Warden.

The PCC and the editor would like to thank all our readers and contributors who diligently provide us with their articles each month.

Also our thanks to the local business' that use the magazine to advertise their services. Most of all our thanks to all our readers who support the magazine throughout the year

We hope you all have a happy and peaceful Christmas.

Please note there will be no magazine during January.

ST PETERS CHURCH NEWCHURCH

Special Notice

**Sunday 21st December - 2.30 p.m.
Family Carol Service.**

**Christmas Day 25th December -11.00 a.m.
Eucharist.**

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Community Council report:—

Monday 3rd November

Reporting this month – Glynis MacDonald

And there were present 15 members of the public!

Police report from PC Cowburn

9th Oct – Mud... was reported on the Usk Road

10th Oct— Youths were heard shouting (!) in Great Barnets Wood

11th Oct— A cow was seen on the Usk Rd again. But it disappeared.

13th Oct- A burnt out car was reported in St Pierre Wood

17th Oct- There was suspicious activity up in Earlswood – was this a poacher?

20th Oct- The electric box of an electric fence was stolen from Gaerllwyd.

20th Oct- More suspicious activity – this time in Shirenewton – however, an innocent explanation was provided.

22nd Oct- Traffic lights were stuck on red (*again*) along the Usk Road

22nd Oct -There was a minor road accident – on the B4235 near Shirenewton.

24th Oct- Bank fraud reported from Shirenewton

25th Oct- A faulty alarm went off in Shirenewton

26th Oct- A stolen car was burnt out up at Earlswood

28th Oct- A mobile phone was stolen from Earlswood Hall

There were reports that badger baiting could be taking place as suspicious people with guns and dogs were seen at sites along the Usk Road. PC Cowburn suggests that if anyone sees anything suspicious, to take down details of cars and registration numbers and let him know.

Planning

1. **The Old Barn, Lower Argoed, Shirenewton**
Kitchen extension. Refused

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2. **The Bungalow, Wentwood Hill, Earlswood**
Two storey extension. Approved with conditions ensuring discreet lighting, the high hedge should be reinstated and the drive should be porous
3. **The Coach House, Shirenewton Hall**
Conservation repairs and alteration to existing buildings. The councilors want to see a conservation report before they make a decision.
4. **Land on Home Farm:** Notification of a storage unit to be built. The councilors noted that this was the third such unit to be built.
5. **A replacement barrier on the Usk Road at The Rhewl.** This will mean that there will be a temporary road closure from 3rd November to 12th January 09 and diverted traffic will be directed to go to Chepstow via Itton.

Items of local concern:

The Path from the War Memorial to the Church has been cleared of moss by the MCC and the church has had the overhanging trees lopped back.

Cllr Down explained that **the pilot recycling scheme** is being trialed in various parts of Monmouthshire and its cost effectiveness will be reviewed .

The Big Issue of local concern was **the disposal of the land at Blethyn Close** by MCC which was why so many members of public had attended the council meeting. And it became apparent during the ensuing discussion that it wasn't only the public that was dismayed at MCC's decision to sell the land at Blethyn Close. Many of the councilors also expressed their dissatisfaction at the way this matter had been handled by MCC. Local authorities are legally obliged to set land aside for allotments and when 10 people in Shirenewton and Mynyddbach applied for allotments – some way back in 2006 – it had seemed obvious that the land at Blethyn Close – (which had been allotment land from 1969 – 89) could be allocated out. However, MCC has chosen to sell this piece of land. Cllr. Down was asked why MCC should want to do this. He pointed out that MCC regarded the land as only 'temporary allotments' He said that he himself had supported MCC's decision to sell the land. He



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CAROLINE'S COOKERY CORNER

Chicken and Ham Pie.

This Pie is easy to make and it is popular children and adults alike – lovely served with chutney; jacket potatoes and salad.

Ingredients:

2 tsp sunflower oil	1 tsp Dijon mustard
butter	500g of skinned sausages
2 slices of ham	1lb boneless chicken breasts
1 packet of short crust pastry	3oz apricots – chopped
1tsp thyme	1 tbsp chopped parsley
2 oz chestnuts – cooked	1 onion finely chopped
1 clove of garlic	salt and pepper
Good splash of Worcestershire Sauce.	

Fry the onion and garlic in the oil and butter – cool and add the sausage meat with mustard, Worcestershire sauce, thyme, parsley, apricots and chestnuts. Mix well and season.

Slice the chicken breasts into 3 fillets – season and fry in oil until browned.

Line the bottom a 20cm sponge form or loose based tin with 2/3 of the pastry. Press in half the sausage mix, one slice of ham and chicken – cover with the remaining ham slice and then the sausage – cover with pastry lid. Brush with egg or milk.

Cook on a baking tray in a pre-heated oven at 170 °c - 190° c gas 5 for 50 – 60 minutes.

Thanks once again to Caroline Davies

explained that MCC sells land for two reasons. One was to generate income – the other was to get rid of a liability, in this case the liability of maintenance. But Shirenewton councilors suggested that the piece of land was so small the income from the sale would be miniscule – and that renting out the land for allotments would bring in income. It was also pointed out that MCC had done nothing to maintain the land anyway.

Cllr Down stated that an alternative piece of land could be provided but the feeling of the meeting was one of puzzlement. Why is it now that MCC want to sell this obvious piece of land for allotments when local people have been asking for years?

The issue had now become acute because the councilors and the public had only recently become aware that the land in question was to come up for sale on 14th November. The councilors expressed concern that they had not been notified of the sale by MCC despite having previously declared an interest in it and had been pursuing the matter of local allotments with them for at least two years. Now they were having to try to find ways to prevent this sale which was taking place in only 11 days time. It seemed (*and I'm putting this judiciously...*) that nobody was impressed at all with the way the MCC had handled this long running issue.

Cllr Down agreed that he would contact Colin Berg CEO and Peter Fox, Leader of the Council asap with a view to getting the sale deferred.

Although other items were on the agenda – the allotment issue was the one that exercised most people's minds. And for most of the time.

Next meeting:

Monday 1st December 2008 at Shirenewton Recreation Hall, 7.30

Shirenewton Opera and Drama Group
present 10th Anniversary Pantomime

PUSS IN BOOTS



Earlswood Memorial Hall

Thursday 22nd, Friday 23rd & Saturday 24th January 2009
at 7.30pm

Tickets available from Barbara Walters
Tel No 01291 641338 email barbaraw@lters.org.uk

Price: Adults £6.00 Children £4.00

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Tel: 01291-641256

Email: shelly.whittington@shirenewton.org

Website: www.pant-y-cosyn.com

Torchlight Carol Service

at

Tintern Abbey

Monday, December 8th 2008 at 7.00pm
(assemble from 6.30pm for torchlight procession)

With

THE MARTIN SINGERS

In aid of Barnardos

FAIRTRADE NEWS

DIVINE CHOCOLATE -BIRTHDAY!

Divine Chocolate, the Fairtrade chocolate company that is 45% owned by cocoa farmers in Ghana, is ten years old. After the liberalization of the cocoa market in Ghana in 1993 a cooperative was set up which soon developed a reputation for honesty and efficiency. By 1997 it had 25,000 members. With the support of the Department of International Development and organizations such as Christian Aid a chocolate company was launched in the UK and in 1998 the first bars of Divine chocolate were produced. It was well nigh impossible to break into the UK market, worth £3.4 billion, which is dominated by just 3 companies that control 80% of sales. Fairtrade supporters lobbied their local supermarkets with 'Stock the Choc' postcards and now Divine is widely available. In Ghana the cooperative Kuapa Kokoo has 45,000 members in 1,200 villages and the schools, clinics, wells and many other facilities are testament to Fairtrade's success.

Job done then? Hardly! Fairtrade cocoa represents JUST 6% of Ghana's output! The message is clear: THIS CHRISTMAS WE MUST ALL EAT MORE (FAIRTRADE) CHOCOLATE!

Traidcraft has a much larger selection of Fairtrade chocolate (and other products) than our dear super markets care to stock!

Contact me for a catalogue or more info or the Traidcraft or Fairtrade websites direct: Marion McAdam 641 316 msm316@gmail.com

New Years Eve Party

@

The Carpenters Arms

One Sick Lizard

Playing live

Tickets £10 from the Carpenters Arm
Include
Beef or Chicken Curry + Chips or Rice
And Raffle ticket

BROWNIE REPORT

TEAM WORK AND LIFE SKILLS

At our October 7th meeting we concentrated on team work. This was particularly important because, with so many new Brownies, we are still learning the value of working together as a new team. Team work really can be lots of fun, especially when it involves building the tallest tower with jelly babies and marshmallows – sticky but fun! Also in October, we had a wonderfully relaxing evening trying reflexology and hand massage, in the capable hands of Annabelle Hancock and Karen Ostler.

The girls are now working on life skills – cooking, ironing, sewing buttons on, polishing shoes, thorough hand washing. These are essential skills that even some teenagers who go to university don't seem to have mastered (so our daughters tell us, but of course being ex – brownies, they're able to do all of them!!). December will mean Christmas card making, and of course the Brownie Christmas party.

Finally, a big thank you to all the girls who came to the Remembrance Service Church Parade. Thank you to our very proficient flag party – Amy, Ellie and Kirtsy. It's great to see so many of our new girls turning up for such important and traditional events. This is appreciated not only by the Brownie Leaders, but also by other people in the community, many of whom remember being in the church parade when they were Brownies, Guides, Scouts or Cubs. Thank you, girls and parents, for supporting Remembrance Sunday.

Jackie Broughton



The concert given by the Chepstow Male Voice Choir on 19th September raised £670 for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution .

Very many thanks to all that contributed to this excellent total.

Chepstow Choral Society

*The first concert of the 2008/2009 season, which will be the annual programme of Christmas Music & Carols will take place on **SATURDAY DECEMBER 13th**, at St Mary's Priory Church, Chepstow.*

*The Choir will be joined by **Lindsay Kidd Churchill (soprano)** and the Choir from **Wydean School**. The programme will be a highly seasonal mixture of choral and individual items, with appropriate readings, and family carols, and will be an excellent commencement for Christmas. This annual Christmas music presentation by Chepstow Choral Society has now become very much a "fixture" in the town's Christmas programme of events.. The Society is encouraged with the increase in new membership at the start of this season. If you require further information regarding singing membership, please contact Marjorie Duerden (tel. 01291 623310) or log onto the website (chepstowchoralsociety.org.uk). Anyone interested in becoming a patron of the Society can contact membership secretary Jean Parkes (620414).*

The Society's next concert & 2009 programme :

Saturday December 13th --- Christmas Music & Family Carols
With: Lindsay Kidd Churchill (soprano) - Wydean School Choir

Peter Cook (organ)

St Mary's Church, Chepstow, 7.30pm

Sunday March 29th 2009 -- Passiontide Concert

J. Stainer -- Crucifixion

Karl Jenkins -- The Armed Man (Choral Suite)

Henry Purcell -- Funeral Sentences

St Mary's Church, Chepstow, 7.30pm

Saturday June 27th 2009 – A Handel Celebration – 250 years

G. F. Handel (1685 – 1759)

St Mary's Church, Chepstow, 7.30pm

Musical Director : Graham Bull

Tickets are available for all concerts from Chepstow Bookshop and through choir members. For more information log on to the choir's website: www.chepstowchoralsociety.org.uk



1ST SHIRENEWTON GUIDES.

We are now getting used to our new venue and it is great to have so much space. We even have volunteers to vacuum at the end of the evening – but I expect the novelty will soon wear off. We are thinking about breaking our tradition of having the Christmas party in January and actually fitting it in before Christmas. There is an ulterior motive for this. We still have the 4 very large piñatas the Guides made as part of the Mexico experience ready to fill and destroy at the party. They take up rather a lot of room and, if the family require the dining table in the near future, the piñatas will have to go!

We are also looking towards our next challenge of “Changing the World” and thinking about which charity we would like to help by either raising funds or raising community awareness. I am sure you will be hearing more on this topic next year. The unit enjoyed making patriotic flag badges with beads and safety pins and playing traditional games on Remembrance Day. Other activities involving comestibles were, as usual, very popular.

We wish you all the complements of the season as we round off another busy year and begin to plan for 2009 which will see the opening celebrations in September to mark 100 years of Guiding.

Kestrel Helen Cann 01291 650835
Kitten Amanda Turner 01291 650763
Koala (Karen) and Panda (Bev)

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1ST SHIRENEWTON CUB PACK

Newsletter (October 2008)

Although we missed two Pack nights due to half term and bonfire night the cubs have still been very active this month continuing our first aid theme.

Matthew gave a talk on hyperthermia, its effect, its cause and how to help a sufferer. This was followed by the cubs practicing pulling a person from a very cold river and the different ways of keeping them warm. The effects of the wind and the chill factor were also explained.

The wind came up!! in our next activity which included making a montage of all the things affected by wind followed by each cub making a wind turbine. I am pleased to say that all the turbines worked very well.

This coming week we hope to be visited by one of Shirenewton local residents Mike Gambold who will be bring along one of his birds of pray and explaining to us how birds find their way home.

We are also going to attempt to make green bird feeders from used 50ml plastic bottles, the coca cola type, and fill them with peanuts, or sunflower seeds to help the birds through the winter months.

We will be having our Christmas Party on the 10th December which will also be our last meeting of the term, starting again on the 7th January 2009.

Diane, Matthew and I would like to thank all the parents who have given up their time to help us through the support group. Your help allows me not only to keep a high number of cubs in the pack but also to have more challenging activities.

We would also like to thank the Shirenewton Community for all their support and kind words during our first full term.

To all of you from all of us we wish you happy Christmas and a very good and safe 2009.

Geoff & Team.

The Pack now has its own web site; <http://shirenewtonscouts.jimdo.com/>

For further Cub Pack details please contact Geoff on geoffmarlow@btinternet.com

**Do you have problems mastering computer skills?
Do you find the use of some words confusing?**

A DISC used to be something you slipped when you hurt your back.

A WEB was something a spider made and a **RAM** was a male sheep.

A NET was for fishing or holding your hair in place.

A MOUSE was a little furry creature with whiskers.

BUGS and VIRUSES were something you caught that made you ill and **CHIP** went with fish.

A HACKER was someone with a bad cough, and a **CURSER** was someone with bad language

A LOAD went on a lorry, and a **BOOT** went on your foot.

You found builders and caravans on a **SITE**, and parked your car on a **DRIVE**

A ZIP helps to keep your clothes together, while a floppy was limp.

You hung your washing **ON LINE**, and sent a **CARD** at Christmas, and a **DESKTOP** was a place for your blotter.

FREE SPORTS MASSAGE

**Do you suffer from aches and pains or sports related problems
such as tight or sore muscles?**

Could you do with a massage?

**I am currently a student studying sports massage at the
University of Wales Institute Cardiff**

**and have to obtain over 100 hours outside my course hours.
Therefore, I am looking to practice on any willing volunteers.**

**If you think you may benefit or would like any further
information please call me.**

Tessa Davies – 01291641331 or 07817411615-

SHIRENEWTON CHURCH WEBSITE -

www.shirenewtonchurch.com

Well the new shopping portal is complete and all shops migrate across and new ones added. The new portal allows multiple category entries for shops and the ability for you to order and sort shops as you wish. As the new portal gets used you will be able to see the popular shops (as counted by clicks). The basic principles are still the same - you need to click through from the portal to the shop prior to purchasing to ensure that Shirenewton Church gets credit.

There are currently 253 shops in 33 categories in the portal - including many of the very popular shops used everyday. So, please, please, pretty please, do your online Christmas shopping via the Church website. It costs you nothing and the small amounts of commission we get for referring you add up.

Shops include many high street brands such as Asda, Comet, Early Learning Centre, Hamleys, House of Fraser, JD Sports, John Lewis, Next, Tesco. Also there are major catalogue and online brands such as Amazon, etc. Travel is well represented with most of the major hotel brands and lots of portals, such as hotels.com, ebookers.com, etc.

This year the Church has already received just over £725 as a result of the commission generated and there are more payments to come. So, it does make a difference.

Thank you for your support this year. Keep it up.

Happy Christmas and happy browsing.

Happy browsing
David Cornwell
Webmaster.

A CAROL SERVICE

Will be held at

Gaerllwyd Chapel

On

8th December 2008 from 7.30 p.m

Led by the Newport Male Voice Gospel Choir
Following the service hot soup and rolls will be available.



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Shirenewton W.I.

SHIRENEWTON WI

November's meeting was a very sociable occasion. Seventeen members were able to attend on what turned out to be quite a nice evening, weather-wise, putting us all in the right mood for our quiz. Separated into four teams we activated our grey cells and pondered over the two sheets of questions.

Our scores were quite good but no full marks. After warming up on the quiz we continued with a beetle drive. There were some very strange shaped beetles being drawn. I thought I was doing quite well, but each round 'beetle' was called before mine was complete. A nice social evening rounded off by tasty nibbles, provided by the committee.

December we are in festive mode, with dinner at the Tredegar Arms on the 11th. In January we are back at the Rec. Hall on the 8th, with a talk on the history of Shirenewton.

A Merry Christmas to everyone and best wishes for a Happy New Year 2009

Diana Such

Barn Dance Itton Village Hall

Friday 5th December from 7.30pm

Caller, Rustic Supper

Tickets £10 pp or £25.00 for family.

**To reserve tickets or for further information:
Contact Gardien Versteeg on 01291 628 091**



Merry Christmas from Magor



Well it's that time of year again – hasn't time flown? I hope you have enjoyed the year in Magor Marsh columns and I would like to thank everyone for their lovely comments. It's been a really busy year here at Magor and we've had a super time teaching the children (nearly 3000 of them) all about wildlife.

I thought I'd finish this year with a little a tribute (supplied by Denis Jackson – my bird expert) to a very Christmassy bird and one that keeps me company all year round here at the Marsh and probably in your gardens too...our dear friend, the Robin! This member of the thrush family with its striking red breast is probably the one bird that everyone can put a name to.

Quite how the Robin first became so symbolic of Christmas is rather unclear. Certainly, the bird has an association with Christianity which dates back perhaps as early as the 6th Century. Some early church writers even went so far as to suggest that its red breast had been acquired as a result of staining with blood as the bird tugged at the crown of thorns on Jesus' brow. None of these very early records though give any hint of the Robin becoming such an evocative symbol of Christmas. For that, we have to look to the much more recent past.

In fact, whilst we cannot be completely sure, it may well have been the Victorians who, quite literally, stamped the robin into our collective consciousness. "Robin" was the nick-name given to Victorian postmen on account of the bright red coat which was the uniform of the day. During the 1860s when the custom of sending Christmas cards started to become a more commercial activity, many early cards would depict a robin, presumably representing the post-man, with an envelope in its bill. The rest, as they say, is history!

I would like to reiterate my thanks for putting up with the amateur journalism and hope that you have a very, very peaceful Christmas and New Year.

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

THE BELLS, THE BELLS.

On 27th of October Shirenewton bell ringers rang the bells and then joined with other members of the congregation to welcome The Bishop of Monmouth to the church to dedicate the new church room. After the service there was a chance for all to participate in refreshments and conversation in the new room. The room itself has a lovely atmosphere it adds an extra dimension to the church and will be a great asset to everyone who wishes to use it.

Shirenewton Tower has become involved in training the next generation of ringing teachers. Several ringers from afar a field as Cardiff have heard how at Shirenewton we apply up to date teaching and coaching techniques. One Friday night three of these such ringers came and joined us for practice night and afterwards in the pub asked if we would teach them to use these new techniques. In response we have set up a teacher training system and will also produce a Teaching Manual. Three ringers from Cardiff and St Mellons came to Shirenewton on Wednesday 12th October to work with our latest recruits. The following Saturday two of them accompanied by their new pupil we started to teach the new learner and at the same time teach them how to teach him! This process will now continue with Pip going over for a further teaching session at Bassaleg and St Mellons.

On Saturday the 15th November Mike Penney our tower captain took part in a peal of Stedman Cinques (3 hours 15 minutes) rung at St Woolos Cathedral in Newport to mark the 60th anniversary of the first peal on 12 bells in Wales. A cinques method is rung on 12 bells. The bells number one to eleven ring the principle (Stedman) and the twelfth bell "covers" that is rings in twelfth's place every row. Stedman Cinques is an advanced method, only experts ring it. We are lucky to have a tower captain who is recognised within the L&MDACBR as such a high quality ringer.

Pip Penney

LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

There have been a number of crimes to properties over the recent weeks A number of these would seem to have been opportunistic, but some have been obviously planned. Some of incidents are as below.

Burglaries I occurred on the night of Wednesday 19th at:

Parva Prestige Cars in St. Arvans, Chepstow, Gwent NP16 6DN

The Anchor Hotel in Tintern

Parkfield Stores in St Arvans Chepstow, Gwent, NP16 6EJ

Texaco Garage—Pwllmeric a cash point and cash were stolen 4th November.

The Anchor Inn, Tintern— burglary where cash and cigarettes were stolen on the 6th November.

Private dwelling -burglary in St Arvans. Cash stolen. Other items recovered outside. Door may have been left insecure. 11th November.

The local police have informed us that new copies of the 'Yellow Pages' directories are in the process of being delivered. These are normally left on the doorstep of homes. If you know your neighbours are away, please take in their copy and pass it on later. A directory left of the doorstep informs the rogues that the premises are probably unoccupied.

Please ensure you keep your home secure to reduce the risk of being a victim.

The next Local Neighbour Hood Watch meeting will be held at the Huntsman Hotel on 14th January at 7.30 p.m. Your local support would be very welcome.

EARLSWOOD & NEWCHURCH WEST MEMORIAL HALL

The memorial service on November 9th at the hall was well attended, raising £76 for the Royal British Legion. Thank you to Rev John Waters and everyone who took part including CFN Joseph McLean, REME, Great Great Nephew of Arthur Leslie Waters, who laid the wreath.

The Earlswood Badminton and Short Tennis Group is now meeting at the hall every Wednesday 7-11. Please contact Charles Eickhoff on 641716 or come along on a Wednesday if you would like to join in. Anyone aged 14 and above, or 10 and above with an adult, is welcome.

SHIRENEWTON MOTHERS UNION

At our November meeting, prayers were led by Rosemary Carey with a reading by Margaret John. "Prisons Week" would be commencing on the 16th November and we remembered and prayed for all those imprisoned for their beliefs and their families and for those who visited prisoners and maintained links with their families. Members then received news from the MU Diocesan Council meeting held on the 7th November that was attended by the Bishop. We were pleased to welcome Mrs. Kathy Palmer, our Diocesan President, who gave us a most interesting talk illuminated with slides of her visit to Australia as the representative of Wales at the Provincial Conference there. Members were asked to note the following dates:

Monday, 1st Dec. at 2.30 p.m. – Advent Carol Service at St. Christopher's Bulwark (Chepstow MU)

Tuesday, 9th Dec. 7.00 p.m. – Advent Carol Service at St. Pierre Church (Mathern MU)

Thurs. 11th Dec. 2.30 p.m. – Carol Service at Llanvaches Church (Penhow & Llanvaches MU).

Thurs. 19th Feb. 2009 12.00 for 12.30 p.m. – Diocesan lunch at the Parkway, Cwmbran (payment to be made at our December meeting).

NEXT MEETING will be held at Shirenewton Recreation Hall on Wednesday, 10th December at 2.30 p.m. when Mrs. Peggy Greedy will be joining us for Readings and Carols. As there will be no magazine in January please note that our January meeting will be held on the 7th at 2.30 p.m. in St. Thomas a Becket Church Room.

Auriol Horton

WHIST DRIVES

Once more 37 players enjoyed the Drive in November. At 7.30 December 4th we will enjoy our Christmas Special and look forward to seeing all our regulars at the Recreation Hall. Since New Year's Day falls on a Thursday we will be holding a Drive as usual to push away the post-Christmas blues – new players will be welcomed (1st Jan. at 7.30 p.m. at The Recreation Hall. In February the Drive will be on the 5th.

Enquiries to Auriol Horton 01291 641844.

SHIRENEWTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY
Registered Charity No. 1090167

The Society's A.G.M. took place on a very cold wet evening, we did not anticipate many members turning up. To our surprise we had almost a full house and after getting the business side of the meeting over, we welcomed Pat Noble and re-elected the existing committee. Our chairman, Anne Underwood declared 2008 to be a busy and successful year for the society. Two monthly meetings and field trips during the late Spring and Summer, a slightly wet visit to Chepstow Show and a busy day at the church Fete all made for an eventful year.

Our speaker for the evening was Julie Reynolds from Caerleon Museum, giving us a talk on Roman life in Caerwent and Caerleon. Showing us many of the fascinating artefacts found during the many excavations in the area.

Dates for your Diary:

Resource Afternoon, Monday, 8th December, 2.00 pm at the Recreation Hall, Shirenewton.

Local History Society December Meeting, Tuesday, 16th December at **Itton Church** at **7.00 pm**, the history of the church and mince pies, such a nice way to end our year. All are welcome.

Annual Winter Solstice Walk up to Grey Hill, on Sunday, 28th December, meeting at the Woodland Tavern at **7.30 am**. Meeting for breakfast afterwards at the Woodland Tavern at 9.00 am. All welcome, if you require breakfast could you contact me on this number 641376.

Resource Afternoon, Monday, 12th January 2009, at the Recreational Hall, Shirenewton.

Local History Society January Meeting, Tuesday, 27th January, 2009. The talk will be entitled, 'Wye Valley Meadows and Traditional Haymaking', given by George F Peterkin.

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STARGAZING IN DECEMBER

If it's clear on the evening of December 1st we're in for a treat. At dusk the Moon's crescent can be seen next to Jupiter. Then, between 5 and 5:15, Venus will appear from behind the Moon. This should provide a splendid view of the three brightest objects in the night sky.

Saturn rises in the east, just below the constellation of Leo late in the evening. The Moon is close to Saturn on 18th December.

In the evening, to the southeast, the constellation Orion is particularly impressive. Three bright stars make up his belt; two stars are his shoulders, and two more make his legs. The bright blue-white star in Orion's right leg is Rigel and the bright star at Orion's left shoulder is Betelgeuse (pronounce it "beetle-juice"). Betelgeuse means "the armpit of the giant" whilst Rigel translates as the "Left Foot of the Central One". Both are Arabic names. Betelgeuse has a reddish colour. It is a vast red super-giant star, large enough to contain the entire path of the Earth round the Sun. Because massive stars burn their fuel at a much faster rate, Betelgeuse has an estimated lifetime of only 5 to 10 million years. This can be compared with our Sun's lifetime of about 10 billion years – bigger is not always better! In [stellar navigation](#), Rigel is one of the most important [navigation stars](#), since it is bright, easily located and equatorial, which means it is visible from all of the world's oceans.

21st December is the Winter Solstice, our shortest day, often called mid-winter and a good time to take a trip to Australia where it is the longest day!

Dave Thomas

ADVERTISING RATES

To advertise in the Magazine rates are:

Full page—£50 for the 12 months i.e. 10 issues
1/2 page—£25 for 12 months—10 issues

Local charities for a single event—no charge.

COUNTRY LIFE IN OUR COUNTY

As we move into winter we continue with extracts from the notes from Mr Ernest Jones that he has compiled through his long years of farming in this area.

Winter.

Winter and the Dairy Farmer, the innocent layman believes that the farm closes down in winter until the following spring, how very different reality is. Ever since I can remember winter is a hard time on the dairy farm in the days of hand milking, not one of the worst jobs, the cowshed was warm after the cows had been there all night, but your feet got very cold on the concrete floor, and after milking there were many jobs to be done outside in all the elements of the weather. These days the modern milking parlour first thing in the morning is a very cold place, mostly a concrete floor and steel fittings, some are now fitted with heaters and that helps not only the workers but it also prevents pipes from freezing up.

Milk produced in this day and age is by and large better in many ways than it was sixty years ago. It's nutritional value and freedom from germs is much better. Two diseases of dairy cows that have been greatly reduced or eliminated, except for the stupid people who will import stock we could well do without are T.B (Tuberculosis) and abortion. When cows were kept in a humid cowshed, if one cow had T.B. it could easily spread to other animals, this was no direct risk to humans unless the udder was infected and this was then dangerous as the germ could be passed through the milk to humans. Nowadays all the cattle on the farms are tested annually for T.B., and as a result bovine T.B., has been virtually eliminated. Abortion could be devastating for the farmer, the calf would be lost, milk production would suffer, infection could follow if the cleansing was retained, the animal could be difficult to get back in calf, and the infection could spread to other animals in the herd, it was also a danger to humans as it could lead to undulant fever. Luckily I never caught it although we had serious abortion at home, which at one time nearly put my father out of business. S 19 vaccine was developed and what a godsend this proved to be in eradicating contagious abortion.

In the modern milking parlour with the job done properly milk is of very good germ free quality, although there are greedy people about who expect one person to do too much and then standards fall. You can have the latest and best facilities that the modern age can devise but if you have a sloppy person in charge the result will be poor quality milk. If care is not taken in washing the cow's udders before milking, this is of particular importance when the cows are housed in the winter, contamination of the milk can occur. It is important that after washing, the cow's udders are dried. In days gone by it was said that "what won't fatten will fill", but this was a dangerous attitude in milk production.

At the present time a lot of money is being spent trying to make robotic milking a success. With robotic milking the cows enter the stalls on their own and a robot washes the udder and puts the milking cups onto the teats. I say here and now and I may be proved wrong but I do not think this can ever be a commercial success, knowing cows for what they are, the variable udder shapes and the varying temperaments will prove to be too great a problem. We have in our own parlour many modern aids including automatic cluster removers, which with a keen person in charge work very well, but complete robotic milking will never be a success. I just wonder if some person reading these few pages in the years to come will say, "ah well", the old man was wrong!!

The worst weather in winter is snow, how I hate it, it really gums up the work, everything gets late and if the lane gets blocked the milk just piles up, as it cannot be collected. In 1947 we could not get out of Green Meadow for three days, we had two farms running at that time and we used an ex army four wheel drive Chevrolet three ton lorry, and with this we eventually got out by going over the fields, that winter was one of the roughest periods of my life. 1963 was also very grim, I was farming on my own account at Green Meadow and the lane was blocked, again we had to go across the fields with the tractor to get the milk out, it was also the year that our youngest son was born on January 22nd. and that was a test of human endurance.

Our thanks to Ernie Jones for sharing with us his feelings for our local countryside through the seasons. Also to Peter Bartlett for providing the copy. These notes are short extracts from one of Ernie's numerous books, copies of the books are available direct from either Ernie or Peter.