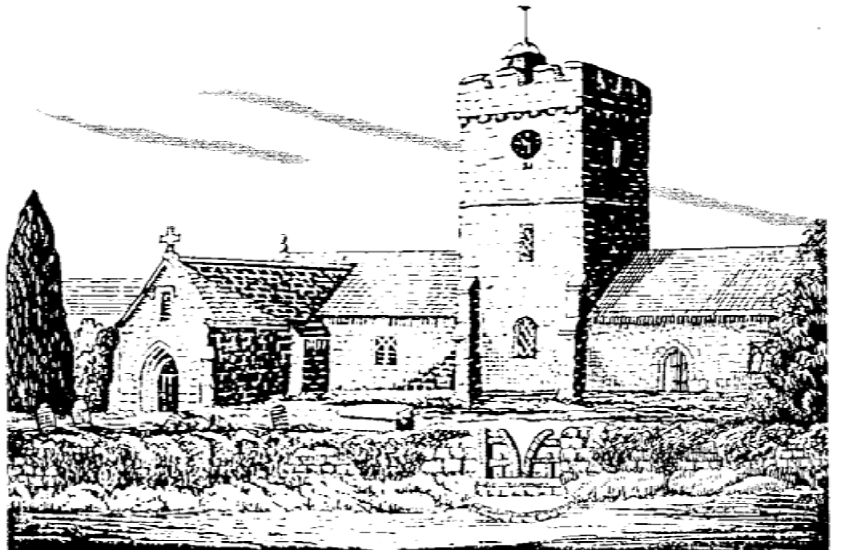


# THE CHURCH OF ST. THOMAS A BECKET SHIRENEWTON



## Parishes of Shirenewton and Newchurch Magazine

### READERS AND SIDES- PERSONS ROTA FOR MAY

DATE	SERVICE	READER	SIDES-PERSON
April 5th	Palm Sunday - Eucharist 9.30 a.m.	Margaret Lock Lisa Morter	Margaret Lock Lisa Moler
April 9th	Maundy Thursday	Eucharist - 7 p.m.	
April 10th	Good Friday	Meditation 2 p.m.	
April 12th	Easter Sunday 9.30 a.m.	Sally Saysell Andrew Baker	Alan Saysell John Nicholas
April 19th	1st Sunday after Easter 9.30 a.m.	Winnie Jones Ernie Jones	Ernie Jones Winnie Jones
April 26th	2nd Sunday after Easter 9.30 a.m.	Bob Gratran Kevin Bounds	Bob Gratran Kevin Bounds
May 3rd	3rd Sunday After Easter 9.30 a.m.	John Nicholas Cynthia Smitij	John Nicholas Cynthia Smith

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

<b>PRIEST IN CHARGE.</b>	Revd. Dr. William Ingle– Gillis	424984
<b>CHURCH WARDENS:</b>	Sally Saysell	641369
	Andrew Baker	641925
	Mrs Susan Lenthall – Newchurch	626389
<b>PCC SECRETARIES:</b>	Andrew Baker - Shirenewton	641925
	David Heritage- Newchurch	641549
<b>PCC TREASURERS:</b>	Kevin Bounds - Shirenewton	641818
	Enid Heritage - Newchurch	641549
<b>GIFT AID SECRETARY</b>	Ruth Savagar	641411
<b>CHURCH MAINTENANCE &amp; SAFETY OFFICER</b>	John Nicholas	641368
<b>ORGANISTS:</b>	Karen Millar	650521
	Ruth Savagar	641411
	Kath Whittington	641600
<b>SUNDAY SCHOOL:</b>	Jane Smith-Haddon	641525
<b>TOWER CAPTAIN:</b>	Mike Penny	650653
<b>Church Hall Bookings</b>	John Nicholas	641368
<b>MOTHERS UNION:</b>	Auriol Horton	641844
<b>CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER:</b>	John Waters	641449
<b>CHURCH FLOWERS:</b>	Maureen Moody	641524
<b>PARISH MAGAZINE:</b>	Bob O'Keefe	641686
<b>200 Club</b>	Pauline Dutton	641677

#### NAMES TO NOTE

<b>COMMUNITY COUNCIL</b>	ROBIN MITCHELL	
<b>Clerk to Community Council</b>	Carole Jones	641791
<b>WI:</b>	Jenny Bonner	641929
<b>SCOUTS:</b>	Dave Richardson	620356
<b>GUIDES:</b>	Helen Cann	650835
<b>BROWNIES:</b>	Jackie Broughton	641797
<b>Cub Scouts</b>	Geoff Marlow	641407
<b>BEAVERS:</b>	Becky Lewis	650304
<b>POLICE CONTACT:</b>	P.C. Mike Cowburn	01633 838111
<b>REC. BOOKING SECRETARY:</b>	Beryl Saysell	641637
<b>TRAIDCRAFT:</b>	Marion McAdam	641316
<b>Local History Society</b>	Shirley Bonsey	641362

#### NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH CONTACTS

<b>COMMUNITY POLICE OFFICER</b>	<b>MICHAEL COWBURN</b>	01633 642068
	<b>E MAIL:</b> michael.cowburn@gwent.pnn.police.uk	
<b>S'NEWTON &amp; MYNYDD BACH -</b>	Beverley Moore	641532
Earlswood	Sue Leat	641207

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 Friday 24th April.

#### **SOME DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

29th Mar	Choral Society—St Mary's Church Chepstow
30th Mar	Local History Society - Monthly Meeting The Huntsman 7.30
1st April	Local Neighbourhood Watch / Pact meeting - Huntsman 7.30
2nd April	Whist Drive—The Recreation Hall—7.30
3rd April	Guitar Recital - The New Church Room 8.00
7th April	Fete Meeting in the Church Room 8.00
20th April	Earlswood Hall - AGM at the Hall 8.00
20th April	Local History Society - Resource session Rec Hall from 2.00
28th April	Local History Society - Monthly meeting - Huntsman 7.30
1st May	Brass Band Concert - St Thomas A Becket Church.
7th May	Whist Drive - The Recreation Hall - 7.30
16th May	Velindre Coffee Morning at The Cayo from 10.00 - 12.00
17th May	St Peter's Newchurch Vestry Meeting 3.30
13th June	Church Fete - The Recreation Field

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From the Priest-in-Charge:

April 2009

'He is not here. He is risen, as he said he would!' These were the words the angel spoke to Mary Magdalene, his beloved disciple, as she arrived at the grave and became the very first to proclaim the Good News that our Church has told out ever since. These, too, are the words that I speak to you this day: Alleluia! He is risen indeed! And not only that—not only was Christ risen on that first Easter Day, two thousand years ago—but he still lives now, sitting at God's right hand; and in the power of his Spirit, we touch upon his resurrection every day of our lives. Indeed, whether we grasp this reality entirely or not (mostly likely not!), creation is bathed in Christ's love and resurrection, and it is in that love that life itself finds root.

We taste his resurrection though the blessed Sacrament, of course. But, importantly, the resurrection is not simply a sporadic occurrence, reserved for Sundays alone or one particular group of people; the Church does not have a monopoly on God's love, for God himself is wider than we can imagine. Rather, the resurrection is rather, it is a long-time event—a movement, if you will—whereby God embraces all our lives in all their dimensions: where God works from within our very selves to make all things new and fresh and whole.

Not so long ago, the Churches in the Caerwent Group of Parishes suffered a great shock: the death of a vicar. Such an event invariably pulls up a whole host of tangled emotions for the group and for individuals. And yet, when I arrived in September to carry on the work that my predecessors had begun (has it really been six months already?!), I found myself amidst four Churches—each with its own 'personality', so to speak—but all with profoundly strong spirits, and all deeply determined to thrive—to live out the Good News in their own way and in their own places amongst the people and friends who surround them. I cannot stress to you how unusual that actually is. It never happens: in the conventional wisdom, congregations invariably shrink during a fallow time between clergy. And yet ours have thrived by sheer determination—and by the hard work of people and the love of my clergy colleagues.

It is evidence to me, my friends, Christ is risen indeed. And he brings us—the human spirit—with him. Out of suffering and sorrow, he draws us closer into one another's lives. Out of struggle and confusion, he creates strength.

But let it not end there. As I write, I am six months into a new post—a natural time for clergy reflection: a moment to look back and take stock of what I have seen and what we together have done—a moment to evaluate what has worked thus far and what has not—a moment when, having begun to get a feel for a new place, we together can begin making plans to move forward. In doing so, I—like any clergyman—will need the constant prayer and support and, I hope, the love of my parishioners and villages. And so will you pray, please pray, for the well-being of our Churches, for God's guidance for me—and for the radically inclusive and self-giving love that God shows in Christ's resurrection, to abound in our hearts and in our loves together.

Grace and peace to us all.

Every blessing,  
Fr. Will

**THE WINNERS OF THE MARCH200 CLUB DRAW WERE:**

<b>Ticket No</b>	<b>Winner</b>	<b>Prize</b>
82	Peter Jones	£40
107	Kerry Edwards	£30
153	Jane Leney	£20
63	David Prosser	£10

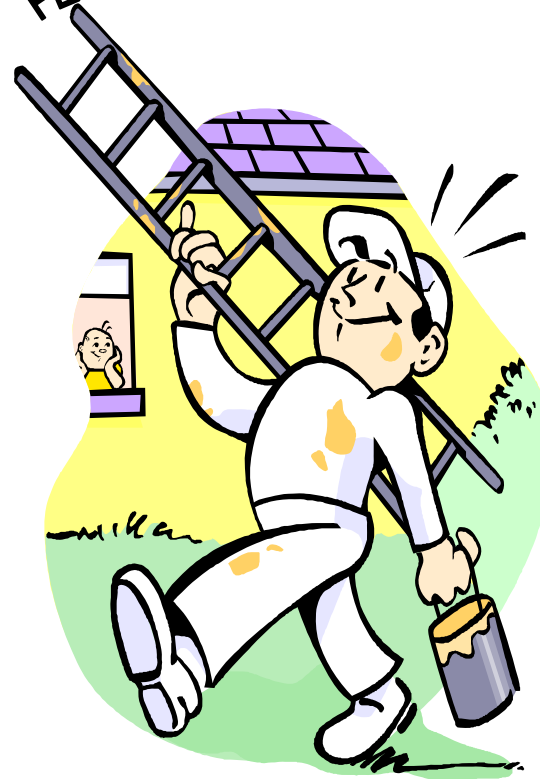
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ANDREW W GRIFFITH AMIH BSYA (IRID)

*THE CHURCH FETE*

IS ON

**SATURDAY - 13TH JUNE**

AT THE RECREATION FIELD

Once again preparations are in hand for this year's Church Fete.

Again we are aiming high to improve even more on previous fetes that have been very successful events both in terms of fund raising for the Church, but also and more importantly to make a great social event for the community as a whole. The aim to make this the best to date, this will be a tough task as each year the Fete has exceeded the success of the previous year.

The Fete Committee as always are seeking new ideas and new faces at the committee meetings. So if you do you have any ideas for improving or making the Fete more interesting please come along to the next meeting which will take place in the New Church Room on 7th April at 8 p.m.

For more information contact Gary Williams on 01291 641529

**ST PETER'S CHURCH, NEWCHURCH**

**ADVANCE NOTICES**

**Vestry Meeting 17th May 3.30.p.m.**

**Midsummer Fayre Saturday 25th July 12- 4.p.m.**

# SHIRENEWTON SUNDAY CLUB

New Term Starts on  
26th April at 09.30in The Church Room

During School term times Sunday club will be on  
Sundays from 9.30 - 10.30 a.m.  
held in the New Church Room

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

*Jane Smith-Haddon 641 525*

*Glynis MacDonald 641818*

Gardening God's Way Lettuce really love one another.

Plant three rows of peas:

Peace of Mind  
Peace of heart  
Peace of soul

Plant four rows of squash:

Squash gossip  
Squash indifference  
Squash grumbling  
Squash selfishness

Plant four rows of lettuce:

Lettuce be faithful  
Lettuce be kind  
Lettuce be obedient

## In the "Spring" of Lent

Plant three rows of turnips:

Turnip for meetings  
Turnip for service

Turnip to help one another

Water freely with patience  
And cultivate with love

There is much fruit in your garden

Because you reap what you sow

To conclude our garden

We must have thyme:  
Thyme for God

The vegetable area is divided into two, distinct areas by long narrow beds. These have been planted up with blackberries and tayberries up to now, but these have proved to be very rampant during the growing season, to the point of blocking the paths, not just preventing access, but also killing off the grass as well. After several years of being scratched to death, and fighting the blackbirds off the fruit, I have decided to get rid of these plants. These were all cut down and last weekend the roots were dug out and the beds were completely dug over, weeded and then manured. They were then replanted with a kiwi fruit that has been bred for our weather conditions, and also a seedless grape. Hopefully these will prove to be fruitful, without being rampant. Still, time to get back to the greenhouse. The secateurs are out again and I can feel the nervous anticipation of those plants again. Onwards and upwards!

Happy gardening until next month. Steve Hunt.

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*garden. In the case of the greenhouse, I've got some French bean plants and some salad crops that are ready to be planted in the border of the large greenhouse. Of course the benefit of this is that they are protected to some degree from late frosts, whilst being in a warmer environment (although this greenhouse is not heated). They are well out of the way of any late, cold northerly winds and can be easily covered with horticultural fleece if the need arises. This all means that the crops grow fast and can be out of the way before being replaced with tomatoes, aubergines and other sub-tropical type plants. The under-gardener has now decimated large areas of the flower borders and the first job for me will be to start digging and weeding these. At the moment the weather is absolutely ideal – unfortunately work pressures are such that I have little time at present to take advantage of this dry spell. Hopefully things will ease down in a couple of weeks and I'll be able to set to in earnest. I have made a start near the house and where I have weeded, for the first time ever, I have managed to mulch the beds with a thick layer of compost. I'm determined if I can this year to do this for the entire garden. I certainly have the manure to do it with thanks to a very kind, local stables, all I need is the time and the weather. Here's keeping our fingers crossed. In the vegetable areas I have started to tidy up the raised beds. Some crops have been in all winter and in this case the beds needed just lightly forking over and feeding them ready to get them going once the weather warms up a little more. Despite the really cold, hard weather we have had this year, crops such as shallots and garlic are looking remarkably well. I think colder but dryer weather suits these, as it does the strawberries. I planted four of the raised beds last autumn with two different varieties and these are now looking well. I've got plastic hoops over the top of the beds and the intention is that two of the four beds will be covered with plastic to try and encourage a slightly earlier crop. Once this has brought the plants on a bit, the plastic sheet will come off and then be replaced with a net that will let the bees through to pollinate the flowers, and will then help keep the birds off the ripening fruit. I did get around to purchasing a couple of red gooseberries in the end and these have joined three blackcurrants, claimed to be the sweetest in the world(!), in large plant pots of compost. I hope to get around to clearing an area of our old plant rearing beds, manuring this and then getting the plants out in the ground. They have been pruned and so will have little fruit this year, but hopefully next year will be a different tale. The prunings were placed in a narrow slot in the ground with the intention that these will root and provide further plants for another year. At least being in pots, its not critical as to when the ground gets dug, so it doesn't matter if the weather does change for a week or so, just so long as it improves again at some stage!*

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## Community Council

Council Meeting Notes – Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2009

Glynis MacDonald

### Police report for February 09

- Tues 2<sup>nd</sup> There was a vehicle accident B4235 near Shirenewton.  
Wed 3<sup>rd</sup> A jogger was bitten by a farm dog near Shirenewton.  
Sun 8<sup>th</sup> A faulty alarm went off in Mynyddbach.  
Sun 8<sup>th</sup> A vehicle got stranded in the snow at Penyaemawr.  
Mon 9<sup>th</sup> 2 mountain bikes were stolen from a garage in Shirenewton.  
  
Tues 10<sup>th</sup> A flock of 26 sheep were found at Earlswood.  
Wed 11<sup>th</sup> A vehicle hit a wall at Shirenewton.  
Wed 11<sup>th</sup> Someone who had lost 26 sheep phoned the Police.  
Fri 13<sup>th</sup> Sheep were reported on the road at Earlswood.  
Sat 14<sup>th</sup> A shed was entered and cases of beer stolen at Shirenewton.  
  
Sat 14<sup>th</sup> There was a report of young child driving a car on B4235 but the search proved negative.  
  
Tues 17<sup>th</sup> There was a burglary in Shirenewton when yet another garage was entered and a hedge trimmer & other items were stolen.  
  
Wed 18<sup>th</sup> There was a report of dangerous driving on the Crick Road.  
Fri 20<sup>th</sup> Wheels were stolen from a trailer at Penyaemawr.  
Mon 23<sup>rd</sup> A car crashed into Great Barnets Wood from B4235.  
Tues 24<sup>th</sup> Concern expressed over a planning application for caravans at Earlswood.  
  
Sun 1<sup>st</sup> Mar Some tools were stolen overnight from a garden in Shirenewton.

PC Cowburn did add that all the garages where the thefts occurred were left unlocked overnight. The message is **LOCK UP YOUR GARAGES AND SHEDS.**

The next PACT/Neighbourhood Watch meeting will be held on April 1st at 7.30pm

## GARDENING CORNER

*There comes a time of year when the plants in our garden are actually quivering in their roots! That time of year is nigh. The under-gardener has got her secateurs out and its time for the plants to be afraid – very afraid. The philosophy behind it all is one of two choices following a “good haircut”. They either thrive or die and who am I to argue? Those secateurs are shining with their winter coat of oil and are very sharp. The under-gardener has a glint in her eye. Thoughts of Mr. Bobbit (of America fame) spring to mind and being a rather gentle coward, but a coward all the same, I slink away to the greenhouse and leave “er that knows best”, to carry on with the wholesale massacre of my lovely garden. Having said that it seems to have thrived over the last fifteen years or so, that she can’t be doing too much serious damage. Either that or the plants themselves don’t want to die for fear of what she might do next!*

*Things are really starting to warm up in the garden now, literally if the recent weather is anything to go by. There is always the danger that with a little warmer weather, you rush outside and start digging and planting away. The result being that at the tale end of March, it turns nasty and all your hard work is undone as a series of hard frosts, or sleety rain turn your nice new plants into a black slimy mess. This is where a greenhouse, no matter how small comes into its own. We are fortunate here in that we have the room to have two large greenhouses and a large polythene tunnel.*

*The smaller of the two green-houses is our propagating one, with a large hot-bench to encourage young seedlings to germinate. I have been sowing seeds for some time and the first plants are now well up. The under-gardener, when she isn’t cutting things down, drifts off to the greenhouse and pricks out the small seedlings into individual cells or pots depending on what they are.*

*“Greens” are potted on into small cells, which are eventually planted out into the garden, whereas those plants that require further heating are put into small (8 cms) pots to begin with. As these grow they will be potted on into certainly one if not two more, bigger sized pots. This way they can stay standing on one end of the hot bench, getting the benefit of the heat, but without the need to heat the whole greenhouse. Hopefully these plants will be a good, robust size by the time they want planting out. The benefit of this is that not only can you wait for the warmer weather, you can also get away with planting a “catch” crop in the meantime. This is a crop that is fairly quick maturing that will grow and be cropped in the time before you want it available to plant again, maximising the output from the*



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## Planning

### Wentwood Mill Grounds, West End, Earlswood

Change of use planning permission. Holiday site for touring caravans (up to 30 units) and temporary/over winter storage.

26 members of the public turned up for this contentious planning application. After the council had discussed the application, a member of the public read out a letter that had been drawn up as a result of a public meeting which been held in Earlswood the previous week. This letter outlined in the strongest possible terms the reasons why they felt the Council should recommend refusal.

These included: interruption of rights of way, interference with water courses, the inappropriate road system for non reversing caravans, the dangerous access to the site, likelihood of light, noise and effluent pollution, the detrimental visual impact from the road and forest walks, and the over-density of 30 caravans on a very small and steep site .

The council unanimously recommended refusal.

**Bully Hole Bottom. Mobile Stable Blocks.** As I'm not a horsey person I don't know what a mobile stable is – but apparently planning permission is not needed if it is mobile but is needed if it is a permanent structure

### Items of Local Concern

The council is aware of the community's need for a **local shop**. The councillors expressed interest in the commercial aspect of the shop premises but not the residential. However, there seems that little can be done to pursue the existing premises as it is now in the hands of the official receiver.

There has been a great deal of interest shown towards the **Community Luncheon Club**. It will meet every 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month at The Tredegar Arms. The first lunch will be on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April and I was asked to say that it is essential to phone up the Tredegar Arms and book your place. It would be ghastly if you turned up and the pub was full – so please ring the TA on 641274

This luncheon Club is aimed at those of Pensionable age. *(It is politically incorrect to use the term old age pensioners so I won't)*

As you've probably read, MCC are now not **grass cutting** in various areas including the Rec. But one councillor suggested that if Shirenewton CC has to take over this task, then the money that would have been spent by MCC

should be devolved to Shirenewton. Otherwise, if SCC has to levy charges to cover the costs, it could be argued that the good people of the area would be subjected to double taxation which, is a bit of a no-no, according to guidance from the Welsh Assembly. (And presumably a bit of a no-no to those who have to cough up twice)

The **Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act** allows community councils to adopt powers to issue on-the-spot fines for people who allow their dogs to dump or those who indulge in graffiti. However, the council felt that the cost of training people to police this issue was prohibitive. And locally, we don't suffer from graffiti. But we do suffer from poo so the local Dog Warden can be called upon.

It was agreed to participate in the **Best Kept Village Competition** this year. The competition will be judged in May/June time and so we will be encouraged to trim our lawns and weed our verges. Carole Jones and Beverly Moore will be delighted if later on in the year, lots of people get in touch and get involved.

The Church Clock (which actually is the **Community Clock on the Church**) has stopped working because its main drive shaft has sheared off. The councillors hope that it is still under its 10 year guarantee when it was electrified some years ago.

**Moving on**, it was reported that the wall by the graves at **Peniel Chapel** has now been completely dismantled and the disrespectful way the gravestones have been treated has caused a great deal of concern to local residents and to the councillors. The authorities of the Baptist Church will be consulted.

The council discussed the **Proposed Welsh Language Legislative Competency Order**. This questionnaire provoked a great deal of thought as the questions were positively loaded along the lines of 'Have you stopped beating your wife?' The councillors recognised that the obvious 'Yes' answer might well result in huge financial overheads which many a community council and voluntary organisation would be unable to bear.

#### **Correction**

In last months mag. I wrote that Gaerllwyd Chapel will receive £50 for repairs to a widow. I apologise to any widows hoping to be repaired. In fact, the money will go towards the repair of the chapel window.

**Next Meeting** will be on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> April, 7.30 at the Recreation Hall.

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two very accomplished professional classical guitarists.  
John Mills and Dan Jones.

John Mills has studied under Andres Segovia and Julian  
Bream and is the visiting Professor of Guitar at The  
Royal Academy.

The programme has not yet been confirmed, but this is a  
wonderful opportunity to hear some very accomplished  
guitar works.

There is an obvious limit to the number that can be ac-  
commodated so tickets will be limited to first come first  
served basis.

Tickets at £5 each are available through

**SHIRENEWTON & Mynyddbach**  
**Fields Association.**

While writing this on the day of the Vernal Equinox I was thinking that, all things being equal, the year ahead is full of promise and anticipation, it lifts the heart to see the burst of yellow in the fields and verges; celandine, daffodil, primrose etc. and the pristine white of the blackthorn blossom, though do not take any of the latter into your house- it will bring bad luck. The mornings are gently started with birdsong and nest building is well on the way for the wintering songbirds although Tawny owls will have long started, taking advantage of the longer hours of darkness. While talking of birds nesting, can I ask parishioners to refrain from hedge cutting until the end of summer, indeed we in the association have missed the window for hedge trimming until September so please do not be concerned if you see little activity in the fields during the long days.

At this time of year most people's garden ponds, especially the wildlife friendly as opposed to the ornamental "garden feature" type will be, like my own, bursting with a convex meniscus with frogspawn and many people will think they have far too much but please do not be tempted to take the odd bucketful down to the fields and release it because you may inadvertently be importing non-indigenous seeds or even invertebrates into the wild from the garden centre plants you may have planted in your pond. Better to leave it alone and let nature handle it- remember, only two tadpoles have to survive to ensure the continuation of the species, many will be predated on by dragonfly larvae, birds and if your lucky to have them, newts.

On the subject of non-indigenous species, we already have a problem with Himalayan Balm, which along with Giant Hogweed, (thankfully we do not yet have this) migrate along riparian channels and take over banks and watercourses at the expense of native species. We hope, with the help of volunteers, to eradicate this during the summer before it seeds, along with the Ragwort, which by law- Weeds Act 1959 and the Ragwort Control Act 2003- we have a duty to control. It is actually quite pleasant on a nice day walking the fields with other like-minded folk pulling up weeds and enjoying the fresh air.



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I would like to take this opportunity to touch on the delicate matter of dog mess. There are some person(s) who, very commendably, pick up their dog's faeces and put it into a dark green plastic bag which they then, not so commendably, knot and proceed to hang up on the nearest tree or strand of barbed wire. Whether the bag is bio-degradable or not I have yet to ascertain but in the course of time, especially in warm weather, things happen inside the bag and when it finally bursts or falls to the ground it releases a very unpleasant, and possibly toxic mess which is far more nasty to clean up than if the faeces were just left on the ground in the first place. I am aware that this could be part of some bizarre pagan ritual, which we are, in these modern times bound to respect but could I ask, and I don't think it is asking much, that whoever it is takes it home and suspend it from their own tree or their own fence. With that off my chest all that remains to say is that for more information and an update of what is going on visit our website-

[www.shirenewtonfields.org.uk](http://www.shirenewtonfields.org.uk) which I am assured will be frequently up - dated.

Mike Gambold voluntary warden.

## **COMMUNITY LUNCHEON CLUB**

The response to the setting up of this Club has been very good. It has been so good in fact that all the available places at the Tredegar Arms for the initial event on April 22<sup>nd</sup> have already been booked!

Obviously this has meant that some people have been disappointed. Julie at the Tredegar Arms has very kindly agreed to consider an additional date between the April 22<sup>nd</sup> and the May 27<sup>th</sup> events, providing that there is sufficient interest.

If you have been unable to book for the April meeting but would still like to be a part of this venture please telephone **the Tredegar Arms on 641274** and your name will be put on a reserve list. If enough people do this then the event could be held fortnightly but the intention is for people to attend only once during the month to accommodate everyone who wishes to attend.

Further information can be obtained from  
Cllr. Beverley Moore 641532  
Mrs. Carole Jones 641791



## 1<sup>ST</sup> SHIRENEWTON GUIDES.

The Guides have been working towards changing the world. We are being realistic and not expecting to do it all on our own! This is a Girlguiding initiative where groups can choose to learn more about a selection of charities working towards improving conditions for disadvantaged people both in the UK and abroad. The Guides are learning more about the Red Cross and the work done to help people after disasters. They are also learning more about Water Aid, a charity that helps to get clean water and toilet facilities to communities throughout the world. The girls chose this in particular as it is often the girls that are kept home from school to walk miles to collect water for the family. As part of the project they are learning songs and will be asking for sponsorship to sing them! Other activities have included biscuit making, smoothies, juggling, tea tasting and foot spas.

Yours in Guiding

Kestrel	Helen Cann	Tel. 01291 650835
Kitten	Amanda Turner	Tel. 01291 659763
Koala & Panda		

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## **WHIST DRIVES**

A successful Drive was held on the 5<sup>th</sup> March when 35 players attended on a fine evening. The next Drives will be on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April and 7<sup>th</sup> May respectively being the first Thursdays of the month, at The Recreation Hall at 7.30 p.m.

## CAROLINE'S COOKERY CORNER

I seldom make puddings as they generally need ingredients weighing out! Also, in our house, hardly anyone eats them unless they have chocolate in! This recipe however is a favourite with all and is simple!

I make the pastry in the food processor;

8 oz plain flour	pinch of salt
2 tsp icing sugar	5 oz cold butter
1 egg yolk	1 tsp lemon juice
cold water	

Make the pastry in the normal way, and bake blind in the normal way in a flan dish. Leave to cool.

Pastry cream:

3 oz caster sugar  
blend 3 eggs with 1-1/2 oz flour until there are no lumps.  
Bring 3/4 pint milk to the boil and mix with the egg mix.  
Return the pan to the heat and bring back to the boil stirring constantly until thick and smooth (it won't curdle as it has flour in). Add 3 oz butter and vanilla extract stir well and leave to cool.

To assemble pour the cream into the flan and cover with fruit such as strawberries, raspberries, peaches, blackcurrants, etc.

I am making one today with a circle of strawberries on the outside, the fresh pineapple, mango and blueberries in the middle. This is fine as it can be glazed with a mixture of apricot jam and water, or that quick jelly stuff you can buy in a packet.

This will make one large flan case or lots of yummy little ones.

*Thanks once again to Caroline Davies*



## **Chepstow Folk Dance Club**

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### **BROWNIE REPORT**

#### **FIRE AND WATER AT WATER AT BROWNIES**

So we all know that fire and water don't mix but at Brownies such things can happen. During March the girls have been learning more about the importance of water as part of our work supporting the charity WaterAid. On Tuesday March 17<sup>th</sup> Mary Watkins, came to our meeting. Mary, who works for Welsh Water, had visited Uganda with Water Aid last summer to work with the charity supporting families to help them get clean water. She organised a water collecting activity for us to show what it is like to have to collect water (dirty water, in fact) from a well for cooking, washing and using in the home. It made us realise how we take it for granted that we can easily turn on a tap to get clean water into our homes. We learned how we could be a lot more careful about wasting water, by making simple changes like taking more showers rather than baths and remembering to turn the tap off rather than keeping it running all the time we clean our teeth. Finally Mary gave us a presentation where we were able to see what it was really like to have to collect all your water from places sometimes miles away from the home.

We learned about children like Millie, who had to walk for 1 hour to her nearest well and wait another hour to queue to get fresh water. Millie had to do this twice a day. When Water-Aid built a Rain Catcher for her village and Millie didn't have to collect water every day she was so happy because this meant there was now time for her to go to school. Shirenewton Brownies and Guides are working towards a sponsored singing project to raise money for Water-Aid during the summer term.

As well as learning about water this term, the girls are also learning about Fire and are hoping to earn their Fire Safety badge. We have a visit to Chepstow Fire Station planned for our last meeting of this term - more news of this next month.

Jackie Broughton- Guider in Charge (aka Brown Owl)



## 1ST SHIRENEWTON CUBS



We are very pleased to welcome Ashraf Peckham and Rhys Kennedy who have joined us from Beavers, and we all hope that you continue to enjoy all the activities we do in cubs.

During March we practiced more of our knots by making towers out of bamboo. Two of the towers were very stable and almost reached the ceiling in the hall.

On another evening Di explained the history around Mothers day and then all the cubs made individual cards for their mums.

The main event for the month was the District Swimming Gala in Newport on the 14<sup>th</sup>. Seven cub packs took part and I am very pleased to report that Shirenewton A team came third. It was a very close fought competition with only six points separating the top three.

Members of our team are as follows; Jacob Tyson, Megan Bennett, Bethan Taylor, Izzy Davies, Will Farrant, Blake Stephens, Ben Cole and Catrin Williams. A special well done to Bethan who although the smallest in her heats and often the only girl had two 1<sup>st</sup>s a 2<sup>nd</sup> and a 3<sup>rd</sup> in each of her swims. Just proves size doesn't matter!

A very big well done to them all and to all the parents to come and gave their support. It was a great afternoon sport.

Future events include

26 <sup>th</sup> April	St Georges Day Parade (Usk)
? May	Night Hike
16 <sup>th</sup> 17 <sup>th</sup> May	Group Camp
6 <sup>th</sup> 7 <sup>th</sup> June	District Cub Camp, The theme for the camp being the Stone Age.
4 <sup>th</sup> July	Football Competition (Chepstow)

For further Cub Pack information, please see The Pack's own web site; <http://shirenewtonscouts.jimdo.com/> or contact Geoff on [geoffmarlow@btinternet.com](mailto:geoffmarlow@btinternet.com)

In the days before incubators hens would have sitting on about twelve eggs for three weeks, and then the chicks would be hatched, we had a shed we used to call the duck house it had an earth floor, which was the best place for hatching because being an earth floor it was slightly damp and more natural, hens were also used to sit on and hatch duck eggs. The hens and young ducklings and chicks were put in little coops on the lawn, the hens were confined but the young ones could run in and out through bars in the front. After a couple of weeks they were allowed to run around the farm-yard together. May is when the bird song is at it's best the cuckoo is back and the swallows are busy, to the country lad bird nesting was part and parcel of the country life although I never saved bird's eggs, I was keen to find a nest but left the bird to do her job. The skylark to me was the most difficult nest to find, very well hidden usually in the hoof print of a cow or horse and very well camouflaged. A source of great interest to country boys was the different types of nest built by different birds, made of whatever material was available some of these nests are a work of art; the little wren makes one such amazing little nest. How I admire the enthusiasm of birds, and how busy they are and how without instruction books natural instinct, enables them to use their beaks to collect the material and build their nests. For generations robins will always build in the same place every year, in contrast to the intricate nature of some nests, the lazy pigeon uses just a few twigs to build its nest.

In spring the unforgettable smell after a warm shower of rain, and that smell like that of a fox in early morning I can't describe it but I know it so well. School like all things in this life is a mixture of good and bad, the village school in this day and age is becoming a relic of the past, but I often wonder how right the so called experts are to close the village schools and lump all the children together in much larger numbers. Of course they don't have to walk in all winds and weather, carrying their few sandwiches to arrive in a classroom that was cold if you sat at the back, with a master teaching four classes in the same room with just a partition between the classes. Today all country children have transport to a new centrally heated school with a hot cooked dinner available, but with the local schools closed the parents mainly driving off to town or factory to work the village is dead, children have lost touch with nature. school after the basics had been taught, and I honestly think they weren't very far wrong.

*Thanks to Ernie for sharing these notes with us and for Peter Bartlett who carried out the original setting. The whole series of these books (some 8 of them) are available to order from Peter Bartlett or Ernie Jones.*



## COUNTRY LIFE IN OUR COUNTY

*we continue with extracts from the notes from Mr Ernest Jones that he has compiled through his long years of farming in this area. With luck by the next issue we will be able to see spring as seen by Ernie through his years.*

### SCHOOL, SCHOOLCHILDREN AND SPRING,

I have already written it is never suddenly spring it is a very gradual process changing from winter to spring. Looking back weather has a profound effect on the life of country folk of all ages. Children of today just haven't a clue how even getting to school could be an ordeal in itself; to get to our school at Mathern (now sadly closed) we had to walk across the fields one and three quarter miles, and we carried our few sandwiches and a piece of cake for dinner and water to drink too much of a hassle to carry anything different. At one stage Mr Eddie Williams when he was our headmaster, he did organise Horlicks for mid morning, made by some of the older girl pupils. So although March is spring it can be a cruel month with winter's icy fingers very loathe to let go. April and Easter holidays, why do school children long for holidays and leaving school? There is something rebellious in human nature that makes us want to do our own thing and not conform to the wishes of others. Not that at home there was much luxury I remember the first radio my father bought. Just a basic set of works no cabinet and the speaker was hung up on the wall, with batteries made of glass and full of acid that had to be taken to the local town to be recharged. We did have a gramophone which we wound up by hand these luxuries belonged to my father we children didn't own anything of our own, just a few basic toys. Away from school there were jobs to be done on the farm at home, feeding the chickens and collecting the eggs, and plucking chickens etc. I spent my time in spring making bows and arrows, at one stage I had an air gun for shooting sparrows, when I was about eleven years my father bought a pony that I used to ride, although she was bought to take the milk churns in a little cart to the main road. Then April came and with it the primroses started to come up in the banks of the lane leading past the farm and violets appeared, always the deep blue ones in the same place every year. May arrives and the sun is getting stronger, mares have their foals this month, born very quickly, hopefully without assistance, because although the most powerful of all farm animals except for the bull, if you had to help a mare to foal in those days it was likely that the foal and possibly the mare would be lost. Foals like all young animals that are allowed to feed from the mother are very attractive.

## SHIRENEWTON WI MARCH 09

Fifty seven years ago in March, the first meeting of the Shirenewton Women's Institute was held. It took place in meeting rooms which are now a private house. Each year since, the March meeting has been our Birthday Party. This year's took place on the 12<sup>th</sup> of March, a mild day and evening with little breeze. There have been many years when it's been touch and go whether members would be able to get to or home from the party because of snow and ice.

Our president, Jenny Bonner, worked hard with members of the committee setting everything out in the afternoon, unfortunately Jenny felt unwell later and so missed our lovely meal. Winnie Jones stepped in and presided. We all thoroughly enjoyed our celebration meal especially the four fantastic deserts made by two of our certainly very expert and talented cooks. After the meal we were led in a cheery sing song by Ruth Savagar on her keyboard. Our jolly sing song was followed with tea, coffee and mints to round off our celebrations.

Our next meeting will be on the 9<sup>th</sup> April, 7:15pm at the Rec Hall. Mr Alan Badmington will be our speaker, with a talk entitled "Lost for Words". New members are always welcome.

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## Women's World Day of Prayer

I would like to thank all those who attended the Women's World Day of Prayer service which this year was written by the ladies of Papua New Guinea. Thanks also to Mrs. Ruth Savagar for the music and Reverend Nansi Davies for her address

The collection amounted to £145 and a cheque has been sent for the work of the Movement for Christian Literature Educational projects throughout the world.

It was also wonderful to enjoy tea and fellowship in our glorious New Church Room afterwards

Sally Saysell

## MOTHERS' UNION SHIRENEWTON

Our April meeting will be held on Wednesday 8th at 2.30 p.m. in the Shirenewton Church Room.

Sue Russell will share with us the latest news from our linked MU members in Rokon (Sudan), Harare (Zimbabwe), Uganda, the Highveld (South Africa) and Bangladesh. We hope to make these links more active.

If you are interested to learn how the other half live, come and join us.  
Rosemary

Rosemary Carey, Branch Leader

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## EARLSWOOD AND NEWCHURCH WEST MEMORIAL HALL NEWS.

The year has started well for the hall with very successful drama performances from SODS and Wentwood Young Farmers. **Kids Ad Lib** has now started and is working towards a production June 18-20th 2009. For more details see the website [www.kidsadlib.org.uk/](http://www.kidsadlib.org.uk/). The Earlswood Badminton and Short Tennis Group has been meeting at the hall on most Wednesday evenings. There have also been a number of private functions held at the hall.

After many years as a member of the hall committee, most recently as Hall Manager, Peter Jones has decided to resign but will continue as a trustee. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Peter for his hard work over the years.

The new committee will formed at the AGM on 20th April at 8.00 p.m. and we would welcome any new members. For further information please come along to the AGM at the hall or contact any of the existing committee members. We would be particularly happy if we could find someone willing to take on the role of maintenance. Killing weeds, fixing doors and mending wobbly shelves ...that sort of thing.

Simon Stanley  
Chairman

Earlswood and Newchurch West Memorial Hall

## SHIRENEWTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Our February meeting was well attended, our speaker for the evening was George F Peterkin who gave us an illustrated talk on 'Wye Valley Meadows and Traditional Haymaking'. This was very topical as the village has acquired 10 acres and hope to turn it into a traditional hay meadow. The talk was interesting agriculturally, historically and botanically and I'm sure Mr Peterkin will remain interested in the village project.

Dates for your Diary


Tuesday, 31<sup>st</sup> March, Monthly Meeting at the Huntsman Hotel entitled 'Anecdotes and Tangents: A Shirenewton Family Story', given by Miss Margaret Jenkins - 7.30 pm

Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> April Resource Meeting at the Recreational Hall, Shirenewton - 2.00 pm – 5.00 pm

Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> April, Monthly Meeting at the Huntsman Hotel entitled 'Medieval Gwent' given by Mr Tony Hopkins (Assistant County Archivist) - 7.30 pm

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### ***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 11<sup>th</sup> April, Saturn on the 15<sup>th</sup> and Jupiter on the 27<sup>th</sup>

Dave Thomas

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### **SHIRENEWTON CHURCH WEBSITE**

It's the time of year when holiday planning starts, and we think about travelling. Please use The Church Website as your first port of call when making travel arrangements for hotels, flights, bus travel and airport parking. Sites like Holiday Extras, Expedia and National Express, can all save you money. Additionally many of the household names and major internet shopping sites are also there for your benefit, and that of the Church. Do use them as the opportunity arises. You can save and The Church also gains a little commission. [www.shirenewtonchurch.com](http://www.shirenewtonchurch.com)  
Happy browsing

David Cornwell  
webmaster.

## **THE GOLDEN PHONE**

An American decided to write a book about famous churches around the world. So he bought a plane ticket and took a trip to Orlando, thinking that he would start by working his way across the USA from South to North.

On his first day he was inside a church taking photographs when he noticed a golden telephone mounted on the wall with a sign that read \$10,000 per call. The American, who was intrigued, asked a priest who was strolling by what the telephone was used for. The priest replied that it was a direct line to heaven and that for \$10,000 you could talk to God. The American thanked the priest and went along his way.

Next stop was in Atlanta. There, at a very large cathedral, he saw the same looking golden telephone with the same sign under it. He wondered if this was the same kind of telephone he saw in Orlando and he asked a nearby nun what its purpose was. She told him that it was a direct line to Heaven and that for \$10,000 he could talk to God. "O.K., thank you" said the American.

He then travelled all across America, Europe, England, Japan, New Zealand. In every church he saw the same looking golden telephone with the same "\$US10,000 per call" sign under it.

The American decided to travel to Wales to see if the Welsh had the same phone. He arrived at Chepstow in Monmouthshire and again, in the first church he entered, there was the same golden telephone, but this time the sign under it read "40p. per call." The American was surprised so he asked the priest about the sign. "Father, I've travelled all over the world and I've seen this same golden telephone in many churches. I'm told that it is a direct line to Heaven, but in all of them the price was \$10,000 per call. Why is it so cheap here?" The priest smiled and answered "You're in Wales now son – it's a local call".

## **Riot Policing**

A young clergyman fresh out of training thought it would help him better understand the fears and temptations his future congregations faced if he first took a job as a policeman for several months. He passed the physical examination; then came to the oral exam to test his ability to act quickly and wisely in an emergency. Among other questions he was asked,

"What would you do to disperse a frenzied crowd?"

He thought for a moment and then said, "I would pass an offering plate around".

He got the job.

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