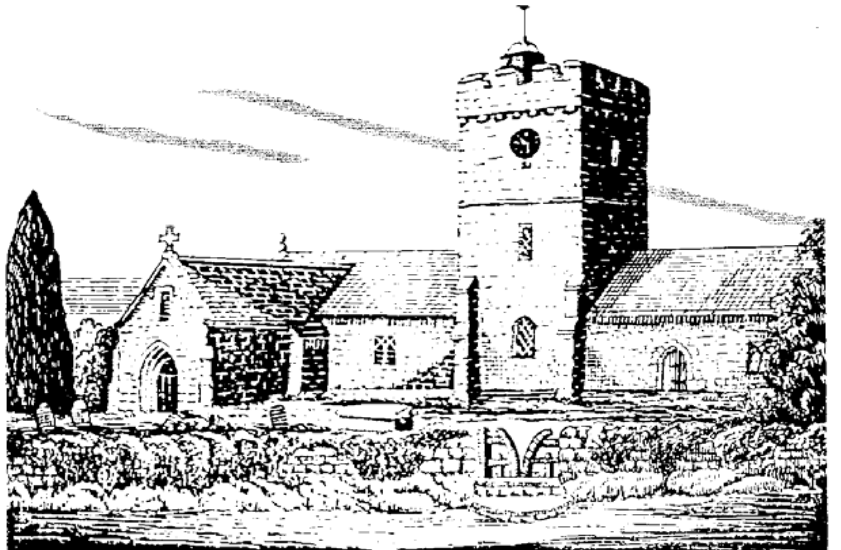


THE CHURCH OF ST. THOMAS A BECKET SHIRENEWTON



Parishes of Shirenewton and Newchurch

Magazine

READERS AND SIDES- PERSONS ROTA FOR MAY

DATE	SERVICE	READER	SIDES-PERSON
May 3rd	3rd Sunday After Easter 9.30 a.m.	John Nicholas Cynthia Smith	John Nicholas Cynthia Smith
May 10th	4th After Easter 9.30 a.m.	Bob Grattan Auriol Horton	Bob Grattan Auriol Horton
May 17th	Family Service	The Children	The Children
May 24th	7th Sunday After Easter 9.30 a.m.	Diane Marlow Ruth Savagar	Diane Marlow Bernice Bowen
May 31st	Pentecost Group Service 9.30 a.m	Sally Saysell Andrew Baker	Allan Saysell John Nicholas
June 7th	Trinity Sunday 9.30 a.m.	Jean Jones Peter Jones	Peter Jones Jean Jones

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
Church Hall Bookings	John Nicholas	641368
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 - Earlswood	Beverley Moore	641532
	Sue Leat	641207

Please send your notes, discs or emails for inclusion in the June magazine to Bob O'Keefe at: 15 Newton Manor, Shirenewton, (641686) or email to bobandwenche@aol.com by Friday 22nd May.

SOME DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

1st May	Brass Band Concert - St Thomas A Becket Church.
5th May	Fete Meeting - The Church Room 8.00.
7th May	Whist Drive - The Recreation Hall - 7.30.
11th May	Community Council & AGM The Recreation Hall 7.30.
14th May	"Best Kept Village" meeting - The Tan House - 7.30.
16th May	Velindre Coffee Morning at The Cayo from 10.00 - 12.00.
16th May	Christian Aid Week's "Ploughman's" Lunch -The Chantry
17th May	St Peter's Newchurch - Vestry Meeting 3.30.
17th May	History Society - Beating the Bounds Walk 2.00 The Church.
24th May	Jeremy Taylor performance - The Church Room (page 28)
27th May	Community Luncheon Club - The Tredegar Arms (page 9)
27th May	Local Neighbourhood Watch - 7.30 The Huntsman Hotel.
1st June	Community Council Meeting - 7.30 The Recreation Hall.
4th June	Whist Drive - The Recreation Hall - 7.30
6th June	Joint Police Community Council Meeting- The Recreation Hall.
13th June	Church Fete - The Recreation Field
27th June	Choral Society - Handel - St Mary's Chepstow (page 31)

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Dear Friends,

Still working with my head in Easter time, I came across a beautiful reflection on the mystery of the Resurrection from the *Sacred Space* website (<http://sacredspace.ie>).

On the first Easter morning, the apostles and the holy women did not see a ghost of Jesus. They saw him in the flesh, but in a different flesh, as the oak tree is different from the acorn that was its origin. We touch on the mystery of a body—not just Jesus' body but our own—which will express us at our best, will not blunt our spirit with weariness and rebellion, but express it with ease and joy. The Lord knows my name and my body. He sees my lived-in face, shaped by my history, showing the lines of love, indulgence, suffering, humour, gentleness. As the proverb says, 'The face you have at forty is the face that you deserve.' Teach me to love my face and body, my temple of the Holy Spirit. It will grow old and die with me, but that is not the end. My body is sacred, and Easter opens a window for it and me onto a mysterious but endless vista.

This is a mystery beyond our imagination, but it is the centre of our faith. As we grow older, nothing in our faith makes more sense than the Passion and the Resurrection, the certainty that our bodies, like Jesus's, must suffer and die, and the certainty that we, in our bodies, have a life beyond death. When we wish one another a happy Easter, it is not just three days in an armchair, but deep joy in the knowledge that the best part of us will cheat the grave. Our weary bones, heavy flesh, addled brains, already hold the seeds of that resurrection. We are none of us mortal.

Sacred Space is, in fact, a site that guides its readers through a daily prayer and meditation based on scripture that need take only 15 or 20 minutes to do (although some people wish to give more time). I warmly commend the site to any parishioners who wish to deepen their conscious contact with God: it is self-explanatory, straightforward, easy to get into, and non-threatening.

But I digress. The point that I want actually wish to raise this month is this: what an incredible message that the Church has passed down to us these 2000 years (though, admittedly, at some stages more successfully than others!)—that God has seen our lives, our hearts, and even our bodies for exactly what they are—and he has loved us unconditionally,

perfectly, wholly, without reservation. This is the great message of Easter (which, by the way, is not just one Sunday but a whole Church season): that when Christ rose from the grave, he took all that goes into making us who we are—mind, spirit, flesh—and he declared it *redeemed*. Indeed, he makes a place for us—you and I *specifically*—in his Kingdom. This is ultimately because he was the one who created us in the first place—and God cherishes what he creates. Though there are aspects of our lives that, no doubt, we all wish we could do a bit better—I know this is true for myself!—nonetheless, the point is: that which make me who I *am*, truly *am* at my core: that is part of God's creation, and God sent Christ so that I, in my fullness, may one day be made even more fully the person that God created me to be in the first place; all that hinders will fall away; and all that brings me wholeness will be increased. This is true for us all—that our lives are cherished by the one who made them—mind, body, and spirit—and, in Christ, all will be set free—and he, by his mysterious but oh-so-physical appearance at the Resurrection, is in himself the sign. We look at him, and we know that we too are made free and are being made free.

Every blessing,
Fr. Will

THE WINNERS OF THE APRIL 200 CLUB DRAW WERE:

Ticket No	Winner	Prize
224	Sally Saysell	£40
40	Mike Lock	£30
165	Anna Baker	£20
1	Sarah James	£10

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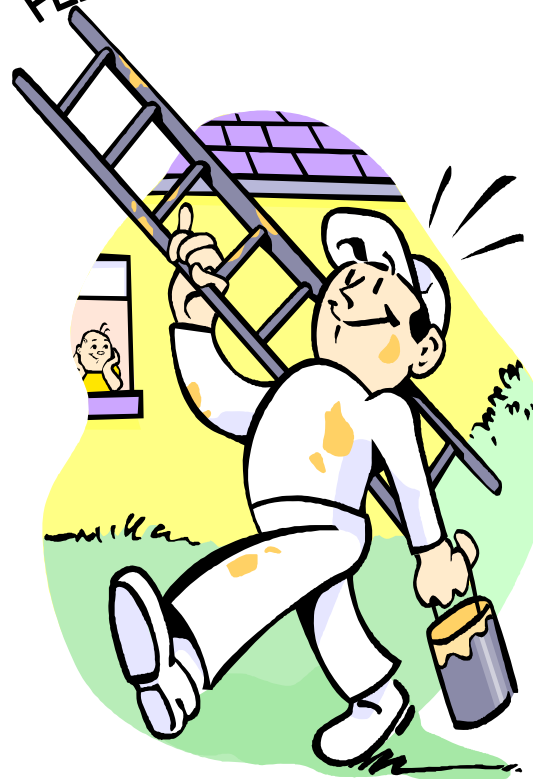
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THE CHURCH FETE

IS ON

**SATURDAY - 13TH JUNE
AT THE RECREATION FIELD**

Preparations are now well in hand for this year's Fete.

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, contributions. If you do you have any ideas for making the Fete more interesting please come along to the next meeting which will take place in the New Church Room on 5th May at 8 p.m.

For more information contact Gary Williams on 641529

FROM THE REGISTERS

26th March - A funeral service took place for Vivienne Ann Ellis, followed by interment at Chepstow Old Cemetery.

Born 1951 died 2009.

24th April - A funeral service took place for Kathleen Joan Jones followed by interment in the Churchyard.

SHIRENEWTON SUNDAY CLUB

Date	Time	Venue
3rd May	9.30	The Church Room
10th May		No Sunday Club
17th May	9.30	Christian Aid Service the Church
24th May		Half Term Holiday until
7th June	9.30	The Church Room
14th June	9.30	The Church Room

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

Jane Smith-Haddon 641 525

Glynis MacDonald 641818

Christian Aid Week 2009

Christian Aid 'Ploughman's Lunch'

Saturday 16th May

£5.00 Family £15 Cons. £3.00

Complimentary glass of wine -
or mug of tea or coffee

All money to go to Christian Aid
Everyone welcome.

Just pop into The Chantry, Shirenewton,
between 12.00 - 3.00

and help yourself to a Ploughman.

Glynis and Kevin 641 818

sowing crops where the seed will go straight into the ground, so carrots, beetroot, swede, turnips etc. For the benefit of the under gardener, I built a new, larger compost bin so that she could put all the debris from her clearing up to some good, future use. Last Sunday, and a lovely sunny day it was too, she came running down the garden to tell me off for lighting a bonfire when the washing was just about to go on the line. There was smoke in more ways than one! Protesting that I hadn't, we investigated further to find that the compost heap was on fire! Not thinking, she had asked where to put the wood ash out of our rayburn. Best place was the compost bin I said! Oh dear, not thinking there would be hot ash in it! The heap in the compost bin is now much reduced, and the bin is partly burnt. All this coincided with a cold morning, that had frozen the hose pipe, so that it couldn't be used. Several trips up and down the garden with a watering can had conserved the bulk of the timbers, but I wasn't quick enough to save the "compost"! Another five second job that ended up being half an hour.

Happy gardening until next month. Steve Hunt.

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hour. With the greenhouse now sealed, I had to these give off a smoke that fumigates the greenhouse and kills any over-wintering white and greenfly. After a while the greenhouse was vented to let fresh air back in again. I still needed to clean the glass down and make sure there were no other over-wintered bugs lurking in the crevices. I did have problems with red spider mite last year on the cucumbers and despite using a biological control, I think I left it too late on in the season. So it was out with the Jeyes fluid and knapsack sprayer, to give the structure a good thorough soaking. Apparently I now have the only greenhouse in the area that smells like a public toilet! Never mind at least it is clean – hopefully!

Within a day of the grand clean up, the greenhouse is now bulging with lots of plants that needed moving from the small, propagating house. This consisted mainly of green stuff, lettuces and other bits and bobs that don't need any heat. This allowed me to pot on all the tender salad plants, such as tomatoes, cucumber, peppers and aubergines, into larger pots. It also meant that I could spread them out a bit but still leave them in a little warmth. I don't heat this greenhouse as such, but I do have a large hot bench in their for getting seedlings going, and I rely on the ambient heat from this to keep the chill off. I made even more room by taking the hardier things out and getting them planted in the garden. I had removed some blackberries and tayberries that were far too rampant, and replaced these with kiwi fruit and grape vines. This has given a bit of extra space in the short term, so I have planted all the sweet peas along the wires, so that they can grow up and make a living divider between the vegetable areas. Also planted out were the first broad beans and sugar snap peas. The rain over the last couple of days will have settled these in well. They are hardy enough to withstand any frost that we are likely to get in the coming weeks. The not so hardy plants have been transplanted into one of the large raised beds in the tunnel. This has included climbing French and dwarf beans and various varieties of salad leaves. The extra warmth in the tunnel will make these grow exceptionally fast, but even so, will require covering over with horticultural fleece, if there is even a hint of a cold night. I have also planted some broad beans and peas in the tunnel to see how they grow. They are growing well, but if the bees can't find them, I may not get much of a crop, but it's worth trying if we get to pick fresh beans and peas in early May to help fill the gap between winter and summer crops.

Outside I've started to clean the last of the raised beds. These were starting to get a bit hard on the top with the period of dry weather we have had in recent weeks. The recent rain will help soften these up, so that I can rake them down to a fine tilth. The intention will be to use these for

KATHLEEN JOAN JONES

1913 - 2009

Kath was born at the Tippling Philosopher Inn at Caldicot on 2nd October 1913. She was the youngest of six children born to Tom and Sarah Rowlands.

The family left Caldicot some years later to run the Five Bells Inn in Shirenewton, whilst living there her father died then her mother a few years later, Kath was only fourteen at the time.

She then went to live with her sister Amy and her husband Charlie at the Tredegar Arms in Shirenewton.

In the 1930's the family moved to Green Street in Chepstow where Kath met her husband Dick on a bus journey when he worked for the Red & White Bus Company. When they married they went to live in Tredegar and then Usk. They had two children, Clive and Veronica.

In 1949, they moved back to Shirenewton where she and Dick run the Tredegar Arms public house.

Kath was a sports minded person who loved ruby, soccer, cricket and tennis. She was a regular supporter of Newport County and Hereford United.

Her favourite story is; when playing in a darts match with a sandwich in one and a dart in the other; instead of throwing the dart she threw the sandwich. After leaving the Tredegar Arms Kath and Dick spent their retirement at Holly Cottage in Shirenewton. Dick passed away in 1987. After several years living on her she went to live with her daughter Veronica and Son-in-Law Geoff in Caldicot. She lived with them for eight years until she passed away at the age of 95.

WHIST DRIVES

A successful Drive was held on the 2nd April when again 35 players attended on a fine evening (this time the number included 2 more local players who were warmly welcomed and we hope they will come again). The next Drives will be on the 7th May and the 4th June respectively being the first Thursdays of the month, at The Recreation Hall at 7.30 p.m.

Auriol Horton, 01291 641844.

SHIRENEWTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL – 6th April 2009.

Police Report – seems there were a few interesting sightings around the patch in March

- 3/3/09 - Report of dogs killing lambs near Shirenewton.
- 8/3/09 - Off road motorcycles near Earlswood (3 complaints)
- 8/3/09 - Report of a parrot sitting on an electrical line at Earlswood!
- 21/3/09 - Smoke from a bonfire across the B4293 near Shirenewton.
- 22/3/09 - Intoxicated male asleep in the bus shelter at Mynyddbach.
- 25/3/09 - Male doing market research in Shirenewton.
- 29/3/09 - Report of possible drink driver near Shirenewton.
- 30/3/09 - Suspicious male seen at Great Barnettts Wood.

There will be a "Joint Police / Community Council Surgery" on 6th June at the Recreation Hall.

Planning

Rock House, Mynyddbach – two storey extension

Approval Recommended

Lower Weyloed, Usk Road, Shirenewton – modify existing entrance

Refusal Recommended

Little Folly, Bluebell Lane, Earlswood – two storey side extension

Approval Recommended

Items of local concern

SCC will have a stall at Shirenewton Fete 13/06/09 (possibly shared with Neighbourhood Watch)

Best Kept Village now has a new sponsor (Raglan Garden Centre) and will be judged during June, there is also a Calor Village of the Year competition which is for the community activity/community spirit of the village rather than the prettiest place.

There was a site meeting with MCC & SAMFAL to look at upgrade of footpath from Tan House Court through to the school, it will be reinstated along it's original route and tarmaced (although it is recognised that this will eventually be eroded, but it will last longer than present path which needs to be repaired a couple of times a year).

Date of the next meeting:- 7.30 on 11th May. This will be the AGM at which members of the community are welcome. The June meeting will take place on 1st June; 7.30 in the Recreation Hall

Gardening Corner

Things are really picking up in the garden now and its all systems go. The under gardener has been busy butchering, sorry I should say pruning, the plants. The flowerbeds are starting to look much tidier, especially where I have managed to follow on behind and done the weeding as well. There are a lot of plants now shooting out with the warmth of spring, but there are also some very large gaps. This year we haven't got a large variety of pot grown plants that we can fill the gaps in with. Fortunately many plants have built up in size over the years elsewhere in the garden so I will be able to divide these up and plant some of the younger sections where I need them. I'm actually manuring the beds as I go and this really does make a huge difference to the appearance of the garden. This is the first time I have been able to do this, but hopefully it won't be the last. We have one rough bit of ground where there is very little soil. We planted this just with buddleas, mainly to attract the bees and butterflies. These don't mind poor conditions and have tended to thrive in what is quite a hot spot. I cut these down really hard with a chainsaw the other day, which has made a huge difference to them. They are now shooting out really well from the bottom and should produce masses of flowering wood, as these plants flower on the current years' wood. Other shrubs that had grown too old also got the chainsaw treatment, mainly dogwood. These will now have the opportunity to send out brightly coloured new shoots, which is really why they are grown.

It is now full speed ahead in the vegetable garden. Before I get too far ahead with getting the main greenhouse full I really wanted to give it a good spring clean. The under gardener had done her usual of tidying me up – well not me personally, but all the pots and trays that were laid about. I have this annoying habit, apparently, of leaving stuff laid about everywhere and not tidying up behind me. Well suffice to say the greenhouse is now tidy! With this all done the first thing was to seal up all the windows and doors. This is never as simple as it seems in that one pane of glass on the roof had slid down a bit, leaving a gap of 3 cms. Off to get a ladder, stretching as far as I could reach – sound familiar? Struggling to get the pane of glass back in place resulted in me putting my elbow through the next pane down, with the glass disintegrating and falling into the greenhouse below. Another mess to clear up. Fortunately I did have a replacement piece of glass, but not quite the right shape, being longer than the original. So what was going to be a two minute job turned into half an

A NOTE OF THANKS

Please could I say a huge THANK YOU to Shirenewton Community Council and everyone who supported my appeal to Monmouthshire County Council to have horse & rider warning signs put up to cover the fast and busy Earlswood stretch of the Shirenewton-Gaerlwydd road. It might have taken 15 years of requests, a file full of letters, a 250+ signature petition and David Davies MP coming along to have his photo taken for the Free Press trotting down the road in Tony Clarke's pony and carriage BUT, it looks like at long last, we have SUCCESS! Two signs are on MCC's spring "To Do" list. Unfortunately official "guidelines" apparently don't allow for the signs to cover the entire length of the whole of the fastest stretch of the road from Gaerlwydd crossroads to Cock A Roostin'..... However, they will cover the Cock A Roostin' junction up to beyond the brow of the hill, where the largest concentration of horses are.

Thanks again to all who have helped make Earlswood a safer place for riders, horses and motorists alike.

Jackie Budd.

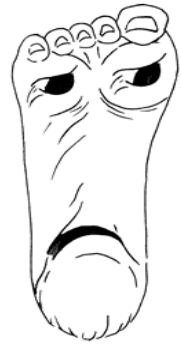
COMMUNITY LUNCHEON CLUB

Following the success of the first meeting of the Community Luncheon Club, it is now apparent that it is essential to book your place if you wish to take part in this popular social occasion. This month's participants all agreed that the staff at The Tredegar Arms ensured that the food, the ambience and opportunity to chat was very enjoyable.

Future Luncheons will be held on **May 27th**, June 24th, July 22nd, August 26th, (and thereafter on the 4th Wednesday of every month) please ring The Tredegar Arms to book your place, Tel : **641274**. If you are of pensionable age and live within the Shirenewton Community Council area then you are eligible to attend. Chose two out of three courses for £6 (with the option of purchasing a third course if required) and enjoy the company of your existing friends and hopefully make new acquaintances.

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

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BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION 2009

Last year Shirenewton was successful in gaining the prize for the Best kept Village Hall for the second year running and the Village as a whole received a 'Highly Commended' Certificate. In fact we only missed winning the Best Kept Village by ONE POINT!

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

Judging for this competition will be at anytime during the month of June. We are looking for some **volunteers to pinpoint any problem areas**. Last year we split the village into 13 smaller areas and had volunteers in each area. We will be holding a meeting for further information at **7.30 on Thursday the 14th May at the Tan House**. A working party will be set up for the last week in May.

Alternatively If you can help in any of the following areas or have any suggestions please telephone the Clerk on **641791** or Cllr Moore on **641532**

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

FAIRTRADE NEWS

Fairtrade - the new gold standard.

When the Fairtrade Foundation was approached by miners in South Africa seeking certification for their gold it became clear that the Fairtrade mark could ensure a more sustainable price for their product and help their communities. Gold miners have jobs that are amongst the most arduous in the world. They spend long hours underground with little or no safety equipment working with poisons such as cyanide and hewing the precious metal out of the ground. Some of the 20 million artisanal or self-employed miners earn less than \$1 a day. Pilot studies are now taking place with about 1,000 miners in 4 countries: Colombia, Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador, with the intention of putting licensed gold on sale in Britain early next year.

Fairtrade sales in general in the UK rose by 43% to £700 million last year, despite all the current financial difficulties. The UK accounts for about one third of the global market. As ever, on a good day this is very encouraging; on a bad day it just shows what a mountain there is left to climb!

I have written before to urge you to consider the provenance of goods that are given as gifts: flowers for example. My pleasure in receiving a gift is not enhanced if I believe it has been produced in dubious circumstances. Surely this is particularly true for gifts often given as an expression of affection: diamonds and of course gold. Ask the jeweller before you buy!

There are many beautiful gifts in the summer Traidcraft catalogue as well as paper goods and foodstuffs. Contact the Fairtrade Foundation or Traidcraft websites or contact me for more info.

Marion McAdam 641 316 m316@gmail.com



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SHIRENEWTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
(followed by ordinary Council meeting)

MONDAY 11TH MAY 2009

7.30 PM

at

SHIRENEWTON RECREATION HALL

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ST PETER'S CHURCH, NEWCHURCH

Vestry Meeting 17th May 3.30.p.m.

ADVANCE NOTICE

Midsummer Fayre

Saturday 25th July 12- 4.p.m.

SHIRENEWTON & MYNYDDBACH
FIELDS ASSOCIATION.

The old Celtic festival of Beltine or as some say, Beltane is soon upon us, the occasion when farm stock (and sometimes people) were driven between two fires to purify them of diseases and malevolent spirits. When SAMFAL eventually makes the fields stock-proof and put some grazing animals on, I hope the owners of the beasts will have taken notice of the above, although I think they will have resorted to more modern veterinary practices in order to comply with the various laws we all have to obey. The open-air factory that is the natural world has fired up her boilers and everywhere is new life - buds and blossom, birds laying and hatching and a massive explosion of insects to feed on, fertilise and become food for the above. While most of us enjoy watching and listening to birds, the clouds of pollen and hordes of biting and stinging insects bring nothing but torment to some, but for advice on these I'm afraid you will have to look elsewhere.

Springtime; although not always obviously, is arriving earlier and it is interesting to observe how the interdependent species adapt to the change in timing. For example; the green oak tortrix caterpillar needs to hatch at exactly the same time the oak tree produces new leaves for them to feed on; mature leaves are too rich in tannin which makes them indigestible . If caterpillars hatch too soon they will starve, and likewise if they hatch too late . Almost to the very day of their emergence, the eggs of the blue tit hatch , and millions of tiny chicks all over Britain are fed on these handy little protein packages . I also believe but cannot prove that they are taken by bats at night. It is indeed wondrous, but as yet no one that I know has worked out how this complex equation comes about, or indeed, if it will continue in the future, regarding climate change.

While on the topic of birds; we often see at this time of year nestlings/ fledglings on the ground and are tempted to "save" them by picking them up and handing them to a local rescue centre or well-meaning individual. This is not generally a good idea in the great scheme of things. So unless the chick is in imminent danger of being gobbled up by a cat it is better left alone as its parents will know where it is and will continue to feed it. Most passerines and medium sized birds have two or even three clutches of eggs in the summer so the system is built-in to handle this natural wastage.

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Speaking of our feline friends, it is fascinating to note that records made over many years by good friends of mine; Helen and her late husband Peter Scourse who ran a wildlife rescue centre at Pennalt; show that birds and small mammals that have been injured by cats have a higher mortality rate than comparable cases of injuries made by dogs or collisions with motor vehicles, etc. The theory being that cats may harbour more toxins or bacteria in the sheaths of their claws which could be a contributory factor in the death of an already stressed victim. Evidence is inconclusive because each case must be treated to its individual merits.

In case cat owners are thinking I have a dim view of the little darlings, I can placate you by asking for assistance. The association is currently involved in commissioning several surveys of the fields: e.g. flora invertebrates, birds, etc. one of which involves the possibility that we may have dormice present on the site. Knowing that cats like to bring home prey to show off their hunting abilities, could I ask that if anyone notices a tawny / wheaten coloured rodent with a bushy tail and prominent shiny black eyes on their doorsteps please call me on 641773 or pop it into a bag and freeze it and contact me later. This of course applies to any other thing of interest, be it bird or beast. (I pick up the crisp packets, drink cans, etc. myself, quietly when no-one is looking).

For further information contact the Association's web site at:
www.shirenewtonfields.org.uk

Many thanks. Mike Gambold

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CAROLINE'S COOKERY CORNER

Lentil and Pork Casserole

1 ½ lb lean belly pork	
2 tbsp oil	Salt
Olive oil	4 oz smoked streaky bacon
2 thinly sliced white parts only of leeks	2 thinly sliced carrots
2 pints of chicken stock	1 Spanish onion
Black pepper	Bouquet garni
12 oz soaked brown lentils	2 crushed cloves of garlic

Pre-heat oven to 450°F, Gas 8

Score skin of pork with a sharp knife. Rub over with salt and olive oil, roast for 15 minutes until crackling is crisp. Then reduce heat to 325 °F, Gas 3 and continue to roast until pork is cooked through – about 40 minutes longer. Add the oil to a large casserole dish and fry the bacon, leeks, and carrots until golden. Cover with everything except garlic, salt and lentils and bring to the boil.

Drain the soaked lentils and add to the casserole with the crushed garlic. Cover and simmer over a low heat for 15-20 minutes. Season.

Place the roast pork on top of the lentils making sure that the crackling remains uncovered and continue to simmer with the lid off for 15-20 minutes. Enjoy

Thanks once again to Caroline Davies

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down

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Why are the workers revolting?

Find out in this nail-biting, action-packed show for all the family, set in



1ST SHIRENEWTON CUBS



Newsletter (April 09)

Putting our map reading skills to the test one evening we went on a night map reading exercise. Each six had to find clues located on a map over a one and a half mile circular course across the local fields and through the woods back to the village hall. We managed the exercise without losing any cubs although one cub did lose his torch.

We ended the term with a games night plus an Easter egg hunt.

Cub of the month goes to Bethan Taylor.

Bethan not only has performed well during pack nights but also gave that little bit extra for her team and the Pack during the swimming gala. Runner ups included Will Farrant 2nd, Catrin Williams, Ben Cole and Isobel Davis came joint 3rd. There were only four points separating the top nine cubs. Bethan received a certificate and an Adventures Essential Pack containing an angle torch, emergency blanket, flint lighter, compass, thermometer and whistle plus a magic towel.

This terms winning six was Black Six who will be taking part in a special event during the next few weeks.

We ended the month joining other cubs, scouts and beavers from all over Monmouthshire for a parade through Usk as part of the St George celebrations. The parade went through the main street Usk to the church where a short service took place before we all marched back to our starting point. A big thanks to all the mum's and dad's who cam along to support us.

Future events include

- 8th May Night Hike
- 16th 17th May Group Camp
- 6th 7th June Evan Thomas Challenge Cub Camp, The theme for the camp will be the Medieval period.
- 4th 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

Jeremy Taylor

Singer/song writer, humorist, social commentator

performing live in the Church Room on

Sunday 24th May @ 7:30pm.

We are privileged to welcome Jeremy Taylor and his uniquely humorous brand of musical comedy for a live performance in The Church Room on Sunday 24th - it's a Bank Holiday on Monday :~)

Jeremy set South Africa alight in the sixties with his "Ag Pleez Deddy" and was then banished from South Africa for ridiculing apartheid. After two years on the West End stage in WAIT A MINIM, a South African musical revue, he became a leading entertainer on the British folk circuit with songs like "Jobsworth", "Red Velvet Steering Wheel Cover Driver" and "Prawns in the Game".

Jeremy was a long-term collaborator and performer with Spike Milligan being for two years Spike Milligan's stage partner in FOR ONE WEEK ONLY and recording a live album with him entitled "Spike Milligan and Jeremy Taylor: An Adult Entertainment".

Tickets are strictly limited so please purchase early by contacting David Cornwell on 01291 641715 or by email at david.cornwell@btinternet.com or webmaster@shirenewtonchurch.com.

Tickets cost £10 and include a post concert glass of Pimms (or two) and nibbles with a chance to meet the artist.

See some of Jeremy's performances on YouTube – I've linked a couple of my favourites from the church website.

This will be an entertaining evening - see you there – I'm looking forward to it!

SHIRENEWTON CHURCH WEB SITE

Well, time flies and before we know it will be time to book car parking for the summer holidays. You can get discounted car parking by booking in advance via Holiday Extras on the Church website. If you book at least 30 days in advance the savings are even greater. Simply go through to Holiday Extras via the Church Shopping portal and save - what's not to like? In a similar vein, Holiday Autos is also available through the church shopping portal and provides some cracking deals on car hire - I use them all the time on my business trips to the USA. If you hire cars more than once or twice per year you should also consider insurance4carhire which, for a single annual premium, covers the excess charges whenever you rent a car. Your car rental typically includes Collision Damage waiver (CDW) insurance. However they always try and sell you the excess charge cover which really adds to the cost of your rental. Insurance4carhire covers you not only for the total amount of Excess for which you are liable if the car is damaged or stolen, but also for damage to the undercarriage of the car, windows and tyres which are not normally covered in the standard Excess cover. Click through from the church website.

At the time of writing (20th April), so far this year the main site has had 856 visits from 498 visitors from 22 countries/territories with an just over 3,000 page views. The internet is powerful medicine! I'm not currently monitoring the shopping portal at the same level as the script technology make this difficult. But, for those interested, Amazon is a nose in front of Tescos on listing of 'most popular' shop followed by The Train Line, Laterooms and John Lewis.

On a technical front I've started a 'hidden' upgrade to the web pages which will mean that the site looks a lot better in Firefox and Google Chrome (which currently account for just under 30% of page views on the site). For the technically minded each page will have: `<!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01 Transitional//EN" "http://www.w3.org/TR/html4/loose.dtd">`

Added before the HTML tag. That and a bit on 'dinking' with the .css (style sheet) will ensure the site renders just a beautifully in the other browsers as it does in Internet Explorer. :-)

Remember that we have many major shops on the site (Tescos, John Lewis, Amazon, Dell, Screwfix, etc) and lots of smaller interesting shops Bouncyhappyypeople, Chocolate Trading Company, Gadget Hub & Seasalt Organic Cotton Clothing - to select a random sample) so please remember to click through from the church shopping portal when doing your online shopping. It costs you nothing and all the little commissions we get add up.

Happy browsing.

David Cornwell
Webmaster.



SHIRENEWTON BROWNIE REPORT

CHEPSTOW FIRE STATION VISIT

In order to finish off their Fire Safety Badge, the Brownies visited Chepstow Fire Station on March 24th and 31st. We met Chief Fire fighter Cooksey and his crew, who explained to us what happens when they receive an emergency phone call to tell them that there is a fire. We were taken around the fire station, shown the fire fighting equipment and sat in the fire engines. Some of the girls got the chance to squirt water from the engine's hoses. The girls were tested on their knowledge of how to prevent fires and what to do if there was a fire at home. We were able to ask questions about the fire escape plans that the girls had drawn up. The girls watched a demonstration of the Fire Fighter's Training Drill - with lights, sirens, fire fighters climbing high ladders into their practice tower and of course lots of water. We were very impressed as all the fire fighters knew exactly what they were to do. We learned a lot from the visit.

Our summer term started with 6 of our girls being involved in the Girl Guiding Gwent County Cookery Competition at Caldicot Castle on Saturday 25th April. Congratulations to Errin, Emily, Ellie, Maddie, Eleanor T and Eleanor W for winning second place in the competition with their 'Enchanted Wood' themed picnic. It was very much their own work and all the leaders and parents said how well they had done. A great team effort!

Jackie Broughton - Guider in Charge
641797

SHIRENEWTON WI APRIL 09

Having moved into 'British Summer Time' we appreciated the extra light for our April meeting, especially accompanied as it has been by such lovely dry spring weather. Although we all appreciate having enough rain for everything to grow.

Our meeting on the 9th April was a little unusual, expectations of Easter, a milestone birthday and an extraordinary speaker. Our speaker, Mr Alan Badmington, requested that we allow him to give his talk first since a matter had arisen which required him to leave earlier than expected. Allowing this suited our April meeting very well.

Mr Badmington talked eloquently, with clear precise diction about being 'Lost for Words' for 50 years of his life. Suffering from a severe stutter, he has spent most of his life avoiding talking wherever possible. Only in this the 21st century has he been able to express himself and talk to all, even taking pleasure in public speaking contests. Having tried many therapies with only partial success, his wife saw an advert for a meeting in Cardiff which sounded interesting and arranged for them to be in the right place at the right time. The rest as they say is history. Alan is a very bright and cheerful person, who in his turn is helping other sufferers around the world.

After Alan's talk we had tea, a special one, with lots of lovely cake to celebrate Winnie Jones eightieth birthday. We sang happy birthday and Winnie blew out eight candles (one for each decade). After tea and cake we concluded with our business meeting, which of course we usually have first.

Our next meeting will be on May 14th 7:15pm at the Rec. Hall and is our AGM and resolutions meeting. Refreshments will be provided by the committee. Come and join us, new members are always welcome. If you require more information please ring our secretary Margaret Woodliffe on 01291 641348

Diana Such

THE BELLS, THE BELLS.

Shirenewton bell ringers have had rather a disrupted month what with concerts in the new hall, ringers off on skiing trips, holidays and Easter itself.

Ringers stay silent in Holy Week so on Good Friday as there was no ringing we took the opportunity to clean the ringing room, the belfry and the stone spiral staircase up to the belfry. 10 ringers turned up to clean and one turned up just as the cleaning had been finished. With so many cleaners the job didn't take long and then it was off to the Millar's house for supper. Karen had kindly offered to make supper for us all – no mean feat as there were 16 hungry mouths to feed.

On Easter Sunday we rang the bells from downstairs in the church. Some of our less experienced ringers find this rather a daunting experience what with the long ropes which tend to misbehave unless the ringer's pull is very precise and being on view to the congregation. However over coffee and hot cross buns in the church room afterwards several people took the opportunity to come and talk about the bells and the ringing at Shirenewton. The sound of the bells carries across the valley and can be heard in Itton apparently.

Pip rushed up to Hereford on the Thursday after Easter to tutor for the first time on the Hereford Ringing course a 4 day residential course now in its 47 year. She was tutoring on B2, one of the Plain Hunt Groups. It is quite hard work, what with 4 one hour lectures and 6 practical sessions in various churches over the weekend. There were 4 ringers from New York who had come all the way to England to be students. During conversation in the bar at night it transpired that the Tower Captain at the ring of 12 at Trinity Church on Wall Street is using the book Pip wrote, Teaching Unravelling – an Evidence Based Approach To Teaching Bell Handling to teach new bell ringers. The Shirenewton ideas are certainly starting to travel far afield.

Pip Penney

under a sea of mud. When walking along the edge of Lavant wood on April 25th. one year I remember seeing bluebells blooming in about three inches of snow, and then there was the time in May when the trees had come into leaf we had snow that broke the branches down, but in spite of set backs such as this as farmers and countrymen we have the undying faith, that seed time and harvest will not fail, and it is that faith that enables us to survive, nature can be both kind and very cruel but we accept that as part of our calling, we are willing and ready take on the challenge.

It is the inspector of taxes, the little men in cosy offices with big salaries, the nosey parkers from our over crowded cities who drive out on warm sunny days and try and tell us how we should run our farms and they forget we the farmers and fishermen were here first, and what we do is based on many years of our experience and the experience of our ancestors, not gained from a few text books often not taking the vagaries of animals and the weather into account. They and their life style are the impostors and we find it hard to tolerate them.

Come out into the country and share it with us by all means but respect our way of life, keep to the paths and treat us and our beautiful countryside and our way of life with the respect it deserves. Unfortunately there are farmers who are not worthy of their profession and I abhor them, as much as the interfering bureaucrats and disrespectful townfolk, but that is human nature it happens in all walks of life, and here I will leave the spring as seen through the eyes of a countryman.

Some interesting data on rainfall data gathered at Merrylea, Shirenewton through the years from Ernie's records. From these, we can see the climate is getting warmer but certainly no drier. (At least in Shirenewton)

1987	722 mm.	1997	1172 mm.
1988	879 mm.	1998	1265 mm.
1989	848 mm.	1999	1372 mm.
1990	874 mm.	2000	1423 mm.
1991	991 mm.	2001	1151 mm.
1992	1041 mm.	2002	1333 mm.
1993	1190 mm.	2003	815 mm.
1994	1237 mm.	2004	1156 mm.
1995	1031 mm.	2005	926 mm.
1996	999 mm.	2006	1181 mm.

Our 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.

MOTHERS' UNION, SHIRENEWTON

On 8 April, Sue Russell shared with us news about our linked Dioceses of Rokon (Sudan), Harare (Zimbabwe), Sebei (Uganda) and The Highveld (South Africa).

There was no news from the Bangladesh link, where Christians are a very small minority and need our prayers.

In each of the African countries HIV/AIDS is a major health and social problem. In Harare (Zimbabwe) MU members, along with all Anglicans, have suffered harassment and official closure of church buildings, but in each of the above dioceses MU members are involved in small-scale income-generating projects, adult literacy, and community programmes to improve nutrition and the support of needy families.

In May, there will not be a branch meeting, but on Tuesday 12 May we are invited to celebrate the MU Deanery Festival at St Mary's Church, Caldicot. 2 for 2.30 p.m. This will be followed by refreshments, kindly prepared by our hosts.

Finally, a warm thanks to Shirenewton Church for their donation of £77.71p to the "Make a Mother's Day" project of Mothers' Union Worldwide.

From Rosemary Carey, Branch Leader

EARLSWOOD AND NEWCHURCH WEST MEMORIAL HALL NEWS.

Our AGM in April gave the committee a chance to reflect on a successful year. We've hosted drama productions, barn dances, parties and badminton, which together provide entertainment and enjoyment for several hundred local people. We also unveiled and used our new tea urn, purchased with a grant from Shirenewton Community Council.

For booking enquiries contact Glynis MacDonald 641818

Simon Stanley
Chairman

Earlswood and Newchurch West Memorial Hall

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COUNTRY LIFE IN OUR COUNTY

This month in our extract from Ernie Jones notes on his many years farming and living in the area, we look at his observations on the weather through the years

THE WEATHER IN SPRING.

It would not I feel be right and proper not to dwell for a while on this all important subject, the weather in spring, the most important ingredient of which is warmth from the sun, now the sun is always there and at Green Meadow Farm, Hayes Gate I have seen the sun rise many times in the last sixty odd years and in mid December it rises due S - S E, over St. Pierre park at about 8.30 am. but as the earth turns on its axis by mid June it rises due east at about 5 am. and it never alters from one year to the next, yet we have early springs and the late springs and that is explained by several reasons. If in the preceding months of the winter we have severe frost and cold winds, then the land and the surrounding sea gets very cold, and it will take the sun longer to warm the soil and the atmosphere and it will be a late spring. Now if the preceding winter months are wet and mild and a predominant southwest wind then we can have an early spring and the effect of the sun has a much quicker effect. Weather in Britain can be very unpredictable being a small island the wind direction has a great effect, predominantly from the west and it is mostly mild and wet, if the east wind dominates it is cold and dry, north can bring cold rain sleet and snow, we rarely have a southerly wind, when we do this is usually quite warm and often moist. Weather in March can be very treacherous and unkind, but it can also be warm and pleasant. Then April can revert back to winter, this then checks any early growth that has taken place. May used to be my favourite month, the weather usually being very kind, but perhaps our seasons are changing or have changed because I have seen some horrid weather in May.

For many years I have kept a record of the weather and rainfall for the month of May in 1990 was only 8.25 mm., in May of 1993 54 mm., of rain fell; having produced a summary of rainfall over twenty years I regard 50 mm., of rain as ideal in May. Annual rainfall figures for 1987 to 2005 will be found inside the back cover. Yet with it all the good and the bad the effect is not often catastrophic, not like earthquakes and the like as experienced in other countries.

To me one of the greatest pleasures is to fetch the cows for milking on an early April morning with the birds singing and the air fresh and unspoilt by man. But then again in early April thinking winter is past the cows are turned out to spring grass and then the weather turns back to winter being wet and cold. When this happens beautiful spring grass disappears

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STARGAZING IN MAY '09

The 5 stars forming the "W" of Cassiopeia lie to the north in the evening night sky. In mythology Cassiopeia was the wife of Cepheus the king of Ethiopia and mother of Andromeda. Star Constellations usually have Ancient Greek names – the name Cassiopeia was used by Ptolemy, a great Greek astronomer living in Egypt when it was part of the Roman Empire around 100 AD. On the other hand the majority of stars have Arabic names – Arabic Astronomy was centred on Baghdad from about 800 to 1200 AD. Unusually the middle star of Cassiopeia is called Tsih, named by Chinese astronomers. This star has been used as an easily identifiable reference during space missions. Its traditional name in Welsh is Llys Dôn, which means the Court of Dôn, a character in the Mabinogion folk tales.

Other prominent Spring constellations are the familiar seven stars of Ursa Major, commonly called the Plough (a traditional Welsh name is Y Sospan, which hardly needs translating), which is now overhead in mid-evening, and Leo the Lion in the southern sky.

In the evening the yellowish planet Saturn lies to the south just below the constellation of Leo. The head of Leo the Lion can be identified by the pattern of stars that look like a reversed question mark. On 3rd May, the Moon is placed just to the right of Saturn.

The very bright planet Venus can be seen to the east at dawn. The rather faint planet Mars may be glimpsed close to the left of Venus and brighter Jupiter is in the south-east to the right of Venus. On 19th May Jupiter is quite close to the crescent Moon at dawn.

Dave Thomas

Dave Thomas

SHIRENEWTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 1090167

There was a full house for our March meeting, the title of the talk was 'Anecdotes and Tangents: A Shirenewton Family Story' given by Margaret Jenkins.

Margaret has spent years researching her family history, and has found she is related to quite a few of the families in the area. In her research she has discovered many interesting old photographs of people and places in the locality. During this period she has collected old documents such as birth, marriage and death certificates and wills which eventually built up a picture of her family tree. We were all fascinated by her many anecdotes of times gone by.

Dates for your Diary:

April Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, 28th April

Huntsman Hotel, Shirenewton

7.30 pm

'Medieval Gwent' Given by Tony Hopkins (from Gwent Record Office)

Resource Meeting

Monday, 11th May - Recreational Hall, Shirenewton

2.00 pm – 5.00 pm (drop in session)

Beating The Bounds

Sunday, 17th May - Annual Parish Beating the Bounds Walk

Meet at the Church at 2.00 pm - Approx 4 – 5 miles

Tea (and oxygen) will be provided afterwards!

Everyone welcome

May Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, 30th May - Huntsman Hotel, Shirenewton at 7.30 pm

'Solemn Sabbaths and Faraway Sundays' given by Peter Strong

**Local Neighbourhood Watch
PACT Meeting**

A combined Neighbourhood Watch / PACT meeting was held on 1st April at the Huntsman Hotel.

Our local Community Officer Mike Cowburn provided details of local crimes, and details of offences that occurred in the surrounding areas. All the crimes reported to the police within Shirenewton were relating to thefts from unsecured sheds and garages, a total of four incidents. The lesson here being keep these buildings secure. There have been further similar incidents since this meeting.

Other thefts occurred in the surrounding areas, in more isolated locations. These included the theft of cash from collection boxes in two churches in Llangwm, estimated at £150. Iron gates were stolen from a farm, as were several iron drain covers. Equestrian equipment has also been taken.

Local priority concerns within the community that were felt to require police involvement were raised. These were ongoing issues of speeding traffic, in particular motor cycles on B4235 (Usk Road) and through the village. PC Cowburn stated that the local force now had available a mobile speed warning sign that has been in use locally that indicated to drivers their speed. This was found to be particularly effective. This device does not record for prosecution. A hand held device is available for prosecution purposes. Only one of each of these devices is available to Chepstow area.

Speeding motor cyclists can only be prosecuted when breaking the speed limit. Monitoring has found very few cases of bikers breaking the legal limit on the roads of concern. The limit on these roads is the National speed limit of 60mph. Although this may be considered too fast. it is legal, and while bikers are driving within the law the police can take no action.

Motor cycling in Wentwood, and Grey Hill Common and other Woodland areas is being monitored. Police are doing what they can along with the Forestry Commission, it is obviously a problem due to the ability of offenders to move through areas not always accessible to police vehicles.

Considerable concern was expressed regarding the system by which contact with the police could only be accessed through the Cwmbran Call Centre due to the greatly reduced opening hours of Chepstow and Caldicot Police Stations.

Details of the "Horse Watch" scheme were discussed. This a separate scheme from Neighbourhood Watch however details can be obtained from Gwent Police on 01633 638111.

The next meeting will be held on 27th May at the Huntsman Hotel at 7.30 p.m.