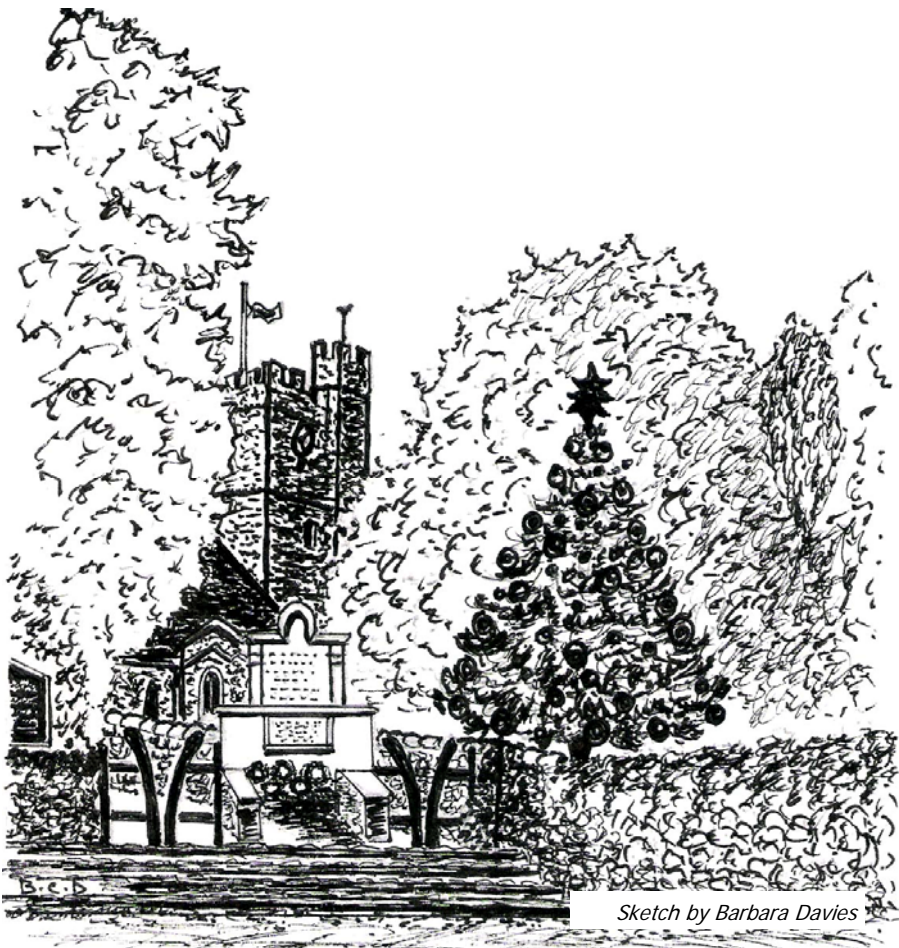


Shirenewton & Newchurch
Parish Magazine
December 2011
January 2012



Sketch by Barbara Davies

Price: 50p

Dear Friends,

Every successful event is usually due to good preparation and many of you are, I expect, already on with your planning and preparations for Christmas. For Christians we are also preparing for one of the greatest events in the Christian calendar, Christmas Day or otherwise known as the Mass of Christ.

Our preparations begin in earnest on Sunday 27th November which is Advent Sunday when we will light the first candle in our Advent Wreath which has four red (or blue) candles in a ring around a white (or gold) candle. One candle is lit during the service each Sunday until Christmas Day. There are several traditions about the meaning or theme of each candle. The scheme that accords best with our Bible readings for the Advent Season is:

Advent Sunday 1 The Patriarchs

Advent Sunday 2 The Prophets

Advent Sunday 3 John the Baptist

Advent Sunday 4 The Virgin Mary

Christmas Day The Christ

Each of the four Sundays then remind us of those who prepared for the coming of Christ. 'The Patriarchs' can focus on Abraham, our father in faith and King David, Jesus' ancestor in whose city he was born, Bethlehem. The 'Prophets' gives us the opportunity to reflect on the way the birth of the Messiah was 'foretold' in the Old Testament of the Bible. 'John the Baptist' who proclaimed the Saviour when he baptised Jesus. The fourth candle is to remind us of 'Mary' the mother of Jesus and this completes our progress and preparations ready to light the final candle at the centre of our wreath during the Midnight Service on Christmas Eve.

Before we reach the great celebration there will be a number of events in the parish including singing carols around the Christmas tree, Carols and Nine Lessons, and Christingle which is so loved by many.

During all the preparations and mounting excitement as we draw closer to Christmas Day we need to remember those who will not be able to celebrate at this time and these are not only those across the world who are in great need and in desperate circumstances, but those in our own neighbourhood. There might be someone near you who will be in some need and if you cannot help please let me or one of our Parish Visitors, or any member of the Parochial Church Council, know so that we can come alongside to help in whatever way we can.

I hope many of you will join in the events which have become traditional in Shirenewton at this time of year - some mentioned elsewhere in this magazine – and come and join us in worship and praise as we give thanks for God's greatest gift to us, His Son Jesus Christ.

I wish you all a very happy and joyful Christmas.

Nansi Davies

Parish Priest.

SHIRENEWTON PARISH MAGAZINE

Regarding deliveries to subscribers in the Earlswood area.

Sadly Mr Peter Jones feels he is no longer able deliver magazines over this area, we would therefore welcome the offer of an individual or individuals who could deliver a number of copies to neighbours.

If you have not received your copy, copies are available in the Church on the table by the lady chapel

Bob O'Keefe

SHIRENEWTON CHURCH PCC

The PCC would like to thank Terry Walters who edits the magazine, Bob O,Keefe who now distributes the magazines and to the kind folk who deliver it to our homes.

However if you do not get it delivered there are always magazines in the church, on the table by the lady chapel. The church is open daily.

Please note the new Child Protection Office is Dr. Kerry Baker (01291 641925)

ST PETER'S CHURCH NEWCHURCH

Reminder: Our Carol Service will be held on the 18th of December at 2.30 PM. Please come, all will be welcome

Christmas Day Service: 11.15 am

GAERLLWYD BAPTIST CHAPEL

December 5th at 7.30 pm. Carol Service

Soup and Rolls afterwards, all welcome.

December 11th at 6.30pm. Service conducted by Newport Male Voice Choir

Refreshments afterwards, All welcome

EARLSWOOD AND NEWCHURCH WEST MEMORIAL HALL

Remembrance service was led by Mr John Waters. The accompanist was Mr Keith Simcock. Mrs Susan Lenthall read the Role of Honour. A poppy wreath was laid by Mr. Raymond Jeremiah.

Thank you all for your support

MOTHER'S UNION SHIRENEWTON / CAERWENT



Much has been going on in Monmouth Diocese on behalf of families here and in other countries. Last year MU members raised over £12,000 that was sent to benefit communities in several African countries.

On 9 November we welcomed Lynn Waters who spoke about her experiences of four months earlier this year working in Kampala, Uganda. She was working with an organisation that aimed to place orphaned children with adoptive parents in stable family units.

On 13 December we have been invited to join MU members at St Arvans in a pre-Christmas celebration.

Our first meeting next year, weather permitting, will be our AGM on Wednesday 10 January at 2.15 pm in Shirenewton Church Room.

SHIRENEWTON WOMENS INSTITUTE

November, long nights, short days, the gradual change to winter mode and preparations for Christmas.

A strangely mild start to the month which with a few blips has continued. We met for our branch meeting in the Rec. Hall on the 10th, our formal business concluded with reminders for December Christmas dinner, the list passed round for choices to be made.

Our speaker for the evening was Mrs Rosemary Scaddon, whom we welcome back, her talk this time titled 'Bringing home the bacon', an insight into how we used to shop. Rosemary illustrated her talk with slides of many shops and vendors from the Valleys and Newport, taken in the early years of the twentieth century. She reminded us how shopping for necessities was a daily routine since neither homes nor shops had refrigerators or freezers. There were even shops selling nothing but yeast, since it was needed fresh for everyday baking. Food arrived at the shops in large containers and was weighed, bagged and wrapped for the customers. There was no cellophane or plastic bags so bagging and wrapping was an art form, if the package was not to come undone or leak. There was no instant coffee, so beans were roasted and freshly ground to order each day. Service was good, but some shopkeepers indulged in various scams to get more money, such as displaying three lots of the same butter in different ways so that people would buy what they thought was a better butter paying more for it. Some places had 'Pantry Shops' where people would go and buy for each meal, morning popping in for a slice of bacon and an egg or dinner a chop and a couple of potatoes. People living in the country relied on deliveries by cart or bicycle and many shops worked very long hours to provide for all their customers.

We may get nostalgic about the loss of individual service, but we wouldn't want the often long queues waiting to be served and very little choice if you weren't the early bird. It's still nice to have small shops and personnel service, but it's good to have stuff in the fridge and freezers especially when the snow is down.



FAIRTRADE NEWS



'Christmas is coming, the goose is getting fat
Please put a penny in the old man's hat
If you haven't got a penny, a ha'penny will do
If you haven't got a ha'penny, then God bless you'

Most of us do not doubt that whilst a very few (people, not geese!) are getting very fat, the proportion of those without the metaphorical ha'penny is very much on the increase. Buying fairly traded products is a very simple way of ensuring that at least some of the people doing the work are treated more reasonably. It's not a charity, it's simply trade, conducted in a fair way! Look out for the Fairtrade logo!

www.fairtrade.org.net

Marion McAdam 641 316 msm316@gmail

P.S. Congratulations to Mrs Jane Eickhoff and the pupils of Shirenewton Primary School which is well on the way to becoming an accredited Fairtrade school!

SHIRENEWTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Curry Supper

Approximately sixty people attended the Recreation Hall in Shirenewton on Thursday 17th November for a presentation about the Caerwent MoD site by the Army Commander. This was a very interesting presentation with some surprising facts, for example, last year there were 92,000 training days at Caerwent! The presentation reinforced in our minds the important job that is carried out in Caerwent before soldiers have to go to war.

There was another short presentation from CADW on the listed buildings on the site and these had previously been unknown to most of those present.

Prior to the presentations there was a joint Community Council/MoD meeting with both Shirenewton and Caerwent Cllrs. These joint meetings have become regular events so if you have any questions or concerns about the activities at Caerwent and pass them on to your local Community Cllr then they can possibly be included in the meetings.

Following the presentations was what many people had been looking forward to the most! The curry supper cooked and served by Army personnel. From the comments that were made afterwards it would appear that everyone really enjoyed it.

Obviously not everyone affected by the 'bumps and bangs' coming out of Caerwent could be invited. The Community Council took the decision to ask local organisations to send two representatives so if you weren't lucky enough to be asked to attend this time maybe you will next time!

SHIRENEWTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING, MONDAY 7TH NOVEMBER 2011

Public Speaking

Three teenagers came along to talk about 'Facilities for Skateboards, Scooters and Bikes in Shirenewton' and were wondering about the possibility of having a skateboard park up at the Rec. They put forward some good points e.g. young people need safe places for recreation, that it would provide the opportunities for healthy athletic outdoor activity, that it would be a 'cool' image for the village, that other villages like Woolaston have skate parks, etc The boys had come to canvass support from the Community Council before pursuing their project further. The council will put in on next month's agenda to discuss it.

The October Police Report from PC Louise Thorpe

- Sun 2nd There was a road accident on the B4235 when a motorcyclist slipped on a bend – luckily he wasn't hurt and luckily nothing was coming the other way. I am presuming it was his bike that slipped rather than him walking along.
- Tues 11th Something was stolen from a field in Earlswood. The chained gate had been 'bolt cropped' and items nicked. The report didn't say what they were – just that they were made of metal.
- Thur 20th Another traffic accident this time outside the TA which involved two vehicles. The road was blocked for a time, but luckily no-one was hurt.
- Mon 31st There was another road collision – again on the B4235 on one of the bends but once again, luckily, no-one was hurt.
PC Thorpe was also looking into the possibility of 'scammers' involving cold calls about Dyson Cleaners (?) and also calls from 'The Electricity Board' offering, '40% off your electricity bills for life'. The latter seemed too good to be true and they were being looked into by the police.

SCC have long been asking Highways to erect 40mph signs on the B4235 to persuade drivers and motorcyclists to slow down as they drive through our area. The good news is that some have been erected – but the bad news is – the signs are not where the council had asked them to be placed i.e. on the bends where the B4235 goes past our village... Sigh.

But finally a good result. In days of yore, our local policeman would regularly walk around the village with a local councilor with the idea of meeting local residents to listen to their local concerns. Trouble was, they very rarely met anyone. The local residents were all ... somewhere else.

Now there is a better plan. PC Thorpe and our councilors will regularly meet up with lots of local people. Where? Down at the local. When people pop in during the morning to...pick up their newspapers.. they can use the opportunity to discuss issues with their local community police officer! And also, as PC Thorpe sits conspicuously in the window seat of the Tredegar Arms it might deter speeding motorists hurtling through the village.

Planning Applications

There were none! Yippee!! I thought I'll be home and dry before lights out. Oh dear no.

In place of deep and meaningful discussions about planning, the councilors were asked to comment on the Draft Local Development Plan or LDP for short. And that is the only short thing about it, as the document runs to a fulsome 219 pages. I felt my life passing before me. Slowly.

The clerk had emailed this monstrous piece of MCC consultative documentation to the councilors at the beginning of the month so that they could read it before hand and bring their comments to the meeting. So...

There followed a numb silence. It wasn't that it hadn't been read – it had. In parts. It was universally acknowledged that this was a cure for insomnia. And this was where things started to liven up a little, as one councilor after another began to rant, rave and rail against the ridiculousness of suggesting this was a consultative document. Not only was this draft LDP overly long, it was factually inaccurate and included statements which were not supported by any evidence at all. And councilors voiced their suspicions that MCC had already made their decisions. It wasn't consultative at all – it was statement of fact cunningly disguised as a consultative document! It was going through the legal motions. It was a waste of time. Gosh, it got quite animated and I think that if there had been buns on the table they would have been hurled at MCC

The next exciting thing on the agenda was to discuss MCC's 'Review of Planning Procedures'. But as regular readers might guess, given MCC's penchant for ignoring and overturning SCC's recommendations, the feeling towards this document was one of complete skepticism.

Indeed, it was suggested in the nicest possible way – well no it wasn't really – it was just stated, that all the people working in the planning department are completely mad.

The Cllrs then went on to consider a response to the draft 'Wentwood Management Plan' which had also been emailed to councilors earlier for them to have a little more bedtime reading. It was suggested that that the council might well have agreed with some of the conclusions but as the Plan ran to a generous 141 pages, most councilors had run out of printer-ink, paper, time, patience and indeed life.

Continued on Page 8

Continued from Page 7

Not only was the Plan lengthy beyond belief, it was apparently turgid, full of unexplained acronyms and very badly written. The clerk was requested to tell the author of the WMP that, it was, in a nutshell, incomprehensible.

Other stuff

- There had been a suggestion that we share **electronic Slow Down Signs** with Llangwm but Clr Down said that there was no funding to help local councils any more.
- The date of the **Shirenewton Church Fete** has been moved forward a week (Sat 2nd June) to coincide with the Queen's Jubilee as it was unlikely that HRH would move her celebrations back to coincide with our fete day. There are plans afoot to have a Jubilee Celebration on the Rec on the Bank Holiday and it was thought that the city of tents, marquees and gazebos could stay up there from the fete on the Saturday for the celebrations planned for the Monday.
- And also Temporary Events Notices, which allow for the supply of the demon drink, last for 72 hours and therefore the one license would cover the two events. I expect HRH knew that too.
- The Highways Department are going to fill in the **humongous potholes** in the road down towards the Cwm but not the holes in the roads up in Earlswood as they are not humongous enough.
- The strange non appearance of the **One Stop Shop** is still unaccounted for because ...actually I can't remember....
- I could tell you about the OVW Annual Conference, Installation of Timetable Cases on Brick Bus Shelters, Traffic Surveys, New Maps for Electoral Wards and even the Reinstatement of a Hedge and but no – I shall leave you sitting on the edge of your seat waiting eagerly for next month's installment of Shirenewton Community Council Notes.

Next meeting Monday 5th December – Shirenewton Rec 7.30

Glynis

PS Don't forget, the meeting is open to the public. Come along to see democracy at work. It is marginally more fun than having your teeth pulled – but not much.

PPS If you haven't read the above notes you may be interested to hear that there may be a vacancy for a new councilor – so watch this space for more details or the village notice boards. It really is tremendously exciting, with lots to read, lots of discussion and a real chance to make a difference.

STARGAZING IN SEPTEMBER

The very bright planet Jupiter is to the south-east in the evening sky. On 6th December the Moon is just above Jupiter. In the early morning sky the planet Saturn can be seen to the south-east on the left of the star called Spica. On 20th December they are joined by the crescent Moon. Mars is to the south in the morning sky below the constellation of Leo. The Moon is just below Saturn on 17th December.

In the evening to the southeast, the constellation Orion is particularly impressive – three bright stars make up his belt; two stars are his shoulders, and two more make his legs. Orion was the great hunter of Greek Mythology who boasted that he could kill any creature on earth – but he met his match in the scorpion, which stung him in the heel and killed him. The bright blue-white star in Orion's right leg is Rigel, an extremely powerful star but at great distance, it is at least 60,000 times more luminous than the Sun. The bright star at Orion's left shoulder is Betelgeuse (pronounce it "beetle-juice" and you'll be close enough). Betelgeuse has a reddish colour – it is a vast red super-giant star, large enough to contain the entire path of the Earth round the Sun. Hanging from Orion's belt is his sword. One of the stars in the sword appears fuzzy compared with other stars and is well worth looking at through binoculars. This is the Orion Nebula and is a huge cloud of gas and dust. It is one of the most intense regions of star formation visible in our galaxy.

22nd December is the Winter Solstice, our shortest day, often called mid-winter and a good time to take a trip to Australia where it is the longest day!

Dave Thomas

RNLI CONCERT

The concert in the church by the Chepstow Male Voice Choir raised the magnificent sum of £992 for the Royal Lifeboat Institution. On behalf of the Institution very many thanks for this most generous contribution to its funds
D B Robinson
President Chepstow Branch

200 CLUB WINNERS

OCTOBER

Mike Baker £40
Ann McLean £30
Wenche O'Keefe £20
Roy Waikes £10

NOVEMBER

Diane Galliers £40
Kerry Edwards £30
Ann Nicholas £20
Will Smith-Haddon £10

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LUNCHEON CLUB**

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Please book early to secure
your place for lunch on
Wednesday :

December 14th 2011
January 25th 2012
February 22nd 2012
March 28th 2012

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&
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Every Thursday
1.30 to 3pm term time
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& Songs. £2

Shirenewton Recreation Hall

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groups/181560798590317](https://www.facebook.com/groups/181560798590317)

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Do you enjoy playing games



Contact:

Paul Owen on 01291 641483

or by email at

dqgm@ppstudio.co.uk

For more information

Earlswood Hall Thanks You!



They are in!!! (or should I say on?)

Earlswood Hall now has Solar Panels on the roof and we are about to go live onto the National Grid!

The committee would like to thank everyone who has helped us with this project which will mean so much to us in terms of a secure financial income and a warmer building.

We have raised the money through generous donations, interest free loans and through investment loans with an approx 3% interest rate. The project has cost us £14,000 and in an amazingly short time we have raised £11,000 which has been brilliant. However, it would be really useful just to find that last little bit. So if you would like to support this excellent venture, ask

Charles, (641 716) Christine,
Simon (641 616) Glynis, (641 818) for more details.

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I'm a native-Spanish speaker, with an excellent pronunciation and grammar. If you are interested in learning a new language for business or leisure purposes, just call or drop me an e-mail.

Translation services and rates vary depending on the extension and nature of the text. I guarantee professional reliable service, flexible prices and confidentiality.

I am available in the day time and early evenings during the week. The place will be agreed on together to suit both parties. Please feel free to contact me for further details.

Paty Davies

Tel: 01291 641553

Mobile: 07807103901

email: lucy_24@hotmail.com

MUSICAL DIRECTOR: GRAHAM BULL

SUNDAY DECEMBER 11th

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information, tel. (01291) 424725, 620414, 623310**

ADVANCE NOTICE

SATURDAY MARCH 24th 2012

J.S. BACH : "ST JOHN PASSION"

**With
GARETH TRESEDER (Evangelist), TIM NELSON (Bass),
ROBERT GARLAND (Bass),
LEWIS BRETHERTON (Counter-tenor), CLARA LISLE (Soprano)**

CCS ORCHESTRA (leader: PAULA KEMPTON)

MUSICAL DIRECTOR : GRAHAM BULL

**For further information about any of the above, please tel. (01291)
623310, 620414, 424725. The Society welcomes new members. If you
enjoy singing, please contact Marjorie Duerden (tel.623310) about
singing membership. NEW MEMBERS ARE INVITED & MOST WELCOME
COME & KEEP YOUR LOCAL SOCIETY SINGING!!
WE CANNOT SURVIVE WITHOUT YOU!!**

**CCS is affiliated to Ty Cerdd - Music Centre Wales, and is also a
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**A Torch Light
Carol Service**

with the Martin Singers
at

TINTERN ABBEY

MONDAY 12th DECEMBER 2011

7.00 pm

Assemble at
The Anchor Hotel, Tintern
From 6.00 pm

This is an outdoor event please bring appropriate
clothing and footwear

Order of Service and light

£2.00



In aid of Rotary Charities

By kind permission of CADW



I am PC 1158 Louise Thorpe and in February 2012, I will have been in the Police for twenty-one years!

I am very happy to have taken over the rural ward from Mike Cowburn and am enjoying this totally different way of Policing.

Thankfully, the overall crime rate is low compared to other areas, but we have seen a slight increase in rural crime, and would like to therefore offer some crime prevention advice.

Everyone with sheds, garages and out buildings, check their security regularly and try to disable mechanical equipment like motorbikes/quad bikes etc.

Security mark expensive tools and garden equipment and make sure that there are chains/padlocks/alarms protecting the property.

Invest in security lighting where possible, make sure all exits that lead to roads, especially away from the house, are secure and if you have a dog, check outside if it barks in the middle of the night.

If you think there is someone prowling around, do not go outside unless you are confident, but **CALL US** either on 999 or 101.

Unfortunately, none of these things will stop a determined thief, but by making it harder and giving you more chances to hear or see that something is going on, they may think twice about taking anything.

The best place for a thief to go is one in darkness and with no security on any buildings.

You can contact either me or Community Officer Andy Jones on

01633 642068 – do not use to report an incident

01633 838111 – you can use this to report an incident if 101 is not working

Louise.thorpe@gwent.pnn.police.uk

Andrew.jones@gwent.pnn.police.uk

1ST SHIRENEWTON GUIDES



What have the Guides been up to? Well we had a good attendance for the Remembrance Sunday service in Shirenewton – well done girls, all very smart. Several girls have now completed their First Aid badge, so if you are feeling a little under the weather please avoid Guides as they are very keen to practise new skills! Many thanks to Debbie and Karen for their help in this. I suspect we will be calling upon their services again in the New Year for a catch up session for those girls with a couple of clauses still to complete.

We have also started working on a Tanzania Challenge which is supporting 2 young Guiders who are trekking in Tanzania to raise funds to help guiding in areas of financial need. We have made beads, played Kims game and had fun with a new game called “Simba” – much chanting and squealing required. Our next challenge is making model drums. The girls are also working in their patrol groups on challenges from our “Go for it” resources. We are hoping to go climbing in a couple of weeks time and our older girls have been joining with the Explorer Scouts for an overnight camp and night hike combined with Devauden Bonfire celebrations and also a young drivers course.

It seems rather early to say this but seasons greetings from Guides and we will have news of our Christmas celebrations in the next edition!

Yours in guiding

Kestrel	Helen Cann	01291 650835
Kitten	Amanda Morton	01291 650763
Karen Ford and Debbie Henshall		

SHIRENEWTON CHURCH WEBSITE

www.shirenewtonchurch.com

As the festive season approaches please be sure to do your present shopping via the church website. It currently has 259 shops in 34 categories including many popular ones such as Amazon, Asda, Boden, Countrywide, Carphone warehouse, Comet, Dell, and so on

Year to date the site has raised just over £1,100 for church funds so many thanks and keep up the good work.

If you are jetting off somewhere warm (or even somewhere colder) then don't forget to book your travel, car hire and airport parking through the site. There are multiple options for each one.

In terms of the rest of the site, I'm going to make a big effort and try and get everything up-to-date for Christmas! Year to date (21st November), the site has had 2,789 visits by 1,620 visitors with 8,977 page views giving an average of 3.22 pages viewed per visit. The visits came from 44 countries.

So thanks for your support this year. Please continue to support the site and ensure that your end of year spending and sales spending next year are directed through it. Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year to all.

David Cornwell webmaster

**Carols and Christingles in
Shirenewton Church.**



Come along to our service of Carols and Christingles
Christmas Eve Shirenewton Church
4.00

Led by our young people, Christmas in Shirenewton wouldn't be
the same without this candlelit service!

Everyone is very welcome
Mulled Wine and Mince Pies in the Church Room afterwards.

WHIST DRIVES

There was a rapid reshuffling, not of cards but of tables as 37 players arrived for the Drive on the 3rd November. New players are always made welcome, please join us; our Table fee is £1. per person which includes light refreshments. We also have a Raffle that raises funds for the upkeep of the Hall. Our Seasonal Special will be on the 1st December and next year we start on the 5th January followed by the 2nd February. All our Drives are held on the first Thursday of each month at the Recreation Hall starting promptly at 7.30 p.m.

Auriol Horton. 01291 641844

Christmas Fair and Coffee Morning for 'Retrack'



Last year, the younger members of Shirenewton Church raised over £1000 for 'The Tigers Club' (now renamed 'RETRACK') which was fantastic. This charity helps children who have to live in dangerous conditions on the streets in Uganda and in Ethiopia.

This year we will be holding a Coffee Morning and Christmas Fair **Church Room on Sunday 4th December from 10.45 onwards.**

Do come along – it would be lovely to see you.

(PS You don't need to have gone to church either!)



Carols Around the Village Christmas Tree

Sunday 11th December @ 6.30
in the Tredegar Arms Carpark
(Thank you Julie!)

The collection will go to 'RETRACK'
"Supporting street children in Uganda"
Bring a torch. And some gloves.

And a warm hat...

Not Just Feet



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&
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Annabel Hancock MAR

Contact me for a home visit on
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I'm a native-Spanish speaker, with an excellent pronunciation and grammar. If you are interested in learning a new language for business or leisure purposes, just call or drop me an e-mail.

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I am available in the day time and early evenings during the week. The place will be agreed on together to suit both parties. Please feel free to contact me for further details.

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Nerys's Natty Nosh

Mulled wine is probably the best drink associated with Christmas celebrations. There are many different recipes but the basic ingredients are: red wine, sweet spices, oranges or apples and sometimes honey. It is quite acceptable to add a little brandy to enhance the flavour of the drink. It is a German and Slavic tradition and it was their custom to offer mulled wine to carol singers to spread good cheer.

I made this last year and served it to family and friends. *Iechyd da*

(Good health).

Mulled Wine

Ingredients

2 litres/ 3½ pints red wine
5 oranges
50 cloves
Thinly pared rind juice of 4 lemons
850ml/ 1½ pints water
115g/ 4 oz caster sugar
2 cinnamon sticks
150ml/¼ pint brandy (optional)

Method

1. Prick the skins of 3 of the oranges all over with a fork and stud with the cloves. Put to one side.
2. Thinly pare the rind and squeeze the juice from the remaining oranges.
3. Put the orange and lemon rind, juice, water, sugar and cinnamon in a heavy-based saucepan. Bring to the boil.
4. Boil for 2 minutes. Remove from the heat and leave to stand for 10 minutes.
5. Strain the liquid into a heatproof jug, pressing down the content of the sieve to extract all the juice.
6. Pour the wine into the saucepan and add the strained spiced juices, the brandy and clove-studded oranges.
7. Simmer gently without boiling, taste.
8. When the infusion is correct, pour into a heatproof glass. Enjoy!

*Nadolig Llawn a Blwyddyn Newydd Dda.
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.*

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SAMFAL

'TIS THE SEASON TO BE JOLLY.....

Here we are at the end of another year wondering at the speed of its passing and how little we have achieved in the time. I for one, have not done one tenth of the things I promised to do at the start of it and some things will now have to wait until the longer days and sun come back around. The fields are looking good after the mild and comparatively dry autumn (think back to this time last year; cold, snow, frosty mornings.) and I have even detected daisies and dandelions popping up in small groups. These of course will be killed off with the first frost, but wild life has been deluded and hibernating house flies have woken up and emerged and hedgehogs will awaken and become active; but they must be sure to fatten up their reserves before they go back to sleep. Hedgehogs; along with bears and other hibernating species possess what scientists call a type of "brown fat" which along with the reduction in their metabolic rate and slower heartbeat enables them to survive the winter months. Now being the time that people tidy up the garden and burn the pile of rubbish that has accumulated through summer, please do not just put a match to it as it is but check first that Mr. and Mrs. Tiggywinkle have not bedded down there for the winter. It will only take a minute, but you could help an endangered animal and gardener's friend.

This autumn has been good for the various species of fungus found on and around Mynyddbach. I would like to thank Helen Sjöberg (former pupil of Mynyddbach School) for drawing my attention to (and sending me photographs) the following types; common puff-ball, parasol mushroom, field mushroom, shaggy ink cap, stinkhorn and Jew's ear fungus- along with some I could not identify. The part of a fungus seen above the ground is in fact the fruit, that is, the means of reproduction by way of spreading its spores. The main structure of the fungus is a matrix of fine threads out of sight, either in the ground, rotten wood, decaying vegetation or even dead animals. In some parts of the world these networks can cover a vast area which some people argue makes a specimen to be one of the worlds largest single organisms. (Don't worry, they don't live here and they don't eat living people.) Speaking of eating, although some types of fungus is edible, I would recommend that you do not attempt to eat one unless you are an expert in identification; and I know experts can often be wrong.

I would like, on behalf of the association, to thank Brian Jones once again for scuffing up the ground on our side of the "almost northern" boundary fence prior to the planting of another mixed hedgerow; which leads me nicely into a plea for volunteers for the above mentioned task. Details to be announced later or contact Alison Broughton or any other member of the committee. Christmas will soon be upon us so ring the bells and have fun....Tra lalala laaa lala lala. Mike Gambold.

SHIRENEWTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The society's Annual General Meeting was well attended, the reports of the officers and election of a new committee was soon completed, and everyone agreed that we had a successful year, with eleven monthly meetings with varied, informative and interesting speakers. Eleven monthly resource meetings, which see's our archive collection grow with generous gifts of local interest out of print books donated from our members, to swell our library. There has been more interest shown this year from overseas, from people tracing ancestors who were born in Shirenewton, which helps us build up a picture of Shirenewton as it would have been in times gone by. Membership stays the same with a few people leaving the village and new residents arriving wanting to get involved with our community keeping our membership stable. We attended the village fete and had a very successful day at Chepstow Show with people showing great interest in the display entitled '*Mounton Brook Mills*'. We carried on with this topic and were asked to lead a walk for the Monmouthshire Walking Festival that took place at half term, where we lead a group along the Mounton brook on a sunny autumn day, everyone agreeing what a beautiful part of Monmouthshire we live in.

Our speaker for the evening, John Harvey, waited patiently while we completed the business side of the A.G.M. and he then gave his talk entitled '*T.A. Walker his Life and Achievements*'. We were celebrating the 125 anniversary of the opening of the Severn Tunnel by asking the builder, Thomas Walker's great grand-son to give the talk and tell us about his ancestors amazing life. We were all very impressed by his many and varied achievements during his life time.

Dates for your Diary:

Monday, 12th December	Resources at the Recreational Hall, 2.00 – 5.00
Tuesday, 13th December	Meeting at Mathern Church, Talk and tour With mince pies. 7.00 pm. Everyone welcome.
Tuesday, 27th December	Our annual Solstice walk up to Grey Hill to See the Winter sun rise at 8.10 A.M. Meeting at the Woodland Tavern car at 7.30 A.M. and afterwards breakfast at the Woodland Tavern at 9.00 A.M. Everyone welcome.
Monday, 16th January	Our monthly meeting will be combined with The Resource Meeting and will be held at the Recreational Hall, at 7.00 p.m.
Monday, 13 th February	Resource meeting at the Recreational Hall 2.00 p.m. – 5.00 p.m.
Tuesday, 31 st February	Annual Dinner at the Huntman Hotel 7.00 p.m. for 7.30 p.m. Guest speaker.

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GARDENING CORNER

Not one of the first to make comment about the weather(!), I have to say that I am not too impressed with the current mild spell. Not because I like cold weather, but more because of the damage and possible extra work that this continuing mild spell might result in. By way of explanation, I was picking the last of the apples in the orchard last weekend. It felt almost spring-like and obviously the bees thought so too as they were flying in all directions. The bad news of course is that they are flying at a time when there is limited of in some cases no food at all for them to forage. This means that they are using up valuable supplies to fly willy nilly around the countryside, with no chance of replenishing the dwindling stocks. Hence where the extra work comes in as I will need to monitor very closely and start to feed the hives as soon as things are starting to look dodgy. Get this wrong and the hives can be lost. You are restricted to some degree as to what to feed them as well as the normal mix of sugar and water is not advisable especially if it then turns cold, as the bees need to get rid of the excess water. If they can't fly to relieve themselves then disease is a strong possibility. The normal feed is special candy or a good alternative is fondant icing that you can buy from good old fashioned bakers. This isn't foolproof however as the bees need some water to help break the icing down, which they obviously have to fly to find – and if they can't fly?! And so the vicious cycle starts again. I also noticed that a couple of hives had a very large number of bees going in and out. There was a lot of debris at the entrance and on the ground which is a sure sign that the activity is down to bees from a stronger hive raiding a weaker one of its honey. There is certainly no love lost between neighbours in the war to survive! Signs are that I will be starting the summer off with at least two hives less than I finished the last one with. Oh for some cold weather!

It isn't much better news in the garden as I noticed that the garlic has already sprouted from the ground. No doubt hard frost will trim these back to the ground as the growth is so lush and soft. I thought one good thing to come out of the milder weather would be a very large second crop of strawberries, as the plants were covered. Unfortunately the mild, grey and damp weather has turned most of these to a mouldy mess, so not much luck there either. I have to say that at times like these one wonders whether all the hard work is worth it, but then again we sat down to a lovely casserole the other evening, where the only thing that we hadn't been responsible for growing was the bit of beef. I have been tempted to

even have a go at that as well (couple of piggies or cattle in our field would help keep it in order after all – well probably not the pigs). However this is when the assistant head gardener takes charge and puts her size four wellies well and truly down! Quite sensibly I have to add, but we can all dream, and with retirement hopefully just around the corner (well two years, 10 months and 6 days away anyway- not that I'm counting) then who knows!

I'm determined to get the outside of the house painted over the coming weeks. I have been trying to do this now for probably the last five years and never succeeded, which has resulted, like Joseph, in a house (as in coat) of many colours. From a distance it looks OK, but closer inspection shows that the coat applied five years ago is a shade lighter than the coat applied at the front four years ago, which is in itself a shade lighter than the coat applied three years ago to the side. You probably get the picture of my dilemma! What's all this got to do with gardening I hear you ask? Not a lot really, but as I explain to the assistant head, I haven't yet grown a brush (think about it!), or two pairs of hands and as there aren't yet 25 hours in a day nor 8 days in the week, there are some days that the painting will just have to wait! One has to get one's priorities right after all. So on the good days, when I'm not watching Armageddon in the bee world, my attention turns to gardening and getting things in hand. At the moment this involves sorting out the greenhouses and the tunnel, as the ground is just a little bit too sticky to get on as yet. The big greenhouse has been completely stripped of all the old tomato plants. Any green or ripening toms have been deposited in the kitchen and we are steadily eating these as they ripen off. The ground has been thoroughly weeded, and will be manured in the coming week or so. This bed has become very weedy, especially with what I know as chickweed, so I think that I will grow early potatoes in this bed next year in an effort to clean it up a bit. I don't really want to grow tomatoes in the same ground next year (as they are the same family as spuds), so this will mean that the potatoes can be replaced with summer 'fruits' such as either melon, pepper, courgette or cucumbers.

The small greenhouse doesn't have crops in it at all as this is reserved for germinating seeds and growing plants on. But, like the other house, both need a thorough cleaning down and disinfecting with Jeys fluid, so this will be done on the first nice sunny day that we get. I've still got quite a few onions laid out in there so these will need to be gathered together first and stored in the garage. I have also tried to save some bean seed in an effort to save some money on next years seed order.

Continued on Page 34

Continued from Page 33

Those that have dried properly will be podded and stored ready for next spring, but some have failed to dry properly so these may end up on the compost heap. I will give them a little longer to dry, but its not looking too hopeful. Other key job that I have started and need to progress to its natural conclusion is the hedge cutting. I have started and at times it feels a bit like the Forth road bridge (once you get to the end it's time to go back to the start again). But one or two good days just concentrating on this soon sorts it out. At the moment the long range forecast (the same that said we would already be gripped in an Arctic blast) is for Christmas to be a long dry spell with possible hosepipe bans to follow. If it is it will at least allow me to get on the ground and sort out all the vegetable beds ready for next year. The flower beds are showing signs of neglect over the last few years (too much work (e.g. painting!) and not enough pleasure time. You know it's bad when you have ash trees that have almost reached firewood proportions, and brambles that are crawling over the tops of the greenhouses! This does get a bit depressing at times and some have said to just grass it down and cut it once a week. But once everything is in order, the garden in all its glory is a haven for butterflies, bees and birds aplenty. I'd rather see these, even with the hard work that is required, than just a sterile sward of green. So I will continue to persevere, I will beat it and the painting will get done – eventually! Here's wishing you all a very merry Christmas hopefully made even better with family and good friends around you.

Happy gardening until next year.

Steve and Felicity Hunt.

To the Parishioners and Supporters of St Thomas áBecket Church,

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DIARY DATES

For further details see inside the magazine

Dec	Event	Location
1	Whist Drive Seasonal Special	Recreation Hall
4	Christmas Fair & Coffee Morning	Church Room
11	Carols around the Christmas Tree	Tredeggar Arms Car park
11	Chepstow Choral Society	St. Mary's Church Chepstow
12	Shirenewton Historical Society	Recreation Hall
12	Torch Light Carol Service	Tintern Abbey
13	Shirenewton Historical Society	Mathern Church
13	Mothers Union	St Arvans MU
14	Community Lunch	Tredeggar Arms
18	Carol Service	St Peter's Church Newchurch
27	Shirenewton Historical Society	Grey Hill
Jan	Event	Location
5	Whist Drive	Recreation Hall
10	Mothers Union	Church Room
16	Shirenewton Historical Society	Recreation Hall
25	Community Lunch	Tredeggar Arms
26, 27, 28	Cinderella	Earlswood Hall


SHIRENEWTON CHURCH - READERS AND SIDES-PERSONS

Dec	Service	Reader	Sides-Person
4	2nd Sunday of Advent Childrens' Service	Bob Gratton Mike Peirce	Bob Gratton Mike Peirce
11	3rd Sunday of Advent Holy Eucharist	James Loney Ruth Savagar	Claire Lewis Allan Saysell
18	4th Sunday of Advent Carols and Reading	Mark Broughton Kevin Bounds	Mark Broughton Kevin Bounds
24	Carols & Christingles 4.00pm		
25	Christmas Day Holy Eucharist	Andrew Baker Sally Saysell	John Nicholas Allan Saysell

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The views expressed are those of the contributor.

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