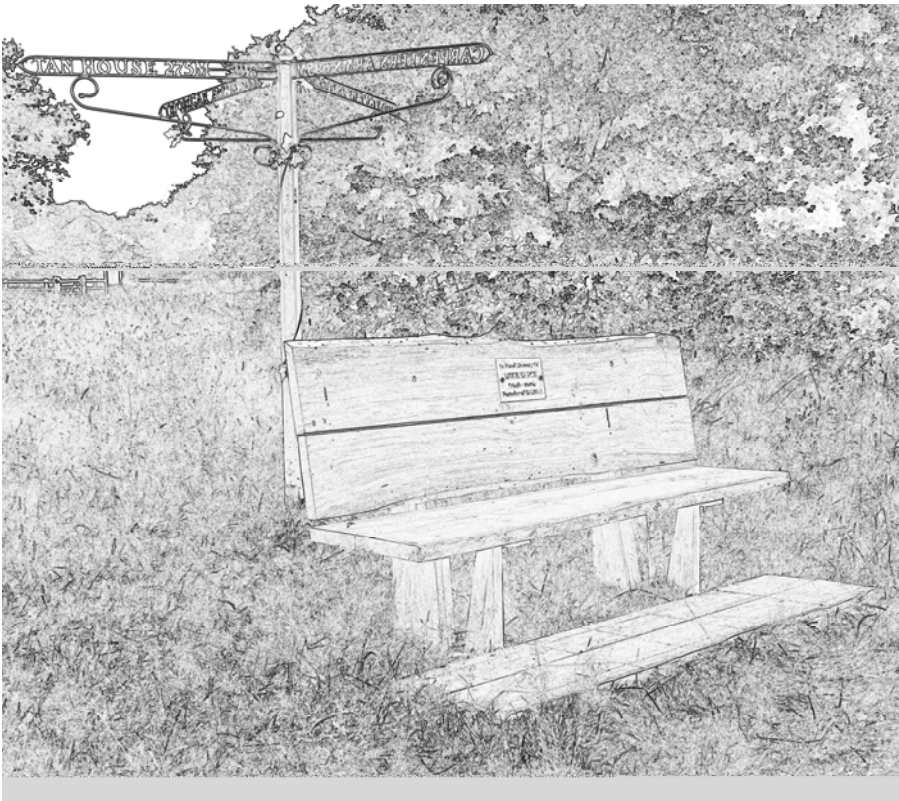


Shirenewton

Parish Magazine

April 2013



*Mike Sayce Memorial Seat
Image by Terry Walters*

Price: 50p

Dear Friends,

We received very short notice of the Bishop coming to St. Thomas a Beckett to Collate and Induct The Reverend Julian White as the Rector of Shirenewton. Thus with only eight days notice the Bishop came on Mothering Sunday and Julian became our new Rector. It was a very joyful occasion and after the service we were able to welcome Julian and Sandra his wife together with a goodly number of members of the other churches in our new Group, Mathern, St.Pierre and Mounton for refreshments in the church room. The Bishop stayed to meet everyone and indeed was not in a hurry to leave! My thanks to all those who provided the refreshments including some of those who were unable to be present because of previous engagements in Edingburgh.

So we welcome Julian as Incumbent and his supporter, Sandra and hope theirs will be a long and fruitful ministry amongst us. A new era begins.

Easter will be with us before the next issue of this magazine and I hope you will keep a keen eye on the notices of services between now and then not only here in Shirenewton but also in the services throughout the Group. Easter is at the very heart of our faith and all baptised Christians are encouraged to receive Holy Communion at this time so do come during Eastertide at some point.

Many of you will be aware that John and Ann Nicholas are moving from Shirenewton during March and we will miss them very much indeed. They have, over the years, given of their time and energy to the life of the church and the community. John has now for the last decade or so been the Maintenance and Fabric Officer of St.Thomas a Becket and it is largely thanks to him, ably assisted by Allan Saysell, that the church building is in such good repair. Ann has over the years prepared refreshments and feasts to delight us while both have always to be seen busy at the Summer Fete. They will be visiting from time to time and thankfully are at the end of a telephone for advice. They have promised to help at this year's Fete. Thank you John and Ann for your commitment to the church and to the community.

I wish you all a very happy Easter.

Every Blessing

Nansi Davies

Parish Priest

SHIRENEWTON PARISH VISITORS

We have a team of five Parish Visitors who are members of the Church of St Thomas á Becket's congregation. They are trained and supported to offer a listening ear and time to chat with those in particular need -- the housebound, the sick, the bereaved, or those facing some other kind of crisis. They are also there to welcome new people into the village and help them to integrate into the community more quickly. They are not professional counsellors, carers or social workers, but ordinary people who are willing to be alongside you when you most need it. Their service is free to those of all faiths and none, with no strings attached.

Confidentiality

Our Parish Visitors work within a strict code of confidentiality so that you may be confident that whatever is shared with them goes no further. The one exception to this is that Visitors may share the minimum information necessary to obtain support and advice themselves, if necessary, from our clergy or other appropriate person. This would only happen with the person's consent.

How to Find Out More

Contact our coordinator, the Revd Nansi Davies Tel 01633 400519 or Diane Marlow Tel 01291 641407 for an informal chat about your need.

If you would like to become a member of the Parish Visitors team please contact Nansi or Diane.

RESULTS OF THE 200 CLUB DRAW

February

1st	£40 Beryl Saysell
2nd	£30 Linda Dobson
3rd	£20 Vivien Ginley
4th	£10 Barry Morris

1ST SHIRENEWTON GUIDES & SENIOR SECTION



Girlguiding UK

The Guides have been busy this term looking at the lives of girls living in India and recognising how many more opportunities are open to them and how fair their lives are! By the time you read this we will have celebrated Thinking Day on the 22nd of February – the joint birthday of both Robert and Olave Baden-Powell. As we have been finding out about India, we will be tasting Indian food. We are also collecting traditional recipes to put onto a blog and the girls in India are going to put their family favourite recipes up for us to see (no I don't really understand how it all works but I will be learning soon!)

The Senior Section girls have been preparing for their practice expedition for the Silver Duke of Edinburgh Award. This entails preparing detailed route cards with mileages (well kilometres) and heights climbed as well as bearings and timings – they take time! However, they are very keen to join us for curry for Thinking Day and are planning an evening trying out different foodstuffs suitable for expedition cooking. Food is always popular!

If you would like to find out more about our activities, please contact us or visit www.girlguiding.org.uk

Kestrel Helen Cann 01291 650835

cann71@btinternet.com

Karen Ford and Debbie Henshaw

WHIST DRIVES

Don't forget to support our Drives held on the first Thursday of each month at the Recreation Hall starting promptly at 7.30 p.m. – the next being on the 4th April followed by the 2nd May. Regrettably I missed the deadline for a report in the March Magazine but 24 players attended both the February and March Drives and pleasant evenings were had. New players are always made welcome, please join us; our Table fee is £1.50 per person which includes light refreshments. We also have a Raffle that raises funds for the upkeep of the Hall.

Auriol Horton. 01291 641844

1ST SHIRENEWTON BROWNIES



Girlguiding UK

Last summer after 14 years in the role, Jackie Broughton took the decision to stand down as leader of 1st Shirenewton Brownies. Over the years Jackie has seen many girls and families pass through the Unit, the elder of these are now leaving University! On behalf of all those girls, past and present we would like to give heartfelt thanks to Jackie for her considerable dedication to the role and having been such a positive role model to so many young girls.

In September, Bev Leaf and myself took over the leadership of the Unit, ably assisted by Shirenewton Brownies very own Bear Grylls, namely Unit Helper Paul Owen. We also have two fantastic young leaders, namely Josie Crossley and Hannah Leney. We are very grateful for their support.

Brownies is about having fun and our meetings aim to be full of challenges and activities, whilst also trying to maintain some of the older traditions. The Unit is currently very busy with 25 active brownies and half as many again on the waiting list. The Brownies have recently enjoyed achieving their Science Investigator's badge which has involved making a balloon-powered car, a pinhole camera and a compass, and culminated in a visit to the @Bristol in early February where we met up with 200 other brownies and shared a brilliant, fun-filled learning experience. We have also benefited from two Planetariums; one visited us at Earlswood Hall and the other during our @Bristol visit. This has meant the girls have also achieved their Star Gazers badge and all of us have learned to recognise more of the stars in our night sky as a result. We recently went on a night hike in Chepstow Park (followed by hot chocolate and hot dogs!) and last week paid a visit to the Chepstow Fire Station where the brownies were excited to see the firemen in action, and to have a go at firing a hose and a chance to explore the fire engine, whilst also learning some vital fire safety information.

The girls are currently working on their Welsh Challenge badge and we welcomed Jackie Broughton back to the Unit to hear some of the history of 1st Shirenewton Brownies and look at how Brownies has changed over the years. We will also be starting work on our Camp Fire Challenge and have our first camp planned for June!

Phew Brownies is certainly an Adventure!

Jaci Crocombe	01291 641681	jaci@bradleystokematters.co.uk
Bev Leaf	01291 641680	leafy123@btinternet.com

SHIRENEWTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL NOTES

Notes from the Community Council Meeting Monday 4th March 2013 - Glynis MacDonald

There were almost more members of the public than there were councillors at this month's meeting. They were there to discuss planning matters.

There was no police report. And as PC Thorpe was unable to be at the meeting the discussion as to the 'Cold Calling Control Zones' which has been carried forward from December couldn't take place. As it happens, the cold weather continues.

Planning.

1. DC/2012/01033 Four Acre Fields, Great House Farm

Agricultural shed.

Quite a few people had attended this month's meeting because of this planning application. They objected to the size of the proposed barn which they felt was far too large for the small plot of land and so therefore totally inappropriate. They also objected to the siting of the shed which would sit on the skyline and have a detrimental effect on the outlook and that the lovely drive would be spoilt by this big building.

The applicant on the other hand said that he needed a shed that big to put his implements inside to stop them from rusting and also he wishes to house his water tank inside which would stop it from freezing in the winter. He stated that others in the area are developing their properties and that he wished to do the same.

At the end of a very long discussion the council recommended that the application be refused.

At this point most of the members of the public left.

2. DC/2013/00089 8 Clearview, Shirenewton

Demolish garage and conservatory. Build new garage, two storey rear extension and porch.

There was nothing really contentious about this application other than the plans suggested that the garage was going to be built over a sewer which is a No-no. The applicant said that she was aware of this problem with the plans and that it was being addressed.

Approval was Recommended except the sewer problem was to be mentioned. The last remaining member of public left the building.

3. DC/2013/00064 'The Granary', Shirenewton

Single storey side extension.

There were no problems with this planning application and therefore Approval was Recommended. Although someone said that a 'pitched roof would look nicer'

4. DC/2013/00127 Gaerllwyd Farm

Change of use of redundant agricultural building into a dwelling.

This planning application had been made before and although SCC had recommended approval last time, MCC turned it down. The application has been re- issued but it seemed as though the present plans differed little from the previous plans.

Anyway, approval was recommended.

A retrospective planning application had been made but it hadn't made it through the system for this month. So there's something to look forward to in April.

Grant Applications

Local groups had been advised that there was a small sum of money up for bids. The sum in question was £300 and as ever the demand was high. Too high. So there followed a discussion as to whether some groups should be granted their wishes whilst other not. Or should everyone get a proportion of what they'd applied for. Or should those who'd asked for only a little amount of money get what they'd asked for, whilst those who'd asked for larger amounts be docked a couple of bob. It was sorted out in the end but my short hand skills were not quick enough to note down who got what.

Items of interest

There was to have been a meeting to discuss the local commemoration of **World War 1** but because of snow, this meeting did not take place.

There was a discussion about the Welsh Assembly Government's kind offer to local authorities to help them financially in setting up and increasing their profiles via **websites**. But it was suggested that MCC wasn't quite there yet in terms of helping or even redistributing this money which might amount to a possible £500. It was agreed that setting up a website was one thing and this in itself would involve a pile of problems - e.g what would it look like, would there be a universal model to follow, who would be the lucky person to set this up. But the other problem would be the continual updating of the local website - and who would do this? The Council agreed they were very lucky to have the monthly minutes put up on the Church Web site...

It was decided to put the progress of this issue on the monthly agenda.

A Response to 'The Single Integrated Plan Consultation' with MCC .

There didn't seem to be much of a response as apparently it is a document which is very good for insomnia. And no one had managed to get to the end of it. It was suggested that a response could be made - but only after it had been read.

Continued on page 8

Continued from Page 7

The Clerk's Report.

A gate has been put up on the poor lands field (previously referred to as the poor lands) (by me not the Clerk)

More excitement in the Shire as we learnt about the Charter Re-launch Action Plan involving such things as 'developing the Charter further as key points become embedded in good practice.' (I know ... incomprehensible ...)

The QE11 Field Challenge – the council received a very nice plaque from the Fields in Trust

Once again, bad weather, bugs, boils, bubonic plague and similar pestilence still scourge the land preventing the repairs to the Notice Boards at Mynyddbach and Gaerllwydd.

Items of Local Concern

People have been asking what is happening at the **Tan House**. It's looking very shabby and twice now, bits of guttering have fallen off in the high winds. But the council has no power over these matters.

What to Do with the old **Shirenewton Telephone Kiosk**. There was a degree of urgency over this as there was a time limit of purchasing the box from BT for the Village and a decision has/had to be made by 15th March. Once purchased and safe for the village various plans could be made to put it to use. A local library, an information corner, guided walks – although it wouldn't take very long to walk round it...

But the box does need to be brought up to scratch – or rather that the scratches got rid of. It was noted that Devauden had painted their telephone box in a quite unattractive shade of pink but it was suggested that perhaps this was the undercover undercoat ready for the iconic red paint.

It was now very cold indeed in the Rec and the shillings had run out ages ago. It was suggested that a mobile gas heater should be purchased for the council meetings. I liked that idea.

In the interests of parity it was suggested that the council could hold some of their meetings up at Earlswood Hall but it was decided 'No'

There was some terribly interesting correspondence but my lap top had died, or gone to sleep or had frozen so you'll just have to manage without.

Next meeting is : Monday 8th April – 7.30. at the Rec.

WE WUS BRUNG UP PROPER !!

Congratulations to those born in the 1940's, 50's, 60's

First, we survived being born to mothers who smoked and/or drank Sherry while they carried us and lived in houses made of asbestos...

They took aspirin, ate blue cheese, bread and dripping, raw egg products, loads of bacon and processed meat, tuna from a can, and didn't get tested for diabetes or cervical cancer. Then after that trauma, our baby cots were covered with bright coloured lead-based paints.

We had no childproof lids on medicine bottles, doors or cabinets and when we rode our bikes, we had no helmets or shoes, not to mention, the risks we took hitchhiking. As children, we would ride in cars with no seat belts or air bags.

We drank water from the garden hose and NOT from a bottle. Take away food was limited to fish and chips, no pizza shops, McDonalds , KFC, Subway or Nandos. Even though all the shops closed at 6.00pm and didn't open on a Sunday, somehow we didn't starve to death! We shared one soft drink with four friends, from one bottle and NO ONE actually died from this.

We could collect old drink bottles and cash them in at the corner store and buy Toffees, Gobstoppers and Bubble Gum.

We ate cupcakes, white bread and real butter, milk from the cow, and drank soft drinks with sugar in it, but we weren't overweight because.. We were always out playing.

We would leave home in the morning and play all day, as long as we were back when the streetlights came on. No one was able to reach us all day. And we were O.K. We would spend hours building our go-carts out of old prams and then ride down the hill, only to find out we forgot the brakes. We built tree houses and dens and played in river beds with matchbox cars.

We did not have Playstations, Nintendo Wii , X-boxes, no video games at all, no 999 channels on SKY, no video/dvd films, or colour TV, no mobile phones, no personal computers, no Internet or Internet chat rooms.....WE HAD FRIENDS and we went outside and found them!

We fell out of trees, got cut, broke bones and teeth and there were no Lawsuits from these accidents.

Only girls had pierced ears! You could only buy Easter Eggs and Hot Cross Buns at Easter time.... We were given air guns and catapults for our 10th birthdays,

We rode bikes or walked to a friend's house and knocked on the door or rang the bell, or just yelled for them! Mum didn't have to go to work to help dad make ends meet because we didn't need to keep up with the Jones's!

Not everyone made the rugby/football/cricket/netball team. Those who didn't had to learn to deal with disappointment. Imagine that!! Getting into the team was based on MERIT.

Our teachers used to hit us with canes and gym shoes and throw the blackboard rubber at us if they thought we weren't concentrating ..

We can string sentences together and spell and have proper conversations because of a good, solid three R's education. Our parents would tell us to ask a stranger to help us cross the road. The idea of a parent bailing us out if we broke the law was unheard of. They actually sided with the law!

SHIRENEWTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

We had standing room only at our January meeting that took place at the Huntsman Hotel, Shirenewton. The speaker for the evening was Dr Caroline Pudney who had directed the archaeological dig at Llanmelin in November 2012. She had promised to return and inform us of the outcome of their investigation. Everybody involved in the dig was very enthusiastic about the site, CADW had instigated the investigation with the help of professional archaeologist, members of our society and soldiers recovering from their injuries while on active service.

The iron age site surrendered many finds, a huge amount of pottery, animal bones, a quorn stone and quite a special Roman nail scraper. As Llanmelin is such a big site this initial dig has only just scratched the surface (literally) of this very interesting hill fort. They intend to return, finances permitting to further unravel the mysteries of Llanmelin Hill Fort

An enjoyable evening was spent at our annual dinner, the after dinner speaker was Gordon McDonald who gave us an account of the project to move the millennium bluestone from the Preseli's to Stonehenge. How ironage man managed it, I don't know! Many thanks to the Huntsman Hotel for an excellent meal, enjoyed by everyone.

Dates for your Diary:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Tuesday, 25th March | Meeting Huntsman Hotel, Shirenewton, 7.30 pm
A talk entitled: 'The Murder of Kymin Bet'
Adventures with my library card.
Given by Peter Strong |
| Monday, 8 th April | Resource Meeting, 2.00 pm -5.00 pm |
| Tuesday, 30 th April | Meeting Huntsman Hotel, Shirenewton 7.30 pm
A talk entitled 'A Family at War'
Given by David Priddis |

FAIRTRADE NEWS



As I understand it, (if I do at all!) tax avoidance by large companies is simply best practice, enabling shareholders to gain maximum profit, which is of course the whole point of the system.

Over time incremental advances have been made to improve the system, all initially generally rejected by those enjoying the profits. Sending tiny children up chimneys was obviously tremendously cost effective.

The fact that many people are currently in moral High Dudgeon (a favourite destination of mine!) is perhaps understandable, but until there is a legal requirement for a more moral approach I do not see that we can, or indeed should expect anything different.

Starbucks, Amazon and Apple have already hit the headlines but it is perhaps worth looking at another company's tax avoidance strategies.

In the recent Actionaid magazine there are details about Associated British Foods (Silver Spoon sugar, Twinings and Kingsmill) and its subsidiary Zambia Sugar Plc. Despite recent record annual revenues and profits, between 2008 and 2010 Zambia Sugar paid NO corporation tax. Overall from 2007-12 it paid corporation tax at a rate of just 0.5% of its profits. One of the company's cane cutters (making a better income than some, earning US\$440 a month) pays income tax at 25% on all earnings above Zambia's personal tax threshold. The lady working 7 long days a week on her market stall makes about US\$4 profit on a good day and pays about 20 US cents in business tax EVERY DAY

Multinational companies have for far too long regarded tax as a drain on their performance and profitability- their 'bottom line'- and an inconvenient cost of doing business they will go to convoluted lengths to avoid. But for those living in countries where multinational companies make and sell their products and from where they derive their profits, there is another 'bottom line' - the ability of families to feed themselves, send their children to school and to keep them healthy.

Will you join me in 'High Dudgeon?! Read more and contact your MP at www.actionaid.org.uk/budget

Residing in 'High Dudgeon' is tremendously stressful - take action and lower your blood pressure!

Marion McAdam 641 316 msm316@gmail.com



Chepstow RNLI

Coffee Morning

In aid of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution
at the Conservative Club Moor Street Chepstow
10:30am till noon on Saturday 20th April.

Entry £2 payable at the door

There will be a raffle and stalls for cakes and preserves
and RNLI Souvenirs

Shirenewton Church Fete

The Shirenewton Church Fete (8th June 2013) is fun day out for all the family and a great way for the community to come together to celebrate the start of summer – here's hoping for lots of sunshine!

Planning for the fete is underway and the Fete Committee would really welcome any new ideas for stalls, activities or entertainment as well as any volunteers who are able to lend a hand. We are especially keen to find volunteers to man the skittles, ice-cream and soft drinks stalls.

If you would like a chat about how to get involved or to understand what it is all about, please email or call Miss Seirian Edmonds, Fete Co-ordinator at andyandseze@aol.com or 07980757802.

SHIRENEWTON WI

We celebrated our WI's birthday in March, this year was our 61st. The weather was kind to us on the 14th, although cold and not very spring like, no snow, no rain and no wind.



Our excellent Committee organised a wonderful evening. Fresh fish and chips served piping hot to our nicely decorated and set out table, lovely drinks were provided and the traditional toast to the Queen and to our WI, followed by grace preceded the meal. The excellent and very tasty fish and chips were followed by an amazing assortment of desserts, made by some very talented members of our excellent committee.

We were joined for our meal by Lawrence and Grace, who afterwards entertained us with a series of beautiful dances. Lawrence and Grace moved effortlessly around the room together, demonstrating different dances, they were a joy to watch.

The different dance types required different costumes and their changes were very quick. Grace told us that she had made her own Latin American dance dress but her beautiful pink Ball gown was purchased from those that had been made for Strictly Come dancing. Lawrence can be seen in the opening sequences of 'Strictly' and has done much work in a formation dance troupe. Lawrence and Grace make very good dance partners', they are also very good at getting everyone dancing. After their displays they told us it was our turn and most of the members got up and had a go. Everyone had a good time and there was plenty of laughter. Lawrence said he would be happy to come back again and we all thought that would be lovely and thanked him for making our party go with a swing. We all enjoyed our evening and many thanks to everyone who made it go so well.

Wishing everyone will have had a happy Easter and hopefully some nice spring weather. We will meet for April on Thursday the eleventh 7:15pm at the Rec Hall.

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Shirenewton Recreation Hall

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

Home Heat Helpline - Families First

Home Help Line is looking to raise awareness of the Helpline during the winter months.

The Helpline is a free, impartial and confidential service connecting people on low incomes or in poor health to financial help towards managing their energy bills. Manned by trained, friendly advisers, the Helpline provides advice on rebates and grants that people may be eligible for, as well as energy saving advice to help reduce energy bills. Certain callers may also be eligible for further support, including the Priority Services Register – an industry safety net ensuring vulnerable customers will not be cut off from their energy supply, even if they are unable to pay the bills.

With the cold weather set to continue, people will have their heating costs at the forefront of their minds. So it would be great to make sure the right people know about this service, and get the help that they are eligible for.

Contact 0800 33 66 99 or www.homehelpline.org.uk

Do You Need Help When You Are Away On Your Holidays?



I am a reliable and trustworthy 13 year old girl and live locally in Mynyddbach. If you would like my help whilst you are on holiday give my mum or dad a call on 01291 641970.

While you are away I will.....

- Feed and look after your pets
- Water the plants/pots and hanging baskets
- Close curtains and turn on lights

&/OR if you also need someone to regularly walk your dog when you are busy or delayed home from work I would love to help you with that too!



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(by kind permission of Janet Horton)

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GARDENING CORNER

The weather continues to dominate work in the garden as always. As gardeners we face many challenges, most are surmountable by either persevering or just accepting the failure or whatever the problem might have been and basically starting all over again! Like farmers and their crops, this usually isn't a problem as most things we grow, apart from things like fruit and asparagus, tend to be annual crops and if you lose one year, hopefully you will recover and gain the next. Last year was disastrous for beekeepers after what was a promising start. The weather went downhill from April onwards and the bees struggled as a result. Forecasts were for heavy losses of colonies over the winter. I haven't heard from any other beekeepers at present, but our bees here at Barn Farm have been devastated. I started the winter with 10 hives and currently am down to just two. I am feeding these in the hope that they will keep going until we eventually get some decent weather, but it is not looking hopeful. This time last year we were enjoying 70 degree temperatures and the bees were out working like mad. The ten hives represented years of work, not just one, and will take years of work to try and recover. All I can hope for is that there are a few swarms about this coming year that no-one else wants. However I suspect that I won't be the only one to have suffered such losses, and as a result I'm sure swarms will be like gold dust. If any of you see one this coming year – give me a call! What I can't understand is that three of the hives I lost were my biggest and best, and I had nurtured them for over ten years. They weren't short of food either as both the brood chamber and next level of super had ample supplies. It was if the bees were unable or unwilling to move along the frames to find it. It is very distressing to see these little workers dead in their thousands, but like the weather we can do very little about it. What it does mean is that the precious supplies of honey we saved last year will now be even more precious.

It is also noticeable outside that there are few bumble bees about at present. I haven't seen one as yet which is a potential disaster as I rely on the early bumbles to pollinate our apricots and nectarine trees in the tunnel. These are in full flower at the moment, so unless a few bumbles appear in the next day or two we will have to try and do our best with soft paint brushes in order to secure a crop of some sort.

But life has to go on and things are really starting to pick up in the greenhouses now. The hot bench has been on for some weeks now and the initial sowing of tomatoes and peppers has resulted in most of them now being potted on into larger pots, and hopefully on their way. I sowed some early broad beans and peas which soon germinated. I moved these away from the hot bench to ensure that they didn't get too drawn up. I decided to plant these outside in a raised bed the other day.

The weather was nice and showing signs of improving, which is when it went down to -4 degrees overnight. Both beans and peas are OK in cold weather, but as they hadn't been fully hardened off I decided to cover them with horticultural fleece over night. This seems to have had the desired result and are not showing any signs of check – at the moment! Because the ground is still very wet and cold I decided to plant the onion sets and shallots into pots in the cold greenhouse. Hopefully this will give them enough protection to start them into growth and will be ready for planting out when it starts to warm up. The onions have really romped away, but as yet the shallots are not showing a lot of interest in doing what they should!

Back on the hot bench I have sown a number of flower seeds this year. In recent years the flower garden has had to take a back seat, as lack of time and poor weather has meant that I have prioritised the vegetable garden. Generally the flower beds are now in a bit of a state as a result of the neglect with numerous ash trees and brambles even taking hold. The intention is to try and get these cleared off and sorted out. I will need some 'cheap' flowers to fill the holes in, hence sowing the seeds. There is one area that I never really got planted up and established as a true part of the garden. This grown really wild so I have decided to leave it for the time being, so I can see what plants push their way through, and then dig these up and use them elsewhere. I'll probably just strim it then and return to just rough grass. The assistant head gardener keeps reminding me that we have plenty elsewhere so don't really need the ground cultivated. Plus we are getting older and struggle to do everything that is needed. Whereas we were probably slaves to the garden when we opened it for charity, we are now agreed that we should garden for pleasure – just for a change!

Over the next couple of weeks the level of seed sowing will increase rapidly, as the bulk of the salad crops will be going in. I will need to make room on the hot bench for this happen, so some of the other early crops will have to go out, either to harden off or for planting. These will include the early calabrese, which are currently in single pots and will be looking to get planted out into one of the raised beds in the tunnel. The first sweet peas are also well established now and desperate to be planted out.

In the tunnel I intend to increase the height of the raised beds so that I can add a greater depth of manure. At the moment the soil spills over the edge and into the paths, which doesn't help. As soon as this job is done and the manure added, I will be able to plant the calabrese I mentioned and also get the strawberries planted. The strawberries are in large pots in the tunnel at the moment and are starting to grow on now that it is warming up slightly under the cover. The sooner they are planted then the more likely they are to produce some strawberry fruits, hopefully well away from the thieving squirrels. But for now, happy gardening until next month.

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STARGAZING

The constellation of Leo the Lion lies to the South. Unlike most constellations, Leo really can be pictured as its namesake. His mane is made up of a backwards-shaped question mark with the bright star Regulus forming his front paw. Off to the left are three stars which make up the lion's hindquarters.



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

The bright planet Jupiter is in the evening sky to the west and to the upper right of the constellation of Orion. On the 14th, the crescent Moon is close to Jupiter, forming an interesting group with the red star Aldebaran and the Pleiades star cluster, particularly when viewed through binoculars. Saturn is in the south-east in the south-east with the Full Moon sitting just below the planet on the 25th.

On clear nights, when the Moon is new and seen as a fine crescent, the rest of the Moon can often be seen as a very dark grey against the black sky. Whilst the bright crescent is directly illuminated by the Sun, the rest of the Moon is in its own shadow. The shadow is dark grey rather than black because of “Earthshine”, where light reflected from Earth illuminates the Moon very faintly.

Dave Thomas

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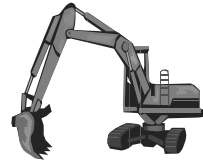
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Nerys's Natty Nosh

The Welsh settlement in Argentina began in 1865 and occurred mainly along the coast of Chubut province in the far southern region of Patagonia, Argentina. They were hard pressed for food and supplies. The women pooled their meagre pantry ingredients (nuts, candied fruit, molasses, spices, alcohol), and came up with this recipe for a fruitcake reminiscent of home, one that would also keep well for months. As they settled in and prospered, this recipe remained a favourite, and is still served today in the Welsh teahouses in the region. My Uncle Robin and Auntie Eirlys visited Patagonia (Y Wladfa) and met many of the families of the Welsh settlers who to this day are fluent in Welsh and Spanish.

Torta Negras Galesa.



Ingredients .

- 1cup walnuts, almonds or hazelnuts, or a mix of all three
- 1 cup raisins
- ½ cup chopped candied fruit peel (optional)
- ¼ cup chopped maraschino cherries (optional)
- 1 cup rum
- 1 cup butter, softened
- 5 eggs, **separated**
- 2 tablespoon molasses sugar
- 3 tablespoon honey
- 1 tablespoon cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon mixed spice
- 2 ½ cups self raising flour

Topping

- 1 ½ cups icing sugar
- 3 to 4 tablespoons fresh orange juice

Method

- 1** Roughly chop the nuts. Soak the nuts, raisins and candied fruit in the rum overnight. Drain the nuts and fruit and reserve the rum.
- 2** Preheat the oven to 350F, 180 C, Gas Mark 4.
- 3** Cream the butter with the brown sugar.
- 4** Gradually beat in the five egg **yolks**, molasses and honey.
- 5** Sift the flour with the cinnamon, mixed spice and add to the cake batter, altering with the reserved rum. Stir in nuts, raisins and fruit.
- 6** In a separate , clean bowl, beat the egg **whites** until stiff peaks form. Fold egg whites gently into the batter. Pour the batter into a 9x5 inch bread tin, or into a 10 inch diameter by 2 inch cake tin
- 7** Bake for 45 minutes, then check the cake. A skewer inserted in the centre should come out clean. If the cake is not done, return to the oven and check every 10 minutes until the skewer comes out clean.

8 Make the icing, place 1½ cups of icing sugar in a bowl. Mix in the orange juice 1 tablespoon at a time, until the desired consistency is reached. The icing should be slightly runny, drizzle over the cake.

The Wales I know is the land of home cooking and the Welsh really cook from the heart, using simple local, readily available ingredients. One of the most enduring traditions in Wales is the weekly bake, items like Bara Brith, Teisen lap, Teisen Sinamon and Teisen Mel eaten as family teatime favourites.

My mother's parents lived on a sheep farm on the foot of Snowdon. As a child, during the long summer holidays I would stay on the farm with my nain and taid. My preferred childhood treat was my nain's freshly baked Pice . Soft and warm with a hint of spice. Always washed down with a cup of tea in the best china cup. What magnificent memories I will always treasure of the sweet and kind-hearted nature of my nain.

Welsh Cakes (Pice Ar Y Maen)

Ingredients

- 8 ozs self-raising flour
- 2 ozs margarine or butter
- 2 ozs lard
- 3 ozs sugar
- 2 ozs currants
- ¼ teaspoonful mixed spice
- 1 egg beaten + a little milk if the mixture is dry

Method

- 1 Rub fat into flour.
- 2 Add the dry ingredients.
- 3 Add the egg and mix gently with a fork.
- 4 Continue mixing and add a **little** milk if required until a ball is formed. The mixture should resemble that of short crust pastry.
- 5 Roll out, cut the dough into rounds and bake on a **low** heat on a griddle or frying pan.
- 6 They take about three to four minutes on each side.
- 7 Sprinkle with castor sugar.

Tips

Use a thick base frying pan or griddle. Warm the frying pan or griddle for a few minutes before cooking. Use a **little** lard or suet on a piece of kitchen paper to grease the frying pan or griddle. This will stop the cakes from sticking.
Welsh :-Teisen -cake, mel - honey, nain-grandmother, taid-grandfather.



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DIARY DATES

April	Event	Location
4	Whist Drive	Recreation Hall
7	Mobile Police Surgery	Huntsman Hotel
8	Community Council Meeting	Recreation Hall
8	Shirenewton Local History Society	Huntsman Hotel
11	WI Meeting	Recreation Hall
11	Mobile Police Surgery	Tredeggar Arms
20	Skittles and Games Evening	Earlswood Hall
20	RNLI Coffee Morning	Conservative Club Chepstow
20	Chepstow Agricultural Society Coffee Morning	Beaulieu House Shirenewton
24	Community Lunch Club	Tredeggar Arms
29	Fete Meeting	
30	Shirenewton Local History Society	Huntsman Hotel
May	Event	Location
2	Whist Drive	Recreation Hall
5	Mobile Police Surgery	Huntsman Hotel
11	Mobile Police Surgery	Tredeggar Arms

Signs of the Times

Seen during a conference:

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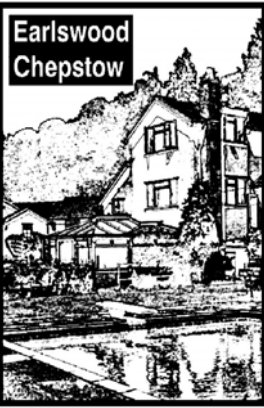
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Saint Thomas á Beckett Shirenewton		Sunday Services Start 10.00 a.m. Unless stated otherwise	
Date	Service	Readers	Sides-persons
7th April	2 nd Sunday of Easter Holy Eucharist	Jan Smith Haddon Glynis MacDonald	Jan Smith Haddon Glynis MacDonald
14th April	3 rd Sunday of Easter Morning Prayer	Mark Broughton Kevin Bounds	Mark Broughton Kevin Bounds
21st April	Fourth Sunday of Easter Holy Eucharist	Janet Horton Bob Grattan	Janet Horton Bob Grattan
28th April	Fifth Sunday of Easter Holy Eucharist	Margaret Woodliffe Wendy Baker	Margaret Woodliffe Wendy Baker

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Huntsman Hotel Car Park Shirenewton 9:30 until 11:30 am	Tredegar Arms Car Park Shirenewton 9:00 until 11:00 am
7th April	11th April
5th May	9th May
2nd June	6th June
30th June	4th July
28th July	1st August
25th August	29th August
22nd September	26th September
20th October	24th October
17th November	21st November
15th December	19th December

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