

# Shirenewton & Newchurch Parish Magazine February 2013



*The Old Post Office Shirenewton  
Image by Terry Walters*

Price: 50p

## **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.

## **COLLECTING MONEY FOR THE PARISH MAGAZINE AND 200 CLUB**

In recognition of the burden of collecting money for the 200 Club and the Parish magazine which falls on a small number of volunteers, the PCC has decided to ask everyone who is able to set up standing orders for both types of payment. It would be very much appreciated if you could support this initiative. In addition to simplifying the task of collecting money, it enables those who are tax-payers to complete Gift Aid declarations, which enables the Treasurer to claim an additional 28 pence in every pound paid from the Inland Revenue, thereby increasing the Church's income at no additional cost to you. Forms for both setting up standing orders and Gift Aid will be available from your local collector during February.

The PCC has decided to hold the current cost of the Parish magazine at £5 a year and the 200 Club at £10 a year in spite of rising costs. There will be a modest increase in the cost of advertising in the Parish magazine.

## SHIRENEWTON CHURCH WEBSITE

[www.shirenewtonchurch.com](http://www.shirenewtonchurch.com)

Last year the Church shopping portal raised £835.79 for Church funds. As always, this is the amount of cash paid into the church account. All of the affiliate companies (i.e. the companies you manage the programs on behalf of the shops themselves) have a payment threshold which is typically £20 or £25. So we don't get paid until we earn that amount. So, as always, we actually have about £75 in earnings in various accounts (we rwith several affiliate companies) which we won't get until we hit a payment threshold with the account.

The amount is down for reasons I have explained several times. If using the portal please turn off the 'do not track' option on your internet security. You can turn it back on once you've paid.

Many thanks to all whom use the portal. For those that don't please do. It's at [www.shirenewtonshop.com](http://www.shirenewtonshop.com) and has many shops. It has over 200 shops listed including many of the high street names you use every day/week. Recent additions include Matalan, Debenhams, Singapore Airlines, Air New Zealand and Sweatband.

I'm typing this durring the weekend of snow (Sat) at Bristol Airport. I was confident I'd get here as I have a complete set of winter tyres for my car. You can get a set from MyTyres (available on the shopping portal) which is where I got mine. You can order a complete set of pre-installed tyres which are delivered to your front door. With this you get not only the tyres but the tyres installed on steels rims all pumped up and balanced. They sit in my garage and then, when the snow is forecast it's about ½ hours work to remove the alloy normal rims and tyres and stick the winter tyres and steel rims on. You are just changing tyres as if they were spares. 5 bolts per wheel. Of course, there is the upfront investment (but its no more than 4 new tyres) but when the winter tyres are on you are not using the normal tyres and so extend their life. I ordered mine during the snow two years ago. The day they were delivered was the day the snow disappeared so I've waited a while to use them. However, they make a huge difference in driving on snow and I recommend them.

Please keep using the portal every transaction counts.

David Cornwell

## **FROM THE REGISTERS**

### **Burial**

John Richard Bonsey 1938—2012 Thursday 10th January 2013

Shirley, Lisa and Matthew would like to thank all our friends for their kind support, the numerous cards and flowers sent to us at this very sad and difficult time

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## **SHIRENEWTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

The Community Council has a small pot of money available from the 2012/13 precept, for distribution to local organisations within Shirenewton, Mynyddbach, Earlswood and Newchurch West.

If you wish to apply on behalf of an organisation, please contact the Clerk to the Community Council, Mrs Hilary Counsell, e-mail [Shirenewton@gmail.com](mailto:Shirenewton@gmail.com) or phone 01291 421307 by Friday 18 January 2013.

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## **SIGNS OF THE TIMES**

In an office:

TOILET OUT OF ORDER..... PLEASE USE FLOOR BELOW

In a Laundromat:

AUTOMATIC WASHING MACHINES: PLEASE REMOVE ALL YOUR CLOTHES WHEN THE LIGHT GOES OUT

In a London department store:

BARGAIN BASEMENT UPSTAIRS

In an office:

WOULD THE PERSON WHO TOOK THE STEP LADDER YESTERDAY PLEASE BRING IT BACK OR FURTHER STEPS WILL BE TAKEN

In an office:

AFTER TEA BREAK STAFF SHOULD EMPTY THE TEAPOT AND STAND UPSIDE DOWN ON THE DRAINING BOARD

## 200 CLUB

**Are you a member of the 200 club?**

**Would you like to be?**

**Want to know more?**



It's easy, just phone me, Bob on 01291641686 and subscribe.

There is an annual subscription of £10 collected once a year by standing order in March. Each member is allocated a number which is entered into the monthly draw. There are 10 draws a year, August and January being the exceptions.

The draws take place on the **third** Sunday of the month. Nine of the draws payout prizes of £40, £30, £20 and £10. At Christmas there is a **bumper** draw with prizes of **£100**, £50, and two prizes at £25.

The Four lucky winners are announced in church and are notified by Sally Saysell.

Where does the money go?

Well! Half the money goes to you as prize winners and the other half towards the upkeep of the church.

Thank you so much for your continual support.

Bob O'Keefe.

### **December Winners**

Simon Leaf	£100
Linda Hicks	£50
Brian Jones	£25
Gareth Davies	£25

# **SHIRENEWTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL NOTES**

## **Notes from the Community Council Meeting**

**Monday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2013 - Glynis MacDonald**

I took December off from Council meeting reporting – not because I was unenthusiastic of course.... but because there was no December parish rag. But it's now the New Year and being full of eagerness and as keen as mustard (what a strange phrase) I arrived on time – well not too late and set up shop in my usual corner refreshed and I'm bursting at the seams to let you know what happened at the first council meeting of the New Year.

There were 7 other members of the public there - interested in local planning applications.

Firstly though, there was a sad note from Liz McCombe who announced the untimely death of John Bonsey. John had been a valued member of the community council some years ago and had indeed been Chair of Shirenewton Community Council. Everyone was very sorry to hear of this news.

### **Police Report from PC Louise Thorpe**

7<sup>th</sup> December. A transit van was stolen from a farm and was later found burnt out in the woods. Gardening equipment was also stolen – so the message is keep your sheds shut. And locked. And your vans.

20<sup>th</sup> December A gate had been opened and a horse's mane had been plaited. It has been suggested that this is a way of earmarking horses as 'desirable'. Whether as for a Christmas present or for beef burgers it is difficult to tell.

New Year's Eve An accident was reported of a vehicle hitting a lamp post but when the police investigated nothing was obvious...

Other incidents included a cow wandering along the road near Bully Hole Bottom (Bully Hole Bottom!). Anyway the driver who hit the cow escaped unhurt. So be aware of stray cows and/or bulls going on a jolly in that area.

There is a problem with 'off road' bikes – inasmuch as apparently they are NOT allowed to use green lanes even if they are riding 'responsibly' And there were reports that they were using the lanes in and around Golden Valley – or was it Golden Hill. Either way, it's a no-no.

One of the councillors also asked PC Thorpe what had been going on up near the Gaerllwyd Cross roads on New Year's Eve as 4 police vehicles had been spotted there. Well, local 'equine -intel' had alerted the police that horses are being stolen in large numbers and apparently they were all in this humungous horse box. And, (to me this is the odd bit) the horses were being put back into a field. Whether by the rustlers or the police I don't know.

## **Planning applications**

### **1. Appeal Ref: E6840/A/12/2187469, Planning Application DC/2011/00008. Tredegar Farm.**

Change of use to proposed touring caravan park and facilities block.

Once again the councilors reiterated their objections to this planning application.

They felt that the new measures did not address the original concerns. The entrance to the proposed caravan site has not addressed the safety issues regarding high speeds on a nasty bend on the B2354. A member of the public mentioned that accidents have already happened there because of the low visibility and indicated that with caravans entering and exiting at that junction, it would add to the potential for accidents, especially when considering the problems of bikers using that road for high speed driving. It was also pointed out that there are already caravan parks within the locality and that the area doesn't warrant another, that the drainage is not suitable and that hedging would not obscure either the site or the increased lighting up of the area.

Once again the council Recommended Refusal

### **2. DC/2012/01010 Gaerllywd Farm.**

Change of use for a redundant agricultural building, into a dwelling.

This old, rather dilapidated milking parlour is at the moment a bit of 'an eyesore' and so the proposed plans to turn it into a three bed dwelling will be 'an improvement'. The Council Recommended Approval

### **3. DC/2012/01008 The Old Barn, Lower Argoed,**

Kitchen extension (Revised design to DC/2008/01073)

The revised designs met with a 'Recommend Approval'

### **4 DC/2012/01024 Old Home, Earlswood**

Demolition of some disused and structurally unsafe outbuildings to be replaced by an annexe.

There was some concern about rights of way being a bit too close and there were frowns and mutterings about the MCC planning officer who had allowed this application through when there were so many obvious gaps in detail but luckily the applicant was there to explain the application. The plans were studied for some while. In principle the council recommended approval but added the note that there should have been more measurements included in the application. However the applicant did point out that the new building was within the existing footprint and so would actually be smaller than the original

### **5. DC/2012/00996 The Grondra, Shirenewton**

Change of use from first floor garage storage area to a self contained residential annex.

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Interestingly, (given the planning history of these listed buildings) the councillor who went along to look at the plans was refused admittance. Apparently, the Community Council does not have a right of access on planning issues. The question was then asked whether The Grondra is still subject to the High Court judgment?

Skepticism was voiced as to whether this was the beginning of 'planning creep' and the difficulties of keeping this sort of incremental development at bay was discussed...

### **To consider donations to local organizations from 2013/2014 precept.**

One councillor questioned whether allocating funds to local voluntary groups every year was a good use of public money. He wondered if it would just be better to keep the precept down. Other councillors were quick to say that many of the organizations relied on these small sums of money whether it was to help with village hall maintenance or helping fund activities for the local playgroup.

However, the councillor then wondered if the organizations should apply for the money with reasons as to why they wanted the funds – how much and what for.

It was pointed out that there was already a small fund of some £300 that is allocated on an application basis but to expect the yearly £1200 to be divvied up on a similar application basis would be a time consuming bureaucratic nightmare. For both the applicants and the councillors. Another councillor pointed out that some of the amounts were pretty small. Would people for example attending the local chapel want to spend considerable time filling in forms for 'maybe' being awarded a grant of £60 to help with the grass cutting? But the councillor persisted and suggested that people would be happier if this scheme was done away with and the precept reduced by 6%. However most councillors agreed that a lot of organizations relied on these annual amounts and that they were an important and reliable source of income.

At this point another councillor put in a plea from the Shirenewton Recreation Association. They had needed £1300 to replace the goal posts. They had obtained a grant of £900 towards this project, the Rec had agreed to put in £200 but they were still short of a further £200. So the council agreed to provide this additional £200 to the Rec Association.

Anyway just a reminder to all those voluntary organizations out there, you can apply for a share of £300 stating what you want the money for, and how much and the benefit this allocation will be to the local community. The forms have already been sent out but you need to fill them and return them to the Clerk Of the Council by 25<sup>th</sup> February. So hurry hurry hurry....



Anyway this is a list of the recipients of the 2012/2013 donations.

Planning Aid Wales booklets	£ 12.00
2012/13 Donation to Recreation Association	£300.00
2012/13 Donation to Earlswood Memorial Hall	£300.00
2012/13 Donation to Shirenewton PCC	£150.00
2012/13 Donation to Shirenewton Playgroup	£100.00
2012/13 Donation to St Peter's Newchurch	£ 60.00
2012/13 Donation to Gaerllwyd Baptist Chapel	£ 60.00
2012/13 Donation to Earlswood Hope Church	£ 60.00
2012/13 Donation to Earlswood Valley Chapel	£ 60.00
2012/13 Donation to Chepstow C A Bureau	£ 60.00

I was flagging a bit at this point and some of the items were a little – well not to put too fine a point on it – dull. And it was cold. The £5 had run out in the meter. That doesn't last long. I wished I'd worn my thicker thermals.

To consider a response to Monmouthshire LDP Consultation on Recommended Focused Changes. Hmmm I remained unfocused. No change there then.

To consider a response to the One Voice Wales Sustainable Development Bill Consultation. Apparently total un-riviting.

To consider making a grant application to Monmouthshire Housing Association's 'Love Where You Live' Project - (Closing date 31.1.13). Communities can apply for funding to help with local gardens, flower meadows, food patches, clearance of bramble patches, veg growing facilities... £2500 max. A Shirenewton cllr wondered about applying for funding for the 'Best Kept Village Competition'. (I wondered in an idle moment if Earlswood Hall could apply for a shrubbery around the oil tank to protect it from villains. And possibly a blow-up policeman which would inflate shouting "Stand Away from the Tank" This seemed much more interesting than... )

To consider the type of commemorative plaque required for the QE 11 Initiative. On a wall? On a plinth? In the grass? The last – the ground mounted consideration won.

The progress or otherwise of the Tan House Pub/Shop/ Post Office/ Café... Don't hold your breath. There is no tenant yet – the owner is doing a bit of maintenance and a bit of security. His other properties have been subjected to theft. The owner has asked that local residents could keep a watch on the property and report any untoward goings on and nicking of assets.

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The 'safety sticky surface' of the Huntsman Hill still hasn't been addressed, this issue is still.. on hold.

It was commented on that the house on the road out of Shirenewton and towards Earlswood was much bigger than the original plans - and still growing but there is little that can be done about it now apparently.

MCC are working through a Budget Plan. There is a teeny weeny gap of £4.8 million. This will be addressed by considering plans for increasing school meals charges, charging for the disposal of green waste, increasing carpark charging and merging town services like street wardens, renewable energy schemes, group procurement, bundling up contracts... that sort of imaginative cost savings. But it was pointed out that it might save some money but it might not support local enterprises and businesses.

Clerk's Report. January 2013

OVW Planning Training for all cllrs. Most had gone on this course but not all.

Poor Land Field - the field is not registered at the Land Registry and Mon CC has no 'interest' in it. Ongoing

Registration of land at Gaerllwydd – Ongoing

Registration of footpath to Llanmelin Hill Fort - WAG has responded that no footpath has been and there will be a joint meeting between SCC, CCC and CADW this month. (Jan) Ongoing

Notice boards maintenance at Gaerllwydd & Mynyddbach - Not done yet because of the bad weather. Ongoing

Correspondence - To receive correspondence as per attached schedule.

No I cant go on – I've got a life – somewhere out there – if you want to know about Council Tax precept, local flood management, OVW Strong Roots, sustainable development, what we did in 1902...the relaunching of charter ... (boats?) because the old one had fallen into disrepair Oh I don't know - To find out go to go to the official minutes stuck up on the local notice boards .

Next meeting as Monday 4 February 2013 at 7.30 pm

## FAIRTRADE NEWS



Those of you familiar with my assorted rants and homilies will know that I have always urged buyers to bring some mild scepticism towards claims by companies that they treat their producers and employees (and the environment) ethically but offer no independently verified evidence. Of course, all may be as they claim. Statements such as 'We give a percentage of our profits to ..' could be true, but could mean millions or (virtually) biff all. The Fairtrade Mark guarantees the integrity of the product.

2011 saw Fairtrade Marked products reach £1.3 billion worth of sales per annum, with Fairtrade sales up by about 14%,. ( It is a burgeoning market. Some years ago one of my pupils expressed concern that I would soon lose all my fairtrade sales if Tesco's etc goods were all fairtrade! Yippee!) However Traidcraft's sales have dropped slightly. As well as reflecting economic conditions the decline is in part the result of Traidcraft's role as a catalyst in encouraging the entry of more mainstream competitors into fair trade. The involvement of big business in fair trade has benefited hundreds of thousands of farmers and communities. However in these difficult times these very much larger organisations are beginning to flex their muscles and this could lead to a weakening of some of the fundamentals of fair trade and developmental focus.

Traidcraft do a great deal more than just sell fairly traded goods. Their charitable arm Traidcraft Exchange has undertaken numerous projects to develop skills amongst producers. Here is just one example: The Sustainable Livelihoods for Poor Producers (SLIPP) project in Bangladesh which ended in March 2012 encouraged farmers to work together, pool their knowledge and take advantage of more efficient production. Independent evaluation has found that 2,500 fish, duck and vegetable farmers took part in the project and achieved higher productivity and lower production costs, increasing incomes by up to 78%. Funding has been secured to develop and use the learning from this project with other farmers in neighbouring districts.

Marion McAdam 641 316 msm316@gmail.com

# CHEPSTOW CHORAL SOCIETY

MUSICAL DIRECTOR: GRAHAM BULL



## **YOUR CHORAL SOCIETY NEEDS YOU!!!** **(particularly if you are MALE!!!)**

It is a sad (but undeniable) fact that smaller choral societies throughout the land have, for years, been in decline. It would be easy to write a major article on this topic highlighting the many reasons, but space prevents this – let us just briefly say that times have changed. The optional activities of so many people now are very different from 25 or 30 years ago, the styles of music for participants – and audiences – have also changed, and there are often fewer opportunities for younger people to learn, appreciate – and enjoy! – singing the classical or even light classical repertoire. We see choirs singing high profile competitions brilliantly and the enthusiasm for new ventures like the military wives. Indeed, there is no shortage of music and singing – but for small-town choirs life is becoming increasingly difficult. Like many others, Chepstow Choral Society now faces major challenges – and is keen to go out and pick up these challenges. A priority is more tenors and basses before 2014.

Chepstow CS has, in the past 10 years, attracted professional soloists and instrumentalists, and programmed superb gems from the choral repertoire that increasingly now are becoming restricted to our major cities – or not performed at all. Our programme for the remainder of the 2012/2013 season offers some wonderful music for our annual Spring concert, and the Summer concert in June will aim to present popular classics in a varied and mixed programme. We cannot believe that, in Chepstow and its surrounding areas, there is no longer enough of an enthusiastic population to maintain the four-part choral tradition. IF YOU FEEL LIKE WE DO, PLEASE COME ALONG AND MEET US –WEDNESDAY EVENINGS, CHEPSTOW LEISURE CENTRE, 7.30pm – WE WOULD LOVE TO SEE YOU!

**SATURDAY MARCH 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013, 7.30pm,**  
**St Mary's Priory Church, Chepstow**

**W.A. Mozart – Vesperae Solennes de Confessore**  
**Anton Bruckner – Requiem in D minor**  
**Orchestral items**

**With**

**CCS Orchestra (leader Paula Kempton)**

*For further information about any of the above, please tel.  
(01291) 623310, 620414. Tickets (students/under 18s free),  
available from Chepstow Bookshop or above contact numbers.*

## SHIRENEWTON WI

Many thanks were expressed by members for the wonderful Christmas meal which we enjoyed at the Huntsman early in December, we are looking forward to the next one.



Our first meeting for 2013 was well attended with several visitors, maybe new members.

We started our meeting with a short silence to allow us to think of Shirley, whose husband John had died suddenly at Christmas, his funeral had taken place earlier that day and many members attended.

After the short business section was completed we welcomed our speaker Mr Tony Nichols. Mr Nichols gave us a wonderful insight into what it was like to work as the Queens Postman. There is a lot of post to be delivered to the palace every day and a lot to be dispatched, everything has to be checked and security maintained at the highest level. But the 'post' is only the start, wherever the Queen is, dispatches have to be delivered for her attention and all replies etc. transported to their relevant destination all to strict timetables. During his time as the Queens postman Tony spent a lot of time at the palace but he also spent a lot of time travelling all over the UK at all times of the day and night using many types of transport. When her majesty was abroad the dispatches would be delivered by him directly to the plane which would transport them to the care of the Diplomatic Service for delivery at the destination.

Tony certainly had to work long hours and did many seven day weeks, but there were some perks, with invitations to various events and the special cards which in time will be a great item on the Antiques Roadshow. Tony was very kind in bringing a selection of his cards, invitations and first day covers for us to see. We felt very privileged to hear of Tony's experiences as the Queens Postman, one of his major highlights was being the person who delivered the Queen mothers telegram from the Queen for her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Our next meeting will be 14<sup>th</sup> February when we will have an evening of scrabble, quiz and nibbles.

**SHIRENEWTON  
COMMUNITY  
LUNCHEON CLUB**

**Tredegar Arms  
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& Songs. £2

Shirenewton Recreation Hall

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

# For Sale

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Will hold around 8 large bags of coal

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Terry Walters  
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Shirenewton NP166RW

## 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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## SHIRENEWTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Our last meeting of 2012 was held at Caerwent Parish Church where the Rector, Father Will gave us a tour of the church pointing out the many historical features of the building including a large number of Roman coins found in the church when alteration to the building had taken place. A very interesting visit to such an ancient historical site so close to our village, really and truly local history! We rounded off the evening with mince pies and mulled wine.

The annual walk up to Grey Hill to see the sun rise on the winter solstice, for the first time was cancelled because of bad weather. The weather forecast for that morning was very wet and a decision was made not to meet at 7.30 am but meet for our usual breakfast at the Woodland Tavern.

Dates for your Diary:

### **Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> January**

Meeting at the Huntsman Hotel at 7.30 pm

A talk given by Dr Caroline Pudney on the results of the present dig at Llanmelin Iron Age fort.

### **Monday, 11<sup>th</sup> February**

Resource Meeting at the Recreational Hall, Shirenewton 2.00 pm to 5.00 pm

### **Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> February**

Annual Dinner, at the Huntsman Hotel 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm. After dinner guest speaker, Gordon McDonald.

Everyone welcome, please check out our website for further information at [www.shirenewtonhistorysociety.co.uk](http://www.shirenewtonhistorysociety.co.uk)

## WHIST DRIVES

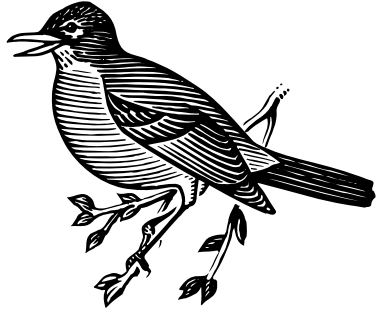
Don't forget to support our Drives held on the first Thursday of each month at the Recreation Hall starting promptly at 7.30 p.m. – the next being on the 7th February followed by the 7th March. In January some old friends joined us to make our numbers up to 25 players. Regrettably we are missing some of our older players due to infirmity but thankfully we have a group of younger players who now form the backbone (i.e. do all the work!) of the Drives. 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



## CHEEKY ROBIN

By Minetta Morris



There's no mistake he's here again,  
A cheeky robin stakes his claim,  
Perched on the barrow, bold as brass,  
Another robin joins him as we pass,

We move away across the garden now,  
The robins hold their ground somehow,  
They ride along, red breasts in beauty rare,  
And we set off together, have a care.

We see our destination drawing near,  
The overflowing cornposting to clear,  
Over they go, and fly straight in to battle,  
Into the bushes, out again, a noisy prattle.

The feathers fly, oblivious to all,  
A battle for supremacy recalled,  
Way in the undergrowth and out of sight,  
Those pretty robins absolutely love to fight.

The musty smell of leaves and trees unfolds,  
And wandering back, the barrow overflows,  
Just one surviving robin hitches a ride,  
One feather left upon his head, to save his pride.

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# 1<sup>ST</sup> SHIRENEWTON GUIDES & SENIOR SECTION



Girlguiding UK

Date for the diary Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 3.30 – 5pm.

The Shirenewton Guide unit was registered at Headquarters on the 5<sup>th</sup> February 1973 which makes us 40 in February! We feel this is an occasion to celebrate and would like to invite all past members, helpers, leaders and friends to join us in the Shirenewton church rooms for afternoon tea.

Please bring all your old photographs and share your guiding experiences with our present Guides and Senior Section members. Spread the word – I am sure many of you are connected via social media – but please could you drop me an e mail to give me some idea of the number of tea bags to buy?

Looking forward to seeing you all there!

Kestrel

Helen Cann

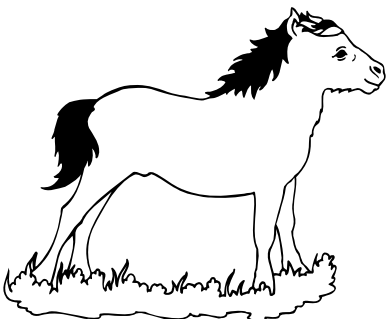
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## THE PONIES ARE BACK ON THE SAMFAL SITE

Because most of the SAMFAL site is too wet to take machines, each year we borrow some Ponies to eat all last years growth. This removes the old thatch and will let the wild flowers see daylight next spring.

This year we have 5 Welsh Mountain Ponies, the breed are very tough and are very capable of looking after themselves even in snow and rain. They don't need hay, carrots, or mints as there is plenty of food and water for them on site, you may see them scratching through the snow for food, this is quite normal. If you lived your life in the Brecon Beacons, a sheltered field in Shirenewton would be a welcome change, they think they are on holiday.



We expect them to be on site until end February or beginning of March.

If you do go on site keep any dogs under control, shut the gates and please don't feed the Ponies.

## STARGAZING

The constellation of Orion the Hunter lies directly to the South in the evening. Four bright stars represent his shoulders and legs whilst a further three form his belt. The reddish star at the top left is called Betelgeuse and is one of the larger stars that can be seen. It is a red super-giant star and is destined to blow up as a [supernova](#). If it were to explode today, it would become as bright as the Moon. The bright white star at lower right is called Rigel and is a blue super-giant. This is an extremely powerful star but at great distance, and is at least 60,000 times more luminous than the Sun.

The bright planet Jupiter can be seen to the upper right of Orion, between the bright reddish star Aldebaran and the Pleiades star cluster. On the 18<sup>th</sup>, the waxing gibbous Moon is close to Jupiter. In a Native American tale, the Pleiades are seven children who, on a walk through the sky, lost their way and never made it home. With the naked eye, people can usually only see six or seven stars in Pleiades. However, some people with good eyesight can see more. Thus, Pleiades has been used as an eyesight test. The cluster contains more than 200 young stars born some 50 million years ago, which means they are only one hundredth of the age of the Sun, our local star. Aldebaran means "the follower" in Arabic, as it rises above the horizon after the Pleiades.

Saturn lies to the south in the morning sky. It is joined by the Moon, which is at last quarter, on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Cassini spacecraft has flown amazingly close to one of Saturn's moons. The moon is called Enceladus, and is particularly interesting because it produces geysers of water. The spacecraft has flown as close as 15 miles above the surface, allowing features as small as 90 feet across to be identified. It's possible that the moon has water below the surface which is warm enough to host living organisms.

Dave Thomas

## THE BELLS, THE BELLS.

JANUARY 2013

January 12<sup>th</sup> 2013 dawned overcast and cold. The intrepid Shirenewton band of ringers, strengthened by colleagues from Mathern and St Woolos, Newport, set out on the now established annual Shirenewton Winter Ringing Tour. The area chosen this year was the northern Cotswolds, now made famous (or infamous) by the Chipping Norton set. However, we were not venturing quite that far east. The first stop was booked for 09.00hrs, requiring an early start, and was the picturesque village of Cold Aston. The church confirmed the village's name and was freezing. The 5 bells were rung up and various methods rung over the ensuing 30 minutes. Thence it was onto Fifield with its tiny pencil shaped tower defying belief that it actually contained any bells at all. These bells proved to be quite a challenge, so much so that an inspection was requested to ensure their and our safety. The obliging Church Warden fetched a ladder so as to gain access to the miniscule belfry but the revealed approach demonstrated the need for 2 ladders. With the time constraints imposed by the Tour itinerary, and the lack of a second ladder, the attempt to ring them was abandoned. However, a few of us vowed to return later in the year for a more leisurely inspection. The bells here are of some interest, the oldest being dated to 1390 making it one of the oldest surviving ringing bells in the UK. Of additional interest is that the 3 bells at Fifield are in perfect tune with the 3 bells at the nearby village of Idbury – our next point of call. Rung together, in the virtual sense, these bells would create a tuneful 6 bells identical in pitch to the bells at Trellech. The bells at Idbury also provided a challenge to ring, especially the tenor bell which I suspect was not roped correctly, but again we did not have time to investigate fully but vowed to return at a future date. The bells, however, with some effort were successfully rung. Two of the bells here were of great age dating from 1420. On then to Churchill with its heavily restored and massive church with its equally massive tower containing 8 bells. Although Shirenewton has only 6 bells some of our ringers are quite proficient now on methods requiring 8 bells and we were also strengthened for 8 bell ringing here by our colleagues. We then visited Oddington which also proved to be extremely interesting. The old church is a “plague church” – that is a church that was isolated after the Black Death as the village moved away. St Nicholas is now about 1/3<sup>rd</sup> mile outside of the village which now has a newer but bell-less church in its midst. The old church, set on a country lane near a copse, remains a medieval gem. No electricity supply has ever been established so within natural light prevails and with its faded medieval wall paintings has a wonderful air of tranquillity. Well worth a visit if you are passing but you will need an Ordnance Survey map to find it!

A welcome break next as we travelled to The Fox Inn at Broadwell for lunch. This is one of a handful of Donnington Brewery pubs all of which are worth visiting. A roaring wood fire and excellent beer greeted us, and as we had been allotted our own dining area we could review the morning together whilst the pre-ordered victuals were served.



After lunch we rang the 6 bells of the village church and then travelled to the picturesque village of Bourton-on-the-Hill to ring the 6 bells there. Our final stop was nearby Blockley with its heavy 8 bells. The local ringers now only ring the lighter 6 bells routinely so the 2 heavy bells were raised so that all 8 were now operational. The ringing day was now over but the tradition is now established of a post-tour celebration which this year was hosted by Bob and Karen Millar. So after travelling back an excellent evening ensued. Early plans were discussed for the Summer Tour in August, so watch this space.

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## The Anchor makes The Times.

For those who may not have seen it, we featured in the centre spread of The Sunday Times Travel Supplement on Remembrance Day, where they featured and recommended The Anchor Inn and Tintern Abbey Cottage as the ideal destination for a high quality visit to Tintern. Great publicity for the whole village.

Now as the darker nights close in around us The Anchor offers a warm and cosy atmosphere in which to enjoy a memorable party or intimate dinner with friends and family. Our Head Chef Rob Parkin has created a delicious festive menu with something for everyone. Please enquire for our Christmas Party and group bookings specials at very competitive prices.

We sampled the Caerphilly & Basalmic Onion tart with sliced Apple Salsa followed by a main course of Pan Fried Turkey Escalope which comes stuffed with sage, onion and cranberry, with Pigs in Blankets and roast gravy. We topped this off with Raspberry Crème Brulee with white chocolate shortbread biscuit. Finally we had a freshly ground latte from our new Italian Barista coffee centre. Truly scrumptious.

Previously we introduced you to Graham G Maiden of Aardman fame, and once again he has been working hard to create more of his exciting pieces for our Christmas decorations.

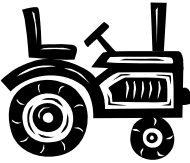
It's also been a rewarding month for all the efforts of our loyal and hardworking staff as we have received a 5 star accreditation for our main kitchen from the Environmental Health Dept. to follow the 5 stars awarded to the tea rooms earlier in the year.

We look forward to entertaining you over the Festive period and would like to take this opportunity to wish all of our customers, both new and old, a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

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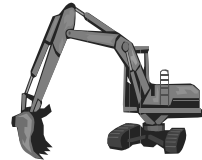
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## ***Nerys's Natty Nosh:***

*French Onion Soup* -serves 4

Onion soups have been popular at least as far back as Roman times. The rich flavour of the soup is due to the caramelized onions. This is a procedure in which the onions are cooked slowly until the sugar in the onion melts forming a sweet, sugary taste. This takes about half an hour, but many cooks allow for hours of cooking to bring out the complex flavours of the onion's sugar. In the final stages of cooking, cognac or sherry is often used to enhance the caramelized onion flavour.

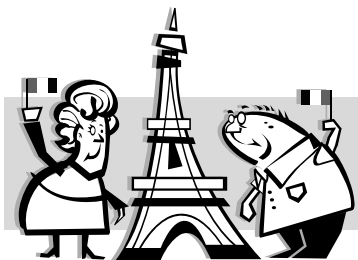
The onion is a nutritious food, containing sulphur compounds that are natural antibiotics. To preserve the valuable sulphide, the onions should be cooked gently on a low heat. It has a good source of vitamin C, Folic acid, Calcium and Potassium.

### **Ingredients**

500g (1lb) onions  
1 tablespoon vegetable oil  
25g (1oz) butter or margarine  
600 ml (1 pint) beef stock  
1 clove garlic  
1 bay leaf  
1 bouquet garni  
¼ teaspoon sugar (optional)  
Salt and pepper  
1 tablespoon cognac or sherry (optional)

### **Topping**

4 slices bread  
100g (4oz) Gruyere cheese  
2 teaspoon French mustard



### **Method**

- 1** Peel and slice onions finely.
- 2** Skin and crush garlic
- 3** Melt the fat in a heavy based pan, add the onions, crushed garlic, and sugar if used. Fry for 30 minutes on **low** heat until the onions are evenly browned but not burnt. Add the alcohol if using.
- 4** Add the beef stock, bay leaf, bouquet garni, pepper and salt. Simmer for 30 minutes .
- 5** Toast the bread, spread with mustard and arrange on the bottom of a flame proof soup tureen.
- 6** Grate the cheese.
- 7** Remove the bouquet garni and bay leaf and season according to taste.
- 8** Pour the soup into the tureen. When the toast floats to the top sprinkle with grated cheese.
- 9** Put the dish under a grill and cook for 3 to 5 minutes. **Enjoy!**

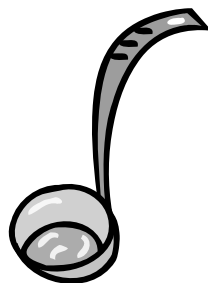
## *Leek and Potato Soup* -serves 4

The leek is one of the national emblems of Wales, worn along with a daffodil on March the 1<sup>st</sup>, St David's day. According to folklore King Cadwaladr of Gwynedd ordered his soldier to identify themselves by wearing the vegetable on their helmet in an ancient battle against the Saxons.

As a member of the onion family, leeks have many similar benefits, including an ability to reduce "bad" cholesterol and protect against heart disease. They are also rich in vitamin C and E , fibre and several important minerals.

### **Ingredients .**

3 rashers of bacon, chopped  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
2 large leeks, sliced  
500g ( 2 medium) potatoes peeled and chopped  
4 cups chicken stock  
Salt and pepper to taste.  
Fresh herbs (optional)



### **Method**

- 1** Heat the oil in a medium pan and fry the bacon for 3 minutes or until golden brown.
- 3** Add the leeks to the pan. Stir over a medium heat for 5-10 minutes until soft. Don't allow to burn or the sweet flavour of the leeks will disappear and will become bitter.
- 4** Add the potatoes and stock, and bring to the boil. Then reduce the heat, and cover. Simmer, stirring occasionally, for 20 minutes, or until the potatoes are tender.
- 5** Allow to cool slightly, then when safe to do so blend in a liquidiser.
- 6** Season to taste. If the soup is too thick, thin it with a little water or milk. Taste and season.
- 7** Return the soup back to the saucepan and heat through. Garnish with fresh herbs, if desired.

### **Tips**

- 1** I like to add a little nutmeg to the sautéed leeks, it enhances the sweetness of the vegetable.

**Enjoy!**

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## GARDENING CORNER

With all New Year resolutions gone out of the window, including the one to pray for better weather, I'm actually at a loss to know what to do in respect of work here at Barn Farm. Apart that is from decorating the bedroom, but that wasn't a New Year resolution anyway, so doesn't really count, although think the deputy Head Gardener might have other ideas! With all the seeds safely ordered and delivered I can't browse through seed catalogues with any sense of purpose. Similarly all the seed potatoes, onion and shallot sets are also on order as well as some plants, which are a new venture for me. By plants I mean cucumbers and melons. These are very much a trial so I haven't gone overboard and ordered tomatoes as well – I couldn't have justified the expense without a proper trial anyway. So what is so special about these plants? Well normally I grow my own plants from seed and with melons and cucumbers in particular, these are not cheap – probably more expensive than gold if you based it on a weight to cost comparison. You may well have read my displeasure when either crop suddenly keels over, despite looking the epitome of health the day before. Last year was no exception as one day I was picking numerous quantities of cucumbers and within 48 hours the plants had died a death. It's all a mystery to me and despite doing different things year on year the results are nearly always the same. An autopsy doesn't reveal any clues and each year I say never again. But I never learn, so each year I do the same again, with the inevitable same results. Enter THE PLANT! These are grafted plants that use the specific variety of cucumber or melon and graft this to a wild variety of something or other which is resistant to bomb blast, pestilence and the vagaries of the British climate. At least that's what it says on the tin so they had better be right. They aren't cheap as I said, but if they work it could be the future. Reading the blurb on the tomatoes in the seed catalogue, apparently all professionally grown tomatoes are now grown on grafted stock and they don't have the problems that I do so they must work. If not it can only be down to the huge volumes of pest and disease chemicals that are available to them but not to the amateur grower – as if. No doubt in the pages of July or August I will be able to update you as to whether we get success or failure. Back to the drawing board or the way ahead!

I was browsing through several of the January pages I have written in recent years, and it seems the rain thing has become a standard 'state of the nation'. It did warm up one day, and with the family out and about doing their own thing, I escaped to the tunnel. This badly needed cleaning out as it still retained the old tomato and pepper plants etc. By the end of the day, all the beds had been cleared and dug and are now just waiting for some manure to be liberally spread across the top of them. I also took the opportunity to give the fruit trees a winter spray as well before the beds get planted up again. The beds under the fruit trees

will be planted with strawberries as previously mentioned, so it is all systems go. With the weather as it was I mainly retreated to the garage and spent several days doing clearing out. The best job completed was to sort out my work room which was pretty well full up with old bee frames and hive parts that needed cleaning and sterilizing to ensure any diseases aren't spread to new bees when the bits are used again. This was one job that I had been planning for ages and never got round to it for longer than 30 minutes a time. This was a job well done, and everything was duly put away, with as much new fresh foundation wax being put into the frames as I had, all ready for the new season ahead. My only concern now with the weather is that the bees will run out of food and I won't be able to open the hives up to give them any much needed supplies. All I can do is keep the fingers crossed. As I write this it is snowing profusely and I have had to shoot down the garden to knock as much snow off the tunnel as I can. The tunnel cover is coming to the end of its life and so would easily tear if I left it with too much weight on. I'd prefer not to replace it this year if I can help it. They are not cheap (about £250 for one this size), but they are big and quite heavy to manipulate, so it's not the easiest job to do. Looking outside I may have to nip down the garden once more to shift the last of the snow.

Whilst doing the odd jobs I've also taken down the artificial house martens nests for the winter. These have been cleaned out and also sterilized ready for the spring. I've got lots of odd scraps of sawn timber in the garage and decided that it was time to make use of it. So it was onto the internet, Google 'bird nests' and download some patterns for making. So far I've constructed some robin nests and small nests for bluetits or similar and I'm currently painting them to make them a little more robust. These will be scattered around the garden as soon as the weather improves a bit.

I've got some greens growing in the protection of the tunnel and they seem to be doing OK. Come the end of the month it will be time to turn the hot bench back on again and start the first seeds off for the new season ahead. These will include some more greens. Top of the list will be calabrese as we love this as a vegetable and it freezes quite well too. Broad beans and some salad leaves will also feature. I've found a red seeded variety of broad beans called red epicure. These have proved to be one of the best tasting varieties that we have ever tried, so I make sure that we save our own seed and grow copious amounts each year. They freeze well too. This year we are changing direction slightly in what we grow, concentrating on crops that can be preserved in different ways. The two big deep freezers soon fill up with soups and pasata sauces as well as calabrese, so we look to dry more crops such as peppers and beans of different varieties. We were also going to try some 'sun dried' tomatoes this year – assuming we ever get some sun to dry them that is! Happy gardening until next month.  
Steve and Felicity Hunt.

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## LOCAL CONTACTS

*If you know of any changes or omissions please contact the Editor Terry Walters  
Telephone 01291 641338 or email [terencewalters@hotmail.com](mailto:terencewalters@hotmail.com)*

### **Church of St. Thomas à Becket Shirenewton**

<b>Parish Priest</b>	Revd. Nansi Davies	01633 400519
<b>Parish Visitor Co-ordinators</b>	Revd. Nansi Davies	01633 400519
	Diane Marlow	01291 641407
<b>Church Wardens</b>	Sally Saysell	01291 641369
	Andrew Baker	01291 641925
	Mrs Susan Lenthall	Newchurch 01219 626389
<b>PCC Secretaries</b>	William Clark	01291 641783
	David Heritage	Newchurch 01291 622708
<b>PCC Treasurers</b>	Kevin Bounds	01291 641818
	Enid Heritage	Newchurch 01291 622708
<b>PCC Members</b>	Mark Broughton	01291 641797
	Charles Eickhoff	01291 641716
	Janet Horton	01291 641783
	Margaret Lock	01291 641884
	Dr James Leney	01291 641271
	Mrs Diane Marlow	01291 641407
	Allan Saysell	01291 641369
	John Nicholas	01291 641368
	Jane Smith-Haddon	01291 641525
<b>Gift Aid Secretary</b>	Ruth Savagar	01291 641411
<b>Maintenance &amp; Safety</b>	John Nicholas	01291 641368
<b>Organists</b>	Karen Millar	01291 650521
	Ruth Savagar	01291 641411
	Kath Whittington	01291 641600
<b>Sunday Club</b>	Kerry Baker	01291 641925
<b>Tower Captain</b>	Mike Penney	01291 650653
<b>Church Hall Booking</b>	Glynis MacDonald	01291 641818
<b>Safeguarding Officer</b>	Dr. Kerry Baker	01291 641925
<b>Church Flowers</b>	Maureen Moody	01291 641524
<b>Parish Magazine Editor</b>	Terry Walters	01291 641338
<b>200 Club</b>	Bob O'Keefe	01291 641686
<b><u>MP/Monmouth CC &amp; Community Council Representatives</u></b>		
<b>Clerk to Community Council</b>	Hilary Counsell	01291 421307 <a href="mailto:shirenewtoncc@gmail.com">shirenewtoncc@gmail.com</a>
<b>Shirenewton Ward:</b>	David Adams	01291 641792
	Tony Hughes	01291 641360
	Carol Jones	01291 641791
	Phil Moles	01291 641521
	Beverley Moor	01291 641532
<b>Mynyddbach Ward</b>	Lynne Prosser	01291 641666
	Ian Moore	01291 650766
<b>Earlswood Ward</b>	Paul Harris	01291 650871
	Ken Morton	01291 650268
<b>Newchurch West</b>	Liz McCombe	01291 652957
<b>MCC for Shirenewton</b>	Graham Down	01291 621846 <a href="mailto:grahamdown@monmouthshire.gov.uk">grahamdown@monmouthshire.gov.uk</a>
<b>Member of Parliament</b>	David Davies	020 7219 8360 <a href="mailto:daviesd@parliament.uk">daviesd@parliament.uk</a>

## **Police Neighbourhood Watch Contacts**

**Comm. Police Officer** Louise Thorpe 01633 642068  
louise.thorpe@gwent.pnn.police.uk  
**Shirenewton & Mynyddbach** Beverley Moore 01291 641532

**Earlswood** Sue Leat 01291 641207

## **Other Local Organisations**

**Beavers** Julie Hitchcock 01291 650548

**Brownies** Jackie Broughton 01291 641797

**Comm. Carol Services** John Nicholas 01291 641368  
jdrnicholas@tiscali.co.uk

**Church Fete** Diane Ward 01291 641843 lordward99@hotmail.com  
**Cubs**

**Earlswood Hope** Mrs Sybil Cullimore 01291 641563

## **Earlswood & Newchurch West Memorial Hall**

Glynis MacDonald 01291 641818  
glynis.macdonald@btinternet.com

## **Earlswood Valley Methodist Chapel**

Avril Smith 01291 650733

**Gaerllwyd Baptist** Mrs E Remnant Brooklands, Usk Road NP16 6SA

**Girl Guides** Helen Cann 01291 650835 cann71@btinternet.com

**Kids Ad Lib (KAL)** Karen Millar 01291 650521 Gail Jones 01291 650861

**Recreation Association** Gordon Hughes 01291 641356 gordon.hughes3@tesco.net

**Recreation Hall booking** Beryl Saysell 01291 641637

## **St Peters Church Newchurch**

Enid Heritage 01291 622708

## **Shirenewton Local History Socty**

Dorothy Brabon 01291 641376 brabonnl@hotmail.com

## **Shirenewton and Mynyddbach Fields Association Ltd (SAMFAL)**

Stu Dutton 01291 641677 stu@dutton47.freemove.co.uk

## **Shirenewton & Mynyddbach Initiative for Local Enterprise (SMILE)**

Charles Eickhoff 01291 641716 eickhoff@shirenewton.org

## **Shirenewton Mothers Union**

Rosemary Carey 01291 425010 crcandkili@tiscali.co.uk

## **Shirenewton Mothers Union Branch Treasurer**

Auriol Horton 01291 641844 aur10l@btinternet.com

## **Shirenewton Operatic and Dramatic Society (SODS)**

Glynis MacDonald 01291 641818  
glynis.macdonald@btinternet.com

**Shirenewton Play Group** Beverly Lindsay Shirenewtonplaygroup@gmail.com

## **Shirenewton Primary School**

Jayne Edwards 01291 641774  
jayneedwards@monmouthshire.gov.uk

## **Shirenewton Tennis Association**

P Brabon 01291 641376 brabonnl@hotmail.com

## **Shirenewton Toddler Group** Jude Langdon 07981 368213

Paula Rimmer rimmerpaula@mac.com

**Traidcraft** Marion McAdam 01291 641316

**Whist drive** Auriol Horton 01291 641844 aur10l@btinternet.com

**Womens Institute (WI)** Jenny Bonner 01291 641929

## DIARY DATES

February	Event	Location
1	Six Nations Kick-off	Church Room
3	Shirenewton Guides 40th Anniversary	Church Rooms
3	Shirenewton Guides 40th Celebration	Church Rooms
4	Shirenewton Community Council Mtg.	Recreation Hall
7	Whist Drive	Recreation Hall
11	Shirenewton Local History Socty.	Recreation Hall
14	Shirenewton WI	Recreation Hall
26	Shirenewton Local History Socty.	Huntsman Hotel
27	Community Lunch Club	Tredegar Arms
March	Event	Location
7	Whist Drive	Recreation Hall
27	Community Lunch Club	Tredegar Arms
April	Event	Location
20	Skittles and Games Evening	Earlswood Hall
24	Community Lunch Club	Tredegar Arms

*Editors words of wisdom:*

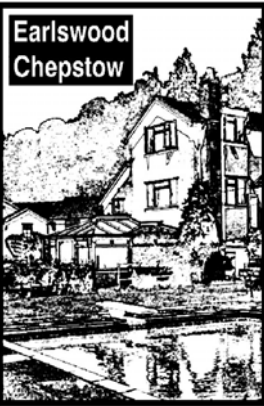
*"My computer once beat me at Chess, but it was no match for me at Kickboxing"*

*"The only reason they say 'Women and Children first' is to test the strength of the lifeboats.*

*When you hear the cry "It doesn't work"  
Look for the obvious, then look for the ridiculous, if its none of those there is a very slight chance it will be technical.*

<b>Saint Thomas a Beckett Shirenewton</b>		<b>Sunday Ser- vices</b>	<b>Start 10.00 a.m. Unless stated otherwise</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Readers</b>	<b>Sides-persons</b>
3 <sup>rd</sup> February	Presentation of Christ Holy Eucharist	Bob Grattan Ruth Savagar	Bob Grattan Claire Lewis
10 <sup>th</sup> February	Sunday before Lent Morning Prayer	Wendy Baker Mark Broughton	Claire Lewis Mark Broughton
17 <sup>th</sup> February	First Sunday of Lent Holy Eucharist	Janet Horton Bill Clark	Janet Horton Bill Clark
24 <sup>th</sup> February	Second Sunday of Lent Holy Eucharist	Margaret Woodliffe Diane Marlow	Margaret Woodliffe Diane Marlow
3 <sup>rd</sup> March	Third Sunday of Lent Holy Eucharist	Bob Grattan and Margaret Lock	Bob Grattan Margaret Lock.
10 <sup>th</sup> March	Mothering Sunday Family Service	The Children	The Children
17 <sup>th</sup> March	Fifth Sunday of Lent Holy Eucharist	Janet Horton Bill Clark	Janet Horton Bill Clark
24 <sup>th</sup> March	Palm Sunday Holy Eucharist	Margaret Woodliffe Cynthia Smith	Margaret Woodliffe Cynthia Smith
31 <sup>st</sup> March	Easter Day Holy Eucharist	Andrew Baker Sally Saysell	Claire Lewis John Nicholas

Earlswood  
Chepstow



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### **EDITORIAL INFORMATION**

Published: by The Church of St. Thomas á Becket Shirenewton

Editor: Terry Walters 01291 641338 email: [terencewalters@hotmail.com](mailto:terencewalters@hotmail.com)

The cost of the Magazine is 50P per issue/10 issues for £5

Copies are delivered free by local distributors to those who have pre-paid.

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Editorial policy is to print what you provide, space and technology permitting.

The views expressed are those of the contributor.

**Deadline for contributions to the February 2013**

**issue is 9:00am on the 21st January 2013**