

Shirenewton

Parish Magazine

September 2013



Sketch by Barbara Davies

Price: 50p

Dear Friends,

Anticipation is strung tautly in the air. The tension is such that I am obliged to leave these shores for a while and seek some respite abroad. Yes, the new Bishop of Monmouth is about to be appointed or whatever happens to them. Nobody has asked me to consider the calling to this high office (or is ever likely to in fact) and my absence is not the result of a sulking fit but simply that Sandra and I are off on holiday. We can't wait. It has been a demanding year so far what with Confirmations and the joining of Shirenewton with our group of parishes to name but two considerations.

By the time you read this we will be lolling sipping wine on some sun-drenched shore (I hope), news of the new ecclesiastical figure heading our diocese may well be common knowledge. Leading part of the Anglican Communion is a demanding and difficult task in our contemporary society. I suppose that it was ever thus. Whoever holds the post will be assured, I trust, of our genuine support long into the future.

I recall a number of Bishops during my years of vocation - **Derek Childs, Cliff Wright, Rowan Williams** (later, of course, Archbishop of Canterbury) and **Dominic Walker**. I can genuinely say that on occasion I have been grateful to them all. There are times when it gets a touch uncomfortable serving as a parish priest and it must be significantly more demanding when in position as a diocesan bishop. Forget the theological contortions for a moment. In many respects 'the buck stops here' with them. They often find themselves in a 'no win' situation in the field of public opinion and surrounded by people each holding a different opinion and, they would have you believe, knowing how to do the 'job' better. In many ways I am old-fashioned. I believe that the Holy Spirit rises above human machinations when it comes to an episcopal appointment. I also believe that we tend to get the bishop we deserve - and that is not always a comfortable thought. Whoever is elected, may God go with him. Or her.

Whilst we speculate on the strengths (and await the presumed foibles) of our new bishop let us reflect and give thanks for the ministry of the last one. I understand the Bishop Dominic, whilst - hopefully - enjoying a period of relative tranquillity, is not enjoying the best of health at the moment. let our prayers and good wishes remain with him as we express gratitude for much of the witness he shared.

Onto more local matters. It was with sadness that I learned from **Pat Osley**, one of the Mathern based Street Pastors, that the Rainbow Centre in Chepstow had ceased trading. I remember with fondness and a sense of excitement the time, some ten years ago, that **Craig Downs** and I joined the team of volunteers transforming the 'Green Dragon' pub into a Christian resource centre. On behalf of our parishes I frequently visited the Rainbow to secure resource materials and altar requisites. At all times I felt the witness of faith within the community. However, times have changed and the expression of Christian proclamation moves on. I wish former members of the Rainbow group every blessing as they set out in new directions.

Just recently I appreciated correspondence received from Magor reminding me that a strong Christian presence continued with the Mustard Seed shop and resource centre in that locality. I shall certainly avail myself of their services and hope also that fellow Christians will support them as well.

Up in Llanfair Discoed (or is it down, or across?) we continue to remember in prayer **Rev'd. Nansi Davies** and **Sybil. Nansi** is instrumental in leading worship and otherwise deeply involved in ministry at Shirenewton and her gifts in this direction are invaluable. As well as exercising her vocation, Nansi is presently nursing Sybil and our thoughts are very much with them both at this demanding time. May the positive presence of God be with them both and also with the rest of us as we continue to advance into the year.

With every good wish and blessing, Julian

From the Registers

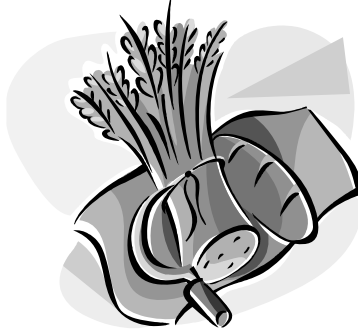
Baptism



18th August 2013

Alexander Joseph Cooke son of James Roger Cooke and Emma Claire Derret Smith Cooke.

St Thomas à Becket Church



HARVEST LUNCH

EARLSWOOD HALL

SUNDAY 6TH OCTOBER

12.30 FOR 1.00PM

Admission by ticket only

Adults £6.00 or children £4.00

For tickets contact:-

Sally 01291 641369 sally.saysell@tiscali.co.uk

Barbara 01291 641338 barbaraw@lters.org.uk

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 persons 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.

SHIRENEWTON CHURCH 200 CLUB

July 2013

1st prize	Seirian Edmonds
2nd Prize	Simon Rowland
3rd Prize	Peter Bartlett
4th Prize	Sylvia Cullimore

No Draw in August



The Worshipful Company of Woolmen

The Worshipful Company of Woolmen is one of the oldest of the Livery Companies of the City of London. Originally the body that oversaw woolpackers and wool merchants to ensure consistent standards for wool producers and wool traders throughout the wool industry, it later became a merchant guild for controlling and taxing the export of wool to the continent. It is now a charitable organisation that provides support for sheep farming, shearing, wool production and textiles and design in many different ways. The Company supports research into appropriate sheep-related veterinary procedures and practices; provides bursaries for students of wool, textile, design and other allied disciplines; and awards prizes and medals for sheep shearing at the major agricultural shows.

Bill Clark is the current Master of the company and about 30 members of the company and their spouses and partners will be staying at St Pierre for the weekend of 13th/15th September. To mark their visit to Monmouthshire, they will attend the morning service at St Thomas á Becket Church during which they will present an Aumbry (see Note below) to the Church. For this reason the service will be delayed and start at 11 a.m. For more information about the Woolmen, please visit www.woolmen.com.

Note:

An Aumbry is a secure place used to store consecrated bread and wine. It allows the parish priest to bless the bread and wine ahead of a service and then for a lay Eucharistic minister to administer the communion without a priest present. The priest can also use it to store consecrated bread and wine between services so it can be administered to the sick and the homebound in the Parish.

SHIRENEWTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

What a lovely summer! Unfortunately, it was not such a good day when we visited Gaer Fawr in June to see the Iron Age Fort, it rained most of the day, eventually it cleared in the evening and allowed our members to view the substantial remains of Gaer Fawr Ironage Fort which remains in private ownership, we were very grateful for Bob Rowles allowing us access, giving us a very informative guided tour of the site, I'm sure everyone found it well worth the visit.

The month of July saw us visiting Caldicot Castle, with a tour and talk arranged for an evening visit for our society. Although so near quite a few members had not visited the site and I believe it was well worth the visit. We are following through in September with this topic with a talk on the Cobb family who lived at the castle.

Our new year starts in September, with a new acquisition to our archive of the fifth volume of the County History of Gwent, this is the final volume and brings the history up to the twentieth century, the society now owns the full set, members are welcome to borrow from our small collection of books at our research sessions in the Recreational Hall.

Dates for your diary:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Monday, 9 th September | View our village archive, 2.00 pm – 5.00 pm
At the Recreational Hall |
| Tuesday, 24 th September | Meeting at the Huntsman Hotel at 7.30 pm
A talk entitled, 'The Cobb Family of Caldicot Castle'
Given by Pauline Hayward |

ST PETER'S CHURCH NEWCHURCH

Harvest Thanksgiving - Thursday 19th September at 7 P.M

We are pleased to report that our organist Kath, is now out of hospital and making a steady recovery.

The funeral service conducted by John Waters, of Dorothy Cochrane, a very loyal and longstanding member of St Peter's, was held at St Mary's Church Caldicot on Thursday 22nd of August. She will be sadly missed by all her family and friends.

THE BELLS, THE BELLS

The Shirenewton ringers have traditionally arranged two tours each year to visit different parts of the country and ring the bells in that area: one tour takes place in the summer and the other in the winter, and named accordingly. Touring around is a common activity for ringers and the majority of church towers welcome visitors. Our mission this year was to visit the flat lands of Lincolnshire and base our Summer Tour in and around Lincoln. And what could be more fitting on the 70th anniversary of the Dambusters raid by 617 squadron, to visit the churches around the airfield at Scampton, the home of the squadron. So the concept of the Dambusters' tour was established and arranged.

Fifteen ringers and one potential ringer arrived on the Friday afternoon of August 16th to the campsite at Thurlby, south west of Lincoln and the ringers were treated to their own isolated and exclusive space in a 10 acre field (perhaps they thought we would bring bells with us and create a noise?). Ringing was arranged that evening at nearby South Scarle [5 bells] and in the larger village of Collingham where there are two churches, one at the south end [5bells] and one at the north end [6bells]. Traditionally a fish and chip supper would then take place but because the forecast for the Saturday evening was rain the BBQ back at camp was swapped to the Friday evening.

Saturday dawned bright and after a light breakfast we headed out to Nettleham [6 bells], Scothern [6 bells], Dunholme [6 bells], Welton [6 bells], and the beautiful estate church of Hackthorn [6 bells]. Then to an excellent lunch at The Dambusters Inn at Scampton. This is not only a quaint village pub but a shrine to the memory of the aircrews that flew out on the evening of the 16th May 1943 to bomb the Mohne, Scope and Eider dams in the Ruhr Valley using the revolutionary bouncing bomb conceived by Dr Barnes Wallis. Amongst the other memorabilia on display was the flight log of Guy Gibson together with all of his medals including his VC. In the main bar was the cockpit instrument panel from a Lancaster bomber. This pub would be a worthy addition to anyone visiting this part of the world as would the next church we visited at Stow. This former minster and abbey has a documented history going as far back as 870 AD with legend linking to St Etheldreda in the 7th century. The grandeur of the interior is breath-taking and most unexpected in a small village. The 8 bells were rung and then on to Saxilby [6].Eagle [6], Swinderly [5], and Bassingham [6]. As predicted the evening proved damp with some drizzle and the deferred fish and chips supper was enjoyed by all. This was not the end of the tour however!

On the Sunday morning before the full breakfast everyone headed into Lincoln, first to ring at St Giles [8] for service and then onto the truly impressive Cathedral. We met the local ringers at the base of the massive south west tower and climbed the 142 steps to the ringing chamber. For many of the band this was a first visit to a medieval English cathedral and the first experience of ringing on 12 bells. We were made most welcome and when the ringing stopped at 11.00 o'clock we were treated to a walk out onto the parapet at the west end of the Cathedral (not open to the general public) with magnificent views over Lincoln and the countryside beyond.

Afterwards back to the campsite for what was now brunch, packing up and returning back to Wales. In the evening we were all guests of Jane and Charles Eickhoff for a post-tour celebration: the end of a truly memorable Shirenewton Ringers' Summer Tour. M.D.Penney

We welcome you to *Itton Village Hall*

Friday 4th October 7.30pm.

The return of Alison Neil

In her show '**The Fossil Lady of Lyme'**

Tickets £7.00 .Can be reserved in advance by phone:
Elaine on 01291 641 615 or Rita on 07814 240 454.
or e mail: secretary@ittonvillagehall.co.uk

It is possible to pay at door
but you can be sure of a ticket if you reserve in advance.

We welcome Alison back with her new show. She delighted us before with her performances of 'The Just William Lady' and 'The Shakespeare Ladies'Club' to name but two. She portrays the story of Mary Anning of Lyme in the early part of the 19th century when science was alive with new discoveries, especially fossils of strange creatures never seen on earth before. Mary came from a poor family but she became an expert fossil hunter (the Lyme Regis area being a well known site for fossils as it still is today). Wealthy people of the time paid high prices for her fossils; she mixed with eminent people of the day and became quite famous. However, some of the eminent scientists took credit for her discoveries. Her story is also told in a book by Tracy Chevalier, the author of 'The Girl with The Pearl Earring').

To learn more about Alison Neil you can view her website:www.alisonneil.co.uk
Light Refreshments and Raffle available

Sponsored by The Arts Council of Wales

FAIRTRADE NEWS

Did you know that Ramadan started this year on July 9th and lasts for 30 days? Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset, and often break their fast by eating a few dates. It's a world away from the more prevalent 'instant gratification' which characterizes many lives in the west! When I worked on the English language radio station in Tripoli I watched as the Libyan workers prepared their evening meal, waiting for the sound of the gun which signified the formal end of daylight hours. They told me that the signal for the gun was given from the main mosque when the increasing darkness made it impossible to distinguish a black thread from a white one. The 30 days of Ramadan move gradually through the year. In summertime of course the hours of the fast increase.

Abdul Wahid, a spokesman for the Shah Jeham Mosque in Woking, the first fair trade mosque in the UK, explains that Muslims aspire to fairness and justice in their dealings with others:

'The notion of fair trade is intrinsic to my faith and by supporting the fair trade movement we can do our bit to encourage justice for all.'

Traidcraft sources fairly traded dates from Tunisia, and olive oil and couscous from the company Zaytoun based in Palestine. The oil is expensive, but the quality is excellent and of course supporting Palestinian farmers is very significant. The special couscous is large grained and is traditionally made for special occasions. It is hand-rolled and sun-dried by Palestinian women providing them with a source of income in the most demanding of circumstances. Trade, not aid.

Flicking through my ActionAid magazine I noticed a rather jolly picture : India, a smiling Mum with her 6 month old baby girl, clutching a gift and a card, a neighbour looking on; in the foreground a pair of hands clapping.

The caption reads simply :

'A mother from New Delhi celebrates the birth of her daughter with ActionAid India staff as part of a programme that encourages families to celebrate the births of baby girls who are often unwanted.'

This cut me to the quick - An ActionAid worker has to try and persuade a mother to celebrate the birth of a healthy baby! I understand that there are many and varied reasons for this, the necessity of a dowry being one of the most important. But really, I found this deeply distressing .

Traidcraft, like ActionAid develops many programmes to educate girls and women, so that they can play a real role in society.

The winter catalogue has arrived. I thought I might mention a few things that caught my eye. There is of course all the usual Christmas paraphernalia, beautiful scarves and jewellery, alpaca knits, ornaments, wooden toys and stationery AND of course all the usual food products, including now, dark chocolate mint thins - in my view much more delicious than the normal ones you are no doubt familiar with.

Do contact me for a catalogue or look at Traidcraft's website.

Marion McAdam 641 316 msm316@gmail.com

STARGAZING



The seven stars of the Plough can be seen in the northern evening sky whilst the “W” of the constellation Cassiopeia lies to the north-east. The constellation Pegasus includes a large square that lies to the south. How did the ancient Greeks manage to see the shape of a winged horse in a square of not particularly bright stars?! The Summer Triangle made up of the bright stars Deneb, Vega and Altair continues to dominate the night sky to the South. Deneb forms the tail of the constellation Cygnus, the Swan which lies pretty much overhead. Its brightest stars form a cross against the background of the Milky Way, a dense band of faint stars from the north-east to the south-west. The Milky Way can be seen particularly well from a dark sight.

The brilliant planet Venus is very close to the south-western horizon in the evening following sunset. Jupiter lies to the south-east in the morning sky. It is to the right of the stars Castor and Pollux. The less bright planet Mars is lower in the sky to the east. It is above and to the right of the star Spica. On the 28th, the waxing crescent Moon is just below and to the right of Jupiter. On the 30th, the Moon forms a triangle with Mars and Spica.

Autumnal Equinox occurs on the 22nd, when day and night are both 12 hours long. Traditionally farmers working late into the evening to gather their crops are aided by the light of the Harvest Moon – this year this is the Full Moon of 18th September. It's the closest Full Moon to the Autumnal Equinox.

Dave Thomas

CHEPSTOW CHORAL SOCIETY

New Season September 2013 - July 2014.

SATURDAY OCTOBER 5th -- CHORAL WORKSHOP

Venue – Arts Hall, Chepstow Leisure Centre, 2.00pm – 6.00pm.

To include choruses from “Messiah” and “Les Miserables”!

Tea & refreshments included in registration fee (£5.00) – fee refunded to anyone joining the Society. Come along & meet us!

SUNDAY DECEMBER 1st -- CAROLS AT ST PIERRE

SUNDAY DECEMBER 8th – ANNUAL CHRISTMAS MUSIC CONCERT

Venue – St Mary's Priory Church, Chepstow, 3.00pm.

A lovely programme of seasonal choral music, family carols, readings etc.

SATURDAY APRIL 5th – G.F. Handel's “MESSIAH” (complete). St Mary's Priory Church Chepstow, 7.30pm –with full professional orchestra & soloists

WEDNESDAY JUNE 25th – SUMMER CONCERT - Arts Hall, Chepstow.

SHIRENEWTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Extracts from the minutes of the meetings held on 5 August 2013

Planning applications considered

DC/2013/00468 Rehabilitation of a former dwelling to provide a single dwelling house.

This property was found to be beyond the boundary between Shirenewton and Caerwent Community Councils so was passed on to Caerwent. However, because Shirenewton Councillors have local knowledge, they visited the location and made observations on the application, these will be passed to the Planning Officer and Clerk of Caerwent CC.

DC/2013/00540 Retention of decking at 18 Blethyn Close, Mynyddbach

Council recommended refusal of retention as the decking is intrusive due to its height and overlooks the neighbouring property. The fence should be lowered, the decking stepped and enclosed underneath to prevent water ingress.

DC/2013/00132 Outline planning permission for residential development of up to 200 dwellings on land at Mounton Road.

Council recommended refusal of this application on the following grounds:
The A466 is the western edge of the green wedge between Chepstow and Pwllmeyric and should be retained;

Traffic impact - there are already serious delays and traffic issues on the approach to St Lawrence roundabout at peak times and on race days, there needs to be a detailed transport assessment to assess traffic implications and clearly identify highway improvements that would create acceptable traffic conditions.

The A48 to Hardwick Hill is an Air Quality Management Area with nitrogen dioxide pollution, this needs careful assessment and should not be exacerbated.

DC/2013/00132 Proposed change of use of Shirenewton shop.
County Councillor G Down informed the Council that at their site visit on 5.8.13, officers of Mon CC were recommending refusal of this application.

Items of local concern

WPC Thorpe advised of a new initiative of providing house plaques for properties that are difficult to find by emergency services/delivery vehicles. Signs can be ordered at a cost of £6.00 each (this includes a donation of £1.00 to Neighbourhood Watch). A poster is to be included in the Parish Newsletter.

Local commemoration of World War 1 - Cllr Jones reported that she hoped the school, church, WI and other local groups would be involved in this event which may be held on Armistice Day 2014. She will contact the organisations and report back to the October meeting.

Update on telephone kiosk - Cllr Jones reported that she is currently pursuing the costs of a formal lease to secure the future of the kiosk, also the possibility of a maintenance grant. She will report back to the October meeting.

Update on maintenance of war memorial - Cllr Jones reported that the cost of restoring the lettering in black would be £960 (inc vat). T J Davies, Stone Masons will be undertaking the work which should be completed in 4 - 6 weeks. Councillors gratefully accepted the offer of a local resident to fund this restoration.

Cllr Jones also advised that the war memorial steps need re-pointing and possibly relaying and that a local resident has offered to complete this work at no cost. Councillors expressed their thanks for this offer.

She further advised that the squeeze belly gates needed attention/oiling and Cllr P Moles offered to find someone to undertake this work.

The aim is that all work will be completed by Armistice Sunday.

Church clock - It was reported that the church clock is not keeping time and needs repair. Mrs MacDonald has successfully gained grant funding of £1500 from the Lower Wye Valley Committee and £500 from the Welsh Church Fund but there is a shortfall of £500. Council recognised its responsibility towards this war memorial and agreed to fund up to £500 to complete the work.

The mobile police vehicle will be at the Tredegar Arms car park on Thursday 29 August and 26th September from 9 - 11am and at the Huntsman Hotel on Sunday 22nd from 9.30 - 11.30am.

Date of next meeting: Monday 2 September 2013 at 7.30pm at Shirenewton Recreation Hall. Members of the public may attend meetings and speak to Councillors about issues/problems/compliments for the first 15 minutes.

Find more information in the draft copy of the minutes in the Community Council notice boards. Previous minutes of meetings can be found on the Council's page of the church website.

Contact the Clerk to the Community Council -

Mrs Hilary Counsell

Tel: 01291 421307

E-mail: shirenewtoncc@gmail.com

Breathe Easy Chepstow

Do you have a lung condition?
Breathe Easy Chepstow is a group providing information and social activities for everyone with any type of lung condition, friends, family and carers.

New members are welcome to join us on
the fourth Wednesday of every month, 2 — 4pm
at
The Palmer Centre, Place de Corneilles,
High Street, Chepstow. NP16 5LH

Breathe Easy is free to attend, no need to book, no referral
needed,
just turn up, for more information call 01291 641666
or visit www.blf.org/wales

Self Awareness Group with Rose

Third Thursday of the Month starting 16 May 2013

7.30pm at Shirenewton Rec Hall

Fee to cover costs: £3.00

Come and discover how to find some peace of mind within your life.
We will have meditation to help focus and discipline the mind. Exercises
to discover our psychic abilities with help on using them to the limit we
require. And a fun social evening
discussing and answering questions on
what it is to be self-aware.

Call Rose for information at: 01291641943 or 07912384011

Tredegar Arms Shirenewton

Coffee Morning

In aid of

Macmillan Cancer Support

Saturday 28th September 10.30 to 12 noon

SHIRENEWTON COMMUNITY LUNCHEON CLUB

01291 641274

tredegararmsshirenewton@hotmail.com

Please book early to secure your place for lunch

25th September, 23rd October and 27th November



ADVANCED NOTICE

Shirenewton Recreation Association
is arranging a

FESTIVE CHRISTMAS FAYRE

at

The Recreation Hall

on

Friday 6th December

at

7pm

Put this date in your diary
for a wide range of shopping opportunities

SHIRENEWTON WI JULY & AUGUST 2013

Summer, what a delight to actually be able to go out for the evening, knowing it's still going to be light when you return and not have to carry a coat.

The evening of Thursday 11th July was good and although holiday season most members attended, looking forward to that months talk.

Mr William Clark was our speaker, giving us an insight into 'The Livery Companies of the city of London' and their history.

Mr Clark is a member of the Worshipful Company of Woolmen and is master of the company for 2013/14. Livery Companies were started in medieval times and came from powerful people having men and women bonded to them. The people worked for and were fed and watered and clothed, quite literally 'liveried', by these powerful people who were the traders, producers and merchants of London. When they first formally gathered together into the Livery Companies there were 77 companies and their order was given by the date they received their Royal Charter (not the date the company started).

So No.1 are the Mercers and No.77 the Carmen (the last of the old companies), the Woolmen are No.43. Many words and sayings we use today come from the Livery Companies, such as 'being at sixes and sevens', which comes from the Merchant Taylors and the Skinners complaining about who should be No.6 and who No.7, so for many years they took it in turns, the order was set in 1480.

There are now 108 livery Companies and other Guilds and Companies will apply to join, some newly formed and some long standing, farmers joined in 1952 No.80 and security professionals are No.108 joining in 2008.

Lots of names in London come from where the original Livery Companies had their Halls, but some were lost in the Great Fire.

Mr Clark told us that there are other towns and cities that have Guilds and that Scotland has its own names for guilds and livery companies.

There are around 24 thousand liverymen in the City of London and they support various colleges and charities. Woolmen support the 'Craft of Shearing' and provide prizes and medals for shearing competitions at shows, the Master goes to the shows to give out the prizes. Not all companies require you to be involved in that trade to become a member. Mr Clark became involved with the Woolmen through people he knows and says it's a great thing to do. The Worshipful Company of Woolmen are holding a charity event in London on the 29th

September, it's a sheep drive over London Bridge and people can sign up and pay £50 to drive the sheep a short distance. (google their website to find out more) We thanked Mr Clark for his fascinating talk and asked many questions.

In August we went out to the Foresters Oaks for our summer dinner. It was another nice evening and pleasant drive along the A48 which was quiet at that time of day. The Foresters Oaks was pleasant and the food good, but they let themselves down by being uncoordinated about serving the main dishes and accompanying vegetables. Some members went for starters and main and some for main and dessert, everyone seemed happy with their choices and it was a pleasant evening in pleasant company.

Our next meeting is Thursday September 12th. We are meeting at Chepstow Library at 7:00 pm for an 'Introduction to Family History'.



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www.keithrowlands.co.uk

Author: Newly launched on Kindle and Kindle Fire

"Noah and an Almighty Flood"

'hilarious' 'laughed out loud'

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GARDENING CORNER

Well, what a summer! You name it, we've had it. Including something that we haven't had for many years – a hot spell! Although I've lost count, I think that I can honestly say that we have had more BBQ's this year than we have had in the last three put together. The locally produced charcoal has been taking a right old battering. The downside of the weather is that there has been no fishing – the reservoir at Wentwood having been full of blue –green algae for the last six months, resulting in any thoughts of fishing being put on hold as the gates were locked. The good news is that we are now experiencing what I call a 'proper summer' with temperatures around 22° with enough rain and sunny periods. The reservoir is now clear, so back to a little fishing before the season comes to an end, and things are growing again in the garden.

Crops were never going to be particularly good this year as the spring was too late and the cold weather had meant that there were few insects around when they were most needed. We did manage to get some reasonable pickings of broad beans and peas, but the really hot dry spell brought these to a premature end. At the other end of the scale the runner beans were slow to get going, and then all of the first flowers fell off in the heat, but as I write this now, they have picked up and the beans are starting to flower again. Fortunately the various varieties of French beans that we grow are not quite so affected by the weather and most of these have set a reasonable crop. Most of these are left to grow on, with the pods being harvested when they are old, the beans being picked for drying and then used in soups and casseroles during the winter. Elsewhere in the vegetable garden things are looking reasonable. We did manage to go the full year round without buying any potatoes. Coming to the rescue as usual was the greenhouse! I planted some early potatoes in there probably five years ago and had a good crop. However, no matter how meticulous I am I never seem able to dig all of the potatoes up – there are always some that escape my attention. Every year since, these missing spuds have provided us with enough really early new potatoes to bridge the gap between the previous year's crop expiring, and the new season's crop (outside), starting. This year has been no different. Leeks, carrots and other root crops are also looking promising for a reasonable harvest.

Fruit wise, the apple and pear trees have got fruit developing, but again, nowhere near the size crop you would expect given the amount of flowers that were on the trees. Apparently the level of flowers were as a result of the cold weather slowing down new shoot development and the trees putting their energy into the flowers instead. It's a shame that mother nature didn't do something to ensure that the level of bees surviving the winter was improved as well to take advantage of the bounty. Still I guess if this had been the case we would be complaining now because the loads of fruit on the branches would have been breaking them under the weight! We did have a good strawberry crop and fortunately managed to keep the birds and squirrels off these, so for the first time in a number of years we have a good supply of strawberries stored in the deep freeze. We did manage several small pickings of apricots in the end and hopefully things will be better

next year. The nectarines are developing well and most of those that started developing have managed to stay on the tree, rather than all fall off like last year. We have had a bad infestation of red spider mite, which has resulted in many of the leaves dropping off, but the new growth (following an earlier pruning) has meant that the trees are recovering well and will hopefully allow the fruits to develop to their full juiciness! With the hot dry weather we have had to water well which has sent the meter around the clock, but hopefully the extra expense will be worth it.

The flower garden has done well this year, although again the really hot weather has brought to a premature end many of the different varieties that we have, but especially the sweet peas. They were doing so well too, and the garden was full of their heady scent. As a result of the hot weather I have also noticed an explosion in the numbers of butterflies, bees and wasps that are about. Unfortunately it seems that two out of every three butterflies have been cabbage whites, so most days I am keeping an eye on the greens and trying to rub off all the bright yellow clusters of eggs as I see them. No doubt I will miss some, but hopefully we will keep on top of things. There is nothing worse than seeing the fruits of your labour disappearing in front of your very eyes, as the caterpillars strip your plants bare. The badgers have dug one wasp nest out in the garden and I found another last night, which was duly destroyed. Wasps are meant to be a gardeners friend as they feed huge numbers of caterpillars to their larvae, but you may have heard me say previously that they are the bee keepers worst enemy as they set about robbing the bees of their hard won honey – that should be the privilege of the bee keeper not the wasp! Talking of bees the summer has been ‘interesting’ to say the least. I purchased two new colonies of bees and I was fortunate later to be offered a surplus swarm – thanks Cliff. However after a couple of weeks, the one hive suddenly seemed to be devoid of the queen. She had been ‘marked’ so normally stood out well. I noticed that there were several ‘queen cells’ that had been created in the brood chamber, so I left these intact in the hope that the colony was re-queening, rather than getting ready to swarm. Similarly, after a week or so I noted with the swarm that there was no evidence of a queen laying any eggs. For fear that I had crushed the queen whilst transferring the swarm to the hive I decided to take some drastic action. Looking at the hive that had ‘lost the queen’ I noted a lot more queen cells had been created. I took one frame of young brood and with two queen cells (shaking all the worker bees off of course) and transferred this to the swarm hive. At very best one of the queen cells would hatch, a new queen would be mated and all would be fine. At the very worst there could be a queen already in the colony that I had missed, resulting in the new and old fighting and both being injured, resulting in failure of the colony. Initially I was relieved to find that the queen cells in both these hives had been torn down. It was with immense relief that a few days later I discovered new healthy larva in each brood chamber – all things appear to be up and running and I now have three fully functioning hives, with honey being transported in for the winter supplies.

Happy gardening until next month. Steve and Felicity Hunt.



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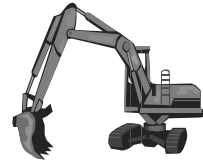
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NERYS'S NATTY NOSH

Choux is a light pastry used to make profiteroles, croquembouches, éclairs and savoury bites. The pastry was first introduced in 1540. Over the years the recipe evolved and the name changed to Pate a Popelin. The dough was made into small cakes to resemble ladies' breasts. In the eighteenth century the choux bun was invented, which resembled a cabbage, (Choux is the French word for cabbages). The pastry can be used to create the most extraordinary shapes from graceful swans to the tower croquembouches traditionally served at a French wedding.



Chocolate Profiteroles -

makes 10- 12.

Ingredients for Choux Pastry

2oz (60g) butter, or soya margarine cut into cubes
¼ pint (150ml) water
2½ oz (75g) plain flour sifted
2 lightly beaten eggs

Method.

- Pre heat the oven to 425F, 220C, Gas Mark 7.
- Put the butter and water into the saucepan. Bring to the boil.
- Remove from the heat, add the flour. Stir to form a soft ball.
- Leave to **cool**, then slowly add the beaten egg, to form a smooth paste.
- Grease a baking sheet and sprinkle a little water.
- Using a plain nozzle, pipe the desired shape onto the baking sheet. Bake for 10 minutes then turn the oven **down** to 375F, 190C, Gas Mark 5 and bake for a further 20 minutes, do not be tempted to open the oven door.
- Split in half to remove the hot vapour and leave to cool.

Filling

½ pint (300ml) **whipping cream**, whipped
Spoon the whipped cream into the cold profiterole.

Chocolate Sauce

6oz (175g) organic chocolate for best flavour.
¼ pint (150ml) water
4oz (125g) sugar
1 teaspoon instant coffee or a preferred liqueur

Method.

In a saucepan add the chocolate, coffee and 2 tbsp. water. Melt gently. Add the remaining water, sugar and liqueur. Simmer gently for 10 minutes. Allow to cool.

Tip

Fill the choux pastry at the last minute to avoid soggy pastry. Serve the chocolate sauce as an accompaniment or pour last minute.

Nerys's Natty Nosh

Cake Faults.

How frustrating is it when you have carefully prepared a cake mixture to find it's not the result you were hoping for?

What went wrong?

Here are some answers.



The cake cracks on top.

The mixture was too stiff

The oven was too hot

Used the wrong flour

Wasn't properly mixed

Too much flour used

Placed on too high a shelf in the oven

Cake hasn't risen

Not enough raising agent used

Ingredients incorrectly measured

Oven too hot

Mixture curdled, less air

Incorrect tin size

Old baking powder or incorrect flour

Flour added all at once, instead of being incorporated gradually and gently with a metal spoon

The fruit sinks

Too much raising agent added

Fruit wet and not drained sufficiently

The mixture was too thin

The wrong kind of flour was used

The fruit was too large and heavy

Oven door was opened before the cake had set

There are so many cake recipes to choose from; angel, banana, carrot coffee, date and walnut, devil's food only to mention a few. I hope you find the tips useful.

Keep on cooking, and don't forget the cake you make is far more nutritious than the shop bought variety.

Enjoy!

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200 Club	Bob O'Keefe	01291 641686

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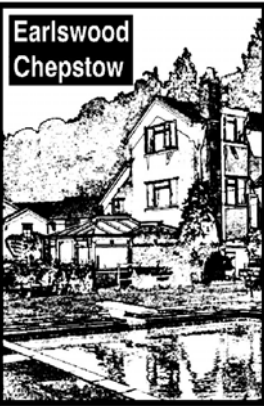
Sept.	Event	Location
2	Community Council Meeting	Recreation Hall
5	Whist Drive	Recreation Hall
9	Shirenewton Local History Society	Recreation Hall
12	Shirenewton WI meeting	Recreation Hall
19	Harvest Thanksgiving	St Peter's Newchurch
24	Shirenewton Local History Society	Huntsman Hotel
25	Community Lunch	Tredegar Arms
28	Coffee Morning	Tredegar Arms
Oct	Event	Location
4	The Fossil Lady of Lyme	Itton Village Hall
5	CCS. Choral Workshop	Arts Hall Chepstow Leisure Centre
6	Harvest Lunch	Earlswood Hall
23	Community Lunch	Tredegar Arms
Nov	Event	Location
27	Community Lunch	Tredegar Arms
Dec	Event	Location
1	CCS. Carols	St Pierre
6	Festive Christmas Fayre	Recreation Hall
8	CCS. Annual Christmas Concert	St Mary's Priory Chepstow

	Saint Thomas a Beckett Shirenewton	Sunday Services	Start 10.00 a.m. Unless stated otherwise
Date	Service	Readers	Sides-persons
1 st Sept.	Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity Holy Eucharist	James Lenev Cynthia Smith	Claire Lewis Cynthia Smith
8 th Sept.	Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity Holy Eucharist	Mark Broughton Margaret Woodliffe	Mark Broughton Margaret Woodliffe
15 th Sept 11.00 am start	Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity Holy Eucharist <i>Presentation of an Aumbry by The Worshipful Company of Woolmen</i>	Bill Clarke Janet Horton	Janet Horton Bill Clarke
22 nd Sept.	Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity Mattins	Jane Smith-Haddon Glynis MacDonald	Jane Smith-Haddon Glynis MacDonald
29 th Sept. 10.30 am start	Michael and All Angels GROUP SERVICE AT MOUNTON CHURCH		

CHEPSTOW MOBILE POLICE SURGERY DATES

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22nd September	26th September
20th October	24th October
17th November	21st November
15th December	19th December

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