

# Shirenewton

## Parish Magazine

### February 2014



*Sketch by Barbara Davies*

Price: 50p

## CHURCH MATTERS

We were all very sad to hear that the Reverend Nansi Davies had suffered a stroke on Tuesday morning, and been taken into the Royal Gwent Hospital. She is now back home, and our thoughts and prayers are with her for a swift recovery.



As the days drew in and the nights started to become distinctly crunchy, the parishioners of Shirenewton looked forward to their seasonal celebrations and fundraising events. These all started off on Sunday 1st December with the Advent Fair in the Church room after the Sunday morning service. The younger parishioners and their helpers had made and created all sorts of Christmas gift ideas and cards which were on sale. On the morning of Saturday 7th December a working party gathered in the churchyard to sweep up leaves, remove moss from the paths and generally tidy up the whole area around the Church, to great effect. They then went into the Church and decorated it for Christmas - mothers, fathers - grandmothers and grandfathers - and all ages were going up ladders, down the aisles, across the pews and over the font with Christmas chains, streamers, bunting and other festive bits and pieces. Our next fundraising event was a Bring and Share in the Church Room on Friday 13th December, organised by Joanne Tomlin. It was a great success, and everyone brought something to eat which was made available as part of the buffet for everyone to share. In the meantime Charles Eickhoff provided a tree for the Tredegar Arms car park and decorated it with Christmas lights, ready for singing carols round the tree on Sunday 15th December with choir and silver band. Then on Tuesday 24th December - Christmas Eve! - the Christingle service started at 4 p.m. followed by mulled wine and mince pies in the Church room; then there was midnight mass at 11.30, and our Christmas Day service on Wednesday at 10 a.m. Although the festive season may be over, we are now all looking forward to the Six Nations Kick Off event in the Church Room on Friday 31st January.

Bill Clark

WJH CLARK, Beaulieu House, Shirenewton, Monmouthshire NP16 6RG  
Tel: 01291641783; Mob: 07890945187

## SHIRENEWTON CHURCH 200 CLUB

During February and March we will be collecting subscriptions for the 200 Club for the year April 2014. The prizes for this year will be:- 1st £40, 2nd £20, 3rd £20, and 4th £10 with extra prizes at Christmas. Half the money collected is distributed as prize money.

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

It would be much appreciated and a great help with the collection process if you could give your subscriptions to your normal collector as you see them over the next couple of months, otherwise someone will call on you before the end of March. If you are paying by Direct Debit we would like to thank you for making the collection so much easier as this saves a great deal of running around for those collecting, if you are not already using a direct debit and would be willing to do so, a form is enclosed, that can be returned to Bob O'Keefe, at, 15 Newton Manor, Shirenewton, NP16 6UA.

I would like to thank our collectors for all the hours they spend collecting subscriptions, and thank you all as always for your generous support.

### **Shirenewton Church 200 Club Winners Christmas Draw Held Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> December**

1<sup>st</sup> Prize – No 80 - £100 Miss B Bryant  
2<sup>nd</sup> Prize – No 65 - £50 – Mr Simon Rubach  
3<sup>rd</sup> Prize – No 21 – £25 - Mrs Mary Follett  
4<sup>th</sup> Prize – No 31 – £25 – Mrs Diane Reid

## **Parish Magazine**

Annual subscriptions of £5.00 for the 10 copies of the magazine for the next twelve months become due in February, would you kindly arrange to pay your regular "News boy / girl" during this period.

Alternatively, please send direct to Bob O'Keefe, at 15 Newton Manor, Shirenewton, NP16 6UA, including your name, address and the name of the person that normally delivers your magazine.

Additional copies of the magazine are usually available at the rear of the Church

## **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.

## **FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS**



### **Funeral**

Gwyneth May Adams 1920 - 2013  
Monday 6th January 2014  
Interment in the Churchyard

## SHIRENEWTON CHURCH WEBSITE

Well, a successful year for the Church website. Just over £1,350 raised and, as always, that is cash into the Church account. Many thanks to all whom use it for shopping – it is much appreciated. Please continue to use [www.shirenewtonshop.com](http://www.shirenewtonshop.com) for your shopping. It costs you no more than going to the shop directly and the church gets a small commission. These commissions add up – as you can see.

On a less positive note, there is a nasty dose of malware going around. This virus encrypts your hard disk and all visible network disks (such as backup drives) and demands a ransom in the form of bitcoins to release the unlock code. Apparently the demand is ½ bitcoin = \$350 - \$500 (depending on the rate). Apparently, if you pay you \*may\* get an unlock code. The only defence is to have a backup drive not visible from the network – i.e. not connected. I have now purchased a separate USB back-up drive which I back-up once per week and store offline (in other words, it's only connected to the pc when backing up). So, at worst, I lose a week's work/data.

Obviously the best bet is to try and avoid doing anything which may mean you meet the virus although it's not always that easy as The Guardian's dramatics headline 'Yahoo malware turned European computers into bitcoin slaves' points out. It was in most of the mainstream press. Just google it.

If your computer does get infected with this or anything else, PCPRO's article (<http://www.pcpro.co.uk/features/385441/my-pc-is-infected-what-now>) 'My PC is infected: what now?' provides some useful tips. However all advice is have a backup to which you can restore. Buy a backup drive, buy it now, backup and then disconnect it - and buy it through Amazon on the church website. That is what I did. A 1TB drive costs £50 – it's nothing when compared with the pain of not having one.

Safe Browsing

David Cornwell  
[webmaster@shirenewtonchurch.com](mailto:webmaster@shirenewtonchurch.com)

# SHIRENEWTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Extracts from minutes of the meetings

## Planning applications considered

DC/2013/00540 18 Blethyn Close, Mynyddbach

Amended scheme to decking and fencing.

As the applicant had requested guidance from the Planning Officer and amended the proposal accordingly, this Council recommended approval.

Appeal Ref: E6840/A/13/2206372, Planning Application DC/2013/0023

Appeal against a refusal for Change of Use, Shirenewton Village Shop.

Representations to be made to the Planning Inspectorate by 5.12.13. Informal hearing to be held at County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk on 29.1.14 at 10 am.

Clerk to submit representations by 5.12.13.

DC/2013/00949 'Hillside House', Usk Road, Shirenewton

Subdivision of existing dwelling into two separate dwellings.

There being no problem with access, this Council recommended approval.

DC/2013/00959 'Yew Tree Cottage', Shirenewton

Demolish garage and rear shed. Erect new building for home office and gym.

This Council recommended approval with the following observations:

That the structure does not exceed the proposed height;

That there is no restriction of the existing parking area.

DC/2013/00925 Buckwell Farm, Penyaemawr. - Installation of photovoltaic panels (circa 32,430 panels), gravel access track, erection of site boundary fencing & CCTV cameras, installation of inverter stations, and connection to the existing electricity grid. Formation of temporary construction compound.

After careful consideration the Council recommended refusal of the application with the following observations:

- Previous similar applications should not be seen as a precedent because of the differences in landscape and visibility.
  - The application as it stands has substantial defects eg, the connection of large generating stations to the grid
- There is a limit for a single phase generation connection. An 8MW power station cannot be connected to an 11kV single-phase line.
- At 8MW, the power station would need to be connected via 33kV, 3 phase transmission to a WPD substation.

- It is not sensible to consider upgrading an existing 11kV network to 33kV because of the number of other existing users that would need to be upgraded simultaneously.

- Even if the connection were possible at 11kV, it would not be possible to share this line with other users if the distance to the substation was beyond 4/5 km.

- Suitable WPD substations for connecting generating capacity are Magor, Caldicot, Sudbrook and Usk.

- Overhead wiring will have a huge visual impact on the area and has to go through the planning process, underground cabling is often chosen, which costs around £200k per km.

- The statement in the title of this application 'connecting to the existing electricity grid' is misleading as it would need a new, dedicated direct connection to a WPD substation about 10 miles away. Burying the cable would add at least £2m to the cost.

- The application is incomplete as the process of taking power away from the site has not been properly addressed.
- The high security for the proposed site is intrusive and out of character for the area. The proposal is to install around 63 CCTV cameras which, if all require a light to work at night, will cause serious light pollution.
- Dealing with rain water run off is not addressed and solar panels create cadmium and lead emissions which run off into the water course and can cause
- contamination potentially harmful to the health of humans and animals, even in minute proportions. This is of particular concern to a neighbouring household and its livestock. The current drainage already has difficulty coping with run off.
- Solar panels produce more carbon than any other 'green' clean energy technology.
- There are no measures for decommissioning the plant. As solar panels contain environmentally damaging materials, this need to be dealt with in detail. How will damaged/failed/obsolete solar panels be disposed of?
- There is a regularly used Right of Way through the middle of the site within full view of the solar panels, provision must be made to gain access to the picnic site at Bluebell Green. This picnic site was installed by Mon CC because of its beautiful location. The trees/hedging around the site will obstruct the panoramic views from the picnic site.

*Continued on Page 8*

*Continued from Page 7*

- Wentwood Forest is an historic ancient woodland that is very attractive to tourists. The site will adversely affect the quality of the leisure experience for walkers, tourists and equestrians as they will be passing fencing with regular notices attached - 'Keep Out - Danger of Death'. The proposed development will have a major visual impact from five roads, many locations and more distant elevated public areas.
- Construction traffic and vehicles servicing the site will need to use very narrow, single track lanes to the site, which are already poorly maintained, will be dangerous to traffic using the road and will cause great inconvenience to residents.
- There are rare bats which roost locally and the shiny surfaces of solar panels have been proven to adversely affect them. Insects and local fauna will also be affected if the watercourse becomes contaminated.
- This is a Special Landscape Area, and as such, its environmental and visual impact should be given serious consideration. The change from field to solar farm would be significant and adverse, it would harm the character and appearance of the area and conflict with Monmouthshire's UDP under the following sections:

C3 - Special Landscape Areas (Objectives 3 and 4),

ENV1 - Environment (e), (h), (i) and (j);

DES1 - Design (b) and (e);

RE2 - Agricultural diversification (a).

Therefore the proposed application does not meet Monmouthshire CC's policies on special Landscape Areas, Environment, Design and the Countryside.

DC/2013/00962 'Ty Canol', Shirenewton

Porch extension to front of house.

This Council recommended approval.

### **Items of local concern -**

From the monthly police report - There was report of a theft of cash from the Tredegar Arms pub - enquiries ongoing, also three reports of damage/theft of fencing at Earlswood and report of a vehicle on fire at a property on Earlswood Road which both police and the fire brigade attended.

Should new road sign read 'Ditch House Lane'? - as no information has been forthcoming from residents, this issue will not be pursued further by the Council.



Broadband - as no interest has been shown by residents in improving the service in this area, this issue will not be pursued further.

Poor condition of Mynyddbach Road - Cllr Prosser has raised this issue several times in the past and Highways have classed the repairs as 'not requiring urgent attention'. Cllr Prosser to suggest to residents they contact highways individually to voice their concerns over the poor state of the road surface and potholes.

Mon CC's proposals for future sharing/transferring of services - the Council received a presentation from Mr R Hoggins, Deputy Chief Officer, Regeneration and Culture, on the local authority's budget constraints over the next three years and how the it proposes to work closer with Town and Community Councils to sustain services and facilities within local communities.

Mon CC's draft proposals for the Review of Communities and Electoral Arrangements - the Council is currently in consultation with Mon CC on a boundary review, alterations to the Council wards and the number of Councillors required for this community.

Small grant applications: The Council has a small amount of grant funding available for organisations within the wards of Shirenewton, Mynyddbach, Earlswood and Newchurch West. If you wish to apply, please contact the Clerk (details below) for an application form. Completed forms to be returned by 25.2.14.

### **Traffic Calming proposals for Shirenewton and Mynyddbach**

Interested residents may attend the next Council meeting **on 3<sup>rd</sup> February at 7pm** to view and discuss the traffic calming plans currently being developed.

Contact the Clerk to the Community Council -  
Mrs Hilary Counsell Tel: 01291 421307  
E-mail: shirenewtoncc@gmail.com

## TREDEGAR ARMS CURRY NIGHT

On behalf of the Tredegar Arms may I thank all of those that came to our curry night last Wednesday. We were overwhelmed with the response and apologise to all those that couldn't get in. We ended up serving 90 people and had many requests to make this a regular event which we will be pleased to do and hope to come up with a similar evening very soon and donate some of the proceeds to charity. We will endeavour to let as many people know as possible.



An announcement will follow on our Facebook page The Tredegar Arms. Thanks again to every who supported us.  
Julie

## FREE TO GOOD HOME

Old plywood sailing dinghy, ten foot, probably built 40- 50 years ago, includes sails, old trailer, etc. For play, instruction or renovation, free to good home, to be collected from Llanvair Discoed. Contact Peter Bonvoisin (whitehallfarm@greenbee.net).

## WANTED OLD BIKE (FREE)

If you have an old child's or adult's bicycle, rusting away in the garage, I would like to take it off your hands.  
I would collect.  
Terry Walters 01291 641338

## WILD BOAR SEEN IN CHEPSTOW PARK WOOD

Wild Boar have finally succeeded in invading South Wales from the Forest of Dean.

A spokesman for the Boar trotted out the following story, "*The first attempt failed because "it was a bit ham fisted . The second time, we planned it in more detail and under the code name "Sowwest" we succeeded".*



At least one person has been chased and another came face to face with one whilst driving down the Glynn one dark night, it was described as "*a bit like a domestic pig but dark and hairy and it was hogging the centre of the road".* Remember you herd it here first and you better believe it, I am not in the habit of telling porkies.  
Editor

## STARGAZING



Orion the Hunter, many people's favourite constellation lies directly to the South. Four bright stars represent his shoulders and legs whilst a further three form his belt.

Sirius, the sky's brightest star lies to the lower left of Orion. Also called the "Dog Star" it appears particularly bright because it happens to lie nearby compared with other stars, at a distance of 9 light years. This can be compared with the bright blue-white star at Orion's right leg called Rigel. This is an extremely powerful star but at great distance, and is at least 60,000 times more luminous than the Sun. Rigel's name comes from the [Arabic](#) for "Foot of the Central One", whilst that of Sirius has [Ancient Greek](#) origins and means "scorcher".

In the evening sky, the bright planet Jupiter lies to the south-east forming a triangle with the stars Castor and Pollux. On the 11<sup>th</sup> the waxing gibbous Moon is just below Jupiter.

In the morning sky, the brilliant planet Venus is close to the horizon in the south-east, whilst Saturn and Mars are in the south-west, with Saturn to the left of Mars. The Moon moves from close to Mars on the 20<sup>th</sup> and Saturn on the 21<sup>st</sup> becoming a fine crescent on the 26<sup>th</sup> when it is near Venus.

Astronomy produces beautiful images. NASA selects a "picture of the day" which can be found at <http://apod.nasa.gov/apod/>

## WHIST DRIVES



Our next meeting is on the 6<sup>th</sup> February. - being on the first Thursday of the month. 19 players were at the January Drive - 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 Recreation Hall, where we play - opening at 7 and starting to play at 7.30 p.m. promptly. We will continue through the year playing on the first Thursday of each month – we would love to see some new faces.

Auriol Horton. 01291 641844

## SHIRENEWTON WI DECEMBER 13-JANUARY 14

Events that took place only a few weeks ago seem a world away when one looks back in January. I'm thinking of the wonderful Christmas meal we enjoyed at the Huntsman on the 12<sup>th</sup> December. Most of our members were able to attend and we had a very festive evening, lovely food, good company, crackers and pressies-celebrating in style.



To get the New Year off to a good start we decided to share our speaker with everyone who wanted to come. All the chairs were out plus a few extras and the hall well filled to hear Mr Ali Ansari tell us about 'A Texan's Tale', a personal story of the black American experience from slavery to the present day.

Ali is forty, married to a 'Welsh girl' and they have been living in Abergavenny for a year (he's been to two food festivals), but he grew up in San Antonio, Texas. Texas is not 'deep south' but was one of the 11 Confederate States. His parents were born in the Forties and were descended from slaves which means that beyond his grandparents they don't know their family history or where their ancestors originally came from.

Ali doesn't know whether his family were in Texas in the 1860's. but the slaves in Texas were the last to be freed. All slaves should have been freed on the 1st January 1863 but in Texas it wasn't until June 19<sup>th</sup> 1865. Ali said slavery was particularly brutal towards women with them forced into breeding programmes and having their babies sold, producing many many broken families. When slavery ended many stayed for very low wages because they didn't know where to go.

The end of slavery didn't make everything better because states can make their own laws. So although everyone was supposed to be equal, they were not allowed to be, with laws on segregation and against mixed marriages. There are still some laws in states which are beyond Federal control. Between 1943-6 38 states had segregation laws on their books. Violence and lynching's prevented normal life. Whites were lynched for sympathising, even children were lynched. Texas was very high on the list of top five states for the number of lynchings between 1882 and 1968. Education was limited with separated schools for black pupils and poor facilities. Those who were educated could get better jobs as nurses or on the railways, everyone else had only very low paying manual labour.

In 1954 schools were integrated and Ali's parents went through the traumas of being 'bussed' to school and having to run the gauntlet of those who opposed it. By the time Ali was born in 1973 it was normal to go to school together, his life has been quite different but even now there are many things he would like to see change. Ali would like to see the media portrayal of blacks evolve as there is still a level of false image. Also criticising success hold people back, especially when smart kids are made fun of, they don't want to stand out. Ali would also like to see everyone get a passport and travel, many Americans never leave their home county.

Ali is very positive about the future and believes that although we shouldn't forget we all have to move forward. Many people asked questions and Ali continued to chat to people after his talk while we all enjoyed refreshments. Many thanks were given for an interesting and informative evening.

Our next meeting is Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> February 7:15pm Rec Hall

Card Making for all Occasions

March 13<sup>th</sup> is our Birthday Party when we will have fish and chips and puds followed by entertainment.

## NOTES ON SHIRENEWTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING

Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2014

### Police Report

Not a lot of crime in the Shire, thank goodness

Early Dec The TA had around £2000 stolen.

16<sup>th</sup> Dec Some fence posts were stolen

A storm drain disappeared from Ditch Hill lane

24<sup>th</sup> Dec On Christmas Eve a car was found on fire in the middle of the road and a fence was damaged.

As there were four members of the public at the January meeting the agenda was tweaked in order to hear from them first. It was to discuss a 'neighbour issue' and although the councillors spent some time on the dispute, they don't really have any remit to resolve these types of arguments or unpleasantnesses unless it impinges on lets say...footpaths or drainage

### A Talk from Mr Paul Hoggins from MCC

Mr Paul Hoggins was here to discuss how monies will need to be re-arranged in order to ensue basic services continue. He reported that some services are 'at risk'. A report had been sent to the cllrs earlier about the financial issues MCC are experiencing but obviously, as I hadn't seen it, I was a bit in the dark. And now, as I write this up some weeks later with my mind scrambled with panto (oh yes it is) I am struggling to interpret my notes but it seems that MCC will offer councils the opportunity to buy services from MCC. Like what? Well, for example some councils could club together to buy in services to maintain their public toilets. OK so maybe not a major issue for Shirenewton. Or perhaps Shirenewton could pay say...£2500 for a week with a street cleaner. I mean of course a big machine not someone with a brush. Or perhaps a sum of money for councils to buy in the facilities to repair roads and fill in potholes and such like. But the councillors were wary of being... steamrollered into such a scheme.

One councillor pointed out that it would have big implications to the Precept which anyway has already been agreed on for the coming year. And that this sort of proposal from MCC was better suited to town councils as they have a bigger pool of money to deal with. And toilets. Another point raised was that the councillors have no experience in term of buying in... how long does street cleaning take? One week? two weeks? Mr Hoggins suggested 'Try it - we'll all learn together' But if we got it wrong, would we get our money back? Err no. but we could rest assured that the leftover money would be helping to sustain MCC's overall services...

So I think that Paul Goggins was trying to say that if councils didn't pitch in then MCC couldn't guarantee that these services would continue. Looks like we all might have to get out there with dustpan and brush and clean our own streets...

Anyway it was agreed that this was a weighty subject and that maybe a few principles needed to be sorted before coughing up money. Mr Hoggins said he would be back...

### **Planning**

DC/2013/00962 'Ty Canol' Shirenewton

Porch extension to front of house. Approval recommended.

E6840/A/13/2206372. An appeal will be held in Usk on 29<sup>th</sup> Jan at The Rhadyr against the refusal for a 'Change of Use' for the Village Shop. People can go along and listen but only designated speakers can... speak.

### **Finance**

The War Memorial maintenance had been paid for by a generous and anonymous donation.

There was a discussion on the increase in costs in emptying the poo bins. One cllr suggested that this was a Shirenewton problem as they were the ones with the poo bins. And the dogs.

And then the annual discussion as to how to distribute the small pot of money to local worthy groups. Any of these groups can apply but they don't really know how much to apply for because they don't know how much is in the £300 pot.

### **Items of Interest**

Earlswood and Newchurch West wards may be amalgamated to one ward called 'Wentwood' Called what? This caused some discussion! And the number of cllrs would be reduced. This concerned one cllr – what would happen In The Unlikely Event a cllr didn't turn up... there would be hardly anyone there at the meeting. (Possibly the meetings would be shorter?)

Traffic Management. No travelling forwards on this one because although cllrs had been invited to look at a brilliant traffic calming scheme somewhere over The River, the arrangements had not been arranged.

Commemoration of World War 1. Plans are being planned even as I type.

The Telephone Kiosk. Well basically still working towards it becoming a .... do you know I've forgotten. Was it the micro brewery or the library or the wildlife park? Well whatever, it can't happen yet because of leases and grants ,

Local Installation of Broadband? No local interest shown.

Potholes at Mynyddbach? MCC say they are not urgent

Verges at West End? Still being verged upon.

And so I leave you with just a flavour of what went on.

Next Meeting Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb 2014 at the Rec 7.30

Glynis MacDonald

## SHIRENEWTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

At our November meeting the talk was entitled 'Edward Joseph Lowe' a very local history topic as Edward lived in Shirenewton for twenty years. He was a Fellow of the Royal Society, a founder member of the Meteorological Society and an authority on ferns, shells and astronomy. The talk was given by Dr. David Thomas and all our members agreed that he was a remarkable man, one of the last Victorian polymaths of that era.

We visited St Mary's Church, Caldicot for our December meeting and were given a tour and talk by Pauline Hayward, a very old church with a long history with connections to the castle and Llantony Sucunda. We ended the visit with mince pies and hot mulled wine to start the seasonal festivities.

Twenty four of our intrepid members climbed Grey Hill on the 27<sup>th</sup> December to see the Winter Solstice sun rise in line with the standing stones, only to find once again a cloudy morning sky, better luck next year! We were rewarded with a hearty breakfast at the Woodland Tavern on our return.

Dates for your diary:

Monday, 27<sup>th</sup> January 2014 Archive Meeting at the Recreational Hall, at **7.00 pm**  
**Please note a change of date.**

Monday, 10<sup>th</sup> February Archive Meeting, at the Recreational Hall  
2.00 - 5.00 pm

Tuesday, 25<sup>th</sup> February Annual Dinner at the Huntsman Hotel,  
with guest speaker Dr Mark Lewis.

Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> March Archive Meeting at the recreational Hall,  
200pm – 5.00pm





**MUSICAL DIRECTOR: GRAHAM BULL**

***"Messiah?...but surely that's sung at Christmas  
(if anyone still sings stuff like that!) ?"***

It is now TEN years since Chepstow Choral Society sang a full performance of *Messiah*. The decision to perform it once again was taken for no other reason than it was decided that it needed to be heard "live" in Chepstow once again. *Messiah* is NOT just for "Christmas" – two-thirds of the work is very much a Lent season work. For many choral societies, *Messiah* has always been a standard bearer of the great choral works – and a view pertaining that "if we can't get an audience for *Messiah* we won't get one for anything!" certainly has historic validity!

However, the reasons for CCS performing it this spring are, in truth, musically-driven. The time is right, the work is a challenge for all, a mix of well-known – and lesser known – exhilarating choruses, we will be joined by an excellent quartet of soloists – and a professional orchestra, including many younger players.

***WHAT COULD BE BETTER?.....***

**SATURDAY APRIL 5<sup>th</sup>, at St MARY'S PRIORY CHURCH, CHEPSTOW,  
7.00pm – "MESSIAH".**

**CCS, with CCS Orchestra (leader Paula Kempton), and Alison Wray  
(soprano), Helen Bruce (alto), Gareth Treseder (tenor) and Stephen  
Hamnett (bass).**

Marjorie Duerden, Chepstow Choral Society.



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**PAINTING AND DRAWING IN THE  
GWENT WILDLIFE TRUST NATURE RESERVES 2014**

with artist **Jenny Joice**

**Friday 11<sup>th</sup> April at Magor Marsh, Newport**

**Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> May at Silent Valley, Ebbw Vale**

**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> June at Pentwyn Farm, Monmouth**

A three day course which aims to provide an opportunity for inspiration, experience and development of skills in painting '*en plein air*' the lakes and waterways, the trees and plants, the grasses and wild flowers as well as the wealth of insects and butterflies around GWT'S beautiful nature reserves.

Should the weather be poor, arrangements may be made to work indoors from photographs and still-life.

Those with experience --- and none are equally welcome.

Please bring your own equipment and materials - - and packed lunch.

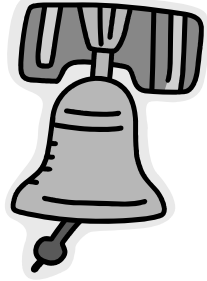
Cost £25 members, £30 non-members per day (20% discount for all 3 days)

**Advanced booking essential**

**Please contact Gwent Wildlife Trust on 01600 740600**

## THE BELLS, THE BELLS

The Shirenewton ringers had a busy Christmas and New Year. As well as the normal Sunday service ringing, we also rang for midnight mass on Christmas Eve, for morning service on Christmas Day and then either side of midnight at New Year, with before having the bells half-muffled to mourn the passing of the year. As has now become a tradition the ringing over this period was performed with the bell ropes down in the nave of the church and in full view.



With the New Year comes the first of our tours - the Winter Tour. Visiting other churches to ring the bells is a common activity for ringers and the majority of towers welcome visitors. This year we decided to visit the Wiltshire/ Somerset border around the Frome area. So on the 11<sup>th</sup> January bright and early 20 ringers set forth to Longbridge Deverill to sample the 8 bells. These proved a bit of a challenge but we managed a respectable course of Grandsire Triples. However, these bells were not quite as challenging as the 6 at Horningsham where frame movement caused some bells to “drop”, a term used when the effort to ring suddenly and for no apparent reason increases dramatically. This phenomenon is caused by the old wooden frame flexing and pinching up the bearings and greatly increasing the frictional loads. We still managed to ring some Bob Minor. Then on too Wanstrow, a nice easy 6 bells and to complete the morning we visited the very picturesque village of Nunney complete with 14th century castle, described by Nikolaus Pevsner as “aesthetically the most impressive castle in Somerset”. The recently restored 6 bells proved a delight. We had been warned that we would be ringing following a memorial service of a much loved villager, who had died just before Christmas. What we did not realise that we formed part of the memorial programme with the final entry in the printed order of service stating “Bells – Shirenewton Church Bell Ringers”. We were joined here by a local ringer from Marston Bigot named Margaret Chapman, who had been very helpful with the arrangements for this tour. Margaret is very well known in ringing circles throughout the world, not least because she has her own ring of bells at the end of her garage known as Pig le Tower. Because the wake had taken over the fine village pub – The George, we drove to the nearby village of Trudoxhill and sampled the delights of The White Hart.

After lunch we visited the very quaint church at Downhead with just 3 bells then onto the very impressive ring of 8 at the very picturesque village of Mells. Driving into Mells passes Park House, recently in the news following the death of Nelson Mandela. Now forming part of a private estate but previously owned by Consolidated Goldfields, Park House played a huge part in helping to bring to an end to apartheid as it was the top-secret meeting place between the ANC and the South African Government to negotiate Nelson Mandel's release from prison. The ring at Mells formed the heaviest of the day with the tenor bell weighing in at just under 27cwt (compare this to the tenor bell at Shirenewton of 5½cwt). Next to the church is the very fine Mells Manor, purportedly procured by Jack Horner upon discovering the deeds a pie given to him to carry to London by Richard Whiting, the last Abbot of Glastonbury. This act is supposedly referenced in the popular nursery rhyme "Little Jack Horner". The final ring of the day was at Rode, a pleasant light 6 bells.

We then visited Tucker's Grave at nearby Faulkland, a completely unspoilt traditional pub and one of only 10 left in the UK without a bar, drinks being dispensed from an alcove. Named after the burial site of Edwin Tucker, a suicide victim in 1747, the pub is situated on a cross roads. A quick celebration was held here before heading for Old School, Earlswood as guests of Christine and Simon Stanley for a post-tour celebration.

M.D.Penney.

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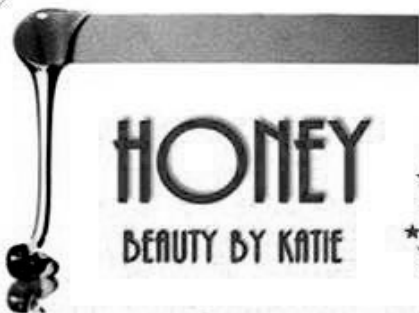
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## GARDENING CORNER

Happy New Year one and all. A new year, with new plans, but same old weather! We have lived at Barn Farm now for over 25 years and have always had problems with water flowing down the bridleway that runs by our house. This also acts as our driveway and over the years we have had to import stone in order to keep a reasonable surface, rather than let it get to the point that it resembles a dried up riverbed. Christmas Eve saw me outside in torrential rain building a dam across our gateway (using the gate as a foundation) to prevent the water from flooding our house. At 700 feet above sea level that's no mean feat but just explains the amount of water that was using the track to find its way down to the brook. Never in those 25 years have I seen water like it. Fortunately the dam worked, although at one point we were just one inch away from water coming in the back door. Christmas presents were hastily lifted onto tables just in case, but fortunately the 700 feet worked in our favour and the water drained away without doing any damage – except for the drive of course! The rain has continued so needless to say there won't be much winter digging (assuming that you do any) for some time to come. It strikes me that it will be weeks before the soil can dry up enough to do any work, but then it's not going to warm up either so any sowing and planting in the near future will be inside the tunnels and greenhouses only.

When it comes to digging I have in the past, always dug soil in the winter and left the ground to break down in the rain and frosts. There seems to be a big movement to a 'no-dig' regime these days so, seeing I'm getting older and always looking for things that make life easy, have decided to try this policy in the vegetable plot this year. I've cleared the weeds from the beds in question and spread liberal amounts of manure over the top. The beds have then been covered in weed suppressing fabric, as much to stop the blackbirds flicking the manure everywhere in their search for worms as opposed to stopping weeds germinating. The idea is that the worms will drag the manure down into the soil and thus avoid the need to dig. Be interesting to see how this goes.

With it so wet I spent several days over the Christmas holidays clearing out the tunnels. The large one was the worst as it still had all the dead tomatoes hanging on strings, and strawberry runners everywhere! So it took a fair bit of time to cut down all the old plants and get them dumped on the bonfire. The weeds were then dug up and placed in the compost bin. I did then dig the beds over but as yet haven't I haven't put any manure down as I just can't get to the heap without making too much mess. The smaller tunnel was also full of old tomatoes so similar operation saw them removed, but in this instance I did manage to get the beds covered with manure, which was then incorporated into the soil using our small hand held rotavator (actually a long handled hedgecutter with an attachment on the end). This saves a lot of time and allows you to get into the raised beds even inside the tunnel. I had sown some 'all year round' lettuce seed in late November



and once germinated, these had been pricked out into individual cells. They were now looking for a more permanent home, so I have planted one of the beds up with these, so hopefully we should get some really early lettuce. I'll start picking as soon as there are enough leaves to pick a few off each plant. This should extend the length of time that we have fresh leaves available. There was enough room at the end of the bed to sow some early carrot seeds as well, although at the moment, some two weeks later, there is no sign of these germinating. It shouldn't be much longer as the soil inside the tunnel is certainly warm enough.

I'm deliberating whether to plant early potatoes or leave the other bed for early calabrese, which I will be sowing on the hot bench later today (it is still dark outside as I write this, having despatched the assistant head gardener off to work!). I'll plant the loser into the larger tunnel, but need to consider the follow up crop as need to have the ground cropped and cleared ready for the tomatoes, so timing is crucial, otherwise the tomato plants stay in their pots too long and will suffer as a result. Back in the large tunnel I collected all the leaves up from the fruit trees and put these on the bonfire for burning. Hopefully this will remove a lot of the pests that will be hiding in them over winter. Once cleared I set to on the pruning work and the apricots and nectarines are now looking good. The beds below the fruit trees are currently planted with strawberries so these were the next job, removing all the old leaves and unwanted runners. If this had been outside I used to wait for a dry day and then set light to the straw around the plants (used for keeping the fruits off the ground and prevent rotting). This would burn off all the old leaves and kill pests without affecting the crown of the plant. Unfortunately this isn't a sensible option inside a plastic tunnel! The best of the runners – always the first on the string – were retained and these were then planted into pots to grow on. Some of the strawberries outside have now been in the ground for three years so it's time to replace them. I have decided to extend the planting inside the tunnel as this has proved to be the best option. There is one area, shaded by the fruit trees, where I'm limited to what we can grow so am going to try the strawberries there. This will release the beds outside, so as soon as the ground is dry enough I will be digging the old plants out, manure the ground and then replant. I think the first year I'll fill one bed with gladioli corms, which will keep the flower arranger in the household happy. I've gradually built up the number of corms we have and this year dug them all up and divided the corms, so have more than doubled the amount that we have. So I should definitely be in the good books this year! The intention will be to plant them over fortnightly intervals as this will spread the flowering period over a longer timescale. Hopefully it will stop raining later and allow me an hour or so to finish cutting the hedges.

Happy gardening until next month.

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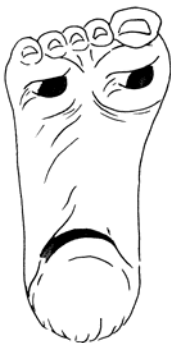
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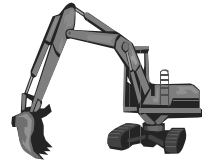
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## ***NERYS'S NATTY NOSH***

Most of the mushrooms that we buy are the young, button mushrooms or the older flat mushrooms. There are several others, such as the Chinese shiitake mushrooms, Italian porcini and wild mushrooms. The amount of nutritional benefits vary according to the variety and age, (older, darker ones have more benefits). Most mushrooms are rich in plant chemicals, which help boost the immune system. They are an ideal source of healthy protein for vegetarians and dieters, and they have a good supply of the Vitamin B group.



### ***Tagliatelle with Mushrooms.***

**Serves 4- Quick and easy.**

#### **Ingredients.**

375g fresh tagliatelle or fresh pasta

1 tablespoon olive oil

4 rashers of bacon, chopped (omit if vegetarian)

1 onion

400g mushrooms, sliced

1¼ cups of single cream

Freshly grated parmesan cheese for serving, garnish with chopped herbs

#### ***Method.***

1. Heat the oil in the pan and fry the bacon and onion until brown but not black.
2. Add the mushrooms and cook for a further 2- 3 minutes. Take off the heat and leave to rest.
3. Add the pasta to a large pan of boiling water and cook until tender. Fresh pasta only takes a few minutes.
4. When the pasta is cooked (taste or squeeze the pasta to ensure correct texture) drain the liquid.
5. Return the pan with the bacon, mushroom and onion to the heat and add the cream, stir and cook for 1 minutes. Add the tagliatelle to the sauce, stir until combined.
6. Serve on a warmed plate with freshly grated parmesan cheese and herbs if desired.

#### **Tips**

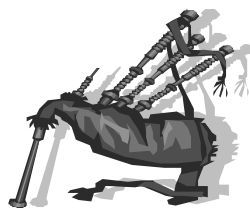
1. Chopped pancetta can be used instead of bacon.
2. Serve with a crispy green salad and fresh bread.

**Enjoy!**



## ***NERYS'S NATTY NOSH***

What characterizes most Scottish food is the shrewd thrifty existence of the peasant lifestyle. As in Wales, the inhospitable climate and terrain made oats the staple grain. This led to the creation of dishes like oatcakes, bannocks and porridge. Warming broths based on barley or lentils and flavoured with mutton, offal dishes like haggis, preserved fish like smoked salmon and kippers. The Highlands are also rich in many types of game birds. The world famous Aberdeen Angus cattle and Scots Blackface lamb, also provide some of the tastiest meat in the world. Scotland also has the baked goodies of delicious shortbread and Dundee cake. Finally, not forgetting the 'water of life' the Scottish Whisky drank and enjoyed all over the world. Slainte Mhath!



### *Granachan with Raspberries serves 4*

#### ***Ingredients***

60g medium oats  
150g raspberries  
600ml double cream  
4 tablespoon runny honey  
4 tablespoons malt whisky

#### **Method**

1. Toast the oatmeal on a baking tray under the grill or in a dry frying pan. Watch closely or it will burn.
2. Blend 50g of the raspberries in a liquidiser until smooth.
3. Whip the double cream until stiff, then stir in the honey and whisky, and mix well but do not over-whip.
4. Fold in 50g of the oatmeal, then carefully fold in the raspberry puree to form a ripple effect.
5. Spoon the mixture into a glass dish then scatter with the rest of the raspberries and toasted oatmeal.

#### **Tips**

1. Any soft fruit can be used but raspberries are associated with Scotland.
2. Drambuie can be used in place of the Whisky.
3. For a less calorific dessert the cream can be replaced with yoghurt or cream fraiche.

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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>Rector</b>	Revd. Julian White	01291 622317 <a href="mailto:jel.white@btinternet.com">jel.white@btinternet.com</a>
<b>Parish Priest</b>	Revd. Nansi Davies	01633 400519
<b>Parish Visitor Co-ordinators</b>	Revd. Nansi Davies Diane Marlow	01633 400519 01291 641407
<b>Secretary and Church Warden</b>	Monnica Williams	<a href="mailto:monnica.williams@virgin.net">monnica.williams@virgin.net</a>
<b>Church Wardens</b>	Sally Saysell Andrew Baker	01291 641369 01291 641925
<b>PCC Secretaries</b>	William Clark	01291 641783
<b>PCC Treasurers</b>	Kevin Bounds	01291 641818
<b>PCC Members</b>	Mark Broughton Charles Eickhoff Janet Horton Dr James Leney Allan Saysell Jane Smith-Haddon	01291 641797 01291 641716 01291 641783 01291 641271 01291 641369 01291 641525
<b>Gift Aid Secretary</b>	Ruth Savagar	01291 641411
<b>Organists</b>	Karen Millar Ruth Savagar	01291 650521 01291 641411
<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

### MP/Monmouth CC & Community Council Representatives

<b>Clerk to Community Council</b>	Hilary Counsell <a href="mailto:shirenewtoncc@gmail.com">shirenewtoncc@gmail.com</a>	01291 421307
<b>Shirenewton Ward:</b>	David Adams Tony Hughes Carol Jones Phil Moles Beverley Moore	01291 641792 01291 641360 01291 641791 01291 641521 01291 641532
<b>Mynyddbach Ward</b>	Lynne Prosser Ian Moore, Chair	01291 641666 01291 650766
<b>Newchurch West</b>	Elizabeth McCombe	01291 652957
<b>Earlswood Ward</b>	Paul Harris Ken Morton	01291 650871 01291 650268
<b>MCC for Shirenewton</b>	Graham Down <a href="mailto:grahamdown@monmouthshire.gov.uk">grahamdown@monmouthshire.gov.uk</a>	01291 621846
<b>Member of Parliament</b>	David Davies <a href="mailto:daviesd@parliament.uk">daviesd@parliament.uk</a>	020 7219 8360

## **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** Bev. Leaf 01291 641680  
Jaci Crocombe 01291 641681  
**Church Fete** Seirian Edmonds 07980 757802  
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**Earlswood Hope** Mrs Sylvia Jeremiah, Mr Raymond Jeremiah 01291 641726  
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**Recreation Association** Gordon Hughes 01291 641356 gordon.hughes3@tesco.net  
**Recreation Hall booking** Beryl Saysell 01291 641637  
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Enid Heritage 01291 622708  
**Shirenewton Local History Socty**  
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**Shirenewton and Mynyddbach Fields Association Ltd (SAMFAL)**  
Stu Dutton 01291 641677 stu@dutton47.freereserve.co.uk  
**Shirenewton & Mynyddbach Initiative for Local Enterprise (SMILE)**  
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**Whist drive** Auriol Horton 01291 641844 aur10l@btinternet.com  
**Womens Institute (WI)** Jenny Bonner 01291 641929

## DIARY DATES

<b>Feb</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>
3	Community Council Meeting	Recreation Hall
6	Whist Drive	Recreation Hall
10	Shirenewton Local History Society	Recreation hall
13	Shirenewton WI	Recreation Hall
25	Shirenewton Local History Society	Annual Dinner Huntsman Hotel
26	Community Lunch	Tredegar Arms
<b>Mar</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>
14	Shirenewton Local History Society	Recreation Hall

	<b>Saint Thomas a Beckett Shirenewton</b>	<b>Sunday Services</b>	<b>Start 10.00 a.m. Unless stated otherwise</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Readers</b>	<b>Sides-persons</b>
5 <sup>th</sup> January	Epiphany	Gillian Lambert Mark Broughton	Gillian Lambert Mark Broughton
12 <sup>th</sup> January	The Baptism of Christ	Wendy Baker Cynthia Smith	Wendy Baker Cynthia Smith
19 <sup>th</sup> January	Second Sunday of Epiphany	Bob Grattan Margaret Woodliffe	Bob Grattan Margaret Woodliffe
26 <sup>th</sup> January	Third Sunday of Epiphany	Bill Clarke Janet Horton	Bill Clarke Janet Horton
2 <sup>nd</sup> February	Presentation of Christ in the Temple	Shan Henshall Ruth Savagar	Shan Henshall Claire Lewis
9 <sup>th</sup> February	Fourth Sunday Before Lent	Mark Broughton Joanne Tomlins	Mark Broughton Joanne Tomlins
16 <sup>th</sup> February	Third Sunday Before Lent	Bob Grattan Wendy Baker	Bob Grattan Wendy Baker
23 <sup>rd</sup> February	Second Sunday Before Lent	Frances Grey Kevin Bounds	Claire Lewis Kevin Bounds
2 <sup>nd</sup> March	Sunday Before of Lent	Bob Grattan James Loney	Claire Lewis Bob Grattan
9 <sup>th</sup> March	First Sunday of Lent	Jane Smith-Haddon Diane Marlow	Jane Smith- Haddon Diane Marlow
16 <sup>th</sup> March	Second Sunday of Lent	Bill Clark Janet Horton	Bill Clark Janet Horton
23 <sup>rd</sup> March	Third Sunday of Lent	Mark Broughton Margaret Lock	Mark Broughton Margaret Lock
30 <sup>th</sup> March	<b>GROUP SERVICE AT MATHERN CHURCH MOTHERING SUNDAY</b>		

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### EDITORIAL INFORMATION

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