

**Shirenewton**

**Parish Magazine**

**December 2015**

**January 2016**



Price: £1

## FROM THE VICARAGE

Julian E LI White

Dear People of the Parish,

By tradition at this time of year I get grumpy.

Sandra will retort, "So, what's new? It is in keeping with the rest of the year." More generous parishioners will say "Hear we go again. Another rant about how commercialism threatens to engulf the spiritual message associated with Christmastide."

However, this time I am feeling markedly different. I feel sad and angry. This has to do with the recent atrocities we have seen promulgated in Paris, and more recently, in Mali. The loss of innocent lives, the acute bereavement felt by many and the haunting fear experienced by even more humans stands in stark contrast to the sense of benign wonderment and of peace generated as we stand on the brink of the Christmas season.

This statement, I know, reflects a Christian take on the significance of this time of year. Countless others (those who I have been quick to criticise in previous years, in fact) nevertheless see it as a time of affirming what is best about the human condition. A display of love and fellowship towards others – never mind the religious connotations – is held to be important and it would be mean-spirited of us to say that it is all very well in that this rises to the surface on this one occasion in the calendar.

One of the most profound statements to emerge from the recent horrors - and it carries huge gravitas in that it comes from someone directly bereaved - is the composition from a Frenchman, reflecting on the sudden and barbaric loss of his wife and mother of their young child. His thoughts concerning what had happened and his ability to put it in some type of context, speak far more eloquently than many sermons from the pulpit at this time of the year ever will. He considers that the hatred shown by the aggressors, and the barbarity which resulted, lessens the cause of the perpetrators and increases the dignity of the victims. In like manner we should be compassionate towards innocent parents of suicide-bombers who share the bewilderment and horror of the majority of societies.

We are reminded by recent outrages that there is also a darkness associated by those of us who subscribe to the Christian faith in the significance of Christmas. It isn't all about cute babies and angels flapping about. The Biblical account also concerns the butchery of young children, flight and exile.

It, surely, is unconvincing to claim that all will be well sometime in the future, in heaven, when we are no longer part of this physical world. More pertinent perhaps, to be reminded that for every terrorist or Adolf Hitler there is a considerable number of everyday human beings who consider (and practice) sensitivity, care and selflessness on a daily basis. In this life in and this world they manifest – perhaps hesitantly – what lies at the very centre of the nature of God: Love.

It would seem a little crass at this point to move onto indicating what festive plans are afoot for our churches in the group. Notice of these can be found elsewhere in this magazine.

Please remember before God those who have lost their lives, and those who have lost those dear to them..

Julian E LI White

## **SHIRENEWTON CHURCH 200 CLUB**

The 200 Club winners for November are:

- 1st prize Diane Marlow
- 2nd prize Mike Penny
- 3rd prize Charles Eickoff
- 4th prize Simon Rubach

## **ST. PETER'S NEWCHURCH**

Remembrance Service was led by Rev. Chris Cayer.

The wreath was laid by Mr. D. Heritage, Organist was Mrs Kath Whittington  
Grateful thanks to all who helped with the refreshments

Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup> December St Peters Church Carol Service and Nativity

Start the Christmas season traditionally with our Nativity and Carols the Sunday before Christmas. Thank you all for your generous support!



# Shirenewton Primary School

## CHRISTMAS FAYRE

Saturday December 12th 2015 2-4pm.  
Featuring Father Christmas in his grotto,  
mulled wine and lots of stalls!



## Christmas

Starts at

**Gaerllwyd Baptist Church**

on

**Monday, 7th December**

at 7.30 pm

## Soup & Carols

Come and enjoy the singing of  
Carols and a Mug of Home Made Soup.

Get into the right spirit for Christmas

# Rumpelstiltskin



Shirenewton Operatic &  
Drama Society Production  
Thursday 28th to Saturday  
30th January 2016 @ 7.30  
Earlswood Hall

Adults £7, Children £5  
Call 01291 641739 for tickets

## BEST KEPT VILLAGE PRESENTATIONS

Shirenewton had excellent results this year in the 201 - 400 population category of the competition,



*Hilary Counsell Clerk to the Community Council and  
Lynne Prosser Community Councillor*

Community Councillors congratulate all the people in the village that worked hard at strimming, mowing, planting and tidying

- \* Best Kept Village
- \* Best Kept Village Hall
- \* Best Kept War Memorial
- \* Joint Winner of Best Kept Churchyard
- \* Runner-up Best Kept Pub - The Tredegar Arms

***Didn't we do well!!***



# **Chepstow Choral Society**

*Musical Director – Graham Bull*

## ***Christmas Music Celebration***

***SUNDAY 13<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2015***  
***St Mary's Priory Church, Chepstow***  
***3.00pm***

***Choral items, family carols, seasonal readings, organ music--  
take a break from the frantic round of activity to come along  
and hear and enjoy lovely Christmas music!***

***Peter Cook (organ)***  
***Marjorie Duerden (piano)***

### ***Musical Director –Graham Bull***

The programme will include musical tributes to Sir David Willcocks, and also music by John Rutter, Gustav Holst – and more! – with organ music for Christmas --

Tickets (£8, under 18s/students free) available from Chepstow Bookshop and choir members (further information, please tel. 620414, 623310, 650472 or see our new sparkling website ---- [www.chepstowchoralsociety.org.uk](http://www.chepstowchoralsociety.org.uk)

CCS is affiliated to Ty Cerdd – Music Centre Wales and Making Music – The National Federation of Music Societies. Registered charity no. 1127098

**TY CERDD**  
MUSIC CENTRE WALES

## Shirenewton Church - ADVENT FAIR!



Come along for Coffee, Cake and a lovely selection of  
Homemade Christmas Goodies  
with our young Sunday Clubbers running  
some of the stalls

**Sunday 6th December 11.00ish - 12.30ish**

The money raised will go 'Abraham's Children in Crisis' a charity  
that helps war-affected children in Gaza, regardless of their  
faith or creed.

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### **'Carols and Christingles' Shirenewton Church.**

**4.00 on Christmas Eve**

Everyone is welcome to this lovely warm  
family-friendly service

Refreshments of the mulled wine and mince pie variety served  
afterwards in the Church Room

Collection to The Children's Society

And if anyone would like to join in, be a shepherd, an angel or a  
king or even a villager, Shirenewton Sunday Club would be  
delighted to see you. Just come along to Sunday Club at the  
Shirenewton Church Room on a Sunday at 10.00.

You would be more than welcome For more details, ring Dr  
Kerry Baker (Sunday Club leader) 641 925





**Carols Around the Village  
Christmas Tree.**

with Chepstow Town Band

Friday 11<sup>th</sup> December @ 6.30ish

in the Tredegar Arms Car park

The Collection will again, go to support 'Abraham's Children in  
Crisis' in Gaza.

Oh and bring a torch. And some gloves.

And a warm hat. And loud voices.

If it's raining we will decamp into Shirenewton Church

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**Our Christmas Praise Service**



Come along to a light service of Christmas Praise where we tell  
the Christmas Story through poems, readings and our favourite  
Carols.

Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December 10.00.

## The Satnav - by Pam Ayres

I have a little Satnav,  
It sits there in my car  
A Satnav is a driver's friend,  
It tells you where you are.

I have a little Satnav,  
I've had it all my life  
It's better than the normal ones,  
My Satnav is my wife.

It gives me full instructions,  
Especially how to drive  
"It's sixty miles an hour", it says,  
"You're doing sixty five".

It tells me when to stop and start,  
And when to use the brake  
And tells me that it's never ever,  
Safe to overtake.

It tells me when a light is red,  
And when it goes to green  
It seems to know instinctively,  
Just when to intervene.

It lists the vehicles just in front,  
And all those to the rear  
And taking this into account,  
It specifies my gear.

I'm sure no other driver,  
Has so helpful a device  
For when we leave and lock the car,  
It still gives its advice.

It fills me up with counselling,  
Each journey's pretty fraught  
So why don't I exchange it,  
And get a quieter sort?

Ah well, you see, it cleans the house,  
Makes sure I'm properly fed  
It washes all my shirts and things,  
And keeps me warm in bed!

Despite all these advantages,  
And my tendency to scoff,  
I only wish that now and then,  
I could turn the bugger off.

## SHIRENEWTON TRAFFIC CALMING

As many of you will have noticed, there have been significant changes made to the surface, layout and markings of the roads within Shirenewton. This is part of the traffic calming scheme that was put in place over the summer. These changes are intended to help reduce the risk for all road users and pedestrians, travelling in and around the village.

Now that the changes have been in place for a couple of months, it seems like a good time to understand the views of residents and users of the road regarding the effectiveness of the scheme in calming the traffic, and any other impacts of the scheme on the village.

Please can you fill out this simple questionnaire and return to [gary@olivecottage.co.uk](mailto:gary@olivecottage.co.uk), Or if you prefer, please visit the community council website at [www.shirenewtoncc.org.uk/](http://www.shirenewtoncc.org.uk/)

We are a small group of residents, who have formed an independent group with the aim of collecting the views of the community regarding the changes brought about by the traffic calming scheme. We are not part of the community, or county council, although we do intend to work with both organisations as required.

All returns will be treated in confidence

Many Thanks

Traffic Karma

### Questionnaire

- \* Do you feel that the traffic calming scheme worked, Yes or No?
- \* If Yes, why
- \* If No, why

# SHIRENEWTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

## Extracts from the minutes of the November meeting

Council received and reluctantly accepted a letter of resignation from Councillor T Hughes effective from 6.10.15, he was sincerely thanked for his contribution and service to the Council.

There are now two vacant positions for Community Councillors for the ward of Shirenewton – **if you are interested in applying for one of these vacancies, please contact the Clerk** (details below).

### Planning applications considered -

1. DC/2015/00847 Gaerllwyd Barn amendment to drainage.  
The amendment from a cesspool to a septic tank would seem sensible providing the required porosity test proves that the ground can accommodate the suggested herringbone drainage from the septic tank outfall. However it must be stressed that the ground outside the proposed development must not be disturbed when laying the drainage pipe work or indeed during any building process as a Neolithic chambered tomb is close by which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

This Council recommended approval with a watching brief from an organisation such as the Glamorgan Archaeological Trust.

2. DC/2015/01086 Bluebell Farm, Usk Road to Buckwell Road, Penywaemawr  
Council noted that four previous planning applications had been approved. Also that the farmhouse is an eyesore that does not provide practical living accommodation. The proposal is to build on the same site, but at a 45 degree angle, with the footprint being 4% less than existing. There is also a proposal to build a new garage to replace an existing tractor shed. Building materials to be traditional natural stone. This Council recommended approval.

**The monthly police report** – During the month there were five reports concerning vehicles, two minor vehicle collisions (one near the Huntsman and one at the Tredegar Arms) and three reports of sheds being broken into in the Earlswood/ Penywaemawr area. There were three calls to Brookacre.

Clerk to request an update from PC L Thorpe.

## **Items of local concern –**

**Update on traffic calming scheme** - A response had been received from G Kinsella of Highways to advise that white lining is not planned for the centre of Shirenewton. **Mr P Keeble of Highways Dept, Mon CC had agreed to attend the December meeting to discuss traffic calming.** County Cllr Down confirmed that he is in discussion with the police regarding a public meeting on a community speed watch initiative, also with Highways regarding a traffic speed and volume assessment through Shirenewton. He further confirmed that the funding for this scheme was brought forward into this year's budget but that costs were over budget.

The Working Party arranged last month will hold its first meeting on 11.11.15.

**County Cllr Down reported** that Mon CC's budget gap is likely to be around £1.7 million which will mean potential withdrawal from non-essential services such as libraries, museums, public toilets, street cleaning, etc. this has implications for the future budget setting of town and community councils within the county.

**Letter from Nick Ramsay AM** regarding proposed changes to abolish the county of Monmouthshire and merge it with Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Torfaen and Newport, creating a super-region of almost 600,000 people.

Mr Ramsay is encouraging signatures on an on-line petition to support his campaign to 'Save Monmouthshire' please visit [www.nickramsay.org.uk](http://www.nickramsay.org.uk)

**Footpath closures** - information received from S Pritchard, RoW Officer, Mon CC on the temporary closure of public paths in Wentwood for forestry harvesting from 10 November 2015 to 6 April 2016. SP to meet with NRW re. keeping alternative routes open as the area is well used by the public – Clerk to monitor.

**Shirenewton Community Council sends all good wishes for Christmas and the New Year to residents within the Community.**

**Find more information in the draft copy of the minutes on the Community Council notice boards. Previous minutes of meetings can be found on the Council's website**  
[www.shirenewtoncc.org.uk](http://www.shirenewtoncc.org.uk)

**Contact the Clerk to the Community Council -  
Mrs Hilary Counsell Tel: 01291 421307  
E-mail: [Shirenewtoncc@gmail.com](mailto:Shirenewtoncc@gmail.com)**

# **NOTICE OF VACANCY IN OFFICE OF COUNCILLOR**

## **SHIRENEWTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL SHIRENEWTON WARD**

### **NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN**

Pursuant to section 87(2) of the Local Government Act 1972, that formerly two members of the above name Community Council has ceased to be a member thereof, and that two vacancies now exist in the office of councillor for the said Community Council.

If by 3 December 2015 (14 days\* after the date of this notice), a request for an election to fill the said vacancies is made in writing to the Returning Officer at County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA by TEN electors for the said Community Council ward, an election will be held to fill the said vacancies, otherwise the vacancies will be filled by co-option.

The election will take place not later than 10 February 2016.

Paul Matthews  
Returning Officer

Dated: 13 November 2015

\* In computing any period of time for this purpose, a Saturday, Sunday, day of the Christmas break, of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning must be disregarded.

"The Christmas break" means the period beginning with the last week day before Christmas Eve and ending with the first week day after Christmas Day which is not a bank holiday. "The Easter break" means the period beginning with the Thursday before and ending with the Tuesday after Easter Day, and "a bank holiday break" means any bank holiday not included in the Christmas break or Easter break and the period beginning with the last week day before that bank holiday and ending with the next week day which is not a bank holiday.

## FAIRTRADE NEWS



'O be humble, my brother, in your prosperity! Be gentle with those who are less lucky, if not more deserving. Think, what right have you to be scornful, whose virtue is a deficiency of temptation, whose success may be a chance, whose rank may be an ancestor's accident, whose prosperity is very likely a satire.' William Thackeray 'Vanity Fair' - one of my favourite novels.

Of course I should like to urge you all not only to 'Be gentle' but rather to use your incredible power as a consumer to improve the lives of the 'less lucky' who supply us with many of the products we take for granted!

### **FIRSTLY, CANNED TUNA.**

There is no actual 'fairly-traded' tuna, but Greenpeace's thorough investigation shows that some brands are clearly fairer than others. John West, which, is supplied by seafood giant Thai Union, and Princes continue to use FADs (fish aggregation devices) which attract tuna but many other species such as sharks, turtles, rays and dolphins. Many of these creatures are later dumped from the vast nets dead or dying (by-catch) - 100,000 tonnes p.a. 1 in 3 seafood workers in Thailand's main processing region have been trafficked. I urge you to check your tuna! Pole and Line caught is best!

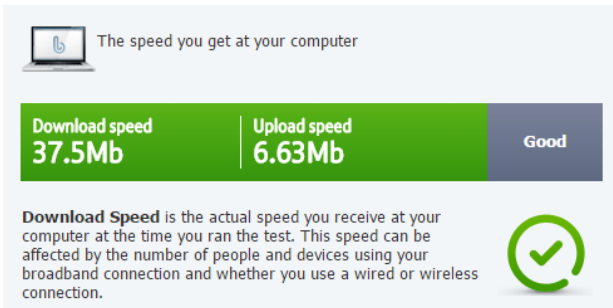
### **SECONDLY, COCONUT**

We in the west are just beginning to appreciate the benefits of this incredible product : a source of healthy fats, vitamins and minerals. Traidcraft is promoting the multi-award winning brand TIANA. COCONUT OIL - contains a unique fat that is readily used by the body for energy and less likely to be stored as fat. It is ideal for higher temperature cooking. It has the mild taste and aroma of coconut. COCONUT BUTTER - No taste or aroma - perfect for roasting or frying. COCONUT CREAM -adds a tropical creaminess to smoothies, soups and curries. COCONUT WATER - a delicious drink on its own or an addition to smoothies etc. All coconut products soothe the digestive system and boost immune function. Tiana coconut products are recent additions to the growing Fairtrade range of products - do give them a try!

Marion McAdam 641316 msm316@gmail.com

# SHIRENEWTON CHURCH WEBSITE

www.shirenewtonchurch.com



That's the result of the speed test I just did. Happiness is a man with 37.5Mb – trust me I know these things.

Thanks to the wet and windy weekends (and, of course, the vastly improved upload speed of Infinity) I've almost

caught up with the new Church website and, now, all main pages are in the new format. There is still a bit on tinkering to do which I'm sure will happen over the winter months. Take a look. As a reminder the site is fully responsive – i.e. it's designed to work across all devices and will automatically adjust its presentation to fit the format of the viewing device, whether that be a phone, tablet or laptop.

Remember the site has lots of community information and links including links to useful traffic sites and local 'jam cams'.

The latest security item to cross my desk concerns boarding passes. I'm sure most of you shred or otherwise destroy your credit card receipts and any other pieces of paper with personal information on - but I'll bet you just chuck the old boarding pass in the bin without a moment's thought. Well this article (<http://tinyurl.com/q4vs2ew>) explains why this is a bad idea. The bar codes on boarding passes actually contain quite a lot of information about you. Your surname, record locator (confirmation code) and your frequent flyer number amongst other stuff. With two pieces of information from that list it is trivial to get into your airline account and read all your future flights as well as possibly update your details. So, shred your boarding passes and don't post pictures of them on any public forum – including Facebook!

And so we come to the time of year when lots of spending appears to be de rigueur. Forecasts suggest that online retailers in UK will see Christmas sales grow by over 16 per cent this year when compared to last year. If you are spending online this year please consider accessing the shops via [www.shirenewtonshop.com](http://www.shirenewtonshop.com). It won't cost you anymore and the church will get a kick back. There are around 200 shops of the portal including many high street brands such as Argos, Debenhams, Screwfix, Tesco, etc. So far this year the website has earned just over £544. As always that is cash paid into the church account. There is money in various accounts waiting to be paid out so I expect to end the year at around the £800 mark. This is down on last year's



£1,202. I suspect several factors are to blame. Retailers are being squeezed and reducing commissions. More security products are implementing 'do not track' so, even if you do click through from the church website the sale doesn't register. If your security product does include a do not track capability I suggest you turn it off when purchasing via the church website.

So all it remains for me to do is wish all the readers a Happy Christmas and a great New Year. See you all in 2016.

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

## STARGAZING

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



In the early morning sky the brilliant planet Venus is just above the horizon in the south-east, whilst Jupiter is higher in the southern sky. Mars is less bright, placed roughly half-way between the two bright planets, and is just above a bright star called Spica. The crescent Moon is just below Jupiter on the morning of 4<sup>th</sup> December, near Mars on the 6<sup>th</sup> and above Venus on the 7<sup>th</sup>. There are no planets visible in the evening sky before midnight this month.

We reach the Winter Solstice on Dec 22nd. The Sun reaches its lowest point in the heavens as observed in the northern hemisphere. This gives the shortest day and the longest night.

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## SAMFAL

Shirenewton loses one of it's oldest residents

*On the 23rd of April 2013 one of our mature Oak tree's was uprooted in the Great Storm!*

*After clearing up the mess, the remaining parts were left. The children's swing remained and some large but sound branches were left over-hanging the footpath.*



*Just recently we became aware that one of these branches was beginning to break up, so the decision was made to cut the tree down to a safe size, still leaving the swing.*

*We estimate this Oak tree was in the region of 110 years old.  
It is sobering thought that when this Oak tree began its life around 1905:*

- \* Edward VII was King*
- \* East Coast gales: Great Yarmouth flooded and pier at Scarborough washed away.*
- \* Alf Common becomes the first £1,000 footballer in his transfer from Sheffield United to Middlesbrough.*
- \* First public protest by suffragettes, led by Emmeline Pankhurst, at Westminster.*
- \* First performance of George Bernard Shaw's 1903 play Man and Superman at the Royal Court Theatre, London.*
- \* GPO London to Brighton horse-drawn parcel post coach makes its last run, being replaced by a motor lorry the following day.*
- \* Automobile Association inaugurated.*
- \* National Colliery disaster at Wattstown in the Rhondda: an underground explosion kills 120, with just one survivor.*
- \* Henry Wood first conducts a performance of his Fantasia on British Sea Songs at a Trafalgar Day concert in London.*
- \* Aspirin sold in the UK for the first time.*
- \* Irish nationalist Arthur Griffith founds Sinn Féin in Dublin as a political party whose goal is independence for all of Ireland.*

From death  
springs life.  
The orange  
patch you see on  
the top left of  
the trunk is  
"Yellow Stereum  
Fungi" which  
lives on dead  
trees



## Shirenewton W.I



We were treated to an inspiring Christmas card making session by our own resident arts and craft expert, Diana Such.

Diana showed samples of 'some-I-made-earlier' Christmas cards,

then directed us to a wide and colourful selection of, what I call, 'bits and bobs', needed to create our own masterpieces. Personally, I was so inspired, I just went for it. There will be a number of friends and family out there who will receive a very individual and original Christmas card.

Quite a few of the ladies were naturals, and demonstrated a real talent for creativity, I wasn't one of them!

We will be celebrating with a Christmas dinner at the Huntsman hotel 7pm, 10<sup>th</sup> December. Always a good meal.

The next meeting will be January 14<sup>th</sup>, 7.15pm.

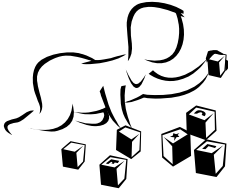
Start the new year as you mean to go on, and join the W.I., please contact:

Carol Jones (President) 641791

Jane Butterworth (Secretary) 641 704



## SHIRENEWTON TODDLER GROUP

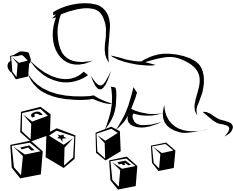


Meet every Thursday  
(Term Time Only)

at The Recreation Hall Shirenewton 1.30 to 3.00 pm

Age range 0 to pre-school

A nice cupper, chat, toys, crafts,



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## SHIRENEWTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Our September meeting held at the Huntsman Hotel was a joint meeting with our society and Cymdaithas Cymraeg Cas-Gwent. The speaker for the evening was Frank Olding who gave a talk entitled 'Place Names of Gwent'. Frank is a Heritage Officer and has researched his subject well and really can talk with great authority on Gwent local history, Our members and guests agreed it was an excellent evening with all hundred seats taken. The proceeds from this meeting will be donated to the National Eisteddfod Monmouthshire & District 2016 Appeal, with help from Barclays Bank we will be able to give over £800.00 to the appeal. Many thanks to those who attend for their kind generosity.

Our Annual General Meeting was held in October at the Huntsman Hotel. Our Chairman reported a busy and interesting year with a lot going on, with visits, exhibitions and research being undertaken by the society. Our membership is up on 2014 with good attendance at all out monthly meetings. The 2015 committee was voted back in for 2016 and we look forward to another full and busy year.

Our speaker for the evening was Professor Maddy Gray who gave a talk on the 'The History of St' Christopher', to everyone's surprise we knew very little about.

The December meeting will take place at Llanfair Discoed Church on Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> December meeting at the church at 7.00 pm, for a talk on the history of the village and church, and later at the Woodland Tavern to start our Christmas celebrations

### Dates for your Diary:

- Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> December      Archive Meeting at the Recreational Hall, at  
2.00 pm – 5.00 pm
- Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> December      Visit to Llanfair Discoed Church, meeting at the church  
at 7.00 pm
- Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2016      Archive Meeting at the Recreational Hall.  
At 2.00 pm – 5.00 pm
- Tuesday, 25<sup>th</sup> January 2016      Monthly Meeting at the Recreational Hall, at 7.00 pm  
View our archive, and a chance once again to view  
the night sky, with two telescopes set up, weather  
permitting. Note change of venue and time.
- Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> February 2016      Archive Meeting at the Recreational Hall,  
2.00 pm – 5.00 pm
- Tuesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2016      Annual Dinner at the Huntsman Hotel,  
7.00 pm for 7.30.

Everyone welcome at the above events

Further information on our web-site: [www.shirenewtonlocalhistorysociety.co.uk](http://www.shirenewtonlocalhistorysociety.co.uk)



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## GARDENING CORNER

As I sit here writing this we are suffering another period where the jet stream has shifted so it is sitting right on top of us, bringing the inevitable rain belts day after day. The ground is now completely sodden so there won't be any digging for a few weeks. If the weather improves a bit I will take the opportunity to cut the remaining hedges and also prune the various fruit trees. These jobs can be done anytime now over the coming months, but there is always a sense of satisfaction if you can get them done sooner rather than later.



*Just around the corner - snowdrops  
in January*

Looking on the bright side, the high winds will hopefully finish blowing all the leaves off the trees. Not that I spend ages clearing leaves up, but I do have to spend an odd hour here and there blowing the leaves off our driveway. Mainly because they block all the drainage channels, which then results in the water running down the drive it's self. Fortunately we were able to concrete this earlier this year, so we don't get the problems we once did, with the water washing the road away on a regular basis.

So with little to do outside, attention has turned to inside jobs and planning for next year. The small tunnel has been completely cleared of any crops. I was going to plant it up with calabrese for early crops next year, but have used it as a stacking area for sawn timber. This has been drying for several weeks and is now ready for painting with timber preservative. So whilst it is raining outside, I'm snugly tucked up inside. The timber will then be ready for repairing the raised beds in the vegetable garden and creating some new ones as mentioned previously. The large tunnel is also going through a transformation. I have pruned the two apricots and nectarine trees, so these are now looking tidy. I've also been through the strawberry bed, removing all the unwanted runners and weeding as I've gone. As soon as the weather improves a bit I'll spread a little manure, to help give the crop a head start for next year. I need to source a supply of 'leaky hose' so that I can lay this among the plants, before spreading some straw. The latter won't be done until early spring, but hopefully doing this will result in more and better crops next year. This year we lost a lot of the crop because of mildew, which isn't helped by overhead watering. I won't linger on the squirrel problems we had last year. Suffice to say that I will be trying to control their numbers during the winter months! Still to be sorted in this tunnel are a couple of beds with tomatoes in. These have finished producing, but I just haven't had the time to get in and sort them out yet. I may get around to this later today and will attempt to clear the greenhouse out at the same time. I prefer to do this cleaning up as early as possible as the vegetation only harbours pests and diseases, so the sooner everything is cleared out the better.

Half of the large greenhouse, where I have staging, is full of young plants, many of which should have been planted out for next year flowering. The wallflowers, Sweet Williams and violas have been re-potted into larger pots and will stand for a

few months. It's obviously too wet to do anything at the moment, but hopefully I can get them out in the New Year. I took delivery of some new raspberry plants a couple of weeks ago, and also some new blueberries. I will have to earth the raspberries in for a few weeks as I need to get the old fruit cage sorted out again. Hopefully it won't be like the last ones I bought which, three years later are still growing where they were earthed in. As my old school reports used to say "Stephen could do better if he would only try"!

The blueberries are in small pots so for now I can just re-pot these into larger ones, using ericaceous (acidic) compost. These may have a few berries this year, but I'm really looking for the following year before they really start producing. The older plants we have are still in pots, but some of these are relatively old varieties and they just do not produce fruit of any size. Some of the newer varieties are phenomenally productive/ The berries are fantastic eaten fresh, but are equally good when frozen, especially when defrosted and mixed with a few raspberries and then served on top of some meringue nests (I would recommend M&S!). I can just taste them now!

The seed catalogues have been sitting on the side table for several months now, so I really must get my act together and get everything sorted and ordered up for next year. This usually takes a couple of hours as I try to source the best varieties from several producers. I inevitably end up double ordering on some things, but I usually find a home for the crop somewhere or other. It is the time of year when I reflect on what has done well and what not so well, and then try new varieties, or quite often go back to old ones that have stood the test of time. One crop I have never tried is sweet potato. Although expensive to buy I am tempted to give them a try.

Cropping wise we have been steadily picking green kale for several weeks. This will continue to crop into the winter months, and has always proved super hardy. Leeks, parsnips, carrots, turnips, swedes and celeriac are all helping to vary our daily vegetable intake. We have now started picking the first brussel sprouts too to add a little more variety. We have almost finished the last of the early potatoes, so will be starting on the main crop before the end of the month. There are still a couple of crops to harvest, but these need better weather. The bean seeds that are for drying are looking particularly bedraggled, and I may not actually be able to harvest them if this rain continues. The other is the Jerusalem artichoke. The tops have now died off, but I desperately need to dig the tuners out of the ground before they start to rot or attract too much attention from the slug population. It is still raining outside, so time to don the coat and get down to the tunnel for timber treating.



*Hellebores in February - a promise  
of things to come*

We hope you and your family have a great Christmas and look forward to the new gardening year. Happy gardening until then.

Steve and Felicity Hunt.

## Nerys's Natty Nosh



The Bundt cake derives in part from a European brioche-like cake called *Gugelhupf* which was particularly popular among Jewish communities. Opinions differ as to the significance of the word *Bund*. One possibility is that it means "bunch" or "bundle", and refers to the way the dough is bundled around the tubed center of the pan. Another source suggests that it describes the banded appearance given to the cake by the fluted sides of the pan, similar to a tied sheaf or bundle of wheat.

### Ingredients

225 grams soft butter (plus more for greasing) or Soya Margarine  
300 grams caster sugar  
6 large eggs  
350 grams plain flour  
½ teaspoon bicarbonate of soda  
250 grams plain fat-free yoghurt or Soya Margarine  
4 teaspoons vanilla extract  
2 tablespoons icing sugar

### Method

1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/gas mark 4/350°F and put a baking sheet in at the same time. Butter or oil your large, regular heavy duty fir-tree shaped Bundt tin (2.5 litres capacity / 2½ quart capacity) **very, very** thoroughly. (I use Wilton Bake Easy, non-stick spray.)

2 Either put all the ingredients except the icing sugar into the processor and blitz together; or mix by hand or in a freestanding mixer as follows: – Cream together the butter and sugar in a mixing bowl until light and fluffy. – Add the eggs one at a time, whisking each one in with a tablespoon of flour. – Fold in the rest of the flour, and add the bicarbonate of soda, the yogurt and vanilla extract. Pour and spoon the mixture into

the greased tin and spread about evenly.

3 Place the tin on the preheated baking sheet in the oven and cook for 45–60 minutes until well risen and golden. After 45 minutes, push a skewer into the centre of the cake. If it comes out clean, the cake is cooked. Let it sit out of the oven for 15 minutes.

4 Gently pull away the edges of the cake from the tin with your fingers, then turn out the cake.

5 Once cool, dust with the icing sugar pushed through a small sieve, to decorate: think fresh snowfall on the Alps.

**MAKE AHEAD TIP:** Make the cake, turn out and leave to cool. Wrap in Clingfilm and foil and store in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks.

**FREEZE AHEAD TIP:** Make, wrap and freeze the cake for up to 3 months. Thaw overnight in a cool room. I did this last year and presented it as a birthday cake for a family member on Christmas Eve.

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



Being a Home Economics teacher I was very keen to encourage my own children to be confident in the kitchen. It's part of becoming independent and self-sufficient. Both my children enjoy cooking and found their knowledge and skills very beneficial when they left home and began college life.



Cooking should be fun, but at all times be supervised when children are involved. This is a very simple recipe to follow and children love it, but always stress the dangers around the kitchen before commencing.

## ***Malteser and Mars Bar Slice makes 24***

### **Ingredients**

- 1 cup of Maltesers plus extra to decorate (280g pack)
- 4 Mars Bars (4 x 53g bars)
- ½ cup Condensed Milk (125ml)
- 1 pack of double chocolate cookies (250g)
- 2 blocks of Cadbury Milk Chocolate (2 x 200g blocks)
- 100g unsalted butter
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil

### **Method**

- 1 Line the base and sides of a swiss roll tin with baking paper.
- 2 Crush the chocolate biscuits (place the biscuits in a sturdy plastic bag and use the end of a rolling pin to beat).
- 3 Roughly crush 1 cup of Maltesers.
- 4 Dice the Mars Bars into small pieces.
- 5 In a small saucepan over a low heat, melt the butter and condensed milk, stirring until combined.
- 6 Add the roughly crushed Maltesers and Mars Bars to the crushed biscuits and stir through. Then add the melted butter and condensed milk and stir until combined - it will be very sticky!
- 7 Pour the mixture into the slice tin and flatten with the back of a metal spoon. Pop it in the fridge for approximately an hour until it has completely cooled.
- 8 Melt both of the blocks of chocolate and add 1 teaspoon of vegetable oil to the melted mixture, making sure you stir it in.
- 9 Pour the melted chocolate over the cooled slice and then decorate with remaining Maltesers.
- 10 Put the slice back into the fridge and cut into pieces before it has completely set. Enjoy!

Nadolig llawen A Blwyddyn Newydd Dda. A Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year.

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PCC Members	Mark Broughton	01291 641797
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	Jane Smith-Haddon	01291 641525
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Organists	Karen Millar	01291 650521
	Ruth Savagar	01291 641411
Sunday Club	Kerry Baker	01291 641925
Tower Captain	Mike Penney	01291 650653
Church Hall Booking	Glynis MacDonald	01291 641818
Safeguarding Officer	Dr. Kerry Baker	01291 641925
Church Flowers	Maureen Moody	01291 641524
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200 Club	Graham Lambert	01291 641175

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	Vacancy	
	Mario Lenza	01291 641333
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	Beverley Moore	01291 641532
Mynyddbach Ward	Lynne Prosser	01291 641666
	Ian Moore	01291 650766
Newchurch West	Ian Martin	01291 650014
Earlswood Ward	Paul Harris Chair	01291 650871
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## Other Local Organisations

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**Fairtrade/Traidcraft** Marion McAdam 01291 641316  
**Womens Institute (WI)** Carole Jones (President) 01292 641791  
Jane Butterworth (Secretary) 01291 641704.

## DIARY DATES

<b>December</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>
6 11:00am	Advent Fair	Shirenewton Church
7 7:30pm	Community Council Meeting	Recreation Hall
7 7:30pm	Soup & Carols	Gaerllwyd Baptist Church
10 &:00pm	Women's Institute Xmas Dinner	Huntsman Hotel
11 6:30pm	Carols around the Christmas Tree	Tredegar Arms Car Park
12 2:00pm	Christmas Fayre	Shirenewton School
14 2:00	Shirenewton Local History Society	Recreation Hall
15 &:00pm	Shirenewton Local History Society	Llanfair Discoed Church
20 10:00am	Christmas Praise Service	Shirenewton Church
20	Carol service & nativity	St Peters Church Newchurch
21 10:am	Christmas Village Market	Recreation Hall
24 4:00pm	Carols and Christingles'	Shirenewton Church
<b>January</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>
11 2:00pm	Shirenewton Local History Society	Recreation Hall
14 7:15pm	Women's Institute	Recreation Hall
25 7:00pm	Shirenewton Local History Society	Recreation Hall
28—30 7:30pm	Rumpelstiltskin Pantomime	Earlswood Hall

# St Thomas a Beckett Church, Shirenewton

## Readers and Sides Persons

Date	Sunday Service	Readers	Sides Persons
6th December	Second Sunday of Advent	Bob Grattan Margaret Lock	Bob Grattan Margaret Lock
13th December	Third Sunday of Advent	Mark Broughton Ruth Savagar	Mark Broughton Claire Lewis
20th December	Fourth Sunday of Advent	Bill Clarke Janet Horton	Bill Clarke Janet Horton
24th December	Midnight Mass 11.30 pm	Andrew Baker Sally Saysell	Claire Lewis Graham Lambert
25th December	Christmas Family Service 10.00 a.m.	The Children	

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## EDITORIAL INFORMATION

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The views expressed are those of the contributor.

**Deadline for February 2016 issue is 9:00am 25th January 2016**