

Shirenewton

Parish Magazine

April 2020



A new flagpole on the Church tower flies the flag of hope during these troubled times—many thanks to James Leney and Simon Lockhart for achieving this

Price £1:50

## **CORONAVIRUS-COVID19**

Coronavirus-covid19 is bringing social life to a halt in the UK and we all know we must take sensible precautions. While communal events are banned and the Church in Wales has stopped Church services and meetings, people may feel isolated and alone. To overcome this, the Christians among us may be interested in the link to the Redemptorists website where you can download the weekly reading sheets that are normally distributed in Church. See also MESH on page 7.

[https://www.rpbooks.co.uk/regular-downloads-anglican?utm\\_source=Anglican+Regulars&utm\\_campaign=e7c800616b-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2020\\_03\\_18\\_02\\_35\\_COPY\\_01&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_d53d96a6d5-e7c800616b-218198459&mc\\_cid=e7c800616b&mc\\_eid=75e61babco](https://www.rpbooks.co.uk/regular-downloads-anglican?utm_source=Anglican+Regulars&utm_campaign=e7c800616b-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_03_18_02_35_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_d53d96a6d5-e7c800616b-218198459&mc_cid=e7c800616b&mc_eid=75e61babco)

Holy mass can be accessed on Sundays on line at <https://mail.yahoo.com/d/folders/1/messages/46158>.

The BBC's coronavirus-covid19 update website is at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m000gnx3/bbc-news-special-coronavirus-your-essential-update> where the latest reliable news is available.

Dave Cornwell has set up a couple of links on the Church website. One leads to the postcard (also shown in this publication) and the other gives advice on how to communicate whilst isolated. This is at [http://www.shirenewtonchurch.com/one\\_off\\_events/2020-Communicating-whilst-isolated.pdf](http://www.shirenewtonchurch.com/one_off_events/2020-Communicating-whilst-isolated.pdf)

The Church will remain open during the day for everyone and anyone who wishes to find a quiet space for reflection, prayer and meditation.

The Tredegar Arms and The Huntsman asked us publish their take away menus—but they have both now closed completely, so we have removed them. Nerys Wilson has some great practical cookery tips (page 31), as well as her usual cookery column.

## **THANKS TO THE MESH VOLUNTEER NETWORK**

Message from the Community Council

Dear all, the Chair of the Community Council has asked me to contact all the MESH volunteers to sincerely thank you for all your hard work setting up the self-help group and distributing leaflets in order to help keep residents in the community safe. He also asked me to offer the Community Council's support if there is anything you think SCC can help with. Hilary Counsel, clerk to SCC

**The Parochial Church Council** (PCC) also express their thanks and gratitude to everyone helping those who cannot help themselves due to self-isolation.

### **COSMIC GOES TO THE STARS**

Celebrity Old English Sheepdog Cosmic of Mynyddbach, Shirenewton sadly passed away last week but after an incredible life. Cosmic was born in Shirenewton and lived in Shirenewton all his life apart from 9 months in Athens when he was touring the Southern European show circuit.

No Old English Sheepdog (or 'Dulux' dog) had ever won Crufts Dog Show, although one was in the final this year, but Champion Aryakas Geocosmic probably stood one of the best chances. One year Cosmic couldn't go to the show but his litter sister, also born in Shirenewton, went instead and won the Breed Best Bitch trophy at the show. Cosmic had even greater ring presence and beautiful movement and had he been there on the day, well, perhaps he could have stolen the show!

Cosmic's great ring presence and wonderful movement were demonstrated at the 'Dulux Centenary' show some years ago when the paint company who have Old English Sheepdogs in all their advertisements hosted a centenary show for Old English Sheepdogs attended by Old English Sheepdogs from all over Europe and the world - and the dog that won the 'Dulux Centenary' Show was Cosmic of Shirenewton!

Cosmic retired from the ring 7 years ago and has been roaming the fields of Shirenewton and Mynyddbach ever since. Cosmic had a wonderful temperament and had three big teddy bears, almost his size, that he happily moved about the house and garden with him, and always brought them out when visitors came to the house. His mother who lived at Shirenewton was the first Old English Sheepdog with a tail to become a Champion in the UK and now, thankfully, all OES dogs have tails.

Cosmic, and the Shirenewton Old English Sheepdogs, lived with Sandra Bushell (Chepstow's Town Clerk for 15 years between 2000 and 2015) and husband John Burrows, and the vet was Chepstow Veterinary Practice, now called 'Archway', in Moor Street. Sandra has retired from showing dogs but occasionally judges dog shows in the UK and abroad.

John Burrows

Pictures on pages 24, 30 and 45

## **FROM THE VICARAGE**

Julian E LI White

Dear People of the Parish,

We live in challenging times.

First, there was the Brexit issue, then came wide-spread flooding throughout many parts of the country.

Now we have to contend with the implications of the Coronavirus outbreak.

Already there has been loss of life, self-isolation and many public services operating at a reduced capacity. Churches have been shut until further notice and social events cancelled.....

Grim times indeed.

And yet, difficult as it might be to believe, there is a positive side to the situation in which we find ourselves.

For example, church services may have been cancelled but ministry strives to be present in other ways. I personally – Luddite though I am– continue to struggle with church communication via the mysteries of computer technology and a weekly message (no, you don't escape that easily!) from the Vicarage should soon be available.

In a more 'hands-on way' I am indebted to church officers for using their initiative and skills in presenting the parish church as central to the physical, mental and spiritual needs of the community. In particular I am grateful to Bill Clarke for his response and reaction to the crisis and to all those involved with groups seeking to address the challenge before us.

Despite the worry and concern, may I also encourage you to explore the various avenues which have now opened to us?

I was listening to Stephen Fry on the radio the other day and it seemed to me that he was extolling good use of more free time that the situation now presents us with. Time. All too often we bemoan the fact that we don't have enough of it . Now we find ourselves in receipt of it in abundance.

When I am not fighting with the computer or trying to rearrange weddings that circumstances have postponed for an uncertain time, I find myself actually enjoying unhurried gardening. Sandra might have another (less printable) description of this. And when did you last observe the behaviour of the birds or marvel at the growth of natural and planted vegetation outside the window? This is the time to re-connect with age old industry and to become part of the great scheme of things.

Yes, this might all sound a bit 'airy-fairy' and no, we don't know if the Bishop's intended visit in June will happen or not, but we cannot always change the situation to the way we would have it. Those of us who, in a variety of ways, were influenced by the upheaval of WW2 know something of the unpredictability of life and this must be learned by every new generation in circumstances pertinent to themselves.

Right now I find myself dwelling on the second word in the following biblical quotation "Be still and know that I am God." Being 'still does not mean doing nothing. It means opening our eyes to what we have.

Stay safe and healthy  
With every wish and Blessing

Julian White

**HELLO!** If you are self-isolating, I can help.

My name is .....

I live locally at .....

My phone number is .....

**If you are self-isolating due to COVID-19 I can help with:**

- Picking up shopping       Posting mail
- A friendly phone call       Urgent supplies

Just call or text me and I'll do my best to help you (for free!)

**Coronavirus is contagious. Please take every precaution to ensure you are spreading only kindness. Avoid physical contact (2m distance). Wash your hands regularly. Items should be left on your doorstep.**

**#ViralKindness**

## **MESh and Coronavirus (Covid-19)**

Volunteers from Shirenewton, Mynyddbach and Earlswood have set up a community self-help group to look after people's shopping and other needs if they are required to self-isolate or restrict their movements. They are reaching out to let everyone know they are there and can provide help if needed.

They have arranged leaflet drops to every part of the Mynyddbach-Earlswood-Shirenewton Community (MESh) and a copy is included on page 6. They have used the template from the BBC at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cornwall-51880695>.

So if anyone needs help, just call the number or text a message to the number on the postcard you have received and help will be at hand. If you have not received a post card/leaflet drop please contact Jeni Harper at [jeh45\\_wales@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jeh45_wales@yahoo.co.uk).

## **FUTURE EVENTS**

All planned events are, unfortunately, very much subject to the progress of the coronavirus-covid19. As far as we are aware, all future events have been postponed and will take place at a later date, and some may be cancelled. Please contact the organiser of the event to establish its current status, if it is not shown in the table below.

**Naomi's Coffee Morning**—4<sup>th</sup> April—POSTPONED

**Bring and Share**—Friday 17<sup>th</sup> April—POSTPONED—contact Bill Clark

**Village Markets**—POSTONED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

**Springfest at The Huntsman**—18<sup>th</sup> April CANCELLED

**Strictly Shirenewton**—18<sup>th</sup> April—POSTPONED - contact Karen Millar

**Village Fete**—13<sup>th</sup> June—POSTPONED—contact Andrew Baker

**Visit of the new Bishop**—14<sup>th</sup> June—POTSPONED—contact Bill Clark

**Shirefest**—20<sup>th</sup> June—contact Phil Moles

**Trip to Canterbury Cathedral**—5<sup>th</sup> July—Julian White

**Call My Bluff Winetasting**—10<sup>th</sup> July—Kevin Bounds

## THE BELLS

An even quieter time of year than usual and by now we all know why. No fewer than five of our band are or have been involved in the medical profession so that early on in the current corona virus outbreak and crisis it became clear that we could no longer congregate for ringing as this inevitably causes close contact and increases risk. Thus, as in the last world war, ringing has been indefinitely suspended until it is safe to do so. But, just as in that last war, as soon as victory is won we will mark the occasion with ringing out the bells once again. Meanwhile we will use the time of isolation to carry out some important maintenance work when we can work individually to improve the go of the bells. So keep safe and listen out!

Mike Penney (Tower Captain).

### **Congratulations to our 200 Club winners in February:**

- |                   |                  |
|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. Frank Atkinson | 2. Cheryl Lloyd  |
| 3. Kevin Bounds   | 4. Maureen Moody |

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## **Shirenewton Community Council**

### **Extracts from the minutes of the March meeting**

#### **Vacancies on the Community Council**

**There are two co-opted vacancies for members to represent the Shirenewton ward.**

If you are interested in supporting the community and would like to join the Council, then please contact the Clerk (details below)

#### **Planning applications considered:**

##### **1. DM/2020/00137 Pantycosyn Farm, Earlswood**

Change of use from a barn conversion holiday let to a single dwelling.

Council noted that there would be no change to the exterior of the building and that parking arrangements were already in place. Council further noted and fully supported the applicant's Supporting Statement that the application was 'for change of use for the unit so that it can be occupied as a long-term short-hold let by local people' and felt that this should remain as a condition if the application is approved. This Council recommended approval.

##### **2. Town and Country Planning Act 1990 – Section 257 Pre-Order Consultation. Revision B Public Footpaths Nos. 34 (part) & 30(part), Shirenewton**

Council considered a revised schedule and plan detailing the proposed changes of Revision B from Mr S Pritchard, Footpaths Officer at Mon CC, which included an additional handrail and a small section of new fence. Council had no further comment to make on the revised proposal, and advised that it was not aware of any equipment that would be affected by statutory undertakers but suggested contacting Mon CC or the applicant.

Council also noted the contents of an e-mail on this subject received on 2.3.2020 from a local resident.

## **Other items of interest**

**Monthly Police Report** - New neighbourhood sergeant Damien Waite will be attending the Council meeting on 1 June 2020.

31/1/2020- Report of 2 outbuildings broken into overnight at a property on Bluebell road. The outbuildings were searched and items including a gas diving cylinder, a grinder and a router were amongst items stolen.

31/1/2020- Report of off road bikes in Wentwood in the Hendre Lane area.

Two reports of off road bikes using a bridleway near West End in Earlswood. Patrols have been made in the area when able to try to deter this. The police are hoping that the highways and partner agencies will put up new signage so that it is signposted as a bridleway to help deter this activity.

13/2/2020 – Report of a 2 vehicle, minor injuries rtc on the Cwm Mill to Shirenewton road. The road was blocked for a couple of hours while the incident was dealt with and vehicles recovered.

19/2/2020 – Report of lead flashing stolen from part of the roof overnight at Shirenewton Primary School. This caused extensive water damage to the ceiling and classroom below.

20/2/2020 – 1 call to Brookacre.

**Dog waste bin** – following local concern Council agreed to provide an additional waste bin at Mynyddbach which, after talking with local dog walkers, is to be located at Blethyn Close.

**HIGHWAYS - Road closure at Bluebell Road, Earlswood** - The road will be closed on **16<sup>th</sup> April 2020**, and it is anticipated that the works will be completed by **20th April 2020**. The order is necessary for Dwr Cymru Welsh Water to repair a leaking stop tap in a safe manner at the location.

**Essential bridge maintenance and planned highways maintenance scheduled to take place on the M48 Junction 2 Newhouse Interchange.**

The works are planned to start on the 11<sup>th</sup> May 2020 and will last for approximately three weeks. The works require the main carriageway to be closed between the eastbound and westbound exit slips and entry slips. During the closures, traffic will be diverted onto the slip roads, then back onto the M48 main carriageway.

**Dates of future meetings** –Monday 6<sup>th</sup> April and Monday 4<sup>th</sup> May - Annual Meeting at 7.00pm and ordinary meeting at 7.30pm at the Recreation Hall, Shirenewton. Members of the public are welcome to attend and may speak with the Council for the first 15 minutes of the meeting

**Find more information in draft copies of the minutes on the Community Council notice boards. Previous, approved 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)

**Take a look at our new and improved website**

[www.shirenewtoncc.org.uk](http://www.shirenewtoncc.org.uk)

#### **EVENTS AT THE HUNTSMAN HOTEL**

"Springfest" music night at The Huntsman Hotel Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April 7:30 pm till 12 pm in aid of Noah's Ark Children's Hospital has been cancelled. Please watch this space for news about " Shirefest" on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June, the annual charity music festival. 3:30 pm till 12 pm

## Shirenewton W.I. Happy Birthday



We celebrated Shirenewton W. I.'s 68<sup>th</sup> Birthday with a shared meal at the beginning of March. The meal was a wonderful array of dishes ... what else would you expect from the W.I.? There was much laughter in the following game of Scattergram and all of our members were presented with a birthday present, the lovely primulas in the photograph. How different life looked a week later. All W.I. meetings and events have now been cancelled.

Community support is what Shirenewton does best. There have been some great community groups set up in the village offering support, and I know that many of you will have received notes about this. Thank you to all those involved with both the formal and the informal schemes.

Additionally the W.I. would like to support it's members, especially as some of you may be having to self- isolate. Shirenewton W.I. members should all have a list of contact details for fellow members, so please do contact any of us if you need help ... even just someone to talk to. Keep safe, keep well.

Jackie Broughton

Please contact Diane Ashton Smith (01291 628838), Jane Butterworth (01291 641704), Jackie Broughton (01291 641797)

## OXFORD UNIVERSITY VISIT

We were one of only three schools in Wales to be invited to Jesus College, Oxford to celebrate the reinstatement of the professorship of Celtic Studies. The children had an exciting and memorable day which hopefully inspired them to aim high and further their studies at university in eight years time! Here they are chatting to Prince Charles ...



## EISTEDDFOD



We had a fantastic Eisteddfod celebrating the Expressive Arts where we were entertained by our extremely talented musicians, singers and artists. Congratulations to Mia who was crowned the Bard of the Eisteddfod for her beautiful poem about Wales; Evan, Juniper and Megan were the runners-up and helped crown her during the ceremony!

## GYM STARS



Congratulations to our Gym Stars who represented East Wales in the Welsh Tumble & Vault Final at Sophia Gardens, Cardiff - both the U11 Girls and U11 Boys team came second and Bro won the individual silver medal too! Ardderchog!

## COFFEE MORNING



The children performed their Eisteddfod entries in a PTA Coffee Morning later in the week, attended by parents, Grandparents, our "Young at Heart" Club and some residents of Crick Nursing Home ...



... a good time was had by all!

## LOCAL GIRL MAKES A SPLASH ON COUNTRYFILE



Well, now we all know where to go to get advice on vole poo. Keen watchers of Countryfile will have seen Jane Smith-Haddon being interviewed on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> March about vole poo and how to collect it, and what to do with it when you do. The programme was largely about the Gwent levels where Jane is a volunteer vole poo collector and fascinating though the subject may be, all eyes were on Jane as she charmed watchers with her tales of vole poo collection. It was also an exciting experience for Ellie Harrison, one of the Countryfile presenters, to meet Jane and learn about vole conservation on the Gwent levels. A new career beckons! Another picture on page 24.



## MEANWHILE LOCAL BOY MEASURES THE TIDES



Chepstow has one of the highest tides in the world, and it experienced its highest tide for forty years on the night of Wednesday 11th March 2020. There was also a very high tide on the morning of Thursday 12th March, which equalled the previous highest day-time tide this century on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2014 (which is shown on the Tides Plaque next to Chepstow Bridge). The 12th March 2020 tide may have been 3 or 4 centimetres higher than 2014, but it looked very similar to the 2014 extreme tide.

It was the night time tide of the previous evening at 9pm that surprised everyone when in the darkness water crept up to 15.4 metres deep (50 ft) which has not been experienced since 1981, forty years ago. The River Wye was only 60 centimetres below the top of its flood defences. A 14.5 metre tide was predicted for the morning of Wednesday 11th March 2020 and also for the morning of Thursday 12 March 2020 (and also predicted for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of April). These are very high tides as 'astronomical tides' cannot exceed 14.7 metres in the Severn Estuary.

At Elmdale, Tutshill directly opposite the Castle, the water rose over the lawn in front of the houses and a lawn well known to Wassailers was under water for the first time in 40 years. Very few people witnessed the extreme high tide but a local resident, Francoise Morley, of the new flats next to the Chepstow Slip photographed the tide gauge there at the height of the tide. The water that night rose to just millimetres below the Gloucester Hole although some debris may have entered it.

John Burrows, who regularly measures the tides at Chepstow and provided the research and text for the Chepstow Tides Plaque by Chepstow Bridge and the Tides Leaflet for the Town Council, was not aware that the evening tide of Wednesday 11 March 2020 would exceed predictions by 1.1 metres. John noted that the fresh water at Low Tide that day in the River Wye was at least 3 metres above the normal low tide level because of recent high rainfall in the River Wye's catchment. High rainfall can raise the tide level but not by all or even most of the 3 metres of additional rainwater in the river but by half a metre - as the fast moving powerful tide, the fastest moving on the planet which is capable of raising the water level by 13.4 metres or 44 feet in 4 hours at Chepstow, pushes the fresh water back rather than adding to its depth. Increased rainfall recently accounted for half a metre of the 1.1 metre additional water level. A storm surge of 0.6 metres in the Bristol Channel and Severn Estuary would have accounted for the other 0.6 metres. Winds from the South West must have increased and driven the tide faster up the Severn Estuary and into the River Wye. Weston Super Mare and Bristol recorded extra high tides on Wednesday night.



John thinks this is unlikely to be a climate change issue because the high rainfall could be connected to the climate agenda but the tides themselves are controlled by the movement of the Sun and the Moon and can be predicted to within a few centimetres a thousand years ahead and calculated for a thousand years in retrospect, and the winds are what you get 'on the night' from regional meteorological conditions at the time.

Exceptional tides of similar size have hit Chepstow throughout history, particularly and most recently in 2014: but higher still in 1981; and 1883 – the tide which is marked on the entrance to Chepstow Bridge and in the Guinness Book of Records, and which stopped work on the building of the Severn Tunnel; 1846; and in 1815 when John Urpeth Rastrick was about to start the building of the stone

piers to take the iron arches of the current Chepstow Bridge (1816) and if he hadn't seen such a huge tide and known exactly what he had to do, the bridge probably wouldn't have survived to the present day; and 1703 probably the worst of the last 500 years and documented by Daniel Defoe; and the famous storm surge of 1607 often likened to a tsunami in its impact but it was a 14.5 metre tide plus a storm surge in excess of 1 metre which overwhelmed local flood defences on the Gwent and Somerset Levels, which 400 years ago were tiny compared to those we have today.

**CHEPSTOW'S 'MEGA' TIDES**

*Always stay on the pathways*



**Tide levels at Chepstow Bridge**

Highest Astronomical Tides (Chepstow 'M', Canada 'W' & Surges)

12.7m	41.9ft
12.2m	40.0ft
11.7m	38.4ft
11.2m	36.7ft
10.7m	35.3ft
10.2m	33.8ft
9.7m	31.8ft
9.2m	30.2ft
8.7m	28.6ft
8.2m	27.0ft
7.7m	25.3ft
7.2m	23.6ft
6.7m	22.0ft
6.2m	20.3ft
5.7m	18.7ft
5.2m	17.1ft
4.7m	15.4ft
4.2m	13.8ft
3.7m	12.1ft
3.2m	10.5ft
2.7m	8.9ft
2.2m	7.2ft
1.7m	5.6ft
1.2m	3.9ft
0.7m	2.3ft
0.2m	0.7ft

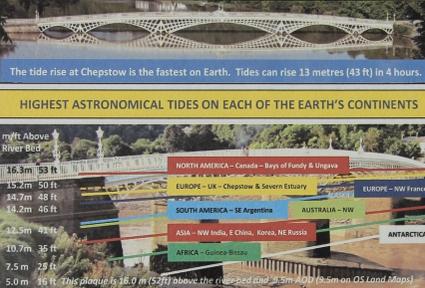
**5 billion tons of water**  
A tide brings 5 billion tons of water into the Severn Estuary (Cardiff - Sharpness) and even more into the Bristol Channel. 5 billion tons is 166 million lorry loads. A queue of lorries 3 deep on the M4, 22 times around Earth! 3 years to bring one tide. Moon does it twice a day!

**Moon at Work (6 July 2016)**

Rare satellite photo of Moon orbiting Earth. Although on far side of Earth, Moon was causing Chepstow's tide to rise by 12 m (40 ft) at the time!

*John Burrows investigat*

**HIGHEST ASTRONOMICAL TIDES ON EACH OF THE EARTH'S CONTINENTS**



**16.3m 53 ft** **River Above River Bed**

**14.7m 48 ft** **NORTH AMERICA - Canada - Bays of Fundy & Ungava**

**14.7m 48 ft** **EUROPE - UK - Chepstow & Severn Estuary**

**14.7m 48 ft** **EUROPE - NW France**

**13.2m 43 ft** **SOUTH AMERICA - SE Argentina**

**13.2m 43 ft** **AUSTRALIA - NW**

**10.7m 35 ft** **ASIA - NW India, E China, Korea, NE Russia**

**7.5m 25 ft** **AFRICA - Guinea Bissau**

**5.0m 16 ft** **ANTARCTICA**

*This plaque is 16.0 m (52ft) above the river bed and 16.5m high (54m on OS Land Maps)*

**'Astronomical tides' (Moon-Sun induced) at Chepstow and Severn Estuary can be 14.7m (48ft) - the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest 'peak' tides and 2<sup>nd</sup> highest 'average' tides on Earth (av. 9.2m). Storm surges can add 0.5m - 1.5m. Canada has 16m peak tides in 2 places which have 12m and 8m av. tides. Chepstow's 'visible' tidal range is 13.4m (44ft) as the Wye has 1.3m (4ft) of water at low tide. 'Time and Tide wait for no-one' - Exact tide times and heights can be predicted for 1,000 years, and more!**

**Where you are standing now is one of the best places on Earth to see the combined power of the two largest objects in our skies - the Sun and the Moon.**

The Moon provides 66% of the gravitational force which raises the tide; Sun 33%. Here, is about the closest you can stand to the enormous vertical rise of one of Earth's 'mega' tides - in fact you can stand directly above it on Chepstow Bridge.

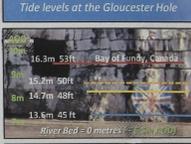
Most of the world's tides are less than 4 metres (13 ft). Chepstow and the Severn's 14.7m (48ft) tides are exceeded only in two remote places on Earth (in Canada) - and only by 1.6m (5 ft).

*Ned Haywood fecit MMXVIII*

*Tides and mud banks are dangerous*



**Tide levels at the Gloucester Hole**



**Incredible 'Reversing' River Wye**  
99% of all the Earth's rivers flow in only one direction. The River Wye flows in 2 directions - south to the sea (to your right) and north to Tintern (to your left). The River Wye changes its direction of flow 4 times in every 24 hours - twice in the day, twice at night.

**'Super' Moon (14 Nov. 2016)**



*Ralph Burrows inspiravit*

The Chepstow Tides Plaque by Chepstow Bridge

Many thanks to John Burrows for this story and the pictures

Another picture on page 25.



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**SHIRENEWTON  
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CANCELLATION**

**IT'S WITH REGRET THAT WE  
ARE CANCELLING THE  
VILLAGE MARKETS DUE TO  
GOVERNMENT ADVICE  
REGARDING THE  
CORONAVIRUS.**

**WE HOPE TO RETURN  
LATER IN THE YEAR &  
THANK ALL STALLHOLDERS  
& CUSTOMERS FOR THEIR  
SUPPORT.**

# SHIRENEWTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 1090167

Our committee met on Monday and we have decided to postpone our March and April meetings due to the Corona Virus pandemic. We will keep in touch and let you know when meetings will begin again hopefully after conditions improve.

But until then I have dug out of our archive an article that I thought you would be interested to read especially if you are housebound - see opposite page.



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## SHIRENEWTON.

This somewhat quiet and retired village was, on the evening of Thursday, June 26th, the scene of a very gay and joyous fête. The inhabitants of the village, as well as many of the parishioners, feeling a wish to mark their respect and good-will towards Captain and Mrs. Hawkins, for their liberal employment and kind treatment of the labouring population, and for the extensive improvements they have effected, determined to take the opportunity of the return home of Mrs. Hawkins and family from a month's visit to London; and accordingly a committee was formed to make all due arrangements. The stone pillars at the new and elegant lodge gates, were profusely decorated with the choicest flowers and shrubs, arranged on graceful arches. The entrance road was to be opened for the first time on the occasion, and the carriage, containing the united family, was to be drawn by 100 willing men. Casks of ale were placed outside the gates, and the Union Jack floated proudly from the church tower: while the bells were to ring a merry peal as soon as the carriage came to the outskirts of the village.

At about eight o'clock p. m., the carriage was received in the square by a large assemblage of most respectably-dressed men and women. Bouquets were then presented to Mrs. Hawkins and her daughters—flowers were strewed on the road to be traversed—the horses were taken off, and long ropes attached to the carriage, and, amid loud and hearty cheers, the procession advanced towards the entrance gates, preceded by the banners of the friendly societies, and the church bells chiming most inspiringly. On reaching the floral arch at the pillars, a halt was made, and a tray, with wine and cakes, was handed to the carriage, after which a most excellent and cordial speech was made by Mr. Thomas Ford, of Mynyth Bach, one of the churchwardens, in the name of the parishioners then and there assembled. At the conclusion, three hearty cheers (evidently given with good will) were responded to by Captain Hawkins, who, on his own behalf, and on that of his lady, returned most sincere thanks for the kind and spontaneous marks the people had given of their good feeling towards them; and he promised that he would strive always to retain their esteem. The procession again moved forward through the grounds adjoining the mansion, and on arriving at the portico, a fresh manifestation of good-will and regard was given by the large and respectable assemblage; to which a suitable reply was again made.

The party of the mansion having taken a kind and grateful leave of their warm-hearted friends, the latter adjourned to the square near the lodge, where toasts were drunk, songs sung, speeches made, and dances kept up till nearly midnight. The best feeling seemed to pervade the company, the number of whom could not have been less than from 300 to 400, of both sexes and of all ages. The beauty of the weather tended greatly to enhance the pleasures of the scene, and it was generally felt and acknowledged that a most agreeable evening had been spent. Long may such happy relations subsist between employers and the employed.

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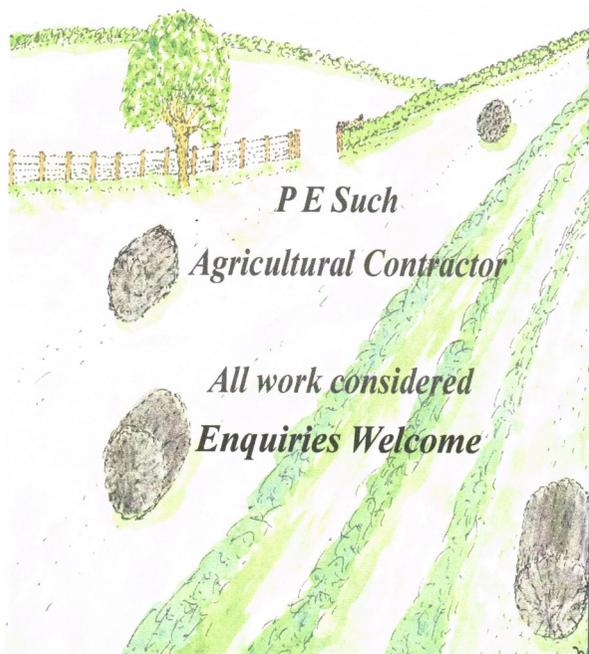
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## BIBLE STUDY GROUP

The Shirenewton Bible Study Group is a friendly group who meet on one evening a month in the home of one of our very hospitable members to study the bible.

We focus to the readings from the lectionary for the Sunday preceding our meeting, so you can come along at any time, you won't have missed anything! Although many benefit from attending regularly, there is no obligation to do so and many members come when they can.

The Bible Study Group will not be meeting during the current coronavirus-covi19 outbreak, but will start again as soon as possible

If you would like to join the group or to be kept informed of the location of meetings, please ask to be added to our distribution group by contacting me via [lem.shirenewton@gmail.com](mailto:lem.shirenewton@gmail.com) or calling 01291 641175.



Above: Cosmic, Telia, Roger and Callie

Below: a water vole on a vole raft





Another view of the high tide at Chepstow Bridge

## ***Gardening Corner***

I am not normally impatient. I can spend ages with a fly rod in hand trying to tempt an artful trout, and the same amount of time with a dibber in hand pricking out tiny seedlings. But sit me behind a driving wheel or put me in front of a piece of Information Technology then I can change just like that. I don't mean to be, but I hate situations that I cannot control, which is why other drivers and IT often send me to the point of madness! Unfortunately, last month was a little like that. I had got up early to draft this article and send it off to our editor in chief, discovered that Microsoft had done yet another upgrade, which upset the email accounts – yet again, and so my patience was strained. Without thinking I sent the finished article, swiftly turned off the computer and went to make coffee. Only to find on the Tuesday (after the deadline) that my email and hard work, was sitting in the draft box unsend to Bill. So, for those of you who missed me last month I do apologise. I'll try to do better this time! For those that didn't miss me, then skip the first bit of this month's effort and start from here on.

Well what can I say, life is no longer as it should be. Instead we have entered a period of uncertainty that is going to impact us all for some time to come. Here at Barn Farm we are in self-isolation. The assistant Head Gardener has suffered with a blood cancer for the last 8 years or so, and potentially is in the high-risk category. I say potentially simply because no-one knows. We are more fortunate than many in that we have a cottage in a lovely part of the countryside and we can go for a walk, and have little risk of meeting others. I will have to venture out occasionally for supplies, but these must be limited out of necessity. We are also fortunate that we have a large garden which will not only help to ensure some sanity is maintained, but it will give us plenty of exercise and more importantly some fresh produce. With the expectation that we will be here for some considerable time many will think that there will be little enough time to get plants started, planted and cropping, before everything returns to normal. But even if we beat the virus this time around, there will bound to be considerable disruption to food supplies for some time to come, so the more we can grow ourselves, then the better things will be for everyone. If you look around, there are now a lot of options for crops that can be grown in a short period of time and yes, you probably wouldn't want to eat them every day, but that's not the point. With careful thought we can grow different things so that, for example, 2

or 3 days a week could be supplied from your own garden, no matter how small a patch you might have. Even those of us in flats could potentially grow something if we have room for a window box or hanging baskets.

We are partial to the odd stir-fry and it is possible to grow the bulk of the vegetables needed, very simply, and more importantly very quickly too. Mung beans and pea shoots for example can take just 6 days from sowing to harvesting and better still, can even be grown on wet paper on your kitchen windowsill. To add to these there are some varieties of greens such as spinach or pak choi that can be harvested in three weeks, so with some thought, and timing, you can have fresh produce on your plate in under a month. Salad leaves as well can also be grown in around three weeks, again on a windowsill if you have no other room or facility, such as a greenhouse. If you have more room, we have found some purpose-built bags from Marshalls, the seed company, that prove extremely useful. They can be sited on a patio or similar spot, filled with compost and then sown with any of the above as well as anything else that is small in stature but big on taste such as radish, spring onions, baby beetroot, carrots etc. If you have more space, but not necessarily garden that can be planted direct, then a number of these bags give you endless opportunities. So you can do a lot to help yourselves. If you have the advantage of a big garden and a cold frame or greenhouse and don't need it all necessarily, then think of neighbours less fortunate than yourselves and offer to help grow things. Virtually anything can be grown in a shorter time span given the extra warmth of a greenhouse to at least get things started. For many of us the soil will have been too wet to have started much in the garden so far this year, but you can steal a march on nature with some thought. Different crops have a set period of time in which to mature. Tomatoes for example normally take between 75 and 90 days in which to produce the first fruits, cabbages and cauliflowers tend to be about the same, whilst others like sweet peppers and Brussel sprouts can take a lot longer sometimes up to 140 odd days. The art is to look for the faster maturing crops and specific varieties. Even then you can hasten things up. So for example potatoes can be planted in pots and placed in a warm spot – or ideally below the staging in your greenhouse and then once conditions improve, and they have started to grow, they can be planted out in the ground, but keep an eye out for frosts, and cover the top growth with fleece or old newspapers if a cold night is forecast. Ours have been in pots for a couple of weeks already and the odd little green shoot is already appearing,

which will mean that we will be harvesting potatoes about the same time as the fresh Pembrokeshire spuds will be in the shops (assuming that the farmers have managed to plant them yet). We are lucky in that we have a large greenhouse and two polytunnels, part of which were planted with potatoes back in January, and so the tops are already some 6 inches out of the ground. I will also be sowing seeds of carrots in a couple of grow bags this week. These will also be left inside a tunnel and we should be able to harvest some lovely sweet baby carrots in around eight weeks-time. Most crops can be started off in the greenhouse or on a warm windowsill given a few seed trays or individual cell trays. For crops such as onions, leeks, celeriac and greens I sow in a seed tray, then prick out the resultant seedlings into pots or cells to be grown on for planting out



later when conditions are right. Others, such as beetroot, spring onions, and all the large seeded crops such as beans, marrows, courgettes, melons, tomatoes and peppers are sown individually into separate cells at the start. This is because they seem to perform better if you don't disturb their roots to any great degree when you come to plant them out. There are a very small number of crops that you cannot speed up. These simply have to be sown direct in the ground, when the conditions are good enough. One that springs to mind is parsnips. So there is a lot that can be done to quicken things up and help to keep food on the table. Maybe even if you haven't tried to grow anything yourself previously, then give it a go now. Who knows you may get hooked and become an avid gardener. There is something about the taste of your own produce fresh-

picked for a meal where food miles are measured in feet rather than, well miles.

Not forgetting that we want to keep things looking pretty, in the flower of that. I have been salvaging what plants I could and replanted them into pots. Most of these have started to grow, so once the weather improves a little more and the soil dries up, I'll be able to replant the beds again. This also means I can 'get rid of' the varieties that haven't performed well, and have more of the ones that have. I often fill any gaps with dahlias or annual flowers as a means of adding more colour and this has always worked well. The philosophy being that the more flowers you have shading the ground, the less requirement there is to keep weeding. Dahlias are excellent for this as they have heavy leaves that shade the ground well. Normally I dig these up at the end of the year, and keep the resulting tubers frost free in the greenhouse. I managed to do this for those varieties that I keep for cut flowers, but the ones in the flower borders are still there. I keep meaning to dig them up but the wet would mean I'd make more mess than it was worth, so the borders is where they have stayed. With the weather having been so mild though, I think most will have survived, but I will have to keep an eye out for slugs once the dahlias show any signs of re-sprouting. One job I have all but finished is pruning all of the (relatively) new roses. These are all David Austin 'English' roses, so they tend to be highly scented, with large ruffled flowers that keep repeat flowering virtually all summer – provided you remove the dead flowers. Generally, these did well last year, although black spot and mildew did cause a few problems. If you haven't pruned your roses yet then don't worry, there is still time, but they should be done by the end of March for the best results. The climbing roses have also had a bit of a trim, as these are yet to establish fully, but I'm hoping for great things this year. We have planted a good mixture of hellebores over the last few years, and these are really starting to perform well. It doesn't seem that long ago that the only colour and type you could get was the single white 'Christmas rose'. But modern breeding as you can see from the picture, has led to numerous varieties of doubles, semi doubles, triples, spotted and everything in between. They are all excellent for providing an early pollen source for bees, so they really are a 'must have' in the early spring garden.

It looks like a couple of hives of bees may have died out over winter. This isn't unexpected as the milder but very wet weather would have meant that they consumed stores rapidly and would have had few 'flying days' in which to get out and about. A couple of weeks ago it was warm enough to lift the lids up and to get some fondant icing on to give them a much-needed boost. Watching the other day when it was sunny for a change there was a lot of activity and it was noticeable that many bees were bringing pollen back to the hive. This is always a good sign as it means that the queen has started to lay eggs again and hopefully the future of those hives is secure. There is one hive that is showing signs of sickness, so I need to open this up as soon as I can and see what I can do. This will have to wait for a slightly warmer day, so the first where temperatures rise above 14 degrees centigrade will hopefully find me with bee suit on and smoker in hand. In the meantime, please keep yourselves safe and healthy. There are extremely challenging times ahead for all of us, but we will get through it if we help each other and follow all the advice of the experts. Happy gardening until next month. *Steve and Felicity Hunt.*



*Cosmic, John Burrows' English sheepdog, who passed away in March*

## **NERYS' PRACTICAL COOKERY TIPS**

Many people are expressing concerns about how they can maintain a balanced diet with a lack of perishable or staple ingredients when they are self-isolated. As a retired Home Economics teacher I can offer a few tips. The first step is to gain a good understanding of all the ingredients you have in your freezer and store cupboards.

Frozen fruit and vegetables have the same if not more nutritional value than fresh products, as they are frozen at their peak. Pulses :- beans, lentils, peas are all a good source of protein, minerals, vitamins and roughage. Supplement them for meat or use half meat and half pulses to make the meal go further. Ingredients like rice and pasta are good staple ingredients and very useful as store cupboard essentials. Cereals which can be crushed to resemble breadcrumbs can be utilised. A good example is to use cornflakes as a coating for fish and chicken. Oats not only make delicious porridge but can also be used as toppings for sweet or savoury crumble dishes. Nuts can also be versatile and nutritional ingredients. They again can be crushed and added into smoothies, stir fries, made into biscuits and a classic nut roast. If eggs are hard to get hold of, look for an alternative substitute for baking purposes. For example in place of eggs vegan recipes sometimes use baking powder, bicarbonate of soda (accurate measurement is essential to achieve a pleasant taste) or vinegar as a raising agent.

Now is the time to dust down those classic cookery books you have at home. Make use of preserves in flavouring sweet and savoury dishes. Use chutneys in casseroles and savoury dishes to enhance the flavour. Jams and bottled fruit can be used to make classic puddings.

When vegetables are scarce why not use tinned soups as an alternative sauce. Add the soup into pasta dishes, casseroles and meat dishes, for example :- chicken and mushroom casserole can be made using fresh chicken or thawed chicken and mushroom soup. Tinned vegetable soup can flavour mince to make a delicious comfort supper.

If you do manage to get perishable foods, you can make larger meals than you currently need and freeze the excess for other days. At least then nothing is wasted. Cheese freezes really well and can be used when needed. Bear in mind frozen cheese has a tendency to crumble more but the flavour and nutritional value is not impaired. The good thing is even when frozen, cheese can be grated and added to dishes.

## OXFORD UNIVERSITY VISIT

We were one of only three schools in Wales to be invited to Jesus College, Oxford to celebrate the reinstatement of the professorship of Celtic Studies. The children had an exciting and memorable day which hopefully inspired them to aim high and further their studies at university in eight years time! Here they are chatting to Prince Charles ...



## EISTEDDFOD



We had a fantastic Eisteddfod celebrating the Expressive Arts where we were entertained by our extremely talented musicians, singers and artists. Congratulations to Mia who was crowned the Bard of the Eisteddfod for her beautiful poem about Wales; Evan, Juniper and Megan were the runners-up and helped crown her during the ceremony!

## GYM STARS



Congratulations to our Gym Stars who represented East Wales in the Welsh Tumble & Vault Final at Sophia Gardens, Cardiff - both the U11 Girls and U11 Boys team came second and B.C.S. won the individual silver medal too! Ardderchog!

## COFFEE MORNING



The children performed their Eisteddfod entries in a PTA Coffee Morning later in the week, attended by parents, Grandparents, our "Young at Heart" Club and some residents of Crick Nursing Home ...



... a good time was had by all!

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## STARGAZING



The seven stars of the Plough lie pretty much overhead. It is one of the “circumpolar” constellations that are always above our horizon. Its classical name is Ursa Major, the Great Bear. The two stars furthest from the handle point to the North Star. The North Star or Polaris is approximately 400 light years away. This is a distance of approximately 2,000,000,000,000,000 miles! The light we now see from this star left the North Star 400 years ago.

American slaves in the southern States of the USA were taught a song in childhood. The first verse runs:

When the Sun comes back  
And the first quail calls  
Follow the Drinking Gourd  
For the old man is a-waiting for to carry you to freedom  
If you follow the Drinking Gourd

The song gave a time, after the December solstice, when the Sun begins to climb higher into the northern sky and the calls of migratory quail can be heard in the southern United States, and a direction – the Drinking Gourd is the Plough and lies to the North. This gave slaves the vital information which allowed them to escape to the North and to freedom.

The brilliant planet Venus is in the western evening sky in April. At the start of the month it lies close to the Pleiades star cluster, and is joined by the new crescent Moon on the 26<sup>th</sup> April. Bright Jupiter rises in the dawn sky followed by slightly-yellow Saturn and orange-coloured Mars. They lie close to the third quarter Moon on the 15<sup>th</sup> April.

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

Joke: How does Jupiter hold up his trousers? With an asteroid belt.

NASA has some beautiful images of astronomical objects on the internet at [apod.nasa.gov/apod/](http://apod.nasa.gov/apod/).

David Thomas

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As I sit here typing this it seems that the Western world as we know it is in the process of self-destructing. The pressure on business (both large and small) is huge and I've no doubt we will all end up poorer as a result of the panic which seems to be afflicting humankind. So, in the spirit of 'keeping calm and carrying on', I'm writing my parish mag entry!

Last month, I mentioned I'd tentatively dipped my toe smart technology and ordered a couple of different types of wireless switched plugs to have a play with. These devices sit between a standard 13amp socket and a standard 13amp plug and allow you to switch the device on and off via an app. So, for example, if you were about to return home you could turn on the kettle and have boiling water on your arrival home. These plugs are compatible with standard smart speakers so could be voice controlled.

I purchased a 'Smart Plug eLinkSmart' and a 'TP-Link Smart Plug'. The TP-Link plug was the more expensive of the two (and the slightly larger) but I note that Amazon has now reduced the price of the TP-Link so both are under a tenner! Well, my experience has been very good. Both were very simple to install and link to my home wifi (following the instructions – no technical knowledge required) and appear to work perfectly. I use the word 'appear' simply because I haven't done any extensive testing. I've tested the ability to switch the plugs on and off via their respective apps and they work as advertised. I've installed the Smart Plug eLinkSmart to control our hot tap power (so I don't have to grovel under the sink) and, before leaving for skiing I turned the plug off via the app (and checked by grovelling that it was off) and then, when we landed at Gatwick, turned the plug back on and, sure enough, there was boiling water for a cuppa on hand when we arrived home. Result!

The app also provides the ability to set the plugs on/off to a schedule and offers a countdown timer – neither of which I've tested. The Smartlife app (which powers the Smart Plug eLinkSmart) seems to be a generic app which can also be used to control other devices such as smart light switches, etc. The Smartlife app also usefully provides a summary and underlying detail of the electricity consumption in KWh. So I can see exactly how much power the hot tap is using every month or daily. It seems that the tap is costing about £2 pcm to run.

The TP-Link Tapo app is compatible with all TP-Link devices. It has broadly the same options as the SmartLife app (i.e. schedule, timer but, in addition, a holiday setting) but doesn't appear to provide electricity consumption stats. I've not tried the voice control with either because, as avid readers will know, I don't own a smart speaker!

If I had to choose I'd recommend the Smart Plug eLinkSmart because, whilst it's not a major brand name, it's more compact and the app is slightly better – only because of the consumption stats although, of course, I've no idea how accurate they are. I've included direct links to both on Amazon (where I purchased them) on the Church shopping portal ([www.shirenewtonshop.com](http://www.shirenewtonshop.com)) so that, if you are interested, you know you've got the correct one.

Moving on. A new suite of add-ons is available for Windows 10. If you are a confident Windows 10 user then it will interest you to learn that Microsoft has made available PowerToys for Windows 10. At the moment the functionality is limited to three key features: FancyZones allows you to create complex window layouts on your screen rather than the default 'side-by-side' option. PowerRename allows you to rename multiple files in a batch, and there is a keyboard shortcuts utility which allows you to view current keyboard shortcuts available. All useful stuff and Microsoft has promised to keep adding useful features. PowerToys is not installed by default and you will need to download it and install it.

Finally, those of you who use WhatsApp (I'm sure the majority) may be aware that there is a version you can install on your PC or Mac. It certainly makes typing longer messages easier. Whenever, I'm sat at my PC WhatsApp is running and all messages appear on the PC as well as the phone. That enables me to reply using my keyboard! The application is free. To download it go to <https://www.whatsapp.com/download> and select your operating system (actually the website works out what OS you are on and offers that).

With everything on lock-down I'm sure your online spending will increase. Please do use the shopping portal to click through to your chosen online shops. That way we can hit the payment thresholds and close it down



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Nerys's Natty Nosh

## *Carrot cake -gluten free-dairy free*



**Carrot cake is a very popular culinary treat. This is a beautifully moist gluten free and dairy free recipe I serve to my family.**

### **Ingredients**

- 2 medium carrots
- 75g(3oz) golden sultanas
- 60ml (2¼fl oz) rum
- 150g (5oz) caster sugar
- 125ml (4½fl oz) olive oil, plus extra for greasing
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 3 free-range eggs
- 250g (9oz) ground almonds
- ½ tsp ground nutmeg, or to taste
- ½ lemon, finely grated zest and juice
- 3 tbsp. pine nuts for topping

### **Buttercream**

- 250g (9oz) icing sugar
- 125g (4½oz) dairy free margarine

### **Optional extras**

- finely grated lemon zest
- finely grated orange zest
- a dash of vanilla extract
- cocoa powder, to taste
- crushed nuts (optional) to decorate

### **Method for Carrot Cake**

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180C/350F/Gas 4. Line the base of a 23cm/9in round spring-form cake tin with baking parchment and grease the sides with olive oil.
- 2 Toast the pine nuts by browning in a dry frying pan.

- 3 Grate the carrots with a coarse grater, then sit them on a double layer of kitchen paper and wrap them, to soak up excess liquid. Set aside.
- 4 Put the sultanas and rum in a small saucepan, bring to the boil, then simmer for 3 minutes.
- 5 Whisk the sugar and oil until creamy and light.
- 6 Whisk in the vanilla extract and eggs.
- 7 Mix in the ground almonds, nutmeg, grated carrots, sultanas, rum, lemon zest and juice.
- 7 Put the mixture into the prepared cake tin and level. Sprinkle the toasted pine nuts over the cake mix and put it into the oven for 30-40 minutes, or until the top is risen and golden and a skewer inserted into the centre comes out sticky but not wet.
- 9 Remove from the oven and let the cake sit in its tin to cool on a wire rack for 10 minutes.

### Method for Buttercream Icing

- 1 Beat 250g sifted icing sugar and 125g dairy free margarine together, until smooth.
- 2 For additional flavouring add any chosen extras and blend throughout.
- 3 Spread the buttercream over the top of the cake using a palette knife.

### For a Dairy alternative use Mascarpone cheese for the icing

- 250g (9oz) mascarpone
- 2 tsp icing sugar
- 2 tbsp. rum

### Best of both worlds!

Alternately serve the mascarpone cream in a separate bowl alongside the cake, just for those who can eat it. **Enjoy!**



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