

# Shirenewton Parish Magazine July/August 2021



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**FROM THE VICARAGE**  
**Julian E LI White**

Dear People of the Parish,

We are half-way through the year, Corona Virus remains a staple of the news, and Ministry Area shaping of our parish continues to advance. A considerable amount of diverse opinion has accompanied the latter at both personal and group level with strong views held on a variety of topics. Recently, I have received – from various parishioners within the group – a copy of a newspaper article which I have been asked to share with you.

The following is taken from *The Daily Telegraph* of June 5<sup>th</sup> 2021 and reflects the sentiments of writer Emma Thompson:

*Look at their actions over recent months and you could be forgiven for thinking that Anglican bishops are on a mission to alienate their flocks, run down their parishes and ultimately give up their special place in British public and spiritual life. How else to explain the actions of (one) who has been forced to delete her Twitter account and apologise after tweeting, "Never, never, never trust a Tory"? It is the Church's job to remind us, in crisis times, of our common humanity.*

*This is most keenly felt in the decline of parish churches. Rural churches have been harassed with demands for growth, in money and attendance. Winchester diocese is cutting clergy numbers, proposing to merge village churches into ever-larger, geographically awkward benefices.*

*This hierarchy now appears to view Covid as enabling a welcome technological and cultural change: more middle managers, fewer local clergy.*

*Rural dwellers love their parish church buildings. This attachment to local people, place and parish is, sadly, almost portrayed as part of the Church's problems. Properly understood, it should be part of the solution.*

*Large organisations need diversity of thought; the Church's breadth used to be its strength. Bishops insulting potential donors, and withdrawing parish clergy without listening, reminds me of the old joke about the tinker's donkey: "He had just taught it to go without food when it died."*

*(article abridged)*

With fingers crossed, society appears to be approaching something close to normality. In this respect, and awaiting Risk Assessment Approval from the Archdeacon, we look forward to welcoming all (well, a Covid-restricted maximum actually) to a Summer Bazaar on July 4<sup>th</sup> at 11.00 – 12.30 in the grounds of *The Chantry*. This is by kind permission of Glynis Macdonald. Full details can be found elsewhere in this magazine.

Finally, a brief word of thanks to Nansi who – pretty much at the last minute - stepped in to cover a Sunday service upon news that my car had resorted to sulky silence the other week.

With every blessing as we approach the holiday season.

Julian E LI White





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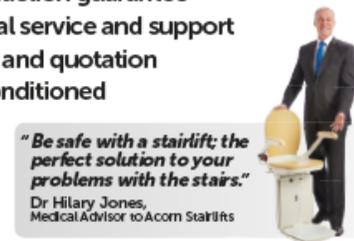
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## STARGAZING



The constellation of Cygnus the Swan lies pretty much overhead. Its brightest stars form a cross against the background of the Milky Way. The familiar pattern of Ursa Major, the Great Bear or Plough, is to be seen in the north-west, with the "W" of Cassiopeia climbing into the north-eastern sky. The constellation of Sagittarius can be seen low in the southern sky. The ancient Greeks could see an archer with the head and chest of a man and the body of a horse in this pattern of stars, but it also looks rather like a teapot with the handle to the left and the spout to the right! On a larger scale, the Summer Triangle made up of the bright stars Deneb, Vega and Altair dominates the sky to the South. Deneb forms the head of Cygnus.

In the southern evening sky, the planets Jupiter and Saturn can be seen in the southern sky throughout July and August. Jupiter is particularly bright whilst Saturn has slightly yellow colour and lies to the right of Jupiter. The Full Moon lies below Saturn on the 24<sup>th</sup> July and joins Jupiter the following day. The Moon returns to Saturn on 20<sup>th</sup> August and to Jupiter on 21<sup>st</sup> August.

You may be lucky enough to see some Noctilucent Clouds. They appear after 11pm to the north. These wispy clouds are formed at heights of over 60 miles – normal clouds are much lower. Noctilucent Clouds are formed when ice particles in the atmosphere, gather around the dust produced by meteors. They can be seen because they are illuminated by the already set Sun.

Apollo 15 was launched from Cape Kennedy fifty years ago, on July 26, 1971. It carried a Lunar Rover to the Moon's surface, which allowed two of the astronauts to drive on the Moon for the first time.

## Shirenewton Community Council

### Extracts from the minutes of the ordinary and Annual meeting in June 2021

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

#### **1) Planning Appeal – APP/E6840/A/21/32744383, Bushes Farm, Earlswood**

Removal of condition 1 from planning consent 2314 (Date of Decision: 01/09/1975):- Occupation of the proposed bungalow shall be limited to a person employed or last employed wholly or mainly locally in agriculture as defined in Section 290(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971, or a dependent of such person residing with him.

As responses had already been made to Mon CC, this Council had no further comment. Response to be made to the Planning Inspectorate to inform them of the dates responses had been made.

#### **2) DM/2021/00774 The Milking Barn, Little Grondra Farm, Shirenewton**

Erection of an oak gazebo within the garden of the property.

This application relates to the conversion of the Milking Barn at Little Grondra Farm, Councillors noted that they had previously approved the building conversion works.

The structure is intended to use high quality materials which match those used on the barn during conversion. The roof will be hipped and covered in slate. The gazebo will measure 4m x 6m and 3.98m high, some 6m away from the building. Whilst set well away it would be visible from the road. Recommendation: No objection.

County Cllr Brown gave an update on the recent Mon CC Planning Committee meeting -

The Tan House pub – application for 2 x four bedroom dwellings in the car park, approved.

Gaerllwyd Farm – application for change of use of barn to B1 Use, approved.

## **Monthly police report**

CO291 Jo Cooper is looking at a Road Safety project for South Monmouthshire, getting the local Community Children involved & thinking about road safety by designing posters that can be displayed locally representing their school. This collaborative work involves linking in with the Schools Police Officer, NxtGen Officers to include Heddlu Bach (mini Police) along with GoSafe. As part of this piece of work the Neighbourhood team will carry out speed checks, mobile phone/seatbelt action days linking in with South Wales Fire & Rescue Service which has proven successful in the past.

We continue to patrol areas for off-road bikes around the Wentwood and Tintern areas on Sundays at peak times, along with areas in Chepstow we receive calls for off-roaders.

## **Your Voice Update**

The team are working on the priorities that came from the public vote. A lot is going on behind the scenes with meetings conversations with partners. For this area we have Chepstow RFC ASB/ Drugs & rural burglaries. Arrangements have been made for our Design Out Crime Team to meet with us in June to carry out site meetings. They will then provide us with a report/ recommendations which can then be discussed with yourselves/ MCC/Chepstow RFC and anyone else who may need to be involved to look at what we can all do to improve the situation/area for those visiting or living close by.

Please remain vigilant and report any suspicious activity/crime via either 101 or 999 if you deem it an emergency. If it is low level you can report via email [contact@gwent.police.uk](mailto:contact@gwent.police.uk)

## **Other items of interest**

### **20 is Plenty Road Safety Campaign**

You may have seen in the local newspapers that the 20mph petition was presented to the full Council meeting of Monmouthshire County Council on 24<sup>th</sup> June by County Councillor Louise Brown on behalf of this community council. A press release was produced by Cllr Dunn and circulated to local newspapers and TV channels, all to promote the continuing issue of reducing the speed of traffic through Shirenewton and Mynyddbach villages to a mandatory 20mph.

**Bus shelter at Earlswood** – repairs have been completed, the barriers taken down and the bus shelter is now available for public use. There is no news as yet to repairs of the roof of the West End bus shelter.

**Road closure – Mounton Road, Bayfield, Chepstow from 28 – 30 July 2021** in order that Welsh Water can install a new service connection.

**Recent Welsh Water meeting in May** to discuss the hydraulic pressure in the sewer pipe serving Shirenewton, Mounton and Pwllmeyric and the ingress of water into the pipe from Mounton Brook, which has been a long standing issue. Sections of the pipe have been relined (especially under the brook) but water is still infiltrating through manhole covers with vertical pipes, which are to be sealed. The Water Board is monitoring the situation after each job and progressing to the next problem. Problems are caused in Mounton and Pwllmeyric, rather than Shirenewton. This community council keeps a watching brief.

### **MESSAGE FROM THE CLERK – Books in the telephone kiosk.**

There are far too many books being left in the kiosk with many being thrown in at the door, all over the recycling boxes on the floor

of the kiosk. Please DO NOT put books on the floor as residents need to have access to the recycling bags. If the kiosk is full of books please don't leave more as I am having to take them to charity shops and book appointments at Five Lanes tip to get rid of them, which is a waste of my time. Please only leave books that someone might want to read – not just have a clear out. A little more consideration would be appreciated.

**Dates of next meetings - Monday 5<sup>th</sup> July and Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> August at 7.00 pm**, by public meeting in Shirenewton Recreation Hall, if possible, or by a remote meeting if government coronavirus restrictions still apply.

**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)**

**Congratulations to our 200 Club winners in May:**

- |                     |                  |
|---------------------|------------------|
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| 3. Mike Penney      | 4. Joy Jones     |

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## ***Gardening Corner***

I think if nothing else, this year is clearly proving that climate change is a very real threat to the world and what we have become used to as 'normal life'. If you are a gardener, or just like looking at other people's gardens because you don't have one of your own, this year is proving particularly challenging. The cold weather is now behind us, but the aftereffects of the extended poor weather is now clear to be seen – although some of them aren't all bad I must admit. Walking through the orchard the other day I noticed that nearly all of the earlier flowering apple and pear varieties are completely barren of developing fruit as the late frosts took out all of the blossom. Even in the tunnel where we have a nectarine tree and peach, there is literally just one nectarine fruit hanging on for dear life, despite the amount of blossom being a real picture for two weeks. Normally I 'capture' several bumble bees and transfer them into the tunnel, but this year there were none to be had. Despite efforts to manually pollinate the flowers with a brush, the frosts have killed every flower bar the one I mentioned. The potatoes survived the frost I mentioned last week but are now struggling for water as we have had no worthwhile rain for a number of weeks. Fortunately, I did delay sowing a lot of crops this year, which was just as well although all of the greenhouses and tunnels were at bursting point come the last week in May. With a week-long holiday booked as we moved into June, we had to risk planting everything out that needed to go, including the early French and runner beans, and keep our fingers crossed, that the cold nights didn't return. Fortunately for us, the weather improved, the last of the frost were behind us and we got away without any further damage. The one good thing that came out of the cold weather was that the flower borders have not been 'drawn-up' as often happens with an early spell of warm weather and are currently looking lush and early flowerers are a real picture. Flowering-wise they are around two or three weeks behind what we would regard as the 'normal' flowering time, although we question what normal is these days! Of particular challenge, despite the cold weather, are the numbers of pests and diseases that are already occurring on our vegetable crops. There seems to have been an explosion of aphids of all kinds be they black, green or white impacted many of the vegetables and flowers. Red spider mites in the greenhouses and tunnels are attacking most things and roses are being badly impacted by black spot. The moles are running riot and young squirrels are queuing up waiting for the strawberries and other soft fruit

To begin to ripen. War will need to be declared soon if we are to get any meaningful crops this year!

I mentioned the cuckoo was late arriving last month. We assume it is still here, as we haven't heard another one since. We are concerned about the number of house martens that have arrived back. Once I heard the cuckoo, we put our 8 artificial nests back up on the house. Often, we get up to 13 nests in total (with the late arrivals having to build their own), but last year only 7 were used. This year we only had two in use for several weeks, but this figure has now increased to five. This is the smallest number of nests that we have had in over 33 years of living at Barn Farm. Others have said much the same, so we can only assume that many perished on either the outward leg to their wintering hibernation grounds, or the return leg back this year. But despite all the doom and gloom we continue to soldier on. In the vegetable borders, everything that needs to be out in the ground has been planted and we are already harvesting a number of crops, such as salad stuff (leaves, radish and spring onions), courgettes, early mangetout peas and broccoli. We are continuing to sow some crops in order to get continuity of supply over the summer, and the winter greens are just about to be pricked out into individual pots, ready for planting in a few weeks-time. The tomatoes have been planted into grow bags in the larger tunnel and the first fruits are rapidly expanding. Peppers, both hot and sweet varieties, have been moved into large pots and are now growing on in the smaller tunnel and the cucumbers have also been planted into large pots and have been moved into the larger greenhouse. They aren't in their final resting place as yet, because I always take advantage of the protection of the glass to raise some early new potatoes in the border. These are



ready to dig, so will gradually be removed and replaced by the cucumber pots. This time of year, it tends to be one large 'juggling' exercise as you wait for an early crop to finish, in order to be replaced immediately by a later crop.

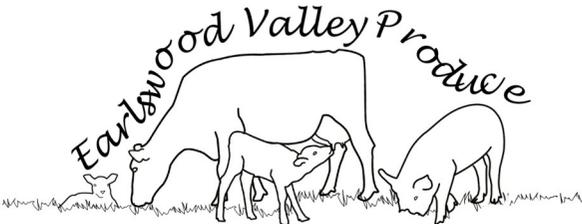
We have grown many more flowers this year as we are hoping to produce more cut flowers for selling. These include dahlias, chrysanthemums, larkspur, carnations, zinnias and stocks to name a few. Generally, these are looking well, but we do now desperately need some rain, as I want to avoid having to use the hosepipe if at all possible. From the honeybee perspective this year is also proving to be very difficult. We lost the two hives over winter as expected would happen, they were too weak from the start. An early look through at the end of April suggested that the rest were OK, including the hive that a mouse had made a mess of, and this had allowed me to put candy on those hives that were running short of food. The next inspection, which was delayed due to the continuing cold weather did not go well. The first two hives were OK, and the queens were laying reasonably well. But then followed four hives that had all died out. Initially I thought that this was down to disease, as all neighbouring beekeepers had been made aware of a notifiable disease in the area. On



closer inspection though, this did not prove to be the case. One of the hives lost was the mouse attacked one, so despite all my best efforts, they didn't survive. Starvation wasn't an issue as there were still supplies, and usually with starvation, you find dead bees with their heads in the cells, where they have died trying to reach into the last food available. This happens from time to time and is quite distressful for the beekeeper as there is a sense of failure in respect of animal husbandry. You have allowed that to happen. A couple of the hives looked as though

the bees had just decided to leave and this suggests to me that as these hives were weak, strength-wise, the surrounding stronger hives had just decided to raid their weaker neighbours and rob them of their food supplies. Just goes to show how cruel nature can be at times as the battle to survive always ends up with the strongest, biggest and best carrying their genes forward as the weaker fall by the wayside. Fortunately, the rest of the hives appear to have fared much better, although one other, did look weaker and will probably fall to the attention of the neighbouring 'honey robbers'. But it's not all gloom and doom, honest. There is plenty of colour to enjoy in the flower garden at present.

As always, happy gardening until next month. *Steve and Felicity Hunt.*



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## **CHEPSTOW CHORAL SOCIETY 2021 -- MOVING FORWARD.**

Like every other choral society or singing group, CCS has inevitably been out of action singing-wise since mid- March 2020.

For ALL choral groups and active music makers, the last 15 months have presented major challenges, and this is particularly the case for “small-town” groups. Committees have not been idle –far from it! –and compared with the traumas faced by so many, choral singing has hardly been the national priority, but we are in a position to look ahead –

**At long last, a light is now shining towards more positive times. Chepstow Choral Society (which is, of course, Welsh-based) is now planning limited reconvening –albeit in accordance with current Welsh Government regulations which differ to English ones in certain aspects.**

At the time of writing (late May), Choral groups can now plan to reconvene with up to 30 members –including MD, Accompanist and Covid Officer –in a venue with full compliance facilities, and protocol. CCS is currently working with Chepstow Leisure Centre and Monmouthshire CC to return for three sessions, with the aim of reconnecting to “just get back to singing some short items” before breaking for late July/August and -- hopefully -- resuming in more earnest in September. Members will initially work on a rota but the hope is that for most members they will at least have the chance for 2 sessions out of 3 before mid-July.

**A “CHRISTMAS MUSIC CELEBRATION” IS ALREADY IN THE DIARY FOR SUNDAY AFTERNOON, DECEMBER 12<sup>th</sup> AT ST MARY’S PRIORY CHURCH, CHEPSTOW.**

FURTHER INFORMATION WILL BE AVAILBLE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE ON CCS WEBSITE. On behalf of CCS, many thanks!

Marjorie Duerden (tel. 623310), Asst MD, CCS

# SHIRENEWTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

*Registered Charity No. 1090167*

The topic for our May meeting was tea. We all like a cup of tea, but did you realise how influential the tea trade had on world history? Well, Colin Andrews our speaker gave an excellent explanation on how tea became an important commodity and how the East India Company controlled the import and export and made it such a valuable trade.

At our June meeting we are still meeting virtually on zoom and this month we will be having a talk entitled Martha Gellhorn given by Nancy Cavill. We have had this talk before but we did not have time for a question-and-answer session to take place, as it was in the early days of our zoom meetings and we only had a limited amount of time.

We thought the title of this month's talk would be appropriate as we are about to unveil a Purple Plaque in recognition of Martha, at the beginning of July. Due to the covid restrictions we are only able to invite a small number of people to the ceremony.

We are hoping to arrange a visit for our July meeting and are already planning our 2021/2022 year which starts in September. Planning is not easy due to the covid restrictions and the weather!

We have had new members join us during the last year and we are always pleased to see more new members in the coming year.

## **MARTHA GELLHORN**

Shirenewton Local History Society, together with the Purple Plaques campaign which aims to mark the achievements of Wales's remarkable women, plans to unveil a plaque to one of the 20th century's greatest war reporters, Martha Gellhorn, later this year at her former home near Shirenewton.

Martha Gellhorn lived for 14 years in Yew Tree House (she named it Catscradle [*sic*]) during her time living there), in Kilgwrrwg between Devauden and Shirenewton from 1980 to 1994.

Gellhorn was a renowned war reporter and journalist who was once married to Ernest Hemmingway but is best known for her own work as a fearless, independent-minded journalist. She was born in St Louis, Missouri in 1930 and died, aged 89, on February 17, 1998 in London.

She covered the great conflicts of the 20th century - the Spanish Civil War, the Normandy landings in World War Two, the aftermath of the war in Hitler's concentration camps, Vietnam, the Middle East and carried on reporting well into her 80s.

She made Britain her home after World War Two. Her connection with Wales is little known but she came to live in Catscradle in 1980 while based in London. The cottage was her 'country retreat' but a place where she wrote every day and also developed a passion for gardening and cooking. She took regular exercise in her small, indoor heated swimming pool.

She only reluctantly gave up living at the cottage, aged 84, after saying she was too old to 'haul dustbins up the drive'. She is quoted as saying, "I've loved my time in Wales; the people are the friendliest in the world but the weather is generally filthy. I want to spend more time where it is warmer."

In the twilight of her career when asked by the BBC to report on any subject she wished to for a new series of foreign writers' views of Britain, Gellhorn, then 88, chose to revisit the scene of her last major piece of front-line reporting - in the village of Newbridge, near Risca in the Gwent Valleys, where she had watched the Miners' Strike of 1984-85 unfold.

Gellhorn has reported on the Miners' Strike for *The Guardian* and described being driven around the Valleys in a jolting, beaten-up old van talking to miners and their wives, watching charity workers prepare meagre food parcels for their families, witnessing at first hand how the then Prime Minister's determination to defeat the National Union of Mineworkers was destroying a community's way of life.

Some of the most memorable reports of her career were during World War Two when she was the only women reporter to land on the D-Day beaches and one of very few women to report from former German concentration camps. The scenes she saw in Dachau were deeply etched in her memory forever after.

She later covered the Vietnam War and the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East. She continued to work and travel the globe into her 80s. Her

war reporting always focused on telling the stories of the victims of war – the displaced, the refugees, the tortured – rather than the politics.

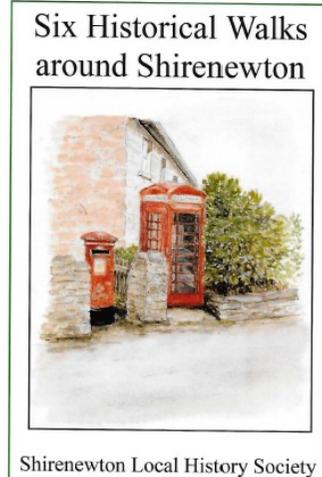
As well as her war reporting, Gellhorn also wrote five novels, 14 novellas and two short story collections. The Martha Gellhorn prize for journalism is awarded annually to journalists whose work has appeared in reputable English-language publications.

Nancy Cavill

*Shirenewton Local  
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1: The Church in Wales runs a "Gift Direct" scheme which collects your contribution by direct debit on a monthly basis. The scheme also allows you to Gift Aid your donation so that the church can claim a basic rate tax refund, making your money go even further. Details of the scheme can be found here: <https://churchinwales.contentfiles.net/media/documents/1798-Gift-Direct-English.pdf>. Alternatively please contact me and I will email the leaflet to you.

2: You can set up a standing order with your bank. Please contact me and I will let you have the bank details. You then need to contact your bank to set up the standing order.

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## **LIVING FOR CHRIST – 1 Peter Chapter 1**

We all need an anchor that will hold during the storms that life throws at us. That anchor can be faith. So, what or who do you put your faith in? How important is it to actually have faith? And where do we find a faith strong and big enough to get us through the storms of life? The Apostle Peter knows a thing or two about faith having been close to Jesus, having let Him down, being restored and being asked to tend the sheep. He knows how important faith is and gives us a great picture of one here in the Bible, a faith that we can anchor deeply with because it will hold during our difficult times. Looking at what Peter talks about here should help us.

**It's a timeless Faith.** Everyone has faith. The Atheists have it in their rational reasoning removing the possibility there is a God and having faith in their intellect. People have faith in their abilities, skills, family, friends, themselves (on their own there is nothing wrong with those). But where is your faith anchored? When life's storms blow in will these anchors hold? Peter gives us very good reasons for having our faith anchored in Christ.

**It's Everlasting.** Look at where faith in Christ is kept. In Heaven. Jesus tells us to put our treasures in heaven where they cannot be damaged or stolen. This means faith in Christ is NOT set on things around us in this world. Faith in perishable things leads to that faith perishing. In history, economies have risen and fallen, nations have come and gone, our new material possessions have broken and gone to the tip. We have lost loved ones who can no longer give us the support we wanted. Only God's Kingdom has remained constant. So, our faith is up there set in Heaven – that's why we know it should never fade away.

**It is not corruptible.** For some people power corrupts them. This reflects the sinful nature of human beings. People start off with the best of intentions but get changed by privilege and power along the way. Our flaws get in the way and our leaders flaws get in the way until they let us down. But Jesus Christ is without sin and is not corruptible. So our faith must be in Him, in the power of God. He has absolute power but is uncorrupted. He has majesty, but the Bible

says He has no ego or pride. If you want your faith to be incorruptible, place in Jesus Christ.

**It does not fade.** Are you a faddy person? Do you follow trends, social media, are you always look for something new? Are you always looking for new people to follow? Well look at your old photos. Look at your hairstyles then and the clothes you wore. Remember the culture of the day. Have things changed much since then? That new person was you reinventing yourself to conform with those around you. But here's the promise: Jesus is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. He holds your faith in Heaven so it will see you through to the end.

**The Christian Faith has been tested.** It is the best choice to anchor your faith in Christ but how do you know it will stand up to being tested? Why trust Jesus? Because it is a tested faith, one that has been shared by many millions of people who went before us, who anchored themselves in Jesus Christ and found the anchor held during the storm (me included). The Apostle Peter survived some major difficulties in his life and he discovered some key truths:

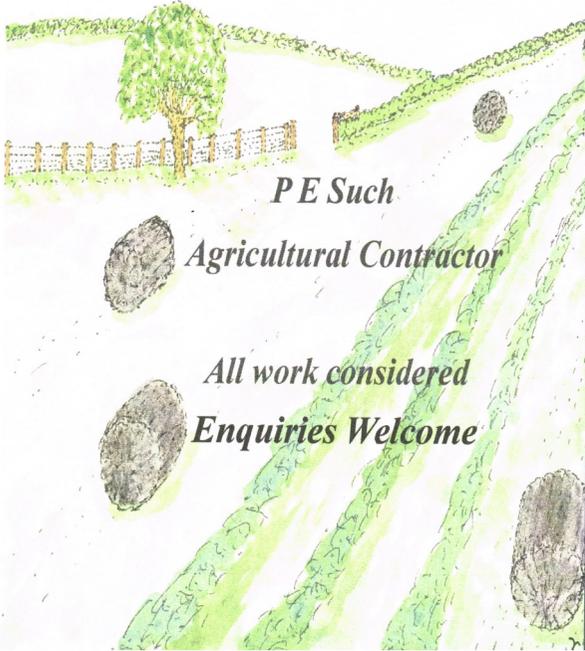
**It is priceless.** Peter uses the example of the Goldsmith who melts the metal down so that the impurities come out of it and he could create pure gold. How often have you experienced a melt down? A situation or circumstances you really couldn't cope with but found a way through faith to keep hold of Gods promises all the same? That gold is YOU! Peter tells us that through trials our faith becomes like pure gold because it gets tested. The impurities in us start to come to the surface (our lack of trust, anger, frustration, impatience) as we learn to be more mature in our faith. Then, as we go through these times with the Lord, we come out the other side having experienced Him getting us through. Our faith is then purer. Because our faith is something eternal and cannot be destroyed it is more valuable than gold. Getting closer to Jesus gives us deeper knowledge of him that changes us and makes us able to reflect Jesus to those we are near. As the goldsmith could see his face in the pure gold, Jesus wants us to reflect Him in our lives. This can only happen if we have been tested.

**It must be at the centre of our being.** Peter talks about having faith in Jesus despite not seeing Him. Read Hebrews 11 v 1. You don't have to see something or always have proof to have faith. I know I have a heart and a brain – I've not seen them, but I know they are there! Hebrews uses the word 'reality'. Just because we have not seen Jesus does not negate our ability to have faith in Him. This is real faith; loving God in Jesus having never seen Him but knowing he exists.

Peter had a true and timeless faith. This is in sharp contrast to what we often hear in our world today which is usually along the lines of 'what works for you may not work for me'. So, will the faith demonstrated in Peter's life also work for us? The answer is yes, and he makes the point by talking about the faith of others. God told the Old Testament prophets that the Messiah was coming and gave them hope. In effect they said to the people who would listen "keep going, God is working His purpose out and the Messiah is coming soon. Get ready". If you are under pressure that could be a message for you – God has come in Jesus Christ. He came into this world, died on the cross, rose again, and now He is alive and is coming back. That sounds like a promise that gives us hope. Help is on its way for us.

Peter tells us that true faith is linked to the fulfilment of those promises about Jesus. Christianity is built on faith in Jesus Christ. He came for us, died on the cross for us, rose again for us and is coming back for us. The Christian faith is built on the historical fact of Jesus' death on the cross and the many witnesses to His resurrection and it has stood the test of time through the storms of life. Peter also gives us an intriguing picture of the Angels. They are looking from heaven watching what God is doing here on earth. They saw the Old Testament Prophets, they witnessed Jesus fulfilling those prophecies and have seen so much, witnessing what God is doing today. If you have faith, you are part of what God is doing today. So how will your faith meet God's actions in our world? We have it to make a difference in our world today – for such a time as this.

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## Nerys's Natty Nosh



## Picnic

*Let us make a feast.*

*Upon the summer grass*

*Let us find a quiet place.*

*And make the moment last.*

Ted ~~Quilak~~

Pack your picnic hamper with delicious homemade goodies and enjoy.

Make some accompaniments to take with you.

### Potato Salad

$\frac{3}{4}$ kg. (1½lb) new potatoes  
1 bunch spring onions or chives finely chopped.  
2 tablespoons mayonnaise  
1 tablespoon lemon juice  
2 tablespoons fresh chopped mint or parsley  
Pepper to taste.

#### Method

1. Cook the potatoes (in their skins for a more rustic and healthier option) for 15 minutes or until tender. Leave to cool.
2. Cut the cooked potatoes into chunks and place in a mixing bowl.
3. Add the chopped spring onions or chives.
4. Mix the lemon juice with the mayonnaise



- and carefully coat the potatoes using a metal spoon.
5. Transfer into a container and add more herbs and black pepper. Serve.

### **Tomato Salad**

350g (¾lb) tomatoes, sliced.  
1 tablespoon grated onion

#### **Dressing**

4 tablespoons olive oil  
3 tablespoons lemon juice  
1 crushed garlic clove  
1 tablespoon freshly chopped basil.  
1 teaspoon caster sugar  
Salt and pepper to taste.

#### **Method**

1. Arrange the tomatoes in a shallow container and sprinkle the grated onion.
  2. To make the dressing. Put all the ingredients in a screw top jar and shake vigorously until thoroughly mixed. Leave to stand for 30 minutes.
  3. Pour the dressing over the tomatoes.
- Refrigerate before serving.

### **Avocado salad**

4 Cos lettuce leaves, chopped.  
6 cherry tomatoes, halved.  
2 radishes, finely sliced.  
Handful of mixed nuts and seeds  
3 spring onions, finely sliced.  
75g cucumber, cut into small cubes.  
Sprig of mint leaves coarsely chopped.  
Sprig of flat-leaf parsley leaves, chopped.  
1 avocado sliced.

#### **For the dressing**

½ garlic clove, crushed.  
1 tbsp lemon juice  
2 tbsp olive oil

#### **Method**

**For the dressing**, mix the crushed garlic with a pinch of salt, the lemon juice and olive oil. Set aside until ready to serve.

Combine the salad ingredients in a bowl, season and toss with the dressing just before serving. **Enjoy!**

## SHIRENEWTON CHURCH WEBSITE

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

Well, a couple of interesting things this month.

In the past I've complained about some other people in the world called 'David Cornwell' who appear to think they own my personal email address! There is a chap in Scotland, a couple in the USA and the latest is a chap in Romford. Let's call him 'Romford Dave'. Romford Dave had diligently subscribed to AVG (the security suite) but had made the faux pas of using my email address (which presumably he thought was his). So, I got the license and the receipt and the download details and everything. Unfortunately, there wasn't a phone number and, obviously, I didn't have his real email address, so I was stuck. In the end it took me half an hour of my time to get in touch with AVG customer service and cancel the order. This way, at least Romford Dave got his money back and could try again.

Lesson: make sure you know your email address and, when a site asks you to enter it twice DO NOT copy and paste. Enter it twice. It may save you from embarrassment.

News, hot of the press: WhatsApp has reportedly backed down on limiting WhatsApp functionality for users who refuse to accept the new privacy policy changes. I have previously explained the changes and, having delayed the acceptance deadline to May, WhatsApp has kicked the ball into the long grass and said that its functionality will not be restricted if you don't accept the new policy. The changes mainly related to communication with a business account and didn't actually impact any personal WhatsApp communication which is encrypted end to end. However, their authoritarian 'take it or get off the platform' approach failed to impress and there was an uproar, and, it has to be said, a lot of misinformation about the changes and their effect.

The privacy changes apparently went ahead on May 15<sup>th</sup> but, if you did refuse them, you should be unaffected. I have to say I can't recall accepting them so either it hasn't fully rolled out yet or they snuck it in somehow when they knew I'd had a couple of glasses of the red stuff.

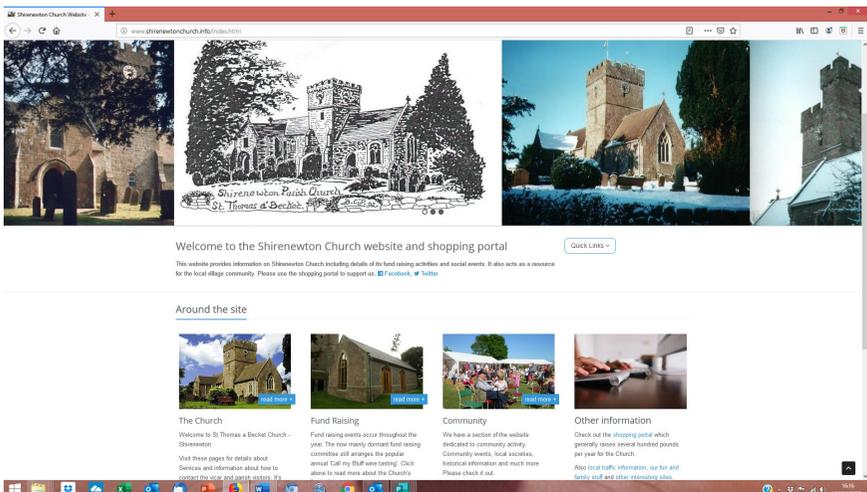
I know this next bit will appeal to a very small audience but, if you are interested in the ethics of hacking and the legal battles going on around

this subject, especially the so called "white hat" ethical hacking supporting anti-terrorism agencies, this article from The Washington Post (<https://tinyurl.com/xvy2pek>) is well worth a read. It tells the story of how the FBI accessed the (so called) San Bernardino shooter's iPhone without help from Apple. In fact, the FBI had taken Apple to court to secure access but dropped the case when they solved the problem. Fascinating stuff. I guess the real message is that the Apple iPhone is pretty secure! Note: Access to The Washington Post is restricted but you do get several free articles a month – just click on the 'free' option.

There is a perception that the iPhone is a lot more secure than an Android phone. This is not altogether true and there is considerable debate. However, what is not under debate is that you need to understand that hackers have shifted focus from computers to mobiles. Android is more open and therefore, if you run Android, you should be using a security suite. I run BitDefender on my mobile. If you run an iPhone, then Apple says antivirus apps are unnecessary and that is why there aren't any in the App Store. Just make sure you update the phone's operating system every time you are requested.

I won't reiterate my standard pre-holiday security briefing as it looks like none of us will be travelling anywhere this year!

Have wonderful summer. Safe browsing  
drc  
webmaster



## **Earlswood and Newchurch West Memorial Hall AGM**

We will be holding our annual general meeting on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2021 at the hall. The meeting will start at 7.30pm.

Please feel free to pop along. If you are unable to, but would like to raise any issues, or find out more information please [contact](#) Rebecca Allen 01291 641 150.



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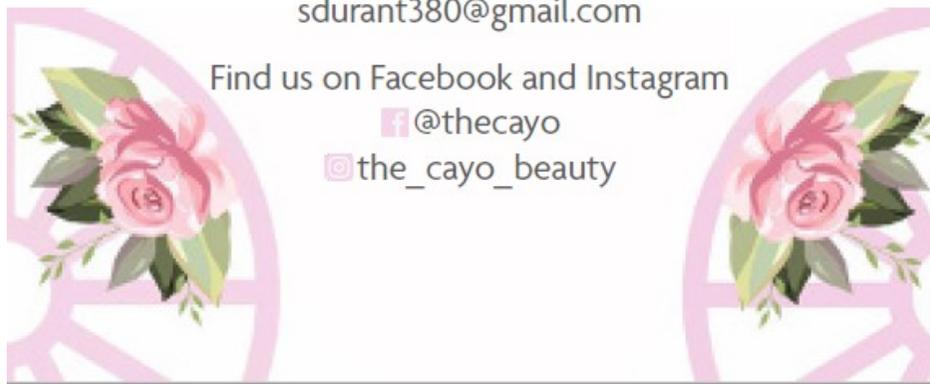
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## THE HUNTSMAN HOTEL

Can I take this opportunity to thank all those who have supported us during this most unpleasant time.

Furthermore, we at the Huntsman Hotel would like to explain our position and future plans.

The epidemic originally placed us in a precarious position business wise and whilst having enjoyed 36 years of continuous trading and service to our local villages we were faced with a very dangerous and uncertain future. Grants, when they eventually saw fruition, were consumed by the enormous costs of banks and running a business even when shut.

Thankfully, after seeing the plight of homeless on BBC Wales and my idea & offer of assistance to MonCC we were contracted to accommodate these most vulnerable people keeping them off the streets whilst relevant agencies did their work rehabilitating these people back into mainstream life.

Incidentally, we have enjoyed numerous success stories and keep in touch with many of them. Unfortunately, contrary to this we have also had some failures.

Our position is that we are in contract until the end of September with MonCC and as we still can't be sure if Covid is beaten yet we are delighted that the contract will probably be extended until the end of the year.

However, we are enjoying a tremendous trade in our outside bar beer garden marquee, shed and decking area and are humbled by the massive support from "the gang" as are we from all those regulars who enjoy our food takeaway services and dine in the marquee service.

Therefore, in the light of the above we will not be expecting to reopen the pub hotel building until at least January 2022 but will be trading outside and in our shed as long as our loyal customers want us to.

Thank you all again for the support.



Phil, Lucy, Ally, Pops & family...

## Are you putting your online shopping to good use?

The **Lions Club of Chepstow and Caldicot** are raising funds for the local community even during these lockdowns. With us all being confined to home for work and play, most of us have had to utilise online shopping, and this is looking set to continue as the new normal.

The Lions Club of Chepstow and Caldicot serve local communities including our own, and like everyone else have had to modernise through the use of technology. Some of their fundraising used to take place in supermarket doorways, but now a number of online mechanisms support their fundraising efforts.

One such fundraising tool is **Amazon Smile**. Every time you shop online at **smile.amazon.co.uk** Amazon will donate a percentage of the purchase to The Lions Club of Chepstow and Caldicot.

To find out more about this and other ways to support The Lions Club of Chepstow and Caldicot including **Amazon Smile**, **Easyfundraising** and **Just Giving**, please go to: [www.chepstowcaldicotlions.org.uk/page-8.php](http://www.chepstowcaldicotlions.org.uk/page-8.php)



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## 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).

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

**My name is**  
.....

**I live locally at**  
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**My phone number is**  
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**If you are self-isolating due to COVID-19 I can help with:**

<input type="checkbox"/> Picking up shopping	<input type="checkbox"/> Posting mail
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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.**

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A very warm welcome to the new family that has moved into  
Shirenewton—see pictures on opposite page

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We are asking you, the people of Gwent, to consider keeping a diary or journal in the coming weeks and months and to deposit it with the archives in the future. They can be recorded as pen-and-paper or digitally. They can include photographs, sketches, or poetry. You may want to record your experiences as audio, rather than handwritten. We want to hear about how current events are impacting on you and your local area, what things are you hearing in the news, how it is affecting people you know?

We have already asked our staff and our volunteers to participate but to truly reflect our history, your history, we need you.

Any questions or queries, please contact [enquiries@gwentarchives.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@gwentarchives.gov.uk). More information on submitting the diaries will follow.





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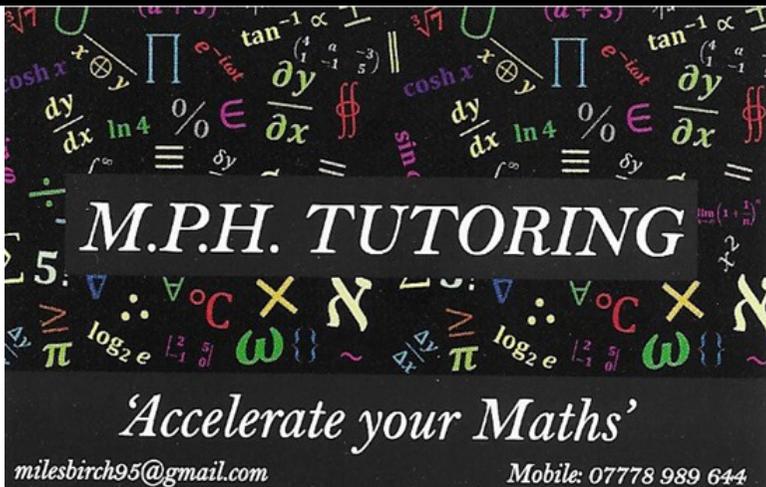
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## **ADVERTORIAL**

### **Inheritance tax – Are you making the most of your allowances?**

I recently visited a widow who lived just outside Usk. She didn't consider herself to be wealthy, but like many of us had worked hard throughout life to pay off a mortgage. She is now retired and in a comfortable financial position. She has three children and you could probably understand her disbelief to be informed that when she passes away the tax man will receive a higher amount in tax than the share of her estate left to each of her three children! The continued rise in house prices in this area means that these days you don't have to be hugely wealthy to be affected by Inheritance tax (IHT). According to HMRC inheritance tax receipts 2019, a record £5.38 billion was collected in inheritance tax in the 2018/19 tax year and this is set to rise. There are many things you can do to reduce your inheritance tax liability and keep more of your wealth within the family.

The current IHT nil-rate threshold is £325,000 for individuals and £650,000 for a married couple or civil partners. Beyond these thresholds, IHT is usually payable at a rate of 40%. In order to help with aforementioned increasing house prices we recently saw the introduction of the main residence nil-rate band, which applies if you want to pass your main residence to a direct descendant, this now provides an additional £175,000 for individuals and £350,000 for a married couple or civil partners. However, it is important to be aware that for larger estates this extra relief is tapered when the estate is over £2m.

There is a range of options to help mitigate your potential inheritance tax bill, but as a starting point, you should consider the following allowances:

Annual gifting allowance – each year you and your spouse can each gift up to £3,000 in total. You can also carry this forward for one year. Furthermore, gifts of up to £250 to any number of people are exempt.

Wedding gifts – Parents can give up to £5,000 to a bride or groom, for grandparents this reduces to £2,500. Other well-wishers can give up to £1,000 before it becomes liable to IHT.

Gifts to registered charities and political parties are exempt

Gifts can also be made out of surplus income, however a number of conditions apply to this allowance and so I would suggest you seek advice in relation to this.

Assets left to your UK based spouse or civil partner are also exempt.

Remember planning pays and there are several routes which can help with such taxes. If you would like to come along to my free inheritance tax seminars just drop me a line. ([info@iscawealth.com](mailto:info@iscawealth.com)) Isca Wealth Management Limited is an Appointed Representative of Vision Independent Financial Planning Ltd which is Authorised and Regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). Firm reference number 487395. Please note that the FCA does not regulate inheritance tax advice.



## YOUR LOCAL FINANCIAL PLANNER

**I OFFER TRULY  
INDEPENDENT,  
UNBIASED  
ADVICE**



Do you know how much inheritance tax is due on your estate?

Are you prepared for your retirement?

Do you need to review your pensions and investments?

Are you taking advantage of your tax allowances?

**JAMES HAWKINS**  
CHARTERED MCS1

Call me for a free initial consultation

**0333 789 0189**

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For further information or to book online visit [www.iscawealth.com](http://www.iscawealth.com)

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The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) do not regulate Inheritance Tax Planning, Tax and Trusts.

The benefits to the treatment of tax will depend on your individual circumstances and may be subject to change in the future.

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*If you know of any changes or omissions please contact the Editor Bill Clark  
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