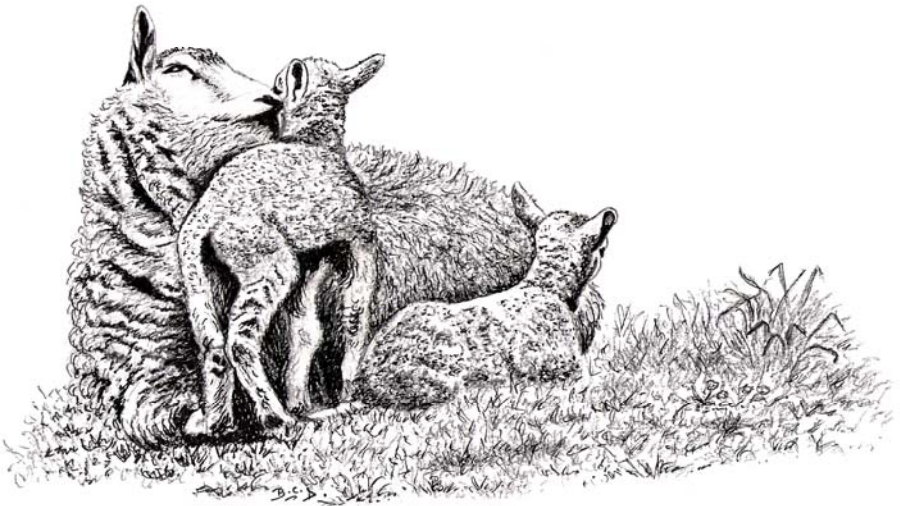


Shirenewton

Parish Magazine

March 2015



Sketch by Barbara Davies

Price: 50p

FROM THE VICARAGE

Dear People of the Parish,

One of the advantages of reaching my age is that it is generally OK to be a bit of a Victor Meldrew. Well, I think that it is anyway, so there. What I mean, is that it is socially acceptable to whinge and moan and to lament that things are not what they used to be. Such a dismal stance feels acceptable to me whilst everyone simply ignores this standpoint.

I am in such a frame of mind because I am reflecting upon Lent. Not, as I often assert, should this season be seen as something wretched and there to be endured until Easter. Easter, still some weeks distant, which will doubtless swamp us with frolicking bunnies and a plethora of commercial chocolate eggs.

This year, Ash Wednesday – the beginning of Lent – was observed by less than a dozen in Mathern Church at a special service during which we were invited to align ourselves with the temptations of Christ and, therefore, deepen spirituality in the process. I applaud those pilgrims (for that is what they are) who accord this time seriousness and have commenced the journey of faith.

What are we to expect from this time? The other Sunday I, along with other ministers, read an informative epistle from the Bishop on this point. He reminded us that as well as making the time to explore our own spirituality, it is the appropriate occasion to consider the needs of others from a truly Christian perspective.

I feel that the 'Journey of Lent' – to use a convenient and useful description – is multi-layered, to say the least. As we all recognise, a journey is not always comfortable and predictable. We might know (or think we do) our intended destination but the trip from here to there is often subject to a variety of changes we did not anticipate. To use a more contemporary metaphor, we might set off on the journey with every confidence including the benefits of 'sat-nav' to assist us, only to find that there is grid-lock on the road, unanticipated detours and perhaps a break down or two. What started out as routine travel becomes a struggle with the unknown and a challenge to our assumptions.

Lent can be like this. We smugly assume that it is 'a journey towards God' and all we have to do is follow in the wake of others who have made the trip before us – the 'company of saints'. Encrusted with such jargon, we are often surprised to find that directions are misleading, the road has disappeared, we are dangerously low on fuel and that we are, seemingly, very much alone on our expedition.

There can be more surprises to come in the 'Journey of Lent'. For instance, we think that we are 'following after God' only to find that He is sometimes behind us, or off to the side, and waiting for the invitation to feature more significantly in our lives. Unless we subscribe to feel-good drivel, let us be clear that this can sometimes be an alarming experience. We talk much, in Lent, of 'encountering God' but – if realised – it can mean that we stand alone, stripped of excuses for our frailties, in the presence of God.

So, I would suggest that the 'Journey of Lent' is not necessarily predictable or mundane but requires a degree of bravery and dedication. Dare we accept the call to follow down this path? In the weeks ahead our churches will attempt this journey in the hope of finding ourselves, to use the words of the old hymn, 'Nearer my God to Thee'. Come, as a genuine pilgrim, and join us as we strive to embrace Lent seriously, honestly and in the trust that we comprehend more of the divine.

Julian E LI White
(The Vicarage)

200 CLUB WINNERS FOR FEBRUARY

1st Prize, £100	Ollie Chapell
2nd Prize, £50	Claire White
3rd Prize, £25	Bob Grattan
4th Prize, £25	Jessica King

"200 Club" subscriptions become due in February.

"If you would like to participate contact Bob O'Keefe on: 01291 641686 or email: bobandwenche@aol.com" 15 Newton Manor, Shirenewton, NP16 6UA .

If you are not already using a direct debit and would be willing to do so, a form is included in this magazine

COST OF THE PARISH MAGAZINE

We need to make new printing arrangements for the Parish Magazine because Joyce Norfolk will retire by the end of 2015. This is a good opportunity for the PCC to review the financial arrangements for the publication, look at improving the quality and the ability to print pictures. The price has been held down at 50p per issue (£5 a year) for as long as most people can remember, and represents exceptional value for money. The PCC has decided to print the magazine in colour, which will be much better for reproducing photographs to accompany articles, and believe that a price increase is justified and necessary. After discussion it was agreed to increase the price of the magazine from £5 to £10 a year from March; and increase advertising costs from £30 to £40 per half page. This will still represent very good value for money for a very informative local publication.

Annual subscriptions of £10.00 for the 10 copies of the magazine for the next twelve months became due in February, would you kindly arrange to pay your regular "News boy / girl" during this period.

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

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

MAKE A NOTE!

Shirenewton Church have arranged two more "Bring and share " evenings:

Friday, 6th March – speaker is Ian Mills of Abraham's Children in Crisis – a charity which children of all denominations in Gaza. (see page 19 for details)

Friday 24th April – speaker is Catherine Todd who will talk about the challenges of being a prison chaplain

Both events are open to all – just turn up with a plate of food and possibly a drink and enjoy an evening of good company and food

NEWS FROM ST PETERS, NEWCHURCH

As we go into Lent things are quiet but spring is around the corner and there is a good show of snowdrops in the churchyard.

From the registers:

Burial

On Wednesday 11th February, the funeral of Mrs Phyllis Evelyn Mary Mayo was held.

WHIST DRIVES

A Diary Note for potential Whist Players



Whist Drives at the Recreational Hall Shirenewton will resume on the 7th May and continue on the first Thursday of each month until the end of the year – we would love to see some more new faces. There happens to be Polling Booths at the Rec. on that day so why not combine your civic duty with a game of whist. We are open from 7 p.m. and start playing at 7.30 promptly – we have a 15-minute break for light refreshments and then play on till approximately 9.45 depending on the number of tables playing. We also have a raffle in aid of The Recreation Hall funds.

Auriol Horton. 01291 641844

ST THOMAS A BECKET & MERTON AUGUSTINIAN PRIORY.

Looking around in 1997 for something to do in our borough to celebrate the Millennium, I "discovered" the ruins of a most important priory. Checking the internet showed that almost nothing of it was publicly known.

Connecting with a local historian we learnt that on 3rd May 1117 the canons of Merton Augustinian Priory said and sung the Office of Nones at 3pm as they entered their new building on the River Wandle. The 3rd May 1998 fell on a Sunday so Nones was arranged, with the help of a RC Augustinian nun, and about 25 invited guests from every denomination and none. They enjoyed an historic moment within the Chapter House remains of Merton Priory. Nones has been said at Merton, London, in memory of the canons' work once a year since.

Magna Carta (x) was refined at the priory a century later into the 11 Statutes of Merton which head the statutes of the realm. Walter de Merton was Clerk at the priory later and founded Merton College Oxford from there.

Within a very short while of the founding in 1117, thirteen "daughter " priories had been colonised by the canons. Holyrood Abbey was one, founded from Merton by King David of Scotland in 1128. Nones has been said in Holyrood Abbey for several years "with" us. This year we have a choir and a canon for Holyrood and the Processional sang at Merton in 1117 will be sung for the first time.

St Thomas a Becket, also known as Thomas of Canterbury, or Thomas the Martyr, went on retreats at the priory and stayed, when in Canterbury, at St Gregory's Augustinian priory, a daughter house of Merton. He was educated at Merton Priory and wore their habit when Archbishop.

It is hoped that all the churches dedicated to him will be able to share in this annual event when we remember all we owe to the canons of Merton Priory. This year Nones falls on the very day again when the canons entered - 3rd May at 3pm.

"The Middles Ages in Britain are unique in the world's history.....the influence of Alfred the great affected our cultural world view - the Magna Carta was the foundation of democracy". Rev John Peck BD. ALBC. One of the founders of Greenbelt Arts Festival and College House, Cambridge.

*Shirenewton Community Council,
St. Thomas a Becket Church
Shirenewton Local History Society
oOo*

*The Village will be holding an event to
commemorate the First World War
on*

*Friday, Saturday & Sunday
17th, 18th & 19th April
at*

*The Church Room
Shirenewton
we will be hosting
the*

*County W.W.I. Exhibition
To include our own
Village War Memorial*

There will be a flower display in the Church

*Friday: 10.00 am - 4.00 pm
7.00 pm - 9.00 pm*

Saturday: 10.00 am - 4.00 pm

Sunday: 12.00 am - 4.00 pm

Refreshment will be available throughout the day

SHIRENEWTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Planning applications considered - none received in February.

Extracts from the minutes

Talk by Nick Ramsay AM - Mr Ramsay gave a presentation on the devolution of tax raising powers to the Assembly, he distributed an explanatory handout and confirmed that this is a huge and complicated issue which will be happening in 2018. He then responded to a question and answer session.

February Police Report - There were reports of a number of suspicious incidents and one crime relating to the theft of hay bales.

Meetings had progressed in relation to safety discussions on the B4235. The last meeting between Gwent Police and Highways had taken place on 27.1.15, the next is to have discussions with Community and Town Councillors from the affected areas - date to be advised.

Calls to Brookacre - 6 in December, 2 in January - no effect on community.

Council felt that information provided in the report only told of community incidents, not all police activity in the area.

The Chair confirmed the need to engage with the newly appointed police inspector, Clerk to invite her to attend a meeting of the Council.

Items of local concern

Mynyddbach notice board - the board has been repaired and will be available for collection w/c 9.2.15. The second notice board for Shirenewton village is under construction.

Telephone kiosk - . Notification received from BSSB Sandblasting on 2.2.15 that work on the kiosk has been completed. Noticeboard/shelving can now be fitted. Meeting to be arranged between SCC Chair, Clerk and owner to confirm and sign lease (when work has been completed).

Planting of wildflowers in 2015 - N Leaworthy of Mon CC has confirmed that preparation will begin at the end of February (weather permitting) of as much of nominated areas as possible. Areas nominated were Crick/Shirenewton road verges; ground opposite Kirrin House at footpath to school; Spout Hill to Postman's Lane; Cock-a-Roosting triangle; area of bus shelter at Gaerllwyd crossroads; top road junction to Earlswood.

Common Land Application (Circuit of Wales)

Councillor Morton reminded members of the history of common land, poor land and poor woodland. Local commoners being allowed to graze livestock. The Open Spaces Society was formed to protect common land (an offshoot of this is the National Trust). Council was asked whether there was an appetite to be stakeholders in the administration of commoners rights. There is to be a Public Enquiry in Ebbw Vale on 10.3.15, which is expected to last two weeks. The Chair advised members to familiarise themselves with the Pre-Inquiry meeting notes circulated on 2.2.15. Clerk to contact OSS to ask whether they have commented and what they think the effects will be on this area.

David Davies MP will attend the Council meeting on 13 April - in response to a letter sent on traffic issues on B4235.

Lease of Earlswood field - The Community Council is looking for expressions of interest in a field in Earlswood that it is planning to lease on a 3 year rolling agreement. The field is 5.18 acres in size and is for grassland or arable use. If you are interested in this opportunity, please contact the Clerk to the Council, (details below).

Dates of next meetings: Monday 2 March and Monday 13 April 2015 at 7.30 pm at Shirenewton Recreation Hall.

Find full information in the draft copy of the minutes on the Community Council notice boards. Previous minutes of meetings can be found on the Council's website <http://www.shirenewtoncc.org.uk>

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

STARGAZING



At around 10 in the evening mid-month, the Constellation of Leo the Lion can be seen to the South. It is one of the few constellations that looks like its namesake. It commemorates the giant lion that Hercules slaughtered as the first of his labours. Leo is dominated by his head, which looks like a sickle or back-to-front question mark. The bright blue-white star Regulus is at the base of the question mark. The name Regulus translates as “prince” in Latin, whilst its Arabic name means “the heart of the lion”.

The seven stars of the Great Bear are in the eastern sky and the “W-shaped” constellation of Cassiopeia can be seen in the north-west. Orion the Hunter is still a fine sight in the south-west.

In the evening, when it is starting to get dark, the planet Venus is a brilliant object to the west. At the beginning of the month, the planet Mars can be seen just below Venus and as the month advances the two planets move apart. The Moon can be a useful way of finding the planets. On the 22nd the new crescent Moon is just below Venus, which should make a fine sight. The bright planet Jupiter is in the south-east and is joined by the almost full Moon on the 2nd.

In March 1781, William Herschel of Bath was observing stars in the constellation Gemini when he discovered a new planet. This was the first new planet to be seen since the beginning of history and resulted in Herschel being knighted and given a royal pension. In gratitude to the king he wanted to call the planet George! It was ultimately named after the god Uranus, conforming to the tradition of naming the planets after characters in classical mythology. Incidentally, Herschel's house in Bath is open to the public. The planet Uranus is quite faint but can be seen with the naked eye, under a dark sky, provided you know exactly where to look. The best views of Uranus, to date, were taken by the Voyager 2 spacecraft in 1986. Some of the brilliant images taken can be seen on <http://voyager.jpl.nasa.gov/image/uranus>.

SHIRENEWTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 1090167

Our January meeting took place at the Recreational Hall, Shirenewton, where we opened up our archive and brought out our new acquisitions for members to browse. To carry on our theme of Edward Joseph Lowe, who was an astronomer, and had planned to build an observatory in the grounds of Shirenewton Hall, we set up three telescopes to view the night sky. Dr David Thomas was at hand to explain the layout of the stars on that particular evening, just a small amount of light pollution from the direction of Newport but other than that we had a cloudless sky. Warm drinks and a chat ended the evening and everyone went home saying, 'We must do this again!'

Dates for your Diary:

Monday, 9th March	Archive Meeting at the Recreational Hall 2.00 pm – 5.00 pm
Tuesday, 31st March	Meeting at the Huntsman Hotel at 7.30 pm Talk entitled, 'Troy House' given by Dr Ann Benson

Everyone welcome at the above events

Further information on our web-site: www.shirenewtonlocalhistorysociety.co.uk



Chepstow Choral Society



Musical Director – Graham Bull

with the

CCS Orchestra (*leader* – Paula

Kempton)

Present

***Vivaldi* – Gloria**

***Schubert* – Mass in G**

***Haydn* – ‘Nelson’ Mass**

Saturday, 21st March, 2015, 7.30pm

St Mary's Priory Church, Chepstow

Charlotte Ives *soprano*

Siân Menna *mezzo-soprano*

Ben Smith *tenor*

Edward Price *baritone*

Tickets: Adults £12; U18s and students free

From: Choir members, Chepstow Bookshop or on the door or

Telephone (01291) 623310 or 620414

CCS is affiliated to Ty Cerdd – Music Centre Wales and Making Music

Registered charity no. 1127098

CHEPSTOW CHORAL SOCIETY.

MUSICAL DIRECTOR: GRAHAM BULL.

CHEPSTOW CHORAL SOCIETY will present its annual Passiontide Concert at **St MARY's PRIORY CHURCH, CHEPSTOW ON SATURDAY MARCH 21st at 7.30pm.**

The programme will feature Antonio Vivaldi's famous Gloria, Franz Schubert's Mass in G and Joseph Haydn's Imperial ("Nelson") Mass. All three works are for chorus, orchestra and soloists, and represent a wonderful programme of well-known choral works from the 18th and 19th century repertoire, in differing styles.

The Society has, for many years, performed its Spring Concert on this particular weekend in the calendar, and always aims to choose appropriate choral music in relation to the season of Lent. Such concerts are challenging to mount in these less than easy times for choral societies like Chepstow - many small-town choral societies, once a lifeblood of singing in communities like ours, are no longer active, having sadly fallen to increasing costs and demands which come with achieving quality performances, along with the easier access to large towns and cities which are the home of our national orchestras, larger choral societies - and the Cathedral Choirs, who also provide wonderful sacred music all year round for the Church seasons, *However*, with all that in mind, CCS very much hope that this particular programme will encourage CHEPSTOW music lovers to come along and hear **CHEPSTOW CHORAL SOCIETY** – *their* local Society – presenting music which is challenging, fulfilling – and utterly appropriate..

The CCS concert on March 21st will feature the **CCS orchestra led by Chepstow-based Paula Kempton**, comprising a group of professional instrumentalists, and also **four magnificent soloists** – all of whom are making return visits to Chepstow. **Charlotte Ives (soprano)**, **Sian Menna (alto)** and **Edward Price (bass)** will be remembered for their wonderful singing (Mozart's *Requiem* 2006, Edward and Sian in *Elijah* 2007, and Charlotte with Vaughan Williams' highly challenging *Benedicite* in 2008). **Ben Smith (tenor)** sang with CCS for the first time in 2013, and we are delighted to welcome him back.

Tickets are available for this concert from Chepstow Bookshop and choir members. For further information please telephone (01291) 623310, 620414, 650472.

Please come and support your local choral society

Thank you. Marjorie Duerden (Assistant MD, Chepstow Choral Society).

SHIRENEWTON WI NOVEMBER 2014

The days are getting longer and with strangely on off winter weather it's been easier to get out and about. It's certainly nice not to have to worry about the weather when going to evening events.

We met on February 12th, enthusiastic for an introduction to Tai Chi. Ms Julie Morgan was our speaker/Tai Chi tutor, she takes classes at the Leisure Centre to promote and enhance participants' wellbeing.



Julie uses a set of 16 moves developed by a Tai Chi master teamed up with a doctor. The moves can be used to help everyone, especially people recovering from trauma, strokes and injuries. The system allows participants to engage standing or sitting and to progress as their abilities increase. Julie took us through the warm up exercises and then the moves with everyone doing what they were comfortable with. There is a strong element of mental relaxation and everyone said they benefited from the experience. We thought that doing Tai Chi for wellbeing was a very good idea, especially since many of the exercises can be done as part of daily activities.

We thanked Julie for a very interesting experience and several members asked questions relating to problems Tai Chi could help with.

On March 12th we have our WI Birthday celebration at the Rec Hall 7pm. This year we are celebrating 63 years of Shirenewton WI and 100 years of the WI in Britain.

In April we will have a talk by Rhian Morgan on 'Genes', 7:15pm at the Rec Hall on Thursday the 9th.

FAIRTRADE NEWS

I've learnt a couple of things this week:

In Norway all tax returns are publicly available.



In the US one programme rewards individuals who expose tax problems in their workplace. Whistleblowers can receive up to 30% of the tax proceeds resulting from their information. In 2013 122 whistleblowers shared awards totalling 53 million dollars.

Are the HSBC revelations beyond my remit? Possibly. However, what we have discovered is certainly not 'fair', even if some of the convoluted manoeuvres are technically not illegal - though it seems quite a few really were, illegal that is. 'Tax avoidance' ('vanilla' to - crimson? - scarlet? - black??) - 'Tax Evasion' : a sort of continuum, with a line at some point.

I return, with some degree of frustration to my minuscule efforts to get a few more pennies into the pockets of struggling cotton farmers, jute growers, tea pickers, rice growers and the millions of other producers who supply us with many of life's necessities. Smallholder farmers grow 70% of the world's food but make up HALF of the world's hungriest people.

'Above all we must realize that each of us makes a difference with our life. Each of us impacts the world around us every single day' Dr Jane Goodall.

Buy fairtrade!

The Traidcraft spring catalogues have arrived. New products include dried mushrooms, coconut milk, chutney and curry sauce, pretty scarves and tops and much, much more.

Or contact Traidcraft direct

Marion McAdam 641 316 msm316@gmail.com

SHIRENEWTON CHURCH WEBSITE

www.shirenewtonchurch.com

Well I have listed the old XP laptop I upgrade to Zorin on eBay. Unfortunately I didn't get around to it for a while and the auction is still running. No bids yet (I put it on for a minimum of £25 plus postage) but there are 7 'watchers' so I'm confident it will sell. You'll have to wait until next month to learn what I got for it.

However, talking of eBay, it's very useful for getting rid of stuff you no longer need. If you've ever looked at something and thought it's really too good to take to the skip, someone must want it, etc. - the answer is 'chuck it on eBay'. If it's large or would cost too much to ship, list it for 'collection in person only'. Someone will buy it and come and collect it and even pay you for the pleasure. It's free to list and you pay only when you've sold the item (10% + VAT). Let me give you two examples:

1. I had an old petrol strimmer which I'd stopped using when I got my Stihl multi-function device. It was sitting in the shed taking up room and had been for about 15 years. I recently sold it on eBay for £16.75. Listed it at 99p for collection only and someone in Abergavenny is now it's proud owner.
2. My 20 year old cement mixer was only ½ working – it would only turn ½ loads. I acquired Terry's when he was selling his which gave me the challenge of how to get rid of my old one. eBay was, of course, the answer. I sold it for £22 and a nice man who spoke very little English turned up in a Lithuanian registered mini-van to collect the 'bone shaker' as he insisted on calling it.

The key is to describe the item honestly, add lots of photos, put a starting bid of 99p and then see what happens. If it doesn't sell the first time, it will automatically re-list. You can re-list it as many times as you like. The best time to list stuff is early evening as eBay operates on a 24 hr cycle. So if you list it at 7:30pm the auction will end at 7:30pm. I normally list for 7 days. Another tip is, as a seller, not to give the buyer feedback until the buyer has given you positive feedback. You don't want a position whereby you give the buyer positive feedback and they then start whinging.

I've got rid of a lot of stuff this way and find it works really well. Because of the eBay feedback system people are much less likely to mess you around than something like freecycle.

Another top tip. Going on holiday this summer and need a satnav? It's expensive to rent one from the car hire company (typically £10 per day) and purchasing one with EU maps is likely to cost you the best part of £100. The answer? Purchase a Nokia phone and (assuming you get the correct one) you get a worldwide license for 'Here Drive+' which gives you a complete satnav which does not rely on having a data feed. This is exactly what I did. I purchased a Nokia 630 from Tesco (which actually we got free on Tesco's points). It's locked to the Tesco network but the point is I haven't used it as a mobile phone at all. It simply works as a satnav. I download the maps I need in advance. You can get a Nokia Lumia 630 from around £55 online. A 32GB micro SD card onto which to load the maps is about £12 from Amazon.

So, as you start booking your Easter and summer holidays please use the Church website. There is a comprehensive travel section and you can book flights, hotels, hire cars, car parking, lounge access and, in fact, everything via the church website and help the church with it costing you any more.

Safe browsing.

David Cornwell

webmaster@shirenewtonchurch.com

Earlswood Village Hall



**Come along to a traditional
'Skittles and Games Evening'**

Saturday 9th May 7.30pm

Adult £8:00

Child £5:00

Price includes a Ploughman's Supper.

There will be a Licensed Bar featuring

Bob the Barman's Speciality Beers

Tickets from :

Christine Stanley 641 616 chris@earlswoodmarketing.com

Glynis MacDonald 641 818 or glynis.macdonald@btinternet.com#

Louise Dyke 650 076 louisedyke607@btinternet.com

Come and join us!

21st June



+



This is a date to put in your diaries !

**Earlswood Hall's Annual Mid-Summer Walk
up to the top of Gray Hill**

And back.

Followed by Afternoon Tea in the Hall

Details tba



"Our Village..... World War One" And Flower Show



The County Record Office has organised a Travelling Exhibition to coincide with the centenary of the outbreak of WW1. It illustrates how the War affected the people of Monmouthshire and has been researched by the County Archivist Tony Hopkins. It will be coming to Shirenewton on Friday 17th April to Sunday 19th April and will be held in the Church Room, Shirenewton.

There will also be a Flower Show in the Church that same weekend.

If anyone has any information or local memorabilia, we would be delighted to put it on display. For more details contact:

Dorothy Brabon 641 376 (Shirenewton Local History Society)

or Glynis MacDonald 641 818 (Church Room Bookings)

A 'Bring and Share' Evening

In December £541.48 was raised for the "Abraham's Children in Crisis" which supports children from all faiths - or none - in war torn Gaza. On Friday 6th March, Ian Mills from the charity will be coming along to The Church Room to a 'Bring and Share Evening' and to give a short talk about the work he and his fellow workers do. It's at 7.30. Bring a plate of food to share and something to drink. All welcome.

Chepstow Agricultural Society
Homecraft Section

Are holding a
COFFEE MORNING

ON

Saturday, 25th April

AT

Beaulieu House

Shirenewton

(by kind permission of Janet Horton)

AT 10.30 AM

£2.00

Everyone welcome

Help at home

Lougher Home Care Ltd

Companionship, Personal Care

Meal Preparation , Shopping

Accompanied Trips , Over Night Stays

We can help with the things you find difficult.

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Contact Sadie or Hywel Lougher

Tel 01633 88 11 77

Email sadie@lougherhomecare.co.uk

Web site www.daycarewales.com

Members- Care Forum Wales #

UKHCA (United Kingdom Home Care Association) #

Regulated by and registered with #

CSSIW (Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales) #

Approved by and working with Monmouthshire County Council

CARERS WANTED

Contact Sadie or Hywel Lougher

GARDENING CORNER

I was sitting on a log in our top field a couple of weeks ago. I don't sit and contemplate very often, but I had brought a load of firewood back to the drying shed and the assistant head gardener had promised to bring me up a cup of coffee and a Welsh cake on my return from the woods. So with the wood unloaded and a cup of coffee in each of our hands we were enjoying some lovely warming sunshine on our backs, and as we often do, agreeing how lucky we are to be living in such a wonderful area. We have lived and worked in this area for 33 years now and will probably never move away. Whilst deliberating things in general, we came back to reality with the sound of a honey bee buzzing around our ears. I had been starting to get a little worried as I hadn't seen any about, and with the mild weather that we have been experiencing in general I had visions that they would be eating their way through all of their winter supplies.

As we sat there continuing to contemplate, we heard more and more bees getting airborne, probably quite thankful that they could get out flying at long last and no doubt go to the toilet! Their legs must have been pretty tightly crossed, as they won't relieve themselves in the hive, knowing that this would cause disease. If they can't get out they risk the chance of getting distemper, which can cause drastic results in a cold, wet spring. So with the sun making things even warmer I decided that the next job would have to be to take advantage of the weather and open the hives up, and feed them some candy to ensure they have enough food to see them through the next month or so. This was duly done, but I was pleased to see that, not only were there plenty of bees in the hives (and very few dead at the entrances), but also that they appeared to have plenty of honey supplies still. Also a good sign was that some bees were bringing back small loads of pollen, probably from the hazel catkins that are hanging well in the hedgerows at the moment.

One hive was conspicuous by the lack of any bees, but this was the one that had lost its queen at the end of last year and despite efforts to create a new one, it never happened. So without a queen the fate of the hive always was going to be sealed. Taking it apart any bees left were long dead, but the super was still full of honey. I will look at this to see if any can be extracted, but it will probably be easier to stand the frames out down at home and let the bees clear everything out. You have to avoid this anywhere near the hives as all this will do is encourage robbing (where bees from a neighbouring hive go next door and steal their honey supplies).

That done it was time to take advantage of the weather and carry on clearing up outside. I have now finished cutting all of the hedges and started to strim all the areas of bramble up the field. I try to cut the bramble in rotation as the flowers are an absolute must for the bees and the fruit isn't half bad either! Down the garden where things have got out of hand it has been a case of cutting all of the self seeding ash trees off and also the brambles and then poisoning the cut stems to prevent re-growth. Some of the trees have been big enough to cut some firewood from, not big, but it all helps to keep the home fires burning. We are

semi-fortunate to have a number of mature trees along our one boundary. I say semi because it's these that supply the copious amounts of seed to cause all the young trees growing anyway! Over the last few years these trees have grown quite a few large lower limbs which were starting to cut out a lot of light from the garden, not to mention the mess landing on the washing! So these have now been cut off, the garden sees more light, there is more firewood for the store and the wash maid is also very happy as she will now only have to do the washing once, rather than twice!

I have bought a trailer load of sawn wood, which will be used to repair the raised vegetable beds. These have been stacked in the smaller tunnel to dry off. They have been treated with timber preservative, but when they are a little drier, I will give them another dose of treatment in order to extend the life expectancy. Hopefully I won't need to replace them again. There are several of the beds that need a complete replacement, and others that have just one or two pieces that have rotted away, so these will have to be replaced before we start to plant the beds. The hot bench in the small greenhouse has now been turned on and the first seeds have been sown. Sweet peas and broad beans have taken up a fair bit of the room, but the first salad crops have also been sown, mainly salad leaves, tomatoes and peppers. I need to ensure that I don't sow the greens so early this year, as I was too keen last, and we ended up with winter greens in early autumn and nothing much now.

In the garage the early and main crop potatoes are shooting on the work bench. The shallots are stored as well, but I will shortly be planting these into pots in order to give them an early start. I did this last year with quite good results. In the flower beds we have had enough frosts to kill all the tops on the alstroemarias. This didn't happen last year as the winter was so mild. This will allow us to clean the beds off properly, weed and then manure them. I never did get around to digging up the dahlia's or gladioli, but hopefully it hasn't been too cold that they will have been caught by the frosts that we have had. For the first time in several years I have bought a few flower seeds this year, so hopefully we will have fresh flowers in the house on a regular basis. I do like to see a couple of vases of 'cottage garden' flowers brightening up the rooms. I have bought some larkspur, stocks and antirrhinums, which are varieties bred specifically for flower arranging. As well as the sweet peas I intend to buy some summer flowering freesia's which will add some heady scents to the arrangements. I have also ordered a few more dahlia tubers as well so hopefully I will be in the really good books of the assistant head! There is rain forecast for today, so there won't be a lot done outside. I can see that I'll be retreating to the workroom in the garage and start to clean up a lot of the bee equipment, especially the old frames. Normally I scrape these off and tidy them up, but this year I have bought a cheap tea-urn to sterilize the frames in once they have been cleaned, hopefully to ensure no nasty diseases.

to prevent re-growth. Some of the trees have been big enough to cut some firewood from, not big, but it all helps to keep the home fires burning. We are Happy gardening until next month. Steve and Felicity Hunt.

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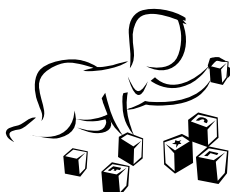
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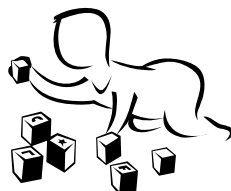
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Professional printing however is slightly more expensive and as a result the purchase price of the magazine has had to be increased. In addition the advertising cost will also be increased from 1st March 2015.

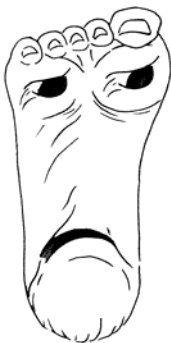
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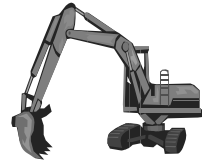
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Nerys's Natty Nosh

Beetroot

Beetroot is one of the latest vegetables to be crowned a 'superfood'. Various studies have suggested that drinking beetroot juice can improve stamina when exercising, lower cholesterol and blood pressure, improve heart, health and liver function, reduce risk of dementia, and fight against cancer. The versatile vegetable is also a good source of many vitamins and minerals, including vitamin C, which is important for tissue growth and repair, and folate, which helps to reduce the risk of birth defects in unborn babies, as well as helping to prevent anaemia.

Roasted Beetroot

Ingredients

8 tennis ball size, fresh beetroot

3 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil

Sea salt flakes

2 sprigs fresh thyme

Method

1 Preheat the oven to 400°F/200°C/Gas Mark 6.

2 Carefully wash the beetroot under cold running water and pat dry with kitchen paper. Cut away the leaves making sure you leave at least 2.5cm/1" of stalk to prevent bleeding.

3 Place the beetroot in a large, roomy roasting tin, sprinkle with the oil, roll the beetroots in the oil to make sure they are well covered. Sprinkle with salt and thyme. 4 Bake in the preheated oven for

40 - 45 minutes or until the beetroot are soft but not shrunken. Leave to cool, rub the skin away with a piece of kitchen paper, cut away the root and stalks and use as desired.

Roast beetroots work well with soft goats cheese and seasonal greens, in a salad, gently warmed and served on pasta with fresh rocket, as a side dish with any meat, or simply on their own with an extra drizzle of olive oil.



To Bake Beetroot

Preheat the oven to 170C, 325F, Gas Mark 3. Put the whole beetroot into a baking dish, cover with foil and cook for 1-2 hours. Exactly how long will depend on the size of the beetroot.

To microwave Beetroot

Prick the beetroot skins with a fork. Arrange in a shallow dish with 3 tablespoons of water. Cook on high for 20- 30 minutes, depending on the power of the microwave. Cool then peel.

Smoked Mackerel Salad with Beetroot, spinach and Avocado. Serves 4

Ingredients

2 tablespoons pumpkin seeds
150g baby spinach leaves
100g watercress
½ red onion, thinly sliced
1 avocado peeled and sliced
2 cooked and peeled beetroot sliced into wedges
4 fillets smoked mackerel or peppered if preferred

Dressing

3 tablespoons sunflower oil
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
1 teaspoon mustard
Freshly ground black pepper

Method

1 Gently toast the pumpkin seeds in a small pan over a medium heat for 2 to 3 minutes. Cool.
2 Arrange the leaves on a large plate, scatter over the red onions, avocado and the beetroot wedges.
3 Remove the skin and fine bones from the mackerel, break into large flakes and place on the salad.
4 Mix together the dressing ingredients and season to taste with the black pepper. Dress the salad and toss to coat, scatter over the toasted pumpkin seeds and serve immediately.

Hints and Tips

1 To avoid damaging the beetroot, it is better to cook before peeling. Always leave a few inches of the top, where the leaves are, to prevent bleeding.
2 Herbs and spices that go well with beetroot are, bay leaves, thyme, citrus fruits, chives, garlic, pepper, horseradish and mustard.
3 Fresh beetroot can be eaten raw. Grate and serve with horseradish sauce as an accompaniment or sprinkle on salad. Add raw grated beetroot to a cheese sandwich.
4 When preparing beetroot it is advisable to wear plastic disposable gloves or a clean plastic bag to hold the beetroot.
5 To remove beetroot stain from skin, rub with lemon juice and salt before washing with soap and water.
6 Beetroot can be eaten raw, as a snack, served in salads and starters. Beetroot can be made into soups, added to main courses, included in pickles and chutneys and even added to chocolate cake. Enjoy!

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	Andrew Baker	01291 641925
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PCC Treasurers	Kevin Bounds	01291 641818
PCC Members	Mark Broughton	01291 641797
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	Janet Horton	01291 641783
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	Jane Smith-Haddon	01291 641525
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Organists	Karen Millar	01291 650521
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Tower Captain	Mike Penney	01291 650653
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Safeguarding Officer	Dr. Kerry Baker	01291 641925
Church Flowers	Maureen Moody	01291 641524
Parish Magazine Editor	Terry Walters	01291 641338
200 Club	Bob O'Keefe	01291 641686

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	Tony Hughes	01291 641360
	Mario Lenza	01291 641333
	Phil Moles	01291 641521
	Beverley Moore	01291 641532
Mynyddbach Ward	Lynne Prosser	01291 641666
	Ian Moore, Chair	01291 650766
Newchurch West	Louise Dyke	01291 650076
Earlswood Ward	Paul Harris	01291 650871
	Ken Morton	01291 650268
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Parliament	David Davies	020 7219 8360 daviesd@parliament.uk

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Shirenewton & Mynyddbach	Beverley Moore	01291 641532

Earlswood	Sue Leat	01291 641207
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	Jaci Crocombe	01291 641681
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Earlswood Valley Methodist Chapel	Avril Smith	01291 650733
Gaerllwyd Baptist	Mrs E Remnant Brooklands, Usk Road NP16 6SA	
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DIARY DATES

March	Event	Location
2 7:30pm	Community Council Meeting	Recreation Hall
6 7:00pm	Bring and Share	Church Rooms
9 2:00pm	Shirenewton Local History Society	Recreation Hall
12	Shirenewton WI (WI's 64th Birthday)	Recreation Hall
21st 7:30pm	Chepstow Choral Society Concert	St Mary's Priory Church Chepstow
22 8:00am	Extraordinary High Tide	Chepstow Bridge
31st 7:30pm	Shirenewton Local History Society	Huntsman Hotel
April	Event	Location
9th 7:15pm	Shirenewton WI	Recreation Hall
13 7:30pm	Community Council Meeting	Recreation Hall
17th 10:00am	County W.W.1 Exhibition	Church Rooms
18th 10:00am	County W.W.1 Exhibition	Church Rooms
19th 12:00am	County W.W.1 Exhibition	Church Rooms
24th 7:00PM	Bring and Share	Church Rooms
25th 10:30am	Chepstow Agricultural Society Coffee Morning	Beaulieu House Shirenewton

	Saint Thomas a Beckett Shirenewton	Sunday Services	Start 10.00 a.m. Unless stated otherwise
Date	Service	Readers	Sides-persons
8 th March	Third Sunday of Lent	Bob Grattan Cynthia Smith	Bob Grattan Cynthia Smith
15 th March	Fourth Sunday of Lent Mothering Sunday	Bill Clarke Janet Horton	Bill Clarke Janet Horton
22 nd March	Fifth Sunday of Lent Passion Sunday	Gillian Lambert Ruth Savagar	Gillian Lambert Claire Lewis
29 th March	PALM SUNDAY	SEE BELOW	

DATE FOR YOUR DIARIES - Sunday 29th March (Palm Sunday)

Apart from the usual 10 a.m. service on Palm Sunday in the Church of St Thomas á Becket, Shirenewton, there will also be a Deanery Service at St Mary's Church, Caldicot at 6 p.m. at which Bishop Richard, the Bishop of Monmouth, will preach. This is an ideal opportunity to meet your Bishop.



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The views expressed are those of the contributor.

Deadline for April 2015 issue is 9:00am 23rd March 2015