



Shirenewton

Parish Magazine

May 2019

Price £1.20

## FROM THE VICARAGE

Julian E LI White

Somewhere, tucked away in the Old Testament, is quite a well known passage which has it '*To everything there is a season*'. It goes on to cheerfully remind us that '*There is a time to be born and a time to die*'.

This emphatic pronouncement is a clear reminder to us that everything has its time and place. It also reminds us that it is God, and not us, who calls the shots.

Yes, we need this reminder. Otherwise we tend to dwell in a world where everything is presented as being fluid and subject to what *we* feel to be appropriate.

When I was a child (here we go again!) there were certain food-stuffs that you simply could not consume because they were not around all the time. Nowadays, if the fancy for strawberries, for example, is upon us in mid-January we simply buy some which have been cultivated in Morocco, South Africa etc and transported to our shores. In the old days we would have had to wait until they were 'in season'.

Fancy an Easter Egg? Why not pop to the shops at almost any time of the year and treat yourself to one. Do you relish the sentimentality which surrounds Christmas? Well, forget the religious trappings and the set date of December 25<sup>th</sup> and enjoy the season in an all-singing, all-dancing secular interpretation which is presented for *your* convenience. It might cost a few quid but, hey, isn't it worth it!

Easter, which will be over by the time that the magazine reaches you, is also a potential victim of this vapid secular interpretation. Pity they keep moving the precise date of the celebration year by year, so let's cast our net wide and sign up to it at a time of personal convenience.

I read an article by *Caitlin Moran* the other day which likewise cast a jaundiced eye on the way we observe seasons. She reminded us that the love of autumn, for example, is slightly weird in that it celebrates a time of things dying and the onset of decay.

It seems to me that the God given seasons are the times upon which to reflect on different themes in turn. Winter is the time to dwell on the importance of fortitude; Summer, we are aware of things coming to fruition,, the abundance of natural produce and suchlike; Autumn on maturity and things which cannot be hurried and Spring on new life and the emergence from darkness.

The church, wisely I feel, will have little involvement with the attitude of 'Anything Goes!' and 'If you want it NOW, what's stopping you?'

Easter, for us Christians, is the time to exult in the promise of new life following the seriousness and deprivations synonymous with the Lenten season. We might still suffer materialistic hardships but the over-arching triumph, a closer walk with God (as the old hymn puts it), has already – thanks to Jesus Christ – been won.

With every Easter blessing to you.

## CALLING ALL 200 CLUB MEMBERS!

200 Club subs for this year are now due. Many people have already paid by standing order (thank you!), but for those of you who prefer to pay by cash or cheque ***please contact Aileen Doggett at Church House, Shirenewton, Chepstow, NP16 6RL, 01291 641459, [aileendoggett@btinternet.com](mailto:aileendoggett@btinternet.com), as soon as possible***. If paying by cheque, please make the cheque payable to "Shirenewton PCC 200 Club".

If you're new to the area and are wondering what the 200 Club is all about, then read on... For each £10 subscribed you are allocated a unique number which is entered into the monthly draw. You can sponsor as many membership numbers as you like in your own name, on behalf of family members or even a pet!

There are 10 draws per year, August and January being the exceptions, and each draw pays out prizes of £40, £30, £20 and £10. The draws take place on the third Sunday of the month. The four lucky winners are announced in church and are notified in the Parish Magazine.

Where does the money go? Half the money goes to you as prize winners and the other half to the church.

## FROM THE REGISTERS

### **Burial**

3rd April 2019,  
Gwenda May James 1940 - 2019

## THANK YOU

I have been overwhelmed by the kindness and love shown to me after my recent accident. Thank you for visiting me whilst in hospital and since I have been home, for your prayers, for the many cards, the flowers, the help with shopping and so much more.

I feel fortunate to live within such a supportive community and I hope to be out and about soon but it is a very slow recovery.

Sally Saysell.

# **SHIRENEWTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

## **Extracts from the minutes of the April 2019 meeting**

### **Co-opted vacancy on the Community Council**

There is a vacancy for a co-opted member to represent the **Shirenewton** ward. If you are interested in the community and would like to become involved with the Council, then please contact the Clerk (details below)

### **Planning applications considered:**

1. DM/2019/00380 Chapel Cottage, Gaerllwyd Farm to Gethley Rd, Newchurch Extension and alterations to provide accessible bedroom and bathroom with associated works. Council recommended approval of this application.
2. DM/2019/00355 NRW Forestry at Coed Mawr, between Itton/Shirenewton Agricultural Notification - Refurbishment of woodland access to enable thinning works to deliver sustainable woodland management. Council had no comment to make on this Agricultural Notification

### **Monthly police report -**

6/3/19 – Report of a farm office at an animal sanctuary broken into on the Mounton to Shirenewton lane overnight. Cupboards were forced open and a tin containing petty cash and a credit card were taken.

6/3/19 – Report of 2 shipping containers at a farm broken into on the same stretch of the above road. Padlocks cut off and entry gained. 2 chainsaws and other power tools were taken.

11/3/19 – Report of an equestrian barn entered overnight on the Earlswood road. Several saddles, horse rugs and a pair of wellingtons were stolen.

14/3/19 – Report of approximately 20 black bags of compost and plant matter dumped in a ditch on the Old Road, Pen-y-cae-mawr. Mon CC informed.

18/3/19 – Report of a 2 vehicle non injury road traffic accident in Earlswood. The incident brought down a power line. The road was closed while western power dealt with it.

21/3/19 Report of a 2 vehicle rtc at a crossroads on the B4235 Usk Road near Mynyddbach.

A reminder to report any suspicious activity/crime at the time via either 101 or 999 if deemed an emergency.

## **Other items of interest**

Annual Grant availability – application forms are now available for local organisations to apply for grant aid from the Community Council's 2019/20 budget. The closing date for applications is 28 June 2019, with decisions being made at the Council meeting in July. Please contact the Clerk for an application form.

Update on the Village Plan Survey – the survey form will be distributed at the beginning of May, to be completed and returned by the end of May. Please make every effort to fill in the survey to make sure you have your say on the future of the community. Returned forms may be left at Earlswood Hall, Shirenewton Recreation Hall (in the new post box), completed online, or sent direct to the Clerk.

Best Kept Village Competition 2019 - Once again, the Council has entered Shirenewton in the Best Kept Village competition. Judging will be held during June 2019 with marks being awarded for the appearance, condition and cleanliness of the village. The Council would like to see more residents involved in helping out with the preparation of the public parts of the village before the judging – such as strimming verges, tidying hedges, litter picking etc. Please see more information on the Competition further on in the magazine.

Coffee Morning followed by Community Litter Pick – the Council will be holding a Coffee Morning at the Village Market in the Recreation Hall on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May from 10.30am – 12 noon. If you would like to talk to your community councillors, then this is your chance. This will be followed by a Community Litter Pick at Shirenewton from 2pm. The litter pick will tie in with tidying up before the Best Kept Village Competition and the more 'pickers' we have, the better. So please get involved and do your bit for the community. Bags have been supplied by Keep Wales Tidy.

Dates of future meetings –Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May - Annual General Meeting at 7.00pm, followed by the ordinary meeting at 7.30pm at the Recreation Hall, Shirenewton Members of the public are welcome to attend and may speak with the Council for the first 15 minutes of the ordinary meeting. Next meeting - Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2019.

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)**

## **BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION 2019 CAN YOU HELP?**

The Community Council will be entering Shirenewton in the competition again this year and we need to rally the troops. Judging will take place between 1<sup>st</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup> June and marks are given for the appearance and condition of the village, village hall and playing field, war memorial, churchyard, bus shelters and surroundings. The condition of hedges, fences, walls and verges is also taken into account, as well as the tidiness of flower and vegetable gardens, outhouses and sheds. Bonus marks are given for the general appearance of the village, noting the absence of litter and refuse dumps. **BUT** marks are deducted for any unsightly areas.

Last year Shirenewton scored well, but lost the award to Llanfair Discoed. Do you think we can do better than that this year? Of course we can. It will mean everyone in the village helping, not only with their own gardens, plant pots and hanging baskets, but also by being aware of their surroundings and taking care of the public parts of the village - the entrances to the village, weeding and clearing verges and footpaths and picking up litter near your home. Two planters have been replaced and new ones bought by the Community Council this year. Planting them will take place in mid-May and if you are able to donate plants, they will be very welcome. If you can help with planting or would like to sponsor a trough, please let me know, offers will be gratefully received.

Shirenewton has entered this competition for several years and scores well because residents are proud of their attractive village and take care of its environment. Let's make a special effort this year and aim to walk away with the Best Kept Village prize.

Hilary Counsell  
Clerk to Shirenewton Community Council  
Tel: 01291 421307  
[Shirenewtoncc@gmail.com](mailto:Shirenewtoncc@gmail.com)

## **DO YOU KNOW THIS CAT?**

He's spent increasing amounts of time with us since February last year and is presently almost resident. We understand he may have wandered here from somewhere in Itton. He's a chatty, unneutered Tom of friendly disposition—suggesting he's had a home at some time. We would like to know where (if anywhere) he belongs. If you know him, or if he's yours, please text us on 07922 423957.

We will adopt / rehome him if unclaimed. We will consider that he is our cat unless we hear otherwise by the end of June. After this we will endeavour to take whatever steps are necessary to provide for his future (including neutering, microchipping and vaccinating) to continue his integration with our existing cat team.



## **Did you know that Sunday Papers are available in the village?**



Sunday newspapers are available by pre-order for collection from the Saysell Centre (also known as the Church Room) between about 9.45am and 11.15am most Sundays. If you would like us to collect a paper for you, please call Andrew Baker on 641925 or sign up here [shirenewtonpapers@gmail.com](mailto:shirenewtonpapers@gmail.com)

And coffee and cake is usually also available at about 11am if you fancy some company.  
Organised by Shirenewton Church

# Life

# Changes

# COFFEE MORNING

At the Tredegar Arms Shirenewton  
1st FRIDAY OF EACH MONTH  
From 10 am to about 12.

## THE BELLS

On Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> April we rang the bells in support of Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris as requested by the Archbishops of York and Canterbury. This broke a long tradition of not ringing in Holy Week. In 2012 I visited Notre Dame north west tower and counted just 3 bells (according to Wikipedia there were 4) – a small number for a Cathedral as during the French revolution the bells were plundered for metal for what Wikipedia suggests was for cannon balls. I suspect not for cannon balls but - as high quality bronze - for cannon itself. However, I digress – in 2013 the original number of bells (as Quasimodo would have known) was recast and now number 10. St Woolos Cathedral in Newport has 12 and Shirenewton has 6. And, of course, French bells are not rung (in the British sense of full circle co-ordinated ringing) but swing chimed (now by electric motors) to produce a cacophony of random sounds - what British bell ringers would call a racket. However, we are extremely thankful that the bells were saved in the fire and wish them well in the restoration of this magnificent building. For your interest there are just 2 full circle (proper) rings of bells in continental Europe – Dordrecht in Holland and Ypres in Belgium – but 2 more are on the way.

As an added bonus to campanophiles out there you will be pleased to know that St Thomas a Becket, Shirenewton this year is hosting the Monmouth Diocesan Annual Striking Competition at 4.00 pm on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May. Bands of ringers will be in competition for a local award and thus go forward with a chance to compete at the All Wales event. So get out into your gardens, switch off all extraneous noise, put your mobiles on silent, sit back and luxuriate in the sound of bells as bands from across Monmouthshire attempt ringing perfection. Who says ringing is not a sport? – active, skilled and competitive.

Mike Penney (Tower Captain).

### **ST PETER'S CHURCH, NEWCHURCH**

CAFE STYLE SERVICE 19TH MAY. ALL WOULD BE ESPECIALLY WELCOME.

CREAM TEA AFTERNOON 15TH JUNE 2-4 P.M. AT CHURCH FARM  
(IF WET IN THE CHURCH).

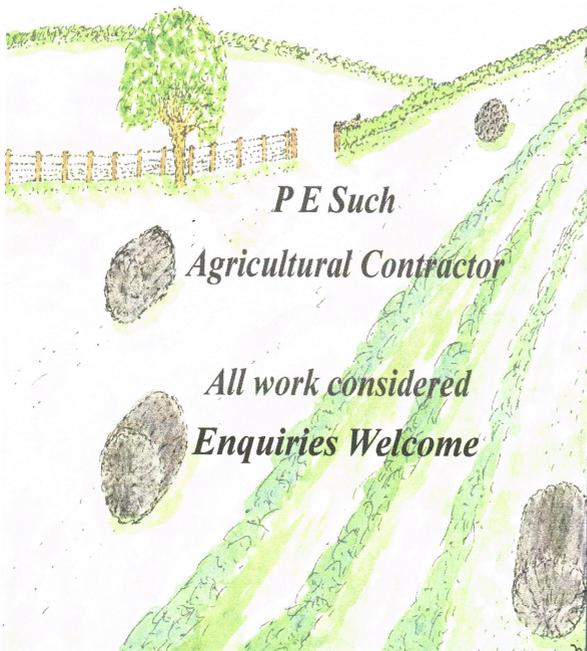
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# Good news!



The sharp-eyed amongst you will have noticed that some parts of the interior of the village church are looking a little unhappy – the walls are running with damp and the plaster is spalling and falling off, which is unsightly and could be dangerous. And it is damp and cold inside, currently not a very appealing place to visit or spend any time.

The Parochial Church Council (volunteers who take care of the church on behalf of us all), have sought advice from specialist heritage architects about the problems and as the church is Grade II\* listed, we have been advised that the work needed to put it right will be expensive.

Over the last few years much of the fundraising that has been done by the congregation and supporters in the village has been to be ready for such an eventuality, but the costs of this project will far outstrip the reserves that have been built up.

So, a small team has been applying for grants to help us to undertake the urgent repairs that are needed.

We are delighted to report that some £89,000 has been secured through the Heritage Lottery Fund, which will help us to tackle a significant proportion of the work that will be needed. If you play the National Lottery, thank you – some of the money raised goes to causes such as this, to keep our heritage in good order.

We hope that work will begin within the next 3-6 months. We will work with our architects and contractors to try and minimise the impact of the work on the use of the church, both for Sunday services, but also for the quiet time and place to escape that we know many value.

As the project progresses there will be bulletins and updates and an opportunity to get involved.

**Charles Eickhoff and Janet Horton**



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# Shirenewton 800

A reminder of what it's all about...

Our parish church appears in records as having been founded in circa 1220, so it seems fitting to mark the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this event in some way. Current thinking is that we should arrange a year of events to celebrate. These would be community events – not fundraisers (but we must consider how they are to be funded if necessary), probably launching the year of celebration at the Fete in June 2019 and closing with the Fete in June 2020. It would need to provide a mix of events that offer something for everyone, but events that the community wants

What has happened so far?

The concept has been discussed and the History Society, School, Church volunteers and Community Council are supportive. A Questionnaire was circulated seeking ideas for events that the community would support. Small community grants are being applied for as seed-corn funding (experience shows that it is very competitive and so we may not be successful) and an open 'social' evening was held at the TA at the end of January to gather more views/ideas. Thank you to all who have contributed so far. As a result, several events are promised/in train;

A Shirenewton murder-mystery  
Creation of a new photographic record of the village

A Big Band evening – Earlswood Hall

A smaller jazz afternoon with fizz – at the Church Room

A classical concert at the church

A teddy-bears' picnic

An 'Art Safari' – inviting local artists/art groups to come and paint/sketch at locations around the village with viewing of creations in progress and finished, with tea and cakes for visitors

Most popular ideas not yet adopted

- The creation of a something permanent for the village to mark the event; ideas include
  - The creation of a viewing point over the Severn estuary and bridges
  - Map of the village showing house names
  - Permanent Heritage/visual history trail with plaques
  - Sculpture of some sort (located by the Well/Spring, or in the Church or elsewhere)
  - Souvenir booklet (make sure each child gets one)

- Treasure Hunt – for all ages
- Guided walks
- Bike ride around the village with routes for families and for enthusiasts
- Rounders/5 a side walking football tournament
- Incorporating some of the other excellent ideas into regular events that happen already (e.g. Shamble 2, Super Saturday and the Fete – Medieval theme, Big Village Picnic or Campfire, Festival and Fireworks, Photo-Booth and dress-up, Aerial photo of as many of us as possible on the Rec)

### **So what next?**

If several people will work in small teams to deliver one of these events, the work gets shared, and we will all benefit for a fabulous year.

Which of these events would you be happy to lead or get involved with? Can you bring a small team of friends or neighbours together to deliver one of these ideas (or indeed another idea not on the list), or would you be happy to team up with other volunteers to move one of these forward? Please could you have a think and call Janet on 641783 or reply to this email address.

Charles Eickhoff and Janet Horton

### **OPEN ACCESS TO BURIAL RECORDS AND THE GRAVE PLAN**

Bill Clark and Dave Cornwell are coordinating the digitisation of the Church burial register and the plan of where the graves are located. The intention is to put all the information on the church website for everyone to access. This will require the current information in the Church burial register and on the grave plan to be checked and updated over the next few months. Bill and Dave would be delighted if people in the community would like to assist them in this task to share the workload. The graveyard is divided into several plots, and if anyone or a group of people would like to take on a plot or two we can give them the current information we hold so they can check it and update it. If you would like to help, please contact Bill on 01291641783.



## Christian Aid Week



Jane and I thought we'd do something different this year. So....

**Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> May at The Chantry**

**11:00 - 2:00**

**"Brunch and Buck's Fizz"**

Pitch up and share brunch with us.

### Menu

Toast and marmalade,

Grapefruit garnished with a cherry

Sausage, baked beans, eggs and bacon

Granola no less... with yoghurt and fruit

Croissant and pain au chocolat

Tea, coffee and/or Bucks Fizz

You don't have to eat everything

of course...

### Raffle

All donations will go to Christian Aid



## FAIRTRADE NEWS



'Extinction Rebellion' : the group causing massive disruption in London evokes differing reactions. One acquaintance described the protesters as 'eco terrorists'. His wife secretly admires them, conceding however that she herself could never become involved with such a flamboyant and active group. Climate change deniers point out, quite rightly, that flux in our climate has always happened, but the overwhelming majority of experts (sorry Gove!) has linked the warming to human activity. It is fair to say that by the time we know with absolute certainty we may all be burned to a crisp.

It is comforting to know that one of the criteria for fairtrade certification is environmental sustainability. Palm oil has, justifiably, a very poor record environmentally. This ubiquitous ingredient, ideal for intensive cultivation, has resulted in enormous losses of forest in south east Asia. Trees are cleared (often illegally) and the timber sold, scrub is burned, creating vast palls of smoke, visible from space. Animals die as their habitat is destroyed. Traidcraft works with organic and fairtrade producers in Ghana (original home of this marvellous crop) and Ecuador to grow palm oil sustainably, in a way that supports smallholder growers and allows the palm plants to grow naturally without destroying the environment.

Healthy soil is in fact the basis of all farming, of all growth, of all trade, of all nourishment and of all economic security. Robin Roth, a Traidcraft employee recalls visiting an organic tea farm in India:

'I remember standing in the foothills of the Himalayas in Darjeeling. The valley I was in was lush and green with plenty of tree cover, and the endless lines of the bushes were broken up by patches of woodland and forest. The (non-organic) estate straight ahead on the other side of the valley was stripped bare, dirty brown and there were small rock falls – avalanches you might call them – where the earth had just slid off the rock taking whole fields with them. It was disturbing to look at, but most fascinating was the view down the valley to the enormous plains below. We must have been at 4.000 feet so we could see some 50 miles or so. The plain below was a dust bowl – completely stripped of all vegetation – apart from directly below us.

The waters that passed through the organic tea estate carried no pesticides with them and as a result a stretch of green flowed out down to the plain below directly beneath us. There were healthy trees to begin with, subsiding to scrub, and then grass. Eventually it all deteriorated into the dead plain as the clean water drained away. I will never forget that sight.'

Soil degradation is not just about killing the soil, it's about seeing it blow away. In Ohio, the corn basket of the USA the ground is, literally, getting lower every year as the dead soil – dust, just blows away.

Traidcraft is helping poor farmers cope with the pressures of global warming. Fairtrade offers a sustainable alternative to the wide spread exploitation of the environment by the majority of large scale producers, where profit is the only real goal.

Marion McAdam 641316 [msm316@gmail.com](mailto:msm316@gmail.com)

See Ethical Superstore or Traidcraft for a really wide range of ethical products



Local Author

## Tash McAdam - We Are The Catalyst

(The Psionics Series - Can be read as a standalone)

	<p><b>Paperback:</b> 357 pages  <b>Publisher:</b> NineStar Press  <b>ISBN-13:</b> 978-1-950412-28-0  <b>eBook:</b> Kindle, Kobo &amp; Nook</p>	
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### Author

Tash was educated at Shirenewton & Chepstow Schools and worked as a waitress in The Carpenters' Arms, Tredegar Arms and as a Lifeguard at Chepstow & Caldicot Pools. Tash earned her first Karate Black Belt at Chepstow Leisure Centre. Tash graduated with first class honours in Computing & Design before obtaining a Cambridge TEFL Certificate and teaching ESL in the UK, South Korea, Chile & Canada. Tash has travelled widely volunteering at a Game Park in South Africa and travelling in Europe, Australia, NZ, USA, India and South America before settling in Vancouver, Canada and qualifying as a teacher at the University of British Columbia.

### Synopsis

Kidnapped and imprisoned, telepathic children are forced to gather military intelligence. Repeatedly stripped of their memories, they live in ignorance of the world above. You can't tell anyone a secret if you don't remember it. It's not child abuse if no one knows you exist.

### Amazon Young Adult Dystopian Hot New Releases

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## **Shirenewton Babies and Toddler Group**

**Thursdays 1.30 – 3p.m. (term time only)  
Shirenewton Recreation Hall**



**Great toys, good company – everyone welcome  
(please bring your Carers too!)  
Contact Jackie Broughton (01291 641797)  
for further**

## SHIRENEWTON CHURCH WEBSITE

www.shirenewtonchurch.com  
www.shirenewtonshop.com



The Daily Mail had an article in 'This is Money' regarding how an O2 customer had been charged more than £1,000 after his mobile phone was hacked and used to send hundreds of texts to (presumably) premium numbers in Japan. This emphasises the need for virus protection on your phone if you run Android. I covered this recently in the December issue and, so to save you the trouble of going to the Church website and downloading the December issue I've copied my summary below:

Sophos is free and good. The Android Authority review (<https://tinyurl.com/y9s5zo43>) says 'if you're going to have one, try this one first'; AV-Test.org (<https://tinyurl.com/jpkgye6>) broadly shows most of the top names are level pegging when it comes to protection; and, TechRadar's summary (<https://tinyurl.com/y9lwazu3>) singles out Sophos and Antiy AVL (which scores just as well as the 'big boys' in the AV-Test rankings), the latter is particularly lightweight which may be a consideration on underpowered devices. So, what would I do if I didn't have Lookout? Install Sophos or Antiy AVL. One last consideration is that if you want parental controls apparently the Trend Micro app has these as well.

Moving on to other stories I've covered. After I discussed smart speakers (in the Feb issue), it transpires that Amazon employees listen in to thousands of Alexa recordings to ensure that the software is correctly understanding the human voice recordings. Included in the recordings reviewed were, reportedly, a possible sexual assault, a woman singing in the shower and a child screaming for help. This was widely reported in the MSM in early April. Just another reason, as far as I am concerned, why a smart speaker device will never darken my doors. I want to be able to sing in the shower in peace!

Most recently, the MSM has been covering the 'go live' date (15th July) for the UK's age verification check to prove users are over 18 before accessing online porn. This legislation means that websites which offer said adult content will need to implement robust age checks to ensure users from the UK are over 18. It will be interesting to see if it works. Most mainstream ISPs (Internet Service Providers, i.e. BT, Virgin, Sky, Plusnet, Talk Talk, etc.) currently offer parental controls which

you can use to ensure that no one attached to your internet can access adult content. So there is a mechanism in place already which the government believes isn't working. This new legislation now places the emphasis on the adult websites themselves to provide the block.

This is, in theory, great and protects children, etc. but it will be interesting to see whether it makes any difference in practice. Most adult websites are hosted outside of the UK and for those that do go to the trouble and expense of implementing the age verification checks, there are multiple ways around the block – primarily by using a VPN to suggest to the website that you are not accessing it from the UK. I've previously covered VPNs (July 2018 issue) and recommended using VPNs as a means to increase security when accessing the internet from holiday destinations. They are also rather handy for allowing you to access UK based content which is restricted outside the UK (such as the BBC iPlayer) and non-EU websites which can't be bothered to implement GDPR and simply geo-block users from the EU with a statement such as 'this content is not available in your region' – for example, a number of mainstream US news outlets. Again, a subject I've previously covered.

In an update from July's issue, I now use Nord VPN which costs circa £60 per year for 6 devices. However, there are multiple free VPNs and following Opera's lead (which now has a free, unlimited, subscription less VPN built-in) major browsers are bound to follow. In fact, in the last week, The Times reported that 'Google's plans to encrypt Chrome will make it harder to block harmful material' and that 'the new version (of Chrome) will bypass most parental control systems and undermine the government's attempts to stop under-18s viewing pornography'. It is also worth noting that this initiative simply restricts access to adult sites. It's clear that a lot of adult content is shared on social media which is not subject to these restrictions and is already encrypted. Plus ça change plus c'est la même chose!

You'll be pleased to know that neither the Church website ([www.shirenewtonchurch.com](http://www.shirenewtonchurch.com)) nor the online shopping portal ([www.shirenewtonshop.com](http://www.shirenewtonshop.com)) are subject to age verification checks so it will be business as usual on 15th July for us. Please do visit and do your online shopping via the portal.

Safe browsing drc Web Master

## **GARDENING CORNER**

This month seems to have flown by and it was a bit of a shock to get Terry's timely reminder about the deadline for this month's magazine effort. So I'm scribing this early on Easter Sunday, looking out of the window at what promises to be another very warm day. Looking out of the window I can watch the antics of the birds on our 'feeding tree'. No sparrow hawk at the moment but it's only a matter of time. He has got more of an aerial challenge now – the house martens have arrived – but even they can be caught if the timing is impeccable on the hawks part. One year we watched in amazement as the hawk flew round the corner of the house and took a marten just as it was launching from its nest. No chance of survival there, unlike a little blue tit the other morning. The hawk landed in the tree and just one bird was left stranded. Not knowing what to do it decided to make a break for some neighbouring trees, but they were nearly two hundred yards away. Thinking it was doomed, I watched it flutter left, right, then up and down with the hawk following every change in direction just a foot behind. Incredibly the blue tit made it to the first branches and the hawk had to pull out of the chase. All of the artificial marten nests are already taken (eight in number), so any later arrivals will have to build their own. I had put them on the house earlier than normal, because I thought the unseasonable warm weather of some weeks ago might encourage them to make the long journey that bit sooner – but it didn't! I knew there would be trouble the other week when I noticed that a pair of sparrows had taken up residence in one of the nests. I wasn't bothered particularly as for some reason sparrows are very rare in our garden. The martens had other ideas though and a war to evict the sparrows commenced. The martens won through in the end, but the sparrows put up a spirited fight – even to the point where one marten was trying to take flight with a sparrow's beak hanging on to its wing!

The change in the weather this week has enabled me to finally open the bee hives up and see what is going on. I was dreading this job, as ideally you would open them up slightly earlier, and if nothing else, get the queen excluder on. This is a metal insert which has precisely cut slots which let the smaller worker bees through, but not the larger queen or drones (the males). The sections above the excluder are then used to store honey, whilst the area below is for the queen to lay eggs and the worker bees to nurture the young brood. If the excluder is too late going on, the queen will start laying wherever it takes her fancy – usually the nice clean 'supers' which are meant for the honey! I had lost a couple of the weaker hives over the winter period, but this was no real surprise. They had two chances. The late autumn weather had meant there were an awful lot of bees in most of the hives and I was concerned that a bad winter (cold and wet wise), would result in problems. In the end the winter was good and the unseasonably warm spell in February allowed me to put some frames of solidified honey on some hives, and fondant icing on the others. I hoped that this would be enough to see them through, but as the period of grey, not very warm days extended well into April I was beginning to get concerned. You need a temperature of at least 15

degrees to open the bee hive's right up, otherwise you can chill the young brood and kill an entire generation. Opening up the first hive I immediately noticed the large number of bees, and working my way in I discovered that the queen had started to lay in two of the supers, with hardly any in the actual brood frame itself. The pattern of egg laying can best be described as 'rugby ball shaped'. Fortunately the top side of this only just extended into the second super, with newly laid eggs, so I shook all the bees off the frames put the queen excluder on and then replaced the super. The bees would most likely continue to attend to the young eggs and hopefully the queen will now be below the excluder rather than above it, laying the eggs where she should be. I'll know next time that I take a look at them! Usually the queen runs away from light, so she would have sought out the darker base. Three of the hives were in a right muddle as the queens had laid and there was mature brood, right the way through the top layers of the hive. With so many bees about as well I had to make the best of a bad job. Normally I run the hives on what is known as a 'brood and a half'. This is the larger brood frame section and a super as well (the half). This hopefully gives the bees more room and makes them less inclined to swarm. The remaining hives had been relatively well behaved, and so queen excluders were put where they should be and then closed down for another week or so. Hopefully reasonable weather will allow me to keep an eye on things regularly.

It is now the busiest time in the garden with sowing continuing apace, followed by pricking out and repotting of the young plants. For some reason I am still getting very patchy germination and I have had to sow several crops – including sweet peas – for a second time. Even once they have been pricked out into individual pots the problems haven't ended. Many have rotted off and others have recently frazzled in the hot sun. So I can see it being a bit of a battle this year. Those that have got going are doing well. The tomatoes have recently been re-potted for a second time and are now in quite large pots, sticks have been inserted and the plants tied up to prevent the plants from flopping about everywhere. I'm also busy taking off the side shoots. The peppers (both sweet and hot chilli) have been slower to get going, but they are showing signs of movement now, as are the courgettes, marrows, squash and cucumbers. I know a bad workman always blames their tools, but I changed compost this year as I was struggling to get supplies of the one I had used in previous years. Although relatively well priced, the quality has varied immensely from bag to bag and delivery to delivery, with some bags being very hard to get water into, and then retain it, whilst others have become completely water-logged, the latter resulting in a number of the young plants rotting. Fortunately I have been able to prepare many of the outside raised beds in the vegetable patch and so planting has commenced as soon as the plants have been ready. The early crop of brocolli, cauliflowers and cabbage have been planted and immediately protected with the insect proof netting I have started to use more and more. Also planted up are the onions and leeks. I have a

*Continued on Page 22*

*Continued from Page 21*

second crop of 'greens' coming on and it will soon be time to sow the next. I'm consciously trying to now keep each sowing to just a dozen or so plants, although the earlier sowings were larger. This is because the earlier sowings then miss the main insect attack period, they grow better in the cooler conditions (slower and more 'hard') and a bulk harvest allows us to replace the broccoli gratin and cauliflower cheese 'instant meals' in the freezer. We used to freeze the crop first and then make the final dish, but actually making the dinner first and then freezing is much more effective – and it allows for home grown 'ping' meals when time is short! I have also started sowing the first seeds direct into the ground, such as carrots and parsnips. If you haven't got round to this yet there is still time, so don't panic. I find that those crops planted later often catch up, especially when the weather is kind. I have bought two large 'cloches' which are fifteen foot long by four foot wide and about the same high. The frames are then covered with the very fine insect mesh. They have to be built as they arrive in 'Ikea flat pack' style so this will be my next task as I will need to cover up the carrots with one, to prevent the ravages of carrot root fly, and the next planting of greens so prevent cabbage root fly and the small and large white butterflies. This physical barrier saves the cost of using pesticides, which are not only getting more expensive, but less efficient as the EU bans many of the more effective active ingredients. I get why, and to be honest I have only ever resorted to their use when desperate, but the fine mesh netting is a brilliant alternative, especially when used with the large cloches.

As soon as I get on top of the vegetable patch I need to turn my attention to the large fruit cage and then the flower beds. I never finished constructing the cage last year so the wildlife cleared out any fruit that tried to ripen – hopefully this year will be different! I have managed to weed and keep on top of the beds nearest to the cottage, so these are looking well and have been a real picture with the early spring flowers. Others furthest away are in a state and will be completely re-dug and planted up afresh. But more of that next month  
Happy gardening until then.

*Steve and Felicity Hunt.*

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## *Nerys's Natty Nosh*



Studies have shown that a high intake of dark-leafy vegetables, such as spinach or cabbage may significantly lower a person's risk of developing diabetes type 2.

Spinach, for example, is very rich in antioxidants, especially when uncooked, steamed or very lightly boiled. It is a good source of vitamins A, B, C, E and K, as well as selenium, zinc, phosphorus, copper, folic acid, potassium, calcium, manganese, and iron.

## *Smoked Mackerel salad with Beetroot, Spinach and Avocado. Serves 6*

### **Ingredients**

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

### **Dressing**

- 3 tablespoons sunflower oil
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- Seasoning

### **Method**

- 1** Gently toast the pumpkin seeds in a small frying pan for 2/3 minutes.
- 2** Put the leaves, red onions, avocado and beetroot on a serving platter.
- 3** Remove the skin and fine bones from the mackerel. Break into pieces and place on the salad.
- 4** Whisk together the dressing, season to taste. Pour onto the salad. Scatter the pumpkin seeds on top. Serve immediately.



Sweet potatoes are rich in dietary fibre, beta carotene, complex carbohydrates, vitamin C, vitamin B<sub>6</sub>, as well as carotene. Sweet potatoes are known to improve blood sugar regulation and some studies have discovered significant antibacterial and antifungal properties. The primary nutritional benefit, and the one for which Okinawan sweet potatoes are especially prized, is their high antioxidant levels.

## *Sweet Potato Wedges*

### **Ingredients**

2 large sweet potatoes, washed and cut into wedges  
1 tablespoon harissa paste  
Soured cream and chives, to serve

### **Method**

Heat oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. In a large bowl combine the wedges with the harissa. Transfer to a baking tray and cook for 40-45 mins until the potatoes are tender and crispy at the edges. Serve with soured cream mixed with snipped chives.

### **Purple sweet potato.**

**People from the Ryukyu Islands (of which Okinawa is the largest) have a life expectancy among the highest in the world. The traditional diet of the islanders contains 30% green and yellow vegetables. Although the traditional Japanese diet usually includes large quantities of rice, the traditional Okinawa diet consists of smaller quantities of rice; instead the staple is the purple-fleshed Okinawan sweet potato. Not easily obtained in Britain, but some larger supermarkets have started selling it.**



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## STARGAZING IN MAY 2019

The five stars forming the “W” of Cassiopeia lie to the north in the evening night sky. Constellations usually have Ancient Greek names – the name Cassiopeia was used by Ptolemy, a great Greek astronomer living in Egypt when it was part of the Roman Empire around 100 AD. On the other hand, the majority of stars have Arabic names – Arabic Astronomy was centred on Baghdad from about 800 to 1200 AD. Unusually the middle star of Cassiopeia is called Tsih, named by Chinese astronomers. This star has been used as an easily identifiable reference during space missions. Its traditional name in Welsh is Llys Dôn, which means the Court of Dôn, a character in the Mabinogion folk tales.



Other prominent spring constellations are the familiar seven stars of Ursa Major, commonly called the Plough (a traditional Welsh name is Y Sospan, which hardly needs translating), which is now overhead in mid-evening, and Leo the Lion in the southern sky.

Our constellations are formed by connecting stars together. Australia’s Aboriginal peoples use the dark areas of sky, absent of stars, to construct outlines of objects. One of these dark areas is called the Emu.

You have to be up really early in the morning or late in the evening to see planets. The planets Jupiter and Saturn are close to the horizon to the South at dawn, with Jupiter being the brighter. Jupiter can also be seen in the South-East late in the evening. Its joined by the almost Full Moon on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May.



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Readers and Sides Persons		May - June	
<b>St Thomas a Beckett Church, Shirenewton</b>			
Date	Sunday Service	Readers	Sides Persons
<b>5th May</b>	Third Sunday of Easter	Mark Broughton Glynis MacDonald	Mark Broughton Graham Lambert
<b>12th May</b>	Fourth Sunday of Easter	Aileen Doggett Paul Morcombe	Aileen Doggett Paul Morcombe
<b>19th May</b>	Fifth Sunday of Easter	James Loney Jane Smith-Haddon	Jane Smith-Haddon Claire Lewis
<b>26th May</b>	Sixth Sunday of Easter	Bill Clark Janet Horton	Bill Clark Janet Horton
<b>2nd June</b>	Seventh Sunday of Easter	Frances Grey Paul Morcombe	Frances Grey Paul Morcombe
<b>9th June</b>	Pentecost	Mark Broughton Diane Marlow	Mark Broughton Diane Marlow
<b>16th June</b>	Trinity Sunday	Chris Sturke Margaret Sturke	Chris Sturke Margaret Sturke
<b>23rd June</b>	First Sunday after Trinity	John Montague Jane Smith-Haddon	John Montague Jane Smith-Haddon
<b>30th June</b>	Second Sunday of Trinity	Group Service Mathern	In Mathern Church

## LOCAL DIARY DATES

May	Event	Location
<b>3rd 10am</b>	Coffee Morning	Tredegar Arms
<b>13th 7pm</b>	Community Council AGM Meeting	Recreation Hall
<b>18th 10am</b>	Village Market	Recreation Hall
<b>19th</b>	Café Style Service	St Peters Church Newchurch
June	Event	Location
<b>3rd 7pm</b>	Community Council Meeting	Recreation Hall
<b>7th 10 am</b>	Coffee Morning	Tredegar Arms
<b>15th 2—4pm</b>	Cream Tea Afternoon	Church Farm Newchurch
<b>15th 10am</b>	Village Market	Recreation Hall

## LOCAL CONTACTS

*If you know of any changes or omissions please contact the Editor Terry Walters  
Telephone 01291 641338 or email [terencewalters@hotmail.com](mailto:terencewalters@hotmail.com)*

### Church of St Thomas à Becket, Shirenewton

Rector	Revd Julian White <a href="mailto:Jel.white@btinternet.com">Jel.white@btinternet.com</a>	01291 622317
Parish Priest	Revd Nansi Davies CBE	01633 400 519
Lay Eucharistic Minister	Gilly Lambert	01291 641 175
Parish Visitor Coordinators	Revd Nansi Davies CBE Diane Marlow	01633 400 519 01291 641 407
Church Wardens – Rector’s – People’s	Sally Saysell Andrew Baker	01291 641 369 01291 641 925
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PCC Treasurer	Graham Lambert	01291 641 175
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**Secretary and Church Warden** Monnica Williams [monnica.williams@virgin.net](mailto:monnica.williams@virgin.net)

### MP/Monmouth CC & Community Council Representatives

**Community Council Clerk** Hilary Counsell 01291 421307 [clerk@shirenewtoncc.org.uk](mailto:clerk@shirenewtoncc.org.uk)

#### Shirenewton Ward:

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	Philip Butterworth 01291 641704	<a href="mailto:philip.b@shirenewtoncc.org.uk">philip.b@shirenewtoncc.org.uk</a>
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	Jane Smith-Haddon 01291 641525	<a href="mailto:jane.s@shirenewtoncc.org.uk">jane.s@shirenewtoncc.org.uk</a>
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#### Mynyddbach Ward

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#### County Cllr.

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#### Member of Parliament

David Davies 020 7219 8360 [daviesd@parliament.uk](mailto:daviesd@parliament.uk)

## **Police Neighbourhood Watch Contacts**

**Neighbourhood Police Officer** Matt Scree matthew.screen@gwent.pnn.police.uk  
**Neighbourhood CSO** Andrew Jones Andrew.jones@gwent.pnn.police.uk

## **Other Local Organisations**

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**Gaerllwyd Baptist** Mrs E Remnant Brooklands, Usk Road NP16 6SA  
**Ranger Guides** Helen Cann 01291 6628534 cannhelen@gmail.com  
**Recreation Association** Gordon Hughes 01291 641356 gordon.hughes3@tesco.net  
**Recreation Hall booking** Beryl Saysell 01291 641637  
**St Peters Church Newchurch**  
Enid Heritage 01291 622708  
enidheritage@gmail.com  
**Shirenewton Local History Society**  
Dorothy Brabon 01291 641376 brabonn1@hotmail.com  
**Shirenewton and Mynyddbach Fields Association Ltd (SAMFAL)**  
Neil Fuller 01291 641324  
**Shirenewton & Mynyddbach Initiative for Local Enterprise (SMILE)**  
Charles Eickhoff 01291 641716 eickhoff@shirenewton.org  
**Caerwent Group Mothers Union**  
Rosemary Carey 01291 425010 crcandkili@tiscali.co.uk  
**Treasurer** Auriol Horton 01291 641844 aur10l@btinternet.com  
**Shirenewton Operatic and Dramatic Society (SODS)**  
Glynis MacDonald 01291 641818  
glynis.macdonald@btinternet.com  
**Shirenewton Play Group** Beverly Lindsay Shirenewtonplaygroup@gmail.com  
**Shirenewton Primary School**  
Mrs Jill Mitchell, Associate Head Teacher 01291 641774  
email jillianmitchell@monmouthshire.gov.uk  
Jayne Edwards 01291 641774  
jayneedwards@monmouthshire.gov.uk  
**Shirenewton Tennis Association**  
P Brabon 01291 641376 brabonn1@hotmail.com  
**Shirenewton Toddler Group** Jude Langdon 07981 368213  
Paula Rimmer rimmerpaula@mac.com  
**Fairtrade/Traidcraft** Marion McAdam 01291 641316  
**Womens Institute (WI)** Diane Ashton Smith (President) 01291 628838  
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