

The cover of the magazine features a vibrant garden scene. In the foreground, a large, bright red peony is in full bloom, its petals ruffled and layered. Behind it, several white peonies with prominent yellow centers are also in bloom. The garden is filled with lush green foliage, including large, serrated leaves and several unopened green buds. The overall scene is bright and colorful, capturing the essence of a summer garden.

Shirenewton

Parish Magazine

June 2020

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CORONAVIRUS-COVID19

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

https://www.rpbooks.co.uk/regular-downloads-anglican?utm_source=Anglican+Regulars&utm_campaign=e7c800616b-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_03_18_02_35_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_d53d96a6d5-e7c800616b-218198459&mc_cid=e7c800616b&mc_eid=75e61babco

Our Lay Eucharistic Minister, Gilly Lambert, takes a simple eucharist every Sunday at 10 a.m. via zoom. If you would like to join the group, please email Gilly at lem.shirenewton@gmail.com and she will send you the link.

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

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

Dave Cornwell has set up a link on the Church website to advice on how to communicate whilst isolated. This is at http://www.shirenewtonchurch.com/one_off_events/2020-Communicating-while-isolated.pdf

GRAVEYARD DIGITISATION PROJECT

The PCC would like to thank Tom and Claire Lewis for all their time and work spent in the graveyard recording and checking names on graves for this project; and also thank the Shirenewton Local History Society for access to their records; and last but not least a huge thank you to Dave Cornwell for using his technical skills and know-how to put it all on line. He has written more about this on page 16.

VISIT OF THE BISHOP

The visit of Bishop Cherry Vann on 13th and 14th June is postponed. The Diocesan office are unable to advise us at the moment of an alternative date, but we will publicise it as soon as we know.

FROM THE VICARAGE

Julian E LI White

Dear People of the Parish,

The past weeks have been a time of confusion and speculation on account of the Corona Virus. It would be comforting to think that the Church would stand as a bastion of certainty in such times.

The immediate closure of church buildings has not altogether helped and many parishioners have expressed their disappointment that 'their sure refuge' in trying times, was shut even for private meditation. However, the Church in Wales' decision to act in this way in the light of possible cross-contamination is understandable.

The Church in Wales, we understand, is reviewing the situation on a regular basis and we trust that 'normal services' (forgive the pun) will be resumed as soon as possible.

Whilst much of my time has been given over to rearranging various parish commitments (not least the postponement of a dozen weddings), I – along with my colleagues – am still unable to let anyone know when we shall be 'open for business' as usual.

Any attempt to keep you informed of what is happening in the parish and elsewhere during this lockdown is not easy. I feel that I must again repeat that since Good Friday I have produced a Weekly Reflection which is kindly distributed by Jen Marendaz, the Mathern PCC Secretary, to all parts of the Grouped Parish. If you are not currently receiving this, but would like to have it, please contact Jen on 01291 329422 or alternatively email : ppccclerk.mathern@outlook.com

In light of the above, we can only presume until we hear otherwise, that most (if not all) church related events have been postponed pending further notice. Among them, unfortunately, we must include the eagerly anticipated visit by our Bishop to Shirenewton Fete and church on June 13th and 14th.

I can inform you that our band of parish Lay Ministers are trained and ready to go as soon as 'lockdown' restrictions are lifted. Once again I express gratitude and good wishes to them as they prepare for the future and to enhance our spiritual journey. To Lynne Bri-erley, Ros Downs, Gilly Lambert, Elsbeth Morgan, Margaret Nutter and Wendy Sinden are extended every blessing and the hope that their ecclesiastical attire withstand the threat of cosmetic contamination.

Over the past few months the conducting of funeral services has been challenging, to say the least, on account of the issues resulting from the Corona Virus. In this respect I must say how moved I was by the presence of so many inhabitants of Shirenewton at the last rites concerning the late Wenche O'Keefe a few weeks ago.

Many parishioners attended the funeral in Shirenewton churchyard, positioning themselves around the perimeter thus observing social distancing regulations, to support family mourners. This must have been appreciated by them and a befitting tribute to someone highly regarded in the community.

I have recently received notice concerning the Monmouth Diocese Enquiry and Review Commission:

The Bench of Bishops in the Church in Wales and the Representative Body have established an Enquiry into events surrounding the retirement of the Right Reverend Richard Pain as Bishop of Monmouth, and to review the procedures followed and decisions made by all those involved.

With every good wish, blessing and a prayer for calmness in this testing time.

Julian E LI White
(Rector)

MESh and Coronavirus (Covid-19)

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

They have arranged leaflet drops to every part of the Mynyddbach-Earlswood-Shirenewton Community (MESh) and a copy is included on page 8. They have used the template from the BBC at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cornwall-51880695>.

If you need help, just call or text a message to the number on the post-card and help will be at hand. If you have not received a post card/leaflet drop please contact Jeni Harper at jeh45_wales@yahoo.co.uk.

MESSAGE FROM GAVO

(Gwent Association of Voluntary Organizations)

We have been given **£25,000** by Welsh Government to distribute in small grants to support voluntary groups who are actively providing vital COVID-19 support to their communities in Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire and Newport.

To find out more and to apply please visit our website <https://www.gavo.org.uk/covid-19funding>

On this page you will find some other Coronavirus-related funding opportunities; you can also use the Funding Finder to find even more.

If you're after **non-Coronavirus specific opportunities**, we note some of them on [our Funding page](#), including funding for those affected by Storm Dennis, as well as local grassroots grants in Newport & Caerphilly and Food Poverty small grant in Caerphilly. Don't forget you have access to the free Funding Finder from this page too.

The claimants group needs to have a constitution, but SCC may be able to host the claim on the group's behalf. Please contact the clerk to SCC for more details.

EARLSWOOD ART YARD



Toby has been creating these amazing structures!
During lockdown he has produced some fantastic works of art, all angles, shapes and shadows against the sun and the sky. As I cycle past every morning, something new is against the horizon – it's worth cycling, walking, running past to see what's up! OK, maybe not running. But you have to be there as Toby deconstructs as fast as he erects. I think of this one as "Vitruvian Woman". Eat your heart out, Leonardo.
Glynis MacDonald



Congratulations to our 200 Club winners in April:

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Kha Koon Cornwell | 2. Jodie Johnsey-Smith |
| 3. Charlotte Broughton | 4. Sophy Ashby |

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

My name is

I live locally at

My phone number is

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

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

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

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

#ViralKindness

EMMA'S STONES

Emma and her daughter have set up a rock trail for the kids on their daily exercise.

Her daughter (5) wanted to brighten up her friends' daily exercise walks by leaving colourful rocks for them to find. So they set up a nature themed rock trail with clues of where to find them and each rock has a letter so that once you have found them all you can spell out a word. The idea is that you take a photo of the rocks when you find them and collect the letters.

All rocks are in normal public and community walking spaces and none have been left on the church grounds. Some of her friends have added new rocks too so there's more appearing!

Clues for the original trail:

1. A place enjoyed by moorhens, tadpoles and dragonflies.
2. Stand and admire the rushing white waterfall.
3. The Welsh word for hedgehog forms part of a house name. The sign is at the top of the drive (no need to leave the public road).
4. You can trip trap along this long bridge over the bog and marsh marigolds (the flowers may be over but look out for their large leaves).
5. This tree is considered ancient only when it reaches 900 years old! Although all parts of the tree are poisonous, birds love the winter berries. (They spit out the poisonous seeds).
6. Although we cannot sit here at the moment, we can still wander past the meadow flowers, butterflies and bees.
7. A place that we will one day enjoy as a community again, for now we can make a daisy chain and see the house martins swooping over.

The second trail left by her friends:

1. Find a flower in a place to send letters to friends and family
2. Find the dinosaur who is raring to go to school
3. Find a fairy waiting for news in the Samfal fields
4. Find the red truck who really wants to swing from its tyre
5. Find another flower where you used to be able to have a good chat with friends from afar...

FUTURE EVENTS

All planned events are, unfortunately, very much subject to the progress of the coronavirus-covid19. As far as we are aware, all future events have been postponed and will take place at a later date, and some may be cancelled. Please contact the organiser of the event to establish its current status, as shown in the table below.

Village Fete—13th June—POSTPONED—contact Andrew Baker

Visit of the new Bishop—14th June—POSTPONED—contact Bill Clark

Shirefest—20th June—CANCELLED—contact Phil Moles

Trip to Canterbury Cathedral—5th July—Julian White

Call My Bluff Winetasting—10th July—Kevin Bounds

CHEPSTOW CHORAL SOCIETY IN THESE TIMES ----

Needless to say, Chepstow Choral Society --as with all choral groups locally and nationally--is at present on hold. It is clearly impossible to give any indication as to the future be it programmes, re-start or planning. All choral societies are in limbo and likely to be so for some considerable time.

However, that does not mean we have totally pulled down the shutters, and during the forthcoming months, the committee will be aiming to gather a strategy for when resumption may be allowed. In the meantime, we wish all our loyal supporters --audiences, patrons, singing members --our best wishes and hope that they will keep safe and well. Thank you.
Marjorie (Duerden) on behalf of CCS.

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Shirenewton Community Council

The Community Council held its first virtual meeting on Friday 15th May 2020

The Chair welcomed all to the first virtual Council meeting and thanked them for their attendance. He acknowledged that the meetings planned for the 6th April and the Annual Meeting on 4th May had been cancelled due to the current pandemic which resulted in government restrictions on attendance at meetings. He explained that it was unfortunate that the public was unable to be involved in this meeting which was via Microsoft Teams, but notices had been posted early with the request that residents raise any issues with the Clerk beforehand. The Welsh Government was not recommending the use of Zoom because of security issues. Therefore future meetings would be held on their usual monthly date and, if possible they would be open to the public, but if restrictions are not lifted they will be by remote attendance of Council members, with the public encouraged to raise any issues with the Clerk, their ward Councillor or County Councillor (details below). The Annual Meeting will be held later in the year when restrictions are lifted and Council meetings are again open to the public. The Chair confirmed that he is willing to remain the Chair until that time. Council members were in agreement and thanked him for the offer.

We now have three vacancies on the Council and would encourage local people who are interested in the community to contact the Clerk to apply. There are people living in Shirenewton and the wider community that have local interests at heart – protecting the rural nature of the community, the countryside and the environment while supporting local organisations and residents. If this is you - **please step forward.**

Council considered one planning application as follows:

DM/2020/00268 Grove View, Earlswood

Outdoor menage for horse riding, area as outlined on attached maps/plans.

Council approved this retrospective application subject to the following conditions:

1. No external lighting without further planning approval;
2. No business/commercial use without further planning approval;
3. Land, including access, to be restored to pasture/agricultural upon dis-use as menage.

Vacancies on the Community Council
There are two co-opted vacancies for members to represent the Shirenewton ward and one vacancy for the Earlswood ward.

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

Councillor	Telephone number	E-mail address
Shirenewton ward		
Philip Butterworth	641704	Philip.b@shirenewtoncc.org.uk
Dr James Grose	641690	James.g@shirenewtoncc.org.uk
Jane Smith-Haddon	641525	Jane.s@shirenewtoncc.org.uk
Vacancy		
Vacancy		
Mynyddbach Ward		
County Councillor Louise Brown	0759897 9719	louisebrown@monmouthshire.gov.uk louise.b@shirenewtoncc.org.uk
Jayne McKenna	01291 691774	Jayne.m@shirenewtoncc.org.uk
Earlswood ward		
Ken Morton	650268	ken.morton@hotmail.co.uk
Vacancy		
Newchurch West		
Ian Martin	650014	Ian.m@shirenewtoncc.org.uk
Clerk to the Council Hilary Counsell	421307	shirenewtoncc@gmail.com

Monthly police report –

17/4/2020 – Report of off road bikes in Wentwood Forest.

18/4/2020 – Report of a Red ATV quad bike stolen overnight from a locked container at a property in Earlswood. Two padlocks were forced off to gain entry.

20/4/2020 – report of suspicious activity in the early hours of the morning at a property in Earlswood. Persons were using a torch in a nearby field. Officers attended and the police helicopter attended too and a wide search was made of the area with a negative result. No offences committed at that time.

30/4/2020 – Report of vehicles congregating in Shirenewton village hall car park. Officers attended but vehicles had left prior.

3/5/2020 – Report of two off road bikes in Wentwood Forest.

The police had been contacted to ask under what circumstances the police helicopter is used.

Other items of interest

Annual grants to local organisations - Application forms are now available from the Clerk for local organisations to apply for grants from the Community Council's 2020/21 budget. **Please apply before the closing date of 30th June 2020.**

Approval of the closure of the play area on 24.3.20 was given. Council noted that closure notices had been displayed by Mon CC on all outside play/gym equipment in the County. Last safety check made by Clerk on 24.3.20, gate locked, notices posted on boards and good supply of dog waste bags in telephone kiosk as all unnecessary travel banned. Hall car park closed on 30.3.20 on the instruction of Chepstow police. On 7.5.20 permission given to Mon CC to undertake agreed painting and repairs to the play area while it is closed to the public. This was undertaken week commencing 11.5.20.

Council resolved to financially assist MESH (Mynyddbach, Earlswood and Shirenewton help), local voluntary organisation providing services to isolated and vulnerable residents in the community, with up to £100 on the production of receipts for necessary purchases.

Permission was given to the Clerk and Cllr Smith-Haddon for the planting up of flower troughs through Shirenewton when lockdown restrictions are eased.

Dates of future meetings are Monday 1st June and 6th July 2020 at 7.00 pm. Future meetings will be held on their usual monthly date and, if possible they will be held in the Recreation Hall and open to the public, but if restrictions are not lifted they will be by remote attendance of Council members.

The following police information came in after the Council meeting but the Council thought it important enough to share with the community.

An operation was conducted between Monday the 27th of April 2020 and Sunday the 10th of May 2020 by Chepstow Neighbourhood officers and neighbouring stations (South Monmouthshire) to target offenders involved in the recent theft/burglary incidents which were predominantly in the rural wards of Chepstow and bordering ward areas with the following results over that period:

- 30 x stop searches
- 4 x Drug drive arrests
- 1 x Drink drive arrest
- 1 x Possession of Class A and B controlled substances arrest
- 7 x Possession of Cannabis
- 2 x Vehicle seizures
- 2 x Covid 19 FPN's
- 4 x Traffic Summons/TOR's for various traffic offences.

There was a significant drop in reported incidents during this time and since, but we still need to remain vigilant and report any suspicious activity/crime at the time via either 101 or 999 if you deem it an emergency. If it is low level you can also report via email on contact@gwent.pnn.police.uk

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

Contact the Clerk to the Community Council - Mrs Hilary Counsell
Tel: 01291 421307 **E-mail: Shirenewtoncc@gmail.com**
Please take care and stay safe

SHIRENEWTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 1090167

I hope everyone is keeping safe and I'm sure everyone is keeping busy.

The society is in the process of planning their new year, starting in September through to July 2021.

We will be getting out list of speakers ready in the hope that by September we will be able to meet up again in some way shape or form.

We are always looking for new members, for newcomers to the village this is an ideal way to get to know the history of the area and meet up on a regular basis with other fellow villagers.

We are still keeping in contact with our members by e-mail.



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Digital Graveyard Project

As part of the Shirenewton 800 project celebrating 800 years of Shirenewton Church, we have digitized the graveyard records. If you visit Shirenewton Church Website (www.shirenewtonchurch.com) under 'The Church' menu item you will find 'Digital Graveyard'.

This index page then points to all the records available and provides convenient links for downloading the source material or a transcribed Excel Spreadsheet of the records. There is a graveyard map with all the plot zones identified - 11 zones, with zones A to J (no I) & L being for graves and zone K being for the burial of ashes (see opposite page). The Excel spreadsheet is also displayed as a table in separate webpages (one per plot zone except for a couple of the smaller zones when there are two per page) which are clearly linked.

There is also a hyperlinked PDF file of the graveyard plan which allows you to mouse over any grave in the graveyard and immediately identify the grave number and its first listed occupant. Clicking on the link will take you to the associated graveyard record in the appropriate webpage.

The burial records from 1771 onwards are available and the indexed lists are courtesy of the Shirenewton Local History Society. These, I understand, are based on the records held at The National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth. Scanned copies of the actual current Church burial register are towards the bottom of 'The Burial Register' section on the page (look for 'Scan of the Register of Burials 1955-date') and currently comprise 43 pages – although I've just spotted a duplicate so, by the time you read this, it may only be 43 pages or another number entirely!

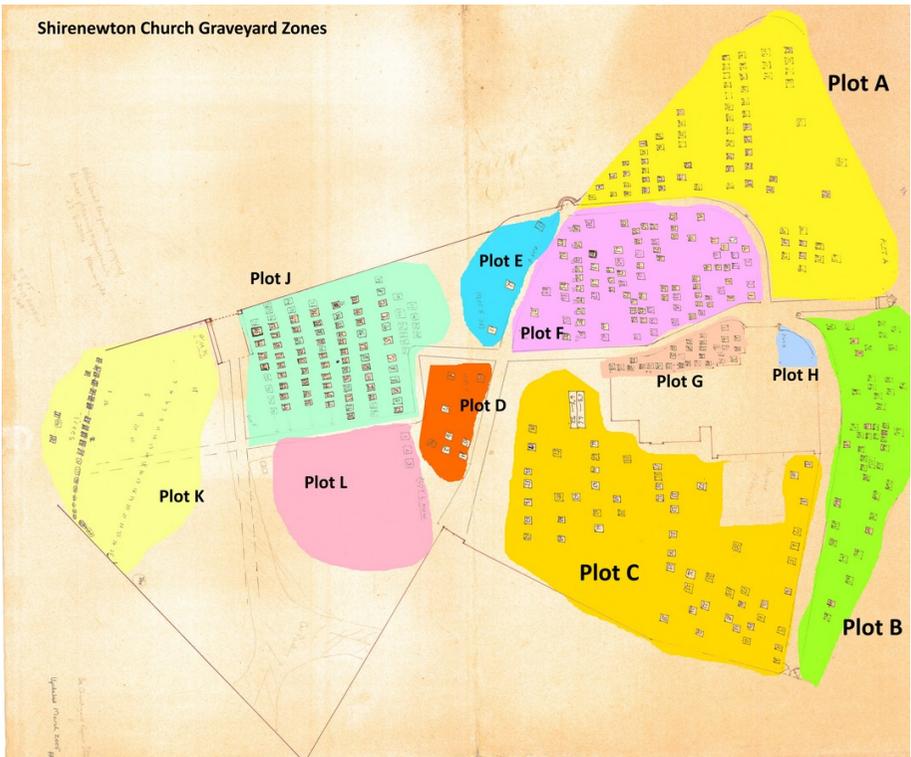
This overall project has taken a massive amount of work from many parties. Bill Clark coordinated the project and has done a considerable amount of transcription work to get the old paper records into an electronic format. Bill points out that Tom and Claire Lewis carried out most of the legwork i.e. in going round the graves and looking at who was where, and updating the spreadsheet accordingly. And, of course, your webmaster has spent hours converting it all into webpages and cross referencing with hyperlinks to bookmarks, etc. There may well be errors in the transcription and in other areas. As I've put the webpages together and examined the data various anomalies have arisen and Bill Clark and I have

made several trips to the graveyard to cross reference anomalies in the data against actual gravestones, etc. If anyone identifies any further anomalies or errors, please let us know and we'll verify and, where appropriate, rectify! Henceforth we aim to update the records annually.

As a further endeavour, I do intend to go around the graveyard and photograph each grave and post the photos linked from each plot. This will take time and I do not promise when this will happen. I'll provide updates through my standard parish magazine column on the Church website.

drc

Safe browsing





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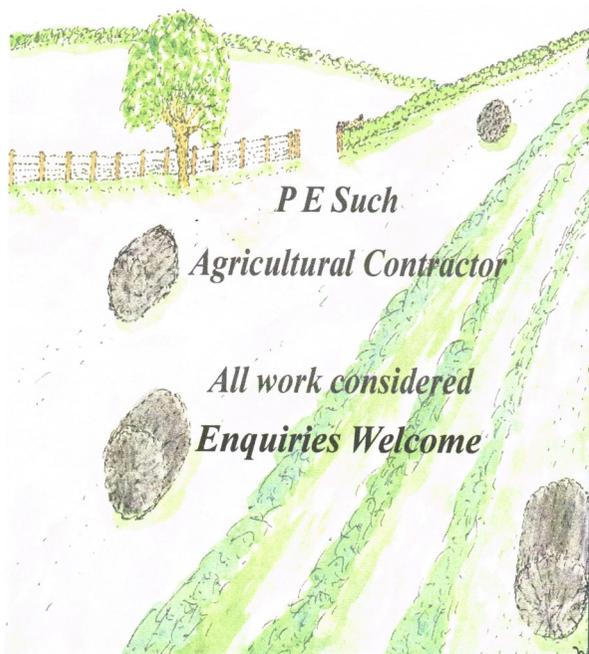
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BIBLE STUDY GROUP

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

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

The Bible Study Group will not be meeting during the current coronavirus-covid19 outbreak, but will start again as soon as possible

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

Gardening Corner

I'm writing this month's article as we are catching the tail end of storm Arthur. The last few weeks must have been some of the most challenging for farmers and growers (including us gardeners). This has included the tail end of April – a month where we had the most sunshine on record, including the warmest day of the year (so far) and probably one of the coldest night's in May. With temperatures down to -5 centigrade not too far away from here. This has had some real impacts in what has and in some cases what hasn't occurred. With April being so sunny, dry and relatively warm it seemed that everything was at least two weeks ahead of normal, but obviously no-one told the cuckoo. We usually hear him on or near cuckoo Sunday (usually the second Sunday in April), but this year it was on a Sunday, but two weeks later than normal. It is said that the number of cuckoos has plummeted in recent years and this appears to be the case by the number calling. Literally just the odd one here and there, and many days you hear nothing at all. When working out in the garden hearing their distinctive call always puts me in a good frame of mind, at last spring is well and truly at the point of giving way to summer. The House Martins also seemed late arriving, and there seemed to be a lot less than usual. With a gentle southerly breeze warming the air I thought I should get on and put the artificial nests up, but it was some time before we saw the first bird arrive. They continued to appear in dribs and drabs, but it took nearly a couple of weeks before all eight of our artificial nests were full. As I look out of the window as I write this, we have a good number whizzing around, which is a sight I love to see, but as yet we have no birds trying to build a 'real' nest with mud. This is very unusual as we have had up to five self-built nests as well as our artificial ones. I think I will buy a couple more for next year as the birds take to them instantly and in a good year, the time saved not having to build a nest means that the parents can get two broods of chicks fully fledged and on the wing before flying off back to Africa later in the year.

Young lettuce seedlings



The dry weather is really starting to impact the garden now. After the almost continuous rains earlier in the year, there was plenty of moisture left in the ground as I started to plant out the first vegetable plants. A quick drop of water after planting was all that was required. But now it is a case of having to water everything for at least a week in order to get roots establishing and the plants to fend for themselves. The last month has been, as always, the busiest when it comes to seed sowing, pricking out the young seedlings, potting on where required, and then planting out when ready. With Felicity being grounded at home, shielding from the virus, all of these jobs have been done on time but the results have been mixed. There is an art to watering and this chore is usually left to me to try and get right. Usually the results are not too bad, but this year has been an absolute nightmare, especially when it comes to the flowers. With sun and warmth, it can be a battle to water enough to keep everything growing along nicely. Too wet and everything either rots off or you lost the plants because of the compost fly (a tiny little black thing that rises up in numbers when you walk past!), or not wet enough that the plants give up. For young seedlings you should never use water from a butt, as this can carry disease which rots off the young plants. I've always used water from the main supply for the seeds and until the plants are potted on, but still had problems this year. From a packet of seed, I have ended up with as few as five plants. Fortunately, the vegetable seeds have fared better and we have had very few losses. I've been making a conscious effort to sow little and often in an effort to keep gluts, and sometimes waste, to a minimum. We will see how that pans out as the year progresses.



Cut and come again lettuce ready for harvesting

Generally, the vegetable area has been working well and we started to harvest our first salad leaves in mid-April. These have now been joined by spring onions and radish all of which are being grown in 'gro-bags' down the side of the large tunnel. The seed are originally sown in trays with individual cells – forty cells to a tray. Germinated in the heated propagator they are removed to a bench in the greenhouse about a week after germinating, and then planted out about two weeks later. I sow a new tray of seed once the previous one is removed from the hot bench and hopefully this gives us the continuity throughout the summer. Despite sowing the tomatoes and other vegetable plants later than in recent years (I've always been too early), the sunny weather has resulted in them almost catching up and so I had to get on with planting out to their final resting places sooner than expected. The greens such as calabrese, cauliflower and cabbages or peas and broad beans are all pretty robust and brush off a colder night. Potatoes, tomatoes and other beans (French and runner) are far more delicate, and just a hint of a frost can see them off in no time. U tunnel or greenhouse does give some protection from a normal cold night, but once a minus number is talked about then drastic action is required. I've spoken about horticultural fleece many times, but it is a definite 'hit' in this household. We have large rolls which can be cut to the necessary length and tender plants covered when there is a risk of frost. With two very cold nights forecast the fleece was brought into play.

Fortunately, I decided on two layers over the tops of the potatoes as these were growing well as you will have seen from last months article. The tomatoes and French beans in the tunnel had one layer as the soil is quite a bit warmer in there and so radiates a little more heat over the night time. Everything in the tunnel fared well, but even with two layers of fleece on, the very tops of the potatoes were just singed, fortunately not enough to do any lasting damage. With the vegetable beds filling up rapidly I am still busy sowing different varieties. The winter greens are now ready for pricking out, as are some of the new varieties I spoke of last time, such as pac choi and fast maturing broccoli. I will continue to sow these quick maturing vegetables over the coming weeks.

Calabrese and French beans with frost protection still in place



In the flower garden, things are starting to look good. The extra time available has meant that we are at long last catching up with clearing out some of the old beds and starting again. Some of these have been untouched for quite a few years and were long past their 'sell-by' date but more of that next time.

In the apiary, the bees have certainly been proving a challenge, with the first swarm in the third week in April, followed in quick succession by three more before the end of the month. The warmer weather has meant that I have been able to go through each hive thoroughly to see what is going on, and more recently add further supers for honey storage as these are filling up fast. I will probably have to remove the first ones by the end of this week, in order to extract the honey, which is much earlier than usual. I have noticed a few fields of oilseed rape within flying distance now out in full flower, so that is probably the reason. Some of the hives remained very well behaved with everything ticking along nicely. Three were a much more serious challenge. One had lost its queen completely. This was easily solved by removing a frame of newly laid eggs from another hive and placing this in the hive affected. The remaining bees know the queen is not there, but usually can do nothing about it, with the hive eventually dying out. The new eggs allow them to create a queen cell, with the grub being fed royal jelly, which turns the ordinary worker egg into a queen. Brilliant – if it works, and I'm pleased to say that it did, and so the hive has a new queen which is now busy laying away. In another hive the queen was laying just male eggs (this is when a queen runs out of sperm and can no longer fertilise an egg, which is what dictates if an egg is male or female). Normally a queen when laying determines from the size of the cell whether she has to lay a fertilised egg of an unfertilised egg. A large, drone cell, receives an unfertilised egg, and a smaller worker cell, the queen fertilises the egg as she lays it and a worker is created. Amazing stuff really! In this particular hive, things had gone too far, so I had to end its days. The third hive was a very big one, with a brood box and a super under the queen excluder and then four supers above. By the numbers of bees about I could tell this one hadn't swarmed and I soon discovered why. The queen was laying in the super frames at the very top of the hive and was above the queen excluder, so there was no way that she could get out even if she wanted to! The brood chamber was rammed with honey. I had to therefore change everything round and, hoping I'd trapped the queen in the super frame where she had recently been laying, I dismantled the hive, put the queen (hopefully) down at the bottom and below the queen excluder and then build it back up again. With over fifty thousand particularly angry bees dive bombing me it was a nerve-racking job. I did get stung, but fortunately only once – a minor miracle. Whether I've been successful or not remains to be seen. Ah the joys of keeping bees! Best of luck with your continuing gardening efforts. Please keep yourselves and your families safe as always time and happy gardening until next time. *Steve and Felicity Hunt.*

Nerys's Natty Nosh

Janet's Elderflower

Syllabub Pavlova

Serves 12

This is a fabulous summer dessert recipe made with a crisp meringue. It is topped with softly whipped cream and ripe summer fruit. A deliciously light syllabub of elderflower and plums compliment the meringue. Janet made this gorgeous meringue and brought it to one of our barbecues. It went down a treat.



Ingredients

5 large free-range egg whites at room temperature
300g caster sugar

For the syllabub

300ml double cream
3-4 tbsp icing sugar (see tip)
4 tbsp elderflower cordial (we used Bottle Green)
100ml sweet dessert wine, such as muscat or monbazillac
Squeeze lemon juice to taste
400g mixed stone fruit, stoned and halved or sliced (I used plums, nectarines and cherries)
Golden syrup to drizzle (optional)

Method

Heat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan/gas 6. Whisk the egg whites in a large clean bowl with an electric mixer until they form stiff peaks when the beaters are removed (this will take around 3-4 minutes). Gradually add the caster sugar, 1 tbsp at a time, whisking well between each addition – the whites should come back to stiff peaks before you add more sugar. Once you've whisked in around half the sugar, you can add the rest in larger quantities. When all the sugar has been added, whisk the meringue back to glossy, stiff peaks.

Line a large baking sheet with baking paper, using 4 small blobs of meringue to stick the paper to the sheet. Spoon the meringue mixture onto the baking paper in a large circle (about 30cm diameter), using the spoon to make peaks and swirls in the mixture, if you like.

Transfer the baking sheet to the oven and immediately reduce the temperature to 130°C/110°C fan/gas $\frac{3}{4}$. Cook the meringue for 1½ hours. Turn the oven off but leave the meringue inside to cool completely (4-5 hours).

To make the syllabub, put the double cream, 3 tbsp of the icing sugar, the elderflower cordial, dessert wine and a squeeze of lemon juice in a large bowl, then stir to combine. Taste, then add the extra sugar and a little more lemon juice if you think it needs it. Whip with a balloon whisk or electric mixer until the mixture forms soft peaks.

Spoon the syllabub over the cooled meringue. Scatter over the fruit, then drizzle with golden syrup, if you like. Serve immediately.

Tips

The amount of sugar for the syllabub will depend on how sweet your fruit is and which elderflower cordial brand you use. Add a little and mix, then taste and add more if you want to. Remember it is being paired with sweet meringue.

Make the meringue the day before and cool completely. Keep in an airtight container. **Enjoy!**



STARGAZING



To the south the constellation of Boötes the Herdsman, has the fourth brightest star in the whole sky, Arcturus. It is a red giant star and the curve of the handle of the Plough points down to it. Arcturus is at a distance of 40 light years, which means it takes light 40 years to cross space from the star to Earth. As light travels approximately 200 thousand miles in 1 second, Arcturus is at quite a distance! Even so it is one of the closest of the bright stars. The name Arcturus is derived from Greek and means "guardian of the bears". Above and to the left of Arcturus can be seen a semi-circle of stars making up Corona Borealis, the Northern Crown.

The W-shape of Cassiopeia lies in a north-easterly direction. Leo the Lion, shaped rather like a reversed question mark, can be seen in the west. Cygnus the Swan lies in the eastern sky. It is one of the most distinctive constellations, often nicknamed the Northern Cross.

There are two planets in the evening sky. Jupiter and Saturn form a pair in the south-east. Jupiter is the brighter of the two, whilst Saturn has a slightly yellow colour. They are joined by the nearly full Moon on 8th June.

On the 20th June the Earth's axis is tilted towards the Sun to its greatest extent and the Sun reaches its highest position in the sky at noon. This is the longest day or summer solstice in the Northern Hemisphere. In Wales it is called Gŵyl Ifan Ganol Haf (St John's of Midsummer). Great agricultural fairs used to be held at this time, along with merriment and dancing. A bonfire was also kept this night. Its observance finally died out in SE Wales by the end of the 19th century.

Joke: After his first meal on the Moon, the astronaut said the food was good but the restaurant lacked atmosphere!

The great Italian scientist Galileo used his telescope or what was then called an “optic tube” to map the Moon, and estimated the height of its mountains to be roughly 5 miles. This is surprisingly accurate considering his measurements were made 400 years ago.

Change of subject: If you’d like to identify the birds you can hear in your garden try “Birdnet”. It’s a really good mobile app.



GWENT ARCHIVES NEEDS YOU

Gwent Archives is not just concerned with preserving the past but also with documenting the present. It is our duty as a service to ensure that our collections reflect the history of Gwent and the experiences of our communities. But to do this, we need your help.

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

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

Any questions or queries, please contact enquiries@gwentarchives.gov.uk. More information on submitting the diaries will follow.





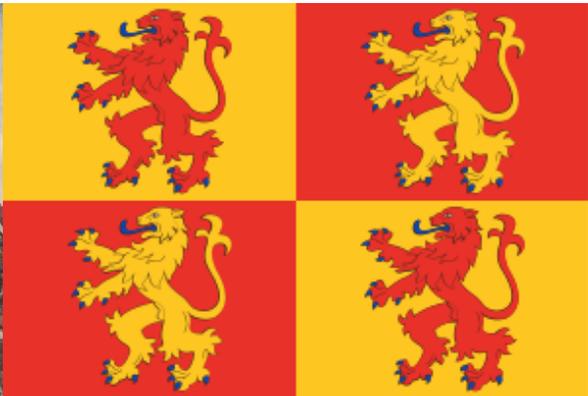
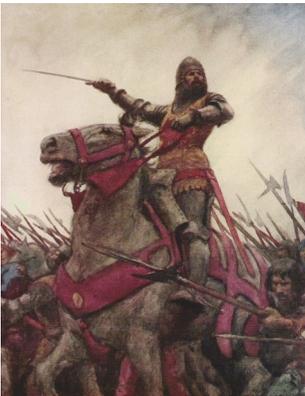
For many people taking their covid-constrained walks around the village, the Chantry flower displays and tree-mounted poetry have provided joy and entertainment. Thank you to Glynis for her abundant creativity.





What's the Flap?

For those of you asking
And a few of you are,
The flag that is flying
Is that of Owain Glyndŵr.
Does our Flag Master reckon
It will strengthen our borders?
And repel caravaners & bikers,
And those English marauders?



COMPETITION WINNERS

As part of this year's International Dylan Thomas Day 8-11 year olds across Wales were invited to enter a competition to write a poem or prose entitled "My Favourite Dream" based around the Dylan Thomas' story "A Visit to Grandpa's". We were thrilled to hear this week that Bre (Year 4) was one of the winners and Lauren (Year 5) was highly commended.

Here's Bre's winning poem about his favourite pastime, gymnastics:

Wake Up and Be Awesome

I see my dreams far off in the distance.
Shouting, calling for me. Pulling me in.
The sound echoing, like a thunder cloud.
Hard to get out of my head.

Dream big, Dream huge, Dream enormous.

One mind focussed on the goals.
Preparation, training, growing strength.
Criticism, judgement and faults.
Years, flipping to perfection!

5 rings, blue, yellow, black, green and red.
Opponents Gold, silver and bronze.

Inspiration from peers,
motivation from coaches,
courage from with in.

Dream, fantasy, ambition, hope, wish, desire.

HEART SET.

By Bre aged 9 years

To read Lauren's highly commended poem and all the other winning poems:

<https://www.swansea.ac.uk/dylan-thomas-prize/dylaned/8-11-year-olds-competition-2020/>

FANTASTIC FUNDRAISERS

Several of our pupils have been inspired by Sir Captain Tom Moore to raise money for NHS charities:-

Olivia (in Reception) has been making and selling homemade hand and body cream to overcome the problem of dry skin from so much handwashing. If you would like to support this excellent cause by buying her special cream (which I can highly recommend), please click on the link:
https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/anna-ross12?utm_source=whatsapp&utm_medium=fundraising&utm_content=anna-ross12&utm_campaign=pfp-whatsapp&utm_term=2ea90eb0d89e4a8a8638f88b04267382

Max L (in Year 1) has been selling home baked dog treats to raise money; this is also counting towards his Beavers World/Community badge. If you would like to buy these doggie treats (they can be posted, collected or dropped off) or simply wish to donate to their Just Giving page:
https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/amy-lam4?utm_source=Sharethis&utm_medium=fundraising&utm_content=amy-lam4&utm_campaign=pfp-email&utm_term=854e09a51e424e57a780a1b5b5d0741b

Also, George (in Year 5) has been inspired by the amazing work that the NHS are doing and is raising money by doing 1000 press ups! If you would like to show your support and spur him on to complete this challenge, please donate to: <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/PaulaSiddall>

Very proud of all our pupils and their inspirational work during lockdown. Bendigedig blant!

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Hello everyone. Little did I realise that, when I wrote the May magazine entry, a month later I'd still be saying 'the lockdown continues ...'.

As we all get comfortable with Zoom meetings – including the Church which is holding Zoom Sunday services – it seems that BT have been fiddling with the Shirenewton Telephone Exchange. The other day I noticed that my broadband speed was extremely slow and started to monitor it. Suddenly it came back faster than ever. Sitting here in my home office I'm currently getting a steady ~38 - 39Mb/s which is around a 15% improvement over what I was previously getting. The upload, which has been hovering around 5Mb/s upload occasionally shows as being in the 20s! I can't find anything online so assume it's a process of gradual improvement.

I've been checking using <https://www.broadbandspeedchecker.co.uk> and, as I wrote this, thought I'd test through the official BT website which should show a true 'hub to exchange' rate and thus ignore any latency in my system – although my PC is plugged by cable directly into the router so latency would be minimal. But, unfortunately, the BT speed tester (part of trouble shooting – you need to log into your BT account) tells me that "We can't see your Hub online so we're not able to run a speedtest for you at the moment." – which is, of course, complete baloney as I am online and have just run the Broadband SpeedChecker test again. Oh well.

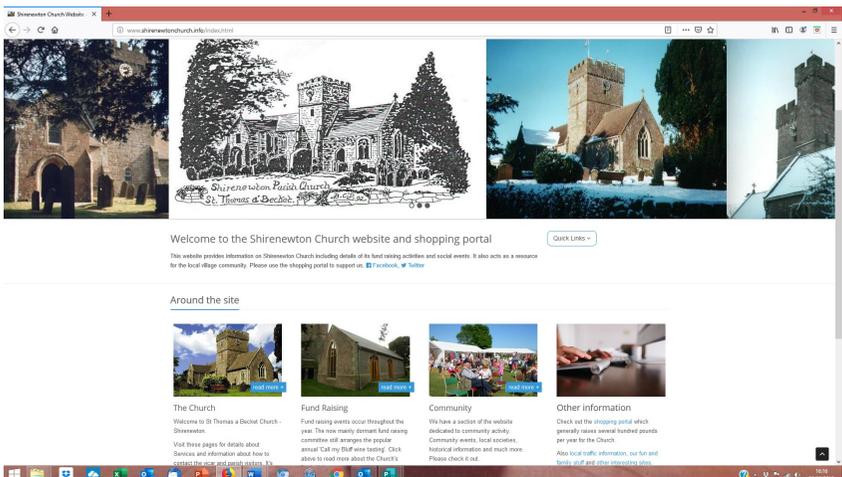
When it comes to searching for recent events not many people are aware of Google's Tools option. After you have conducted a search if there are a load of irrelevant historical records displayed, simply select Tools (far right on the option below the search bar) and you will note that the default is 'any time'. You can select a period from which you want the results displayed. For example, 'Past Hour', 'Past 24 Hours', 'Past Week', 'Past Month', 'Past Year' and an option to enter a custom date range. This is particularly useful if you are searching for a specific set or results in a known time period or even just the latest news on a topic.

In fact there are lots of tips and tricks available to narrow down searches. Most people know to put an exact phrase in quotes so that you only get results which have that exact phrase. Less well known is the ability to use the minus sign to exclude certain words (e.g. Jaguar – car). I've just updated the Church website to show how to search a specific site. I had to remove the search option on the Church website due to GDPR complications and only recently realised that using google you can search a specific site using the syntax: site:{sitename.???}[space]searchterm. For example: site:shirenewtonchurch.info "village fete" – would give you all the references to 'village fete' on the Church website. I'll finish with the old favourite which I've mentioned before (many years ago), if you select settings -> language -> more you have the option to select 'Elmer Fudd' – this simply changes your menu options into Elmer Fudd speak. Childish but fun!

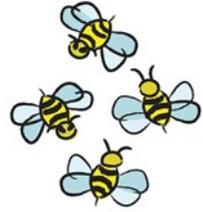
Needless the Coronavirus scammers are still at it as are the normal scammers so be aware – or should that be: be alert.

Please don't forget to use the shopping portal to click through to your chosen online shops. That way we can hit the payment thresholds and close it down!

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The Bad Tempered Bees



Now that we are all taking our exercise close to home, I thought that I would put out a warning about the wild bees that have built a colony in the base of a tree on the Golden Valley walk.

We were walking on the footpath in mid-April and were attacked by some of the bees. I have recently discovered that they have attacked at least another three walkers / runners on separate occasions. These angry bees aim for your head, get into your hair and, yes, they do sting. We haven't been back to find out whether they are still there, but any walkers / runners, especially if they have children and / or dogs with them, may want to avoid the area. If you do want to run the gauntlet then I'd recommend you take a hat with you.

The location is on the right, about 300 metres after the cottage that is being renovated (but has no roof) in Golden Valley, as you are heading down the side of the field towards the perimeter fence for Caerwent base.

Below: Brecon Beacons last year —you can look but you can't visit ...yet...





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Lay Eucharistic Minister	Gilly Lambert	01291 641 175
Parish Visitor Coordinators	Revd Nansi Davies CBE	01633 400 519
	Diane Marlow	01291 641 407
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– People’s	Andrew Baker	01291 641 925
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