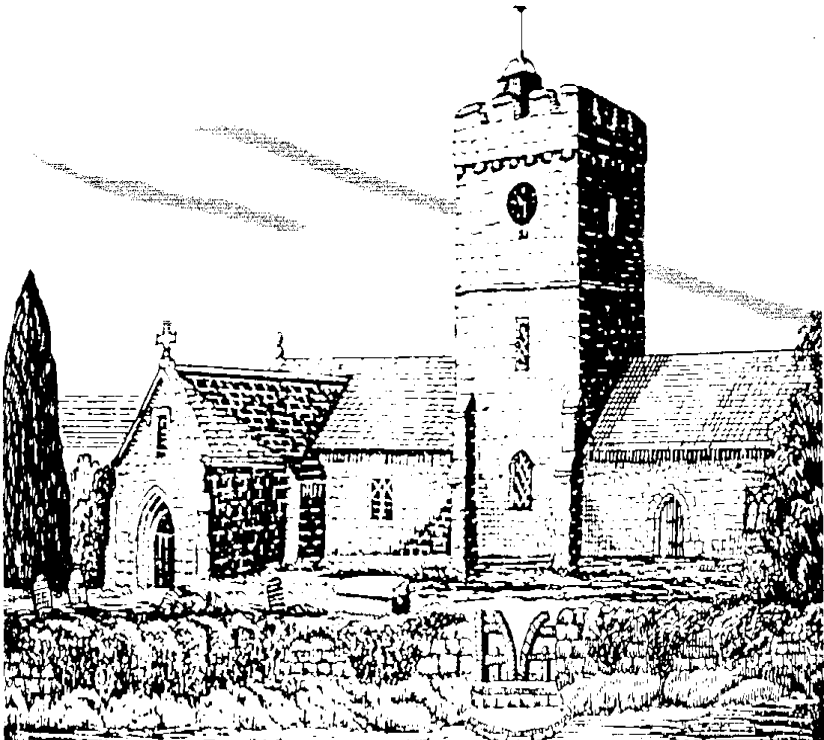


Price: 50p

Shirenewton & Newchurch Parish Magazine Dec 2009/Jan 2010



The Church of St. Thomas à Becket Shirenewton

Priest in Charge.	Revd. Dr. William Ingle - Gillis	424984
Curate	Rev. Nansi Davies	01633 400519
Church Wardens:	Sally Saysell	641369
	Andrew Baker	641925
PCC Secretaries:	Mrs Susan Lenthall	Newchurch 626389
	Jane Smith-Haddon	641525
	David Heritage	Newchurch 641549
PCC Treasurers:	Kevin Bounds	Shirenewton 641818
	Enid Heritage	Newchurch 641549
Gift Aid Secretary	Ruth Savagar	641411
Church Maintenance & Safety Officer	John Nicholas	641368
Organists:	Karen Millar	650521
	Ruth Savagar	641411
	Kath Whittington	641600
	Jane Smith-Haddon	641525
Sunday School:	Mike Penny	650653
Tower Captain:	John Nicholas	641368
Church Hall Booking	Auriol Horton	641844
Mothers Union:	John Waters	641449
Child Protection Officer:	Maureen Moody	641524
Church Flowers:	Terry Walters	641338
Parish Magazine Editor	Pauline Dutton	641677
200 CLUB		

Names to Note

Community Council	John Eede (Chairman)	
Clerk to Community Council	Carole Jones	641791
WI:	Claire Lewis	
Scouts:	Dave Richardson	620356
Guides:	Helen Cann	650835
Brownies:	Jackie Broughton	641797
Cub Scouts	Geoff Marlow	641407
Beavers:	Becky Lewis	650304
Police Contact:	P.C. Mike Cowburn	01633 838111
Rec. booking secretary:	Beryl Saysell	641637
Traidcraft:	Marion McAdam	641316
Local History Society	Shirley Bonsey	641362

Neighbourhood Watch Contacts

Community Police Officer	Michael Cow burn	01633 642068
	e mail: michael.cowburn@gwent.pnn.police.uk	
Shirenewton & Mynyddbach	Beverley Moore	641532
Earlswood	Sue Leat	641207

Please send your notes, & emails for the February magazine to Terry Walters "Bywood" Mynyddbach, Chepstow, NP16 6RW (01291 641338) or email to terencewalters@hotmail.com by 9.00am Monday 18th January

Dear Friends,

I have borrowed my message this Advent season from a American journalist Louis Cassels, who wrote the following parable in 1959. It has been reprinted annually in hundreds of American newspapers since then.

The Parable of the Birds

Once upon a time, there was a man who looked upon Christmas as a lot of humbug. He wasn't a Scrooge. He was a very kind and decent person, generous to his family, upright in all his dealings with other men. But he didn't believe all that stuff about God becoming man, which churches proclaim at Christmas. Why would God want to do anything like that? So when his family left to attend midnight services on Christmas Eve, he stayed home.

Shortly after the family drove away snow began to fall. He went to the window and watched the flurries getting heavier and heavier. Sometime later, as he was reading his newspaper by the fire, he was startled by a thudding sound that was quickly followed by another. Then another. When he went to investigate, he found a flock of birds huddled miserably in the snow. They had been caught in the storm, and in a desperate search for shelter had tried to fly through the window. "I can't let these poor creatures lie there and freeze," he thought. "But how can I help them?"

Then he remembered the barn. It would provide a warm shelter. He quickly put on his coat and boots and tramped through the deepening snow to the barn. He opened the doors wide and turned on the light. But the birds didn't come in.

"Food will bring them in," he thought. So he hurried back to the house for bread crumbs, which he sprinkled on the snow to make a trail into the barn. To his dismay, the birds ignored the bread crumbs and continued to flop around helplessly in the snow. He tried shooing them into the barn by walking around and waving his arms. They scattered in every direction -- except into the warm, lighted barn.

"They find me a strange and terrifying creature," he said to himself, "and I can't seem to think of any way to let them know they can trust me. If only I could be a bird myself for a few minutes, perhaps I could lead them to safety."

Just at that moment the church bells began to ring. He stood silently for awhile, listening to the bells pealing the glad tidings of Christmas. Then he sank to his knees in the snow. "Now I understand," he whispered. "Now I see why you had to do it."

In this season of Advent, I encourage you to enjoy all your Christmas festivities and hub-bub. I also invite you to come join us for worship or carols, as well. Come, meet the God who through love comes to meet us.

Blessings, Fr. Will

FROM THE REGISTERS

A Blessing took place in St. Thomas á Becket Church Shirenewton on Saturday October 31st for Gareth and Patrica Davies. Their Wedding had taken place in Mexico earlier in the year.

Thanks from Sheila Hodgson

Sheila and family sincerely thanks neighbours and friends for their support, condolences, and donations to the RAF Benevolent Fund following the sad loss of Griff.

Many thanks go to neighbours for their immediate assistance at the time of his sudden death

Thanks from Pat Noble

I would like to thanks everyone who so kindly sent cards and letters of sympathy at the time of John's death.

It was comforting to know that we were in the thoughts of our friends at Shirenewton at this sad time.

Pat Noble
formerly of the "Barn"

Gaerlwyd Baptist Chapel

Carol and Soup Evening

7th December at 7.30 pm

Speaker:- Natalie Howard of Magor

Everyone is welcome

Shirenewton Community Luncheon Club

Please book early to secure your place for lunch on Wednesday

December 16th and January 27th

Tredegar Arms, Shirenewton

Telephone 01291 641274

ST.PETERS CHURCH, NEWCHURCH

Our annual Carol Service will be held on Sunday December 20th at 2.30 pm when everyone will be very welcome to join us. A cup of tea or a glass of sherry along with a mincepie will be served afterwards.

Also a reminder that our Christmas Day service will be at 11.00am

WHIST DRIVES

I am glad to report that 37 players enjoyed the Drive on 5th November and we look forward to our Special Christmas Drive on the 3rd December. We will be playing again on Thursday, 7th January at 7.30 p.m. in the Recreation Hall and as ever hope that we might find some more local players among our numbers as all proceeds go towards the upkeep of the Hall. Many thanks to all who have supported us during the past year and I wish them all a very Happy Christmas and Healthy New Year. Enquiries to Auriol Horton 01291 641844

EARLSWOOD & NEWCHURCH WEST MEMORIAL HALL

The Remembrance Service on 8th November was well attended and £83.50 was donated to the Royal British Legion. Thanks to all who attended and helped with the refreshments. The service was conducted by Canon Bernard Johns and the organist was Mrs. Myra Bowen. Spr Joseph McLean of the Royal Engineers laid the wreath.

Almost 100 people enjoyed the brilliant Soul'd Out on October 3rd. Debra McLean laid on a lovely buffet super and the event raised significant funds for the hall. Thank you to the band and helpers for supporting this event and to everyone who bought tickets. We are planning a number of events for 2010.

Simon Stanley
Chairman

SHIRENEWTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

2ND NOVEMBER 2009

Police Report

Not many incidents locally during October

23/10 - Suspicious vehicle late at night Wayload Lane - No details of vehicle

25/10 - Stolen car set on fire and burnt out near Shirenewton (car was stolen in Suffolk)

31/10 - Glass feature to barbecue damaged overnight in Shirenewton, thought to be due to a possible prowler climbing over the Garden wall.

And an odd incident in Llanvair where eight patio slabs were dug up and stolen during the day.!!!

PC Cowburn was keen to publicise the use of the 101 telephone number for non-emergency calls to the Police.

Planning

Penwaun, Shirenewton.

Single storey extensions to front & rear, plus garage conversion and new detached double garage.

Approval Recommended

Pantycosyn House, Usk Road, Shirenewton

Certificate of Existing Lawful Use or Development for paddock used for sheep grazing, free range poultry; shed providing shelter/accommodation for these and as a wood and tool store.

No Objections from the council.

Affordable housing on Blethyn Close, Mynyddbach.

Amended plans.

Refusal Recommended with repeat of the various objections from last time around.

There was a lengthy discussion amongst the councillors and members of the public as to the options available to prevent MCC granting planning for housing on this site. This concluded with the council deciding to continue opposing planning permission, whilst some members of the public might pursue alternative courses of action such as submitting a new planning application.

Other Items of local concern

Notice Boards around the area need some repair and the one by the telephone box in Shirenewton will be replaced, possibly with the one from outside the shop.

Blethyn Close open space, discussed whether applying for Village Green status for all or part of the land would be beneficial. Once SAMFAL has clarified with MCC whether they can agree terms to take over the management of the area it might be useful to canvas local opinion on how to proceed. In the meantime if you have strong opinions on the matter I suggest you forward them to the Clerk.

A Wentwood Mountain Bike Centre feasibility study will be undertaken at some time in the near future.

Next meeting will be Monday 7th December at 7.30 pm in Earslwood Hall

SHIRENEWTON CHURCH WEBSITE

The end of another year approaches and we are about to launch into in the biggest shopping frenzy of the year. So please remember to do your online shopping via the church website. You have access to all the shop's special offers and their entire range. They just give the church a 'referral fee'. We do not get the referral fee if you click on an email they send you to purchase. We only get the referral fee if you actually go to www.shirenewtonchurch.com/shop , locate the shop of interest and then click through using the 'www.tinyurl.com/abcde' url. This may sounds like a lot of work but it is only a few mouse clicks (especially if you have the shopping portal on your favourites or as your home page) and the small referral fees we get really add up. The website currently has 254 shops in 34 categories. There are lots of the 'high street' names including Amazon, Argos, ASDA, Comet, Halfords, Hamleys, House of Fraser, JD Sports, John Lewis, Laura Ashley, Marks & Spencer, Mothercare, Next, Sainsburys, Tescos, Thorntons, etc.

To the end of October this year Shirenewton Church had received £754 from such referral fees! At any one time there is always a balance with the referral agencies (frequently they only pay out after a set period of days to ensure there are no returns or, for example, after a flight has been taken) but I only ever count the cash paid into the church bank account. So that is £754 in cash into the church bank account for a few simple mouse clicks! Not bad and a big 'Thank you' to those of you who do take the time to click through from the shopping portal.

Windows 7 - another good reason to go shopping via the Website. My business has been using Windows 7 for about a year and our techies love it! I'm currently on XP having stayed well clear of Vista and plan to move to Windows 7 early next year. So, if you've been thinking about a new PC now is the time - just make sure it has Windows 7 (I would say its simply not worth going for Vista despite the fact Vista PCs are being off loaded by the retailers with some reasonable deals). For those of you who would like to upgrade from Vista you can buy Windows 7 via Amazon - via the Church website of course. If you are thinking of upgrading you should be sure to back-up first! Back-up drives are also available via the Church website.

The forums script is bedded in and working well so anyone wanting a forum let me know. I'm going to publish a general village forum shortly and see how that goes. I'm looking into other stuff such as a 'village diary', an obituaries script and a reminders script. I also am researching doing something for the Ryder Cup next year. This text was written at 35,000 ft en route to Los Angeles where it is apparently going to be warm and sunny. From here, Christmas seems a long way away but there are not many shopping days so get browsing.

David Cornwell webmaster www.shirenewtonchurch.com

THE BELLS, THE BELLS

Shirenewton bell ringers have had a busy season. At the end of August 14 of our ringers and 3 visiting ringers made the long drive (it was the traffic jams on the M25 which made the journey so long) to Saxmundum in Suffolk. Here we had booked a whole corner of a campsite and promptly erected several tents and gazebo. We spent Friday evening visiting a few local towers, meeting and ringing with the locals at Rendham. This was followed by fish and chips and a few glasses of wine back at camp. On Saturday the weather was warm and sunny. We drove around the lovely villages ringing in 10 churches and having lunch in a pub garden. On Sunday morning we went off to Southwold for a paddle in the sea and to ring the 10 bells of the parish church for morning service.

We have rung 5 quarter peals all of them a "first" for someone. Bob Millar rang his first quarter of Cambridge Surprise Minor, the first of a series of complicated methods. However, it was the Stanley family who achieved so much. Merrick rang his first quarter peal - treble to Grandsire Doubles; Maddie and Kate rang in the same quarter together, Maddie rang her first treble bob hunt and Kate her first Cambridge inside; Christine rang her first quarter on a working bell – the 3 to Plain Bob Doubles, this is a big step in a ringers development and following this the ringer can consider themselves to be a "change ringer" i.e. a method ringer; and finally Simon who rang his first Grandsire Doubles on a working bell. So huge congratulations to the whole family.

Some of our teenagers have been on a couple of expenses all paid trips to London and Birmingham. They ring with Llandaff & Monmouth DACBR youth group Kids.Ring.Out. This organization has been seen as a trail blazer in the eyes of the ringing public. Jenny Millar, Claire Eickhoff, Kate Stanley and Maddie Stanley along with three other young ringers from Newport and Cardiff travelled first to Founders Hall in EC1 and then 3 weeks later to Priory Hall, Bull Street, Birmingham to give a presentation about the group to audiences of about fifty people. They did a stunning job. They raised more interest and had more questions fired at them than any of the other speaker.

Shirenewton church hosted the first of a new type of approach to the teaching of bell handling (the pre-requisite for being able to learn to ring). This course was attended by nine ringers wishing to become teachers from the immediate area and as far afield as Cardiff. In fact, we were very pleased to have the president of the Cardiff Students Ringing Society with us for the day. This course is run under the umbrella of the new South East Wales Ringing Centre to be opened in Usk in December and is being piloted on behalf of the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers Education committee. We hope that it will prove successful bringing modern teaching techniques into bell ringing.

Pip Penny



November is often a quiet month. The dark nights and inclement weather take away the outdoor opportunities. We had a reasonable turn out for the Remembrance Day service in the village despite other commitments for some girls. As I write we are preparing for a sleepover at the weekend. This is purely a leisure event for the girls – nails, hair, craft and DVD. We are travelling all the way to Penhow! I am sure we will have a great time.

We will then be on the countdown to Christmas. We have a couple of evenings planned around the theme of the Cook Islands as Girlguiding Cymru are trying to raise sufficient funds for Guides on the Cook Islands to have their own Promise badge. Our last meeting will be a disco down in Bulwark for all Chepstow District Guides and Senior Section girls. This is to raise sponsorship for a Chepstow guider who has taken up the challenge of walking across Cuba to raise funds for the Centenary Fund to help underprivileged guides. It should be good fun! We will then meet back on the 12th January and have our traditional late party – theme this year as chosen by the girls “neon”. Anybody out there help with outfits for guiders?

We wish you all the complements of the season.

Yours in guiding

Kestrel Helen Cann tel. 01291 650835

Kitten Amanda Turner tel 01291 650763

Koala & Panda

BROWNIE ADVENTURE 100 CHALLENGE

The Girl Guiding Centenary celebrations have continued at First Shirenewton Brownies as we have taken up the Adventure 100 Challenge. The girls have to earn 100 points by completing various tasks. We have made the most of the dark evenings and held a skeleton hunt to earn points for our In the Dark Challenges. Agi Tyson helped us to host a Polish Evening to earn points for our 'Friends across the Seas' challenge. Agi told us about her childhood growing up in Poland. We even learnt some Polish words- 'please ' and 'thank you' which came in very handy as Agi had brought us some delicious Polish biscuits to taste. The following week Kay showed the girls how to make some lovely dream catchers – all made from natural things that Lucy and Kay had scavenged on an autumn walk. We all agreed they looked much better than those sold in the shops. Last week we held our first 'Clothes Swap' which involved the girls swapping clothes they had either grown out of or no longer wanted. Everyone seemed to go home with a smile on their faces and a bag full of nearly new clothes.

A special thank you to all the girls who turned up for the Remembrance Service Parade – it was great to see so many young people there. Well done.

Jackie Broughton

STARGAZING IN DECEMBER '09

The very bright planet Jupiter is to the south-west in the evening sky, slowly dropping towards the horizon as the month goes by. The crescent Moon is just above Jupiter on 21st of December. The reddish planet Mars lies to the South in the early morning, just to the right of the head of the constellation of Leo the Lion. Leo's head is a star pattern that also looks like a backwards-facing question mark.

In the evening to the southeast, the constellation of Orion the hunter is a very prominent sight. Three bright stars make up his belt; two stars are his shoulders, and two more make his legs. Hanging from Orion's belt is his sword. One of the stars in the sword appears fuzzy compared with other stars and is well worth looking at through binoculars. This is the Orion Nebula and is a huge cloud of gas and dust, approximately 1,500 light-years away and hundreds of light-years across. It is one of the most intense regions of star formation visible in our galaxy.

The W-shape of Cassiopeia lies to the northwest, whilst the 7 stars forming the Plough can be seen in the northeast.

We reach the Winter Solstice on Dec 21st, the shortest day of the year. On the bright side it gives a nice long night under which to do a spot of Stargazing!

Dave Thomas

RESULTS OF THE 200 CLUB DRAW

November 09

125	Louise Williams	£40
29	Nancy Jones	£30
120	Gordon Hughes	£20
174	Wenche O'Keefe	£10

Many thanks to Louise Williams for donating her prize to the Shirenewton Churchyard maintenance fund

Next month is the Christmas draw when £200 is paid out in prize money.

Torch Light Carol Service

Tintern Abbey

With The Martin Singers

In aid of Barnardos

7 pm, Monday December 14th, 2009

Assemble at The Abbey Hotel, Tintern from 6 pm

Torches and Carol Sheets for sale

Dress up warmly and be prepared for the weather
as this is held in the open air

FIREWORKS

While we all enjoy a good fireworks display, recent 5th November festivities appear to have stretched over a whole week! Could I make a heartfelt plea?

For those of us who have pets, *please* could you let everyone know in advance by advising date(s), possibly in this magazine? Save stressed animals (and owners)!!

Lynne Prosser

1ST SHIRENEWTON CUB PACK

Newsletter (November 2009)



I am pleased to announce that Michael Slack, Harry Glyn, Josheph Bailey, Adam Davis and Joe Simmonds, having learnt and understood the meaning of the cub law and promise have now been invested into the pack. A big well done to all of you.

Remembrance Sunday parade, the 8th November, and what a fantastic turn out with thirty one representatives from the group including beavers, scouts, explorers and twenty two cubs. Each section with their own flags made it a very colourful event. The parade marched up through the village with flags flying wild in the wind and the threat of rain always there however all the boys and girls, although cold remained just in their uniform, and how smart they all looked. Matt was the drill sergeant, having had the cubs practicing their drill the week before, and as we marched up through the village was keeping us all in step.

We have received a large number of comments from other members of the congregation on the boys and girls exceptional good behaviour and smartness. The vicar, Nancy, said that I should be very proud of them, and I can assure you we ALL were. Events like this makes all the leaders feel that all the hours of work they put in throughout the year is so worth well. A big thank you also to all the parents who braved the weather to support us on the day it really was appreciated. Di was very disappointed that she could not attend due to illness.

Our visit to Caldicot fire station was very informative with the firemen demonstrating how they would remove doors from cars that have been involved in serious accident so that they could extract the patients safely from within.

They also explained to all the cubs about home safety, the importance of smoke detectors and what to do in the event of a fire. Each cub was presented with a fire safety book and a red water bottle.

A big thank you to all the firemen for two great evenings.

Geoff

SHIRENEWTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 1090167

The society's A.G.M. took place on Tuesday, 27th October at 7.00pm the business side of the meeting was soon over, re electing the same committee. Our speaker for the evening was Don Waring who gave us a talk on the 'Caerwent World War II Base'. The talk was illustrated with photographs, diagrams and charts, with hands on material to study before and after the talk. This was a major site in the war effort, and many local people were employed on the base. We hope in the future to arrange a visit for our members.

Dates for your Diary:

Tuesday, 8th December, 7.00 pm, Christmas visit to Mounton Church. The Rev Julian White will give a talk on the history of the church with mince pies to follow, everyone welcome.

Sunday, 27th December, 7.30 a.m. Winter Solstice Walk, meeting at the Woodland Tavern, walking up to Grey Hill to see the sun rise at 8.15am (approx) and then back to the Woodland Tavern for breakfast. Everyone welcome, just turn up, but if you want breakfast could you please give me a ring (01291 641376).

Monday, 11th January, An open meeting at the Recreational Hall, Shirenewton at 7.30. Members and anyone interested can come and browse our collection of old photographs, documents, census returns and much more and afterwards enjoy a cup of tea and a chance to meet up with everybody and have a chat.

Tuesday, 23rd February, Monthly meeting at the Huntsman Hotel, at 7.30pm. The title of the talk 'Cradle to the grave and back again'. an history of the Monmouthshire Canal and what is being done to restore it. Given by Phil Hughes.

SHIRENEWTON OPERA & DRAMA SOCIETY

P R E S E N T S

PRICE
ADULTS: £6.00
CHILDREN £4.00



DICK WHITTINGTON

EARLSWOOD MEMORIAL HALL

THURSDAY 21ST, FRIDAY 22ND, SATURDAY 23RD JANUARY 2010

@ 7.30PM

TICKETS AVAILABLE FROM SUE PHILIPSON
T: 01291 641 799 E: SUE.PHILIPSON@TALK21.COM

Sunday Club Christmas Fair

Sunday December 6th

Christmas Produce

Raffle

Games

Coffee and cakes

Christmas Fun

Gifts



Shirenewton Church Hall
11.00 am

On 11th November we welcomed our Vicar, Will as our speaker and facilitator as we discussed what is needed in "pastoral care" of one another in our anxiety-ridden world. We all agreed that always our attitude should be that of Christ - to love one another with acceptance and sometimes practical action and above all, 'empathy' - a word that is deeper than sympathy.

We meet next on Wednesday 9 December to share favourite carols, readings and poems, as we prepare our hearts for the real meaning of Christmas. Peggy Greedy will be leading us and we welcome any who would like to join us. Of course, there will be mince pies too !

Our meeting on 13th January will be a sharing, thinking and planning occasion as we work out a programme for the year ahead.

Rosemary Carey, Branch Leader 01291 425 010

ADVENT-URE CALLING 2009

What do you know about the purpose of Advent ?

The Christmas story, on which we all focus, is told very briefly in the Bible, but if you cut out the message of Advent you lose half the Old Testament and most of the New.

Come and join in these four sessions, each with a visual focus, a pair of readings from the Old and New Testament; time for reflection, thinking, praying and looking forward.

Evenings

83 Wentwood View, Caldicot (Chris & Rosemary Carey)
Four Thursdays from 19 November starting at 7.30 p.m
or:-

Afternoons

Shirenewton Church Room
Four Tuesdays from 24 November starting at 3 p.m.

SHIRENEWTON WI OCTOBER 09



The gloom of November was quickly lifted by our speaker Mrs Sue Seymoor, she encouraged us to engage in a cheery outlook towards the forth coming festive season. Cocktails for Christmas was her theme and what a wonderful array of colourful drinks were produced to intrigue and delight us, Testing was happily undertaken by all the members, with alcoholic and non-alcoholic versions available so no one had to opt out.

Our November tea hostesses Judy and Margaret provided a lovely assortment of savoury nibbles to compliment the cocktails and enhance the party atmosphere. It's always fun to try something new so there may be some interesting mixing going on this Christmas, but maybe we should wait till after dinner if we are going for the alcoholic versions.

Our next meeting is Wednesday 9th December which is our Christmas Meal and we wish everyone a very happy Christmas and New Year.

Diana Such

FAIRTRADE NEWS



KENYA'S FLOWER INDUSTRY

More than half Kenya's population of 37 million live in poverty so the annual rate of growth of its flower industry - 20% could play a vital role in improving people's lives. 55,000 people, mainly women, are directly employed in the industry and 2 million more are involved indirectly. Kenya is now the 5th largest exporter of flowers in the world. The first Fairtrade flowers were imported into the UK in 2004 and by 2007 this grew to 83 million stems. Yet Fairtrade certified farms only export a maximum of 20% of their flowers to Fairtrade buyers. On the Fairtrade website there are many heartening detailed accounts of the benefits fairly traded flowers have brought their producers, ranging from radical improvements in the local environment to schools, clinics, transport links, not to mention the fairer wages and conditions of the workers themselves. Fairtrade flowers are available from Interflora, John Lewis, ocado, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Waitrose.

As ever I urge you to consider the provenance of your purchases. As I said at my Fairtrade assembly at Shirenewton School this morning - 60 million of us in the UK - what an incredible force for change that could be!
Marion McAdam 641 316 msm316@gmail.com

SHIRENEWTON & MYNYDDBACH FIELDS ASSOCIATION

What a wet and windy November we are having coupled with the shorter hours of daylight the situation is made awkward for those who have to work and make a living out of doors. This will include the gang clearing and fencing the fields; a start has been made (I am sure most people will have noticed) and all around the perimeter of the site has been knocked back and the erection of the fence started in earnest. Most of the brambles are gone, (from a personal point of view I would have liked to have left a patch in the centre, (some where for the rabbits to run to.) but do not be surprised to see a vigorous re-growth in the spring. The surface of the ground is looking very muddy and war-torn at the moment but be assured that the large ruts will be flattened and when the grass and spring flowers come expect a transformation.

We have discussed the idea of a pond on the site and after talking to Brian Jones I believe we have found the ideal site, but I am informed there are many hurdles to jump before this can be achieved, the Health and Safety rules may be restrictive and may end up cancelling out the point so it is a case of watch this space. We think we have reached a balance as to where the farm gates, stiles and self-closing gates are to be situated and hope all will be happy and will use them according to the Countryside Code.

I have been reminded that the moth and dormouse survey has not been reported on but the truth is that for various reasons these did not in fact take place, but hopefully we can achieve them next year.

Spotted several times this last week; a Jack Snipe, probably a sign of the boggy conditions. Any sightings which you may think unusual and helpful, please let me or Mike Sayce know so we can add to our lists.

Many thanks, Mike Gambold.

NERYS'S NATTY NOSH

Thank goodness for Christmas! This was my late father in law's favourite saying. This Christmas pudding was prepared by Eirwen, his wife, and would be accompanied by custard and a good measure of rum. Chris would say "I like pudding with my rum". Eirwen's Christmas pudding has a beautiful light texture, not as rich as the shop bought variety.

Christmas Pudding. Preparation Time: 55 minutes .

Cooking time - 2 puddings in 1 pint basins, steam for 5 hrs.

Serves 8 to 10.

100g plain flour or wholemeal flour
2 tsp mixed spice
25g ground almonds
100g fresh breadcrumbs
100g shredded beef/or vegetable suet
225g soft brown sugar
500g dried mixed fruit
25g chopped almonds
1 lemon
1 small apple
3 medium size eggs
4 tbsp brandy
2 tsp black treacle.

Method

- 1 Line and grease the pudding basins.
- 2 Sieve flour, mixed spice and ground almonds into a large mixing bowl.
- 3 Stir in breadcrumbs, suet, soft brown sugar, chopped almonds and dried mixed fruit.
- 4 Grate the lemon and squeeze the juice. Add to the dry ingredients.
- 5 Core and grate the apple and add to the dry ingredients.
- 6 Lightly beat the eggs, treacle and brandy. Add to the dry ingredients.
- 7 Mix well until all the ingredients are combined. Add a little milk if the consistency is too stiff. Don't forget to make a wish when stirring.
- 8 Spoon the mixture into the prepared pudding basins.

- 9 Cover the tops of the puddings with circles of greased greaseproof paper, then with foil. Fold a pleat in the centre and tie string around the rim. Leave overnight to develop the flavour.
- 10 Place the basins in the top of a steamer or double boiler, or in a large pan and gently steam for 5 hours, topping up the water level from time to time during the cooking.
- 11 Remove the basins carefully from the pan and leave until quite cold. Discard the foil and greaseproof paper and replace with fresh greaseproof paper and foil before storing.
- 12 Steam again for about 2 hours before serving or microwave for 3-4 mins. (check your book and don't forget to take the foil covering off).

Enjoy! Merry Christmas and a happy new year.

INTERESTED IN CLIMBING KILIMANJARO ?

In July next year a village team will be undertaking a fund raising climb of Kilimanjaro for the Church! You heard it here first.

We are flying out on July 4th and then commencing the climb a couple of days later. All individuals will be responsible for their personal costs (£700 for the airfare & £1,600 for the climb and other stuff). There will be a major fund raising/sponsorship effort associated with this climb and you will be expected to be part of it.

We currently have 4 people committed (i.e. have booked their flights) and are seeking a team of 9 - 12 people. Several people who initially expressed interest have dropped out which means that there is room for others.

Interested? Then contact:-

David Cornwell (01291 641614 or webmaster@shirenewtonchurch.com)

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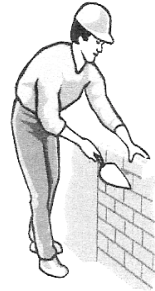
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30th ANNIVERSARY SEASON 2009/2010

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St Mary's Priory Church, Chepstow, 7.30pm

£7, children with adults FREE. Available from Chepstow Bookshop

Passiontide Concert : Sunday March 21st 2010

M. Charpentier : Te Deum
WA Mozart: Missa Brevis in B Flat
JS Bach: Magnificat
With CCS Orchestra
St Mary's Priory Church, Chepstow

Summer Festival Celebration Concert Wednesday June 30th 2010

S Coleridge-Taylor: Hiawatha's Wedding
CV Stanford: Songs of the Fleet
A Borodin: Polovtsian Dances

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SHIRENEWTON SUNDAY CLUB

date		time	venue
6	Dec	9.30	Sunday Club – The Church Room Nativity Rehearsal and Advent Fair
13	Dec	9.30	Sunday Club – The Church Room Nativity Rehearsal
20	Dec	10.30	Sunday Club – Church Nativity Dress Rehearsal
24	Dec	4.00 pm	Church Service of Nativity and Christingle

New term starts Sunday 10 January 2010

Shirenewton Sunday Club welcomes
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Glynis MacDonald 641 818

Shirenewton Sunday Club

presents

Alleluia Angels

a Nativity Play

St Thomas a Becket Church, Shirenewton

4.00 pm Christmas Eve

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GARDENING CORNER

A couple of years ago I started keeping a record of everything I planted in the vegetable garden, when they were planted and what the end results were. Essentially this was to ensure that I maintained a good crop rotation cycle going. But am finding that it gives you a good insight into when you harvested crops and it is interesting to compare data. This time last year we were harvesting copious volumes of calabrese from inside the tunnel. It appeared that I got the timing right and the plants matured just at the right time. We harvested the main heads and then throughout the winter, right through to May in fact, we continued to harvest at least one meal per week, sometimes two or three, depending on the weather. This was despite the really cold snaps that we experienced at times. On the down side the neighbour's sheep totally destroyed every greens crop that we had growing outside, except for the Brussel sprouts, which were protected by netting. This year I sowed the calabrese at the same time, but this coincided with a warm dry spell, that slowed the young plants right down, encouraged the caterpillars and meant that as yet, we have still to pick a meal. The cooler, wetter weather has meant that the plants have now recovered but they are some way off providing us with a consistent supply. Out side on the other hand, we have managed to keep the sheep out, or more likely, the farmer has managed to keep his sheep in. Most of the greens are still there and are now being productive. I tried outdoor calabrese and cauliflowers, thinking I'd got the timing right to avoid the scourge of caterpillars. We had problems early on, but a constant round trip to pick them off seemed to be working. Unfortunately we have nice sized heads, but they are full of horrible caterpillars, so these are going to be destined for the compost heap. I think the only way to grow these crops is to do so out of season or under cover. On the other hand we have some superb curly kale, which is something we have never grown before. It is quite an old fashioned vegetable, but we have grown it to perfection this year. We eat this with 'gravy meals', so roast dinners, casseroles, liver and bacon etc. Ten minutes before dinner is ready, I pop down the garden, cut approximately ten of the younger leaves. Then wash them and put them in the steamer for five minutes, after which its on to the plate, the water makes the base of the gravy and

hey presto. Less than ten minutes from growing and approximately 0.001 air miles with the sweetest tasting greens imaginable. Oh how I love this home growing lark!

This year we have done quite well with root crops and onions, so we have a good store of these for some weeks to come yet. We are still picking peppers, both sweet and hot in the tunnel, as well as aubergines and lettuce. We did have a frost one night a couple of weeks ago and this did give them a shock, but still they survive, unlike the tomatoes that said enough was enough. As I had mentioned before it had not been a good year for tomatoes and I think that they had got to the point that they couldn't be bothered to try any more. So these were ripped out of the ground and the soil weeded ready for some manure to be spread over the surface.

Before the current spell of torrential rain and wind, I did manage to get on the soil and finish planting the last of the onion sets and garlic. I've really got into shallots this year. We only grew one lot, but were so taken with the quality when harvested. They are so sweet. The under gardener has succumbed to my constant requests of sticking a couple in the Sunday roasting pan. I can always remember mum doing this, and the result was one of my favourite vegetables. I had always assumed that what she cooked were onions, and I'd never thought of asking. Now I know it was shallots, sweet, with the outsides slightly caramelised, oh what joy. With this in mind I have ordered two different types for the coming season and these have already been delivered. I'm a little confused as the one pack says plant immediately, which I have done. Whilst the other says plant out in March, so I've put these in the garage for now. Reading my 'Grow Your Own' magazine for December it states that shallots should be planted on the shortest day and harvested on the longest. I can remember being told this rule as a kid, but had forgotten it. Not sure why the timing has changed though unless it is due to breeding and the ultimate use. As a lad, dad always used to use most of the shallots dried for pickling in vinegar, as pickled onions. Whereas now they are being used more for cooking, perhaps because we are more adventurous with our recipes these days! I'll have to ask mother if it was just the large ones she kept for cooking!

..... Continued from page 33

With green crops being not too successful I need to consider other types of vegetable to try. I have tried kohlrabi, but this is also a relative of the cabbage and has also suffered at the hands of creeping caterpillars. Celeriac has proved a success. This is a root vegetable with a celery taste. I think its now time to look at alternative crops, such as fennel, sweet potato etc. No harm in trying! As John Wintersgill used to say of the village shop "if it's not on the shelf you can't sell it". A phrase the under gardener keeps quoting, with affection, at every opportunity! I think what she is trying to say is if I don't try these things you'll never know. So it's back to the seed catalogue for another look through to see what takes the fancy. After all, if it's not in the ground I'll never taste it!

I'm really starting to get into this whole self sufficiency thing at the moment, so looking to see where we can expand our production. Fruit is one area, and we are just finishing the last of our apple crop for this year. I did get some new trees last year, with a view to extend the season as long as we can, but these will take a couple of years to get established and producing any quantity of fruit. I'm considering ordering some more, along with a walnut tree. I'm tempted to try a couple of cider varieties as well, as the thought of producing my own cider is quite appealing. It will shortly be Wassailing time so it will be into the Morris dancing gear for a spot of singing, drinking and firing of shotguns, to ward away the evil spirits and encourage a good fruiting year for the coming season. What better than the cider to be your very own!

Happy gardening, a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year, until next year!

Steve Hunt.

NEED A BABY SITTER FOR THE PARTY SEASON?

Fabian Cornwell (15 years old - soon to be 16) is available for "babysitting" in the run up to Christmas. Fabian lives in Mynyddbach so doesn't need collections or lifts home in the Shirenewton/Mynyddbach village area.

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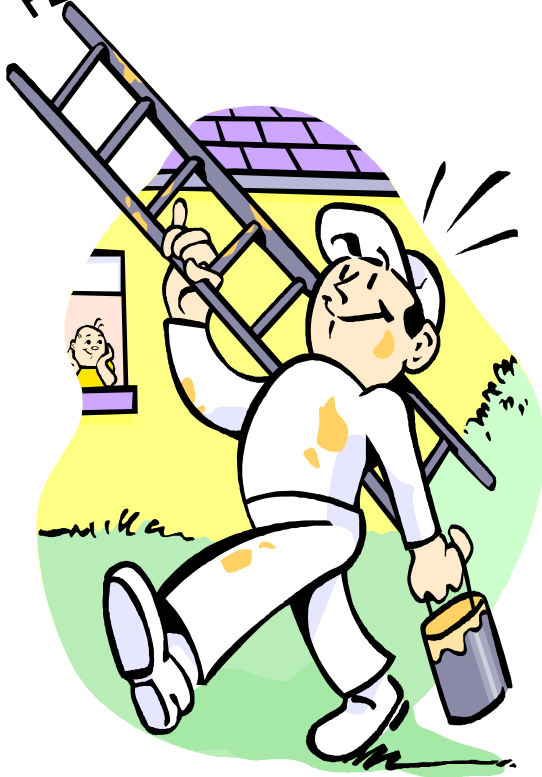
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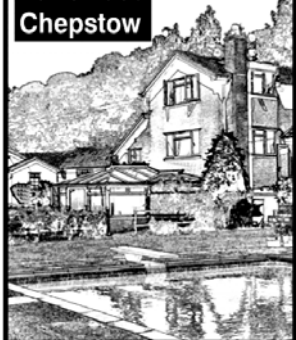
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SOME DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

For further detail on all the above see inside the magazine.

December 2009

- 1st Dec Get your sprouts boiling for Christmas Day Dinner
- 3rd Dec Whist Drive in Shirenewton Recreation Hall
- 6th Dec Sunday Club Christmas Fair in the Church Hall
- 6th Dec Sunday Club rehearsal
- 7th Dec Carol & Soup Evening at Gaerlwyd Baptist Chapel
- 7th Dec Shirenewton Community Council Meeting in Earlswood Hall
- 8th Dec Local History Soc. Visit to Mounton Church
- 9th Dec Mothers Union Meeting
- 9th Dec Shirenewton Womens Institute Meeting
- 12th Dec Chepstow Choral Soc. Concert
- 13th Dec Sunday Club rehearsal
- 13th Dec Carols round the Christmas Tree at the Tredeger Arms
- 20th Dec Annual Carol Service at St. Peters Church Newchurch
- 20th Dec Sunday club rehearsal
- 21st Dec Winter Solstice
- 24th Dec Service of Nativity and Christingle in Shirenewton Church
- 24th Dec Check sprouts to make sure there is no colour left in them
- 27th Dec Local History Soc. Winter Solstice Walk

January 2010

- 7th Jan Whist Drive in Shirenewton Recreation Hall
- 10th Jan Sunday Club new term starts
- 11th Jan Local History Soc. Open Meeting Recreation Hall
- 13th Jan Mothers Union Meeting
- 21—23 Jan SODS Pantomime Dick Whittington
- 29th Jan Keith James & Rick Foot music evening at the Tredegar Arms

READERS AND SIDES-PERSONS ROTA

DATE	SERVICE	READER	SIDES-PERSON
6th Dec 9.30 am	Second Sunday of Advent	Mike Peirce Ruth Savagar	Mike Peirce Claire Lewis
13 Dec 9.30 am	Third Sunday of Advent	Cynthia Smith Kevin Bounds	Cynthia Smith Kevin Bounds
20th Dec 9.30 am	Fourth Sunday of Advent Carols and Readings	Diane Marlowe John Nicholas	Bernice Bowen Diane Marlow
24th Dec 11.30 pm	Christmas Day	Sally Saysell Andrew Baker	Allan Saysell John Nicholas
25th Dec 10.00 am	Christmas Morning Family Service		
27th Dec 9.30 am	John, Apostle & Evangelist	Sally Saysell Andrew Baker	Claire Lewis Cynthia Smith
	Group Service in Shirenewton		

ST PETER'S NEWCHURCH

Services first and third Sunday of each month at 2.30 p.m.

20th Dec 2.30 pm	Annual Carol Service
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