

Shirenewton

Parish Magazine

October 2017



Photograph by Terry Walters

Price: £1

FROM THE VICARAGE

Dear People of the Parish,

The other day I broke down outside *Waitrose* in Caldicot. It could have been worse, darling, I am told – it might have been in the proximity of *Lidl* in Bulwark.

In case you are picturing me gibbering and in floods of tears, let me clarify the circumstances somewhat. In fact the car that I had been driving broke down. Mind you, after a four hour wait for recovery I very nearly manifested the same symptoms as the vehicle.

The recovery man, who brought us all back to Matheron on a low-loader (well, Sandra and I were inside the cab actually), regaled us by confessing that he was "F***** sick of the job, mate" and couldn't wait to join his wife and children in Thailand whereupon he would commence his new vocation as a farmer. Yes, it was that sort of slightly surreal journey home.

I mention this as he (and I could see it coming) at length asked me what job I did. I told him. "F***** Hell, mate!" he retorted "Nobody goes to church these days". He then went on to explain how he accompanied his wife to the Buddhist Temple she frequented (I told you that this episode, with a bald individual from Cwmbran as a major player was somewhat surreal). "I don't believe a F***** word of it, mate but it shows the missus some solidarity." I did not dwell on the theological ramifications of this as, by now, I had lost the will to live and could only seek succour from a (very) large G&T.

I mention this (1) in a desperate attempt to secure your sympathy (thank you Monnica, for furnishing alternative transport) and (2) to indicate how others perceive church commitment.

We live in an age and in a country where religious observance is in continuing decline and coming from an atheist background, I presume to have a certain understanding of the situation.

I have said before how in the time I have been ordained (some thirty-nine years) the statistics show that church attendance has declined, year on year, in our diocese. I am confident that the same is true in most parts of the UK.

I have recently read in a national newspaper (not a representative of the gutter-press either) that those owing to a Christian allegiance have now dipped to below 50% of the population.

I know – an occasion of this very day illustrates – that when I invite others to join me in reciting the words of the Lord's Prayer, most people under the age of forty have no idea of what I am talking about.

I also know that occasions which, by tradition, the church holds to be significant have often melted away to become a mere husk of their former selves. The marking of Harvest Festival ranks among these. For a number of years there has been no discernable increase in the number of attenders over and above any other Sunday. It is not just the church that takes the hit either – I have recently heard that the local Village Harvest Supper has been cancelled on account of lack of interest.

We, as Christians, are faced with an obvious challenge. How do we make the presentation of faith more involving? How do we render spirituality more pertinent? Unless we re-think what we represent, the likes of the recovery driver as indicated above, cannot be blamed for concluding that we adhere to an extinct belief.

With every good wish and blessing, Julian E LI White

READING THE PSALMS

I wrote in the previous edition of the magazine that I once disliked the Psalms and found that most Sundays at Church I mumbled through them.

I was then introduced to sung Psalms, whilst attending church in Chepstow, this again proved rather difficult because I got lost when I was supposed to sing in the same key for a line or two, remember this usually takes place when we see a ♦ in the text. But I found that I liked singing the Psalms.

Within the sung Psalm, there is of course the 'Response', this is where the choir sing the verses and throughout the Psalm there is a response that the congregation sing. This again is quite a wonderful way of reciting the Psalms, and is quite common when the church uses the Lectionary as its reading cycle. The response Psalm can also be spoken, for example, someone reads the verse aloud and the congregation respond as prompted throughout the Psalm.

I was then introduced to taking a more in depth look at the Psalms, where I studied Bruggermann, which I wrote about last time as well.

But it was on a training weekend for potential priests that I learned so much more about how to recite the Psalms in different ways during services. Many of you know that I ask alternate sides to read a sentence from the Psalm of the day when I lead Matins, and I have also used this approach sometimes when I Preside at other services.

Psalms are a form of poetry and can be approached in that way. If we thought of Psalms in this way would we recite them in a monotone sort of address? Reading a Psalm is not a blur, blur, blur reading, it is a reading using our emotions, using our senses and our understanding that God is everything to us.

We can also use the Psalms to help us in Prayer, for example, Psalm 15.

Lord, who may dwell in your tabernacle? ♦ Who may rest upon your holy hill?

What a way to start a prayer to the Lord. It can lead us to ask the question, are we able to dwell in the Lords house? Are we really doing all that we should be doing for others? Do we deserve the love shown to us by our Saviour?

The Psalm then goes on, *Whoever leads an uncorrupt life♦ and does the thing that is right.* We are now given an answer to the question, which can then lead us to pray that the Lord shows us how to lead this type of life, pleasing to God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

There are Psalms for all our needs, confirmation, hurt, building up, reflecting and so on, so go on have a look at them and see if there is a verse that can help you in the day, then pray the verse and ask the Lord to speak to you through it.

Lastly, and my favourite way to read the Psalms is using the pause, one, two, three. This is a great way of reflecting on the Psalm being read, rather than just reading it all the way through in one go. I have used this method once or twice in church, but it is harder to use as a corporate activity, because our one, two, three are never quite the same, I might take slightly longer than you to count them and alike.

The one, two, three method was also taught to me whilst on a priest course, and I use it every day when I say the Daily Office each morning, and when I say the Evening Prayer. This method gives us time to let the words sink in before we read the next section of the Psalm. How does this work I hear you all ask? Well let's use Psalm 15 again.

Lord, who may dwell in your tabernacle? ♦ pause one, two, three.

Who may rest upon your holy hill? Pause one, two, three

Whoever leads an uncorrupt life♦ pause one, two, three

and does the thing that is right. Pause one, two, three.

Who speaks the truth from the heart♦ pause one, two, three.

And bears no deceit on the tongue. Pause one, two, three.

Notice the pause one, two, three comes in at the ♦ as well as at the end of the verse. This way of reading the Psalms really allows the word to sink in, it gives time to reflect as I said before, and brings a peace that we all so dearly need in our busy lives.

I pray that to those of you that are not fans of the Psalms, where they are the beefy spread you either love or hate, I have managed to open you to thinking them more as paste, or even better a jam.

Rick Hayes

Harvest Festival

Sunday 1st October
Family Service with
Glynis and Jane
10.00 am

Shirenewton Church.
Bring a harvest basket to
decorate the church and
to auction later!

Village Harvest Lunch

12.30 for 1.00 Earlswood Hall
Bring your family and friends for
a sociable community lunch followed by a
fun charity auction of harvest offerings.
Drinks at the bar.

Tickets: £5.00 adults
£2.00 children under 12
from:

Jane Eickhoff 01291 641716
eickhoffjane@gmail.com
Noelyn Prout 01291 641261
Sally Saysell 01291 641369

Get your tickets early!



HOUSE MARTINS

Have you noticed in the last two or three weeks that something has changed in the village when you go outside, but you can't quite put your finger on what it is? It's early October and the skies have gone quiet: our chirruping feathered summer visitors have nearly all gone....

Many people saw me over the last few months lurking outside the Tredegar Arms with a clip board - sometimes even when the pub was closed! I was taking part in a national volunteer survey recording the breeding success of house martins in the British Isles, to assist with research being conducted by the British Trust for Ornithology, (BTO)

These beautiful little birds fly all the way from sub-Saharan Africa to breed in our village, and are a characteristic feature of our skies during the summer months. However, they are in trouble, and long term monitoring has revealed that the house martin population in England declined by around 69% between 1966 and 2013, with a particularly pronounced period of decline in the 1980s. There have been declines in abundance in the southern half of Britain, yet increases in the north.

The TA has long been the site of a large number of nests, so was the obvious place to carry out most of the monitoring, sometimes while enjoying a glass of wine. With help from Sarah at the TA, as well as Glynis and Jane, 19 nests on the pub were monitored, (this isn't even the total number on the TA!) Of those observed, 6 nests produced one brood of around 4 – 5 fledglings, most leaving the nest early to mid July, and 5 of these went on to produce a second brood, most of these fledging from late August to mid September. While there was a lot of activity in at least two more nests, there was no conclusive evidence of birds fledging, and they may have failed. The extremely hot spell of weather at the end of June appears not to have suited them. This weather coincided with casualties, with some young birds falling out of the nests, or trying to fledge too early before they could fly. Sarah found several on the road and path outside the pub, including one on the front step seemingly waiting for opening time. (It had heard that the beer was going 'cheep'....). A notable observation was that at least 2 existing nests were occupied by breeding house sparrows, and indeed nesting house martins on my own house were evicted by sparrows during both the last two years, but happily managed to raise a brood successfully this year. The nests on the TA have been in place for many years, and to have breeding success in only 6 out of 19 is very disappointing. Several people who have lived in the village for many years mentioned to me that the numbers used to be much higher within their memory.

Hugh and I enjoyed an amazing evening of 'martin madness' one Friday at the end of August when dozens and dozens of recently fledged young were noisily bombing around low over the gardens in the village, seemingly exhilarated just by the joy of flight. By the time you read this in early October, most of them will have departed the village for their long migration to Africa, and the sky will be quiet once more until they arrive back in April. However, the numbers that return will be far fewer than those that left. They have a long and perilous journey ahead of them, and I hope that this survey will go some way to enabling the BTO to understand what is causing their numbers to decrease, and what we might be able to do to help to reverse this trend.

Pauline James.

SHIRENEWTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The following is the Society's planned program for the 2017-2018 season.

On the second Monday of the month: Archive sessions at the Recreation Hall.

31 st October 2017:	A.G.M. Followed by a talk on Chepstow Bridge from John Burrows
28 th November 2017:	Visit to Chepstow Museum : The Chepstow Coat – afternoon visit 2.00 p.m.
12 th December 2017:	Visit to Llanfiyangel- Tor- y- Mynydd Church, and afterwards at the Tredegar Arms
27 th December 2017:	Solstice Walk on Gray Hill followed by breakfast at Woodland Tavern 7.30 a.m.
30 th January 2018:	V.T.B.D. – David Thomas UK Astrological Society - Planetarium .
20 th February 2018:	Annual Dinner following a talk by Jonathon Jenkins – “671/2 the mark on the wall”
27 th March 2018:	“Monmouthshire Oddments No 2” with Naylor Firth
24 th April 2018:	“Raglan Archive” by Tony Hopkins
10 th May 2018:	“Beating the Bounds of the Parish” Shirenewton Church
19 th May 2018:	Visit to the “County Record Office” at Ebbw Vale to view the Raglan Archive.
26 th June 2018:	Visit to Cefn Tilla Court Details to be confirmed.
31 st July 2018:	“Trellech Dig” by Stuart Wilson.

Further information on our web-site: www.shirenewtonlocalhistorysociety

200 CLUB

Congratulations to the winners of the 200 Club draw in September:

- 1.Mike Penney
- 2.Jenny Howells
- 3.Angela Miller
- 4.Frances Gray

Thanks to all members for their on-going support.

RNLI CONCERT

The church was very pleased to host Chepstow Male Voice Choir who gave a concert on Friday 22nd September in aid of the R.N.L.I. Thanks to all those who organised and supported this event and we're pleased to announce that a net total of £626 was raised.

COFFEE MORNING

Maureen Moody and helpers would like to thank everyone that attended and donated to her coffee morning.
£960 was raised for the Velindre and St. Davids.

FAIRTRADE NEWS



One of the principles of Fairtrade, and indeed one of the criteria for the award of Fairtrade status is sustainability and respect for the environment. The public (well, at least some of them) tend to know about fair wages and reasonable working conditions but concern for the environment is surely, in the current climate (!), an equally crucial consideration.

A small item in Private Eye (no 1452) drew my attention to Nespresso, the coffee capsule company. Now, Nestle, over many years has been the target of a great deal of, in my opinion, well-founded criticism – baby milk advertising in the developing world for example. In the current ad for Nespresso George Clooney's voice-over attempts to position the product as an eco-titan, highlighting how it sources its beans ethically (they say) and how a new mill Nespresso has built in Colombia is bringing endless benefits to the smiling, happy community there. Not a mention of the environmental impact in terms of the billions of spent aluminium capsules its machines spit out. Nespresso has always refused to say how many of them get recycled which doesn't augur well. Searching on the internet it seems one can craft them into jolly knick-knacks but I could find little else – how many knick-knacks does the population need?

It is interesting how blithely companies promote what turn out to be completely ridiculous products! Who was the clever twerp who thought that our exfoliating skin lotions and kitchen cleaners needed ground-up plastic granules? Gosh! The particles go down the drain! Gosh! (Most) plastic is not bio-degradable! Gosh! the fish swallow the particles! Gosh! –we end up eating them ourselves! Who would have thought it? Or perhaps imbibing plastic is merely an unimportant consequence of a successful (i.e. profit-making) product.

The 10 principles of Fairtrade are

- 1 Opportunities for disadvantaged producers
- 2 Transparency and accountability
- 3 Fair trade practices
- 4 Fair payment
- 5 No child labour, no forced labour
- 6 Gender equity, freedom of association
- 7 Good working conditions
- 8 Capacity building
- 9 Promote Fairtrade
- 10 RESPECT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

We can trust the Fairtrade mark in all these areas. It is harder to be sure that individual 'fairtrade' schemes promoted by companies are so reliable. (And I am disappointed with George Clooney!)

Marion McAdam 641316 msm316@gmail.com

Full Frontal Fun



Imagine our horror on discovering that our red altar frontal was missing from its place in the church, as we prepared for Palm Sunday. There was disbelief and sadness that anyone would take it, and take it someone clearly had, for the burse and veil were missing too. It cast something of a cloud over our celebrations, but it was a cloud with a silver lining, as our Sunday Club volunteered to help to make a temporary frontal for Pentecost, while arrangements are put in place for a permanent fabric replacement.

At Pentecost, Acts speaks of tongues of fire spreading out and touching each of the disciples when the Holy Spirit descended. This imagery is mirrored in many hymns used for the festival, such as "Come down, O, Love divine" and "O Thou who camest from above". We wanted to show the members of our Church, filled with the fire of the Holy Spirit.

Our thanks to designer Gilly Lambert, Sunday Club Leader Lynn Morecombe, Maya, Lucie, Daniel, Ben, Harry and Dexter and the Sunday Club Mums, for turning our crisis into a cause for celebration.

Maya, Dexter and Harry bravely volunteered to be drawn round to form the basic people shapes for the design.



Everyone was very busy cutting out flames from different tissue papers. Then we got stuck in, pasting the flames onto the shapes. (This was very messy!) When everything was dry, we added some glitter. (This was even messier!!) Finally, the finished shapes were mounted onto the red background and the spare flames used to ensure it reached the ground. We were very proud of our handiwork when it was blessed by the Revd Andrew Todd at our Pentecost service.



SHIRENEWTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Extracts from the minutes of the September 2017 meeting

Council accepted the resignation of Cllr I Moore as representative of the Mynyddbach ward and co-opted him into the vacancy in the Earlswood ward. County Councillor Louise Brown was co-opted into one of the vacancies in the Mynyddbach ward.

URGENT

Vacancies on the Community Council

There are still three vacancies on the Council – 2 for co-option in the Shirenewton ward and 1 by advertisement in the Mynyddbach ward.

It is important that these vacancies are filled by local residents who are interested in the surrounding community and wish to join the Council –

if that means you - please contact the Clerk (details below).

Your Councillors

Shirenewton ward

Councillor Beverley Moore
Councillor Bryn Price

Councillor Michelle Davies

Two vacancies

Mynyddbach ward

County Councillor Louise Brown

Vacancy

Earlswood ward

Councillor K Morton

Councillor I Moore (Chair)

Newchurch West ward

Councillor Ian Martin

Planning applications considered:

1. DC/2017/00607 Bluebell Farm, Blackbird Lane, Earlswood

Amended plans for new vehicular access to northern boundary of site to Old Road. Council decided maintain refusal of this amended application on the grounds that the revised application does not satisfy any of the reasons the Council gave in its original refusal. This Council would add its support to the other objectors who raise legitimate and serious concerns for road safety. There is still no proposal to route the roadway at the side of the field nor to remove the existing track so this

would, if an access remains across the middle of the field, create a permanent and highly visible scar on the valued Castroggi valley landscape.

2. DC/2017/00966 South Grove, Earlswood

Retrospective planning consent for garage. As built amendment to approved scheme DC/2012/00051.

Council recommended approval.

3. DC/2016/01110 Little Grondra Farm, Shirenewton

Conversion of redundant barn to a dwelling.

Council was minded to recommend approval subject to the revised bat survey and ecological appraisal being acceptable to Mon CC.

4. DC/2017/00933 Little Gaerllwyd, Earlswood

Conversion of an existing redundant agricultural barn into a dwelling.

Council noted that pre-planning advice had been sought. Also that the proposal is not visible from the Usk Road and barely from Buckwell Road, only from the farm entrance and lane which is a public footpath. Council further noted the floor area and exterior of the barn is to remain (66.3sqm), there being an addition of a fully glazed porch (6sqm) at the front entrance and some additional windows in the roof. The barn's stonework and slate roof are to remain. Drainage is by existing septic tank. Internally there will be one large room for lounge/dining/ kitchen with shower room and utility off, and 2/3 bedrooms one with ensuite plus a bathroom upstairs.

The recommendation was for approval.

5. DC/2017/00905 Access at Wellhead Wood, Mynyddbach

Repair and improvement of an existing hard standing access to the woodland.

Although this application is outside the Shirenewton boundary, Council objected to the proposal on the grounds of access onto the B4235 as this is the main access route for residents of Shirenewton and Mynyddbach to the nearest facilities in Chepstow.

Over several years the Council has worked closely with Gwent Police and the Highways Department to improve road safety on the B4235, but felt that this proposal would have an adverse affect on the good work that has taken place. The B4235 at this point is subject to a 60mph speed limit with double solid white lines. To allow this proposal would be potentially hazardous to all road users due to the speed of traffic already using the B4235, plus poor visibility and sight lines for drivers of vehicles exiting the hard standing area. This Council recommended the application be refused pending a road safety report from the Highways Department.

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Other items of interest

Monthly Police Report - Council noted that following staff changes the new neighbourhood officer is now PC Carly Powell.

6/7 and 23/8/17 – Reports of fly tipping in Wentwood Forest. Paperwork evidence was found in the rubbish which was passed to environmental health and NRW to deal.

13/7/17 – Report of a burnt out vehicle found in Wentwood Forest. No identification marks were found on the vehicle which was recovered by NRW.

Next Community Council Coffee morning – will be held at the Village Market in the Recreation Hall on Saturday 21 October from 10 am – 12 noon. Please come along to enjoy coffee and cake also to meet and talk to your local Councillors.

Council Website – Apologies to all who have tried to access the website in recent months. The website has been subject to a cyberattack which has now been resolved and a new and improved website will be available soon.

Dates of future meetings – Monday 2 October and 6 November 2017 at 7.30pm at Shirenewton Recreation Hall. Members of the public are welcome to attend and may speak with the Council for the first 15 minutes of each meeting.

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



SHIRENEWTON VILLAGE MARKET DATES FOR 2017

**EVERY THIRD SATURDAY OF THE MONTH FROM
10-12**

AT THE REC HALL.

***YOUR MONTHLY ONE STOP SHOP FOR LOCALLY
GROWN, PRODUCED AND HANDCRAFTED
ITEMS.***

ENJOY COFFEE AND CAKE IN THE CAFÉ.

JOIN US TO SHOP AND SOCIALISE!

21ST OCTOBER 2017

18TH NOVEMBER 2017

16TH DECEMBER 2017

CHRISTMAS MARKET

SHIRENEWTON SUPER SATURDAY – FUN DAY & FUNDRAISER

Saturday 2nd September 2017

What a difference to last year – we couldn't have wished for a better day – a complete contrast to the lashing rain & high winds – wall to wall sunshine! The event was a huge success judging by the support from the village community with families enjoying refreshments, live music and outdoor games for the children. The teas, coffees, cakes, ice creams, bar and BBQ were all well received and as suggested some families enjoyed their own picnic on the field.

Last year's proceeds of £170 (remarkable considering the weather!) were donated to the Village Defibrillator Fund. This year our fundraising - thanks to the generosity and hard work of the community - raised a phenomenal £717.20 in total split equally between Cancer Research and Recreational Hall Improvements/Maintenance.

Special thanks to all on the Recreational Committee and their spouses/partners for all the help given – both on the day, with setting up and with all the preparation prior to the event. A big thank you to Ken & Jamie for the wonderful live music (& to the Karaoke King & Queen – Stu & Shirley for their efforts – so good apparently no one else could follow them!).

Huge thank you to:

Gordon - our barman extraordinaire (& Chair of the Rec Hall Committee) for setting up and serving (and all the tireless work he does all year behind the scenes for the Rec Hall), to Pam & Clive who volunteered their services to man the BBQ, to Phil at the Huntsman & Julie at the Tredegar Arms for donating fabulous cakes, to Tesco's for the tea & coffee donation, to committee members & spouses for all the baking, to Luke for all his assistance putting up/taking down gazebos, to Sarah for organising bales/ice cream and the children's treasure hunt, to the Kitchen Crew, to the School for supplying games, to the PTA for the Gazebos, to the Church for the Sound System, to Lewis Evans & Daniel Morcombe for their donation from their refreshment stall, to everyone else who helped clear up at the end of the day & to the community for supporting the event.

Shirley Ayres

GARDEN HELP WANTED

(Mynyddbach)

Help required for a few hours a month to keep borders tidy and a little light pruning occasionally.

Suitable perhaps for someone who likes to "potter" in the garden.

Tel : David Prosser 641666





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SHIRENEWTON CHURCH WEBSITE

What a difference a month makes! No sooner than I had submitted last month's entry in which I had nothing to write about, stuff started happening thick and fast!!

Where to begin? How much will Terry publish? Well I'll start with the most important and see where Terry cuts the copy!

So, last month, if you, like me, updated CCleaner, you may have installed Malware on your PC. In the past I've recommended CCleaner for decluttering. In fact, it's a standard install for me. Well, Piriform, the authors of CCleaner, confirmed that hackers managed to attack the company's servers successfully and, if you updated CCleaner between 15th August and 12th September, you may have unwittingly installed malware on your PC as the hackers managed to incorporate a payload in the standard CCleaner install. If you have CCleaner what should you do?

Firstly, it seems that the payload only infected 32-bit systems. If you run a 64-bit system (I do) then it should not have been infected. Google how to check whether you have a 32-bit or 64-bit as the method is operating system dependent.

If you are a relatively confident PC user you can try looking in 'reedit' – the registry editor. It seems that the malware installs a HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Piriform\Agomo option in the registry. So if don't have such a key (uninstalling CCleaner would not remove the key) your system was not infected. WARNING: you can do a lot of damage with regedit so don't do anything unless you can avoid fiddling! There are lots of tutorials on how to use regedit on YouTube.

Piriform recommend that you update CCleaner (another option is to uninstall it – but they are unlikely to recommend that). I've updated it – on the basis they'll be extra careful going forward. Go to the Piriform website (<https://www.piriform.com>) and download and install the latest. Or uninstall via the control panel.

Finally, download Malwarebytes (the free edition) and run a scan. If this is clear then you are likely to be clear. I say 'likely' as experts are also saying that you should restore your system to a date before 15th August. That sounds drastic to me. I'm sure more information will emerge over the next few weeks.

Moving onto the next issue which I'm sure you have read about. Yes, a Daily Mail headline, on 30th August, was: Change your email password now! More than 700 million account details are leaked in the biggest spambot dump ever

So what's the truth? Well, the first thing is not to panic and, quite frankly, not to believe everything you read in the Daily Mail or other mainstream newspaper especially when it comes to technology! In the article it says "More than 700 million email addresses and a number of passwords have been leaked". So, not all 700 million email addresses had passwords leaked. On the positive, the article

does point people at the 'have I been pwned?' website: <https://haveibeenpwned.com> which is a very good place to visit. Enter your email address into the box and inspect the results.

If you get a green box saying 'No breached accounts and no pastes' – excellent news.

If you get a red box saying 'Oh no — pwned!' – don't panic!! Underneath the red box is a list of sites on which your email address was found. Read the text carefully. If, under 'Compromised data' it doesn't mention passwords, all it means is that your email address is 'in the wild' (i.e. known to spammers), so expect more spam. If, it was released as part of the Onliner Spambot (this is the release to which the Daily Mail referred), you'll note the 'Compromised data' entry for this says: 'Email addresses, Passwords'. This doesn't mean your password was released but it may have been. So, in summary if 'Compromised data' in any of the entries includes 'Passwords', it's best to change your password anyway.

In an entirely separate incident, in the last few days (at the time of writing), Equifax, the credit reference agency, has admitted that the details of 400,000 UK people could have been accessed by hackers. Although the breach was confined to US servers, a "process failure" meant that a file containing UK information which could be used to steal your identity (Name, date of birth, email address and a telephone number) could have been accessed. Read more here: https://www.theregister.co.uk/2017/09/15/equifax_uk_breach_statement/. It's early days, but Equifax stated that no password data was stolen. This would imply that in this case the 'Compromised data' did not include passwords. I'll try and provide an update next month if there is any more news.

And, as if that wasn't enough, there appears to be an active campaign by Indian call scammers to target BT customers. In fact, my wife had a call along these lines in mid-September. I was in the kitchen and took over. The caller addressed her by name and claimed to be from BT and was calling about our reported broadband problems. Now, I hadn't reported any BB problems but, if you have reported them beware – it's not BT on the line – and there are suspicions that the scammers may have access to BT data. TalkTalk has recently been fined £100,000 after the details of 21,000 people were exposed to fraudsters in an Indian call center. So, even if they seem to know a lot about you they are unlikely to be BT. In fact a BT spokesperson said: "Even if someone quotes your BT account number, you shouldn't trust them with your personal information."

This appears to be a variant on the old 'Microsoft here, we've received error reports from your PC' scam. Their aim is to remotely access your PC hard drive and get you to install malware on it. This then empties your bank accounts, etc. BT will not need access to your PC to resolve broadband problems.

Safe browsing
David Cornwell
Rock House, Mynyddbach, NP16 6RP, UK



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01633 400548, 07930 893680
07930 893678

A photograph showing a large stack of firewood logs, cut into sections, piled together. The logs are of various sizes and colors, ranging from light tan to dark brown, indicating they are seasoned.

Firewood for Sale

**Barn Stored Seasoned
Logs for Sale**

Contact Daniel or Matthew Haines

Tel. 01633 400548
07930 893680 or 07930 893678



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GARDENING CORNER

It is certainly the season of mellow fruitfulness in our house at the moment. So much so, that we have had to buy a small upright freezer to work alongside our existing two chest freezers! We try to vary our methods of preserving fruit and vegetables through the year, so we pickle what we can and store what we can as 'fresh' fruit and vegetables, the latter either in the ground or in sacks or boxes stacked in the garage. We are not big jam eaters, and in an effort to store more fruit for the winter months we did buy a de-humidifier a couple of years ago. This is meant to dry the fruit out so that it can then be stored in airtight containers. We initially tried it out with apples and then nectarines, but things didn't quite turn out as they should! Once you have learnt the knack it is meant to be very easy to preserve fruit, but I've been reluctant to have another go. I must remember to do better next year.

So why the need for yet another freezer? Well despite nature's best efforts to ruin the summer (in particular the school holidays) the garden has been quite productive this year. I did manage to harvest the potatoes just before potato blight hit particularly hard as a result of the August rain. The tops had gone, but fortunately the blight had not managed to progress to the tubers. I think this is because our main crop varieties have been chosen specifically for their resistance to this particular disease. We did try a new variety this year which has deep blue/purple skins but white flesh. They are meant to be particularly good for chipping, baking and roasting. We have only tried the latter and have to say that they are absolutely fantastic. So if you want to grow your own and you like roasties then give Sarpo 'Blue Danube' a try – well worth the effort. We grew four separate potato varieties this year, one variety of new potatoes, one salad, and two main crop. These are safely stored in hessian sacks and will hopefully keep us going until the early crop is ready to harvest next year.

The major success this year has been the covering over of susceptible crops, but in particular the 'greens' and root crops, such as carrots and celeriac. The greens always get attacked by various caterpillars and unless you spray with chemicals then a crop can be ruined in days. You can remove the caterpillars by hand, but this is a slow job and you never find them all, so another option was needed. The same caterpillars attack swedes and turnips as well as they are also members of the brassica family. Many of the other root crops can get badly damaged by root fly and for the amateur grower there are no longer any chemicals available that are effective against these pests. So this year I bought netting that prevents butterflies getting access to the plants, and a much finer net that prevents root flies (which are a lot smaller) from getting access to the root crops. The netting was laid over the tops of hoops that were constructed by thrusting short bamboo canes into the ground and then making a hoop by placing blue water pipe over each pair of canes. The numbers of hoops depended on the length of the raised bed. The netting sides were then held down by wire pegs. I wasn't sure how effective this would prove to be, but suffice to say that we have had some excellent calabrese and cauliflowers with no caterpillars present at all. Similarly the carrots and celeriac are showing no tell-tale signs of root fly damage – so a

big success story all around. Next year though I need to ensure that I try to protect at least one row less than I did this year. The winter purple sprouting, Brussels sprouts and celeriac are actually now lifting the netting up as they have grown so tall!

The bean and pea crops have done well, starting with the broad beans and finishing now with runner and French beans. Whereas we freeze broad beans when they are young and tender, we are not so keen on the others once frozen, so instead I try to grow 'little and often' so that we never have too many at any time. Leeks, onions and garlic have also done well, although the leeks are showing signs of being infected by rust. The only way to really control this is by spraying with a suitable fungicide – but we need a dry day for that to be effective and we don't seem to be getting many of them at the moment. With many of the crops harvested now I'm clearing the raised beds as the weather allows and making plans for next years' planting. The seed catalogues have already arrived, so I'm busy thumbing my way through them at the moment, including a specialist 'show seed' supplier.

The orchard and fruit garden have also been producing a reasonable crop. The dessert apples we try to eat as they are ready, as the early varieties are not good 'keepers'. We do have some later varieties such as Queen of cox, and the basic cox which will hopefully allow us to store a few apples for a month or so at least. We have a lot of cookers and we try to freeze these as cooked fruit and so ready to use – often with other fruit such as blueberries, mixed in at the time of cooking. We have a good supply of blueberries, strawberries, apricots and nectarines frozen for use over the next six months or so. We have different pear varieties as well. Concorde and conference dessert varieties will be stored in trays for use later, whilst the other varieties that do not store well, will be peeled, with the cores removed, halved and then poached in mulled wine, before being frozen in individual pudding sized portions. These are removed from the freezer when needed, defrosted on the top of the wood burning stove, and then served up warm, with cream or ice cream. Yum! With most of the harvesting work completed we have time to turn our attention back to the flower beds and flower arranging garden. Despite the weather, the assistant head gardener is still finding enough flowers to fill a pot each week, although the gladioli and alstroemarias are coming to an end now. One or two of the raised beds have now become very congested, so I'm removing the plants, digging out the soil and replacing with some fresh. I'll probably give these beds a rest from flowers for a few years, so may plant either strawberries or use for 'greens' next year instead. In the flower garden, we have four areas that have not received the attention they need. These either haven't been weeded for several years, or they have old plants that have not been divided up for many years. A couple of the beds actually fall into both categories! With these I intend to dig out everything, rescue what I can, and then start all over again with the planting. I have been using this as an excuse to visit and to buy some new plants from our favourite nurseries, which have been left to grow in their pots, then divided up and re-potted (some several times). From one or two original plants we now have up to eight or more that are ready

Continued on page 22

Continued from page 21

for planting out in the ground.

The bees as you may have twigged from earlier articles have been particularly difficult this year. Some of this is down to the weather, but I have also struggled to give them the time that they need. This in turn made it worse as hives swarmed, giving me yet more work to do. I was reading the British bee keeping magazine this month and they were saying that honey production was going to be patchy this year due to the weather. The early good weather certainly got our bees working well (hence why they swarmed early). If the weather had continued fine then it may have been a bumper year, but instead the weather deteriorated which is never good news. With large numbers of bees in the bigger hives, this simply means that any food supplies gathered in earlier on in the year are simply consumed by the bees when they cannot get out of the hives to forage. The best performing hive was actually one of the swarms I gathered in late May. They completely filled four 'supers' with honey, but then consumed two of them during the bad weather. Overall, I did take six supers of honey which will result in around 100 pounds of honey. Not a brilliant crop, but at least we will have some unlike last year. Some counties have done a lot better than this, but others like Cornwall have suffered badly and may not have much of a crop to harvest at all. The bees work to age old rhythms so they increase their numbers ready for when certain crops such as blackberries, are going to flower. This year, blackberries seemed to be at least two, if not three weeks earlier than usual. As a result the highest numbers of bees available to take advantage of this bounty arrived too late and the opportunity was missed.

In a similar vein, we plant many species of flowers and trees whose seed source, and thus flowering time, is out of kilter with our native stock, and the bees simply cannot react appropriately. Hawthorn is a good example of an early crop that over-wintered bees will be desperate to take advantage of, but most hawthorn plants are imported from Europe, where their flowering time will naturally be a couple of weeks earlier and when, due to cold weather here, the bees are unable to fly to take advantage. None of this helps the beekeeper, nor with the survival of the bees themselves. Since taking the honey off, I have been feeding those hives that have limited supplies of food with thick sugar syrup. The syrup is a lot thicker than that fed to them at the beginning of the year as they need to evaporate less water before they are able to store it as a food source for use during the winter. Un-ripened syrup (syrup with too much water) is much more likely to start fermenting, which would result in sick bees and high losses due to diseases such as distemper. I will continue to feed until the end of the month or possibly into October if the weather remains warm and the bees are active. When I stop feeding I will then shut the bees down for the winter, after which they will be left to their own devices until late March / April when things will hopefully start up again for a new year. There are a couple of hives that are very weak and I've yet decided what to do with them. Normally they would be combined with another weak hive, but they have limited food and so few bees that I may decide not to bother with them.

Happy gardening until next month, Steve and Felicity Hunt.

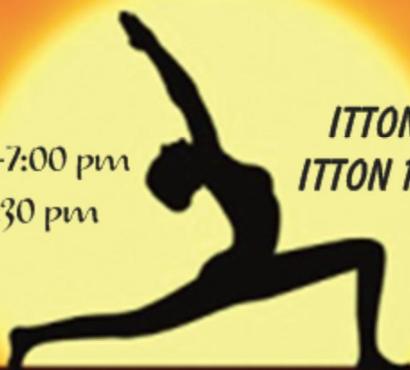


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STARGAZING

As it is now getting darker earlier there are more opportunities for stargazing. The slightly yellow coloured planet Saturn is low in the south-west during twilight. The crescent Moon is close to Saturn on the 24th October. The brilliant planet Venus can be seen in the early morning sky to the east. Later in the month the fainter planet Mars can be seen above Venus. Mars is redder than the stars near it.



The constellation of Cygnus the Swan lies pretty much directly above. It is in the shape of a cross – in fact it is sometimes called the Northern Cross. According to legend, Jupiter the king of the Gods changed himself into a swan when he wanted to visit Leda, the wife of the King of Sparta. In memory of the episode, he placed a swan in the sky. Deneb, the brightest star in the constellation, is at the tail of the swan, whilst Albireo forms the "head" of the Swan. Albireo is worth looking at through a small telescope. It consists of 2 separate stars, one gold in colour the other blue.

The spacecraft Cassini has just completed its very successful mission to collect images and data on Saturn and its moons. There are lots of amazing photographs taken by Cassini on the internet.

60 years ago this month, the great radio telescope at Jodrell Bank in Cheshire became operational. It hit the world newspaper headlines within days by picking up radio signals from the very first satellite launched into orbit. This was Russia's Sputnik 1 which heralded the start of the Space Age.

David Thomas



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Nerys's Natty Nosh



Last year we went on a family holiday to Northern Italy. I have to say we all enjoy our food and had great pleasure shopping and sampling various culinary delights. Montepulciano is a medieval hill town in the Italian province of Siena in southern Tuscany.

The region is famous for Pecorino cheese. The name of a family of hard Italian cheeses made from ewe's milk. The word derives from Italian pecora meaning 'sheep', which in turn is from the Latin pecus meaning livestock.

Montepulciano has a variety of excellent wines to choose from. The shop keepers are very eager for newcomers to sample the various wines, cheese and ham on offer.



Nerys's Natty Nosh



Some delicatessants offer a plate of your choosing of various cheeses, hams, pickles and bread. Very informal but delicious. This could easily be adapted at home for friends or family for an impromptu gathering. Even better enjoy a glass of wine.

Enjoy!





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SHIRENEWTON W.I JULY '17

Due to unforeseen circumstances the 'Reflexology' had to be cancelled; this did not dampen the enthusiasm for an evening with friends. A quiz was organised by our very own Gill Duckham, there were different categories... name the photos of celebrities, History, General Knowledge and more. Needless to say there was good humoured haggling over the scores, but we all agreed Gill did a great job. Ladies please feel free to join us, if for no other reason but to enjoy our company and make new friends.



Next meeting 12th. October 'Tribal Belly Dancing' with Wendy Hughes

Contact: Diane Ashton-Smith (President) 628838
Jane Butterworth (Secretary) 641704

EARLSWOOD COMMUNITY HOG ROAST.

The Hog Roast evening was a huge success. 120 lucky people joined in for a wonderful evening of good food (the pig was fantastic) with lots of accompanying salad, followed by home made pies, crumbles, trifles etc/ A jolly singsong to accompany the enthusiastic Ukelele band from Usk. A Great evening.

THANK YOU TO ALL INVOLVED IN ORGANISING AND PREPARING THE FOOD, AND HELPING LAY OUT THE CHAIRS AND TABLES.

Contact up with suggestions for further events at earlswoodcommunity@bt.com

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	Michelle Davies	01291 641583
	Vacancy	
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	Beverley Moore	01291 641532
Mynyddbach Ward	Vacancy	
	Ian Moore	01291 650766
Newchurch West	Ian Martin	01291 650014
Earlswood Ward	Paul Harris Chair	01291 650871
	Ken Morton	01291 650268
MCC for Shirenewton	Louise Brown	07598 979719 clairebrown@monmouthshire.gov.uk
Member of Parliament	David Davies	020 7219 8360 daviesd@parliament.uk

Police Neighbourhood Watch Contacts

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louise.thorpe@gwent.pnn.police.uk
Shirenewton & Mynyddbach Beverley Moore 01291 641532

Earlswood Sue Leat 01291 641207

Other Local Organisations

Beavers Julie Hitchcock 01291 650548

Brownies Bev. Leaf 01291 641680

Jaci Crocombe 01291 641681

Church Fete

Earlswood Hope Mrs Sylvia Jeremiah, Mr Raymond Jeremiah 01291 641726

Earlswood & Newchurch West Memorial Hall

Glynis MacDonald 01291 641818
glynis.macdonald@btinternet.com

Earlswood Valley Methodist Chapel

Avril Smith 01291 650733

Gaerllwyd Baptist Mrs E Remnant Brooklands, Usk Road NP16 6SA

Girl Guides Helen Cann 01291 650835 cannhelen@gmail.com

Recreation Association Gordon Hughes 01291 641356 gordon.hughes3@tesco.net

Recreation Hall booking Beryl Saysell 01291 641637

St Peters Church Newchurch

Enid Heritage 01291 622708

Shirenewton Local History Society

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Shirenewton and Mynyddbach Fields Association Ltd (SAMFAL)

Neil Fuller 01291 641324

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Jane Butterworth (Secretary) 01291 641704.

DIARY DATES

Oct	Event	Location
1st 12.30pm	Shirenewton Church Harvest Festival Lunch	Earlswood Hall
8th 6:30pm	Harvest Festival	Gaerllwyd Baptist Church
9th 7:30pm	Harvest Supper	Gaerllwyd Baptist Church
12th 7:15pm	Shirenewton Women's Institute	Recreation Hall
20th 7:00pm	Shirenewton Community Council	Recreation Hall
21st 10—12 noon	Village Market	Recreation Hall
21st 10—12 noon	Community Council Coffee Morning	Recreation Hall
28th 10:30am	Xmas Fayre	Hope Chapel Earlswood
31st	Shirenewton Local History Soc	Huntsman Hotel ?

*If you want me to put your event in this Diary,
please mention the date, the time, and the location.*

Mind reading is not my strongest point!

Readers and Sides Persons**October - December 2017****St Thomas a Beckett Church, Shirenewton****8th September
2017**

Date	Sunday Service	Readers	Sides Persons
1st October	Trinity 16	James Leney Margaret Lock	Clare Lewis Margaret Lock
8th October	Trinity 17	Bob Grattan Paul Morecombe	Bob Grattan Paul Morecombe
15th October	Trinity 18	Jane Smith-Haddon Joanne Tomlins	Jane Smith-Haddon Joanne Tomlins
22nd October	Trinity 19	Mark Broughton Diane Marlow	Mark Broughton Diane Marlow
29th October	Trinity 20 (Group Service) at Shirenewton	Andrew Baker	Clare Lewis Graham Lambert
5th November	Fourth Sunday Before Advent	Bill Clark Janet Horton	Bill Clark Janet Horton
12th November	Third Sunday Before Advent	Mark Broughton Cynthia Smith	Mark Broughton Cynthia Smith
19th November	Second Sunday Before Advent	Bob Grattan Frances Gray	Bob Grattan Frances Gray
26th November	Christ the King	Bill Clark Janet Horton	Bill Clark Janet Horton
3rd December	First Sunday of Advent	Mark Broughton Ruth Savagar	Mark Broughton Clare Lewis
10th December	Second Sunday of Advent	Bob Grattan Glynis MacDonald	Bob Grattan Glynis MacDonald
17th December	Third Sunday of Advent	James Leney Paul Morecombe	Clare Lewis Paul Morcombe
24th December	Fourth Sunday of Advent	Andrew Baker Sally Saysell	Graham Lambert Clare Lewis
25th December	Christmas Day - Midnight Mass Family Service 10 a.m.	Andrew Baker Sally Saysell	Graham Lambert Clare Lewis



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