

Shirenewton

Parish Magazine

March 2018



*Photograph by Terry Walters*

Price: £1

## FROM THE VICARAGE

Dear People of the Parish,  
The other day my car broke down.  
Again.

As well as being obliged to exclaim "Oh, deary-me" (or words to that effect), I was forced into considering what the replacement would be. Sandra seized the opportunity and pressed for a WW2 Willis Jeep which would, by chance, make extensive shopping-trips to Oka and the White Company in Bath a little more bearable. If pushed, she added, she might settle for a 1953 Mk 7 Jaguar.

I was more prudent and considered that a 1970's Pontiac Trans-Am would fit the bill. We both agreed that older models of vehicular transport were preferable to modern offerings. Who, on earth, would want to float around in a contemporary biscuit-tin which was politically correct and utterly characterless in comparison to an historic gas-guzzler?

Which, I must admit, got me to thinking.

Although I have a weakness (some would say insanity) for the more mature motor vehicle I have to admit that – in many respects – the 'good old days' were, in fact, not that good at all. Do you remember (well, I do) when it was almost impossible to buy petrol after 5.00pm and if your transport broke down (as it often did) you just prayed that the nearest telephone box was within a walking radius of five miles. Yes, mobile 'phones were not even thought of then. Such conveniences abound these days. I even understand that the most dreaded of horrors – shopping – can be executed on the computer thingy in the comfort of your own home with a cup of coffee to hand. I loathe computers as well (in other words I am too old to want to know how they operate) but I have to give them their due. Email is a wonderful thing. You can actually communicate with people without speaking to them. A cumudgeon like me could hardly ask for more!

In like manner, I am quick to lament the days of a by-gone era when the Vicar and (reluctantly) PCC knew what was best in respect of parish life. These days it seems as though brides, for example, are adamant in their belief that they should see inside the venue in which they are to be married prior to the event itself. I am also expected to have full knowledge of the best location for their reception afterwards and the collar size to be most expedient for use by the Best Man on the occasion. Times have indeed changed and, despite my protestations, quite often for the better.

Moving with the times is also essential for the church. I have written glibly before that it must embrace the social situation of the present and the challenge of the future whilst retaining what is most valuable from the past. It often requires the addition of a 'new' face with 'new' perspectives to accomplish this. For this reason I am not infrequently indebted to my colleague, Revd. Rick Hayes.

Rick has both revived and added too, for example, the notion of personal prayer and an open church to those who are in need of either or both facilities. His leadership in this direction is appreciated and increasingly well-supported.

The above impinges on what I believe to be a bed-rock characteristic of the Christian life – spiritual exploration. This should be no more evident than during this period of Lent. This 'walk with Christ' or 'personal pilgrimage' – no matter what we call it – should draw us into a more intimate relationship with God. To this end I would direct you to the range of special Lent Services elsewhere in the magazine. May your spiritual journey be fulfilling.

With every good wish and blessing; Julian E L White (Rector & Vicar)

## PARISH MAGAZINE SUBS NOW DUE

Thank you for taking the Parish Magazine over the last 12 months. Subscriptions for the 2018 magazines are now due. If you wish to continue to receive the magazine and have been unable to meet up with your local distributor to pay for the next 10 issues of the magazine, will you kindly forward your £10.00 subscription to . Graham Lambert, at Oakley House, Ditch Hill Lane, Shirenewton. Many thanks for your support. Cheques should be made payable to: **Shirenewton Church PCC.**

We do hope that you find the magazine interesting and useful.

## 200 CLUB

Congratulations to the following 200 Club winners in February:

1. Nansi Davies
2. Hugh Owen
3. Glynis MacDonald
4. Simon Stanley

Many thanks for your support.

200 Clubs subs for this year are now due. The cost is £10 per number.

If you are not currently in the 200 Club and would like to join, then please contact Graham Lambert at [200clubshirenewton@gmail.com](mailto:200clubshirenewton@gmail.com) or telephone 641175.

## Shirenewton Plant Stall



At last year's Fete we had a few disappointed customers who didn't get to us early enough to get what they wanted, so this year we are offering you the opportunity to pre-order bedding, begonias, geraniums and fuchsias (subject to availability).

Why not get the Plant Stall to plant up your hanging baskets?



Do you have old baskets and pots you no longer need? Donate them to us!

Competitive rates - all proceeds to the Church.

Call or text 07821 725690 with your requests.

# Shirenewton Quiet Morning

**Saturday 10 March**  
**10:00 to 12:30 followed by lunch**  
**The Saysell Centre**

## a space for grace

### *What is a quiet morning?*

- It is a time to enable God to meet with you in the way God wants to meet with you.
- It is a time that will enable you to leave the 'baggage' behind, and hopefully move into a new place within
- It is a time of spiritual refreshment
- It is a time when we can allow our longings and our fears to surface and own them before God
- It will engage, our intellects, senses and imaginations

### *Is it for me?*

It's for anyone and all are very welcome. You don't need prior experience, you don't need to be a Church-goer (regular or otherwise). You do need to wish to develop or explore your relationship with God.

### *Should I prepare?*

You don't need to prepare, but you will get out what you are prepared to put in. If you have a very hectic life it might be a good idea to take a little down time during the preceding day, so it's not too much of a shock.

### *What will it involve?*

After an introduction, a cup of coffee and maybe a biscuit, there will be a series of short silences for prayer around suggested topics. Material will be provided to inspire you. We will finish with an informal act of worship and shared lunch.

### *What does it cost?*

There is no charge, but you are invited to bring along a plate of food to share at lunch.

### *Do I need to bring anything?*

No just come! You could bring your Bible, if you wished, but it is not obligatory.

**Please let us know you are coming by emailing Gilly at [lem.shirenewton@gmail.com](mailto:lem.shirenewton@gmail.com) or calling 07821725690**

**Pray as you can, not as you can't!**

## CAERWENT COMMUNITY COUNCIL COMPETITION WINNERS

A huge thank you to Caerwent Community Council who donated £120 to the school to run a 'Roald Dahl' themed competition and to Cllr Phil Murphy who had the unenviable task of having to choose the winners from the two hundred plus entries! The winners and runners-up won Amazon vouchers



Rec: Draw the chocolate factory  
Year 1: Write a Willy Wonka description  
Year 2: Pen portrait of Willy Wonka using similies  
Year 3: Instructions - how to make a dream jar  
Year 4: Pop art of favourite Roald Dahl character  
Year 5: Roald Dahl animation using 'scratch'  
Year 6: Willy Wonka's science experiment

## OPEN MORNING



Thank you to all the parents who attended our Health & Wellbeing open morning ... the children enjoyed having you in their lessons. Diolch yn fawr to the Healthy Schools Committee for their informative presentation.

## GYM STARS



We are very proud of Rhianwen, Carys, Issy, Libby, Chloe, Matilda, Niamh & Edith who recently competed in the East Wales Schools Tumble and Vault competition. Congratulations to Issy who came 4th overall and will compete in the Welsh finals next month.

## MABINOGION WORKSHOPS

As part of our Curriculum Cymraeg fortnight the children enjoyed listening to and re-enacting scenes from The Mabinogion ...



## CLASS BLOGS

Check out what else we've been up to on our website: [www.shirenewton.monmouthshire.sch.uk](http://www.shirenewton.monmouthshire.sch.uk)

Come & join us on **TUESDAY 27th MARCH 2pm** at our "**Young at Heart Community Club**" in the school hall ...

You will be working with pupils doing some art and craft activities and knitting; with entertainment from the Eisteddfod and Easter Assembly. Please contact school if you have some free time on your hands and would like to be part of this club: 01291 641774

[shirenewtonprimary@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:shirenewtonprimary@monmouthshire.gov.uk)

## Bishop Richard visits Shirenewton



At the group service in Shirenewton on Sunday 28th January, we were very pleased to welcome Bishop Richard. Bishop Richard joined Julian, Nansi, Andrew and Gilly to celebrate The Eucharist and also consecrated the new red altar frontal which was made by the extremely talented Claire Lewis, after the previous one sadly went missing last year.

Our thanks to Claire for all her hard work making the frontal. Having volunteered to produce a simple red cloth somehow the project grew and before she knew it Claire was presenting designs to the PCC, travelling all the way to Ormskirk to choose the fabric and appliques, and of course putting in some long hours with her sewing machine and getting some very sore knees as she laid it out ready for stitching. All who have had the chance to examine it closely will recognise what a fine and professional job she has done.

There was a very welcome chance for everyone to meet the Bishop and his chaplain after the service over coffee and delicious homemade cakes in the neighbouring Saysell Centre.

# Services in Holy Week



**Palm Sunday** (25<sup>th</sup> March)

**Eucharist with distribution of palms**

**10 a.m.**

**Shirenewton Church**



**Good Friday** (30<sup>th</sup> March)

Walk on Gray Hill.

Back by popular demand, join us for a family walk in the Spring sunshine (we hope) with readings of the Passion.

We will then enjoy a homemade hot cross bun or two!



**10 a.m. from reservoir car park**

Children and dogs welcome

Email to register interest to [lem.shirenewton@gmail.com](mailto:lem.shirenewton@gmail.com) (and receive updates in case of bad weather)



**Good Friday  
Meditation**

Pause for reflection

2:30 p.m.

Shirenewton Church

**Rejoice! EASTER DAY** (1<sup>st</sup> April)

**Easter Communion**

**10 a.m.**

**Shirenewton Church**



THE  
ST WOOLOS  
SINFONIA



## **St Woolos Sinfonia**

### **Italian Wine and Italian Music**

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> March

St Woolos Cathedral 7:30

Tickets £15:00 Jane Leney 01291 641 271

### **Brahms Concerto for Violin and Cello**

Schumann Symphony 'The Spring'

Conductor Tianyi lu

Sat 14<sup>th</sup> April

St Woolos Cathedral 7:00

Tickets: £12:50 Jane Leney 01291 641 271

## **Easter Fayre at Hope Chapel Earlswood Shirenewton**

**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2018 10.00 a.m. – 2.00 p.m.**

All Welcome £1.00 entry with free tea, coffee and biscuits.

Come and join the fun: Teddy bears picnic with a Teddy Bear Tombola.

Home made cake stall: Tombola; raffle with lots of prizes, guess giant Ted's name and more.

Bring along your friends and your old Teddy – a prize for the Eldest Teddy Bear – Teddy Bears only!

Friendly fun for young and old.

## SHIRENEWTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

**Save the Date - Friday, 23rd March, 2018. 7pm.** Who wants to join us for a night of entertainment and shopping?

Doors open at 7pm where there will be several stalls selling an array of items, plus some fully qualified beauticians doing mini manicures.

Tea, coffee, soft drinks and cakes will be available to purchase, plus a licensed bar.

Take your seats at 7.30pm for a fashion show of ladies and children's clothes. The show lasts for about 45 minutes, after which you can browse the rails and make purchases. There will be over 1000 items of ladies and children's clothing to suit all tastes, from top high street brands, with savings up to 50% and even 75% off original store prices. Sizes range from 8-22 for ladies and 2-14 years for children (boys and girls). All come with a 28 day full refund policy. We will also be selling tickets for a raffle on the night, with the top prize being a £50 voucher to spend on clothes from the fashion show, plus other lovely prizes donated by our stall holders.

We are selling EARLY BIRD tickets at £2.50 each if purchased before half term (16th February) or at the school Eisteddfod coffee morning (2nd March). Afterwards, the price per ticket will be £3.50. Children need a ticket but go FREE with a paying adult.

Tickets available in advance from the school on 01291 641774, Shirenewton Primary School PTA via Facebook. See advert on Page 13



## Sir Fynwy – Oriau Agor Monmouthshire County - Opening Times

	<b>Drop in sessions for gateway advice</b>	<b>Appointments</b>	<b>Extra sessions by appointment only</b>
<b>Caldicot Office</b> 5a Church Road Caldicot NP26 4BP	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 10am to 1pm	Available Tuesday Wednesday & Thursday 10am to 1pm	Better Advice Better Lives (help with benefit issues) Monday 10am to 2pm Tuesday 1pm to 3pm Wednesday 10am to 3pm
<b>Chepstow Office</b> The Gate House, High Street Chepstow NP16 5LH	Monday Tuesday Wednesday & Thursday 10am to 3pm	Available Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 10am to 3pm	Better Advice Better Lives (help with benefit issues) Thursday 10.00am to 12.00pm

For your information - These are our opening times as at 9 January 2018

## Camelot the Panto

Once again another wonderful production from The SODS. There is just so much talent in the village - all those villains and heroes, ghosts and teddies, kings and princesses, wizards and weird women, dames and invisible Knights and of course a whole army of young knights who just like to sit around a table. And we mustn't forget all those people back stage, front of house, serving refreshments, making costumes, making noises including the Band. And the piece de resistance? Well it's got to be the unforgettable Shrieking Bogs.

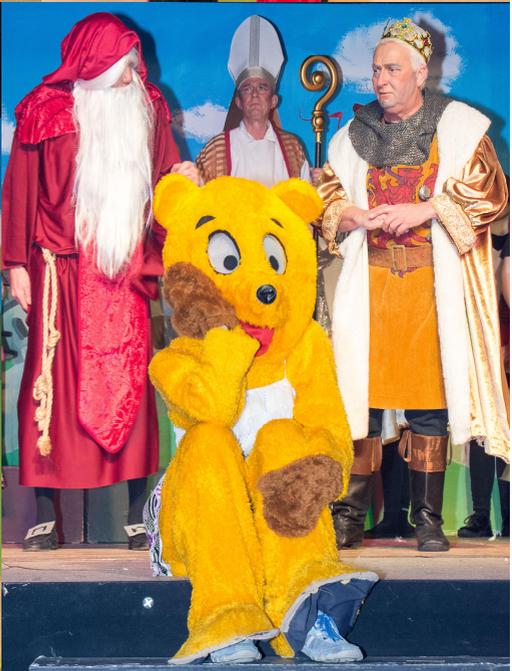


And thanks to the generous donations for the programmes and the refreshments, a magnificent £1672:79 was collected and this has gone to the two charities. 'The Brecon Mountain Rescue' and the 'Stroke Association' have both received cheques for £836:40. (The SODS were so flushed with success that they topped up the donations with one p to make the amount divisible by two.) Thank you once again to everyone who helped to make the panto such a success! Want to be involved next year?!

Ring me on 641 818 or email [glynis.macdonald@btinternet.com](mailto:glynis.macdonald@btinternet.com)









# Love Labels

## Fashion Show & Clothes Sale

PLUS Stalls, Raffle, Beauty Treatments,  
Licensed Bar & Refreshments.

You are invited to a...

Ladies & Children's Fundraising Fashion  
Show & Clothes Sale with HALF PRICE  
Surplus Stock from High Street Stores



## Raising Funds For: SHIRENEWTON SCHOOL



At.. Shirenewton Primary School  
On.. Friday 23rd March, 2018  
Starts.. 7.30pm (Stalls/Bar open at 7pm)  
Admission.. Early bird tickets **£2.50**  
(before half term or at Eisteddfod  
Coffee Morning). **£3.50** afterwards.

**For Tickets:** Contact the school on 01291 641774 or Shirenewton Primary School PTA via Facebook.

**Contact us:** 01789 750175 ♥ [lovelabelsfashionshows@aol.com](mailto:lovelabelsfashionshows@aol.com)

# SHIRENEWTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Extracts from the minutes of the February 2018 meetings

## URGENT

### Vacancies on the Community Council

**There are still three vacancies on the Council – two for co-option in the Shirenewton ward and one 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).**

### **Planning applications considered –**

1. DC/2017/01466 Tregaron, 2 Oak View Cottages, Old School Hill, Mynyddbach Proposed rear double storey extension.

Council noted there had been one online objection regarding access down Boast Lane. The lane is a private road serving several properties and is very narrow. Its entrance onto Old School Hill is a hazard as there are no sight lines and it is virtually impossible to exit onto old School Hill in safety. There is concern related to the use of the lane by contractors during building works and the damage that would be likely to arise both to the lane surface and to the adjoining properties given the narrowness of the lane. When previous building works were carried out access was obtained via Blethyn Close, down past the affordable houses and then across the garden of Oak Lodge. Such access would require the consent of the owner of Oak Lodge and possibly of MCC as the presumed owner of the section of roadway from Blethyn Close past the affordable houses.

Insufficient dimensions are given on the application to assess the extent to which the proposed extension increases the existing accommodation but a rough estimate would be approaching double the volume. Councillors were aware that MCC guidelines indicate extensions should not exceed 30% of the original volume.

Council recommended approval subject to safeguards for access over Boast Lane such as weight and size limits on contractors/delivery vehicles or an alternative means of access via Blethyn Close.

2. DC/2018/00099 Longmeads, Shirenewton. Proposed porch and double garage.

Council noted that an additional drawing had been posted to the Mon CC planning portal on 6.2.18 which showed the relocation of the public footpath, possibly on to the property of High Trees. Concern was also expressed over the ownership of the turning area.

Council recommended that the application be refused in its current form and withdrawn as invalid on the following points:

1. A lack of clarity and/or inaccuracy over the ownership of the land on which the public footpath runs, no application had been made for relocation of the path, the proposed garage appeared to straddle the original route of the footpath.
2. Lack of clarity over the ownership of the turning area, and how the legal right of use by neighbours will be preserved.

Council found no problems with the proposed porch.

3. DC/2018/00139 Sunnybank Farm, Earlswood. Replacement extension. Council recommended approval.

### **Other items of interest**

Monthly Police Report - 3/1/18 – Report of vehicles racing around Wentwood Forest. Officers attended but no vehicles were found acting anti-socially at that time.

18/1/18 – Report of a vehicle crashing through and damaging a hedge at a field off Ditch Hill Lane.

29/1/18 – Report of two large bags of copper (approx. half a ton) taken from an insecure shed at a farm between Mounton and Shirenewton.

31/1/18 – Report of 3 sheep found dead in a field off the Usk road near Earlswood. The owner believed they were killed by dogs.

2/2/18 – Report of an oil tank feeder pipe damaged at a farm near Earlswood. The owner believed the pipe was damaged whilst someone was trying to check how much oil was in the tank, but no oil was taken.

There were two calls to Brookacre during this time. 1 on the 18/1/18 and 1 on the 20/1/18.

The update for the burglary on the 13/1/18 at Parc-Maes-Ffynonn near Shirenewton is that a male is helping police with enquiries and at this time they are not looking for anyone else.

Lower Bushes, Earlswood - the Community Council reported flooding to Highways on 20.11.17 and have been advised that pot holes had been filled on 10.1.18, also gouts cut into verges and drains cleared.

Coffee Morning – the next Community Council coffee morning will be held on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> April at the Village Market in the Recreation Hall (subject to permission)

Dates of future meetings – Monday 5 March 2018 and Monday 9 April 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](http://www.shirenewtoncc.org.uk)

Contact the Clerk to the Community Council - Mrs Hilary Counsell

Tel: 01291 421307

E-mail: [Shirenewtoncc@gmail.com](mailto:Shirenewtoncc@gmail.com)



**SHIRENEWTON  
VILLAGE MARKET  
DATES FOR 2018  
PLEASE NOTE NEW MARKET  
HOURS 10.30 – 12.30**

**17<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2018**

**21<sup>ST</sup> APRIL 2018**

**19<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2018**

**16<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2018**

**21<sup>ST</sup> JULY 2018**

**AUGUST 2018 – NO MARKET**

**15<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2018**

**20<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2018**

**17<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2018**

**15<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2018**

**CHRISTMAS MARKET**



**MUSICAL DIRECTOR: GRAHAM BULL**

***CCS is affiliated to Ty Cerdd & Making Music, and is a Registered Charity (no. 112798).***

***CHEPSTOW CHORAL SOCIETY is breaking from recent tradition this year, and will be holding their Annual Spring Concert AFTER Easter as opposed to our normal practice of the past 15 years or more when the Spring Concert has taken place on Passion Sunday Weekend, i.e., two weeks before Easter Day. The reasons for this are two-fold-***

***The early Easter in 2018 has limited the rehearsal times since Christmas, and we are always mindful of possible difficult weather in January and February!***

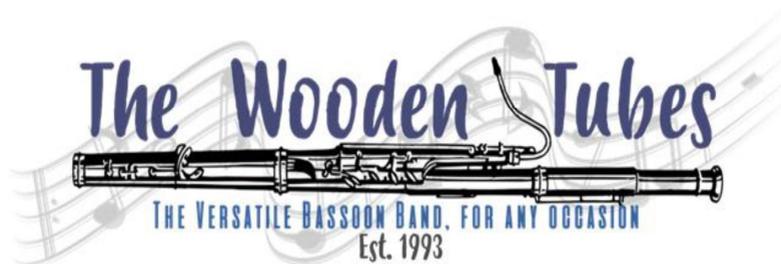
***The Concert this year will take place on SATURDAY APRIL 21<sup>st</sup>, 7.30pm, at St Mary's Priory Church Chepstow, with a different focus, and will feature Brass Ensemble and Organ. Choral works will include John Rutter's "Gloria" and "Te Deum", Parry's rousing choral anthem "I Was Glad", all with full brass and organ, and "Blest Pair of Sirens". Other items included in the programme will be Vaughan Williams' "The Old Hundreth" (All People That On Earth Do Dwell), also complete with brass and organ, and Stainer's big anthem "I Saw The Lord", along with organ solos and other short choir items.***

***This is an unashamed concert of British music by British composers, in the 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year of the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth in June 1953.***

***Tickets (£12) will be available in mid-March from members and Chepstow Bookshop, with more information on the CCS website ([www.chepstowchoralsociety.org.uk](http://www.chepstowchoralsociety.org.uk))***

***Marjorie Duerden (Asst Mus Dir, CCS)***

ST THOMAS Á BECKET CHURCH, SHIRENEWTON  
IS PROUD TO PRESENT A PROGRAMME OF LIGHT MUSIC  
TO CELEBRATE THE YEAR OF THE BASSOON!  
IDEAL FOR A SUMMER AFTERNOON  
ON SATURDAY, 12<sup>th</sup> MAY 2018 AT 5 P.M.  
IN THE SAYSELL CENTRE  
WITH



"Wooden Tubes" is a bassoon ensemble originally formed in 1993 performing throughout London. Today it is a group of six accomplished musicians intent on bringing a unique sound to a wider audience with a repertoire suitable for all tastes and every occasion.

The "Wooden Tubes" provide a distinct musical encounter guaranteed to make any event that little bit special. With a versatility to suit any mood their music caters from the fun-loving and frivolous to the highbrow and discerning; from Mozart and Bach to Teddy Bears' Picnic.

The "Wooden Tubes" have performed at a variety of venues for all occasions: from lecture recitals concerts to wedding parties providing entertainment that has surprised and delighted audiences.

For further details please contact Shaun Roderick: [saroderick@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:saroderick@hotmail.co.uk).

Players:

Oliver Ludlow

Caroline Hudson

Rachel Morgan-Heath

Ian Mansbridge

Shaun Roderick

Kirstie Mayes



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## SHIRENEWTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 1090167

*Our January meeting took us up to Earlswood & New Church West War Memorial Hall. The speaker for the evening was David Thomas who brought along the planetarium belonging to Usk Astronomical Society. It was rather a cosy fit in the planetarium, designed for 25 but there must have been at least 30 members. As well as been interesting and informative it was good fun and I think everyone enjoyed the rather unusual meeting sitting on the floor of the hall with the stars above us. Mince pies and mulled wine were eaten during the interval. Nick, another very enthusiastic astronomer, gave us a talk on his collection of space debris. What they were! and Where they came from. Really a first class talk.*



### *Dates for your Diary:*

*Monday, 12th March*

*Archive Meeting at the Recreational Hall 10.00 pm to 4.00 pm drop in session*

*Tuesday, 27th March*

*Meeting at the Huntsman Hotel, at 7.30 pm Talk entitled 'Monmouthshire Oddments' Given by Naylor Firth, not to be missed.*

# Spring Clean

EST. 1986

Proprietor:  
Alan Knight

Mob: 07786 364759

Tel: 01291 424399

[www.springcleanclean.co.uk](http://www.springcleanclean.co.uk)

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01291-01600-01594-01633 AND BEYOND

## **Shirenewton Babies and Toddler Group**

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

**Shirenewton Recreation Hall**



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

## **THE CHURCH CAUSES A COUPLE TO DIVORCE!**

Rick Hayes

At the time of writing this article, I had the privilege to attend the unveiling to the statue called the Lady of the Lake, at Morriston Hospital Burns unit, Swansea. During the event we enjoyed a professional story teller who shared with us the legend of the Lady in the Lake, , Lyn-y-Fan Fach.

It started with a young farmer, who wooed the Lady of the Lake, by first offering her a crust of bread from his pocket. Then after sharing his love for the Lady of the Lake with his mother, she made him a lightly rolled doe to offer to the Lady and again she refused the gift. His mother then assured him that the heart of his true love would be won with his mother's first class bread, which she made ready for him to take to the Lady in the Lake the next day. When the Lady of the Lake saw the bread she agreed to marry him, and would ensure that all his needs were met.

But the Lady of the Lake gave one condition, that being, he would never strike her. She explained that should he strike her three times she'd be off and take everything with her. (First prenuptial agreement 11<sup>th</sup> century). He agreed to the terms. She then left the lake and called to the lake and every sort of domestic animal came out of the lake and they all travelled back to his farm, married and settled down.

They lived happily together and had three boys who grew and all was well until the first trip to the church, where they were attending a Christening. During the service the Lady of the Lake cried and cried and her husband shook her, (domestic abuse), asking her what was up? She said the baby would not live for long, and then said that is the first time of him striking her, so be careful.

The next time they went to church was for a wedding, where an old wealthy gentlemen was marrying a young girl from another village. The lady of the Lake cried and cried and her husband nudged her hard, saying it was supposed to be a joyous occasion, so why was she crying? She explained that it was not true love because the young girl was only marrying for money, and she told him he had struck her again, be very careful as this was the second time.

The third time at church, was to attend a funeral, and during the service The Lady of the Lake laughed uncontrollably. He husband took her by the shoulders and shook her hard, saying it was not the time of the place to be laughing, why was she laughing? She said that the lady who was dead has gone to a far better place, and then she said by the way, that's the third time you have struck me, so I am off. (Divorce underway).

On the way she called to all the live-stock she had blessed the young farmer with and left him as poor as he was before, (Divorce settlement).

It is fabled that the three sons continued to meet with their mother, although the father did not know, and during their meetings she would walk them around the lake and show them all the herbs and plants that were good for healing people. The folklore says the three sons are deemed as the first physicians in Wales.

So remember, always keep your promises, and think twice before you act. I used the heading 'Church causes a couple to divorce'. That's the type of headline that would appear in the media, as they would route because the incident back to the visits to the church where the three strikes and you're out took place. By the same token we are sometimes conditioned to act within the environment we find ourselves. Look at the three occasions, there should have been two happy events and one sad event. But because for some reason the Lady of the Lake could see past and through things she acted in a completely different way.

To us Christians Baptism is crucial we see in Matthew 3:11 (NIV), *I baptise you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.* Our baptism looks to the eternal, not the temporal.

As to marriage, we are told in the Bible, Matthew 19:6 (NIV) *so they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.* Marriage is not something to do because of lust or some whimsical notion. As Christians we should not worry about death, as stated in the Bible, Ecclesiastes 7:1 (NIV) *A good name is better than fine perfume, and the day of death better than the day of birth.* Why? Because we are told we will enter into the Lords Eternal Kingdom when we leave this world of ours.

So when was the last time you attended an event and thought, 'This is wrong, I shouldn't be here!' And more importantly what did you do about it?

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[www.shirenewtonshop.com](http://www.shirenewtonshop.com)



Well what a difference a month makes. When I penned last month's entry I said about Bitcoin: It peaked before Christmas at \$19,086 for a bitcoin and, at the time of writing, is trading at \$11,552 per bitcoin. Well, at this time of writing it's currently trading at US\$9,867 having hit a low (in the month) of US\$6,914. A bit of a roller coaster!

So what is Bitcoin and why is everyone talking about it? Bitcoin is a so called 'cryptocurrency' which means that it is a digital currency outside the control of a central bank. As a currency is simply a means of exchange and payment for goods or services, a cryptocurrency meets the definition if you can use it to pay for goods and services. Bitcoin is one of many cryptocurrencies in the market. Bitcoins are created by so-called 'miners' who solve complex mathematical algorithms which consume a significant amount of computing power. Therefore it's not possible to 'just create one' and because supply is restricted the currency has some value to some people especially if it can be used in exchange for goods and services. Bitcoin mining can be very lucrative but is very expensive due to the equipment required and the power used so it's tempting to use someone else's computational resource. You may have read recently about some Russian scientists being arrested for attempting to mine cryptocurrency using the supercomputer at the nuclear facility at which they worked!

How that affects us is that viruses these days are as likely to install background Bitcoin mining programs which use your computing resource as there are to install another form of malware.

There are other classes of cryptocurrencies which are created and controlled by companies or other such organisations. In fact, in 2017, there were estimated to be over 400 initial coin offerings (ICOs) with many of the offerings being put out by companies looking to raised funds without resorting to venture capital. These clearly are extremely high risk as the 'investor' as no legal rights and ICOs currently operate outside of any regulatory control. Definitely *caveat emptor*. In fact the whole cryptocurrency area is one where it is very easy to be a victim of fraud. I, personally, stay well clear of them. That doesn't mean I don't find it interesting!

I could go on but if you want to read more there is plenty online.

My wife wanted me to bring to readers attention a scheme called Re-Cycle. As I always do as I'm told, let me tell you about it.

Re-Cycle ([www.re-cycle.org](http://www.re-cycle.org)) is a charity aiming to take our unwanted bicycles and re-distribute them in Africa. As they note "In Africa the benefits of bike ownership are life changing". The key point is that you can donate your old bikes, so long as they are in **reasonable** condition at many branches of Halfords. You can see the exact stores on the Halfords website (look for the Re-Cycle link under 'Community' in the website footer), but, locally, Halfords stores in Bristol (both Cribbs Causeway and Eastgate) and the Penarth Road branch in Cardiff will accept unwanted bikes on behalf of Re-Cycle. It sounds like a great scheme!

Please don't forget to book your Easter travel plans via [www.shirenewtonshop.com](http://www.shirenewtonshop.com). There are about 50 stores in the Travel & Holidays category covering general travel portals such as Expedia, Opodo, Skyscanner, etc. Airlines, Hotels, Airport parking, Car Hire, etc.



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## GARDENING CORNER

Generally, I always think of myself as a glass half full sort of person, so always looking for the positives in life wherever I can. Both I and the assistant head gardener have always found that the only way of getting yourself out of a bad place is to think positive and work your way through things. Whether it's an age thing or not I find that these days there are occasions where I am becoming more of a glass half empty sort of person so finding the negatives in life. I still work two days a week in Bristol for my sins, and if any readers of this article also suffer the same traffic chaos on a daily basis you will know what I mean. This year I will clock up forty years of working for the Forestry Commission and I now start going to work earlier than I ever have done to beat the worst of the traffic, being at my desk a little after 6.30 am. I can't avoid the traffic coming home at night, but there is something about sitting in traffic knowing that you are on your way home, rather on your way to work! Whilst looking at the hundreds of rear red lights in front of me I think back to my working career and dwell on how it is that I have come to be where I am! I remember back to when I first started working with the Commission in West Wales, when I never saw another car on the way to work, the dog went with me, and together we spent probably 85% of our time out in the forest, often travelling 200 miles without ever touching a council road in a single day. It was a big forest. Chainsaws and the first harvesting machines had long replaced handsaws and axes, but there were to be no computers for at least ten or fifteen years. When they did arrive they were only used for working out the forest workers pay, and the room they sat in was the only one in the office where there was a no smoking rule! How things change. Now I sit at an office desk all day, looking at my twin computer screens, writing guidance for the field staff (usually aimed at steering them through truckloads of EU Regulations) and never see a forest from one week to the next. There is a positive to all this though, and something as a wee young trainee forester I never expected to see or be part of, and that is that I will be with the Commission as they celebrate 100 years in existence, which will be in 2019. Having escaped the clutches of the ring road and M32 I have a little more time to consider not just what the Commission has achieved in the 100 years (mostly good, but some not so). I also think of the numerous tree planting schemes I have been involved with in Monmouthshire over the years and tell myself that at least I have made a difference.



I currently feel like a glass half empty man in respect of the weather. I have had enough of the endless cold, grey and wet days where just walking across the grass you can hear your feet squelching the mud through the green grass blades and then slipping as your boots lose purchase. The weatherman is now talking of a long, cold spell to take us into March, due to some weird goings on in the stratosphere which will result in the wind direction going into reverse and us being subject to endless East winds. By the time you read this we will know whether their predictions are right or not. I dwell on the bees and wonder what I'm going to do. More hives of bees are lost in March due to starvation as the hive begins to stir and the queen begins to lay again as a result of the first fresh pollen (usually hazel and the first snowdrops) is transported back to the hive on any spring-like days. If it's going to be cold and grey, that isn't going to happen, and I will need to get some fondant icing and pollen substitute on the hives as soon as I'm able. The cold weather will mean that these will have to be deposited on the top of the hive, immediately



under the lid, but if it is really cold then the bees will not go in search of these vital foods, as they will remain clustered deep within the hive. So definitely a glass half empty sort of day until that is, I stand and admire the numerous snowdrops, many with bees working the flowers and signs of the first daffodil opening and I think that, like us, the bees have adopted the view that they have to work their way through the problem as best they can, and hopefully come out the other side!

On a positive the weather has meant that I have been spurred into getting on with some repair jobs around the garden and our top field. The log shed has been leaking for some time as the roofing sheets I first used were not up to the job. They were a corrugated fibre, compressed together with a tarlike substance. What I hadn't twigged was that in hot weather the stuff would soften in the heat and then warp and twist, resulting in the screws holding them down pulling out and making holes for the water to run through. So this roof had to go, being replaced instead by a plastic coated metal sheet, which really does appear to be 'just the job'. Time will tell! Whilst the old roof was off I took the opportunity to replace a few of the roof timbers which should have been a stronger dimension to take the weight of (heaven forbid) a good snowfall. The resulting shed now looks fit for purpose. In the small propagating greenhouse the staging for plants was also giving up the ghost. It had been there for twenty years or so, so I can't really complain. It was time to rip it all out and replace with new staging. During a couple of days dry weather I had dug up an old concrete slab path in the cottage garden and put down new wood edging and replaced the concrete with wood chips to create a nice non slip pathway. The slabs were re-cycled in the greenhouse to form a base for the staging to stand on and one which would prevent weeds growing through. The job is now complete, and I must admit that I was quite pleased with the end result. Just as well, as the first plants have been removed from the hot bench where they have successfully germinated.

One key advantage of the raised beds in the vegetable patch is that you are able to work them even when the ground has not properly dried out. The entire vegetable area needs weeding, and a couple of dry days has resulted in the soil just being workable. This is the point at which you dig a weed out, and a good shake allows the soil to return to the ground, rather than stubbornly hanging on to it. A few hours yesterday afternoon allowed me to complete four beds and looking back over the handy work. I definitely felt that I had worked my way through the problem and was now very much a glass half full person. Hopefully we would get another couple of dry days when a few more beds will get weeded and the things would really be looking up. Just in case though I have been creosoting a load of timber inside the big tunnel, ready for being put to service when the need arises. Some of the timber is for the final stage in repairing the fruit cage, so that hopefully we can keep the birds off the soft fruit crop this year and secondly to repair the frame of the tunnel in which the wood is currently sitting. I need to cut the current cover off as it is well beyond its life expectancy and then replace the rotten timber frame that connects all the metalwork together and is what the new tunnel cover will be attached to. The trouble is I need decent weather and I'm wondering if the weathermen will be right or wrong in their predictions.



Happy gardening until next month. Steve and Felicity Hunt.



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*What's for dinner tonight?*



*Chicken Casserole*

*Gratin Dauphinois*

*Garden peas*

*Spring cabbage*

### *Chicken & Tomato Casserole Serves 4*

#### ***Ingredients***

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 chicken legs or breasts
- 2 bacon rashers, chopped
- 1 large onion, peeled, halved and sliced
- 1 large red pepper, chopped
- 2 carrots, peeled and thickly chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped or pressed
- 120ml white wine or chicken stock
- 1 (400g) tin chopped tomatoes or punnet cherry tomatoes or 6 fresh tomatoes, chopped
- 2 tablespoons tomato puree
- Pinch salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste
- 1 tablespoon chopped coriander or parsley



## Method



1 Heat oil in a saucepan over medium heat and fry chicken until lightly golden brown.

2 Add the onion, bacon, red pepper, carrots and garlic. Simmer gently until the ingredients have softened. Turn down the heat then add the wine/chicken stock tomatoes, tomato puree, salt and pepper.

3 Cover and simmer on a low heat for 30 - 40 minutes. Taste and season with salt and pepper before serving. Enjoy !

### Health benefits of Chicken

1 Chicken is a very good source of lean, high quality protein.

2 In older people, the proteins present in chicken also help against bone loss.

3 Chicken is a rich source of niacin, a B-vitamin that protects the body against cancer.

4 The trace mineral selenium is found in good quantities in chicken. It is an essential mineral required by many major metabolic pathways, which includes the thyroid hormone, defense systems, and immune function of the body.

5 Vitamin B6, present in chicken, plays a crucial role in maintaining a healthy body.

6 Chicken meat is a good source of phosphorus, which is a very essential mineral for the body. Phosphorus maintains the health of teeth and bones, and also ensures healthy functioning of the kidneys, liver and the central nervous system. Enjoy!



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## SHIRENEWTON WI

February meeting

This month's meeting was a truly enjoyable evening in which we welcomed Gareth Trumper from the Tredegar Arms. He brought with him his in depth knowledge of the world of real ale and more to the point, samples of said ale!



Many of us, who would never before have ventured to try a beer before tonight, were pleasantly surprised when we realised that this was far from being the preserve of the male pub goer. The beers were delicately flavoured and Gareth's descriptions and detail helped to open minds and adjust palates. We are extremely grateful to him for giving up his valuable time.

Jane Lane (secretary) 641704

Diane Ashton-Smith (President) 628838

## STARGAZING

There are no planets visible in the evening sky this month. However in the early morning, three are visible. At the start of March the bright planet Jupiter lies to the south, whilst Saturn is in the south-east. The fainter orange-coloured planet Mars lies between them. As the month progresses, Mars moves ever closer to Saturn. On the 7<sup>th</sup> the Moon is just above Jupiter. It is near Mars and Saturn on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> respectively.



Much the brightest star in the sky, Sirius can be seen to the South, below and to the left of the constellation Orion. The name "Sirius" is derived from the Greek word meaning scorching. For the ancient Egyptians the appearance of Sirius coincided with the annual flooding of the Nile Valley, vital to growing their crops. This event was of such importance to them that it marked the beginning of their year.

The pair of stars high above Sirius and Orion is part of the constellation Gemini, the Twins, and they are called Castor and Pollux. In mythology Castor and Pollux were the twin sons of the Queen of Sparta. Castor was mortal, but Pollux was not – his father was none other than Jupiter, who had paid a clandestine visit to the Queen. When Castor was killed in battle, Pollux pleaded to be allowed to share his immortality with his brother; this was granted, and both boys were placed in the heavens. Gemini is crossed by the Milky Way – the dense belt of stars that make up our own galaxy.

The Vernal Equinox occurs on 20th March, when day and night are equal, with exactly 12 hours between sunrise and sunset. This is a useful day for getting your bearings right as the sun rises due east and sets due west wherever you may be.

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## DIARY DATES

Date	Event	Location
<b>March</b>	Event	Location
<b>5th 7:30 pm</b>	Community Council Meeting	Recreation Hall
<b>8th 7:30pm</b>	St Woolas Sinfonia Concert	St Woolas Cathedral Newport
<b>10th 10:00am</b>	Shirenewton Quiet Morning	Saysell Centre
<b>12th 10:00am</b>	Shirenewton Local History Society	Recreation Hall
<b>17th 10:30 am</b>	Village Market	Recreation Hall
<b>23rd 7:30pm</b>	Fashion Show	Shirenewton School
<b>24th 10:00</b>	Easter Fayre	Earlswood Hope Chapel
<b>25th 10:00am</b>	Palm Sunday Eucharist with distribution of Palms	Shirenewton Church
<b>27th 2:30pm</b>	Shirenewton Local History Society	Huntsman Hotel
<b>30th 10:00am</b>	Walk on Grey Hill	Meet Reservoir Car Park
<b>30th 2:30pm</b>	Good Friday Meditation Pause for reflection	Shirenewton Church
<b>April</b>	Event	Location
<b>1st 10:00am</b>	Easter Day Easter Communion	Shirenewton Church
<b>9th 7:30pm</b>	Community Council Meeting	Recreation Hall
<b>21st 10:20am</b>	Community Council Coffee Morning	Recreation Hall (Village Market)
<b>21st 10:30am</b>	Village Market	Recreation Hall
<b>30/31st</b>	U3A Art Exhibition	Palmer Centre Chepstow

# READERS AND SIDES PERSONS

February / March 2018

Date	Sunday Service	Readers	Sides Persons
4th March	Third Sunday of Lent	James Leaney Ruth Savagar	Claire Lewis Graham Lambert
11th March	Mothering Sunday	Glynis and Jane taking the Family Service	
18th March	Fifth Sunday of Lent	Mark Broughton Bill Clark	Mark Broughton Bill Clark
25th March	Palm Sunday	Andrew Baker Sally Saysell	Claire Lewis Graham Lambert

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