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ISSUE 59
SEPTEMBER/
OCTOBER 2019



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Welcome!

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We are a small independent business and our aim is to provide an informative and interesting magazine that positively contributes to both community life and local businesses. A full list of local events, activities, groups and churches are available on our website, www.swdirectories.co.uk

Please don't forget to get in touch soon if you would like to advertise your business in our November/December edition. This will be our Christmas edition so may be an excellent opportunity to promote your business to lots of potential customers at this time of year. We deliver to 30000 homes all over Newport; this is an ideal way for you to reach prospective customers and support the local community at the same time. Advertising in the Directories has proved successful for so many of our advertisers, some have been with us since the very first magazine in May 2006.

A huge thank you to all our advertisers - we are grateful for all your support.

Best wishes

Susan
x

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COPY DEADLINE FOR THE NOV/DEC EDITION - MONDAY 30th SEPTEMBER

Editor: Susan Woolford

Sales & Distribution: Leslie Woolford

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“Excuse me, can you tell me where I can buy some Diesel?”



By Mike Joenn, Founding Director of AJ Garage Services, Ponthir

I'd like to bet that not many readers will have drawn comparisons between Pubs and Filling Stations. Indeed, pubs and cars don't mix very well at all. But, that's not where I'm going with this. We're going to look at a particular impact that electric cars will have in the coming 20 years. Stick with me...

Cast your mind back to the 1970s or earlier. There were few towns or villages that didn't have a pub. Bigger towns might even have a pub on every corner. And those pubs sold **drinks!** If you were lucky, maybe a bag of crisps. Fast forward to the 1980s - pubs were rapidly declining because of reduced profits and publicans started to widen their product offering to make ends meet. Fast forward to the 21st century... Pubs are still closing at the rate of about 14 a week according to the British Beer & Pub Association and there can be precious few pubs left that don't offer food. So, not only has this institution of British life & culture declined dramatically – those that are left, have transformed themselves into restaurants rather than remain as traditional 'boozers'.

Now consider the retail enterprise that we have come to know as 'The petrol station'. Back in the day when pubs

were pubs, there were few villages that didn't have the filling station and their stock-in-trade was generally limited to petrol, Castrol GTX, light bulbs and maybe a chamois leather. By the 70s, an evolution was well under way. By the turn of the century, the petrol station had almost entirely transformed itself into a grocery store for the motorist (*Who could have foreseen Marks & Spencer or Waitrose teaming up with BP?*).

Now, the next stage of that evolution is under way with the coming of the electric vehicle. As pubs became restaurants to improve profits, the filling stations have become the new 'corner shop' because they couldn't turn a profit simply selling fuel and that 'osmosis' is about to become more pronounced. The government target for all new vehicles to be electric by 2040 has started to drive the sale of electric cars - which don't use filling stations. The steady decline of filling stations is widely predicted in much the same way we have seen the decline in pubs. Now this doesn't mean that the establishments will disappear entirely... Indeed, the shift that they have already made into grocery stores probably saved their bacon... and with an increasing number now incorporating cafes, the

buildings and locations will stay, but the number of pumps will decline to the same status as the Air & Water unit or the car wash. Ultimately, the petrol & diesel offering will simply not stack-up as a (small) business proposition to deliver a low profit product to a steadily declining number of customers. The days of the independent filling station are numbered. Hydro-carbon fuel will be thinner on the ground and in the hands of large supermarkets that can afford to carry a loss-leader.

Meanwhile, we have a whole range of new problems to deal with following the introduction of the electric car – which (at the moment) need many hours to re-fuel (*Ahem... re-charge*). I'll leave you with a thought... if you live in a terraced house after 2040, how will you re-charge your vehicle? You can't stick the charging cable out of the front door and across the pavement! To be explored next time.

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Tornado in Newport

Early on a sunny morning in July a Tornado passed through Newport leaving a trail of steam and a group of happy railway enthusiasts, young and old, all feeling that the early start had been well worth it. Built in 2008, the Tornado is the

first mainline steam engine to be built in the UK since the 1960s. The magnificent steam engine set off on its Pembroke Coast Express journey from Bristol, travelling to Newport, Cardiff, Bridgend, Port Talbot, Swansea, Llanelli, Carmarthen and Tenby.



The £3m locomotive is owned by a trust and was built over an 18 year period.



BEACHES IN WALES

Caerfai Bay



A small rocky cove at high tide, sandwiched between towering cliffs, one mile south of the UK's smallest city, St David's. The beach is accessed by following a path through the craggy cliffs and down a steep set of steps. At low tide, a sandy beach is revealed with lots of rock pools to explore. You

won't find much in the way of beach amenities at Caerfai Bay and there is no lifeguard, so care should be taken if swimming here as currents are strong and changeable. If you are passing or on holiday in the area, the magnificent Cathedral is definitely well worth a visit.

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Newport Uskmouth Rotary boost Charity funds to over £180,000

Newport charities and volunteer organisations continue to benefit by thousands of pounds each year by taking part in the annual Newport Uskmouth Rotary's City Draw **and there is an opportunity for new organisations to join the 2020 Draw.** Affectionately known as the **NURD**, the event is genuinely a win/win scheme first introduced in Newport in September 2008. The concept is simple and hugely beneficial. The Club obtains prizes from sponsorship from various commercial and private sources. The Rotary Club prints the raffle tickets, **gives them** to the participating organisations who **keep the income from the sale of tickets.**

On average each year, more than £17,000 has been pumped into the charity sector of the City. The first Draw was in May 2009 and the most recent on 1st May 2019, when the Mayor of Newport drew the winning 11 tickets which were shared by Friends of the Newport Ship, Newport Philharmonic Choir, Newport MIND, Lliswerry Heart Link, Zimbabwe Volunteers Association, Adams Chorale, Cantorion Sanctaidd Choir, and ETA-mined. **£20,000 worth of tickets will be available for the next Draw (NURD20) and registration will take place in late October.** Beneficiaries of the Draw say:

RN Association (Newport): "A big thank you for inviting us again to take part in the Annual Draw. They provide everything – all we have to do is sell the

Newport Uskmouth
Rotary
& Satellites



tickets and keep the money and, this year, our funds were swollen by £1,500".

Parkinson's Newport: "We may not have won a prize but it was all in a good cause and we raised £395 for our funds".

"Opt to Adopt" Dogs'

Home: "We really appreciate the opportunity to take part and the funds raised will be put to good use".

NURD19 first prize

Winner: "Winning the top cash prize means that I can afford a holiday for the first time for many years. Thank you Rotary".

The Draw promoter, Keith Minton, says "This is just part of the contribution Newport Uskmouth Rotary makes to the City: other activities include the award-winning 'Young Carers' project, developing work in the City's first 'Men's Shed', the annual summer cycle ride for Prostate Cancer and the 'Tree of Light' at Christmas in Friar's Walk.



“The event is genuinely a win/win scheme first introduced in Newport in September 2008.”

If you are involved in running a charity, a youth activity, keep-fit class, PTA, church, choir etc. etc., you may be eligible to take part in the 2020 Draw. To learn more contact Keith Minton on keithminton44@gmail.com



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The Golden Age of Smuggling

by Paul Minton

I write this article at the height of summer, when the country has recorded its hottest July ever temperature. Welsh beaches have been invaded by throngs (or should that be thongs?) of sun worshippers, whose modesty is protected only by scanty bikinis and budgie smugglers. Of course, budgie smuggling is not the only sort of smuggling that takes place in the UK. Trafficking in both drugs and people is an ever-present blight but old school smuggling of goods is never out of fashion. In 2012, for instance, contraband consisting of 25,000 bottles of red wine, 67,000 cigarettes and 92 kilos of tobacco was recovered from just a single container at Newport Docks.

According to estimates, Britain once had as many as 25,000 smugglers with another 100,000 people actively involved in distribution. The Royal Navy, with its complement of 50,000 sailors, struggled to police national waters and it was only after the conflict with France had ended with the defeat of Napoleon that the war against the smuggler gained traction.

As a major port, Newport has been awash with illicit goods for hundreds of years, depriving HM Customs and Excise and its

predecessors of millions of pounds in lost revenue. The manner in which contraband was brought ashore varied but there have been persistent rumours of secret tunnels running beneath the city, such as between the River Usk and Christchurch and from the River Ebbw to St Woolos Cathedral.

The earliest reports of the illegal trade around Newport possibly date back to 1649 when 2,000 lbs of tobacco were seized at Redwick. Attempts by customs officers to board moored vessels suspected of smuggling were often less than plain sailing. During one such episode in 1791, a ship's crew, brandishing both cutlass and pistol, swore to the official that "if he presumed to come on board, they would blow his brains out!" Many merchant seamen who were found guilty of smuggling were later pressganged into the Royal Navy as a punishment and a deterrent. From 1830, it was generally recognised that smuggling was in decline nationwide, although Newport did not see a similar change in the tide. Instead, it reported increasing numbers of offences and it has been suggested that the opening of the Monmouthshire Brecon Canal may have contributed to the rise. One interesting case involved the inaptly named ship, *Good Intent*.

Owned by a group of Newport businessmen, the 72-ton schooner ran a seemingly respectable operation between Britain and France. However, an inspection in 1837 revealed a series of false bulkheads that concealed 1100 gallons of brandy in 259 kegs. As a result, the *Good Intent*'s master was sentenced to a stint in Monmouth Gaol, whilst the vessel itself was confiscated and broken up.

On another occasion in 1891, the *South Wales Echo* reported that the master of a German ship named the *Leocadia* had been summoned to Newport Town Hall following the discovery of undeclared brandy stowed beneath some canvas in his bath. The steward had claimed the barrel was empty but the truth was revealed when customs officers heard the liquid sloshing about inside. That same year, the *Western Mail* printed a story about a runner for a Newport butchers, who was charged with smuggling cigars. Upon being confronted when bringing them ashore, the man literally did a runner, although he was apprehended some two hours later. The sentence was one month's imprisonment with a two guinea fine and no doubt, his dreams of becoming a big time smuggler went up in smoke at the same time!

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Dying to Get Up Twmbarlwm

Photo: Terry C. Evans



Photo: Ann Woosnam

I know this is going to be a sensitive subject and many out there will castigate me for these views – but ask yourself, would your dearly departed really want his or her favourite location treated in this way?

I am, of course, talking about the increasingly common practice of displaying floral tributes and other memorabilia in public places. You see a lot of this on local beauty spots and Twmbarlwm is no exception.

I have no problem at all with the occasional bunch of flowers which are going to rot down to nothing – but when it's a six foot long wreath spelling out "Grandad" I start to question the sentiment.

Some of these wreaths are works of art and one has to admire the skills of the florist who created them and when they are displayed on that emotion-sapping day of the dearly departed's funeral they look splendid atop the casket – there's no finer indication of the family's love for their beloved relation.

Later, the family decide they need to mark the loss of their loved one in one last commemoration by displaying the wonderful, expensive, floral tributes in the place he/she loved the most. Never mind that it's everybody else's favourite place too. But that doesn't matter because the flowers will rot away naturally and be returned to the earth's bounty in the same symbolic way of the one who is now pushing up the daisies.

But wait a minute – how has the talented florist managed to sculpt the flowers into a meaningful symbol of the expired person's life? As one who has cleared away much of this type of detritus I can tell you – there is half a mile of 16 gauge wire, several kilos of phenolic foam, a ton of plastic and enough polyester ribbon to encircle around the world – none of which is going to melt into the environment any time soon.

Bearing that in mind, I believe that if the site of the tribute was truly the favourite spot of the one who is now at peace, I strongly suspect he/she is considering moving on to a less cluttered location to spend eternity.

As if the floral tributes weren't enough to irk my

After only two weeks the beautiful floral tributes are reduced to just so much plastic, ribbon and metal.

ire, don't get me started on balloons, inflated with hydrogen and released in their hundreds to interfere with air-traffic control and land miles away across the country where they can be potentially gobbled up by all sorts of wildlife and farm animals.

To top it all, the distribution of such tributes is often preceded by the bizarre practice of scattering poor old Grandma or Grandad to the four winds.

Now I must admit, I don't object to that too much – indeed, I also intend having the lead role in such a ceremony one day (in the distant future). Hopefully, those that I leave behind to perform the ceremony will have the sense not to leave me in an untidy pile where visitors to the site are going to want to sit with their egg sandwiches and thermos of tea. I also hope that they check the direction of the wind – I don't fancy being inhaled by my grieving family or faithful hound.

Although this article takes a light hearted view at this subject there is a real message – the passing of somebody close to you is a traumatic, personal time and we in the Twmbarlwm Society who tend the landscape for the sake of the community do not want to impinge on anyone's time of grief. However, please do not be offended when your well-meant tributes are removed after a suitable period – or why not retrieve them yourself before they're past their best?

Terry C. Evans, Chairman CTS

CTS meet at the car park below Twmbarlwm's summit for a litter pick and volunteer workday on the last Sunday of every month to which everyone is invited, it's not all hard work and it's a great opportunity to find your way around up there. We organise walks and other events up the mountain and at Crosskeys RFC throughout the year so watch our website and Facebook page for details.

www.twmbarlwm.co.uk

Fifteen Seconds to Create the Right Impression!

Our experience has shown that most potential buyers will decide whether they have a good feeling about a house within 15 seconds of entering it!

Whilst it would be ridiculous to suggest that this is the major contributing factor as to whether an offer is made or not, we strongly recommend that home owners looking to sell their properties take note and do what they can to present their house in its most favourable light.

We encourage our sellers to look at their own home through the eyes of a potential buyer and ask themselves what would you like to see, how would you like the house to be presented?

Tidy Up Before Viewings

You would be amazed by the number of houses we show people around where the current owners have made no effort to clean the main living spaces. Plates, mugs, clothes, toys etc are left on display instead of being tidied away.

- Keep a few family pictures on display but if possible pack away your knick-knacks, ornaments and other items that some might consider as clutter. Whilst it is still your home, potential buyers want to be able to see themselves living there and constant reminders of you won't help!

- If your kitchen worktop space is limited, make it look as large as possible by putting kettles, toasters, microwaves, storage jars/containers and other items in cupboards.

You might also be interested to know that almost 95% of buyers are looking to buy a house that they can move straight in to. Even though buyers are encouraged to overlook the current furnishings and decoration of a property, ripped or marked wallpaper and stained or worn carpets can turn buyers off.

Some sellers might think that because they are moving they needed invest the time or go to the expense of replacing things like this but we strongly recommend you reconsider because what will cost you a couple of hundred pounds to do might save you thousands when it comes to negotiating the sale price.

Don't Forget Your Garden

Spend a bit of time and money preparing the exterior of your home. Create the right first impression and keep the gardens and driveway well maintained, clean the facias and guttering, paint the front door if necessary and please remove the gnomes from the lawn!

Speak to the Experts

We pride ourselves on our honesty and integrity. If you are unsure what you need to do to show off your house in its best light, ask us.



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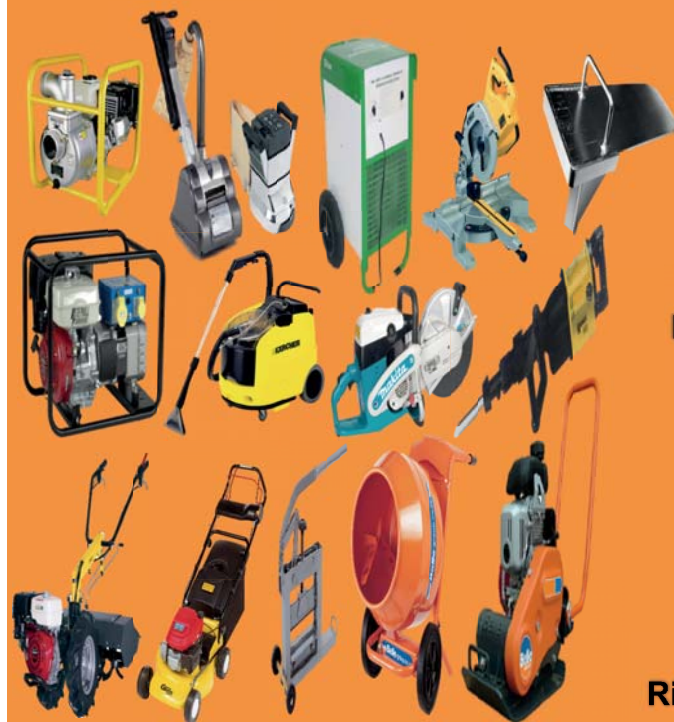
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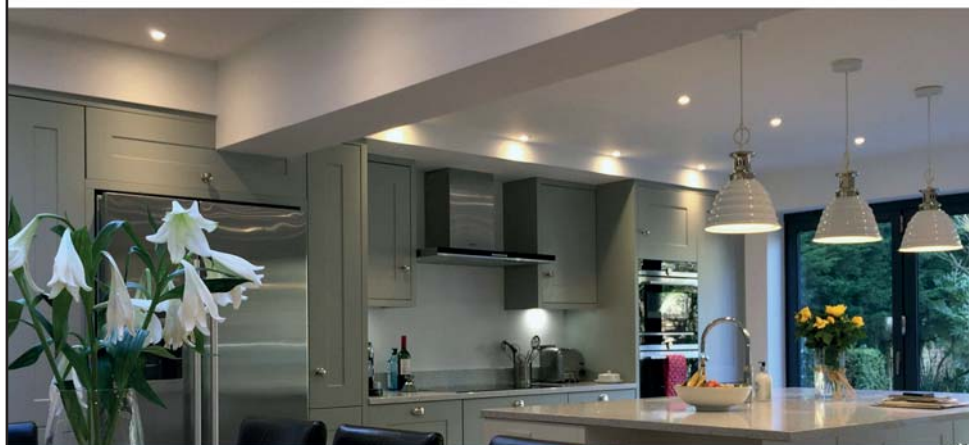


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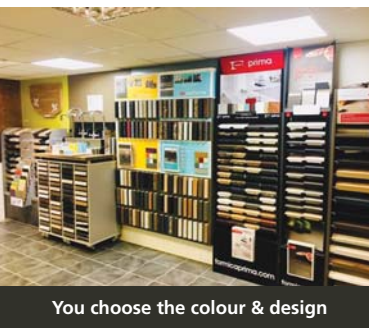
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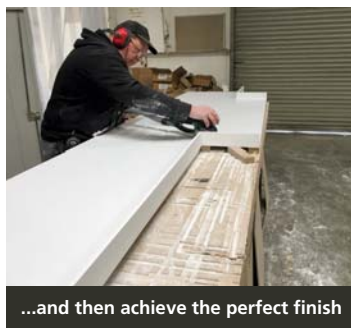
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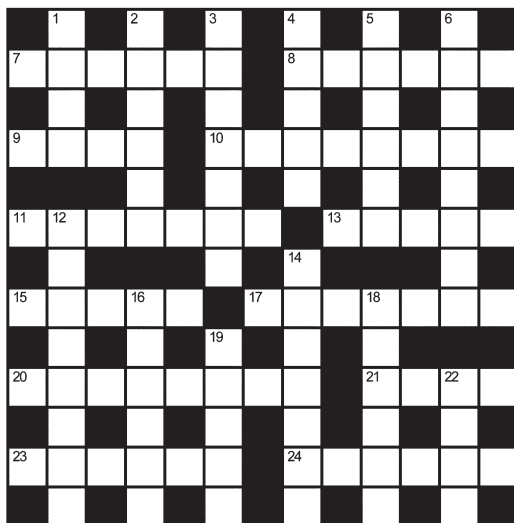
Crossword

Across

- 7 Wait upon (6)
- 8 Educated (6)
- 9 Leave out (4)
- 10 Buy (8)
- 11 Rebuked (7)
- 13 Cost (5)
- 15 Areas within a house (5)
- 17 Covered with thorns (7)
- 20 Against the current (8)
- 21 Curve on bottom of foot (4)
- 23 Edible bulbs (6)
- 24 Employ (6)

Down

- 1 Very small particle (4)
- 2 Relating to the teeth (6)
- 3 Modified (7)
- 4 Celestial bodies (5)
- 5 Writer (6)
- 6 Involving the body (8)
- 12 Cutting with an axe (8)
- 14 Metal wind instrument (7)



- 16 Technique (6)
- 18 Alter (6)
- 19 Sound practical judgment (5)
- 22 Wire enclosure used for birds (4)

Sudoku

1	3	4	2		9		8	
				1			4	3
7	6	8	3				9	
3				9				
4						5		
		9	1				7	
	4	6	5	7				
5					4		2	
8	1	3		2				

The object of sudoku is to insert the missing numbers in the boxes to satisfy just one condition: each row, column and 3x3 box must contain the digits 1 through to 9 exactly once. This can be done by applying logic – you do not have to guess.

Solution on page 32

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General Class (Iyengar)
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SA2 8PP

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Cwmbran group contact - Mrs Val Carnegle

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Further info on Diabetes contact - Diabetes UK Cymru

T: 029 2066 8276 E: wales@diabetes.org.uk

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Whist club

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Adult Art Class 7.00pm-9.00pm

Wednesday Adult Art Class
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Saturday Children's Art class
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Newport U3A

Would you like to travel, get creative, play the Ukulele, join a choir, attend talks and video shows, get active or learn a new language - all for pleasure, with **NO** exams? Well Newport U3A has over thirty interest groups for the retired or those winding down to retirement. We meet at the premises of Shaftesbury Street Methodist Church, NP20 5JH from 10.00am to 3.45pm Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays during term time, and other days for offsite activities.



The New Term starts on Wednesday 4th September. Come along and try a few taster sessions before committing to join us. We would love to see you at anytime of the year.

For more information about Newport U3A's many interest groups and events visit www.newportu3a.org.uk or phone Angela Robins on 07980 970967.



Dementia Café

Dementia can strike anyone at any age with any degree of severity, it affects not only those with the illness but also the carers. To help them and give some respite to the carers, St Mary's Church, Malpas has opened a dementia friendly café. It meets every 2nd Monday of the month in the new Cloister Room adjoining the church. Everything is free.

There is free tea, coffee, biscuits, cake, jigsaws, songs, textured cloths, painting, people to listen, people to talk to. The café is open

10am to 12 noon. Come along and spend a while among friends, you will be made more than welcome. There is good

wheelchair access, a disabled toilet and parking is either outside the church in the bay on the main road or in Llanover Close around the corner.

The dates for the rest of the year are - 9th Sept, 14th Oct, 11th Nov & 9th Dec. For more information contact Maggie Thomas 07825 914095

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Puzzle Solutions

Crossword

Across: 7 Attend, 8 Taught, 9 Omit, 10 Purchase, 11 Scolded, 13 Price, 15 Rooms, 17 Prickly, 20 Upstream, 21 Arch, 23 Onions, 24 Engage.

Down: 1 Atom, 2 Dental, 3 Adapted, 4 Stars, 5 Author, 6 Physical, 12 Chopping, 14 Trumpet, 16 Method, 18 Change, 19 Sense, 22 Cage.

Sudoku

1	3	4	2	6	9	7	8	5
9	2	5	7	1	8	6	4	3
7	6	8	3	4	5	2	9	1
3	5	1	4	9	7	8	6	2
4	7	2	6	8	3	5	1	9
6	8	9	1	5	2	3	7	4
2	4	6	5	7	1	9	3	8
5	9	7	8	3	4	1	2	6
8	1	3	9	2	6	4	5	7

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	10.15-11.00 Independent 3-4yrs*	10.15-11.00 Under 2yrs	10.30-11.15 Independent 3-4yrs*	10.30-11.15 Independent 3-4yrs*		10.15-11.00 Yr3-Yr6
	11.15-12.00 Parent/Child 2-4yrs	11.15-12.00 Parent/Child 2-4yrs	11.30-12.15 Parent/Child 2-4yrs	11.30-12.15 Under 2yrs		11.00-11.45 Rec-Yr2
	12.30-1.15 Independent 3-4yrs*	12.30-1.15 Parent/Child 2-4yrs	12.45-1.30 Independent 3-4yrs*	12.45-1.30 Independent 3-4yrs*		11.45-12.30 Rec-Yr2
	1.30-2.15 Independent 3-4yrs*	1.30-2.15 Independent 3-4yrs*	1.45-2.30 Parent/Child 2-4yrs	1.45-2.30 Parent/Child 2-4yrs		1.00-1.45 Independent 3-4yrs*
	2.15-3.00 Independent 3-4yrs gym/cheerleading	2.15-3.00 Independent 3-4yrs gym/cheerleading				1.45-2.30 Parent/Child 2-4yrs
3.45-4.30 Rec-Yr2	3.45-4.30 Rec-Yr2	3.45-4.30 Rec-Yr2	3.45-4.30 Rec-Yr2	3.45-4.30 Rec-Yr2		
4.30-5.15 Rec-Yr2	4.30-5.15 Rec-Yr2	4.30-5.15 Rec-Yr2	4.30-5.15 Rec-Yr2	4.30-5.15 Rec-Yr2		
5.15-6.00 Yr3-Yr6		5.15-6.00 Yr3-Yr6		5.15-6.00 Advanced Yr4-Yr8		
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Of Ducklings and Gulls

Those of our readers who have been with us for any length of time will know it's not only swans which need our help, but it is true that by far the majority of our rescues do involve 'water' birds in the broadest sense. This time, its ducklings (mallard) and gulls (Lesser Black Backed); the two stories are not related.

We received a family of eight tiny day old ducklings, their catastrophic separation from mother duck in a totally regrettable incident involving a speeding motorist on the outskirts of Cardiff. We have years of experience in dealing with these tiny creatures; at some stage this always involves moving them on for 'finishing' prior to release, due to limited capacity this might be sooner rather than later. And so it was with this group. A characteristic which marks some mallard families is they are incredible 'athletes', capable of jumping considerable heights from a standing start; doubtless a very useful attribute in their survival kit! So we loaded the ducklings into what we considered a suitable box and set off for Vale Wildlife Rescue at Beckford. Horror of horrors, when we arrived and booked the birds in, we found we had only six ducklings. Despite emptying the back of the car we could find no trace of the two missing ducklings and neither could we hear them, we would have expected their characteristic high pitched contact calls to have been apparent. There was nothing, so we set off for home. Stuck in traffic at some point during the return journey we did hear that call, and eventually found two little ducklings in one of my wellington boots. Clearly, they had jumped from the bottom of the box, locating one of the



The discovery was made at about 5am by members of the workforce. They had to find a certain amount of sophisticated kit in order to remove them from their predicament, whereupon we were



carrying slots and transferred themselves to the boot. So, for these two, the whole process had to be repeated, for which, it seems, they were none the worse.

A local food manufacturing /processing company has learnt how careful they have to be regarding the management of open topped road-going containers, by ensuring they are fully covered when they are not in use. One such recently emptied container (but not washed and cleaned because its use is for unwanted leftovers) was found by four adult gulls at some time during the night, and clearly was thought to contain some tasty food items. Whether it did or didn't, the actual residue was in fact a curry sauce colour, let's say turmeric yellow!



called to arrange transport, care and rehabilitation. In fact we were in a near identical situation three years ago, and so had no hesitation in, once again, involving Vale Wildlife Rescue. The gulls are recovering well. By an odd coincidence, on 6th July, The Times carried a picture of a Herring Gull which had met with a similar misfortune some 100 miles or so away, and was cleaned by the staff at another local wildlife hospital.

For swan and all other wildlife problems please contact Peter & Ellen on 01633 895241 or 07802 472788



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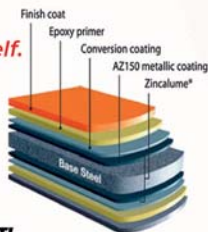
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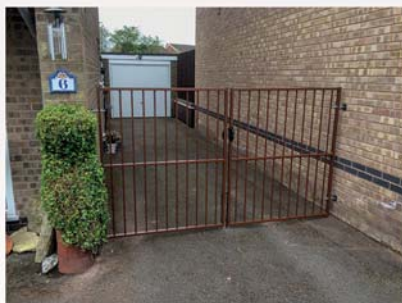
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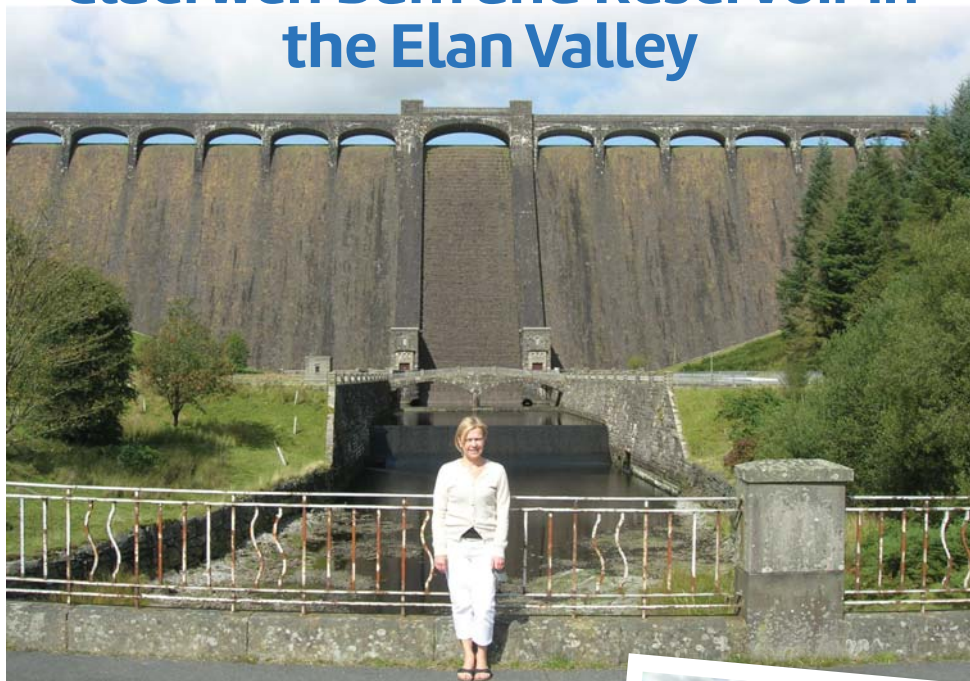


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Claerwen Dam and Reservoir in the Elan Valley



The severe drought of 1937 served to give warning of the increasing need for much greater water storage capacity. Proposals for a large new dam in the upper Claerwen Valley were at an advanced stage by early 1939, but the Second World War meant that the demands of wartime production itself put even greater strains on the existing water supplies. The increasingly urgent calls for a new dam and reservoir on the Claerwen were to be reactivated soon after the end of the war.

It is a measure of its size that the Claerwen dam was to create a reservoir which holds almost as much water as the

combined total of the three earlier dams built in the neighbouring Elan Valley. The dam is 184ft (56m) high and 1167ft (355m) long.



The Claerwen dam was designed to be in keeping with the appearance of the much older structures nearby. Although built in concrete, the



huge dam was faced with dressed stone. The construction of the Claerwen dam, the last of the dams in the district, took six years, using a workforce of 470. The Claerwen dam was ceremonially declared open by the newly crowned Queen Elizabeth in October 1952, in one of the first official engagements of her reign.

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GRACE BAPTIST ASSEMBLY

gathers for public worship on Sunday afternoons at the **Malpas Community Centre**, Pillmawr Road, at **3 pm**.

Sermon excerpt from: *A KINGDOM WHICH CANNOT BE MOVED*

(continued from the previous issue) ...The Apostle Paul taught the same kind of thing in Romans 8:19-22, "For the earnest expectation of the creature (now by "creature" or "creation" is meant all manner of inanimate objects, such as the geological plates under the Philippines and California and Britain) waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected *the same* in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."

Now, I ask you, who subjected creation to vanity, as it says, "in hope"? The devil? No! Satan subjects nothing to anything in hope; only **GOD** is a God of hope. God subjected creation to vanity in hope, so that when the curse came upon the world with all of its manifold decaying and vanity, it was God bringing a curse on the world for sin - but in hope!

If you were to ask, "Why should God ordain that there be an increasing frequency and intensity of earthquakes toward the end of the age, as the Lord draws near?" the biblical answer would seem to be that God intends to give hope-filled and shocking warnings, the same way labour pains are hope-filled warnings that a mother and father should get ready and go to a safe place to have the baby. God gives birth-pangs to the world so that the world will wake up and know something is about to happen. This is a great mercy: that with all of the tragedy in the calamities of the world, it is the loud, sombre voice of a holy God saying, "Get ready! There's a shaking still to come that will leave no house standing, no building standing, no place to stand but My throne." That's the meaning of earthquakes: they are warnings! And there'll be an increasing number of calamities, so that there's a growing sense of unsettledness in this world, and people grasp and hang onto money, and some cling to power, and some go after alcohol, and some go after drugs, and some go after illicit sexual relationships, and only a few have their love not grow cold because lawlessness is multiplied. Those will be the ones who hear the voice of the Lord in the shaking of our world. Open your eyes to read the signs of the times so that you won't be taken off-guard when the calamity comes - whether it is your own little private calamity of a stopped heart, or whether everybody together rolls with the earthquake. It is coming, and the Lord is warning us that it is coming. Again and again and again He is shaking people awake to the reality of the instability of this world and the desirability of the unshakable kingdom that He offers.

Before the end of this age, God is giving to **everyone** who **believes** in His Son **the gift of a kingdom that cannot be moved** and will never end.

This is the message of the entire Bible. But in order to see it, we should look at verse 28 of our text: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved..."

Notice with me that we've already received it. Verse 27 says that what can be shaken will be swept away in one last great shaking, and that what is unshakable will remain. Then verse 28 says that we've already received that unshakable kingdom.

This is the great joy of being a genuine Christian believer. It doesn't matter whether you live San Francisco, California, or Newport, South Wales, or on the island of Luzon in the Philippines - you have a kingdom which has already been given to you, and your life in Christ is **UNSHAKEABLE**.

That doesn't mean that there weren't any Christians killed in the rubble of those buildings. There probably were. We share in the vanity and futility and decay and calamities of creation as long as we're in the body. Romans 8:23 says, "And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body." When the flood comes, even we believers in Jesus Christ may drown. When the tornado comes, we may lose our homes and church property. When the earthquake strikes, we may be crushed under the rubble.

No, my friends, receiving an immovable kingdom does not mean safety for the body in this world. It does not mean that we'll escape the earthquake. What it means is that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39). It means the deep and abiding certainty that "whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living" (Romans 14:8-9). It means that "here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (Hebrews 13:14): "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God" (Hebrews 11:10), "a kingdom which cannot be moved" (Hebrews 12:28) - forever. It doesn't mean that the judgment won't begin at the house of God. The Apostle Peter tells us (1 Peter 4:17) that it will.

And this brings us to our final point - that **God is a consuming fire**.

In view of all of these things - the free gift of an unshakable kingdom - we ought to serve God with reverence and godly fear, remembering that our God is a consuming fire.

Verses 28 and 29 tell us: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire."

The question for believer and unbeliever alike today is this: are you serving the immovable God, or are you worshiping shakeable possessions? Is your heart steadfastly fixed on God? Is Christ Himself your greatest treasure, or is the world out there your treasure? Is God your security, or is your pension plan your security? Is God your fellowship, or is your own family the sum-total of your fellowship? Are you an idolater? Is Christ your portion in this life, or is the world your portion? Do you stand with reverence and godly fear before the power and holiness of this God, who is a consuming fire toward all sin, and do you clothe yourself with the flame-resistant righteousness of Jesus Christ, so that the fire of God can be seen from within you as glory and not as punishment?

One thing that the recent cyclone and earthquakes should reinforce in our minds is the importance of holding loosely to material things. In one powerful stroke, accumulated possessions for which people had laboured for many years were turned over to wind and rain, or a quaking ground, and soon followed by...looters.

Receive the kingdom which cannot be moved. Jesus says to us, "**Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein**" (Mark 10:15). See how simple it is? What does "**a little child...**" mean? It means that you humble yourself and recognize that you cannot possibly make a place for yourself to stand. You simply humble yourself like "**a little child...**" You recognize that there is a Father in heaven. You see the gift offered to you through His Son Jesus Christ - forgiveness and the hope of everlasting life and a firm kingdom that cannot be shaken - and you extend your hands and say, "Sinner though I am, I receive it; this is now my portion forever and ever." Will you do that today?

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gathers for public worship on Sunday afternoons at the Malpas Community Centre, Pillmawr Road, Newport, at 3pm and fourth Sunday mornings of the month at the Libanus Centre, Libanus Road, Blackwood, at 10.30am

What do we believe?

We seek to be Word-centred and gospel-driven.

The Word of God is crucial! The ministry of Grace Baptist Assembly will, we trust, always keep God's Word central. Why? The Holy Bible is God's written Word; it is how He has chosen to communicate to us who He is, what He has been doing, and what He expects of us. The Bible alone holds the ultimate, most trustworthy, most authoritative answers to the questions of life and eternity. Thus, rather than magnifying the ideas of mere human beings, we look instead to God, trusting that He inspired and preserved His Word for His glory and our good. We believe that the written Word is a reflection of the Living Word, Jesus Christ, and that its contents are our reliable, sufficient rule of faith and practice. When a moral question is raised, or when we face a difficult circumstance, we choose to resort to the Bible for guidance, correction or comfort, rather than falling back on our own experiences and opinions.

We seek to be traditional in our message.

We hold to historical Baptist distinctives. Specifically, we are fond of The First London Baptist Confession of Faith, 1646 edition. We gladly accept broken, unaccomplished, needy sinners like ourselves; but we are not seeker-driven. We do not believe that 'doing church' is what God requires of people, and we do not believe that it is this or any other local church's responsibility to water down, nor add to, the gospel of Jesus Christ in order to create a more 'comfortable' environment. Do we want that gospel [good news] to be understandable? Yes. Do we ourselves want to be compassionate and inclusive? Yes. We want broken people - people like us - who know their sinfulness. We are here for those who know that they need something more than what this life has to offer. We seek not to offer more of the same, but to offer something different. The person and work of Jesus Christ is enough for us. We invite you to come see why.

We seek to be relevant in our vision.

We maintain that the Bible is more than a collection of ancient writings, but rather, it contains everything we need to face the problems of life in today's culture. Consequently, our teaching and preaching will include practical application to help us live as we ought to live. We are not an elite group of those who have 'arrived' and we are committed to continual change. We rest on and submit to the absolute, unchanging truth of the Bible; and it in turn changes us. We hear and meditate on God's Word - and while we do that, we try to be doers of that Word, and not hearers only. We have found that the unchanging truths of the Bible affect our everyday lives, and we pray that we will become more and more like Jesus Christ as we submit to and obey His Word.

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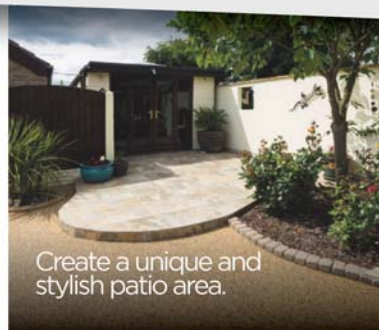
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