

ALLT-YR-YN

DIRECTORY



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SW DIRECTORIES

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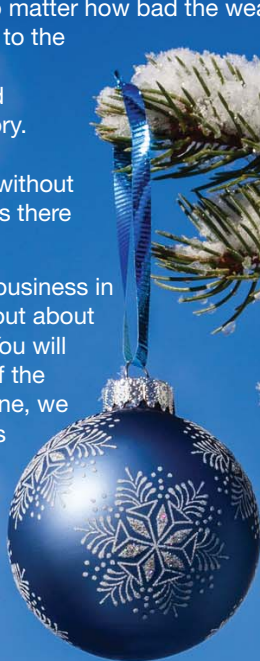
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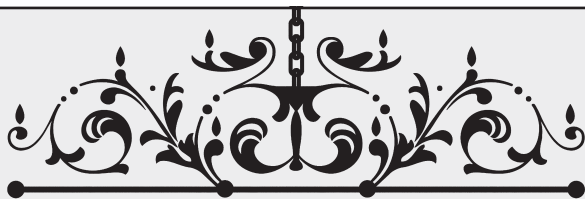
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Who Do You Think You Are, St Woolos?

by Paul Minton

A recent episode of *Who Do You Think You Are?* featured comedian Jack Whitehall tracking down his Welsh ancestor, Thomas Jones Phillips. Phillips, who was his great-great-great-great grandfather, was a successful solicitor and former Mayor of Newport. As clerk to the town's magistrates, however, Phillips sought to subjugate the working classes and was instrumental in the capture of John Frost. Being one of the ringleaders of the Chartists' uprising, Frost was condemned to be hung, drawn and quartered after being found guilty of high treason. This was the last time a prisoner in the UK faced such an extreme punishment, although his sentence was later commuted to penal servitude.

Despite Jack's antics, Phillips had been held in high esteem and even received the freedom of the City of London. When he died, a plaque was erected inside St Woolos Cathedral to commemorate his life. The programme closed with Whitehall hunting for the monument: a search that led to its discovery on a wall near the lavatory. To Jack, the location seemed befitting a man who had endeavoured to flush workers' rights down the toilet. But I was left with one burning question: just who the heck was St Woolos? Obviously, I was familiar with the name but I remained ignorant about the man. The time had come to make amends.

The name, Woolos, is apparently an anglicised version of



Gwynllyw, although for the life of me, I cannot conceive of how the one gave rise to the other. Born around 450 AD, his name still survives in places like Pillgwenlly. He was a formidable chieftain ruling the area betwixt the Usk



and Rhymney and he was renowned for attacking ships in the Bristol Channel and for raiding nearby territories. In one such skirmish, he captured Gwladys, the daughter of King Brychan of Brycheiniog, who had objected to a union between the two. Some stories claim that the battle was stopped only when King Arthur and Sir Bedevere intervened. Gwynllyw and Gwladys, the fifth century's answer to Posh and

Becks, went on to have several children. Among them was a son called Cadoc, who later became St Cadoc after whom the hospital in Caerleon is named. Cadoc became extremely religious and his pious influence led to his father's conversion to Christianity. Gwynllyw went on to experience a vision of a white ox with a black spot on its forehead. When he came across that same creature on what is now Stow Hill, he established a hermitage at the site. A statue commemorating the prophetic animal is located near Friar's Walk: its sculptor, Sebastien Boyesen, is also responsible for the enormous miners' memorial at Six Bells.

Following his death, Gwynllyw's hermitage became an important shrine and a wooden church was constructed there. It was rebuilt in stone in the 9th century and there is still evidence of that structure at the cathedral. Both Gwynllyw and Gwladys were subsequently canonised and they remain one of the few married couples to be honoured in this way. Although both are patron saints of Newport, St Gwynllyw also represents soldiers. And pirates!

Various miracles have been credited to St Gwynllyw over the years. A fountain, which appeared after he prayed for water, was believed to heal those who drank from it. Angels were said to have been seen near his tomb and the defeats of King Harold (of 1066 fame) and a marauding Viking party were attributed to him after they ransacked his church. So the next time you find yourself by the cathedral, make sure you behave or suffer the consequences. You have been warned...



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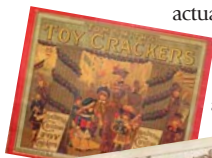
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Christmas Traditions

Ever wondered how we came to kiss underneath the mistletoe, deck the halls with tinsel and wear paper crowns around the dinner table?

CRACKERS

In 1847, the confectioners Tom Smith started wrapping sweets in a twist of paper. Over the years, he added new elements, first inserting a love motto into the wrapper, and then – inspired by a crackling fire – a ‘crack’ when the wrapping was broken. Tom then replaced the sweets with trinkets and wrapped paper around a cardboard tube. When his sons took over the business, they introduced crowns.



CHRISTMAS CARDS

Sending Christmas cards can be time-consuming, but they were actually invented to save time! In

1843 Sir Henry Cole commissioned an artist to create a festive illustration alongside a Christmas greeting. He then printed 1,000 of these cards to send to friends, then sold the rest to charity. Today, around 900 million Christmas

cards are sent in Britain every year. In 2001, one of Cole's 12 surviving original Christmas cards sold at auction for £22,500.

TINSEL

Tinsel was designed to

replicate icicles, and was initially made from strips of real silver! However, this became tarnished by smoke from candles, so lead foil was used instead. In the 1960s, worries about lead poisoning saw a switch to plastic materials, which are still used today.

MISTLETOE

Pagans believed mistletoe had a mystical life force of fertility. Kissing under the mistletoe became a popular Victorian parlour game: each white berry represented a kiss, and for each kiss given a berry was removed, until none were left and the kissing had to stop.



Festive Music Facts

James Pierpont's 1857 song Jingle Bells was first called One Horse Open Sleigh and was written for Thanksgiving.

We Wish You A Merry

Christmas is one of the oldest secular Christmas songs, originating in 16th century England.

White Christmas by Bing Crosby is the best selling single of all

time. It's sold over 50 million copies.

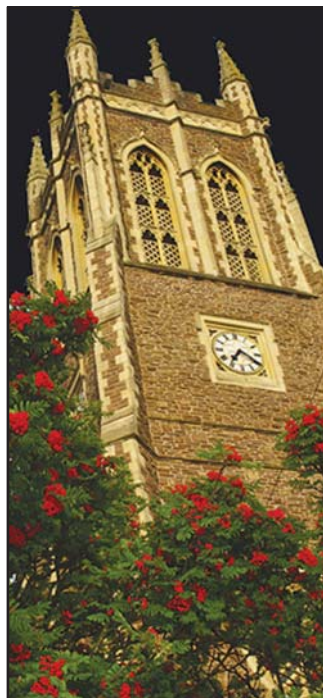
In Britain, the best-selling festive single is Band Aid's 1984 track, **Do They Know It's Christmas?**, which sold 3.5million copies. Wham is next in the same year with Last Christmas, selling 1.4million.

The Beatles hold the record for most Christmas number 1

singles, topping the charts in 1963, 65 and 67.

Bohemian Rhapsody by Queen

is the only record to get the UK Christmas Singles Chart Number One twice, once in 1975 and again in 1991. Do They Know It's Christmas was number 1 three times (1984, 1989 and 2004), but technically it was by different groups, so doesn't count.



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December 15th
 (3rd Sunday in Advent)
 10.30am - Advent 3 Service
 5.00pm - Messy Christingle
 (All ages welcome)

December 22nd
 (4th Sunday in Advent)
 10-30am - Advent 4 Service
 6.00pm - Traditional Carol Service

December 24th
 (Christmas Eve)
 11.15pm - Midnight Communion

December 25th
 (Christmas Day)
 10.00am Christmas Day Family Worship

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Lasting the distance

The early retirement dream lives on, but at what cost?

Whether you choose or need early retirement, having a plan can give you the best chance of lasting the distance. Whether lifestyle preferences or circumstances beyond your control are behind your decision to retire early, you'll need to make a plan to help your retirement savings last, while still enjoying your favourite comforts in life.

But with increasing numbers now working past traditional retirement ages, stopping work can seem a long way off, especially for younger people. But the good news is that the early retirement dream lives on, according to new research.

ESCAPE THE DAILY GRIND EARLY

Nearly two thirds (60%) of those stopping work this year are doing so before their expected State Pension age or company pension retirement date. The study also found that the average expected retirement income, inclusive of savings and State Pension, for those retiring early is £18,567, compared to £21,961 for those not retiring early. It appears that those planning to escape the daily grind early feel the most comfortable when it comes to their financial situation in retirement, with over half (56%) saying they feel financially well prepared, compared with 49% of those working towards their expected retirement date. That's reflected in the numbers taking professional financial advice – 68%

of early retirees are seeking professional advice, compared with 60% of those working until their projected retirement age.

MAKE THE MOST OF FREE TIME

The average age of those retiring early is 57, and early retirees will be making the most of their free time – over a third (37%) plan to take up a new hobby or sport, 27% will start voluntary or charity work, and nearly a fifth (17%) are planning a long-term holiday or gap year. It's encouraging to see that so many of this year's retirees are in a comfortable enough financial position to enable them to retire early. People stopping work early are not planning to put their feet up – they want to keep busy and active by taking up hobbies, sports and charity work, and some are even planning a post-work gap year.

IDENTIFY THE BEST COURSE OF ACTION

These are nice ways to spend your retirement but can be expensive, and with everyone living longer than ever before, it is vital to ensure you can fund your entire retirement. Seeking professional financial advice can help you identify the best course of action to achieve your specific financial retirement goals at any stage in your working life. The East Midlands is the early retirement capital of the UK, with 72% of its retirees retiring early, closely followed by Wales (69%) and Yorkshire and the Humber (67%).

TIME TO UNLOCK AN EARLY RETIREMENT?

If you're thinking about early retirement, it's important to understand what this means to you and to have a plan to make it happen. Your planning doesn't stop once you commence your early retirement – you need to be flexible and be prepared to adjust as you move through your life.

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~

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Twmbarlwm devastated – but hey! – every cloud...

Have the fires done us a great favour and revealed some vital clues to the archaeological history of the iconic mountain?

You probably do not need reminding of the terrible wildfires that affected Twmbarlwm mountain in the summer of 2018 when much of the grass, heather and whim covering the scheduled monument was burnt away to quite a depth.

Cymdeithas Twmbarlwm Society, like everyone else, were very concerned about the devastation and within days of the fire, after sending a series of photos showing the the damage, CTS were guiding officers from Cadw around the site.

Together with the ecologist from Caerphilly CBC they were shocked to see the extent of the damage. Although it was a very sad sight, we were able to see that without the cover of the undergrowth, there appeared to be some archaeological features that we and Cadw were not previously aware of.

Not being slow on the uptake CTS saw an opportunity developing. We had already had dealings with Cadw and knew how difficult it can be to get permission to stick a spade in a scheduled monument without their say-so.

After all, Twmbarlwm and its supposed hill-fort has had very little serious research done on it and certainly no official archaeological excavations – indeed there are many conflicting opinions on its history and possible origins, so wouldn't it be a great idea to try to get some answers.

As it turned out, our friends from Cadw were way ahead of us, and were thinking of ways they could persuade their bosses that a serious archaeological investigation of Twmbarlwm was long overdue and this window of opportunity provided by the fires was too good to miss.

So a team from CTS worked with Cadw to explore the possibility of an archaeological dig and after many months of planning and negotiations the Society managed to get the go ahead for an in-depth archaeological investigation of the ancient monument at the summit of Twmbarlwm.

Cadw provided the funding with which CTS engaged the professional services of Clwyd-Powys

Archaeological Trust to perform the investigation. Lead archaeologist, Richard Hankinson, from CPAT was shown around the site by CTS members for an initial assessment and designed a schedule for the project's four to five week duration.

Preliminary work started early October, so much of it will be complete by the time this article hits the press. The investigation kicked off with various surveys including magnetometry geo-physics, auger and borehole sampling.

Using the data supplied by those surveys a series of trenches were dug to help uncover some clues to the origins and nature of some of the features this fascinating area. Results of the surveys and trench work are all available in the public domain and can be accessed through the Twmbarlwm website.

CTS gathered a list of volunteers who were invited to a briefing meeting with Richard and Cadw officers – nearly 30 people turned up for the meeting at Risca Museum and many more applied via email.

Without volunteers and the support of the community an operation like this would be unviable, we are therefore very grateful to all those who help out.

The end of the dig is not the end of the project, our research into the history of Twmbarlwm goes on and there will be other opportunities to get involved – so please keep visiting our website for news.

At the end of the excavation period there will be an open day on the mountain to show people the work done, there will eventually be a printed report published and an audio visual talk on our findings.

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

Officers from Cadw and the Caerphilly CBC ecologist examine the devastation on Twmbarlwm.
Photo: Terry C. Evans



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To justify the decision for delaying putting our house on the market, we tell ourselves that we do not want to be disturbed right now, purchasers might be put off looking in bad weather and Christmas is coming so their focus turns to buying presents not houses!

But let's take a look at a few reasons why sellers should get their house on the market now:

- 1 Less competition:** your house is more visible to buyers now – beat your competition to the market!
- 2 Motivated buyers:** buyers looking for property at this time of year are usually motivated. Maybe they need to find a new house by January? If so, they will have a sense of urgency.

3 Bad weather: really? Well, yes. If somebody likes your house in bad weather, they know that they will absolutely love it in good weather, so decisions can be made more swiftly.

4 Strengthen your buying position: sell now and you will be a much stronger position negotiating the purchase of another house.

5 A jolly mess: this is the only time of year that you can get away with a little jolly mess when selling your house. Buying a home is emotional. Christmas decorations, a roaring fire, the smell of mince pies and festive cheer conjure up happy memories. This can help you to sell.

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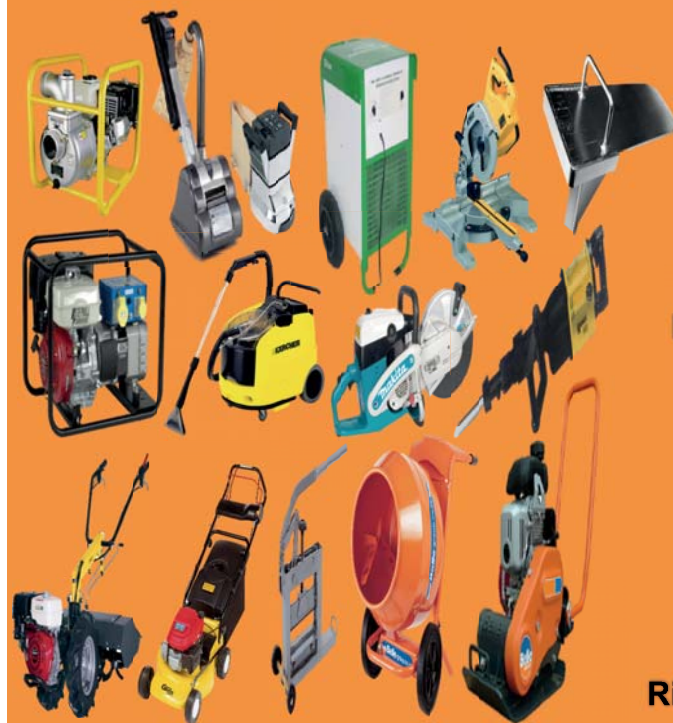
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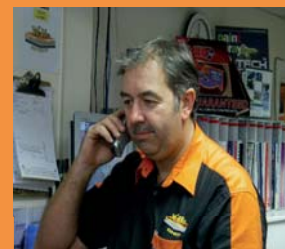


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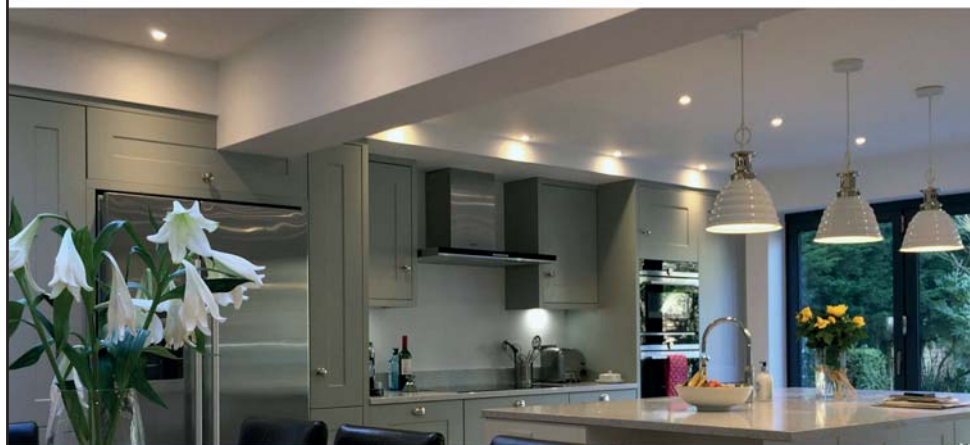


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Recently the Out and About Group went to the Onion Fayre at Newent - a festival with live music, retail stalls, an onion eating competition and more. Members enjoy this trip so much it has become an annual event in their calendar!

Soon various groups will each enter a team in our Winter Quiz, when there will be much banter and taunting whilst trying to win



first prize.

The Skittles group will be hosting a return friendly match against Chepstow U3A, there's a lot to play for as the state of play is one-all at the moment.

The Choir (see photo) is rehearsing in preparation for a busy festive season with many concerts booked. Importantly

they will perform at our Annual Carol Service held at the church, along with the ten Language groups that sing a Carol in one of the five languages that they are studying.

We will finish the term with a Christmas Party and many groups will also go out for a Christmas meal.

If you are retired or winding down to retirement come along and try a few sessions before committing to join.

Angela Robins 07980 970967.

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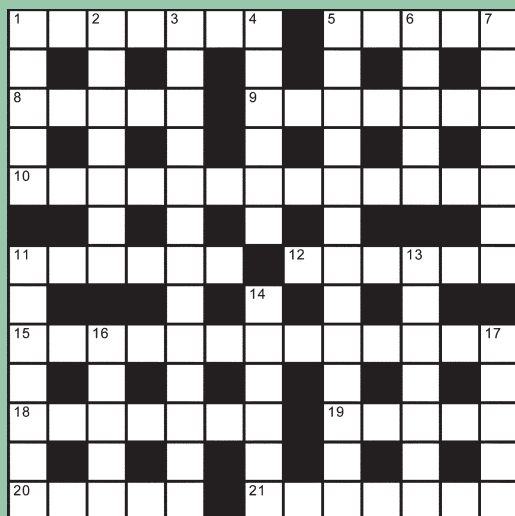


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Quick Crossword



Solution on page 40

Across

- 1 Cooked in hot water vapour (7)
- 5 Older member (5)
- 8 Floating platforms (5)
- 9 Persons deliberately injured (7)
- 10 Upright (13)
- 11 Smoothly (6)
- 12 Spring back (6)
- 15 Display (13)
- 18 Saving of money (7)
- 19 Take in liquid (5)
- 20 Plant propagators (5)
- 21 Pulled or towed slowly (7)

Down

- 1 Thick sweet liquid (5)
- 2 Impose strongly (7)
- 3 Sundry items (13)
- 4 Split (6)
- 5 Book of facts (13)
- 6 Boring tool (5)
- 7 Extra player (7)
- 11 Everlasting (7)
- 13 Securing with metal pins (7)
- 14 Remained (6)
- 16 Elk (5)
- 17 Undressed (5)

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Wednesday 11th Dec
Cinema Night - Newport.

Sunday 15th Dec
Santa Ride - Newport,

Sunday 23rd Feb
Pontypool 10K - Pontypool.

Sunday 1st March
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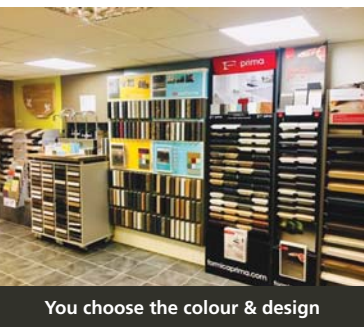
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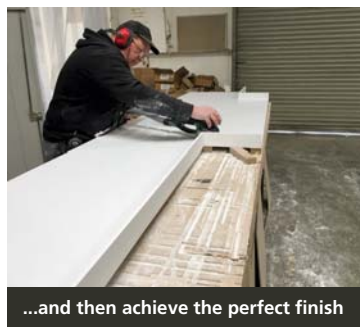
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Cygnets, More Cygnets and Still They Come

Never can we remember transgressing the print deadline date as badly as this, but as this article unfolds it may become apparent how it has happened this way! In terms of subject matter, we were spoiled for choice; it might have been to do with the problems we encounter caused by cats to swathes of our wildlife, horrendous injuries to small birds and bats, that's on the periphery of our self imposed remit – swans, or, not for the first time the problems which result from some irresponsible dog owners who refuse to accept their animals must be on a lead when they are sufficiently close to swans that an attack is possible. We have had to deal with examples of both of these within the last month, in addition to a veritable spate of cygnets getting into trouble as they start to disperse.

A start point is difficult to define, so for convenience, let's begin with a call from Gwent Police at 7.47am on 25th September about a cygnet grounded on the westbound Heads of the Valleys road between Ebbw Vale and Tredegar, not a good time of day to be crossing the county at high speed! Clearly this was the first of eight cygnets leaving Bryn Bach Country Park. In the event the police did pick up the swan and transport it to Tredegar Police Station in their van from where we recovered it. Within the hour, there was a further call from Porthcawl about a cygnet which had landed on the roof of a semi-detached house, had slid off, and had landed in the garden, mercifully uninjured. Later the same day, Gary, our man in Port Talbot recovered another one in



The evening meeting - who's first in?

roughly the same area. At 8.53pm that same evening, a further call from Gwent Police advised us of another cygnet 'down' in Tredegar town centre; this was collected eventually following a hiatus resulting from having been given the wrong post code! Don't know how we would manage these days, especially in the dark, without satnav, provided of course we are given the correct post code.

The next day started in much the same way; a call from the owner of a property barely half a mile from Bryn Bach with a cygnet 'down' in the back garden; sorted in the customary way, relocated. To return a cygnet to its 'home' at this time of year is pointless. Inevitably, either the same thing will happen again, or it will come under attack particularly from the adult male, with, ultimately far more serious consequences.

In the following days we continued to deal with more of the same; again three further visits to Tredegar, an actual attack by the adults on a cygnet at Duffryn, in Newport and an



Cleghonger cygnet - fishing line plus weights around tongue and lower mandible

example of a young bird with a wing defect at Llanrhidian in Gower. In the case of the last bird, transportation to The Swan Sanctuary at Shepperton was necessary. We do not expect this to be the end of 'dispersion' for this year, we know of lots more cygnets still at home! However an underlying theme every year is the effect of lost or carelessly discarded fishing tackle on waterfowl. An example of this took us to Cleghonger, a village to the south west of Hereford, mentioned in the Doomsday Book. Here we had one of three cygnets with a wodge of line and weights around its tongue and lower beak impeding its ability to feed freely. Caught, freed and released; all in yet another days work. Business as usual.

Story by Peter, photographs by Ellen. For swan and all other wildlife problems please contact Peter & Ellen on 01633 895241 or 07802 472788



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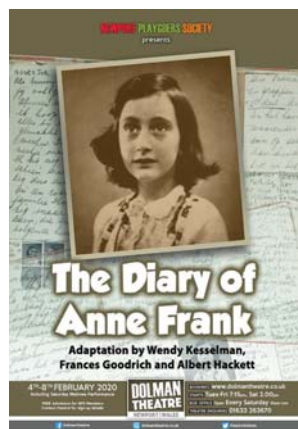
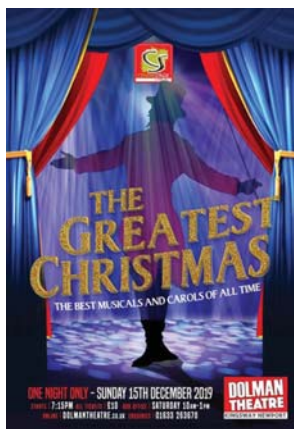
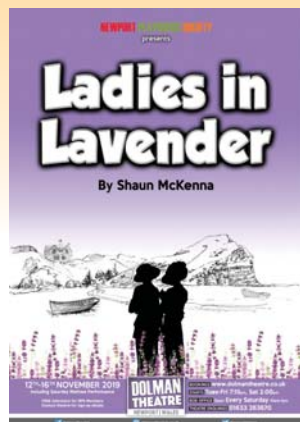
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Jam and Jerusalem

I always knew that the W.I. ladies had it right. For those of you wondering what I am wittering about, I am wittering about Jerusalem, that wonderfully inspiring hymn that the W.I. have always called their own but now the country has voted the best loved hymn. It is sung regularly at many W.I. meetings although not at ours, we render a version only at our AGM and other memorable dates such as our birthday.

I could possibly have ignored the other 'epithet' accorded to the W.I. but today it suits my purpose to mention jam; not, I might add, probably to my shame, that I have ever made any. However, I know plenty of ladies who do and excellent jam it is too. Just name the flavour!

Why have I thought to mention this when often it is a source of amusement to those who are somewhat ignorant of the kaleidoscope of learning opportunities that groups offer, it is because this coming Saturday the Gwent Federation of W.I.s is holding its biennial show. This allows members from the whole of Gwent the opportunity to show their talents. There are sections on flowers and plants, cookery items, craft sections, photography, preserves, floral art scarecrow making and a co-



operative item which has to include five items from the above list. The scope of artistry is amazing, what a wealth of talent that must be multiplied across the

Ambulance, it included a CPR demonstration and helpful tips on first response do's and don'ts.

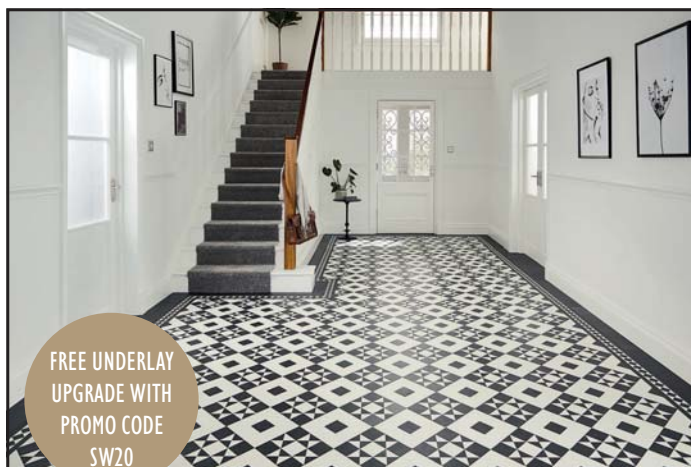
October begins with a talk on Anti-Slavery, which is very topical at the moment and of course there have been several local incidents of slavery, so this is not something we can dismiss as 'not in my back yard'. The Great British Bake Off with Jon Jenkins will round off October. Just looking at these few weeks hopefully will show how diverse a W.I. programme can be, there are social events, physical events, informative talks on topical issues alongside clubs that are run such as bridge, Mah Jong, choir and craft. Add in theatre and cinema trips, excursions and dining experiences and our W.I. rightly claims to be a vibrant lively group.

If any of these activities interest you do come along to one of our meetings, which are held on the second and fourth Tuesday of every month at St Anne's Church Hall, High Cross. The meetings start at 7.30pm but ladies arrive from about 7.00pm to enjoy a cup of tea or coffee and a chat.

Liz James

nation.

At Rogerstone Roses our new programme is as diverse and interesting as usual, we began September with an informal evening talking about holiday experiences, this was a very pleasant couple of hours catching up with members after the summer break. The following meeting was a practical session by St John's



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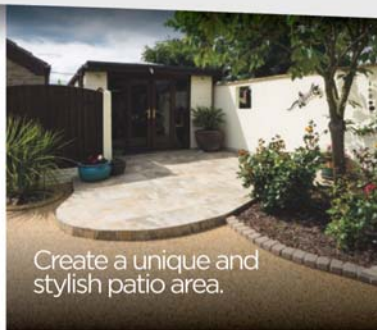
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