

BASSALEG & RHIWDERIN

DIRECTORY



ISSUE 78
NOVEMBER/
DECEMBER 2019



SW DIRECTORIES

Welcome!

As 2019 draws to an end we would like to say a very big thank you to everyone who has contributed to the success of the Directory this year.

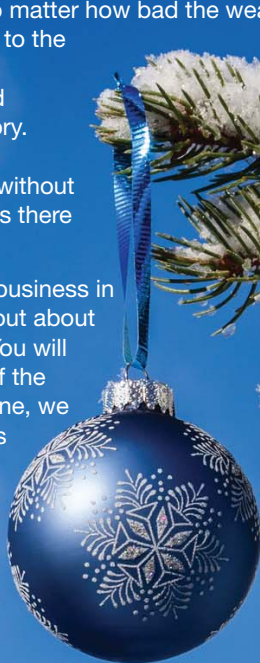
Thank you to all the distributors who, no matter how bad the weather is, deliver the Directories for us. Thank you to the residents and local clubs, charities and organisations for sending us articles and information for publication in the Directory. Finally, a very special thank you to the advertisers for their continued support, without the financial support from the advertisers there would be no Directory.

If you are interested in advertising your business in the Directory, please contact us to find out about the very competitive advertising rates. You will always deal with us directly, like many of the businesses that advertise in this magazine, we are a small, independent family business and fully appreciate how much your business means to you.

Have the most relaxing and enjoyable Christmas,

Warm wishes

Susan
x



Advertising enquiries:

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FRIDAY 29TH NOVEMBER**

Editor: Susan Woolford

Sales & Distribution: Leslie Woolford

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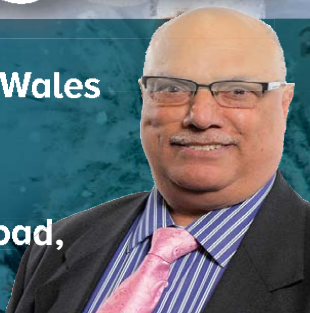
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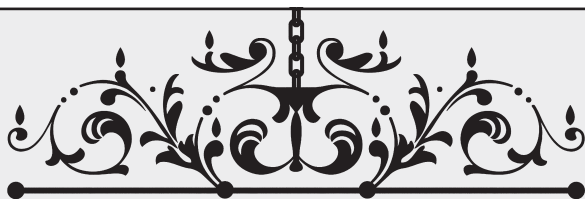
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Gwerinwyr Gwent Diary

Flushed with success after dancing for Prince Charles on 4th July, our busy month continued on Sat 13th at an old favourite – the Caerleon festival. Lovely weather drew out the crowds and we danced twice, once in the garden of The Bell and then in front of the main stage at the Hanbury Arms. So many people were sitting enjoying the sunshine, I should imagine the bar takings were through the roof!

Monday 15th saw us in Monmouth giving our Welsh culture evening to the ladies of Agincourt WI. They joined in enthusiastically with the participation dances (which makes our job much easier) and we had some very nice comments afterwards. Saturday 20th took us to Blaenavon and the 'Dance on the Mountain' day of dance. The event has been growing over several years, but it was the first appearance for GG. Again we had two spots, one in the Heritage Centre and the second in the marquee in Market Square. There were plenty of people watching the varied styles of dance, which included local youngsters with street dancing through to strictly ballroom, flamenco, rapper and folk. We were lucky to have the support of the Lloyd family as our



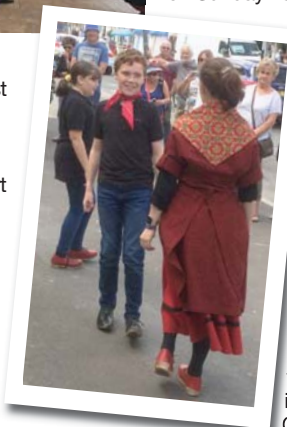
musicians, as we also did on the last weekend of July when we travelled to Dorset to take part in the Bridport Folk Festival. All the dancing takes place in street settings, so thank goodness the weather was lovely (although there was a plan B if it was wet). Lots of people around watching the mainly Morris dance sides, so I think we made a nice contrast and of course the Lloyd children's clogging routines always go down a storm with the audiences. The festival is only in its second year of revival after being defunct for several years. We danced both Saturday and Sunday and really enjoyed it. What a lovely town Bridport is, so many old buildings and a nice atmosphere. Also it is only a mile from West

Bay, where the TV series Broadchurch was filmed. August was quiet and we have our annual break from practicing then, but started back a week early as we had been invited to dance at the Rogerstone festival on Sunday 1st September. It was another beautiful day with lots going on and huge crowds at the Welfare Grounds. Sadly not that many were watching our performance and even fewer agreeing to join us in a simple ceilidh dance, so thank you to those who did and thanks also to the organisers for inviting us.

Gwerinwyr Gwent is

always seeking new members, and beginners or experienced dancers/musicians are very welcome. Practice night is Thursday 8-10pm at the Graig Community Hall (opposite the Ruperra PH).

For more details visit our website
www.gwerinwyrghwent.org.uk,
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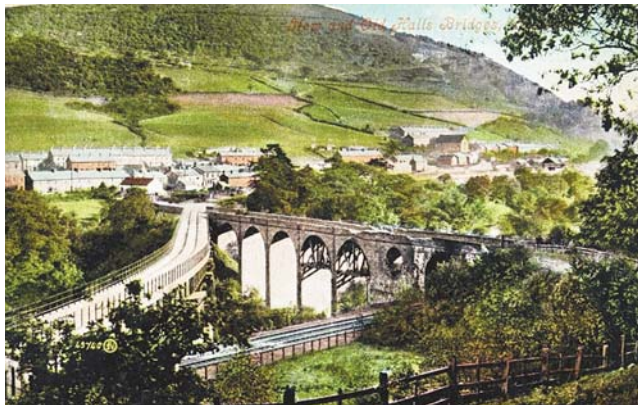
Pont Hall (Hall's Bridge) by Geoff Smith

Travelling up the A467, between the roundabouts at Cross Keys and Cwmcarn you pass under a viaduct passing across the valley. This is Pont Hall.

So, who was Hall? Mention 'Big Ben' and the iconic clock tower at Westminster comes to mind, but Big Ben was the nickname of Sir Benjamin Hall, who was the Clerk of Works for the building of the clock tower, and at 6ft 2inches tall was very tall for a Victorian gentleman. This story is more concerned with his father, also Sir Benjamin Hall. He married the daughter of the ironmaster Richard Crawshay of Cyfartha, and after Crawshay had bought the Abercarn estate for some £50,000 in 1808, he sold it to his son-in-law for 5 shillings!

Hall owned collieries in the Sirhowy Valley, and to get his

Sir Benjamin Hall



coal to Newport for shipping built a tramroad which via a tunnel at Pentwyn Mawr and Newbridge reached a basin which had been built alongside the Crumlin Branch of the Monmouthshire Canal at Abercarn. This was not altogether satisfactory, as despite the climate the canal was short of water and delays resulted. Sir Benjamin decided to extend his tramroad further down the Western Valley to eventually join the Monmouthshire Canal tramroad near Cross Keys. Hall's tramroad ran down the Western side of the valley until near Pontywaun, where a stone arched viaduct was built across the valley. This was Pont Hall. Later, the tramroad was upgraded to a railway, which was eventually leased by the Great Western Railway in the 1870s. As often happened, the later railway could not accommodate the sharp curves of the horse worked tramroad and as Pont Hall was subsiding a new bridge was built which gave an easier route for the railway. The picture shows both

the old and new 'Pont Hall'.

The industrialists of the early years of the 19th century were a crafty and ruthless lot. Sir Benjamin Hall had a rival coal owner in Sir Henry Protheroe, who intended to build his own tramroad through a tunnel between the Sirhowy and Western Valleys, to eventually reach the Canal at Pontywaun. Because the Valley is narrow and steep sided the choice of routes for a tramroad were very limited. To thwart Sir Henry, Sir Benjamin built a row of eight cottages directly up the hillside near West End, Abercarn, which effectively blocked the only available route down the valley. Sir Henry waited until the row was nearly completed, then one night his men demolished the buildings and carried away the doors and window frames. It was all to no avail, Sir Benjamin completed the cottages, thereby scuppering Sir Henry's plans. The cottages were known as 'Spiteful Row'. When Hall's Tramroad arrived the front and Back doors of cottage No.5 were enlarged, and the rails ran straight through!



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What's On



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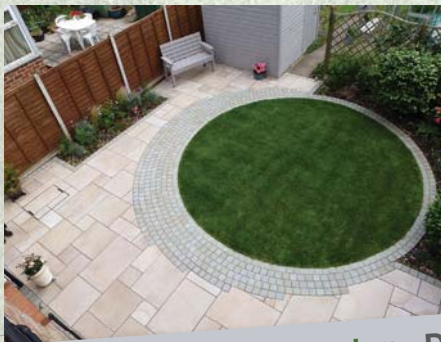
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Carol Service 6.00pm St. Basil's Bassaleg

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4.00pm Crib Service St. John's
24th December 11.30pm Midnight Mass
St. Basil's and St. John's

25th December Christmas Day

8.30am St. Basil's Said Eucharist
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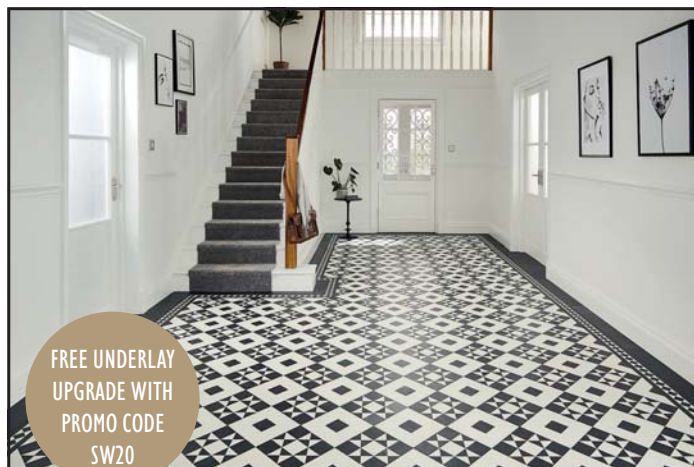
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Saturday 23rd Nov
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Sunday 1st Dec
Christmas Fayre – St Pierre, Chepstow.

Wednesday 11th Dec
Cinema Night – Newport.

Sunday 15th Dec
Santa Ride – Newport,

Sunday 23rd Feb
Pontypool 10K – Pontypool.

Sunday 1st March
Admiral Half Marathon – Newport.

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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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- 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 in 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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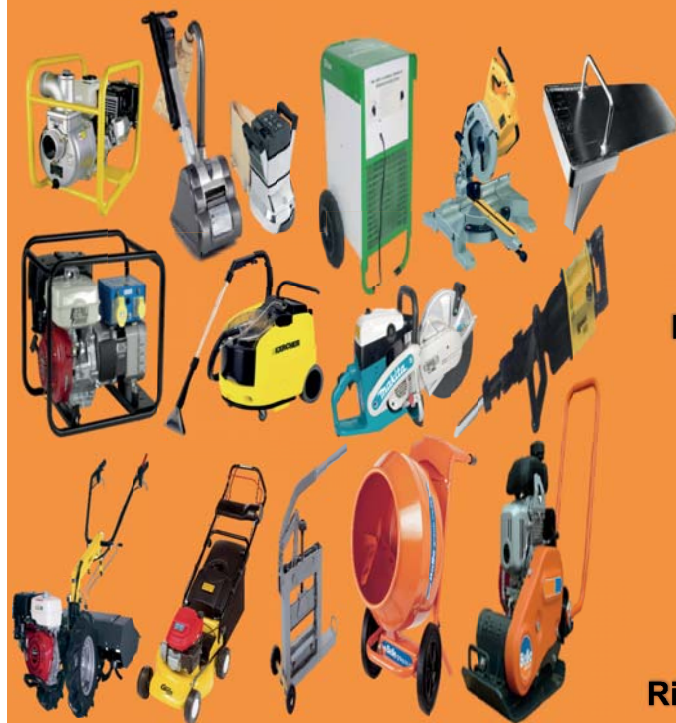
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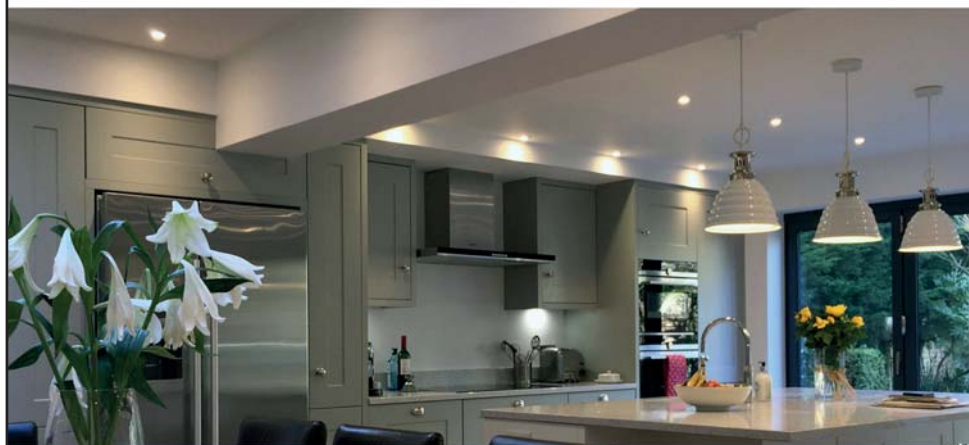


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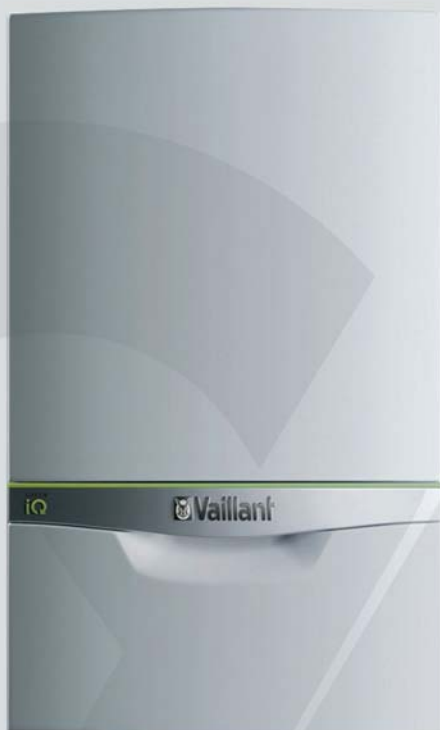
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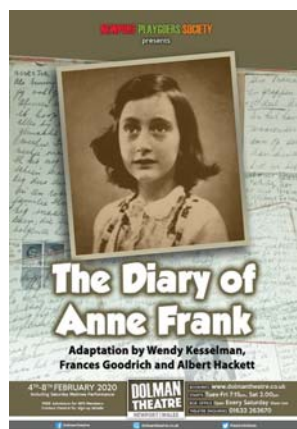
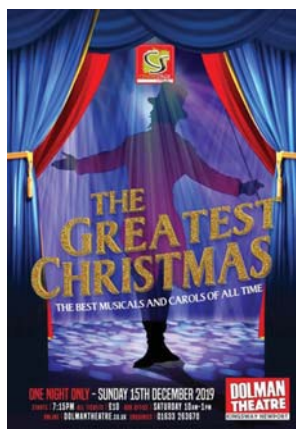
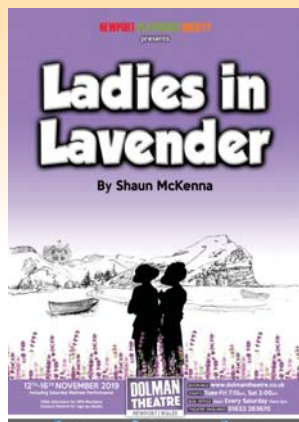


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Twmbarlwm devastated – but hey! – every cloud...

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 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.

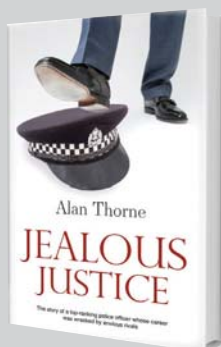
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Officers from Cadw and the Caerphilly CBC ecologist examine the devastation on Twmbarlwm.
Photo: Terry C. Evans

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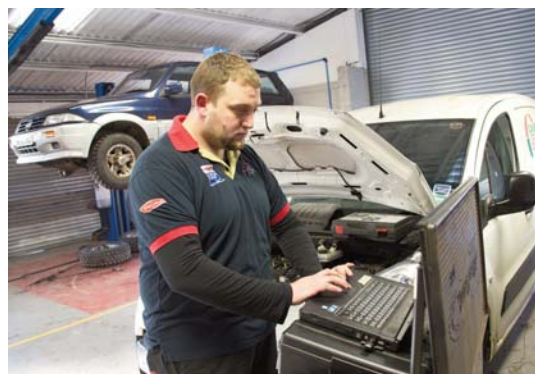
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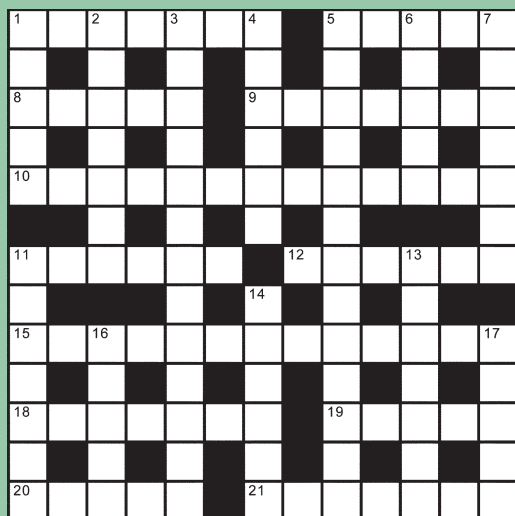
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Quick Crossword



Solution on page 43

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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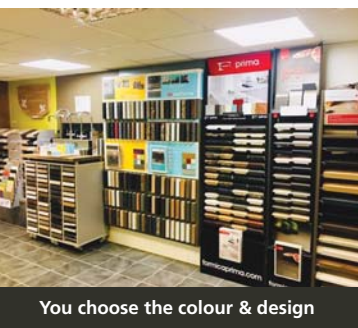
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Cygnets, More Cygnets and Still They Come

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



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 Domesday Book. Here we had one of three cygnets with a wedge 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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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 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 horror at his forebear'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, Sebastian 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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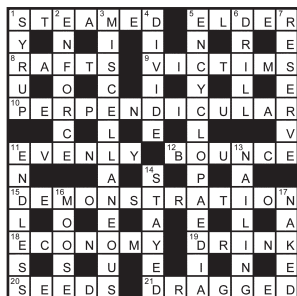
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Crossword Solution





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ROGERSTONE

Ty-du community hall
Welfare grounds
Tregwyllym road
Rogerstone
NP10 9EQ
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Thursdays 18.30 - 19.30

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Newport road
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NP11 7LZ
Monday 18.30 - 19.30
Friday 18.30 - 19.30

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Ty-du community hall
Welfare grounds
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Rogerstone
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Tuesdays 19.30 - 20.30
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THE FINAL FATE OF H.M.S. NEWPORT

(Part 4)



*Svyataya Anna (Former H.M.S. Newport,
Pandora II & Blencathra)*

It is very difficult to establish the final fate of the *Svyataya Anna* (H.M.S. *Newport*), because there are several different stories (some obviously apocryphal) about the final ending of this historic ship. There are also various different tales of the fate of the remaining crew members.

The *Svyataya Anna* (formerly H.M.S. *Newport*, then renamed as *Pandora II*, then again as *Blencathra* before finally becoming *Svyataya Anna*) was never ever seen again, perhaps crushed by the polar ice she sank to the bottom of the sea. It has been suggested that if she survived the ice she may have broken free and drifted to the other side of the Arctic and then, in 1915, been sunk by a German submarine without her crew realising that a war had occurred. Attempts were made to trace the ship

and crew, in 1914-1915 Otto Sverdrup searched for two missing expeditions in the Kara Sea, including that of Captain Brusilov on the *Svyataya Anna*, but found no trace. There was even an air search made by Polish/Russian aviator Jan Nagorski, on the first ever flight over Arctic regions, without any result. Valerian Albanov attempted when he returned to Russia to persuade a Russian Admiral Kolchak, former explorer and White Army Governor of the region, to help in setting up a search

for the iced up ship. This was not possible because the Russian Navy was too involved in the Great War and the confused political situation in Russia leading to revolution did not help.

When Albanov abandoned the ship and led his small party in the attempt to reach the mainland, there were still sufficient provisions left on board the *Svyataya Anna* to last the remaining crew another 18 months. These rations could also have been further stretched by shooting Polar bears and walrus to provide additional sustenance. It is possible that only when these remaining supplies were nearing exhaustion that the remaining crew abandoned the ship to make

another attempt to reach dry land. In 1937 Soviet explorer VI Akkuratov discovered a ladies' patent leather shoe on Rudolph Island marked 'Supplier of the Imperial Household, St. Petersburg'. The *Svyataya Anna's* nurse was the only Tsarist society lady likely to have been in this area. So it could be that Yermina Zhdanko left the ship with another crew group to try and follow in Albanov's footsteps. This would have left the unmanned and abandoned ship still gripped firmly in the ice. The ice of the Arctic Ocean is in continual westward motion which could have eventually pushed the ship into the Atlantic at some point. In 2010 a Russian expedition to Franz Joseph Land came across remains of a skeleton and various artifacts, including cartridges, shell casings,

canvas belt, sailor's knife, pocket watch and a diary etc. These remains could likely be from any follow-on group. The diary largely illegible, on the date of May 1913, reads "Today we got our last brick of tobacco, the matches ran out long ago." It also noted that crew members were hunting polar bear to supplement canned food supplies. This diary has been placed in the Arctic and

Antarctic Museum of St.

Petersburg.



Nurse Yermina Zhdanko

The most likely explanation for the final fate of the ship that I have come across, was a report that Soviet artist and writer, Nikolai Cherkashin, had noticed in an

Hanseatic bar in the port of Stralsund, East Germany, a battered old ship's wheel and a worn Russian icon of a little known **Saint Anna** of Kashin. He enquired of the origin of these articles and was told a

surprising tale by the bar owner. "My father when fishing on a trawler in the North Sea encountered an abandoned schooner, boarded her and found a lot of canned meat and other food stuff and his father then took the helm and an icon from the schooner." Close examination of the wheel revealed a worn English inscription '...**andor**' which could be part of '**Pandora II**' seems probable that the *Svyataya Anna* when she finally broke free of the ice could have drifted into the North Sea where she was discovered. After this chance encounter by the German fisherman the ship finally sank. When the former British Naval Commander, George Strong Nares, of this ship undertook his insolent exploit of being the first ship to enter the Suez Canal in 1869, he would never have guessed what the final fate of his ship would be. He, himself, carried on to be a famous Arctic explorer and discoverer.

(The End)

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