

CAERLEON

# DIRECTORY



ISSUE 73  
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.

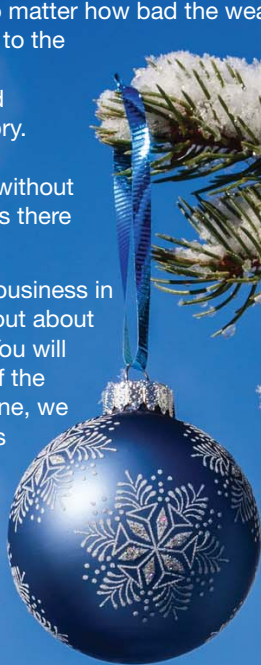
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Have the most relaxing and enjoyable Christmas,

Warm wishes

*Susan*  
x



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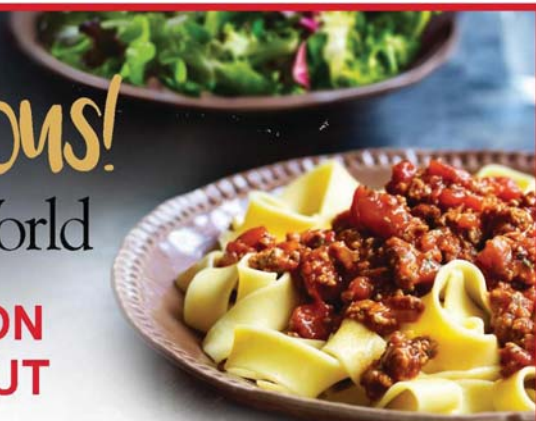
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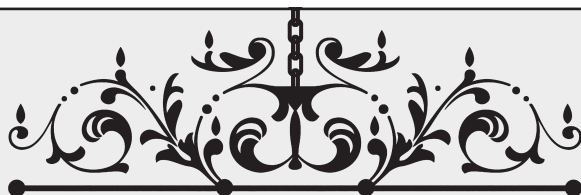


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# New Puppy



**A decision whether or not to acquire a pet dog has to be taken with due consideration as it can be life-changing. If it is a replacement for one that has shared the house previously, or an addition to others presently in residence, the change will not be so dramatic, but for first time owners the prospect is often quite daunting. The choice of breed frequently depends on what people have been used to earlier in their lives, and temperament also plays its part. Some would prefer dogs that are mature and house trained, whilst others may wish the challenge of young blood, and there are plenty of rescue centres looking to rehome dogs of all ages to people they deem suitable. Sometimes potential pets just turn up, and those who work at veterinary centres can certainly attest to this: just recently a small Chihuahua/Jack Russell pup was brought to us having been found discarded on a local motorway and, after a day or two dwelling on its impact, one of our young vets has taken it under her wing.**

**P**uppies, like young children, can be demanding. They need feeding at regular hours, ablutions attending to, and distractions from getting bored. They sleep, but not necessarily the whole night long, have a predilection for damaging things that you would prefer remained intact and, like children who greet you with

hands smeared in orange food, puppies with muddy paws delight in travelling up the legs of your best trousers. It is important to understand that puppy will respond better to a calm, ordered household with a regularity of events that include feeding, going outside, walks, rest periods and sleep. The new pup has been taken away from everything it

knows when it is rehomed: it has been removed from its litter mates and may never see mum again; the house and furniture are different, as are the people, and quite possibly the food. It will strive for the attention that was given by mum for the whole of its life so far, thus might be forgiven for demonstrating the sort of naughty behaviour that provokes any attention. In the absence of mum, pups need another role model to follow, and that role falls to the new owner.

Socialisation with other dogs is recommended, ideally soon after microchipping and vaccinations have been completed. There are several life-threatening illnesses that are easily preventable by vaccination, and at these vet checks you will also be advised on how to prevent parasitic diseases, both internal and external. Puppies have needle-sharp teeth and indulge in play biting, which can be very sore. On



one occasion my young Jack Russell managed to nip my toe through thick shoe leather and drew blood! During socialisation puppies learn just how far they can go with other dogs, probing and discovering the boundaries of acceptable behaviour; this makes the owner's job easier but it must be emphasised that the latter should remain top dog otherwise you make a rod for your own back. Simple tips: humans should eat meals first, dogs second; humans go through doors/gates first, dogs follow; humans decide when bedtime is, dogs acquiesce. Another thing: if your hound has deliberately done something quite dreadful, you will find that if you scold it, it may well repeat this action later because, as alluded to earlier, any attention is welcomed, good or bad. Best thing is to grit teeth and walk past in silence, ignoring the destroyed tomato plants or soiled carpet,

place pet in solitary confinement and tidy the damage.

A large part of the fun of owning a pet is interacting with it: walks, runs, chasing balls, beach activities, swimming or just having quiet moments at home just stroking and being together. One of our Labradors had a habit of prising a resting hand with her nose so that it would slide down the back of her head, initiating a stroking sequence, and if you stopped too soon, she would nuzzle for more. Training your pet is immensely rewarding and should commence quite early in life as they are very receptive.

House training is an obvious start, as is teaching them to sit, stay, and come. We have recently acquired a young Labrador pup to help us fill the gap left by our dear old girl whom we lost last year, and it has been thrilling to see her successfully negotiate the cattle grid near our house, stepping carefully along a supporting plinth, something that her predecessor in all her 14 years was always reluctant to do.

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# CAERLEON THEN & NOW



Back Hall Street, in the 1960s. A local decorator at work, his Austin Mini Van is parked with no yellow lines to contend with. Note the gas lit street lamp and how peaceful the street is.  
Below is the same view taken in 2014



Extract taken from Norman Stevens's books of Caerleon. They can be purchased from Caerleon Post Office







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Excavation work on the foundations for the dam at Pen-y-Garreg began in April 1895, when the railway line that was constructed for the building of the dams reached the site. Work on the masonry of the dam itself started at the end of the following year.

Although there are actually four dams in the valley of the Elan River, Pen-y-Garreg is often regarded as the 'middle dam' in the series.



This spectacular scenery is slightly less than a two hour drive from Newport. On an average it rains 235 days a

year on the Elan Estate, for the perfect day out make sure you check the local weather forecast before you leave.





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# Smart Motorways

*Smart? Or are they just smart at extracting more penalty revenue from the beleaguered motorist?*



An Extract from a Blog Post at [www.ajgarageservices.com/mike-joenn-says](http://www.ajgarageservices.com/mike-joenn-says)

If you've been to London on the M4, you must have experienced one of these emotions as you approached Reading: **Anxiety...** You are about to enter 30 miles of narrow lanes; **Frustration...** You're going to be late, or perhaps **Admiration...** You are aware that the government is spending £848million on this **Smart Motorway** between Junctions 3 and 12.

But what is a **Smart Motorway**? How 'smart' can 30 miles of tarmac be?

The Department of Transport came up with the concept in 2009 and there are 200 miles of them on the motorway network already, including the stretch between the M5 to M32 junctions on the M4). The objective of the Smart Motorway is to: *Reduce congestion; smooth the flow of traffic to improve journey times; make journeys more reliable; support the economy and facilitate economic growth within the region, by providing much needed capacity on the motorway; continue to deliver a high level of safety performance on the network using smart motorway techniques and minimise environmental impacts. So there you have it... in language that could only have come from Whitehall.*

If you're a bit cynical, then all you'll see is that the hard shoulder has become another live lane. There's more sign gantries to tell you which lanes to use and what speed to travel at and

they've introduced lots... and lots more cameras. The roads are **smart** because the cameras collect data about your vehicle! And, wherever there's a smart something or other, there's scope for a hack, a system crash or an opportunity to collect fines and penalties.

If all goes well, the technology should ensure that speed limits are set according to the density of traffic and that new inner lane (the one that used to be the safety zone called the hard shoulder) is opened and closed (or even permanently open) to accommodate higher traffic density at peak times.

However, our brave new digital motorways are not completely free of controversy. The AA has expressed concerns about the removal of hard shoulders and are campaigning for an increased number of emergency laybys to be introduced after a woman died earlier this year because she could not get to the emergency lay-by some distance away. Furthermore, the short lay-bys are more dangerous to exit than a hard shoulder by making it difficult to get up to speed before joining traffic. Emergency vehicles may also have a challenge getting to the scene of an accident without a hard shoulder – or new rules which oblige drivers in standing traffic to move to either side of the carriageway and leave a vacant lane for just such emergencies (as in Germany).

And then there's the Big Brother

aspect. We're all aware of the need to moderate our speed over a distance but with the introduction of more sophisticated cameras and many more of them, drivers risk more speeding infringements. Be aware that the digital motorway cameras don't just calculate your AVERAGE speed. They can get you on instantaneous speed too. Drivers choosing to ignore the big Red X above their lane will also find themselves in the camera viewfinder and the wrong end of a £100 fine.

On the up side (and you have to dig deep for this...) it is reported that the Dept of Transport have offered the sweetener of 60mph through roadworks as opposed to the current 50mph.

And how is all this going to be paid for? I need only give you one piece of information... Thames Valley Police forecast that EACH CAMERA on the new sections of M4 and M40 Smart Motorways will generate and eye-watering £600,000 in fines EVERY Year. **£600,000 EACH camera.** As they say in the Dacia Duster TV adverts: "*You Do the Math*".

**Mike Joenn, founding Director of AJ Garage Services, AJ Garage Services, Star Trading Estate Ponthir.**

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# It Might Be the End of the Summer but **NOW Is A Good Time to Sell Your House**

As the nights grow longer and the days colder, many homeowners think that they should delay getting their house on the market until next spring. Other owners with properties not yet sold withdraw their house from the market. But are they right? Are they perhaps missing out on the opportunity for their property to shine (and sell) at a time when there is less competition?

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 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.

## **Caerleon remains very popular**

We have buyers waiting for properties here and the surrounding areas. Do you own a house with three or more bedrooms? Are you looking to sell? These types of property are in great demand and selling very quickly at competitive prices, please get in touch to arrange a FREE valuations.



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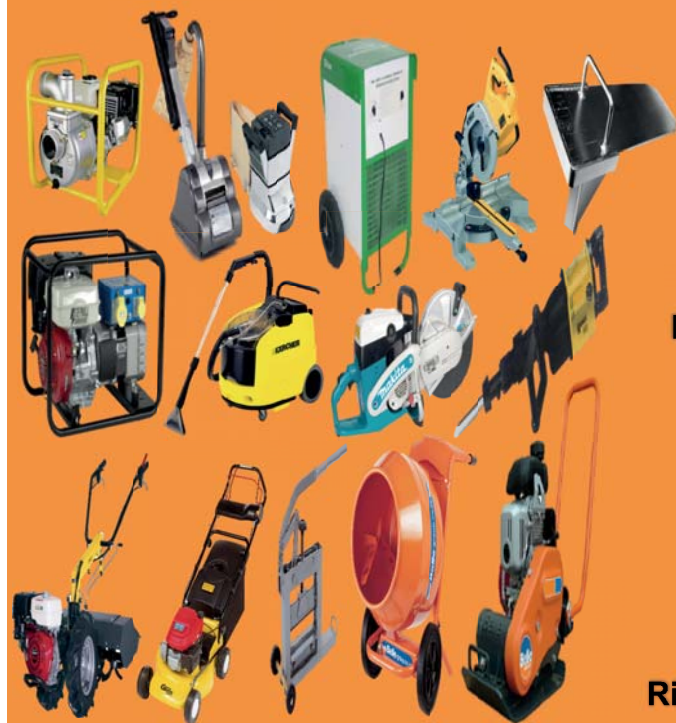


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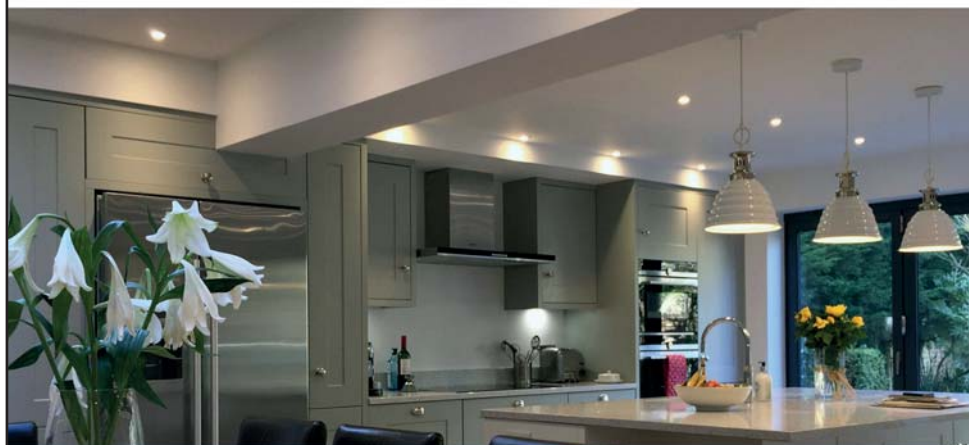


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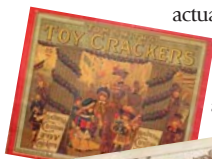


# Christmas Traditions

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

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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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**Cwmbran group contact - Mrs Val Carnegie**

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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.

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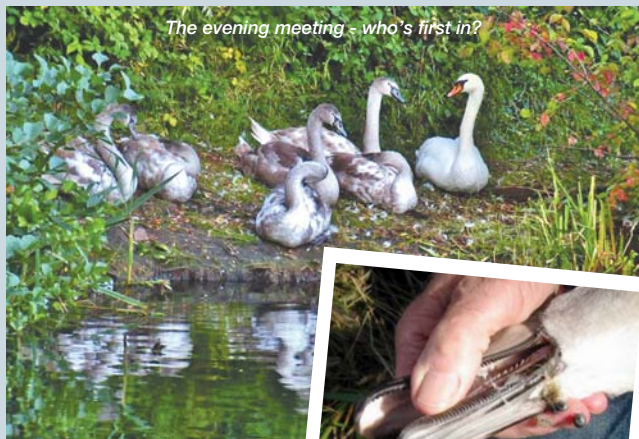
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# Cygnets, More Cygnets and Still They Come

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 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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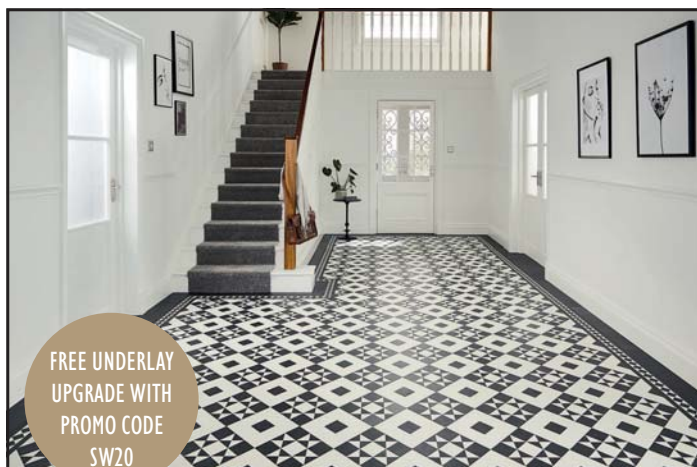
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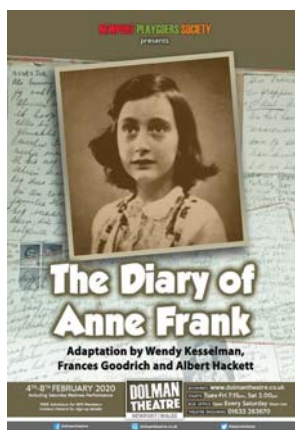
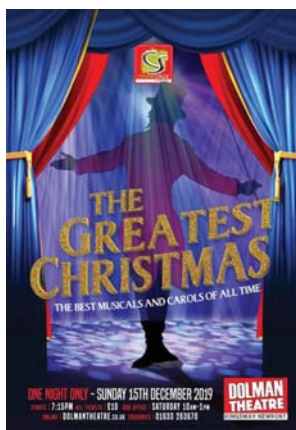
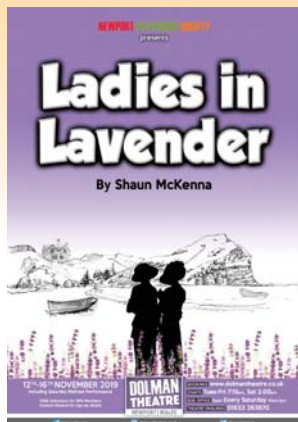


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# Who Do You Think You Are, St Woolos?

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 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 Chartist's 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, 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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