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DIRECTORY



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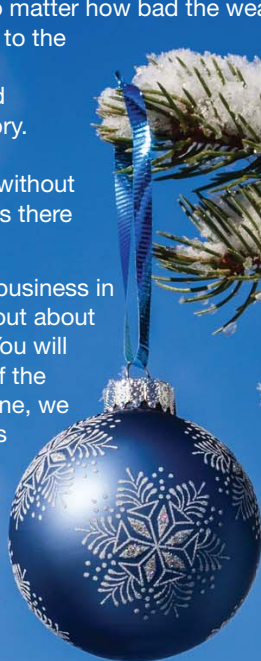
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Susan
x



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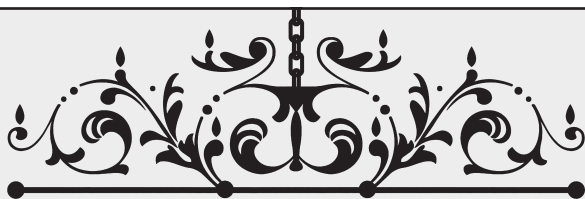
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Christmas Traditions

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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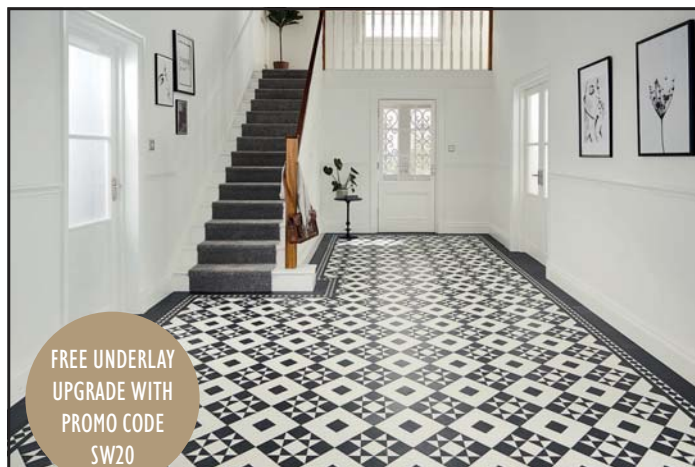
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Smart Motorways

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

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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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 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

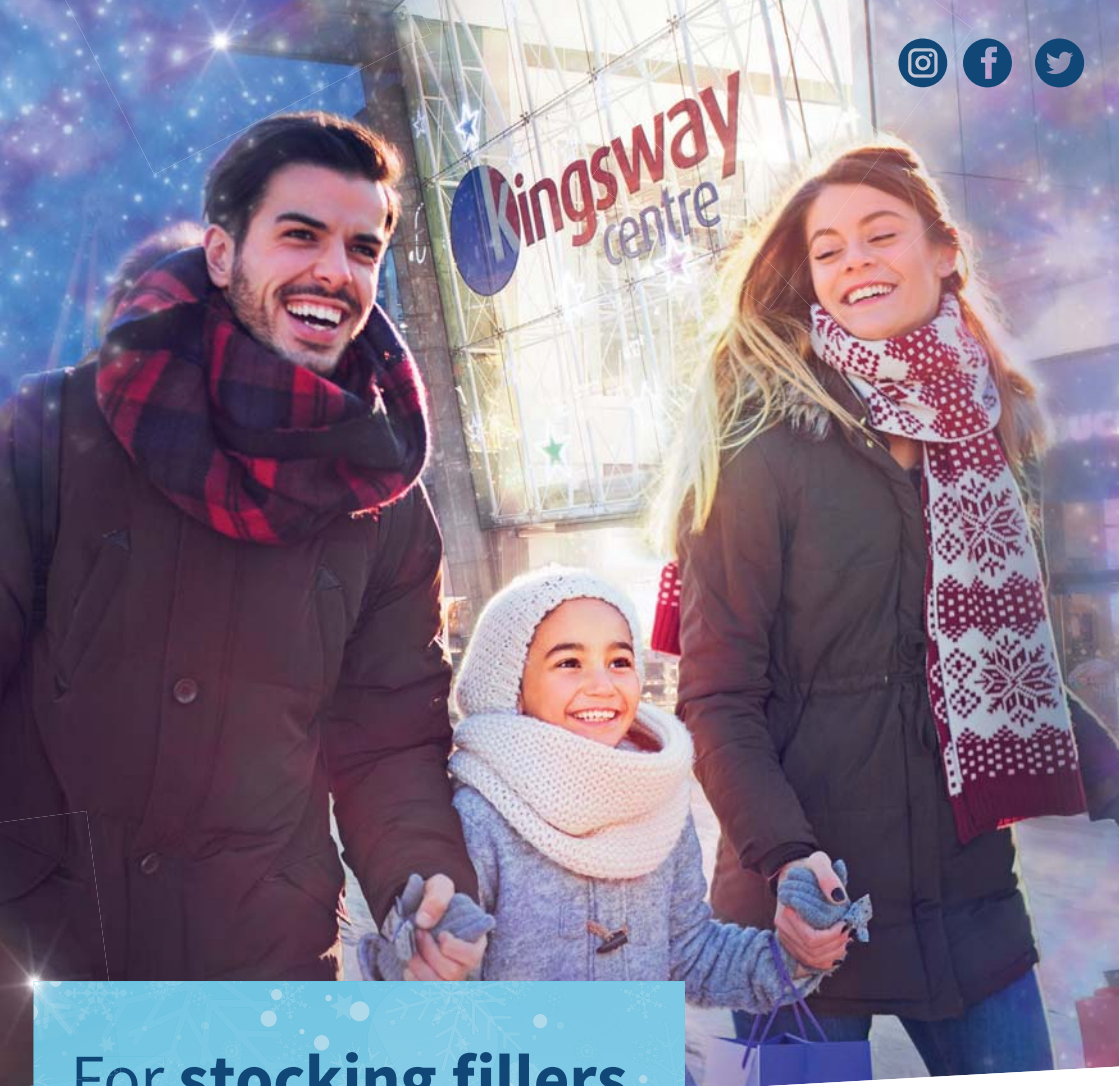


and Rhymney and he was renowned for attacking ships in the Bristol Channel and for raiding nearby territories. In one such skirmish, he captured Gwladys, the daughter of King Brychan of Brycheiniog, who had objected to a union between the two. Some stories claim that the battle was stopped only when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

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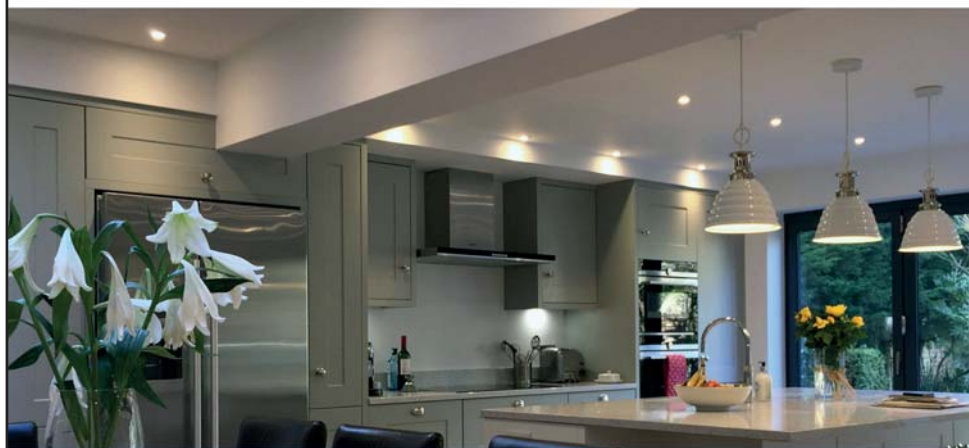


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THE FINAL FATE OF H.M.S. NEWPORT

(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.

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)



Nurse Yermina Zhdanko

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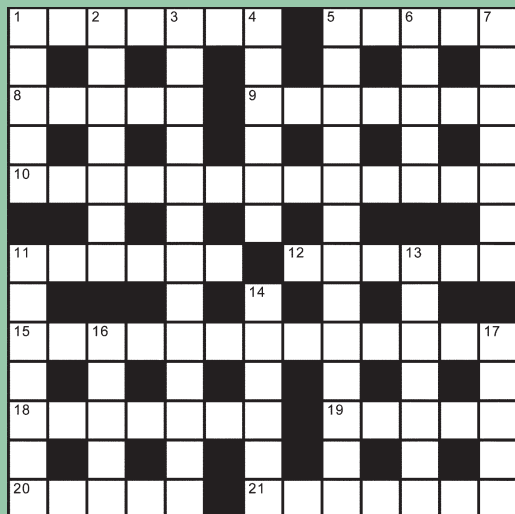
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Quick Crossword



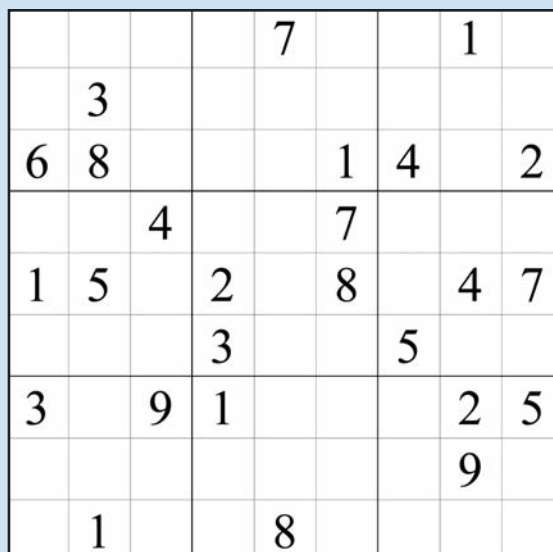
Across

- 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)

Sudoku



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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Puzzle Solutions

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

1	S	T	E	A	M	E	D	2	B	E	L	D	E	R
2	Y	N	I	I	N	R	E							
3	R	A	F	T	S	9	V	I	C	T	I	M	S	
4	U	O	C	I	Y	L	E							
5	10	P	E	R	P	E	N	D	I	C	U	L	A	R
6														
7	11	E	V	E	N	L	Y	12	B	O	U	13	N	C
8														
9	14	N						14	S	P	A			
10	15	D	E	M	O	N	S	T	R	A	T	I	O	N
11														
12	16	L	O	E	A	E	L	A						
13	17	E	C	O	N	O	M	Y	18	D	R	I	N	K
14														
15	19	S	S	E	U	E	I	N	E					
16	20	S	E	E	D	S	21	D	R	A	G	G	E	D

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Newport U3A

The U3A is the 22nd largest charity in the UK and the Newport branch (u3asites.org.uk/newport) meets at Shaftesbury Street Methodist Church Wednesday - Friday each week during term time and, since the introduction in October of Meditation sessions, it now runs 40 interest groups. In addition there are many extra-curricular activities.

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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Sunday 23rd Feb
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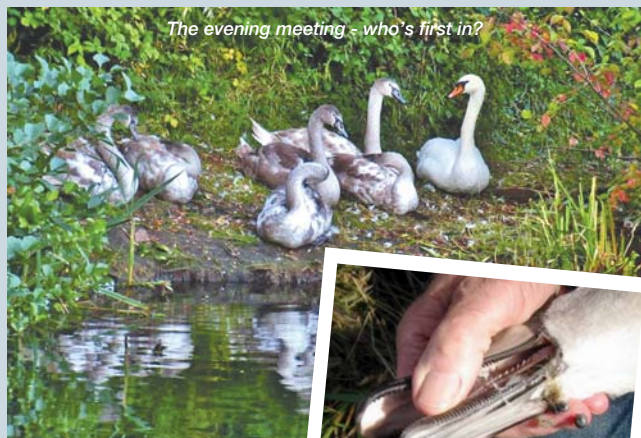
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Cygnets, More Cygnets and Still They Come

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 Llanthidian 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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Sit Sit Sitttt, how does the dog know what we want him to do? By trial and error he will eventually get it, but by using a combination of luring with food and hand signals we can quickly teach him to sit and we just say 'Sit' once.

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Playing with our dogs is again really important, some breeds prefer chase games and others like games of tug. If we play with them we are building strong bonds and a good relationship and again our dogs will want to be with us and be more attentive to us even in a distracting environment. The games that we play need to be taught properly and they need to be fun for the dog. He also needs to be left wanting more when we play with him.

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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.

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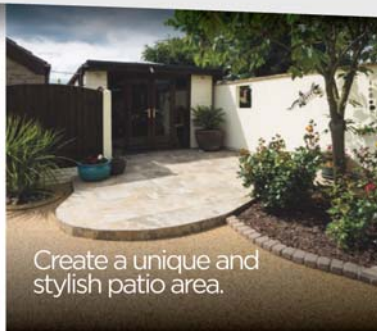
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- Completely porous and puddle free
- Hardwearing, durable and weed-adverse
- 10 times more environmentally friendly than concrete
- Slip resistant, wheelchair friendly and excellent tyre traction



Why Choose Resindrives.co.uk?

- Highly skilled installation team
- No subcontracting
- Multiple colour schemes & styles to choose from
- Over 10 years experience

For ultimate kerb appeal add a state of the art garage door, maintenance-free composite fencing or a realistic artificial lawn



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