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YOUR FREE COMMUNITY MAGAZINE & LOCAL BUSINESS DIRECTORY
DELIVERED TO CWMCARN, PONTYWAUN AND CROSSKEYS



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.

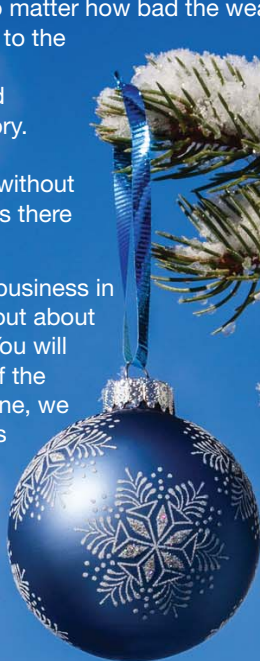
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If you are interested in advertising your business in the Directory, please contact us to find out about the very competitive advertising rates. You will always deal with us directly, like many of the businesses that advertise in this magazine, we 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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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

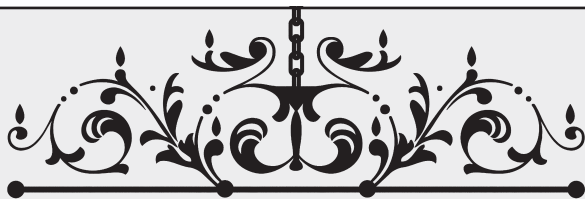
CTS meet at the car park below Twmbarlwm's summit for a litter pick and volunteer workday on the last Sunday of every month to which everyone is invited, it's not all hard work and it's a great opportunity to find your way around up there. We organise walks and other events up the mountain and at Crosskeys 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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Open Doors Review

For the fifth year running, the Museum opened on a Saturday & Sunday from 10am to 4pm as part of the Wales Open Doors event. This year it took place on September 28th & 29th and, although not blessed with the best of weather, after a quiet first 30 minutes a constant stream of visitors passed through the doors.

Several visitors came specifically to see the Western Valley Model Railway Club's tracks operating on the first floor of the building. Whilst these visitors found the Museum displays to be an unexpected bonus, for those attracted to the Museum, the railway displays came as a surprise extra attraction. Visitors came from near and far, with one couple from Grove Road making their first visit and an American couple who travelled from Oxford being particularly interested in our Columbia printing press (patented in London by an American) & associated printing-related items.

An additional attraction on the Saturday was St. Mary's Church whose parish records were available for inspection and where delicious refreshments were available. Also, Risca Male Choir opened the old Risca Urban District Council offices for inspection; they were especially pleased to talk to the son of the caretaker of the building, who grew up in the house next door (which no longer exists) and was able to describe the use of each room in UDC days.



FRIENDS OF RISCA MUSEUM

In 2017, following the disposal of the old Miners Institute building by Caerphilly County Borough Council, the charge for the use of the ground floor of the building by the Risca Museum increased from £500 a year to £3,500 a year.

Among several ideas to raise money to meet this huge extra burden, it was decided to launch Friends of Risca Museum based on an annual contribution of £10 from those who wish to ensure that the Museum continues to exist.

Many people signed up to become Friends although others preferred to just give a monetary donation. However, even with donations from

increased numbers visiting the Museum on Saturday mornings and other money-raising by the volunteers that run the Museum, total income is still considerably short of requirement. The Museum has continued by dipping into its reserves which can only be a short term measure.

Therefore, whilst continuing to investigate any possible source of income, the Museum has decided to relaunch the Friends of Risca Museum. Enough people pledging £10 a year will make the difference between the Museum continuing to function and having to close in a few years time.



For details see our Facebook page, our website www.riscamuseum.org.uk or call in to the Museum any Saturday between 10.00am and 12.30pm.

Usk New Start Cat Rescue

We rescue abandoned and stray kitties and support owners to re-home.

If you would like to adopt one of our furry friends please contact Sam Murray on 07535 087970.

Please friend us on Facebook;
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Aviation and Air Traffic Control Established 1987

If you are interested in aviation and would like to know more about what goes on in the air above us every day, why not come along to one of our regular meetings at the Graig Community Hall, Bassaleg?
For more information call
01633 213243

GWENT CHORALE

We meet at Dan-y-Graig Church, Risca at 7.00pm every Wednesday.

More information about the choir can be found at www.gwentchorale.com or find us on Facebook.

Alternatively you may like to talk to Nicola Price on 07974 111712 or Colin Harvey on 01633 894914.

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Western Valley Camera Club

Western Valley Camera Club is one of the leading Camera Clubs in South Wales.

We meet on a Thursday evening at Cross Keys Rugby Club and operate for people who are interested in photography and wish to develop and enhance new and existing skills.

The club holds meetings throughout the year on a variety of topics and aims to provide a varied programme which features the following broad topic areas:

- Competitions
- Practical sessions
- Demonstrations
- Talks and presentations from members and quality external speakers

We hold our meetings in the Dudley Suite, Cross Keys Rugby Club (Pandy Park, Woodward Avenue, Cross Keys, NP11 7BS) at 7.30pm and aim to finish by 10.00pm



For further information please go to the club web page at www.westernvalley.co.uk

Risca Rascals Parent & Toddler Group

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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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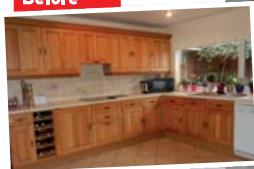
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www.gatersbarbers.com

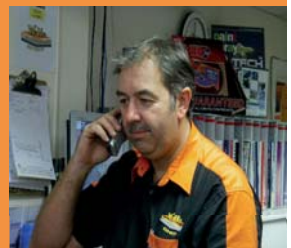


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Dates for your Diary

Saturday 23rd Nov
Elf walk/Run - Cwmbran.

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.

Friday 6th March
Ladies Day - Cardiff.

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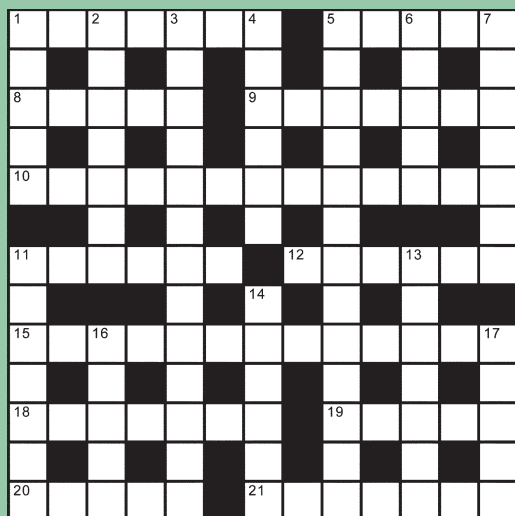


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Quick Crossword



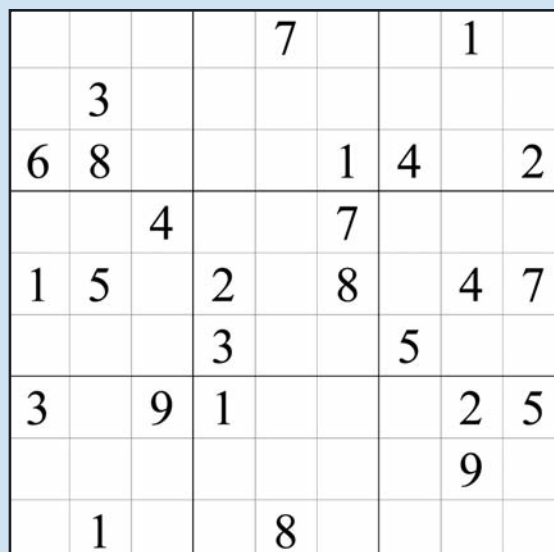
Across

- 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 18

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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
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4	1	2	5	8	9	7	6	3

1	S	T	E	A	3	M	E	4	D	5	E	L	6	D	E	7
Y	N	I	I	N	R	E										
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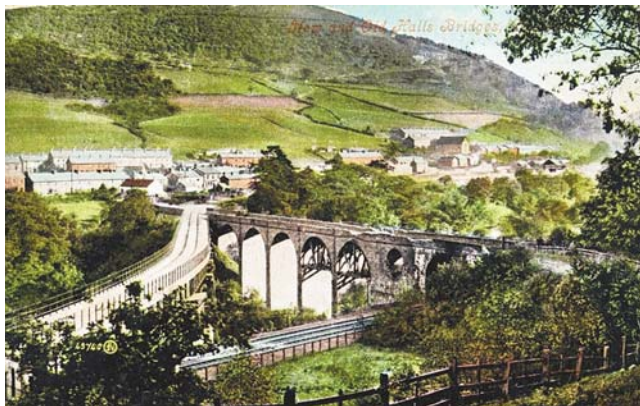
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Pont Hall (Hall's Bridge) by Geoff Smith

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 Crawshaw of Cyfartha, and after Crawshaw 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



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!

Sir Benjamin Hall





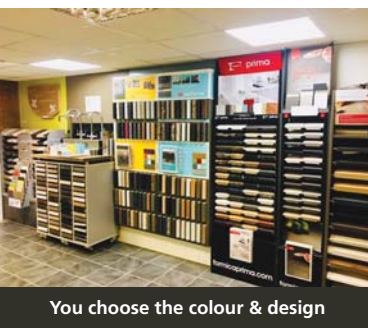
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David Brimble

1860 Black Vein Disaster Survivor

This is the grave of David Brimble in Cromwell Road Cemetery, Risca. David, a native of High Littleton in Somerset, was a survivor of the Black Vein Colliery disaster of December 1860.

David was badly burned in the explosion and was expected to die. Two of his sons, Joseph (17) and William (13), were killed in the mine. His wife was infirm, and his four remaining children were all under the age of 11 at the time of the disaster. A further child was born in 1861.

A coffin was made and placed in David's bedroom in readiness for his passing. However, he was cared for by a kindly local woman and, against the odds, survived. He slept with that coffin under his bed for the rest of his life.

Earlier in 1860, for a six-week period of work, David's earnings had been £13 3s 6d. He had paid 15 shillings rent, 4 shillings for coal and 6 shillings and 6d for Club Membership and Doctor. His two boys who were lost would have added to the family's income. David was deemed to be permanently disabled a result of his burns and, in 1862, his family was receiving 7 shillings a week Poor Relief at Risca. Sadly, less than a fifth of his former income.

The Act of Settlement and Removal (1662) had established who should have responsibility for the care of paupers and people like David, who were no longer able to earn a living and were dependant on the parish. Sadly, David fitted none of the criteria for a Certificate of Legal Settlement in Risca and the local authority had provision under the Act to apply for the removal of his family back to High Littleton, where he and his father were born.

In February 1862, in order to reduce Risca's poor relief payments, the authorities brought a case to do just this. David was examined and William Edmunds, Relieving Officer of the Newport Union, travelled to High Littleton to find David's Birth record and his father.

"I produce a certificate of Baptism of the pauper in High Littleton Parish Church on the 4th June 1820, which I saw compared with the original entry in the Register Book. It is a true extract. I



saw James Brimble, an infirm old man, the pauper's father, who pointed out a house at Hallow Brow in which he said he was born.

It is in High Littleton parish. I saw the assistant overseer, Isaac Cowen and he told me he knew the house in which James Brimble was born and believed he was a parishioner of High Littleton."

We don't know by what means David and his family were able to avoid that immediate threat of removal back to Somerset, but they never left Risca. Cruelly and out of necessity, nine years later David was a collier again and his three daughters were all working and his son was a collier. Ten years later again David was working as a Colliery Lampman. May he rest in peace for his trouble.

Stephen Lyons - Black Vein Miners Memorial Society.



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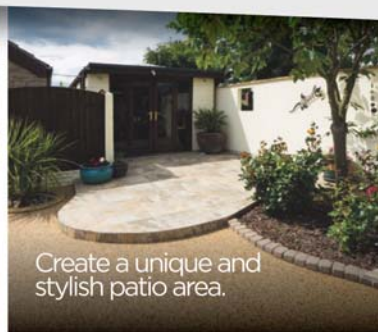
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