

RISCA

DIRECTORY



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SW DIRECTORIES

WELCOME!

It's always good to try new things and aspire to improve our lives, whether it's losing the extra pounds we put on over the festive season, attempting to become fitter, volunteering or helping a local charity, starting a new hobby or even starting a business. Trying something new and having different experiences often makes us feel focused and happier in life.

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Susan
x

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Twmbarlwm – iconic and as popular as ever

Photo showing some of the hundreds of visitors who climb to the top of Twmbarlwm every Good Friday – but how many recognise the work of CTS who watch over the landscape for the benefit of all
Photo: Terry C. Evans

I'm writing this just after the Society's AGM and I must admit, when I started to compile my annual report on the past year I was definitely a "glass half empty" person as I began to wonder "...what have we done this year". Then as I look at all my photos and go through the records of projects we have been involved with – I gradually became a "glass half full" type of guy.

Cymdeithas Twmbarlwm Society is going into its tenth year since we formed and so far we have achieved quite a lot on the mountain and I am pleased to say that we are recognised by the local authorities and other official bodies as a major influencer in environmental, community and historical issues of the area.

My "glass half-empty" persona says that to continue being effective we need to encourage more people to become members and get involved with the Society's work to make Twmbarlwm and surrounding area a place to be proud of and secure for future generations.

My "glass half-full" persona looks at how popular the mountain is, not just on Good Friday, as the above photo shows, but also on our litter pick days when visitors stop to chat to us and thank us for looking after the area. I would like to convince a few more to come and help us out, just look at the following stuff we get involved with, wouldn't you like to be part of it?

Our mantra, **"... dedicated to research, restore and protect Twmbarlwm"**, remains as pertinent now as when we were founded. Each of these criteria is inextricably linked and Society members work on various projects to help fulfil our aims for Twmbarlwm.

The "research" part of that statement is well underway (as described in this column last month). It has already started with drone, geophysics and paleoenvironmental surveys. Following on from these surveys, 2020 will see an archaeological dig take place on the mountain.

This will be the first time that such research has been officially endorsed and it has come about by the persistence of the society and the co-operation of some sympathetic Cadw officers.

I'm very optimistic that some interesting results will come out of the research and I hope that some light will be shed upon the mysteries of "the Twmp".

The "restore" element of our slogan is also tied in to the archaeological research because part of the programme will be looking at how the wildfires of 2018 have affected the underlying archaeology. It will look at how best to re-seed or treat the burnt areas to give mother-nature a helping hand in restoring the heath land to its former glory.

CTS did a great deal of restoration work in our early years when we erected fences, planted trees and installed and repaired paths and steps to the Twmp. Such projects were in conjunction with the Commoners Association and Caerphilly County Borough Council – together we continue to pursue similar landscape management projects.

For instance we are looking forward to more of that sort of work in 2020 working with CCBC on their implementation of the "Adventure Triangle" funding. This funding was announced a year ago and CTS was asked to submit a list of works to be done such as path repairs, way marking, signage, wall and fence repairs. Planning for this work is almost complete and we hope work will be underway in 2020.

Another major project that CTS has been involved with comes under the heading of "protection". Along with our sister organisation, Friends of Cwmcar Forest Drive, we have helped campaign for the re-opening of the Drive. I'm sure that everyone is pleased to know that the Drive will re-open to vehicles in the Spring of 2020. Our involvement includes some members being part of the focus groups who advise and comment on the various requirements to re-open the drive.

Twmbarlwm is at the centre of the Forest Drive and the nature of the facilities will greatly influence the Drive's success and the Society's work on the mountain will undoubtedly help improve and protect the natural landscape for future generations.

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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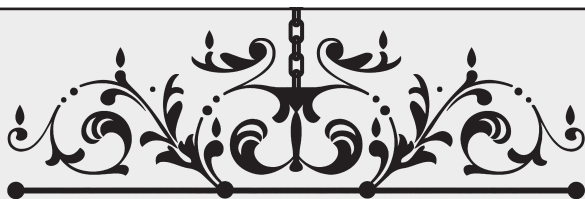
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During the war

It's likely that most people will be familiar with the appearance of the gas masks which were issued to the general public in the United Kingdom during the Second World War. However, a stark reminder of the potential horrors of war which civilians may have had to endure was brought home to us at the museum thanks to a recent donation.

Local resident Mark Jones donated the baby's gas mask, shown in the photograph, which had been given to the family of his cousin, Ann. She was born in the 1940s and, it seems, never had to be placed inside the gas mask. We can only imagine the horror a baby would feel being placed inside such an item and the trauma of the parent having to use it. As an interesting side note to this, Ann's uncle was taken as a prisoner of war while serving in North Africa. In the first instance, he was held in Italy but was later transferred to Dresden in Germany. While there he had to endure but, thankfully, survived the Allied bombing which all but destroyed it.

Civilians on both sides in wars are subject to the horrors of attacks on their homes. The Home Office pamphlet in this photograph sets out directions on how civilians in the UK should go about defending their homes. As well as advice for protecting property, the government established Air Raid Protection Wardens whose duties included enforcing the blackouts to prevent enemy aircraft from



spotting potential targets. A warden's helmet is also on display in the porch area of the museum.

Rationing was something else which had to be endured by the civilian population during the war; in fact rationing was not totally lifted until 1954 in the United Kingdom. This photograph shows another exhibit on display at Risca Museum, being a ration book for a Mr M. Davies of Gloucestershire dated 1945-46. It wasn't only food that was rationed, we also have a Clothing

Book for the same individual dated 1943.



During the war, and the consequent rationing, British civilians often received gifts of food from overseas. Recently, the museum was given such a gift in the form of a large tin of Maxwell House Coffee. It can be clearly seen on the label on the tin that this one-pound tin of coffee was produced in New York. The information from the donor is that it was a charitable gift from the people of the United States of America and that it was received by the Ward family who lived in Hill Street, Risca.

At this time of year, it is usual to remember those from the armed forces who were killed during the wars that have been fought over the last century. We have two WW1 memorial boards from Richard Thomas and Baldwin, one listing the men who lost their lives and the other the men who were awarded gallantry medals. It's worth remembering that it wasn't only members of the armed forces who exhibited bravery. We have had a number of certificates donated to the museum which record the bravery of the men who fought and extinguished the gob fire in the Black Vein Colliery in 1918 which had closed the colliery. The certificates note that the 'heroic action and self-sacrifice' shown by these men 'will live as an example and inspiration to future generations'. The civilian memorabilia described above and on display in Risca Museum also reminds us that the horrors and privations that civilians have to endure during war is also something that gets all too easily forgotten or ignored.





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LOCAL HEROES

By Bernard Osment

Gwent soldier killed by IRA bomb blast

A grave, in the far lower corner of Section F of Danygraig Cemetery, is the last resting place of Arthur Fryer and his wife Marie, previously of No.8 Garden Suburbs, Pontywaun. Some ten yards away is the grave of their only child, their son Paul Arthur Fryer.

Arthur Fryer passed away suddenly, at the age of 69, at the Royal Gwent Hospital on the 27th January 1992. His wife Doris Marie, always known as Marie, had passed away at the Royal Gwent Hospital some eleven years earlier, on the 10th June 1981, aged 51. Both had been heartbroken at the loss of their beloved son Paul in 1979.

Paul didn't die in an accident, or of an illness in bed at home or in a hospital, he was murdered by the IRA, in a quiet country lane in Northern Ireland, on the 13th November 1979, aged just 18 years and 4 months. It had always been Paul's ambition to join the Army and after leaving Cwmcarn Comprehensive School in 1977, at the age of 16 he joined up. In August 1978 he



was serving in the Welsh Guards, stationed in Berlin, as 24464284 Guardsman Paul Arthur Fryer. In 1979, in the midst of a 'most volatile

situation', his Battalion of the Welsh Guards was posted to Northern Ireland. Just three weeks after Paul joined the Prince of Wales Company at Crossmaglen, he was killed.

Paul had never shown any worry about the dangers of serving in Northern Ireland. His bold attitude was a great

encouragement to others in his Platoon. Though he was only eighteen he was a much respected

member of the Company and exemplified all that a Welsh Guardsman should be. He was sadly missed by his comrades.

At about one o'clock in the afternoon of Tuesday the 13th November 1979, after spending most of the morning carrying out house to house inquiries in the Ford Cross area of Crossmaglen, Paul was one of a four man patrol making their way cross country to a helicopter pick-up point. They kept off the roads, crossed fields, avoided gates and gaps in hedges, but after two of the patrol had climbed over a wire fence to get across the road at Ford's Cross, three miles from

the South Armagh border, just as Paul was getting over the fence an unseen IRA team hidden some distance away, detonated a radio controlled bomb concealed behind a nearby telegraph pole. Paul took the full force of the blast and died instantly. Another member of the patrol, Guardsman Michael Miller was injured, but not seriously.

On Thursday the 22nd November 1979, Welsh Guardsman Paul Arthur Fryer was given a full military funeral.

Hundreds of people crowded into St John's Church, Cwmcarn, for the service. Paul's coffin, draped with the Union Jack, with a Welsh Guards cap and belt on top, was carried by eight guardsmen.

Guards from the Battalion Headquarters in Surrey, and some of Paul's colleagues from Northern Ireland, escorted the funeral procession. Shops in Cwmcarn and Pontywaun were closed, and people stood at the roadside as a mark of respect, as the cortege made its way to

Danygraig Cemetery.

At the cemetery, a firing party gave three volleys and a bugler sounded the Last Post followed by Reveille.

At Danygraig Cemetery on Wednesday the 13th November 2019, there were no rifle shots, only the sound of the Last Post and Reveille as family members, friends, army comrades and serving members of the Welsh Guards gathered at Paul's grave side for a memorial service to commemorate the 40th anniversary of Paul's death.

IRA's revenge – Gwent soldier is victim

A wooden plaque on a wall in Rogerstone Library reads – In Memory of Corporal G.C. Bristow. Killed on active service in Northern Ireland April 1972.

Gerald Charles Bristow, the third son of Charles and Doreen Bristow, was born in Rhiwderin in 1945. In the mid 1950s his family moved to No.11 Ebenezer Drive, Rogerstone. He attended High Cross Primary School before going to the Graig Secondary School in Bassaleg. On leaving school he started working on the railway as a fireman.

Bored with his job, in 1964 he decided to join the Army at the age of 19. He was serving in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers as 24040659 Private Bristow, eventually reaching the rank of Corporal. He served overseas, in Germany and Cyprus before returning to the U.K. in 1967, to Heathfield Camp, near Honiton. There he met and married his wife Gillian in 1969. He was then posted to Hong Kong, taking his wife with him, their son Peter being born there in 1971.



In March 1972 the Fusiliers were posted to Northern Ireland, where Gerald, his wife Gillian and baby son moved into married quarters at Ebrington Barracks, Londonderry.

Although Gerald was due to

come out of the Army in 1972, he was thinking of signing on for another 12 years.

On Sunday the 16th April 1972, Corporal Gerald Charles Bristow, aged 26 of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, was shot by a sniper whilst on foot patrol in Bishop Street, Londonderry. Despite an emergency operation Gerald died of his wounds.

The IRA claimed responsibility for Gerald's shooting, saying it was in retaliation for the death of Joseph McCann, a senior IRA leader shot by the Army the previous day.

Gerald was given a full military funeral in his adopted home town of Honiton, where he was laid to rest in the cemetery of St Michael's Church. His name is inscribed on the Honiton War Memorial.

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Welcome to

Risca East Community Council

Newsletter

On behalf of Risca East Community Council, the councillors would like to wish you a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Looking back over the last couple of months, the community councillors have been busy organising events in our community of Risca, including joining with the Risca Branch of the Royal British Legion and Risca Town Council, and many others, to organise and take part in the Armistice and Commemoration Service held at Moriah Church.

Grateful thanks to everyone who took part in the Armistice events, which ran over three days, including all those who helped hang the poppies from the lampposts in Ty Sign and Risca Town.

The last Friday of November was the day for the official switch on of the Christmas lights along Elm Drive on Ty Sign and, for the first time, the lights on a Christmas tree sited in the grounds of St David's Church. Many thanks to members of the Salvation Army who played carols for us to sing along to and to everyone, young and old, who lent their voices in the count down before the lights sparkled into life! Then it was time for a mince pie and a cup of tea or two in the warmth of the church hall where we were joined by Father Christmas, Mrs Chris Pudding and Miss Zoe Penguin. Risca East Community Councillors are looking forward to supporting the community of




Risca East throughout 2020 but we need your help to do this... we need local groups and charities to contact us. It could be that your group needs a new kettle, carpet, storage boxes, fence, paint, cupboard; it could be that your group is hoping to organise a coach trip, etc but are struggling to raise funds.

If you would like help, please contact the Clerk, Mr Gwyn James at riscaeastcommunitycouncil@outlook.com or write to him at 13 Cherry Tree Road, Pontllanfraith, Blackwood, NP12 2PY

The Community Council meets on the third Thursday of the month at 5.30 p.m. and holds its meetings in St David's Church, Ty Sign and members of the public are very welcome to observe proceedings. However, if you wish to book a 15 minute slot on the agenda to bring some local matter to the attention of the Councillors, please contact Gwyn as detailed above.

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Gwerinwyr Gwent Diary

On Monday 7th October GG was in St Mellons village hall at the invitation of the ladies of St Mellons WI. They had booked our evening of Welsh culture, which can be tailored to suit our audience but usually comprises a short talk on costume and Lady Llanover, demonstration dances and some easy audience participation dances. This time Barbara Griffiths had also promised them her boxes quiz, so we squeezed that in as well. The ladies really enjoyed the evening, joining in with gusto, and we later received a very nice 'thank you' letter.



The following Saturday (the 12th), we were running a twmpath as a 70th birthday celebration at Lysaght's Institute in Newport. For many of the people attending it was their first twmpath, and I have to say that most people joined in enthusiastically, especially the birthday girl! I think I can safely say a good time was had by all, and for the final dance of the evening (Circassian Circle) only one person in the whole room (a young man) refused to take to the dance floor.

This year the Welsh Folk Dance Society celebrated its 70th anniversary over the weekend of the 25/26th October, and GG joined the massed dancing in the atrium of St Fagan's National Museum of History. The weather was awful on the Saturday but fortunately the dancing had



always been planned to be in the atrium and not outside. Welsh folk dance teams from all over Wales had travelled to Cardiff for the weekend, and their costumes made a colourful display. The atrium is a very nice performance space, and many museum visitors chose to watch us dance and even joined in when invited. The music was played by a brilliant band made up of musicians from Tawerín and other teams, we danced solidly for an hour, then went for a cuppa!

November 21st was our final booking of the year and saw us return to Risca and the U3A's monthly social meeting. Our dance displays were interspersed with Barbara's Welsh places survey (this gives us a breather and the audience something to think about), plus a couple of audience participation dances. The

audience then gets to pick their favourite place from those named in the survey, and this time the winner was Tenby. We always have a good afternoon at the U3A, and as we keep being invited back, I'm pretty sure they really enjoy it too.

2019 has been one of our busiest years with 18 bookings, and we start all over again in January with 8 bookings already confirmed for 2020.

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, ring 01495 271953, or just come along and give it a try.





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Friday 17.45 - 18.30

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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

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| | |
|-----------|------------------------------------|
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| Tuesday | 9.30am - 1.00pm 2.00pm - 5.00pm |
| Wednesday | 9.30am - 1.00pm 2.00pm - 6.00pm |
| Thursday | 9.30am - 1.00pm 2.00pm - 5.00pm |
| Friday | 9.30am - 1.00pm 2.00pm - 5.00pm |
| Saturday | 9.30am - 4.00pm |

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meets every Wednesday 2.15pm - 2.45pm

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meets weekly on Friday's at 11am-12pm
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Risca Senior Citizens Association

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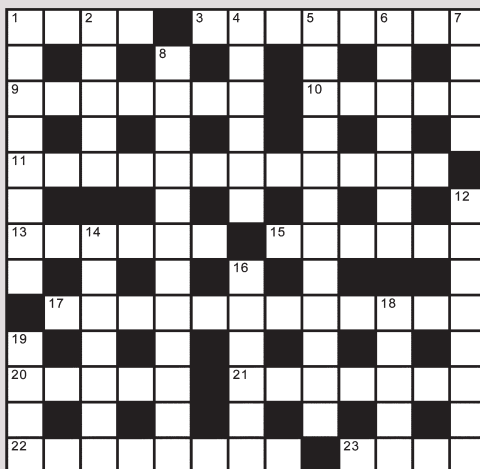
Quick Crossword

Across

- 1 Cattle (4)
- 3 Came about (8)
- 9 Organise (7)
- 10 Passenger coaches (5)
- 11 Garden pests (12)
- 13 Once a year (6)
- 15 Expose (6)
- 17 Formation of society (12)
- 20 Fastening together (5)
- 21 Equalise (7)
- 22 Troubling (8)
- 23 Upper limbs (4)

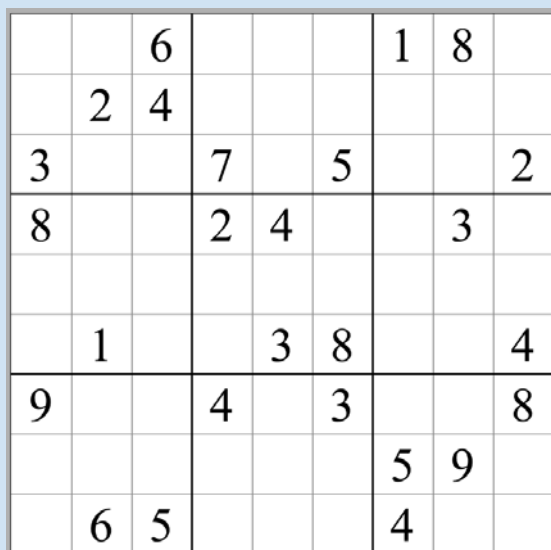
Down

- 1 Very dark grey colour (8)
- 2 Not the best (5)
- 4 Deferred payment (6)
- 5 Incredible (12)



- 6 Set aside (7)
- 7 Hurry (4)
- 8 More and more (12)
- 12 Wool covers (8)
- 14 Louder (7)
- 16 Type of ape (6)
- 18 Internal (5)
- 19 Casserole (4)

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

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

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|---|----|---|---|----|----|----|----|---|----|---|---|
| 1 | C | O | W | S | 3 | O | C | C | U | R | R | E | D |
| | H | O | | | B | | I | R | N | E | | A | |
| 4 | A | R | R | A | N | G | E | | 10 | B | U | S | E |
| | R | | S | | C | D | | | E | | E | H | |
| 11 | C | A | T | E | R | P | I | L | L | A | R | S | |
| | O | | | | E | T | | I | V | | 12 | B | |
| 13 | A | N | 14 | N | U | A | L | 15 | E | V | E | A | L |
| | L | O | | S | | 16 | G | | V | | | A | |
| | 17 | C | I | V | I | L | I | S | A | T | 18 | I | O |
| 19 | S | | S | | N | | B | B | | N | K | | |
| 20 | T | Y | I | N | G | | 21 | B | A | L | A | N | C |
| | E | E | | L | O | | E | E | | E | T | | |
| 22 | W | O | R | R | Y | I | N | G | 23 | A | R | M | S |

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Although most of the reservoir looks like a lake, there is a bell-mouth spillway at the south-eastern side of it, which is only one of three in the whole of the UK. It is designed like an inverted bell and really makes the water look like it's swirling down into some kind of vortex! It's pretty cool to see.

The reservoir is popular with sailors, anglers and picnickers. The Taff Trail runs through the woods on the western side of the reservoir. Merthyr Tydfil sailing club is based on the eastern bank and the



Brecon Mountain Railway which runs up its eastern side from Pant Station to Dolygaer and on to Torpantau.



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Newcomer introduces himself to the residents of the Knapp

Cygnets struggle to make their way in the world

It's too early to be certain, but right now it feels as if the autumn and early winter 2019 have been amongst the busiest and most concentrated periods of activity we have ever experienced, or maybe it's just another sign we are getting a little bit longer in the tooth. It's not for the first time we find ourselves writing about cygnets and the territorial problems they encounter as they start trying to make their independent way in the world.

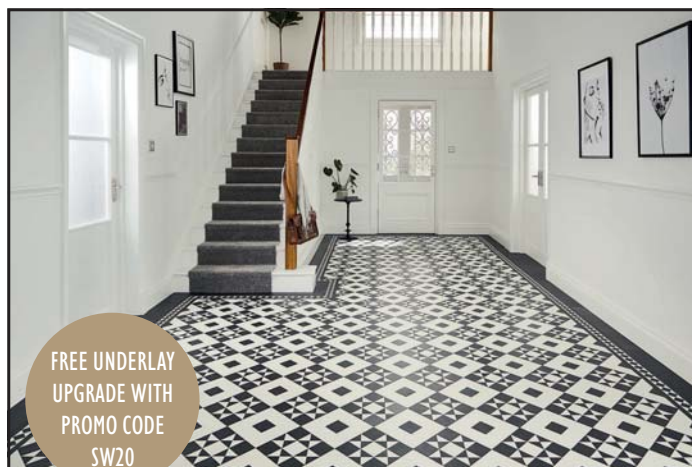
We like to think adult swans, as it were, give their offspring flying lessons, so that by the time they leave the parent's territory they are reasonably competent fliers. However, what is equally clear is that it is not possible for any guidance to be given as to where it is safe for them to go, or, in a way, where it is definitely unsafe to go. Once again we are in the realm of territorial disputes. This time, the action takes place on a pair of lakes near Upton Bishop a little to the north of Ross-on-Wye, nestling just below the southern end of the M50

motorway. Here there is a breeding pair of swans which we were told produced nine cygnets in 2019 but there were just six left when we were called in late November. The trouble began when two other cygnets (origin unknown) landed, one of which was promptly set upon by the resident adult male (cob). The victim was being pinned down at the bottom of the outfall connecting the two lakes. Grisly it is, but the aim is to drown the intruder. By the nature of things, it took us a little over an hour to reach our destination, and we firmly believed we were in time to save the badly distressed young bird. We brought him home and placed him with another reasonably fit cygnet rescued from somewhere else more local. They bonded immediately. What an awful shock it was to discover him dead two mornings later. We really don't know what more we could have done, but the cause of death could have been shock or the intake of too much water in an uncontrolled fashion or both. The next thing we know is we're

back up there again two days later when it seems the cob had 'decided' it was time his own family ought to be on their way and certainly the male juveniles in particular, because they are seen as potential threats. This time however was different; night had fallen and there were remnants of the earlier heavy rain. Of three cygnets which had been driven down the outfall from the lower of the two lakes, one which was slightly injured had managed to make his way up onto the far bank. Despite the uncompromising conditions we were fortunate enough to be able to find a route (on foot) resulting in a rescue being possible. He (definitely 'he' judging by his size and weight, approximately 10 kg.), is making a good recovery and we expect to be able to release him soon, probably at The Knap at Barry.

We do not expect the phone to stop ringing any time soon!

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