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I hope you enjoyed the sizzling temperatures we experienced in August. Personally, I'm looking forward to some cooler weather and to all the delights of autumn. It's my favourite time of year, the lovely crisp, dry days of September, a nip in the air and the gold, red and russet leaves on the trees.

Thank you, one again to the NHS, all the key workers and to the wonderful volunteers who have continued to keep our community going during the Covid-19 pandemic.

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Susan

Editor: Susan Woolford | Sales & Distribution: Leslie Woolford



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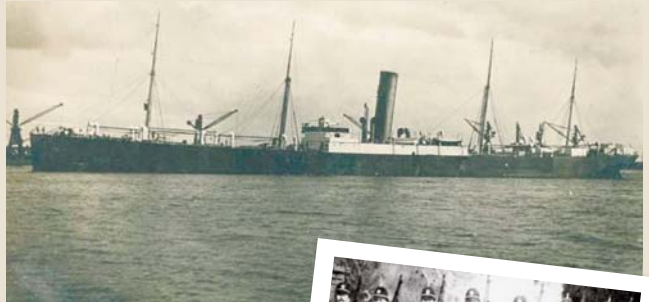
The First Prize of War

by Paul Minton

As countries across the world implement lockdown strategies to stem the tide of the coronavirus, many people have taken the opportunity to reconnect with family and acquaintances. I am no exception and have been exchanging stories (and cute animal videos) with an old friend from Hamburg. Curiously, there is one major tale from history that links our two cities, that of the *SS Belgia*.

The steamship was originally called the *Irak* and was constructed in Belfast in 1901. It operated out of Liverpool for over decade until it was acquired by the Hamburg America Line in 1913, when it was renamed the *Belgia*. In August the following year, the vessel was travelling from Boston, Massachusetts to Hamburg with a cargo that included flour, timber, and copper as well as animals bound for Hamburg Zoo. These consisted of various exotic birds, chameleons, bullfrogs, rattlesnakes, racoons, and even two live alligators. On 3 August, the Captain learnt that war had broken out between France and Germany and he was reportedly concerned that his ship might be captured by the French Navy as it passed through the English Channel. Claiming that its reserves of coal were running low, the *Belgia* headed towards the Bristol Channel but was refused entry to both Barry Dock and Cardiff Pier Head. As it approached Newport, the last of the Welsh seaports, it was instructed to set anchor and wait for a pilot to navigate the ship into the newly opened Alexandra Dock.

Some five hours later, however,



events had caught up with the ship as Britain and Germany declared war. In less than two hours, the Chief Constable and the Dockmaster took a tugboat called *Wolfhound* and concealed a team of twelve policemen below deck. The men were armed with rifles borrowed from the Territorial Army, although these were reputedly devoid of ammunition. The *Belgia* was then berthed successfully with the Captain's cooperation, whereupon the policemen emerged from their hiding place and captured the liner along with its 20 crew, 75 reservists, and floating menagerie. The Germans, who offered no resistance, are thought to have become the first prisoners of the entire conflict. They were taken to the Temperance Hall in Dock Street before being transported to the Isle of Man, where they were interned for the duration of the war. Meanwhile, the ship's cargo was sold in auction at the Waterloo Hotel and the alligators and reptiles are said to have been displayed at Abergavenny Fair. The incident made the global news, including an announcement in the New York Times.

The Hamburg America Line protested at the loss of the *Belgia*, arguing that it



breached the Hague Convention that protected ships against seizure if moored at an enemy port during the outbreak of war. However, a British Court ruled that the vessel was not docked at Newport when hostilities were declared and as such, the confiscation was lawful.

As a prize of war, the *Belgia* soon found itself swelling the ranks of the Merchant Navy under the new moniker, *Huntstrick*. At the time, it was customary to rechristen seized ships with names that bore the anti-German prefix, *Hun-*. In June 1917, the steamer was tasked with delivering troops and provisions to Salonika in Greece but it was sunk by U-39, captained by Walter Forstmann, one of Germany's foremost U-boat commanders. Fifteen lives were claimed in the attack off the coast of Morocco, including *Huntstrick's* Master, Robert Duncanson. Ironically, he lived in Clyffard Crescent, just a short walk from where his ship had been captured in Newport less than three years before.

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(Motoring Post Covid-19)

What has Covid-19 done to the Motor Trade and the Motorist

Extract from a Blog Post by Mike Joenn, Founding Director of AJ Garage Services, Ponthir



We can all agree that it has been a very L O N G five months since the nationwide lockdown started on 23/24th March. I think most of us harboured the hope that it would all be over in a few weeks, indeed, we were encouraged to hold that thought by the Government. But with hindsight, it has become apparent that they didn't want to un-nerve us all by telling us on Day 1 that we've been in a devastating lock-down for four months.

A lot has happened in that four months... and just to be clear, I am not setting aside or overlooking the death of 1,566 of our Welsh brothers & sisters who have fallen to Covid-19. We acknowledge and bow our heads to this truly tragic statistic, but I do try to focus on motoring, the motor trade and the motorist in this blog and it is in that direction I turn my attention today.

Much of what we have seen (in motoring terms) has been generally unexpected, but again with hindsight, inevitable. The first big announcement was the suspension of MOT testing and the six-month extension. To be honest, that came as a surprise to us. We also thought that it may have been a mistake. MOT stations, like our own, stayed open, seeing ourselves as 'essential' in order to ensure the roadworthiness of the vehicle which continued to use the road. The arrangement has now ended and motorists are now flooding back to their MOT testers. September & October promise to be very busy months in most

MOT bays throughout the country.

Early on in the lockdown, we were saddened, which quickly turned to anger, about some scum bags who nicked a local doctor (Tom Rontree-Carey's) catalytic converter from his car WHILE HE WAS ON DUTY in the Gwent Royal Infirmary helping to save lives. With the help of local parts supplier, Fast Parts in Cwmbran, we were able to recover the vehicle and get Tom back on the road. That was a proud day for us.

We navigated the four months of lockdown without illness at AJs. That's not to say that we got off Scot-free. Early on, two of our team self-isolated at home for 14 days after reporting possible symptoms. These later proved not to be Covid related, so it would be fair to say that we got through relatively unscathed.

We've seen a steady return to normal levels of business over the last month (in keeping with many other businesses) and as road traffic has increased, so too has our workload and break-down rescue activity. I think it would be fair to say that we will be back to pre-Covid activity levels by the end of September.

Then there's the secondary impact of Covid-19 over these last few months. Fuel prices in particular have been an unforeseen bonus for the motorist. We've seen petrol at £1.09/Litre and Diesel at £1.13/Litre in the Newport area. Not sure how long that will last.

Vehicle sales were all but halted during the lockdown and we acknowledge that it has been a tough time for the dealers.

However, they are virtually all now open again and we hear reports of brisk business on the forecourts. We wish them well in the coming months. The manufacturers on the other hand are facing massive problems and widespread redundancies are anticipated in the motor manufacturing sector when the furlough scheme comes to an end.

So, where do we go from here? Well, we like everyone else in business, have adopted new working arrangements and hygiene regimes. We've never used some much disinfectant, anti-bacterial wipes and hand-gel. Vehicles get a different kind of post-service wash-down and anti-bac treatment these days and there's been a lot more collections from and delivery to the customers over the last few months.

Our biggest fear, again like most folks, is the threat of a so-called second wave. We live in hope that the Government offers good guidance and the general public show some common-sense in the coming months and we get the virus under control. So, this month's tip from the workshop: Wear the mask; Do the Social Distancing thing and Keep the Covid-19 at bay... for all our sakes.

As they used to say in the old Esso TV Advert... **Happy Motoring!**

Mike Joenn, AJ Garage Services, Star Trading Estate. 01633 431305

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We have seen a spectacular increase in the number of instructions received to market houses of all sizes in the area since the Welsh Government eased the lockdown restrictions.

Sellers have spent the lockdown period preparing their houses for sale and our team have been out providing free valuations and advice to those of you who want to move.

When you travel around Newport you might well have noticed our For Sale boards as this area has been particularly active.

Houses in Newport are In Demand

Houses in this area are selling quickly. Demand for properties here has increased and we are receiving enquiries from both local buyers and those from further afield who are actively looking to move.

Is It Safe to Put Your House on the Market?

We would like to reassure you that we are following all the advice provided by the Welsh Government regarding putting your house on the market. Our team will happily explain to you what is required by all parties and we also inform viewers what is expected from them. This information can frequently change and when it does, we will let you know.

Changes to Welsh Land Transaction Tax

The Welsh Government announced that the Land Transaction Tax (LTT) would change, bringing the rate payable for properties valued at between £180,000 and £250,000 to zero. The changes will come into play on 27 July 2020 and will run up until 31 March 2021.

Properties in Wales selling for under £180,000 were already exempt of paying the tax, so essentially the Government has extended the threshold up to £250,000. The change will not include second homes or buy-to-let properties, which will continue to pay the existing LTT as well as 3% of additional tax.

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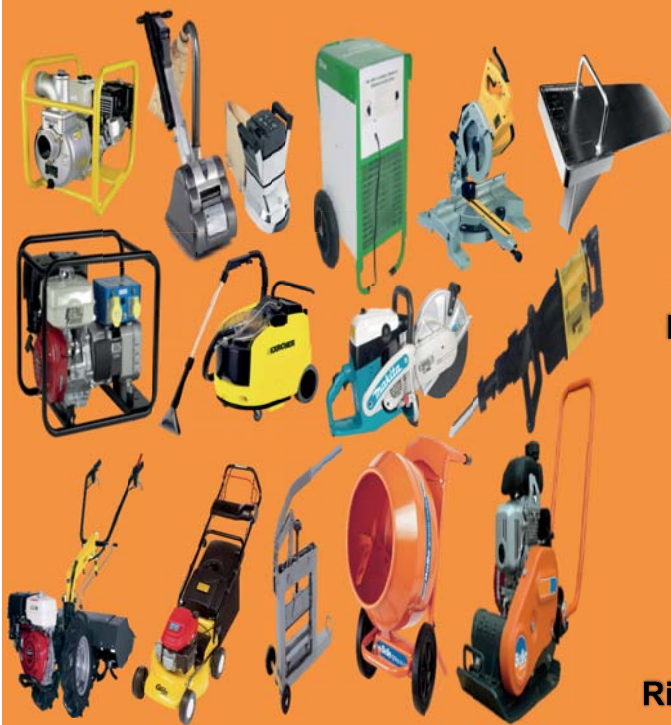
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Lockdown highlights littering illiteracy

When I started to consider my theme for this month's topic I had just come in from our monthly litter pick on Twmbarlwm. I thought I can't go banging on about rubbish and littering on our mountain again – can I? But then I realised that I haven't written about this disgusting habit for quite a while so I'm afraid the answer is a resounding "Yes" – indeed I really need to highlight this problem.

As part of the coronavirus restrictions the government allowed and encouraged people to maintain their fitness with at least a daily walk. So more people than ever seemed to be getting up to Twmbarlwm for their daily fitness routine. That's great but I was amazed that so many people seem to think it's okay to casually leave their empty bottles and energy-bar wrappers scattered about the countryside. I often gather a bag of such rubbish on my walks around the mountainside.

The nature of this litter suggests to me it's dumped by people who are out exercising – runners, cyclists etc. – surely if you take that stuff up the mountain with you, it's not too much effort to bring the empties back down with you?

Those of you who are briefly passing through our landscape scattering your dross to the four winds should go back to class to revise the country code and learn to leave only footprints – and make sure your friends get the message too.

Another bone of contention during lockdown was the fact that the council had closed down most civic waste disposal facilities. Many people argue that this policy led to an increase in fly-tipping in many areas around the borough. I'm not going to speculate on the veracity of that argument because in my opinion there can be no excuse for the crime of fly-tipping.

To load a car or van with household detritus and drive miles out into the countryside with the intention of dumping it in a hedgerow or on a quiet mountainside is an act so premeditated and anti-

Our first litter pick in six months (below) was done with social distancing in mind, nearly a dozen volunteers turned up and collected about twenty bags of rubbish

This fly-tip from some sort of house clearance was found over half a mile from the nearest road

social it should be severely punished.

To teach such perpetrators the error of their ways we should all be more vigilant and report any incidents of fly-tipping. If you see it in progress or have proof of the culprits, you can report it to the police using their 101 service, you can do so anonymously if you don't want to get involved.

Don't forget, if you arrange to have rubbish collected professionally, it is your responsibility to ensure it is a properly licensed service – if a fly-tip is traced back to you, you are liable to be prosecuted and fined as much as the offender. I can assure you that the authorities do try to trace the origin of the offenders and successful prosecutions are on the rise.

CTS did not arrange any "official" litter picks during the lockdown period but I am very grateful to a few members who went and did a clean-up on the mountain of their own volition.

At the end of July we had our first litter-pick since January. Nearly a dozen willing volunteers turned up and we collected twenty bags of rubbish and cleaned up a couple of burnt out mattresses. The following day, CCBC collected what we had gathered. We are always grateful when the council supports us so well in our efforts to keep our mountain and environs tidy for everyone to enjoy.

Maybe the most challenging lesson needs to go out to that group of young people who gather, like teenagers have always done, to have a bit of fun and have a sneaky drink or whatever. I know you don't think it's cool, but go on, take your fast food wrappers and unmentionable trash home with you – and behave like the little angels all your parents think you are.

I dare you, get "Keep Wales Tidy" trending – or better still, join us for a litter-pick.

Terry Evans, Chairman, Cymdeithas Twmbarlwm Society



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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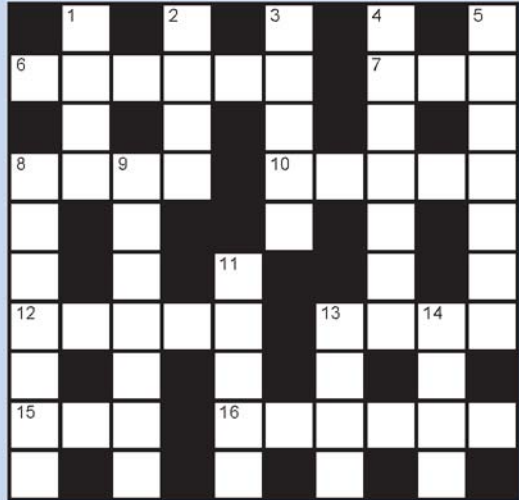
Crossword

Across

- 6 Education centre (6)
- 7 Used for listening (3)
- 8 Groups (4)
- 10 Special occurrence (5)
- 12 Flowing water (5)
- 13 Group of cows (4)
- 15 Lubricant (3)
- 16 Loving touch (6)

Down

- 1 Dull pain (4)
- 2 Faithful pets (4)
- 3 Passageway (5)
- 4 Protection (7)
- 5 Make believe (7)
- 8 Common small bird (7)
- 9 Journeys (7)
- 11 Building block (5)
- 13 Cause injury (4)
- 14 Element of danger (4)



Puzzle solutions on page 28

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THE MYSTERY OF THE MEMORIAL PLAQUE DISCOVERED IN RHIWDERIN (PART 2)

I will open this part of the article with a photograph of Eveswell Street as it was before W.W. 2. It is likely that many of the people standing pictured in the group may have died during the bombing incident, perhaps even Albert Garland was amongst this group.

The Memorial Plaque for A. Garland is engraved from Fellow Workers Npt. Corporation, Red & White Services, Barlows Furnishers, Richards Caterers, & Friends Rodney Road.

We can presume that all the people mentioned in the plaque must have worked with and known Albert

Garland. They possibly collected money and contributed to and paid for the Memorial Plaque. The first question is – Where was it intended to be attached by means of the four corner holes? Suggestions that have been made to me include that the plaque could possibly be screwed to a coffin containing the unidentified remains of the bomb victims, or secured to a wall in Albert's local school or church.

The second question has to be why was it that the Plaque ended up in this cottage garage in Rhiwderin? Maybe a previous owner of the cottage was a relative or friend or fellow worker of Albert Garland and for some particular reason had retained possession of the Plaque.

An informative local history book *The History of Newport Borough* by Hadyn Davis mentions that Albert Garland was the Bandmaster for the Newport Sea Cadet Corps.

Pre-war Eveswell Street



Coincidentally, another bomb victim, Mr. Alfred Searle of Gaerwood House, is also mentioned in the same book, as the founder and

commanding officer of the same unit for 41 years.

Perhaps the plaque could have been intended to be mounted and displayed on the wall of the Sea Cadet's

headquarters? Then for some reason this did not happen and one of the people involved retained it and took it to Rhiwderin, where it remained.

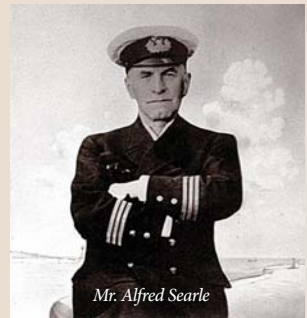
There are also similar sized memorial plaques mounted in St. John's Parish Church, Maindee. This may have been Albert Garland's local place of worship.

I have attempted to contact the Sea Cadets to see if they held any information about their former Bandmaster Albert Garland, leaving messages on their answer phone and sending them emails. The only response was an acknowledgement of my emails saying that they would get back in touch later, but I have not had any further message.

As a matter of interest I have discovered that Sea Cadets Corps was developed locally from the Maindee Church Lad's Naval Brigade.

I also searched in a recent telephone

directory for local residents with a Garland surname, to see if any of them were related to the Maindee Garland family. I did speak to about six local residents named Garland including one with a Conway Road address (situated close to Eveswell Street), but none were related to the Eveswell Street Garlands.



Mr. Alfred Searle

I have also arranged with contacts in the Newport Reference Library to try and identify the names of people living at Deri Cottage, Caerphilly Close, Rhiwderin during the relevant period. I was hoping to discover a possible connection to the Maindee Garland family. Unfortunately, none of my attempts to discover any further information about the plaque or Mr. Garland have been successful.

Basically there are two unanswered questions, where was this plaque intended to be mounted on display? And why did it end up in Rhiwderin? I have, therefore, decided to conclude my investigations and throw the search open to the readers of this Directory. I request that anyone, with any suggestions to contact the editors of the Directory with any relevant information or suggestions.



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A small charge of £2 per head covers the cost of refreshments.

We also have a monthly Branch meeting on the last Wednesday of each month at the
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Crossword Solution



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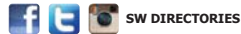
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Newport U3A's Scrubbers

Newport University of the Third Age is a self-help charitable organisation that aims to advance the education of retired people. We have had to curtail our activities since the Coronavirus Lock Down as many of our members are in the vulnerable category. When the Aneurin Bevan Scrubbers was initiated in response to the COVID-19 outbreak our Welfare Officer and Chairman's daughter, Lisa, became a coordinator for Newport and Caerleon and recruited over 30 of our members, many from the Craft Group, to help create and supply scrubs to the NHS (hospitals and surgeries) and other care providers. Scrubs are usually worn by medics but are



Our member, Gwyneth McGuinness, with some of the scrubs she has made.

now used as personal protective equipment to prevent the spread of the virus. All fabric offerings were supplied by volunteers and even included clean bedding such as Peppa Pig and Superman duvet

covers! In all, they made well over 2,000 pieces of PPE at the time when it was needed the most. Sewing is a pleasure for our members and to put it to such a worthy cause gave them a great sense of purpose and community during this challenging time.

If you are retired or working part-time towards retirement visit our website www.u3asites.org.uk/newportsewales for more information.

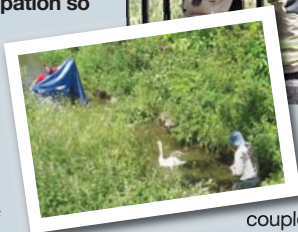
What Did You Do in the Lock-down Daddy?

To coin a phrase! The simple honest answer is that we carried on pretty well as normal. Apart from April, which was eerily quiet and uneventful, we were on the road only ten times, calls for our services continued more or less unabated. It is worth noting swan rescue activity is very largely a solitary occupation so that social distancing is really not a problem.

The following statistics (below table) comparing the period March to July (up to 27th for 2020), are presented in support of this statement.

The most striking feature of our journeys until just over a week ago is how little traffic there was and in particular how incredibly easy it was to exit High Cross onto the main road. But now it is at least as bad as ever and manners of some drivers appear to us to be plummeting to new lows.

As might be expected we have a



wide selection from which to choose a couple of rescues

worthy of mention, but the two we will touch on both owe the eventual success to the sterling efforts of crews from the Fire and Rescue stations in Yate (South Gloucestershire) and Cwmbran. In the first case, our victim was a 'yearling' which had been driven away from his natal home by his parents, normal behaviour as the start of the next breeding season approaches and found himself

trapped in the deep narrow stream bed cut for the River Frome close to Yate town centre. Our picture shows the final act, made possible by the Fire Officer driving the swan towards me leading to capture and relocation to a sanctuary in the West Midlands.

The second required the help of a team of really fit guys to assist in the capture of the third (of seven) cygnets on the canal in Old Cwmbran, all of which had fallen victim to lost or carelessly discarded fishing tackle and all of which needed to be hospitalised. Our picture shows the final moments after the cygnet had been netted, just before taking charge of him for investigation, care and treatment.

Our involvement with 'tackled' swans continues unabated; sadly, nothing has changed in almost 40 years!

Sincere heartfelt thanks to Red/Green and White Watch respectively for making both these rescues possible in the most efficient and timely way possible.

Text: Peter. Photos: Ellen and Stephen Pocock.

	2019	2020
Calls received	111	100
Number (%) days Swan Rescue services needed	93 (61%)	84 (56%)
Total mileage	11841	9927
Number of trips of greater than 100 miles	44	36
Most frequent reasons:		
Fishing tackle	28	22
Territorial dispute	17	17
False alarm	17	21

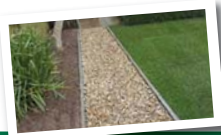
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