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Hopefully, the weather will warm up a little over the next couple of months and we'll all be able to take a walk in our beautiful countryside, canal & river walks – read our article about the River Taff.

Wishing you all a Happy Easter.

Susan x

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Fundraising for charities close to our hearts



Newport u3a has over 400 members that attend sessions at 40 cultural, active and social groups and in addition they like to hold fund-raising events to raise money for charities that are close to their hearts. Just at these most recent events a total of £1485 was raised.

Choir members made cakes to sell at a rehearsal and raised money for Breast Cancer UK. The Craft Group made a variety of items to sell at their Annual Fayre for St David's Hospice whilst one of its members sells her hand-made greetings cards for the British Heart Foundation. The Raffle at a Quiz attended by 60 members was donated to Guide Dogs Cymru. Also, at our Annual Concert that showcases the wealth of talent that our members have, the ticket sales were shared between Serennu Children's Centre + Velindre Cancer Centre.

u3a learn, laugh, live

Newport u3a meets at the Dolman Theatre Wednesdays to Fridays during term time at 9.45-15.00. If you are retired and would like to join a caring society visit u3asites.org.uk/newportsewales or phone Angela Robins on 07983 130541.

Tredegar House Folk Festival

10th – 12th May 2024 - Something for everyone

Well, another year has flown by and here we are eagerly anticipating the 33rd Tredegar House Folk Festival which will be held over the weekend of 10th-12th May.

After the triumph of last year's festival headlined by the great Barbara Dickson, it appeared difficult to maintain that high level...but we are sure we have managed it with folk legends Lindisfarne (Meet Me on the Corner, Fog on the Tyne, Lady Eleanor) headlining the big Sunday late afternoon concert supported by four outstanding acts.

The festival starts on Friday afternoon with a free concert then a ticketed concert Friday evening (four acts) headlined by local band Rusty Shackle, plus, for those more interested in dancing than listening there is a Cajun and Zydeco workshop with the Whiskey River Boys and an expert caller. Saturday brings more free concerts and our famous free dance displays, with the ticketed Saturday evening concert (four acts) headlined by the Young'Uns. Saturday night's ceilidh features Juice with caller Ned Clamp.

There will be children's entertainers, including the fantastic Dan the Hat making a return visit after wowing adults and children alike last year. Cotyledon farmers market will be onsite Saturday and Sunday, plus craft stalls, a CAMRA bar, food outlets, workshops, sessions...not forgetting the grand parades...in fact all the usual festival fare.

For those who like to come to the festival for the wonderful dance displays...you won't be disappointed. All the local and UK dance teams you expect to see will be there plus some surprises,



Lindisfarne

Speelschaar Ossaart

and the international group joining us this year is Speelschaar Ossaart from East Flanders in Belgium. On Saturday morning there will also be a mini Gwyl Plant featuring local schoolchildren.

Also, making a one-off appearance will be the Great Basque Folk Orchestra and Dancers with over 50 performers on stage...this will be a free concert at midday on Sunday. The grand parade moves to 11.30am that day (12.30 on Saturday) to accommodate all that is happening.

This year for the first time the festival will take place around the car park of Tredegar House in a 'festival village', as the National Trust is carrying out conservation work on the property causing the courtyard marquee, craft stalls and bars to be repositioned.

Once again we are fortunate to have received the backing of the Arts Council of Wales in the form of a grant, plus we hope for continuing support from sponsors such as the Welsh Folk Dance Society and Admiral Insurance.

Such a great variety of music and dance styles on offer that there really is something for everyone. All we need now is some decent weather!

Weekend tickets cost £115 including camping, and individual concerts are £45, with the ceilidhs £8 (Friday) and £10 (Saturday). Children 7-16 are half price with specially priced family tickets available for the ceilidhs. There is too much going on to mention it all in this article, so, check out the website www.tredegarhousefestival.org.uk for more details including music clips of all concert artists, or keep up to date on our Facebook page. All tickets purchased include a free visit inside Tredegar House.

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passes to the beneficiaries. As the surviving partner does not own the deceased's share of the property it is fully protected for the beneficiaries, so if the surviving partner requires care, or even remarries, this share of the children's inheritance is protected. This last point can be of particular interest to couples who have come together but have children from different partners. A PPT can help each person in a relationship ensure that their children inherit their share of the property, while giving their surviving partner the ability to live in the property for the rest of their life. If the surviving partner wants to move to another property, they can still sell the property and the proceeds be used to purchase a new property; the terms of the trust remain over the new property.

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Mr Pan Man by Paul Minton

I was first told about the Angels of Mons by a religious education teacher at my secondary school. I had thought initially that she was talking about the Angels of Mars so the prospect of messengers of the Lord visiting the Red Planet, or failing that, a chocolate factory, had genuinely piqued my interest. However, the teacher proceeded to explain how angelic warriors appeared at the Battle of Mons in Belgium during the First World War. The outnumbered Tommies and their holy allies were ultimately victorious and repelled the enemy. The class was informed this was proof that God was sometimes prepared to intervene directly against evil

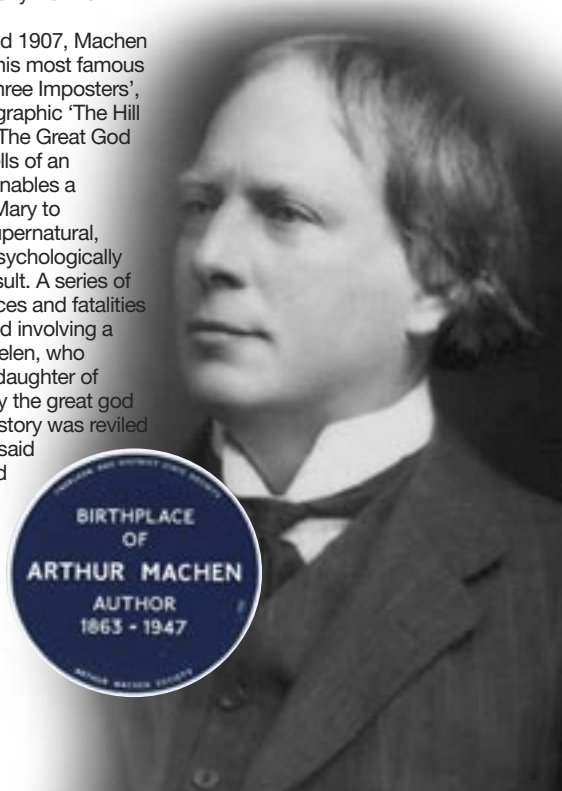
It's an amazing account but of course, it never happened. The idea of celestial beings fighting the Hun was actually hijacked by British spiritualists spurred on by a short story entitled 'The Bowmen'. First published in September 1914, just over a month after the actual battle, 'The Bowmen' described spectral archers from Agincourt, who had been summoned by a British soldier whilst fighting at Mons. Although only every intended to be a work of fiction, many readers believed it to be true. The tale was written by the Welsh author, Arthur Llewellyn Jones, better known as Arthur Machen and whilst his name may be unfamiliar to many people nowadays, his novella, 'The Great God Pan', has been described as 'Maybe the best [horror story] in the English language' by none other than Stephen King.

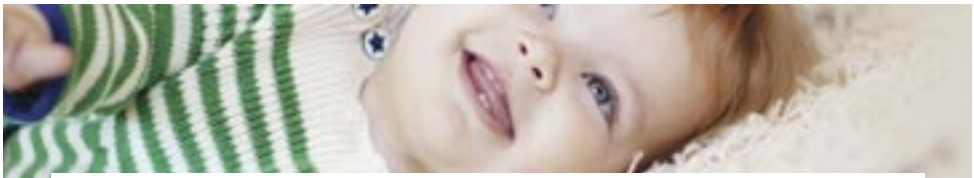
Arthur was born in Caerleon in 1863 and lived in a house near the Priory Hotel: a blue plaque is still affixed to the front of the property in recognition. When Machen was two, his father became the vicar of Lladdewi Fach, a few miles to the north and the family moved into the village rectory. In order to inherit a legacy, the clergyman adopted his wife's maiden name to become John Jones-Machen and young Arthur seems to have been baptised with this surname.

Arthur first became interested in the occult as a boy after reading an article on alchemy in the vicarage library. He developed a voracious appetite for literature, borrowing books from neighbours and buying titles like 'Confessions of an Opium Eater' from Pontypool Road Railway Station. He was later sent to boarding school in Hereford and eventually sat (and failed) the entrance exam to study medicine in London. He remained in the capital, however and took various jobs including journalist, children's tutor, French translator, actor, and manuscript reader for the publisher Ernest Benn, who was Tony Benn's uncle.

Between 1894 and 1907, Machen penned some of his most famous works like 'The Three Imposters', the semi-autobiographic 'The Hill of Dreams', and 'The Great God Pan'. The latter tells of an experiment that enables a character called Mary to experience the supernatural, although she is psychologically damaged as a result. A series of strange occurrences and fatalities are then recounted involving a woman named Helen, who proves to be the daughter of Mary and possibly the great god Pan himself. The story was reviled at the time but is said to have influenced the likes of Bram Stoker and H P Lovecraft.

Both Machen's literary career and his finances had their highs and lows but republication of his works, including some collected volumes known as the Caerleon Edition, proved a success and alleviated his money worries at least for a while. Shortly before his 80th birthday, an appeal was started to improve his financial situation after years of hardship. Supported by luminaries, such as T S Eliot and George Bernard Shaw, it raised sufficient funds to ensure Machen could live in reasonable comfort until his death four years later.





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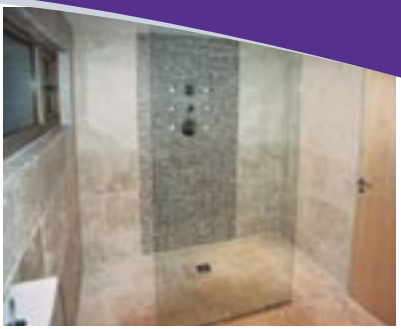


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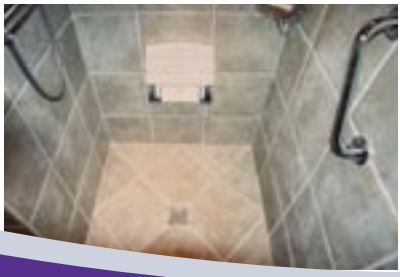
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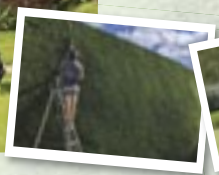
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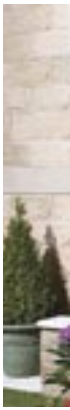
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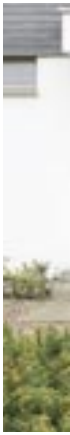
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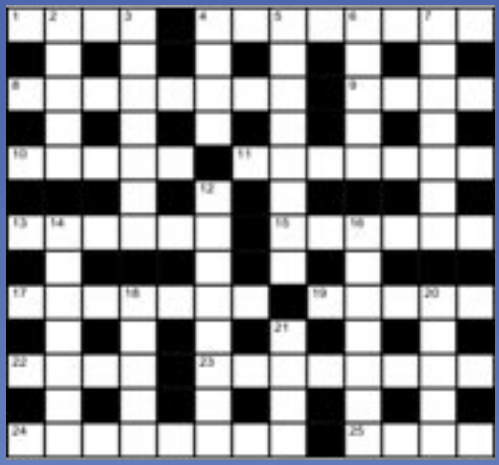


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Puzzles

CROSSWORD



Across

1 "Beware the ___ of March", advice given to Julius Caesar (4)
4 Lake on which Chicago stands (8)
8 Royalist supporter of Charles I (8)
9 Hindu or Buddhist religious leader (4)
10 Divisions of the school year (5)
11 Plait of braided hair (7)
13 Protruding abdomen (6)
15 Computer application program that uses the client's web browser to provide a user interface (6)
17 Outlet of a river to the sea (7)
19 City, the capital of Ghana (5)
22 Threesome (4)
23 Spillage caused by exceeding capacity (8)
24 Medicated lozenge for the throat (8)
25 Dark greenish-blue colour (4)

Down

2 First Englishman to circumnavigate the globe (5)
3 Itinerant Australian labourer (7)
4 Female domestic (4)
5 Prominent bishop of the Roman Catholic Church (8)
6 Block of metal (5)
7 Flight-operating company (7)
12 Stick of black carbon material used for drawing (8)
14 Country, capital Vienna (7)
16 World's largest ocean (7)
18 German submarine in World War II (1-4)
20 Dry red table wine from Spain (5)
21 French for 'father' (4)

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

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.

Solutions on page 23

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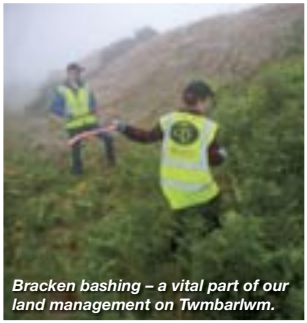
Cattle are key to the success of the Conservation Grazing Scheme on Twmbarlwm and will greatly improve the bio-diversity of the area.

Twmbarlwm – The Work Continues Where We Left Off Last Year…

Last year the Society started promoting and helping out with new land management measures on Twmbarlwm, which I informed you about on these pages.

Working with the Commoners, Cadw, CCBC, GWT and Llanarth Estates we will be continuing the work and we hope to get our members and volunteers involved too.

We were, unfortunately, a little late off the mark with our bracken bashing events and the fence around the SAM wasn't quite ready to contain the cattle on top for the conservation grazing aspect of the scheme.



Bracken bashing – a vital part of our land management on Twmbarlwm.

However, this year will start with some gorse clearance on the upper slopes of the hill-fort. This will greatly help with the bracken bashing due to come later in the year when the ground-nesting birds' breeding season is over.

With the new kissing-gate installed at Pegwn-y-Bwlch there is now no danger of the cattle wandering down the wrong side of the mountain and therefore they will be released onto the hill in April or May to do their bit to improve the area's bio-diversity.

Remember to keep to the countryside code around the cattle – those on Twmbarlwm are naturally docile and do not pose a risk to walkers, however, visitors are advised not to approach them or startle them, and to keep dogs on leads when around them.

Some work was done repairing the paths last autumn but after the winter weather they need re-visiting. So occasionally you may see workers with heavy machinery up there, please be wary and give them a wide berth.

THE Twmbarlwm HOT CROSS BUN WALK

Good Friday
29th March 2024



Hundreds of people trek to the the summit of Twmbarlwm on Good Friday

One of the great traditions we have in Risca and surrounding area is the annual pilgrimage to the top of Twmbarlwm.

Again this year CTS will organise group walks and offer free Hot-Cross-Buns to those who come along with us.

Even if you don't want to take part in our group walks we still want to encourage you to keep this tradition alive. Get up there with family and friends and why not bring a picnic with you to enjoy while you take in the breathtaking views at the top.

The fences we and the farmers have installed all around Twmbarlwm are vital for land and livestock management and are very expensive. We continually monitor them and are always disappointed to find that some people in our community see fit to rip them down. Be aware, this is criminal damage and when culprits are discovered they will be punished under law.

I urge anyone who witnesses such damage to report it to the police on their 101 non-emergency service (or via e-mail to contact@gwent.police.uk.).

A dedicated police unit,The Rural Crime Team, has been set up within Gwent especially to deal with such incidents.

TERRY EVANS
Chairman Cymdeitas Twmbarlwm Society

Cymdeithas Twmbarlwm Society 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 throughout the year so watch our website and Facebook page for details.

www.twmbarlwm.co.uk

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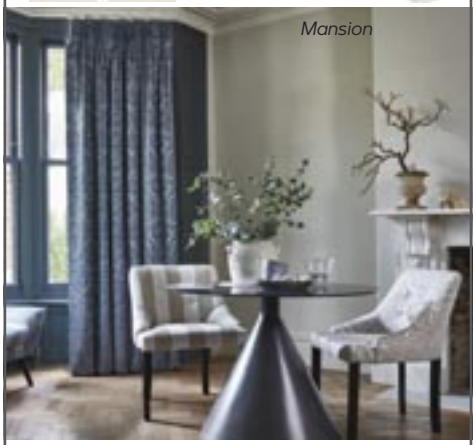
Puzzle Solutions

Across: 1 Ides, 4 Michigan, 8 Cavalier, 9 Guru, 10 Terms, 11 Pigtail, 13 Paunch, 15 Applet, 17 Estuary, 19 Accra, 22 Trio, 23 Overflow, 24 Pastille, 25 Cyan.
Down: 2 Drake, 3 Swagman, 4 Maid, 5 Cardinal, 6 Ingot, 7 Airline, 12 Charcoal, 14 Austria, 16 Pacific, 18 U-boat, 20 Rioja, 21 Père.



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River Taff

The River Taff is formed at Cefn-coed-y-cymmer in Merthyr Tydfil at the confluence (meeting point) of the rivers Taf Fechan (little Taff) and the Taf Fawr (great Taff).

The Taf Fawr rises below the peak of Corn Du, south-west of Pen y Fan. It flows through three reservoirs, the Cantref Reservoir, completed in 1892, the Beacons Reservoir, completed in1897. The third in the chain, Llwyn-on Reservoir, did not start construction until 1911, impounding of water began in June 1926.

The Taf Fechan rises immediately to the south of Pen y Fan and runs southwards through three reservoirs and a former fourth, now abandoned, Pentwyn Reservoir, which was built between 1859 and February 1863. The Upper Neuadd and Lower Neuadd reservoirs began work in 1896 and finished in 1902. The Pontsticill Reservoir was started in June 1913 and was opened in July 1927.

The River Taff then flows south, passing through Pontypridd and through to Taff's Well. It flows underneath the M4 Motorway, before turning south-eastward and flowing past the Cardiff suburbs of Radyr, Whitchurch, Llandaff, Pontcanna.

In the early 1840s the South Wales Railway was trying to find a suitable site for a railway station, but the area that is now Cardiff Central railway station was prone to flooding. At this point the main route of the Taff was around Cardiff Castle and down what is now Westgate Street. It now passes through Bute Park, past the Cardiff Arms Park and the Principality Stadium. The Taff flows into Cardiff Bay, an artificial lake created by the construction of the Cardiff Bay Barrage in the 1990s, before flowing into the Severn Estuary. The River Taff is 64 km long.



Pontsticill Reservoir



Blackweir



River Cruises from Bute Park



Cardiff Bridge

Llwyn-on Reservoir



Cardiff Bay Barrage



Cardiff Bay

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RISCA MUSEUM

Waunfawr and the Black Vein Colliery

Part 2 - 1796 to 1812

In 1796, Edward Jones of Bristol leased, for a term of 21 years, all veins of coal and iron ore in 53 acres of land called Machen Mountain, Waun Fawr, Coed Waun Fawr and land on the east side of the Ebbw River in the tenure of Rowland Phillips, all within the parish of Machen.

Jones expected his investment to prove highly profitable due to the imminent opening of the Monmouthshire Canal, his lease included a lower payment until the canal opened. However, he had problems with the tenant of Risca Farm (now Risca House) whose fields he had to cross. He wrote to Sir Charles Morgan 'When I took the colliery there was no bridge over the river to go to it. I was consequently obliged to build a bridge, when I had finished it, Rowland Phillips would not let me have a road through his farm to the bridge. I was obliged to take the bridge down and rebuild it in another place, at a heavy expense, when I had rebuilt the bridge he would not let me have a road through his farm to the canal until Sept 1798.'

He completed the balanced-worked gravity controlled incline and tram road from his coal workings across the river and up to the canal in March 1799. Later in that year, William Coxe was travelling around Monmouthshire and wrote 'On my way to Risca, I crossed a bridge over a rail road formed by Mr Edward Jones, two parallel rail roads are carried from the canal to the opposite side of the Ebbw river, along which two cars are drawn up and let down at the same time by means of an engine; they appear to pass each other alternately like buckets in a well, a boy descends with the empty car nearly midway, after adjusting the machinery, it is again drawn up with the loaded car which empties the coals into the boats of the canal.'

Further letters to Sir Charles Morgan complained about the canal being unusable for many days of the year due to shortage of water in hot summers and icing up in cold winters. In July 1801 he wrote to Evan Phillips 'The canal is a bad business and until some alteration take place, I expect no profit from Waunfawr.' As a result of his complaints Jones received some reductions in his payments to Sir Charles Morgan and in 1801, he obtained the tenancy of Risca Farm moving in with his family.

At a Select Committee of the Houses of Parliament in 1810, enquiring into the prices paid to canal companies for shipping coals and duties paid on coals shipped from South Wales ports, Jones stated that he had taken several people into partnership in the Waun Fawr Colliery in 1799 and over £60,000 had been spent without any return of capital. They had two steam engines, a large water wheel, three miles of private rail road and four inclined planes, one of which carried the coals up to the canal. There were four shafts between 40 and 70 yards deep and three levels each about a half-mile long. They raise about 110 tons of coal per day. The pit has been overwhelmed with water taking two years to get it out. The produce of this colliery has not paid the wages by several thousand pounds for the last five years.

Jones appears to have given up in 1812. By 1814 he was back in Bristol trading as a coal merchant and in 1820 he moved to London.

Please consider becoming a Friend of Risca Museum to ensure its future.

Details from the website www.riscamuseum.org.uk and Facebook page or visit the museum any Saturday 10.00am to 12.30pm.



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