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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

COPY DEADLINE FOR THE MAY / JUNE EDITION - FRIDAY 29TH MARCH

Advertising enquiries: Telephone Leslie on 07725 888070 or email contact@swdirectories.co.uk

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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.

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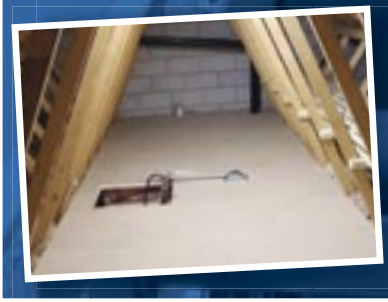
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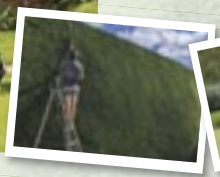
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Tredegar House Folk Festival

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.

Belle Vue
Park & Tea Room



What's On in March & April

March

Sunday March 3rd

We cannot wait to welcome you to the first Belle Vue market of 2024. Packed full of goodies from new and existing traders, we look forward to seeing you there. This year, once again, our charity is Sparkle so those small donations as an entry we collect will help a local charity do some great work. Last year we helped raise over £1800.

Sunday March 10th is Mothers Day!

We are offering our tasty boxed delights – afternoon tea for two for collection or delivery at £18.50 per person. Give that special lady a surprise treat. Limited places are available in the tea room also if you would rather join us. We will add a little something extra for the mums. You can book via phone on 07737 630657 up to 24 hours before the day. We ask for a deposit prior to the day. Simply discuss it with Jan.

Good Friday March 29th 11.00am-4.00pm

Family Fun Day hosted by Belle Vue delivered by Green Top Markets. Children's rides, activities and music, with street food and bar.

April

April sees the start of our spring and summer programme:

Sunday April 7th 11.00am – 4.00pm

Belle Vue Market once again packed with goodies and new traders.

Friday April 19th 6.30pm – 9.30pm

Our first Street Food Friday of the year! Come along to sample the delicious delights of our four street foodies plus a bar. Or bring your own! No charge as usual. Listen to the fabulous 360 degrees who will entertain you from the bandstand.

Sunday April 28th 11.00am-4.00pm

Garden Market and Plant Sale. Come along to talk anything plants and gardens.

Sundays on the bandstand – we have approached all local brass bands and choirs to see if we can have a full calendar of music on the bandstand. Watch this space!









We are hoping to make beautiful Belle Vue Park busy and bustling. Look out for more information on our notice boards and Facebook/Instagram @Bellevuetearooms and on our new website www.bellevuetearoom.uk. Alternatively text or phone Jan on 07737 630657.

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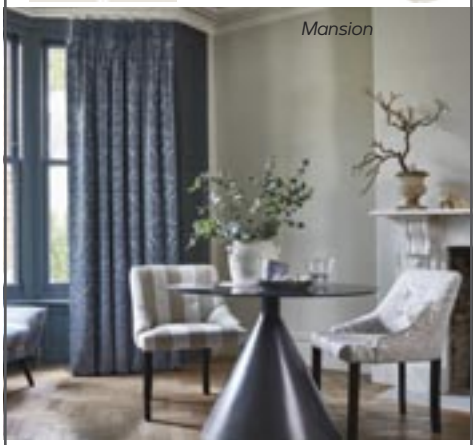
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passes to the beneficiaries. As the surviving partner does not own the deceased's share of the property it is fully protected for the beneficiaries, so if the surviving partner requires care, or even remarries, this share of the children's inheritance 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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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.



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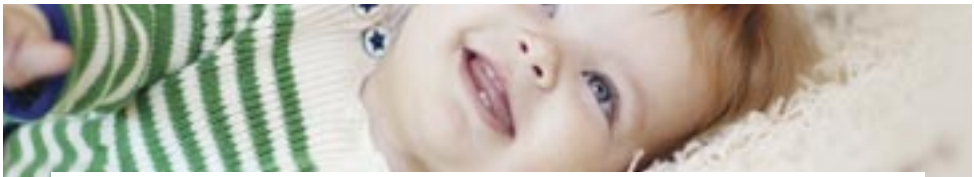
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Cygnets, and Their Dispersal





The way it works: the peak hatching time for Mute Swans is the first week of May following approximately five weeks of incubation essentially by the female (pen). The resulting brood is normally between three and ten cygnets, but usually between five and eight. From this point on, it is, as it were, very much a case of 'full steam ahead' because, in a very real sense, there is a deadline to be met. Even for those of us who live close to a swan family, the rate of growth is truly amazing; from say 250 grams at hatching to 6.5 – 7.5 kg by the late summer. This is a slightly vague statement indicating when the cygnets start to leave their home territory – and deliberately so.
In our experience here in South Wales, the timing of departure is enormously variable, but it does seem to be becoming earlier with each passing year. In 2022, our first rescue of a grounded juvenile was in the last week of September; in 2023, it was fully a week earlier and was on Lamby Way. From that date, our monthly rescues of grounded juveniles, were 5 (Sept), 18 (Oct), 4 (Nov), 2 (Dec), and 13 for January. These birds are relocated to safety – into a flock situation where no territory is being held, and the 'set-up' is not particularly hierarchical.
There are a couple of problems here which we, with our observant minds and analytical brains can appreciate, but not so, our beautiful but ever so vulnerable young swans. Firstly, observations indicate that what might be called 'flying lessons' given by adults do occur, but these are limited to getting airborne and landing either on home water or something similar nearby, if, fortuitously such happens to exist. This hints at the second problem; one thing is pretty certain – geography lessons are not available, so neither is a list of nearby waters offering safe havens for what inevitably comes next i.e. the third problem. The need to leave the home territory becomes an imperative. Adult swans, and the cob in particular start to become increasingly intolerant of the continuing presence of last year's young as the start of the next breeding season approaches. This takes the form of increasingly persistent chasing of the young around the home water, until they 'get the message' and leave. Failure to do so, is likely to be fatal…
The numbers presented in the second paragraph is a statement of one very specific problem which we as rescuers face. The ones we know about come to our attention because they have landed in totally inappropriate places, such as railway lines. So far this season there have been three of these locally. The most recent was on 24th January when Network Rail asked for help with a swan on the track between Llanwern Village and Newport station. For very obvious safety reasons a rescue is possible only under the strictest imaginable set of rules. This was accomplished with a complete absence of drama and, effectively recorded by Network Rail using a camera mounted on a drone.

The first picture is a panoramic view looking west from Llanwern village. The white dot just beyond the second gantry – left side – is the swan. The second picture is self-explanatory.

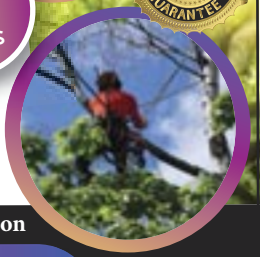
Story; Peter and Ellen. Photos: T. Williams, Network Rail. For swan problems please contact Peter & Ellen on 07802 472788.

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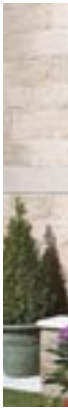


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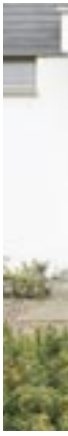






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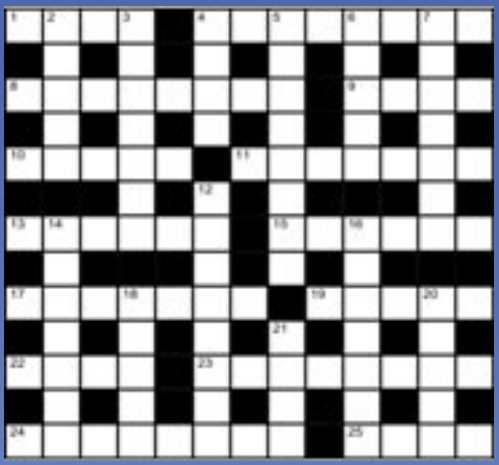
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Puzzles

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)

SUDOKU

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

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 22

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Why it's dangerous to get a DIY divorce

It's tempting to consider a 'DIY' divorce, especially when the prices advertised are so low, even non-existent. But what aren't they telling you? Rhian Jones, an Associate Solicitor at Harding Evans, explains why you should always use a solicitor.

1. No Solicitor Fees?

When you instruct a lawyer, you are paying for the protection that the profession offers. They are protected by a strict code of conduct - the Solicitors Regulation Authority ('SRA') Code of Conduct.

Lawyers are required to safeguard your money and assets, and obligated to provide you with information you can understand. They have a duty to ensure you can make informed decisions and are aware of your options. You also have the benefit of a professional regulator, should something go wrong.

2. I just want a divorce…

This is something heard regularly as lawyers, but what does that mean?

Divorce severs the matrimonial ties which exist between spouses or civil partners. But what else have you lost? Completing a divorce, to the stage of decree absolute or final order, you could have potentially lost pension benefits, life insurance or other insurance benefits (as you will no longer be their spouse or civil partner) and there is likely to be issues if one of you are to pass away.

This also includes the loss of spousal tax exemptions, potential difficulties in challenging an estate, and significant costs. Without specialist advice, you could lose benefits and incur huge financial losses.



3. We have dealt with everything else ourselves!

Another misconception is that if you divide your assets, or have no assets, you do not need a financial order, or the help of a court or lawyers.

Choosing to divide your assets at the point of separation, or point of divorce, you are still at risk of a financial claim in the future. This could result in a complicated legal argument in which the court would have to sift through what you may have had at the point of divorce, and what you have at the point of financial settlement. The only way to protect yourself is with a financial order. We can invite the court to seal the order on paper (neither party would be required to attend the court). If there is no agreement, you can seek assistance from the court, who will assist yin obtaining a reasonable settlement.

4. Surely there isn't anything else? Yes, there is.

Lawyers are specialists in their field, but also required to be aware of other areas of law, as well as their own limitations. For example, upon separation, you need to consider your will and estate. If you complete a divorce without updating your will, your spouse will be treated as if they died at the point of divorce. This may result in a division of assets, against your wishes. Further, if you haven't severed any joint tenancies, property may automatically pass to your spouse outside of your estate.

Perhaps your property is in your spouse's name, but it's been agreed you can stay in the property. Completing the divorce before obtaining a financial order means your spouse can remove any home rights notice you have and take steps to sell the property. A financial order, by consent or otherwise, would afford you that protection.

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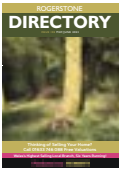
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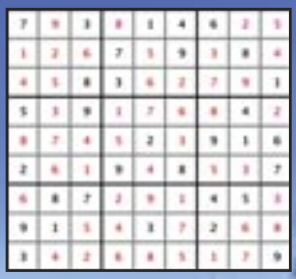
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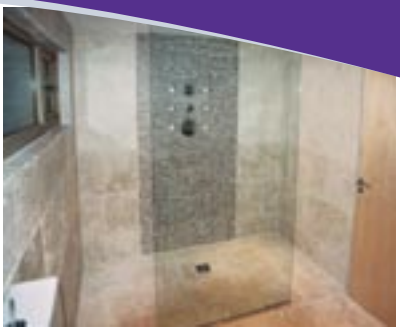
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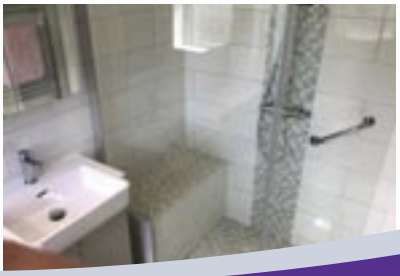


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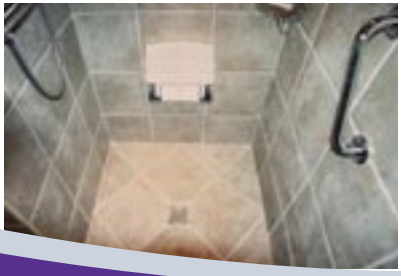
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RISCA MUSEUM

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.

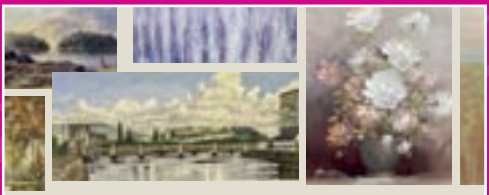
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Mr Pan Man by Paul Minton

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

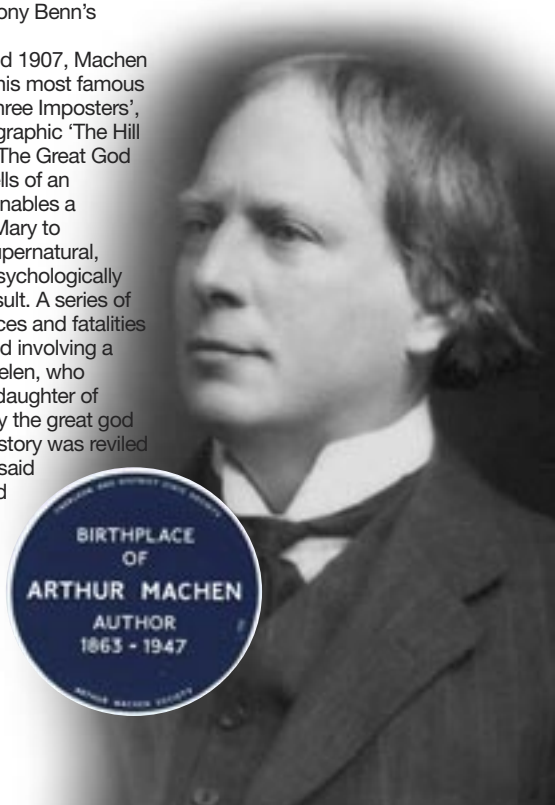
It's an amazing account but of course, it never happened. The idea of celestial beings fighting the Hun was actually hijacked by British spiritualists spurred on by a short story entitled 'The Bowmen'. First published in September 1914, just over a month after the actual battle, 'The Bowmen' described 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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