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ISSUE 86 MAY/JUNE 2024



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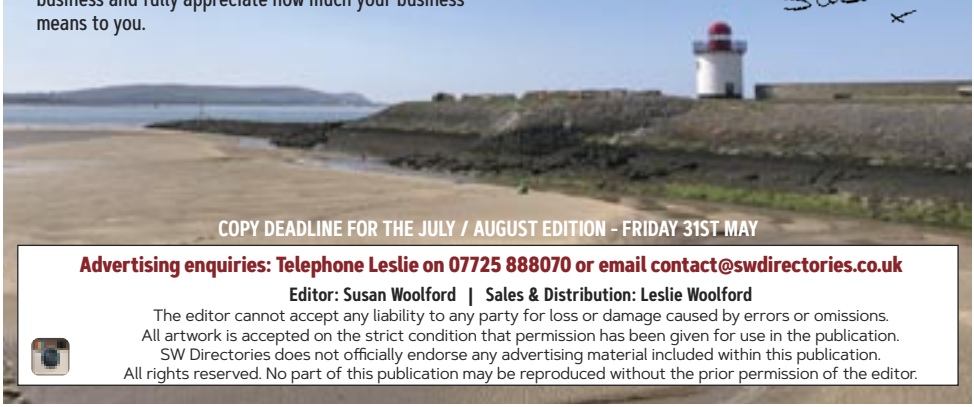
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Hopefully, the weather will be kind to us over the next couple of months and we'll all be able to enjoy our beautiful Welsh riversides (see article about the River Severn) and rugged Welsh beaches (see article about Burry Port).

Susan x

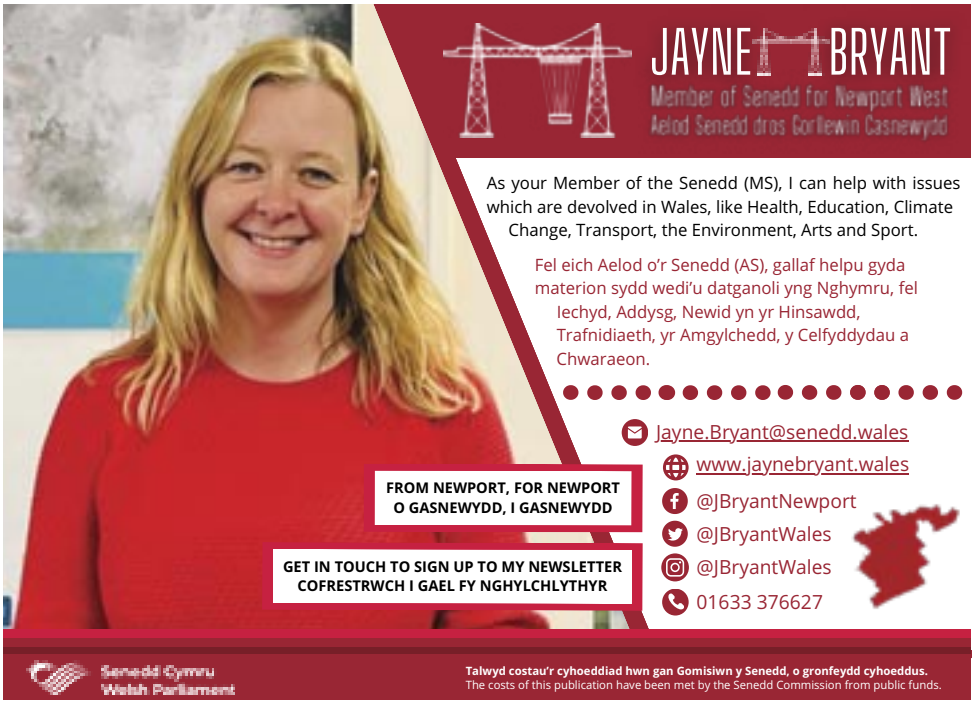


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O GASNEWYDD, I GASNEWYDD

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COFRESTRWCH I GAEL FY NGHYLCHLYTHYR

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The costs of this publication have been met by the Senedd Commission from public funds.

DO YOU HAVE PARKINSONS?

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The Newport Parkinson's Support Group is here to help and support people living with Parkinson's in the Newport area.
We have two regular monthly meetings.

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A drop-in Parkinson's Cafe in Maindee Library, Chepstow Road, Newport NP19 8BY.
The 2nd Friday of each month
2.15pm - 4.15pm.
£2.00 per person for refreshments.
The cafes are very informal and have been very successful for several years.
Call Ruth on 07966 754366 for more information.

SUPPORT MEETING
Maesglas Community Centre, Bideford Road, Newport NP20 3XT
The 1st turning after Cardiff Road Lidl Store.
The last Monday of each month
2.30pm - 4.30pm
The support meetings usually have a speaker or demonstration, not always about PD.
Call Julie on 07446 630229 for more information.

Both meetings give the chance to socialise and talk to others about the PD experience and maybe get some tips. Don't be shy or nervous about joining us. It helps to speak to others who are on the same journey as you with this frustrating condition. We'd love to see you.

Here we go… Spring has well and truly sprung!

Are you thinking about dusting off the trainers and pounding the pavements, or starting back to an exercise class to burn off the Easter Calories? Well, I'm here to tell you to modify, adapt and start slowly. All too quickly we find that family life interrupts our flow in health and fitness and when we take a break we envisage just bouncing back. But as we age, those niggles, injuries and complaints always creep back in, especially if we start too quickly or push to the limit.
Well, those niggles and injuries, don't have to hold you back and all you need to do is listen to your body, be patient and start slowly.

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Start the couch to 5km programme if it helps, even if you've completed a 5km previously. Speak to the instructor before you begin an exercise class and explain you've just started back; the class can be adapted for you. Discuss your options with a health and fitness professional such as Physiotherapist, they can advise you what will work and what to avoid?
What's worse, starting and failing in the first attempt, because you exhausted yourself, or going for a 15min walk, enjoying it, achieving something and looking forward to the next session.



Don't set yourself up to fail, set yourself up for success and your summer body will thank you for it. If you're ever stuck and not sure where to start, please feel free to get in touch. Karla. 07791 217306

LASTING POWERS OF ATTORNEY (LPAs)

What happens when I can't make decisions for myself?

Many of us would like to plan for a time when we need help making decisions and looking after our affairs. A stroke, dementia, Alzheimer's, heart attack, or a severe accident can leave us dependent upon others to help make crucial choices in our lives. Or we may need to give someone decision-making power for us if, say, we're going to be in hospital or abroad for a time and can't easily carry out decisions for ourselves. To plan for the future, you can create an LPA. An LPA is a simple way for you to choose someone you trust to make decisions for you. LPAs can be a lot less expensive than other ways for



people to make decisions on your behalf and can make things much easier for other people in your life than the alternatives.

What would happen if I don't create a Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA)?

- You will no longer be able to decide who makes decisions for you and looks after your affairs (you can only make your LPA while you still have mental capacity).
- People you don't know will end up making crucial decisions for you instead – such as where you live, whether to accept medical treatment to keep you alive, what you eat and wear, and about your property and your finances.
- Your spouse, children or friends will have to go to court to make decisions on your behalf – which will be a lot more expensive and time-consuming than making an LPA now.

If you still have mental capacity, LPAs are a simple and legally robust way of giving someone you trust the power to make decisions for you – temporarily or for a longer time.

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*All our prices include VAT (when applicable). These very special rates are only available if you are over 60 years old. Our normal price for a standard single Will is £150, or £250 for a couple. Minimum spend for a free home visit is £95.

Gwerinwyr Gwent Diary

In early March 2019 a group of French Canadian students from Laval near Montreal was visiting the UK, working from an appeal put out by the Welsh Folk Dance Society, a visit to Newport's Welsh Medium School was arranged by GG member Barbara Griffiths. The event was called 'A Flavour of Wales' and GG was involved by giving some dance displays and demonstrating easy dances they could join in with.



This time Barbara was contacted directly by the Canadian agent, Michel Paquet, but as she was very busy and the last visit involved a huge amount of work, she advised him to contact WFDS to see if another of their member groups would like to arrange it. Not a single group replied, so Barbara felt obliged to take it on, but put together a much scaled down programme. There would be no school involvement this time, and as the group of 50, 14-16 year olds plus five teachers was coming from Heathrow via London, Stonehenge and Bath, just a couple of hours at our practice venue (the Graig Community Hall in Bassaleg) was squeezed in before they moved on to their hotel in Cardiff for a four night stay.

Barbara gave them short talks about Wales in between our dance displays and taught a few useful words of Welsh. They had a drink with Welsh cakes as refreshment before joining in with a couple of easy dances. They took to it enthusiastically, and these days it is refreshing to see boys as well as girls dancing together without self-consciousness or embarrassment. They would have liked to do more but the evening was cut short by the restrictions on their coach driver's hours.

Surprisingly this year we had no bookings around St David's Day, so the next event was our annual visit to Llanover – on Sunday 24th March. The opening of the gardens as part of the National Garden Scheme for charity had been in doubt two weeks before because of all the rain we have had (parking is in one of the fields), but fortunately it went ahead and the afternoon was lovely. There were over 450 visitors which raised a huge amount for NGS charities, plus the local church benefitted from the sale of refreshments. The gardens as always looked lovely with all the daffodils and magnolias out in bloom.

Our next outing will be Saturday 11th May at the Tredegar House Folk Festival. There are free dance displays in two marquees between 1-5pm both Saturday and Sunday afternoons. Gwerinwyr Gwent is always seeking new members, and beginners or experienced dancers/musicians are very welcome. Practice night (numbers permitting) is Thursday 8-10pm at the Graig Community Hall (opposite the Ruperra PH).



For more details visit our website www.gwerinwyrgwent.org.uk, ring 01495 271953

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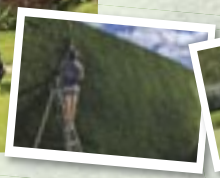
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RESCUE

Finale to 2023 Swan Breeding Season at Llantarnam Ponds

Those who are familiar with the swan family which inhabits the ponds at Llantarnam will be all too aware of how long it has taken to bring the 2023 breeding and rearing season to a close, so allowing the 2024 episode to start – and it really has been a struggle. As I'm sure we have noted previously, adult swans are very intolerant of the continuing presence of the juvenile swans from the previous year as winter transforms into spring, and so the degree of hostility displayed, particularly by the cob starts to ramp up. And so it did at Llantarnam, if a little later than might have been expected in mid-February. Again, as has been noted previously, catching swans off the Fountain Pond is particularly difficult, the more so this year because the continuing wet weather has made it particularly treacherous underfoot.



Mark our 'Swanherd' at Llantarnam

All this said, on 20th. February, we got off to a good start because the young birds were still coming to food, fairly unhindered by the adults; even coming out onto the bank. That was the undoing of what was to be our first success on the first of what turned out to be a total of six visits. Two days later, our luck held again as the birds came for food, but this time a swan hook was required to catch the second one on the water. Roz, (forgive me – our local swan minder) continued to visit every day, 9th March I joined her in what turned out to be a completely fruitless visit. However, the following day, she reported one of the remaining juveniles had been injured while attempting to avoid the cob's attacks which clearly were intensifying. The injuries involved significant strains to a leg and a wing, the consequence of which was that, whereas the first two were released immediately at The Knap, this one had to go into care at the Swan Sanctuary at Shepperton.

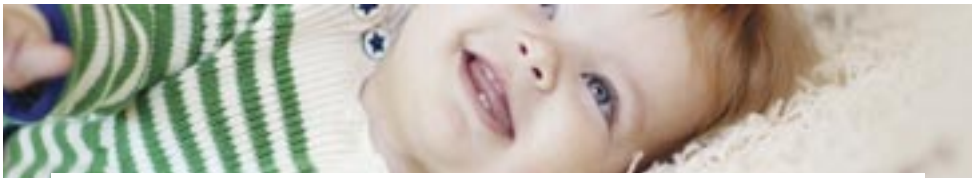


The last Llantarnam juvenile caught at last

On the day before the final denouement, the adults were on the Fountain Pond – not surprisingly because this is where the nest site is, and the two remaining juveniles were on the adjacent Kingfisher Pond. Even although we tried, these two birds were now so wary, there was not a chance of catching either of them. Fortunately, Mark, of whom we cannot speak highly enough was available the following day to help us, along with his trusty kayak.

When we arrived on the final afternoon, the adults had joined the juveniles on Kingfisher Pond and had driven them both up onto the main road! There we managed to catch one of them and caged it. I chased the other as best I could, but it took off and landed back on the Fountain Pond. Pressure from Mark eventually resulted in the cygnet returning to Kingfisher Pond, where more pressure both from Mark and the two adult swans resulted in the young swan returning to dry land. I pursued it up the road, left into a cul-de-sac and finally caught it at the top of a steep slippery bank...What a relief! Just time to draw breath before securing it in the car alongside his sibling, leaving once again to release them both at The Knap in Barry.

Story by Peter & Ellen, photos from Roz.
For swan problems please contact Peter & Ellen on 07802 472788.



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Burry Port

People in Burry Port made a living from farming and fishing before the industrial revolution brought the railways and collieries to the area. With the closure of all the mines at Cwm Mawr in 1917 the railways up the valley were lifted. Pembrey and Burry Port railway station remains with regular services east via Swansea and Cardiff to London and west into Pembrokeshire.

Carmarthen Bay Power Station was built on the north shore of the Burry Estuary. Work started on its construction in April 1947 and power was first generated on 28th June 1953. At this time the plant employed around 500 people and during its 31 years of operation the three stacks became a local landmark. The power station ceased generating in 1984 and was demolished in the early 1990s.

Today the harbour consists of an impressive marina catering for small leisure craft. It is the third largest town in Carmarthenshire. Burry Port and Pembrey lies on the Millennium Coastal Path and is very popular with ramblers, offering over 25 miles of walkways, bridleways, and cyclists with the National Cycle Network.

When we visited last year, we enjoyed a delicious coffee and cake at the quaint Harbour Light Tearooms.



Harbour Light Tearooms

“Today the harbour consists of an impressive marina catering for small leisure craft. It is the third largest town in Carmarthenshire.”



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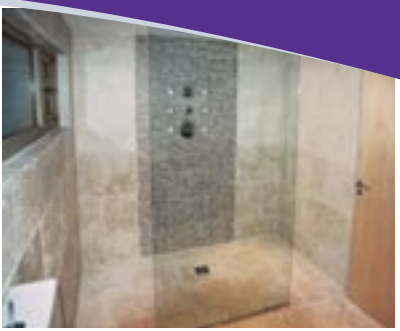
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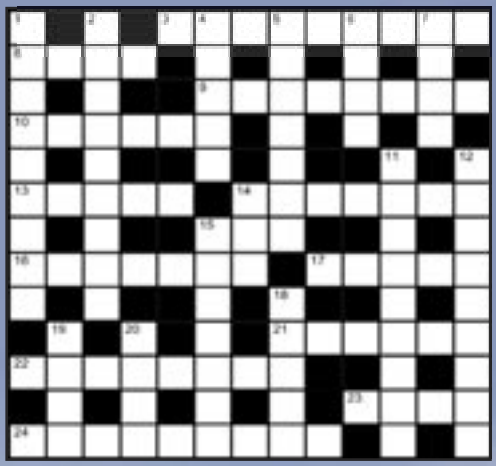
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Puzzles

CROSSWORD



Across

3 Pre-decimal coin worth two shillings and sixpence (4,5)
8 British county dissolved in 1996 (4)
9 Natives or inhabitants of Greece (8)
10 Breakfast food of untoasted dry cereals and fruits (6)
13 Country on the Iberian Peninsula (5)
14 Swiss cheese with small holes (7)
15 Nocturnal mammal (3)
16 London-based international news agency (7)
17 Same again (5)
21 Expensive white fur (6)
22 Line of longitude (8)
23 Bird symbolising peace (4)
24 Personification of icy or wintry weather (4,5)

Down

1 Telling fortunes by the lines on the hand (9) 2 French part of the Riviera (4,5)
4 Small plant-sucking insect (5)
5 Hazelnut (7)
6 Lively Scottish dance (4)
7 Tiny, common UK bird (4)
11 Aviator hired to fly experimental aeroplanes in designed manoeuvres (4,5)
12 Instrument for recording the number of steps taken (9)
14 Nitrogen, for example (3)
15 Metal container in which coal or charcoal is burned (7)
18 Roman goddess of love (5)
19 Salty Greek cheese (4)
20 Mammal having partially webbed feet; valued for its fur (4)

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

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.

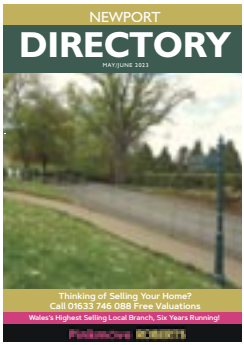
Solutions on page 23

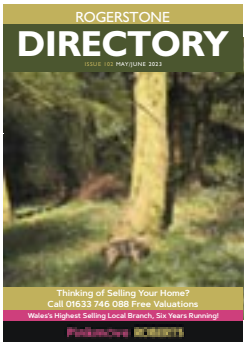


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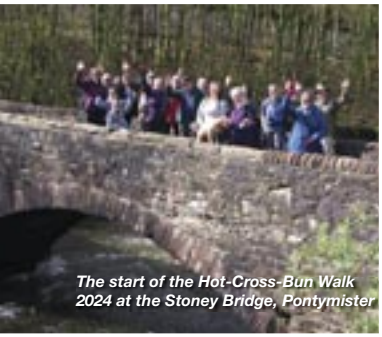
It's Fun to Get Involved with a Group like The Twmbarlwm Society

The Hot-Cross-Bun Walk 2023

On the morning of Good Friday I was all tucked up nicely in bed and the weather forecast was not good for the day ahead. But with a moan and a groan I dragged myself out to go collect a load of Hot-Cross-Buns because that's what we had promised to do.

My wife was to butter and jam the buns and we were to take them up Twmbarlwm to give out to what we hoped would be crowds of people on the annual pilgrimage walking up there – because that's what we, the Twmbarlwm Society, had promised to do.

Okay it was an effort to get started but, long story short, by the end of the day I and a small band of helpers had a fabulous day meeting up with all sorts of people, encouraging them up the steep slopes, chatting about when they did this as kids, swapping stories and simply enjoying the great outdoors and admiring the views.



The start of the Hot-Cross-Bun Walk 2024 at the Stoney Bridge, Pontymister

It was a great day and well worth the effort we had all put into it – we were weather beaten and worn out when we got home, but with that warm smug feeling of a job well done – and that basically is what getting involved in a local society is all about.

The point of my story is that I speak to many people who help run various groups – from Environmental to Historical Groups or Scout Troops and Kiddies' Football Clubs to Church Restoration or Community Societies – and they all talk about the difficulty they have in persuading people to get involved. The good work of these organisations is often mentioned on these pages and social media.

Unfortunately their threads are often followed by the comments *"… why doesn't somebody do something about it?"* or *"… why didn't so-and-so group stop it happening?",* written by people who always expect somebody else to act.

Many groups start with great intentions amid a flurry of public interest and plenty of people turn out to support the cause initially. But once the group is established too many slink away, never to be involved again.

Some groups start because of some local controversy, but even when that issue seems resolved the group often needs to stay together to ensure the problem doesn't recur or a new topic becomes a concern.

The Twmbarlwm Society is a typical example of that and over the years we have become a society whose influence is respected – and I know we have a few battles on the horizon we will need to be involved in.

We are a non-political group and use our collective voice to influence how the landscape and environment of the area is managed and used for the benefit of the surrounding community.

Judging by the numbers who join us at our events there is no lack of interest in what we stand for – and I hear similar reports from other groups – but when it comes to attending meetings, organising events or helping with admin, then volunteers are thin on the ground.

These organisations I'm talking about are largely run by older folk yet we are all desperate to get some younger blood involved.

So come on, all you community spirited people, get involved, use your skills to help a cause that interests you. You will meet interesting people, improve things for the community and most of all, have some fun and feel good about it.

TERRY EVANS
Chairman Cymdeithas 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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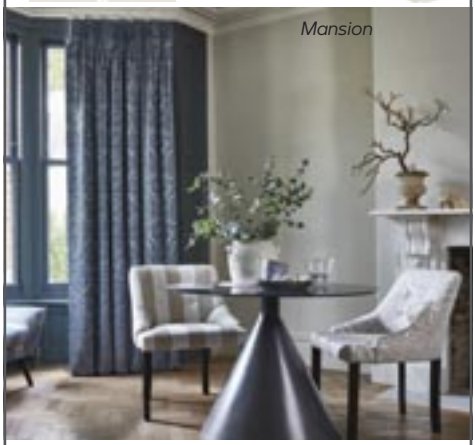
Across: 3 Half crown, 8 Avon, 9 Hellenes, 10 Muesli, 13 Spain, 14 Gruyère, 15 Bat, 16 Reuters, 17 Ditto, 21 Ermine, 22 Meridian, 23 Dove, 24 Jack Frost.
Down: 1 Palmistry, 2 Cote d'Azur, 4 Aphid, 5 Filbert, 6 Reel, 7 Wren, 11 Test pilot, 12 Pedometer, 14 Gas, 15 Brazier, 18 Venus, 19 Feta, 20 Mink.

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



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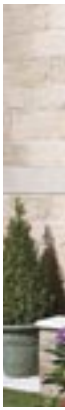
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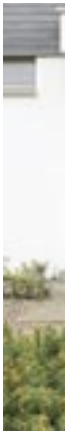






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River Severn

The River Severn is Britain's longest river from source to tidal waters about 180 miles (290 km) long, with the Severn estuary adding some 40 miles (64 km) to its total length. The Severn rises on the northeastern slopes of Plynlimon in the Cambrian Mountains, at an altitude of 2,001 feet (610 m) and then follows a semicircular course basically southward. The estuary widens gradually between South Wales and Somerset and eventually becomes the Bristol Channel.

Since the destruction of the railway bridge between Sharpness and Lydney in the late 1960s rail traffic has been serviced by the Severn Tunnel, 15 miles (24 km) further downstream.

The Severn Bridge, an impressive suspension bridge was opened in 1966 by Queen Elizabeth II. For thirty years, the bridge carried the M4 motorway. It was granted Grade I listed status in 1999. It replaced the 137 year-old Aust Ferry.

An increase in traffic led to the construction of the Second Severn Crossing (renamed the Prince of Wales Bridge in 2018), which opened in 1996 and now carries the M4 motorway.

On a cold October day we walked over the old Severn Bridge, starting from the Wye Valley Link Road, A466 just off Junction 2 of the M48. We only managed to get to the middle of the main span but we enjoyed watching the Severn Rescue boat practicing their manoeuvres. The walk was well worth the effort.








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Newport u3a

Katherine Hawkins, the Age Friendly Policy Officer at Newport City council, recently made a visit to Newport u3a that is situated at the Dolman Theatre.



Having seen how our organisation provides an inclusive and friendly environment offering over 40 active, social and cultural groups for the retired, she agreed it would be beneficial for our u3a to be involved and our members Julie Kennedy and Jackie Kerr volunteered to represent us.

Katherine observed our Choir rehearsing and talked to our Theatre Group regarding what Age Friendly meant to them. Sitting in our Cafe area, she also chatted with members as they completed her survey relating to their knowledge and ideas for making Newport an Age Friendly City.

u3a learn, laugh, live

If you would like to belong to an Age-Friendly organisation, come and try us out for two weeks. Newport u3a meets Wednesdays to Fridays at 9.45-15.00 during term times. Contact Angela Robins on 07983 130541 or www.u3asites.org.uk/newportsewales

Hardy Plant Society

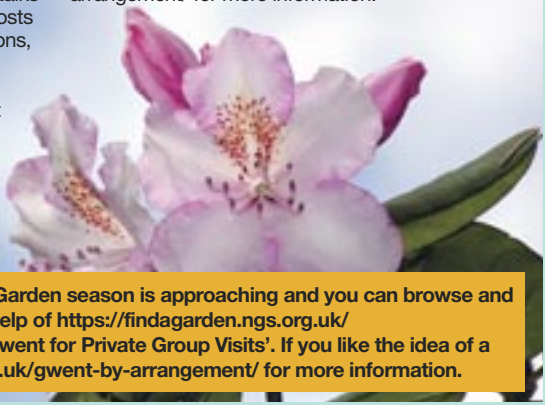
The HPS Monmouthshire group is for people who love plants and gardening and enjoy sharing their enthusiasm.

Non-members are very welcome to come along. It's an excellent opportunity to meet people with similar interests, to chat, enjoy refreshments and buy some plants. We'd love to see you. Talks take place at Little Mill Hall on the second Saturday of the month at 2.30pm. Refreshments are available and the talks last about 40 minutes. Sometimes, the group hosts Zoom talks or organises garden visits, discussions, dinners & plant sales. To keep in touch visit https://hpsmonmouthshire.co.uk

On Saturday 11th May at the Hall in Little Mill at 2.30pm, Roger Lloyd will give an illustrated talk entitled 'Hydrangeas – A Gentle Obsession'. Roger's talk will be an all-you-need-to-know, encyclopaedic account of growing hydrangeas. Our fantastic Plant Sale is also on the 11th May at the Hall. We are hoping to have as many plants as possible for sale at all our talks in the Hall.

The National Garden Scheme (NGS) Open Garden season is approaching and you can browse and plan your visits with the help of https://findagarden.ngs.org.uk/

The NGS has introduced a 'Gardens in Gwent for Private Group Visits'. If you like the idea of a private group visit see https://ngs.org.uk/gwent-by-arrangement/ for more information.



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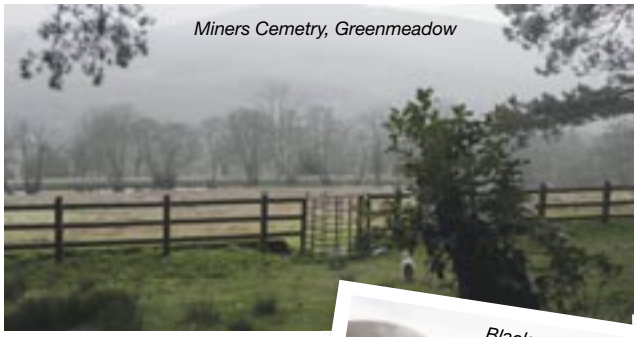
Waunfawr and the Black Vein Colliery

Part 3 - 1812 to 1860

William Jones gave up the Waunfawr Colliery in 1812 and returned to Bristol, trading as a coal merchant. Brothers James Leman and Thomas Curtis Leman were granted a 60 year lease covering all seams and veins of coal and iron ore under Machen Mountain, Waun Fawr, Coed Waun Fawr, the colliery farm, Risca Farm, Gellifiniog, Tonteg Farm, Llandanglais and a parcel of land at the top of Coed Medart. Although the Lemans went bankrupt within a few years, the Monmouthshire Canal Company accepting 5s in the £ to settle their outstanding payments, with no prospective purchaser in sight, the Tredegar Estate allowed the Lemans to continue operating under the terms of the lease.

The lease on Risca Farm, which had been extended, expired in 1833 and James Leman took out a new lease on the farmhouse and five acres of land for 41 years from June 1831. In January 1842, James John Leman, son of James Leman obtained an extension until 1899; his uncle had died in 1827 and his father in 1835.

In 1839, James John Leman had taken John Russell as a partner. Russell gradually gained control of the colliery which, having had £140,000 spent on it, was again on the verge of bankruptcy and he took on new partners. Extensions to the lease resulted in Russell having the mineral rights over 1044 acres of land. In the parliamentary report of 1842 into the employment of children in mines, it was stated that Risca employed 250 adults, 50 youths under 18 years of age and 15 boys under 13. In describing the work, one of the directors said that children rarely commenced work before the age of ten.



Miners Cemetry, Greenmeadow



Blackvein Colliery

Russell sank a new, deeper shaft to reach the black vein seam which, in trials, proved to be the best coal for steam ships. As a result he gained a contract to supply the Royal West India Mail Steam Packet Company with 72,000 tons of coal. This new pit became the Blackvein Colliery.

From the beginning the deeper workings resulted in problems with gas, the pit was referred to as 'fiery' and there were some explosions resulting in a small number of deaths. Many locals wouldn't work there resulting in higher wages being paid and experienced miners recruited from Gloucester and Somerset. A larger explosion occurred in 1846 which resulted in 35 deaths, only a handful of the victims had Welsh surnames.

Small numbers of deaths continued, two men in an explosion and a 16 year old falling down the shaft, four men in separate roof-fall accidents in 1849, and this seems to have been accepted as the norm.

However, things went to a whole new level in 1860, on 1st December 1860 a large explosion was heard from the colliery and 142 were killed including 22 boys under 15 years of age.

There were not enough burial places in the area so families in other areas took their relations back to their home district and those that couldn't get places in local burial grounds were buried in what became known as the miners cemetery in the field on the mountainside above the canal near the Greenmeadow Bridge.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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