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If you are interested in advertising your business in the Directory, please contact us to find out about the very competitive advertising rates. You will always deal with us directly, like many of the businesses that advertise in this magazine, we are a small, independent business and fully appreciate how much your business means to you, especially in these uncertain times.

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

Wishing you all a 2025 filled with kindness, compassion, respect and gentleness.

Susan x



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Most people hope that their estate will pass on to their children and grandchildren eventually. But this will not happen for many, unless careful arrangements have been made to protect their assets from being taken towards the end of their life to pay for care home fees.

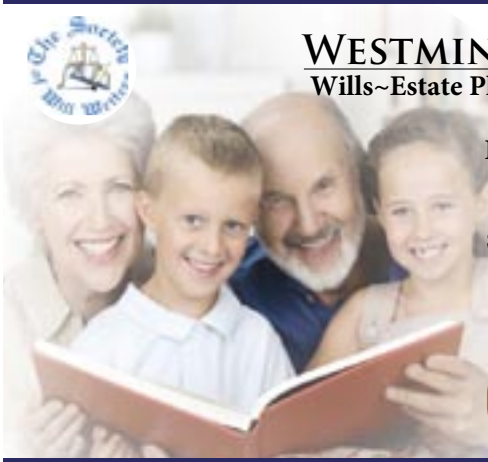
The solution to help protect your estate is a Will incorporating a Property Protection Trust (PPT). A testamentary PPT can only be executed whilst both partners remain alive. Upon death of the first partner, their Will specifies that their share of the property is placed into trust and names the ultimate beneficiary of this share, normally the children and grandchildren of the deceased. The surviving partner, under the terms of the Trust, has the unequivocal right to remain living in the property for the rest of their life. On the death of the second partner the Trust comes to an end and the property



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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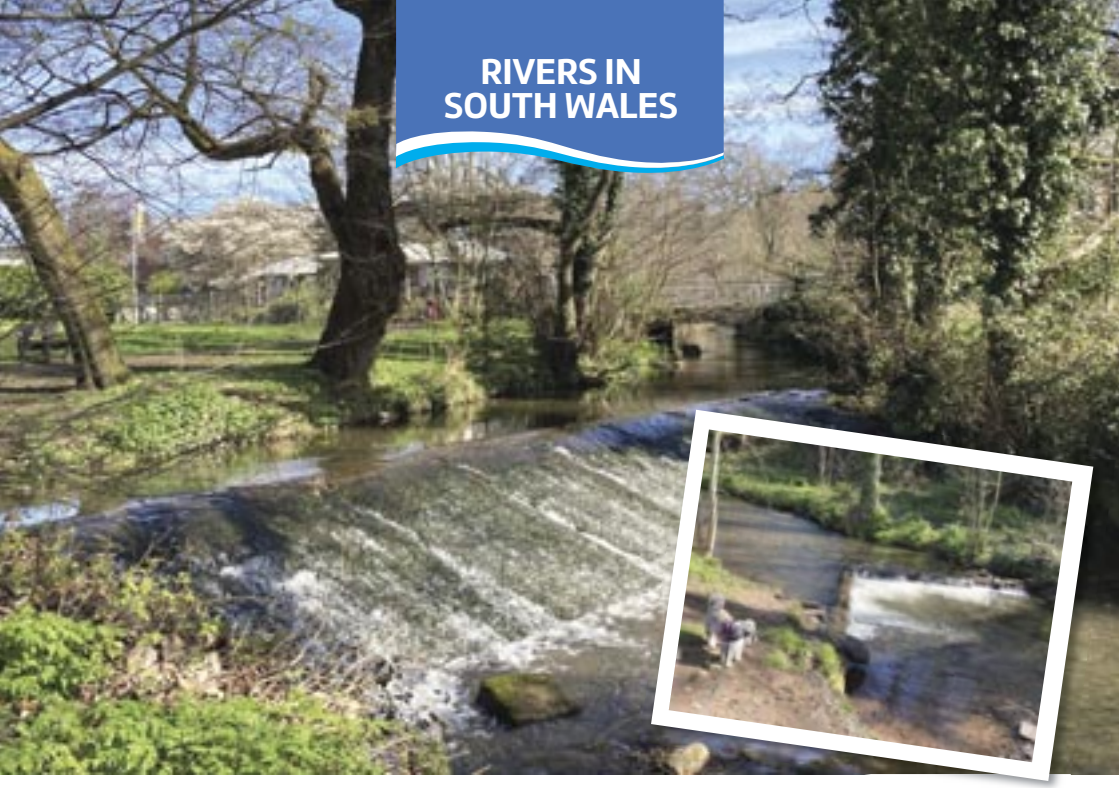
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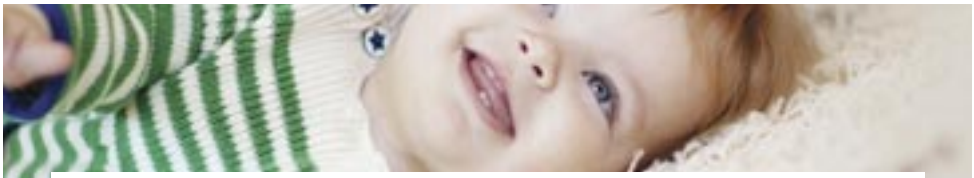


The River Gavenny

The River Gavenny is a short river in Monmouthshire. It rises 1 mile (1.6 km) southwest of the village of Llanvihangel Crucorney from springs near Penyclawdd Court, supplemented by springs in Blaen-Gavenny Wood and tributary streams there and within the Woodland Trust-owned Great Triley Wood. It flows south for about 4 miles (6.4 km) to its confluence with the River Usk towards the eastern end of Castle Meadows at Abergavenny.

The river is crossed by road bridges north of Mardy at Triley Mill and at St Teilo's Church and also, to the east of Mardy by those carrying Nantgavenny Lane, Hereford Road (B4521) and Tredilion Road. The Nantgavenny Lane crossing carries both route 42 of the National Cycle Network and the Beacons Way over the river. The lowermost crossings are at Lower Monk Street (B4233), Monmouth Road (A40) and Mill Street bridges east of Abergavenny town centre. Next to the river there is a stone circle at Swan Meadows, it may look prehistoric but dates from 1912. It was erected for Gorsedd of Bards ceremonies relating to the National Eisteddfod held at Bailey Park in August 1913. In 2001 the Gorsedd stones were moved to Swan Meadows from their original position at the Grove, Monmouth Road. Also, in the bus station next to the river is a Bikers meeting place. The Oasis Snack Bar has been a haunt for years. It welcomes hundreds of Bikers at weekends.





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Newport u3a



Newport u3a's member Hilary Lester is the organiser of the Newport Fundraising Group for Guide Dogs for the Blind. One of her projects is collecting foreign and British obsolete money from our members to raise money to train more puppies that will help give someone with sight loss the freedom to live the life they choose. We regularly see Hilary and her gorgeous dog Portia at our meetings and more recently another member Lesley Gore has acquired her companion named May.

Committee member and Convenor of the Table Tennis Group, Gwyn Havard, kindly offered to help increase the value of the donations. Periodically he does a valuation on the donations which Hilary accepts and then he sells the coins on eBay. To date they have raised over £300.

u3a learn, laugh, live

Newport u3a runs 40 active, social and cultural groups for the retired at the Dolman Theatre Wednesday to Friday at 9.45-15.00 during term time. If you would like a more rewarding retirement vwww.newport.u3asite.uk or phone Angela Robins on 07983 130541

Hardy Plant Society Monmouthshire



Our meetings are held on the second Saturday of the month at Little Mill village hall NP4 0HJ at 2.30pm, between September and May. Visitors are very welcome - entrance is usually £6.00.

The full Group programme can be found on our website. We are registered with the national Hardy Plant Society but also affiliated with both the RHS and the Tender Shoots Garden Club Network which organises gardening talks and events throughout the year via Zoom for its members. Full contact details below. We hope you enjoy our talks and that you will spread the word about our programme to those of your friends and family who love plants and gardening. During the summer months we organise garden-related visits and events and throughout the year gardening discussions for members, plant sales and members' social events and offer a discount card for plant purchases at four local garden centres.

Please do join us!

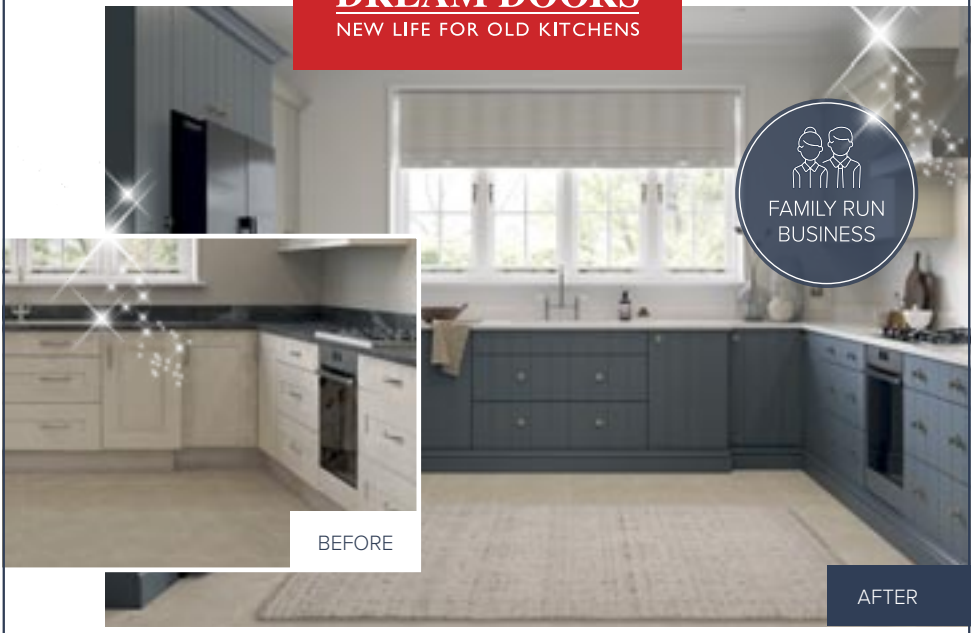
For further details of our local group and programme of events, see https://hpsmonmouthshire.com

For more about the national Hardy Plant Society, see https://www.hardy-plant.org.uk/

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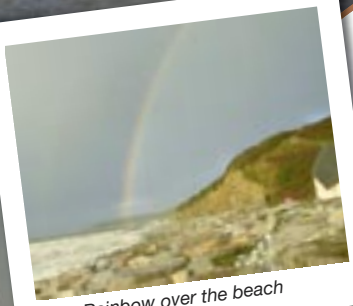
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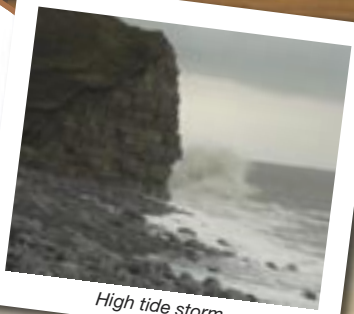
Winter scenes from Cwm Colhuw beach

Sunset



Rainbow over the beach

A short drive or gentle stroll from the town centre of Llantwit Major is the beach of Cwm Colhuw. Where there's a café, great rock pools and easy access to the Wales Coast Path. The Vale of Glamorgan Heritage Coast is 14 miles of unspoilt coastline and breathtaking scenery that rivals any coastline in Britain!



High tide storm

Sunrise

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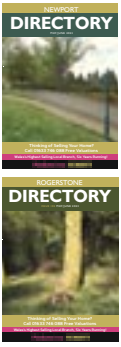
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*Local author Dale Bradford discusses his new novel, **The Time-Travelling Estate Agent**, in which Cwmbran - and its iconic Boating Lake - plays a pivotal role...*

Have you ever regretted something you didn't do, rather than something you did do? Eric Meek has. He believes the direction of his whole life changed in July 1976, following an incident at Cwmbran Boating Lake.

Fast forward to 2019 and Eric is now the proprietor of estate agency Barrington Meek, with a showroom in Cwmbran Town Centre, when he discovers a property which boasts a truly unique garage conversion. Instead of the more customary home office or gym, it contains a hole in space-time that has been developed into a traversable portal.

A by-product of the homeowner's attempts to emulate the work of pioneering electrical engineer Nikola Tesla, the portal allows movement between 2019 and July 1976.

Presented with a chance to right the wrongs of the past, Eric's adventures in time find him caught up in a decades-old missing persons case while he attempts to improve the lives of those close to him, including his long-dead father.

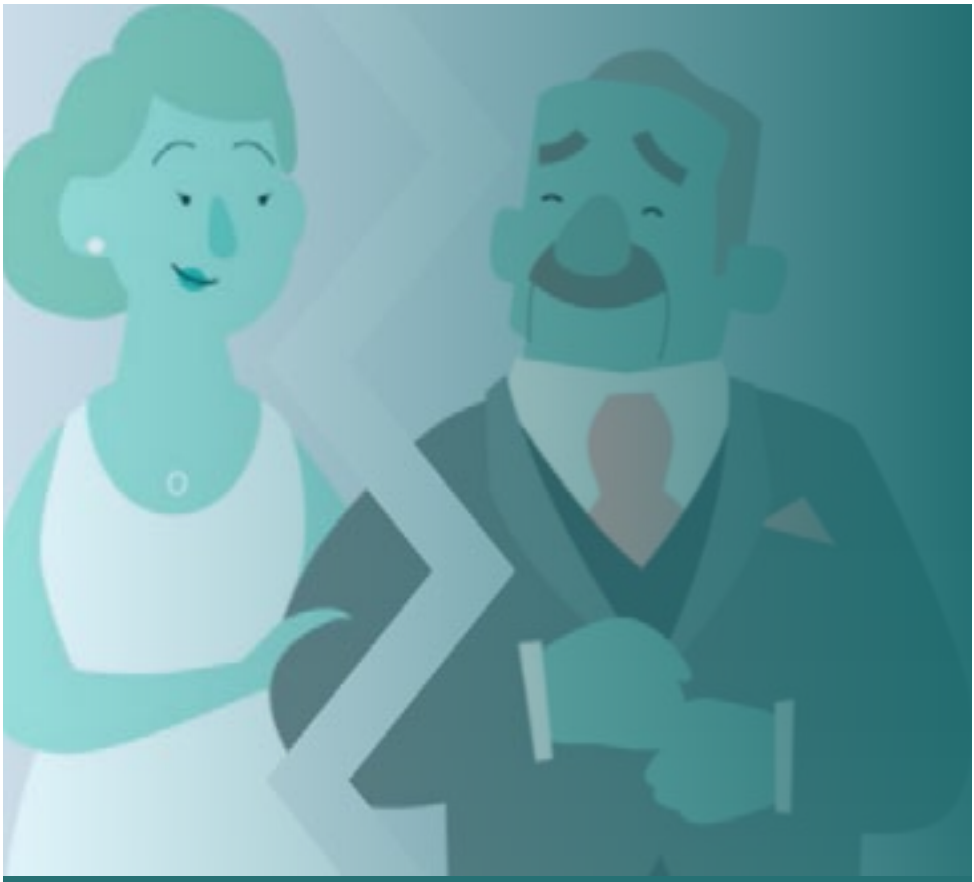
"The Time-Travelling Estate Agent is the story of a first love, a second chance, and a third-age redemption," says author Dale Bradford, who grew up in Cwmbran. "I've always been fascinated by the concept of time travel, even though the greatest scientific minds maintain that it's impossible. Fifty years ago, my iPhone was impossible though, and the story grew from the idea of me meeting my teenage self, and the people I knew back then, and demonstrating my iPhone's capabilities to them."

Will readers learn anything about the property business from reading the novel?

"They might," says Bradford, "I did when researching it, but the book is pure escapism and offers a few hours respite from the depressing global news cycle. Its title suggests it's sci-fi, and there are indeed elements of it, but it also blends a mismatched romance with a murder mystery, while offering gentle nods in the direction of Groundhog Day and 50 First Dates."

The Time-Travelling Estate Agent is available now on Amazon.co.uk in ebook (£1.99), paperback (£12.99), and hardback (£16.99) and it is free to read on Kindle Unlimited. The first four chapters can also be read online instantly via Amazon's Read Sample facility. Go on, treat yourself...





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Risca Colliery

The Risca Colliery was sited at the north end of the Risca bypass, just before Wattsville on the B4251. It is now a small industrial estate with some of the original colliery buildings use in use.

It was opened by the London and South Wales Colliery Company and later owned by the United National Collieries Limited, the Ocean Coal Company, and from nationalisation in 1947, the National Coal Board.

Two shafts were sunk in 1878 to the Nine Feet (Black Vein) seam to a depth of 752 feet. This was connected with the bottom of a drift from the old Black Vein Colliery, a decision that was to have disastrous consequences two years later. Eventually shafts were sunk to the Five Feet/Gellideg seam to a depth of 1,009 feet.

Risca was the first pit in the South Wales coalfield to use electric lighting both on the surface and at the pit bottom. It also used compressed air (blast) haulages and the new method of longwall mining from the start. Manpower was planned at 1,050 with 102 horses. It aimed to produce 1,000 tons of coal per day.

The major markets for the coal were navel contracts and the Egyptian railways. Risca was then known as an English pit with very few Welshmen being employed.

By 1880 there were 800 men employed on a double shift until on the 15th July when an explosion occurred of such ferocity that it destroyed the surface fan. It also destroyed the lives of 119 men, boys and their families. Out of the 119 killed almost 100 of them lived in the company village of Newtown, Crosskeys which had been purposely built for the colliery. An enlightened decision for the times was the





owner's commitment to bring all the bodies out for burial.

Another explosion rocked the pit on the 15th of January 1882 and the only 4 men underground at the time were killed. This was to be the last fatal explosion in the Risca pit.

The uncompromising attitude of the United National Collieries Company can be seen from an incident in 1900 when they summoned 17 men who had who had absented themselves from work for three days without prior notice. The matter was settled out of court for a fine of £1.00 per man. In the 1930's working conditions were affected by the merger of the United National Collieries Company with the Ocean Coal Company. The Risca miners encountered similar problems as did the Nine mile point miners with the importation of scab labour. This resulted in the forming of the South Wales Miners Industrial Union.

All the problems came to a head with the stay down strike of 1935. 126 men stayed down the No.1 pit and 63 in the No.2 pit for 72 hours. The actions of both the Risca and Nine Mile Point miners at the time was said to have saved the South Wales Miners federation from destruction by the coal owners.

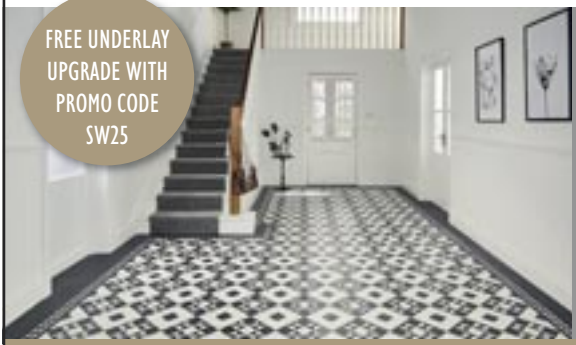
In 1947, Risca Colliery, along with the nation's other coal mines employing more than 12 men was Nationalised and brought under State control. Operated now by the National Coal Board, Risca Colliery employed 710 men working the Nine-Feet and Big Veins seams.

After almost 200 years of continuous mining, all coal mining in the Crosskeys and Risca areas ended with the closure of the Risca Colliery in August 1967.

David Williams

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Puzzles

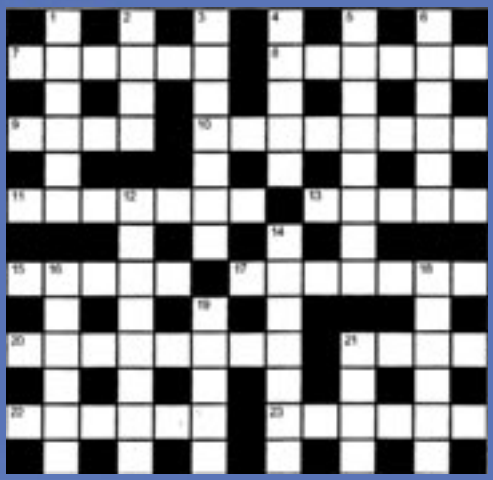
CROSSWORD

Across

7 Road with houses each side (6)
8 Attorney
9 At liberty (4)
10 Fight (8)
11 Promised (7)
13 Be in accord (5)
15 Spectre (5)
17 Most delicate (7)
20 Entering a country by force (8)
21 Assist (4)
22 Dreaded (6)
23 Skilled (6)

Down

1 Depots (6)
2 Existed (4)
3 Piled (7)
4 Dull (5)
5 After sunset (8)
6 Save (6)
12 First floor (8)
14 Protective spectacles (7)
16 Chased relentlessly (6)
18 Wages (6)
19 Take care of (5)
21 Joints above the thighs (4)



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

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 21

St David's Hospice Care

Fundraising Calendar of Events 2025













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Twmbarlwm - The Challenges of 2024 and Beyond


The beauty of the landscape as we all prefer to see

Gosh — where did that year go? It's already time for me to look back on the achievements and failures of 2024 – a job that requires me to delve into my library of photographs to act as an aide-memoire.

As in so many previous years my photos show that we've had another challenging year on the mountain and yet it is still a beautiful landscape with exquisite views. I'd rather not dwell on the negativity shown by some of the photos, but use the examples as a rallying call to ask visitors to be vigilant, report incidents you find on your wanderings and support the Society in any way you can. *(Visit our website to see 2024 in photos).*


Damage to signage costs us in time and money

In my collection there are far too many photos of litter and fly-tipping – a practice that is unsightly and a serious environmental hazard but it is a nationwide problem that the Society tackles as best we can with KWT and our monthly litter picks.

Many photos illustrate the damage done to the landscape by selfish off-road vehicle users – another widespread problem that we try to control with help from the police and local authorities.


The Cwmcarn Forest Drive's future is at stake

There are photos of general vandalism such as the cutting of fences, fire-starting or defacing signs – this is called anti-social behaviour because the perpetrators simply don't realise the harm they are doing to the pockets and good honest work done by the community to benefit everyone now and into the future.

The Twmbarlwm Society attempts to address these problems, and more, with support of the Commoners, Cadw, the Land Owners and local Authorities and we anticipate many more challenges in the future.

For instance there are plans afoot to erect over 20 wind turbines on Mynydd Maen which will surely be a blot on our precious landscape; and The Cwmcarn Forest Drive is rumoured to be further developed in the hands of private investors – a potential major worry if not handled sympathetically.


We repair breaks in fences where we can

Both these projects will have a profound impact on Twmbarlwm and its iron-age hill fort and we intend to make sure the people's voices are heard in the process. With such a wide remit of responsibilities we could really do with more willing volunteers and expertise to take the Twmbarlwm Society forward.

TERRY EVANS (Chairman CTS


Setting off on the Hot-Cross-Bun walk


Huge thanks to the litter picking team


Close all gates - cattle don't belong here

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.

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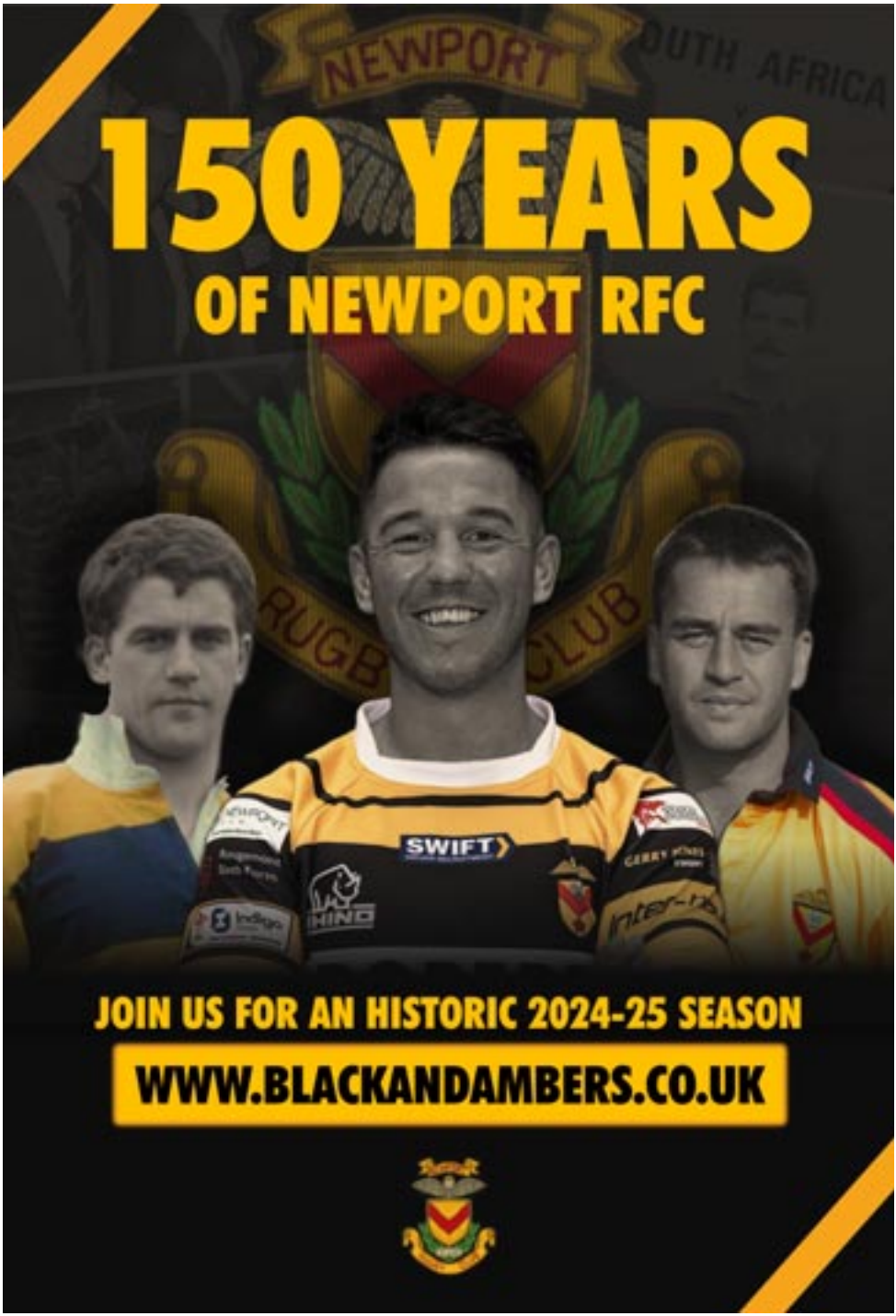

Puzzle Solutions

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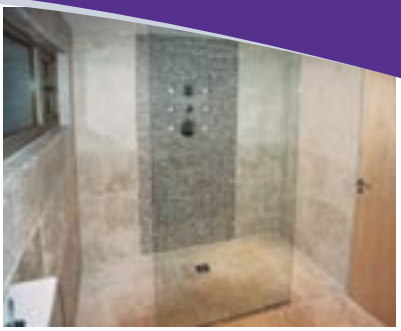

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Swan RESCUE

The Grand Tour

Gloucester, The Knap, Tredegar Park and Amroth

Long gone are the days when we could look forward to a pause in calls to rescue a swan in distress. Autumn rescues are dominated by juveniles getting into difficulties as they attempt to leave their parent's territory. This call was received from a member of staff at Tredegar Park (National Trust) as we crossed the Severn Bridge on route to de-tackle an adult swan in Gloucester Docks, from which, for obvious reasons, there was no turning back.

The problem to which our attention was being drawn is a fairly common occurrence – a juvenile swan was stuck behind the railings at the southern end of the lake, trying and obviously failing to return to the water. 'Well, isn't there anyone else who can help?' Shock, horror...No! But the area will be visited as soon as possible… the following morning.

It is important to note the day had already been seriously compromised as a result of a call at 0840 hrs from The Knap at Barry made by a very committed staff member from the Vale of Glamorgan Council who had noticed an ailing swan with what turned out to be an ear infection, and which we had collected and bedded down at HQ.

So, all that was Friday. As promised, early on Saturday morning, with the intention of hospitalising the previous day's casualty at a sanctuary at Amroth, and so loading the swan into the car a visit was paid to Jamaica Walk, i.e. on the landward side of the railings at the end of Tredegar Park Lake. A thorough search was carried out; the only sign of a juvenile swan was a small number of feathers scattered across the



Cygnet with damaged tail rescued from bramble thicket in background

dingle which abuts the outfall from the lake. That was searched thoroughly, but nothing further was found. Neither here nor more widely. There seemed little option but to conclude the swan had managed to find another way out. Time therefore to set off for Amroth with the poorly bird from The Knap.

A comfort stop was needed which was provided by calling at Cardiff West Services. In that brief interval two calls were received in quick succession from participants in the Tredegar Park Park Run; they had spotted the missing swan hard up against the railings, and deeply 'submerged' in brambles and other vegetation. There was even a question as to whether or not the swan was still alive. Immediate call for a high-speed return to Tredegar Park where one of the callers, Emma, to whom we shall for ever be grateful, was waiting to help.

Over the years, we have learnt to carry not only tools to deal with embedded fishhooks but also a selection of pruning implements; these were absolutely essential for getting the swan out of his predicament. All things considered he wasn't in bad shape except for a significant wound to his tail. The earlier discovery of feathers now made sense; the swan had been attacked by a dog, which, quite clearly had not been under control.

And so, now with two ailing swans on board, we set off, at the second attempt to provide treatment for both casualties. Mercifully, the injury to the swan which is the main character in this story was not as bad as it might so easily have been. He was considered fit for release and was given a new home when he was released onto The Fendrod Lake on the outskirts of Swansea almost three weeks to the day following his failed attempt to leave Tredegar Park.

Story: Peter & Ellen. Photo: Emma. For swan problems please contact Peter on 07802 472788.

Belle Vue
Park & Tea Room



The Team at Belle Vue Tea Room would like to wish you all a very healthy, happy and prosperous New Year!

We have now completed six full years at Belle Vue Park. We are loving it and we hope you are happy with us. We want to continue giving you the best possible value for money in these trying times and we look forward to welcoming you rain or sunshine. We will be reviewing prices in April 2025 as we have been able to absorb much of the increases during the past year. However, we will always keep any increases to the absolute minimum as we take pride in being able to offer you great, homemade and artisan cakes, bakes and savouries at a very competitive price matching or bettering the high street.

As a reflection over 2024:

- Our lovely bara brith won the Great British Food Award gold award – the second time in 3 years. It is proving popular but we are struggling to keep up with demand.
- The Tea Room came runner up in 2024 South East Wales Business Awards held in December. Thank you for all those votes. It really brightened our year.
- We served so many afternoon teas last year. Many people choosing a venue for baby showers chose our teas and we loved serving you all. We especially love seeing the babies growing as they come in with parents.
- We hosted our monthly (from March) artisan markets. We struggled with fresh meat and vegetables again last year, so we are redoubling our efforts to bring you those in 2025.
- We supported Sparkles Appeal, our charity of the year by collecting on markets visitors' behalf in excess of £1000 during 2024. This year we will once again be looking for a local charity to support.
- We provided five out of the six planned street food Friday evenings (the weather put paid to September unfortunately). This is where we provide music on the bandstand between 6.30pm and 9.30pm. Given that we had few takers of brass bands and choirs on the bandstand during our weekends last year, we may change streetfood to a Sunday afternoon in 2025.
- We hosted 10 wedding ceremonies and/or receptions and whilst a funeral is a very sad occasion, we tried our best to make the 6 we hosted, as comforting as possible.
- We hosted Louby Lou story trails and their Halloween play. We also created a fun trail in the conservatory again to delight youngsters.
- Our Christmas theme was popular again, as the Snowman and the Snow Dog. Each year we try to play with a theme. I wonder if anyone has any ideas for 2025?
- Thank you to all who supported the pay forward scheme this year – 'Buy a drink for a stranger'. We know that quite a number of people took advantage of that and expressed their gratitude for your kindness.
- We supported Gwent Wildlife Trust and other charities by offering opportunities for pop ups.

Thank you once again for supporting us and we hope to see you as we continue to open every day between 9.00am and 4.00pm.

Very best wishes Jan, Paul and the Team









Look out for more information on our notice boards and Facebook/Instagram @Bellevuetearooms and on our website www.bellevuetearoom.uk. Alternatively text or phone Jan on 07737 630657.

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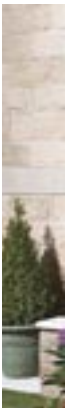
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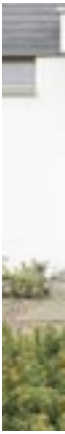
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