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ISSUE 99 MAY/JUNE 2025

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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 our article about the River Ogmore) and Welsh beaches (see our article about Cold Knap).

Susan x



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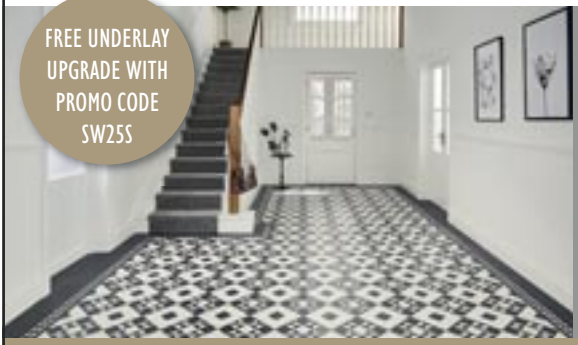
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Twmbarlwm Therapy



Not only do you get magnificent views like this, but walking will also raise your spirits and improve your general health. Photo taken from What3Words location – wanted.staple.tried

Spring came as a welcome surprise this year – dry, sunny and relatively warm and gave us no excuse not to get back out for a nice walk up our favourite mountain.

As I write this we are coming up to our famous Good Friday Hot-Cross-Bun walk up Twmbarlwm and for the first time in an awful long time I won't be joining them – which is making me a little bit fed up and gives me the reason for this article.

These articles have featured the subject of walking many times, and for good reason – Twmbarlwm and the surrounding countryside holds a wide selection of walks to suit your physical or mental fitness.

If you need a bit of tranquillity there's some lovely quiet spots where you can sit and admire the beauty of the surrounding nature such as alongside 'Pwll Tra' – a secluded pool in the middle of the forestry on the eastern edge of the ridgeway.

Just taking in the scenery as you walk is a positive therapy in itself and the walk from Car Park 2 of Cwmcarn Forest Drive along the ridgeway to the Twmp gives wide panoramas over the Severn Estuary to the south or towards the Brecon Beacons in the north.

My walks usually start from the car park on the Risca side of the mountain but if you prefer a more challenging walk you could climb up Twmbarlwm from Cwmcarn via Pegwn-y-Bwlch (Car Park 7 of the Drive) – that will get your lungs working and build muscles in your legs you never knew you had.

For me, Twmbarlwm is the one place I like to go when I'm suffering some malady like a bad cold or even worse, man-flu. I can cough and splutter all I want without spreading my germs and, often, the cold, driving wind and rain keeps my head clear until I get home.



Pegwn-y-Bwlch – What3Words location – character.awesome.rider

Whenever I feel a bit down or need to work through some personal conundrum, Twmbarlwm is the one place I can find the solitude to give myself a good talking to. The place has a spiritual aura about it that no other local mountain has, it has a mystery about it that permeates into one's inner self and sets the imagination soaring.



Pwll Tra (Pool of Avarice) What3Words location – bravo.admire.sooner

'Mental health' is a phrase that's bandied about a lot nowadays and I guess that's the main message I want to address. Walking is the easiest activity you can do to beat the stresses of everyday life – you just need a good pair of shoes and some decent countryside to wander through – that is what Twmbarlwm has to offer in abundance.

It's never been easier to get out for a walk, you don't have to be able to read a map there's plenty of apps on your smartphone that will help you. And there are plenty of groups, such as Islwyn Ramblers, who would welcome new comers – so get out there, get fit and enjoy it.

TERRY EVANS (Chairman CTS

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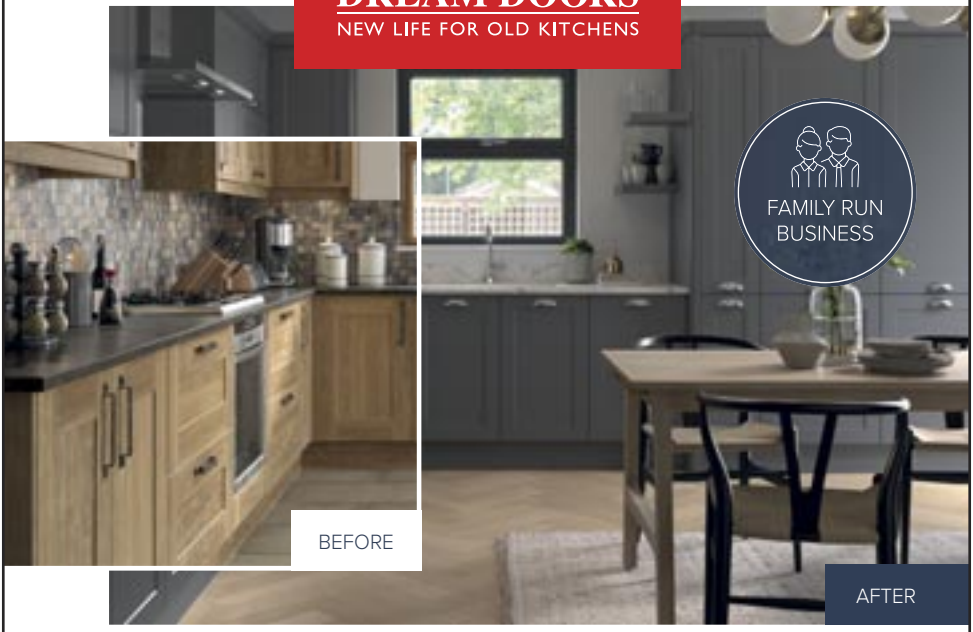
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passes to the beneficiaries. As the surviving partner does not own the deceased's share of the property it is fully protected for the beneficiaries, so if the surviving partner requires care, or even remarries, this share of the children's inheritance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

Crosskeys Names

Why are things called what they are called. Sometimes it's a mystery, but sometimes we know, and at other times we can make a reasonable assumption. Here are some names linked to Crosskeys starting with Crosskeys itself.

Crosskeys

The first mention of the name was with the opening of the Crosskeys Hotel in 1848 and subsequent census returns listed some residences as being 'Near the Crosskeys'. However, this only covered a very small part of current Crosskeys. The suggestion is that the inn was built to take advantage of traffic on the adjacent turnpike road and tramroad, perhaps being a stopping place for exchanging horses. When the tramroad started using steam engines, whilst they didn't need to change horses, the engines needed large volumes of water and it may well have been the stopping place when a passenger service was introduced.

When the tramroad became a railway, increased volumes of passengers resulted in a 'proper' railway station being built a short distance away retaining the name Crosskeys. The postal service set up nearby became the Crosskeys Post Office which defined the area covered by that office (people had to collect mail from their local office). That area is almost exactly what we know of as Crosskeys.



Waunfawr School

Waunfawr School /Road/ Avenue/Park

The original Waunfawr (Welsh for Big Field) was just that on the upper slopes of Mynydd Machen. It was the site of early coal mining and, when that expanded to a commercial operation, the registered company took the name of The Waunfawr Coal Company.

The mining moved down the hillside, levels or adits replacing bell-pits, and then shafts sunk to the better coal at deeper levels; the most important shaft was the Blackvein Colliery. When the company built a school near the colliery for its workers' children, the building was called The Waunfawr School.



Crosskeys Hotel 1976


Tredegar Street/Terrace


Gladstone Street


Woodward Road

The local council took over responsibility for education in the late 1800s and they built a larger, more modern replacement in the centre of Crosskeys. The pupils and the name transferred to the new school in 1897. The houses built later either side of the school became Waunfawr Road and Waunfawr Terrace. Once the field next to the river became a public space and playground, it was named Waunfawr Park and, the houses alongside it, Waunfawr Park Road.

Halls Road Terrace

Benjamin Hall, later Lord Llanover, was a major landowner and industrialist originally based in Abercarn. He owned early coal workings and had a tramroad built to take the coal to Newport which was named Halls Road. This tramroad, later a railway, ran through Crosskeys near the canal and joined the main line near Crosskeys station. Halls Road Terrace is a street between the canal and Halls Road.

Tredegar Street/Terrace

This should be an obvious one, so many streets and other buildings in Gwent were named in deference to the Tredegar Estate and their enormous land holding. The mystery is that the land of Tredegar Street and Tredegar Terrace wasn't owned by Lord Tredegar. In fact, Tredegar Terrace was originally called Llanover Street.

Gladstone Street/Cobden Street/Bright Street/Salisbury Street

These streets, all built around the same time, appear to all have a political link. Most people would be aware of William Gladstone, Liberal politician and Prime Minister four times between 1868 and 1894. However, you may not have heard of Richard Cobden and John Bright. Both were originally elected to Parliament as Radicals but later became Liberals during Gladstone's leadership although Cobden remained on the radical wing (pacifist, Chartist supporter) which is probably why he never got a Government Office.
The 'outlier' is Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoyne-Cecil the 3rd Marquis of Salisbury usually known as Lord Salisbury. He was Prime Minister three times between1885 and 1902 but, unlike the others, was a Conservative and a rather right-wing one at that.

Woodward Road/Avenue

John Woodward was a local man, born in Risca and a collier at the Risca Colliery. By 1891, he had become a Checkweigher, an important position within the miners' union. He lived in Mount Pleasant Terrace, Pontywaun and later became a Risca UDC councillor. He later moved to Carlton Terrace, Crosskeys. For a working man to have streets named after him is very unusual indicating that he must have been held in very high regard.

Blackvein Road

This may be the easiest one. This road lead from the Roundhouse, on the main road, to the Black Vein colliery.

Pandy Park

Another easy one, the land was originally Pandy Farm. When Crosskeys Rugby Club first started using the field, the farmhouse still existed (see photo). It was demolished when the later playground was established and the Boys Club (now Youth Club) was built on the site.


Gladstone Street

Hardy Plant Society

The HPS Monmouthshire Group is for people who love plants and gardening.
The meetings provide an excellent opportunity to meet people with similar interests. Non-members are very welcome. Garden-related talks take place at Little Mill Hall on the second Saturday of the month at 2.30pm between September and May, the months of June to September being filled with garden visits and various trips. Refreshments are served at meetings from 2pm, a good time to catch up with fellow members before the meetings begin. The talks, usually illustrated, are followed by Q&A and a raffle. Guest entry: £6



Coming up on 10th May at the Hall in Little Mill at 2.30pm, Val Bourne's topic will be Bomb-Proof Roses.
Val, the well-known garden writer, organic gardener and lecturer who gardens on the wind-swept Cotswolds, will talk on super-healthy roses which are able to cope with the worst of conditions, black spot included. Val is an excellent speaker and not to be missed.

The annual Usk Open Gardens festival is being held on the weekend of 28-29th June 2025, from 10am to 5pm each day.
If you'd like to see the open gardens, entrance is £10 per adult, free entry for children under 15, free car park at Memorial Hall.

The National Garden Scheme (NGS) Open Garden season is here.
If you like the idea of a private group visit, see https://ngs.org.uk/gwent-by-arrangement/for more information.

The HPS Monmouthshire Group also organises discussions, dinners & plant sales throughout the year, and a series of garden visits during the summer. For more information on all aspects of the HPS Monmouthshire branch's activities, please visit https://hpsmonmouthshire.co.uk





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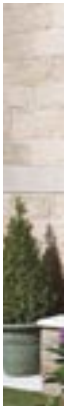
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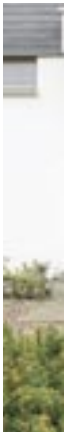
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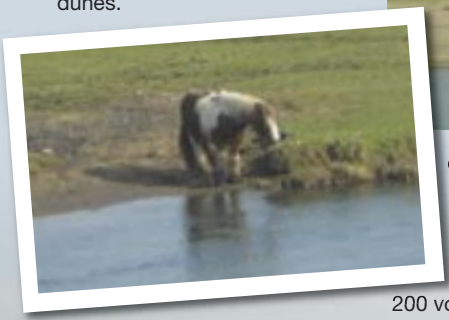
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River Ogmore

The River Ogmore runs from north to south from the Ogmore Vale and Gilfach Goch, past Bridgend and Ogmore. The River Ogmore rises at Craig Ogwr (527 m) in the Ogmore Valley as the Ogwr Fawr before it links with the Ogwr Fach at Blackmill. The River Llynfi, the River Garw and finally the River Ewenny in its estuary are all tributaries of the Ogmore which flows into the sea between Ogmore-by-Sea and the Merthyr Mawr sand-dunes.







Until the 1970s raw sewage was discharged directly to the estuary. The construction of the sewage treatment plant in 1974 provided full treatment to the 30:20 standard. In recent years UV treatment has been added to substantially reduce the bacterial and viral load of the treated effluent. However, in periods of heavy rain, emergency outfalls pour into the river, releasing some sewage.

On 29th August 2023, 200 volunteers gathered at the banks of the Ogmore River to help remove 2,000 tyres from the riverbed. This project was coordinated by a local dog walker with the support of 50 different partners/agencies /companies/local individuals. During the clean, 32 trolleys were removed from the river with nearly a tonne of waste plastic and metals.

We have walked along both sides of the river, we parked at Newton Beach and then walked to Merthyr Mawr Beach. On the other side we parked at the Ogmore by Sea car park then walked upriver to the Stepping Stones by Ogmore Castle. Both walks are a round trip of just over one hour.




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March

A Most Peculiar Month

March still has almost a week to run and as far as 2025 goes, we have answered about the same number of calls as to this point last year, but so far there has been a need to take the car out on only twelve days. There have been three particularly challenging cases of fishing tackle ensnarement; a Black Headed Gull at Tredegar Park tethered to a tree and reachable from the water only by means of a hugely extended hook, a swan at Caerphilly with a hook in its neck which required four visits before, finally, a successful rescue could be executed and worst of all, a Canada Goose, first encountered at Ponthir, was tracked to Cwmbran Boating Lake, and then to Five Locks. Here, and after a total of about five hours, and with the extremely skilful use of a large carp net by a very committed new volunteer to our work (Tim), the goose was captured; just as well, because the problem was the presence of a dozen or more wraps of monofilament fight around its neck. Without our intervention, there is little doubt this bird would have had a lingering death by starvation…
To justify the title of this article, there is clearly a need to change course! None of these calls resulted in a need to disturb the car from its slumbers but provide a flavour of the extent of the misconceptions as to what Swan Rescue South Wales is about.
1**6.03. c. 1600 hrs**. Call from 'E' from Newport reporting a Tawny Owl trapped in her chimney. Even although I'm not sure how this would work, the only suggestion I could make was to find a sympathetic chimney cleaner. In the event one was found but not before the gas boiler installed in the fireplace had been isolated and removed from the fireplace. The owl entered the room soon after this, but when approached by a human with a blanket he rapidly retreated back into the chimney. The chimney cleaner provided the means by which this problem was overcome. The bird was none the worse for his experience and was released locally flying off as if nothing had happened.



23.03. c.1700 hrs. Elderly male caller had 'come by' a cat and wanted Swan Rescue to adopt it. On the spur of the moment such questions are such as to floor one, apart from ruling it out of the question. As a parting shot, it was suggested he try Cats Protection.
24.03. c.1100 hrs. Business woman from Newport had taken delivery of a replacement second hand car. On opening the boot, a mouse fled from it leaving behind a number of minute baby mice. It seems she had been sustaining herself by munching on a chocolate biscuit bar. Unable to offer much help with this one, but suspect Socelex might have been contacted.
And so back to the matter of swans. It seems and actually is many months since the 2024 cohort of cygnets started to leave their parent's territory. One of the last to go, but which did actually have to be rescued from the mounting pressure from its very handsome parents – the subject of our one photograph this time - was from Llantarnam. As with the majority of the others, the 'clearing station' was The Knap at Barry. And so, the whole process has already started all over again.

Story & Photos: Peter & Ellen. Photo: Roz. SRSW.25.03.2025.
For swan problems please contact Peter on 07802 472788.

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Puzzles

CROSSWORD

Across

1 Plant stalks used as roofing material (6)
4 Government tax on imports or exports (6)
9 Coastal area between La Spezia in Italy and Cannes in France (7)
10 Man in chess or draughts (5)
11 Well-grounded in logic or truth (5)
12 Stretchy fabric (7)
13 Substance that stimulates love or desire (11)
18 Female ruler of many countries (7)
20 Often the last movement of a sonata (5)
22 King of Judea who ordered the death of many children (5)
23 Country, capital Quito (7)
24 Beads used in prayer (6)
25 Fish-eating bird (6)
25 Actor ___ Guinness, who played Smiley's People (4)

Down

1 Flourish, prosper (6)
2 Block of iron or steel on which hot metals are shaped (5)
3 Popular British cheese (7)
5 First letter of the Greek alphabet (5)
6 Disposition to remain inactive (7)
7 Picture painted on a plaster wall (6)
8 Trader who sells sewing and dressmaking materials (11)
14 Egyptian paper reed (7)
15 Johann ___, Austrian composer of waltzes (1804-1849) (7)
16 Rope or light chain used to restrain an animal (6)
17 Scottish clan leader and outlaw (1671-1734), the subject of a novel by Sir Walter Scott (3,3)
19 Duck valued for its soft down (5)
21 Point directly opposite the zenith (5)



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

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 20

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Puzzle Solutions

Crossword Solution

Across: 1 Thatch, 4 Tariff, 9 Riviera, 10 Piece, 11 Valid, 12 Elastic, 13 Aphrodisiac, 18 Empress, 20 Rondo, 22 Herod, 23 Ecuador, 24 Rosary, 25 Osprey.

Down: 1 Thrive, 2 Anvil, 3 Cheddar, 5 Alpha, 6 Inertia, 7 Fresco, 8 Haberdasher, 14 Papyrus, 15 Strauss, 16 Tether, 17 Rob Roy, 19 Eider, 21 Nadir.

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

BEACHES IN WALES

Cold Knap beach



Cold Knap beach is a long stretch of steeply shelving pebbles, although at low tide some sand is revealed. The beach is located around a mile from the main resort beach at Barry. As a result, it is always quieter, although it still gets busy in the summer.



Facilities are good here and the area includes a lake shaped like a Welsh harp with ducks and swans. It is a favourite place for model boat enthusiasts on weekends

There was previously an outdoor swimming pool, but this has now been closed and filled in and the area turned into a tourist trail and the Richard Taylor Memorial Skatepark. While you're there visit one of the lovely coffee shops and eateries nearby.

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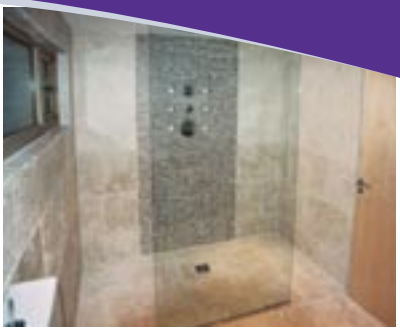
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