CAERLEON

DIRECTORY

ISSUE 108 NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2025



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As 2025 draws to an end we would like to say a very big thank you to everyone who has contributed to the continued success of the Directory this year.

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If you are interested in advertising your business in the Directory, please contact us to find out about the extremely 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 family business and fully appreciate how much your business means to you.

Please check our website for churches near you for information of their Christmas services.

We wish you all a very happy, peaceful and enjoyable Christmas.

Susan x



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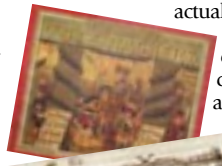
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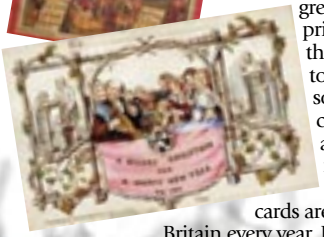
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Christmas Traditions

Ever wondered how we came to kiss underneath the mistletoe, deck the halls with tinsel and wear paper crowns around the dinner table?





CRACKERS

In 1847, the confectioners Tom Smith started wrapping sweets in a twist of paper. Over the years, he added new elements, first inserting a love motto into the wrapper, and then – inspired by a crackling fire – a 'crack' when the wrapping was broken. Tom then replaced the sweets with trinkets and wrapped paper around a cardboard tube. When his sons took over the business, they introduced crowns.

CHRISTMAS CARDS

Sending Christmas cards can be time-consuming, but they were actually invented to save time! In 1843 Sir Henry Cole commissioned an artist to create a festive illustration alongside a Christmas greeting. He then printed 1,000 of these cards to send to friends, then sold the rest to charity. Today, around 900 million Christmas cards are sent in Britain every year. In 2001, one of Cole's 12 surviving original Christmas cards sold at auction for £22,500.

TINSEL

Tinsel was designed to replicate icicles, and was initially made from strips of real silver! However, this became tarnished by smoke from candles, so lead foil was used instead. In the 1960s, worries about lead poisoning saw a switch to plastic materials, which are still used today.

MISTLETOE

Pagans believed mistletoe had a mystical life force of fertility. Kissing under the mistletoe became a popular Victorian parlour game: each white berry represented a kiss, and for each kiss given a berry was removed, until none were left and the kissing had to stop.



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Caerleon
Then & Now



A November morning in 1997 with the children of the Endowed School attending the annual Service of Remembrance in the Memorial Garden. Below in the same gardens after the service in 2010.



Extract taken from Norman Stevens's books of Caerleon. They can be purchased from Caerleon Post Office



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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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More Christmas Traditions

SANTA CLAUS
The tradition stems from the pagan figure of Father Winter, who would be welcomed into homes and plied with food and drink in hope of being given a mild winter. The name Santa Claus comes from the generous Catholic St Nicholas, a red-robed bishop who was said to drop presents down chimneys for children. Some say Santa Claus wore green until Coca-Cola gave him a red coat in the 1930s adverts. But some earlier descriptions show him dressed in red, based on St Nicholas' red bishop's robes. In 1879, the world's first ever Santa's Christmas Grotto appeared in Liverpool.



ADVENT CALENDARS
Counting down to Christmas was started by the Germans in the 19th century, who made chalk marks on a door and wiped them off each day. The advent calendar was invented by Gerhard Lang, whose mother placed a cookie on each day of the calendar leading up to Christmas when he was a child. This inspired him to produce a commercial Advent calendar. The first advent calendars containing chocolate were produced in 1958, Cadbury launched its version in 1971.

CHRISTMAS TREES
Pine trees have long been seen as symbols of hope and celebration, their greenery showing that life continues throughout winter. In 1419, the first chronicled Christmas tree appeared in Freiburg, Germany. This communal tree was decorated by bakers with fruit, nuts and baked goods, which were given to children to eat on New Year's Day. In 1800, the German-born Queen Charlotte, wife of George III, put up Britain's first known Christmas tree in Windsor. Laden with candles, trinkets and sweets, it set a trend and demand soared further after a sketch of Queen Victoria's family with their Christmas tree appeared on the front of a magazine.

Christmas Wreaths

Where do they come from?

Christmas wreaths are one of the most beloved Christmas decorations adorning front doors of homes today.
The wreath is an assortment of flowers, leaves, fruits, twigs, or various materials that are constructed to resemble a ring. They are usually made from evergreens and symbolize strength, as evergreens last even throughout the harshest winters.
In Christianity, wreaths are used to observe the Advent season and are often set up on the first Sunday of Advent. The Advent wreath was first used by Lutherans in Germany in the 16th century, and in 1839, Lutheran priest Johann Hinrich Wichern used a wreath made from a cart wheel to educate children about the meaning and purpose of Christmas, as well as to help them count its approach, thus giving rise to the modern version of the Advent wreath. For every Sunday of Advent, starting with the fourth Sunday before Christmas, he would put a white candle in the wreath and for every day in between he would use a red candle. All of the Advent wreaths, however, have four candles, and many of them have a white candle in the centre, the Christ candle, which is lit on Christmas Day.



This Christmas, consider the history of the Christmas wreath as you're hanging your wreath on your front door. Think about what the circle means to you and your family, and decorate your Christmas wreath with symbols of love and life.

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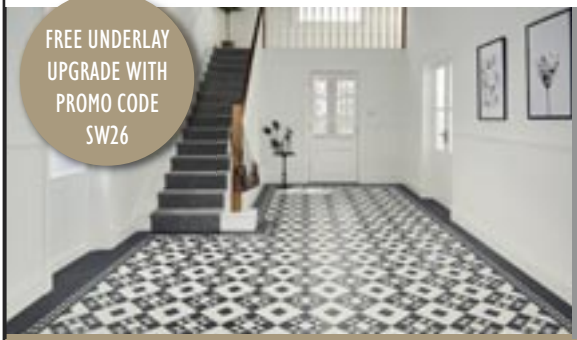
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Investing for Children and Grandchildren

Turning growing pains into long-term gains

As we live longer, many families think about how they can help the next generation at life's key milestones. Sharing your wealth during your lifetime – particularly with younger family members facing rising house prices and university costs – can make a meaningful difference and often brings great personal satisfaction too.

Whether you'd like to teach a child or grandchild good money habits, help with the cost of further education, or give them a head-start towards future goals such as buying a first home, **starting early is key.**

A Practical Alternative to More Toys

Birthdays and Christmas are natural times to encourage children to think about the value of money. Instead of adding to the growing pile of gifts, you might consider **investing in their future** – for example, by contributing to a **Junior Individual Savings Account (JISA)** or even setting up a **pension** for them.

With today's young people often needing tens of thousands of pounds for a first step on the property ladder, even relatively modest monthly contributions can add up significantly over time.

The Power of Time and Compounding

By investing early and allowing those funds to grow, you can give children a meaningful lump sum when they reach adulthood.

However, it's important to remember that **all investments carry risk** – their value can go down as well as up, and you may get back less than you invest.

A pension is a long-term investment that normally cannot be accessed until at least age 55 (rising to 57 from April 2028). Pension income will depend on investment performance and the rates available when benefits are taken. Tax treatment will depend on individual circumstances and may change in future.

Helping Loved Ones Build a Brighter Future

With a little forethought and planning, the gifts you give today can go a long way towards helping the next generation achieve financial security tomorrow.

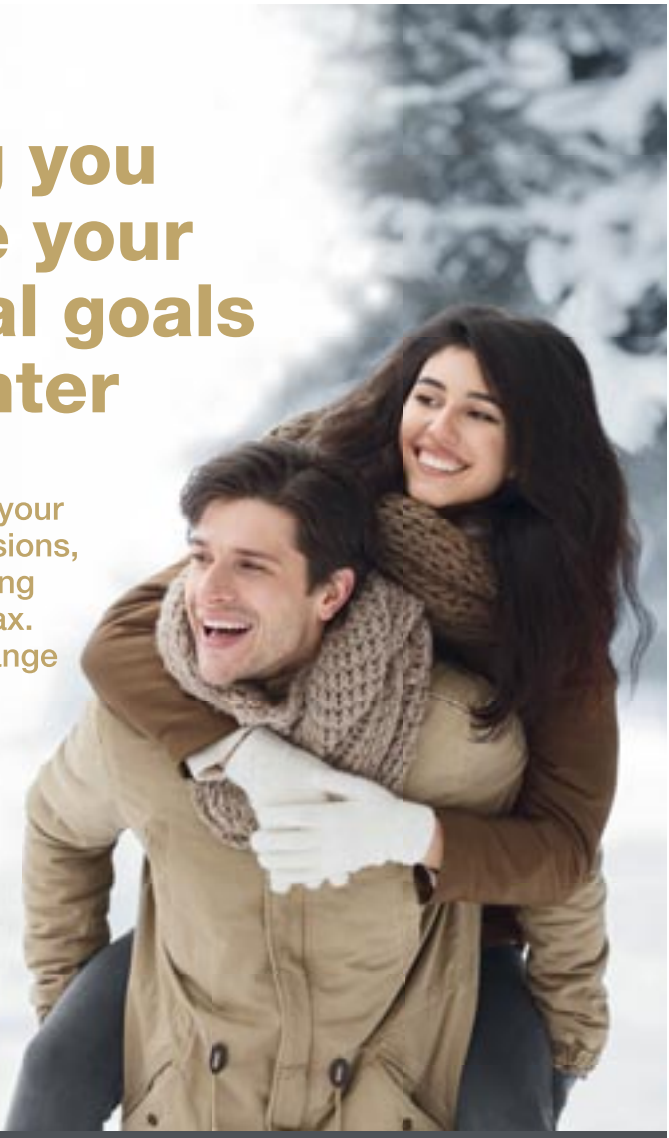
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Festive Music Facts

We Wish You A Merry Christmas is one of the oldest Christmas songs, originating in 16th century England.

James Pierpont's 1857 song Jingle Bells was first called One Horse Open Sleigh and was written for Thanksgiving.

White Christmas by Bing Crosby is the best selling single of all time, its sold over 50 million copies worldwide.

LadBaby is the act with the most Christmas number ones with five, surpassing the Beatles' previous record of four in 2022. Paul McCartney has been top eight times with various acts, while Cliff Richard has spent four Christmases at number one.
The Spice Girls later equalled the then-record of the Beatles to have three consecutive Christmas number ones, from 1996 to 1998.

Bohemian Rhapsody by Queen, which reached the number-one spot at Christmas 1975 and 1991, was the only record to have reached the top twice, until Last Christmas by Wham!, which topped the charts in both 2023 and 2024, making it the first consecutive Christmas number one.

Mary's Boy Child is the only song to be Christmas number one for two artists – Harry Belafonte in 1957 and Boney M. in 1978, although Do They Know It's Christmas? has been Christmas number one for three generations of Band Aid.

Fairytale of New York by The Pogues and Kirsty MacColl has never hit number one on the UK charts but is still one of the most played Christmas songs in the UK. It has re-entered the UK Top 20 chart every year since 2005.

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RESCUE

What Can One Say About September?

It has been a month of challenges and difficulties, resulting inevitably in a considerable amount of driving and a handful of truly awful incidents; so here is just a flavour.

The biggest single problem, which given the circumstances had the happiest possible outcome. The location is Tredelerch Lake at the bottom of Llanrumney, a stretch of water with which we have had a very long connection, a lot of it in the past with unhappy memories. There was an echo of this in mid-August when two of the six cygnets were shot dead and another was left severely traumatised. Eight days later, one of the surviving cygnets was found to be horribly tackled involving a 45 minute patient vigil until an opportunity presented to catch the bird; the rest was just routine removal of hook and line.

A matter of days later, (5th September), Paul called to say that two more of the cygnets had been shot and appeared to have broken wings. Mercifully, we weren't too far away and so were able to be on site very quickly.

With the benefit of modern technology, photographs were despatched immediately to Mel at the Swan Sanctuary at Shepperton. 'No', she said 'That's botulism. Get them up here as quickly as you can.' We were under way in no time at all. Technology, then intervened again; passing through the Brynglas Tunnel, Sally from Shepperton phoned with an offer to meet partway; an offer which was accepted pretty quickly! For this purpose, Reading Services is ideally placed with full entry and exit junctions to the motorway, both to the east and the west.

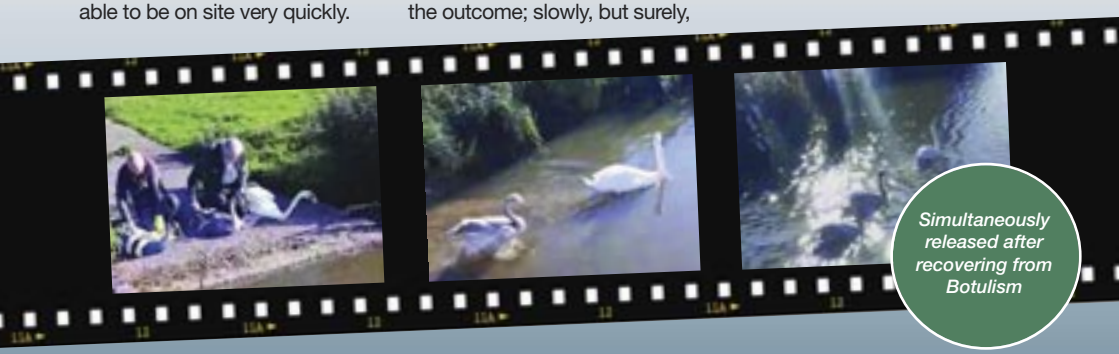
Those two cygnets were in treatment, one much more poorly than the other and therefore on a drip, in near record time.

At 6.40pm the following day, Paul phoned again to report that the cob (adult male) was then showing significant signs of distress. Clearly, there was no alternative but to drop everything, collect the swan, large and very heavy, a long way back to the car and arriving at Shepperton at 10.45pm. For a few days, it seems, it was touch and go as to the outcome; slowly, but surely, the signs of improvement grew stronger.

The effectiveness of the drugs available is well illustrated by the fact that towards the end of the following week, it became clear the swans could be returned to South Wales, which duly happened on 22nd.

In the meantime, a further trip to Shepperton had to be undertaken on the 8th as a result of the need to rescue a poorly swan from Cold Knap on account of it apparently lost the ability to walk, and hence dragging itself along on its belly.

The release of the botulism survivors went well; the three returnees, still in their bags, were lined up at the foot of the slipway, and all released simultaneously; they all departed extremely rapidly and immediately headed half right to the other side of the lake where, quite obviously they had spotted the rest of the family which had not succumbed to botulism. Despite the lengthy absence, it was obvious there was instant recognition and the anticipated greeting between the adults.



Simultaneously released after recovering from Botulism

Story by Peter & photos by Paul and Lynn Cawley. For swan problems please contact Peter on 07802 472788

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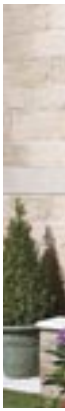
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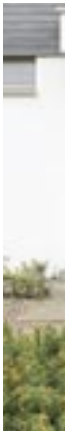


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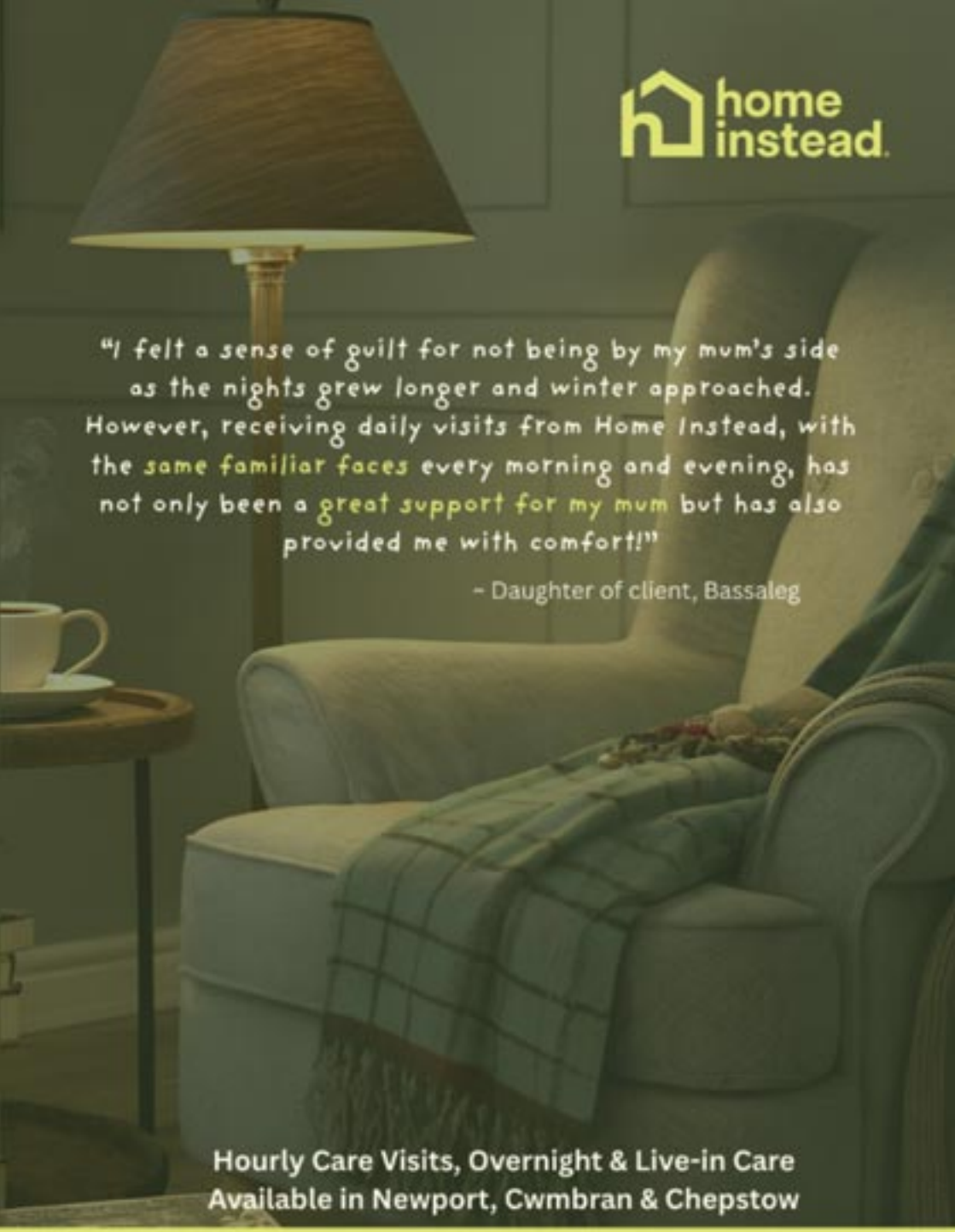
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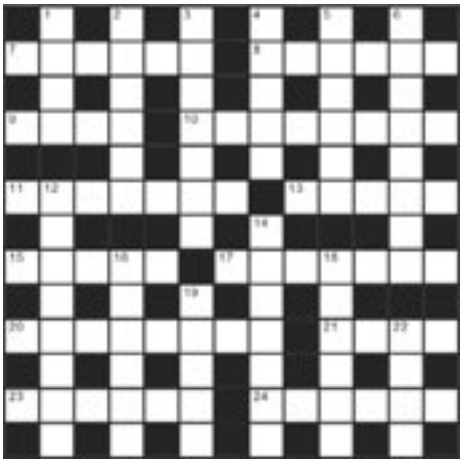
Crossword

Across

7 Any person (6)
8 Strong cloth artists use (6)
9 Wild animal of the dog family (4)
10 Sending something through the air (8)
11 Prohibiting (7)
13 Operate a vehicle (5)
15 Large water birds (5)
17 Easily understood (7)
20 Brief news report (8)
21 A green plant with leaves like feathers (4)
23 Nuclear (6)
24 Person in charge of a newspaper (6)

Down

1 Enter (4)
2 Casket (6)
3 Risking money on horse races etc (7)
4 Provoking fear (5)
5 Reply (6)
6 Large outdoor party or festival (8)
12 Satisfactory (8)
14 Slim (7)



16 Serious (6)
18 An event (6)
19 An orderly pile (5)
22 Part of the plant below the ground (4)

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

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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Does the Pwca Still Roam Over Twmbarlwm?



Of the many folk tales on and around Twmbarlwm the Pwca is one often repeated by story tellers throughout Wales and beyond. The Pwca is usually described as a gangly, evil looking sprite with a long nose and can be mischievous or kindly in equal measure.

Many tales concern the Pwca of Abercarn (or Abergwyddon as it was formerly known) – which some say go as far back as the fifteenth century, and were still being told into the nineteenth. The small close in Cwmbran known as Tŷ Pwca (Pwca's House) – is evidence of that. However, most of the Pwca stories are located in the lower Ebbw and Sirhowy valleys. In fact, a line enclosing the tales, runs through Abercarn, Mynydd Maen, Pantygasseg and Hafodyrynys, enclosing a roughly circular space.

It is said one particular Pwca relocated from Pantygasseg to Trwyn farm, near Abercarn. He was fleeing the wrath of a servant girl after he robbed her of a jug of barm – beer in its initial fermentation stage. Unfortunately for servants, Pwcas saw them as easy victims and became notorious for their acts of theft.

Another poor girl, tasked with taking a ball of yarn to her mistress, dropped it, and immediately heard a Pwca say "I am going into this ball and I am going to Trwyn farm and never coming back." The servant girl never saw the Pwca but on trying to retrieve the yarn, the ball moved away from her. Each time she tried to pick it up, it rolled further away.

Eventually tiring of the game, the Pwca and the ball began rolling away, they rolled up the mountain (that we must assume was Twmbarlwm), down the other side and finally arrived at Trwyn farm. Unfortunately, we are not told of what happened next.

On another farm, things started off much better when a servant girl heard the small voice of a Pwca who agreed to do all her household chores in exchange for a saucer of warm milk. All went well for some time until the foolish girl decided to play a trick and instead of milk gave the Pwca a saucer of stale urine – which was on hand, because in those days that liquid was used for dying wool. The enraged sprite retaliated and began kicking her all over the house. Fortunately for the servant, the men of the house heard her screams and managed to chase it away. From that moment, the unfortunate girl had to do all her own chores.

But from this point on, the Pwca became a pest, knocking on doors, harassing the farm animals and stealing food. Eventually the farmer, fed up with this disruption to his farm's smooth running, tried to shoot the Pwca to get rid of him.

However, the Pwca was too clever for him and taught the farmer a lesson when one dark, misty night on the mountain, he led the farmer astray, by the light of a candle, to the edge of a cliff. The farmer saw the chasm just in time and did not fall – but he stood there all night long trembling with fear.

Apparently, these servants never really understood that Pwcas are very short-tempered. On one farm in the Abercarn area, the Pwca almost became part of the family and often spoke to them from his rooms (which included the oven by the hearth). Then one day, the farmer told a servant to get up early to feed the cows. Now, Pwcas were very proud of their rapport with cows and were well known, for doing the milking, and immediately offered to do the job for him.

However, the servant, wishing to get in his master's good books, spurned the offer and when the Pwca discovered this, he upset a hayrick over the animals, and the servant had to explain to the farmer why his cows had nearly been killed.

So let that be a warning to you: if your local Pwca makes you an offer – don't turn it down and especially don't give it a saucer of urine!

Martyn Vaughan, Trustee of Cymdeithas Twmbarlwm Society

Cymdeithas Twmbarlwm Society meet at the car park below Twmbarlwm's summit for a litter pick and volunteer workday on the first 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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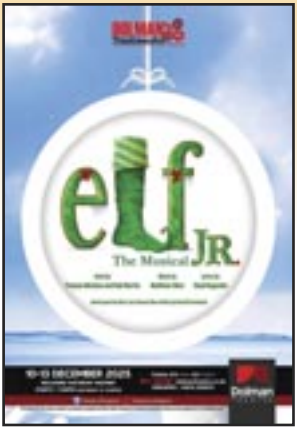


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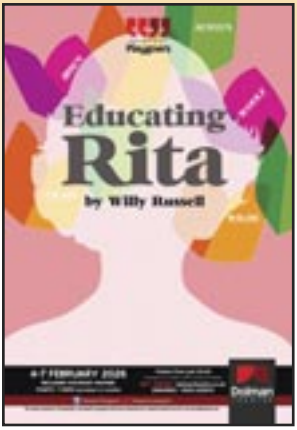
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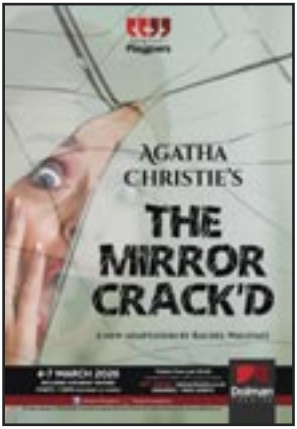
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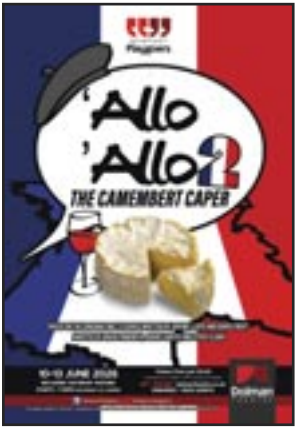












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THE ORIGINS OF ROGERSTONE LIBRARY

The next time you're travelling along Tregwilym Road in Rogerstone, the road that stretches between St John's Church and the entrance to Jubilee Park, take time to stop about half-way down and take a look at Rogerstone Library.

Because it is above street level and back from the road it is easy to miss but from the opposite side of Tregwilym Road you will have a splendid view of this imposing, 120 year-old, Grade ll listed building. It was built 'in a prime site... overlooking the broad Ebbw valley' and, to quote the experts, in 'an Edwardian free Classical style of squared purple sandstone with a slate roof and a lantern dome'.
What makes Rogerstone Library special is that it came into existence because of the generosity of one man, namely Andrew Carnegie and is one of 35 free libraries that Carnegie funded throughout Wales at the beginning of the twentieth century. Andrew Carnegie was an iron and steel entrepreneur, a billionaire described as the richest man in the world in his lifetime and as the world's first modern philanthropist. A patriotic Scotsman from a poor family in Dunfermline, he relocated to America and as an avid reader 'this first great patron of public libraries in Britain and America' dreamed of providing free libraries for all in every town and village. Carnegie worked assiduously with local communities to ensure that the buildings he funded had security of tenure over time and would have





sufficient books either donated or paid for from the 'penny rate' that local authorities could levy. His largesse enabled 660 free libraries to be set up in the UK at a cost of 15 million dollars. His friendship with people like David Lloyd George and with Gladstone, who lived in Wales, and his contacts in the world of Welsh iron and steel ensured that his philanthropy reached many areas of Wales particularly those, like Rogerstone, which were heavily industrialised.

On 29th September 1903 Rogerstone Parish Council resolved to thank Andrew Carnegie for his promise of £1400 for a new library building and so it was that only just over two years later the Rogerstone Library, free for all to use, was opened. It was fitting, perhaps, that the Lord Lieutenant of Monmouthshire, Lord Tredegar, officially opened the library for, as a philanthropist in his own right, he had provided the 'prime site' and at Carnegie's request had also gifted the freehold of the land. There were some behind-the-scenes negotiations before the deal was struck in that the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Monmouthshire button-holed Carnegie about the matter at a meeting of the Iron and Steel Institute of Great Britain, both men being prominent members of the institute.
Andrew Carnegie has generally remained an unsung hero in Welsh history despite his philanthropic work in The Principality. However, there is no doubt that his love of books translated into the provision of free libraries for all has had a profound and lasting effect on communities all around Wales. Rogerstone should certainly be proud that its library is a thriving legacy of this great benefactor's vision.

Reference: Free and Public, Andrew Carnegie and the Libraries of Wales by Ralph A. Griffiths, University of Wales Press.
Peter Davies (photos c/o Christine Davies).

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The convenor has had a long association with the Newport Playgoers Society and is able to borrow a variety of scripts from their extensive library. In addition, we have had the pleasure of reading several works that have been written by our very own members, including a murder mystery that was performed on the Orient Express.



This is the group for those who love escapism by bringing a script to life. Acting experience is not required, there is no typecasting, learning lines or first night nerves - just fun!

Newport u3a meets at the Dolman Theatre, Wednesday to Friday at 8:45-15:00 during term time. If you would like more drama in your retirement, come and try us out for two weeks (FOC). Phone Angela Robins on 07983130541 or www.newport.u3asite.uk

Hardy Plant Society

The HPS Monmouthshire group is for people who love plants and gardening and enjoy sharing that interest with other like-minded people. Our meetings provide an excellent opportunity to meet fellow enthusiasts in a relaxed environment, to take time to listen to some excellent speakers, to mingle, chat and enjoy refreshments and perhaps buy some plants. We welcome non-members, entry is £6. You will be made very welcome.

Our meetings are monthly and are held at 2.30pm in Little Mill village hall NP4 0HE on the second Saturday of each month from September to May. In addition, the group organises garden visits and discussions, dinners, a plant sale and more. Saturday 8th November brings the editor of Gardens Illustrated magazine, Stephanie Mahon, to our meeting. Stephnie's talk is entitled 'Behind the Scenes at Gardens Illustrated'. Saturday 13th December Liz Knight will talk on 'How to Make Wild Drinks', an appropriate subject for the approaching festive season.



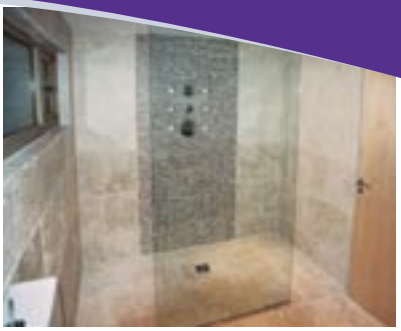
For more information on all the above, our website is www.hpsmonmouthshire.co.uk


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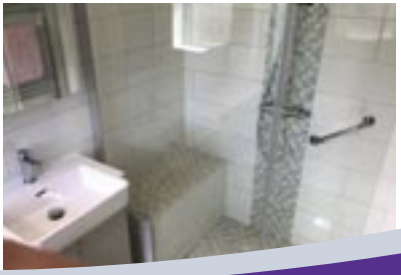


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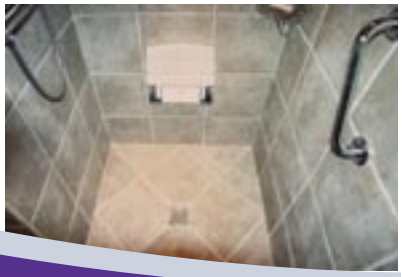
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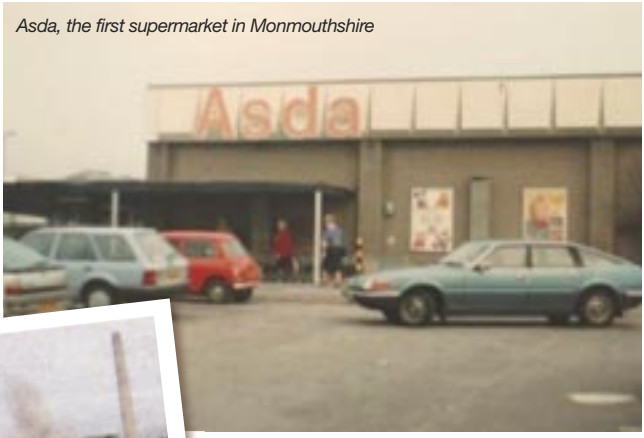
Part 3

Changes in Rogerstone

since 1974 when it officially became part of Wales

Industrial and Commercial Developments

During this period of change, the local economy was hit with the closure of the aluminium factory, the power station and the Asda supermarket but has been bolstered by industrial and commercial developments. Business parks, small and medium size shops and commercial centres have been established, providing employment opportunities and stimulating economic growth.



Asda, the first supermarket in Monmouthshire



Demolition of the Power Station in September 1991

Heritage Sites

Efforts have been made to preserve Rogerstone's cultural and historical heritage. Heritage sites and historical landmarks have been maintained and restored. The 14 Locks project is an excellent example of these, allowing residents and visitors to appreciate the village's rich past. Another example is the small replica of the destroyed Chartists Mural to remember their march through Rogerstone. These preservation efforts ensure that Rogerstone's history remains an integral part of its identity.

Derek Picken



Alcan Factory



One of the locks where the locals swam



Same lock in 2021



Replica of the Chartists Mural

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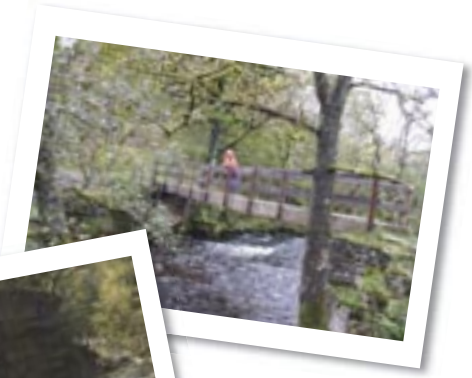
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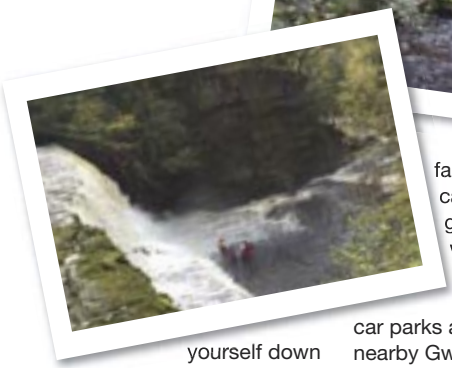
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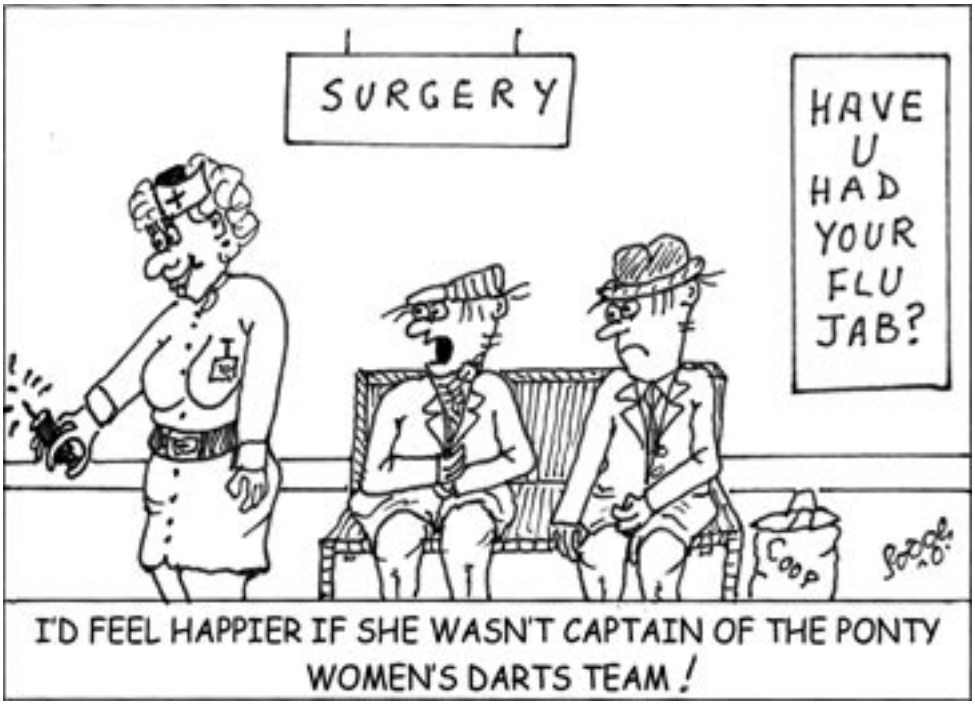
River Mellte

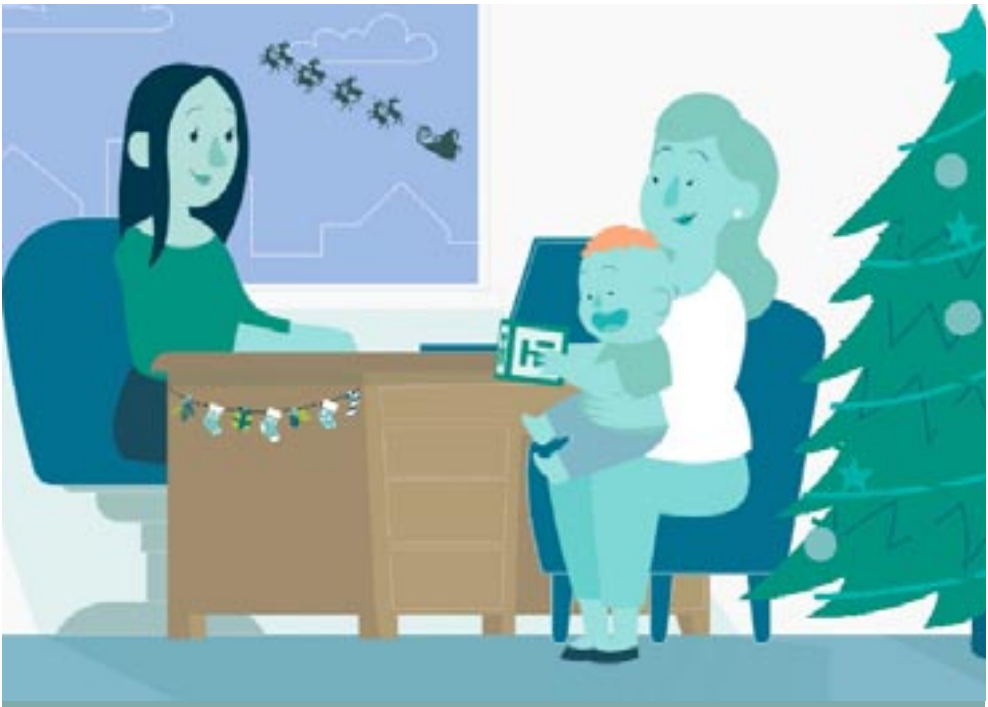




The Afon Mellte is formed by the confluence of the Afon Llia and the Afon Dringarth. It then flows south through the village of Ystradfellte to Pontneddfech an where it joins with the Nedd Fechan to become the River Neath. The river derives its name from 'mellt' - the Welsh word for 'lightning' - after its tendency to rise and fall rapidly in response to heavy rainfall. The bridge over the River Mellte is a great place to view the river that then flows down into Sgwd Clun-Gwyn. When the river is low you can walk along the banks, on the rocks and get yourself down to the waterfall. You can also go for a paddle as the flow is not too strong.

The river and surrounding area are a hot spot for many different outdoor activities including the famous waterfall walks, caving, canyoning, gorge walking and white-water kayaking. Visitors can park at the pay and display car parks at Cwm Porth and the nearby Gwaun Hepste or in Pontneddfechan. It only takes just over one hour to drive to the car parks from Newport and then about a one hour walk from the car park to the waterfalls.





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