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ISSUE 102 NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2025

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Thank you to all the distributors who, no matter how bad the weather is, deliver the Directories for us. Thank you to the residents and organisations for sending us articles. Finally, a very special thank you to the advertisers for their continued support, without the financial support from them, there would be no Directory.

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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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.

www.twmbarlwm.co.uk

WHY DO WE NEED A PROPERTY PROTECTION TRUST?

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.

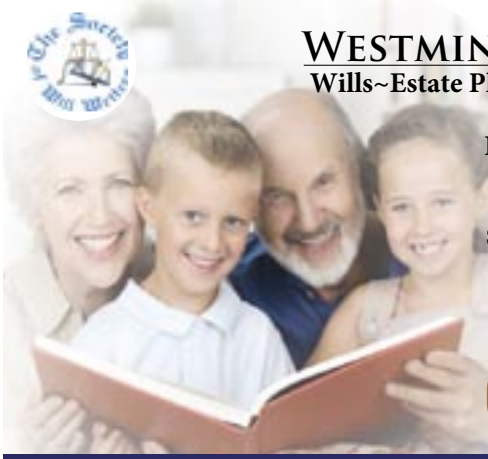
The solution to help protect your estate is a Will incorporating a Property Protection Trust (PPT). A testamentary PPT can only be executed whilst both partners remain alive. Upon death of the first partner, their Will specifies that their share of the property is placed into trust and names the ultimate 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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"For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."
(Isaiah 9:6)

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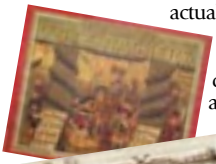
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Christmas Traditions

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.

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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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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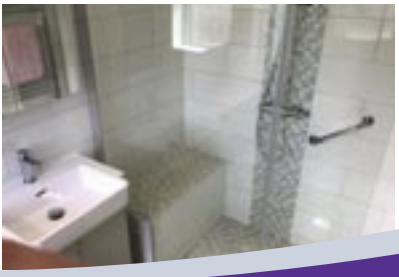


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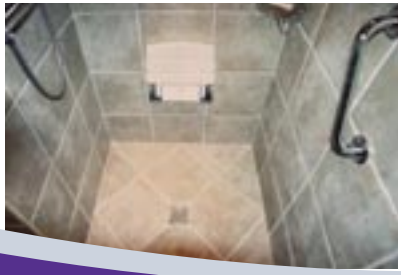
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Christmas Puzzles

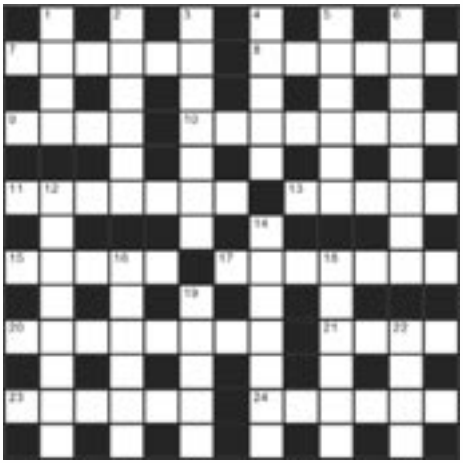
Crossword

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.

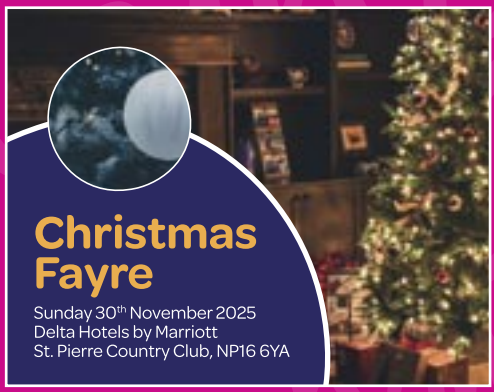
Solutions on page 21

St David's Hospice Care

Fundraising Calendar of Events 2025













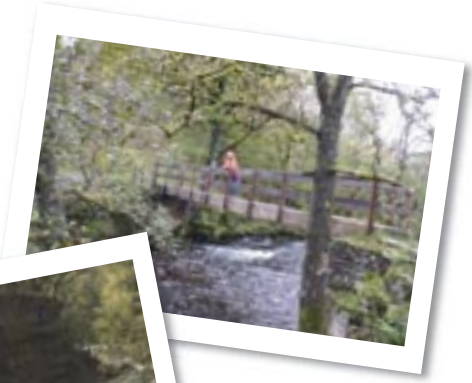
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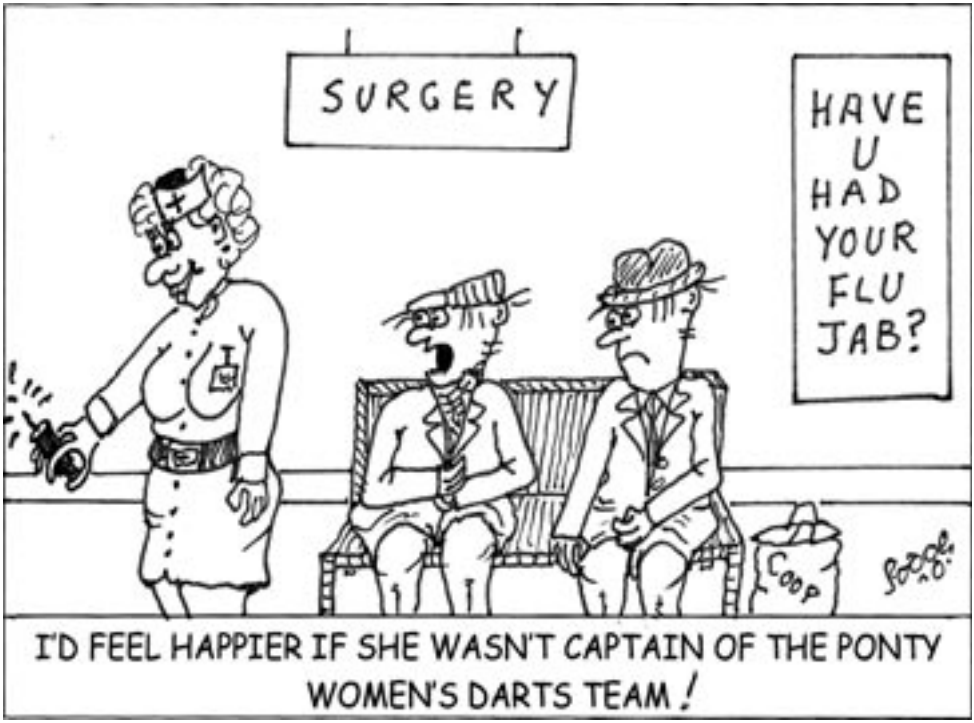
River Mellte





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.



Puzzle Solutions

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



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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.



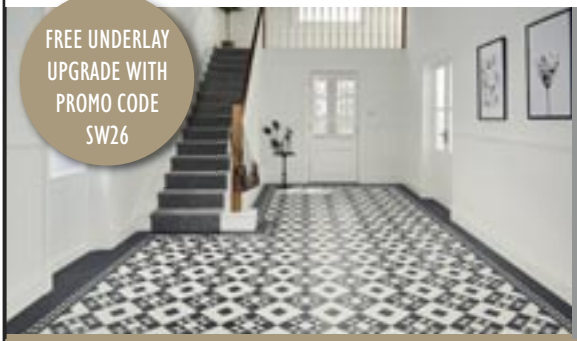
Stephanie Mahon

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

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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.

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



Asda, the first supermarket in Monmouthshire



Demolition of the Power Station in September 1991



Alcan Factory



One of the locks where the locals swam



Same lock in 2021



Replica of the Chartists Mural



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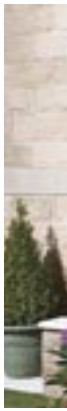
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