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ISSUE 103 JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2026

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Hello and Happy New Year!

Welcome to our January/February edition!

This year we'll be bringing you even more local stories, inspiring people, handy recommendations, and all those small-but-special moments that make our area a great place to live.

And the big news? We're going all in on social media. Expect community updates, local events, small-business spotlights and plenty of extra content over on Instagram and Facebook. Follow along, say hello – and you might even feature!

Thank you for supporting local and being such an important part of our community.

Here's to a bright, busy and brilliant year ahead.

Susan x



COPY DEADLINE FOR THE MARCH / APRIL EDITION - FRIDAY 30TH JANUARY

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Back to Normal On Twmbarlwm



Regular readers of this column will recall that last month's theme concerned one of the many folk tales on and around Twmbarlwm – the Pwca, who was quite a mischievous creature and, judging by the state of the mountain, they could still be active in the area. So for this month's article I thought "…no more fairy tales let's get back to reality".

I'm sorry to say, littering, fly-tipping, vandalism, illegal off-roading and anti-social behaviour are the features of modern reality that I am addressing once again.

On a recent visit I found the car park strewn with beer cans, fast food packaging, all sorts of household and garden waste and the detritus of what youngsters do to get a high nowadays.

The heavy metal corral gate was vandalised and hanging off its hinges – this gate was installed at great expense to ensure the safety of grazing livestock and prevent them straying beyond the mountainside.

Further up the hill the double fence that we, the Society, installed ourselves was cut through and trampled to the ground – and on the forestry side of the Twmp the fence was similarly vandalised for the umpteenth time this year.

I didn't visit the summit on this occasion but I have reports from other users saying that there has been a great deal of damage done to the ground surface, stone paths and the knee fence around the hill-fort.

On the plus side, the large fly-tips that were there a couple of weeks ago had gone – collected by Caerphilly County Borough Council at our request.

Doing something about all those problems is probably the main *raison d'être* of the Twmbarlwm Society. We want to ensure the area remains an attractive and safe place to visit, not only for locals, but also for those who travel from afar to experience our wonderful landscape.

So you see the amount of work required to keep Twmbarlwm in just a reasonable state of repair is immense and when you consider our other achievements I think we have done a reasonable job since our inception some 15 years ago.

The Twmbarlwm Society isn't just about keeping the mountain tidy – we have instigated archaeological digs, built fences and paths, worked closely with Cadw in managing the hill-fort and added our collective voice to proposed developments such as the current project to erect wind turbines on the Mynydd Maen ridgeway.

If we are to continue to maintain this local landmark in good order for the community and our children's children, we could really do with more support from the younger generation. Find us on Facebook or visit our website (**www.twmbarlwm.co.uk**) for more info – because there's many battles still to fight.

Terry Evans, Chairman of Cymdeithas Twmbarlwm Society







Cymdeithas Twmbarlwm Society meet at the car park below Twmbarlwm's summit (What3Words location = ***ironic.sweetened.people***) 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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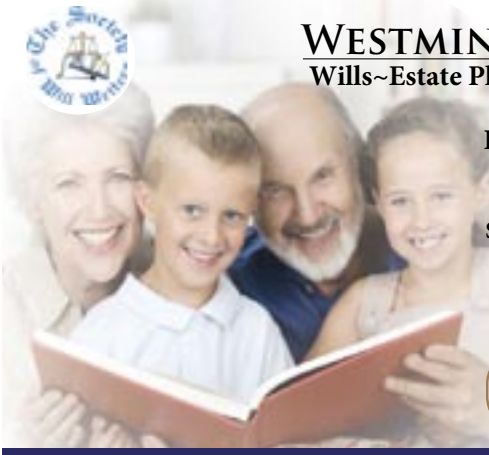
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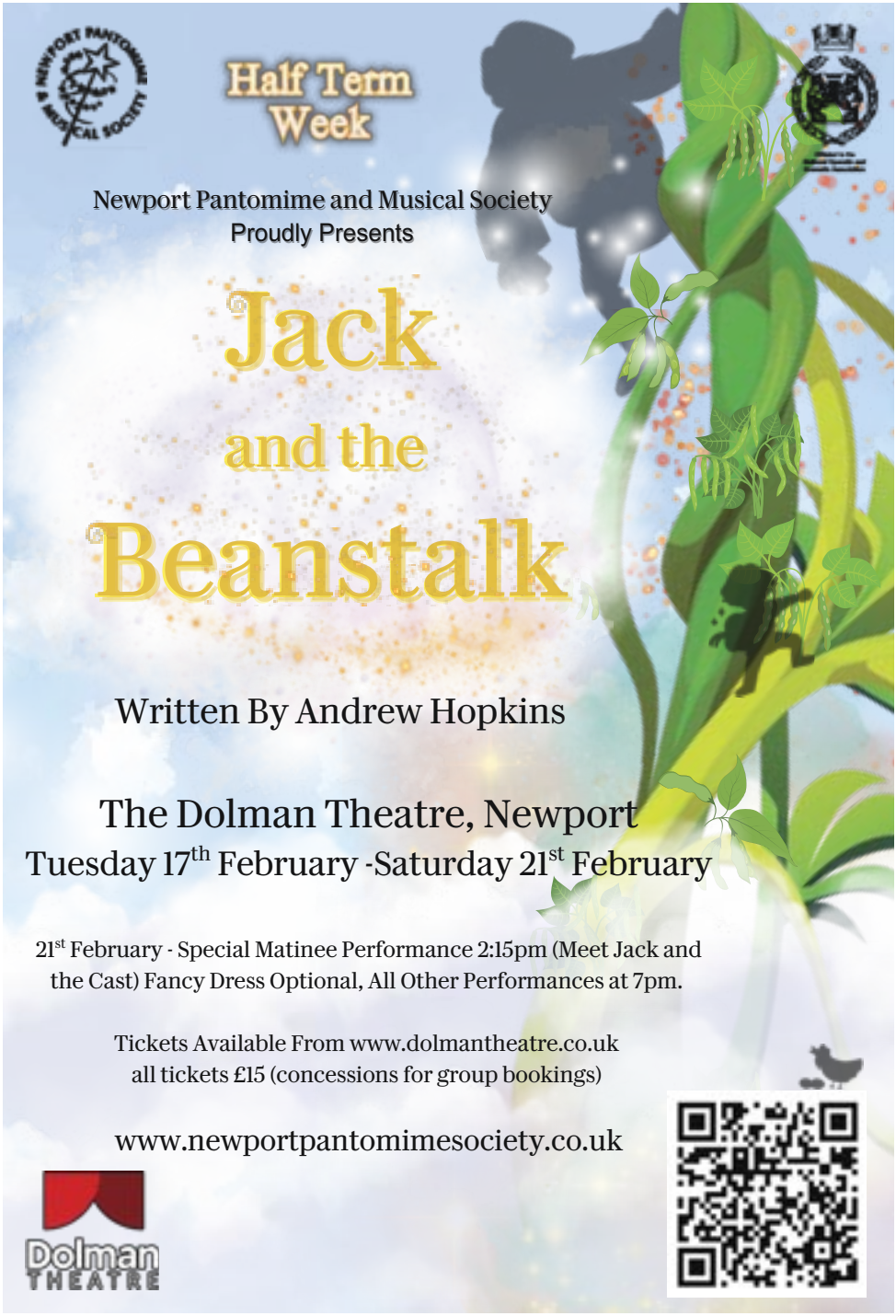
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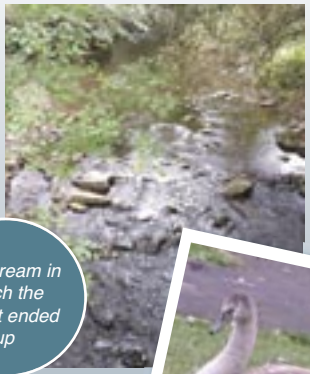
The Hazards of Bird Flu… and Cygnet Dispersal

It seems like a good idea to set this article in context. It is late November; the dispersal of the 2025 cohort of cygnets has barely started, although the first recorded departure from the canal at Old Cwmbran occurred on 13th October. In the meantime, our activities, as rescuers along with many others across at least England and Wales have been brought, more or less to a grinding halt by a very rapidly worsening outbreak of Avian Influenza (H5N1 variant). Birds affected by this disease seldom survive; already, there have been significant numbers of deaths locally in Barry, Cardiff and Swansea. It would probably be appropriate to return to this subject next time, when hopefully the news will be somewhat better.

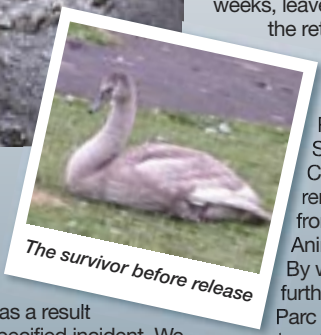
Parc Taf Bargoed is a delightful area some little way to the southeast of Merthyr, easily approached by driving north through Nelson and Trelewis. Swans have bred here for a number of years – the cob, originally from Cyfarthfa Castle is partially disabled, having suffered a wing injury when very young, and is unable to sustain flight but can still give 'teenage' cygnets a run for their money at this time of year! Clare who runs the Snack Ranch in the Parc keeps a constant and very caring eye on developments as the cygnets mature, and indeed following one unsuccessful maiden flight was instrumental in rescuing the bird in question and returning it to the lake. Earlier in the year she had been instrumental in getting help for a very young cygnet which had been totally immobilised as a result of some unspecified incident. We took this casualty to our friend Maria at Amroth who worked a miracle to the point at which its recovery and recuperation, many weeks later was completed at The Swan Sanctuary. Finally, she is not averse to assisting, as was so necessary with the very difficult removal of a bundle of discarded fishing tackle from the leg of another of the cygnets.



The cables into which the bird flew.



The stream in which the cygnet ended up



The survivor before release

Thank you so much to all those prepared to pitch in and help us. It is possible it was the same bird, a few days later, to which we were called at Bedlinog, a couple of miles further up the same valley, where it was 'felled' as it collided with overhead power cables and ended up in the stream below. (See photos). Unlike many which suffer this type of mishap, there was no injury, and it was a few days before the 'locals' decided correctly that this bird ought to be moved. The bird was caught and, given the circumstances was taken into care for a few days, before being released at The Knap, as, we must suppose long before there was any thought that H5N1 would, within a matter of weeks, leave its calling card. On the return journey, a happy coincidence was to hear as an encore to a performance on Radio 3 of Saint-Saens' 1st Cello Concerto a beautiful rendition of The Swan from The Carnival of the Animals.

By way of a follow-up, a further visit was paid to Parc Taf Bargoed in the days following the rescue to assess what was going on amongst the remainder of the family, as can be assessed from our other picture; all was calm and peaceful, and, as we bring this brief piece to a close, it's a relief to be able to report that all continues to be well, at least at this sheltered and peaceful location.

Story & photos by Peter. For swan problems please contact Peter on 07802 472788.



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Part 4

Changes in Rogerstone

since 1974 when it officially became part of Wales

Green Spaces and Sustainability
Rogerstone has embraced environmental sustainability through the implementation of eco-friendly practices. The educational Glade Project and the 'wildflower areas are excellent examples of this, as are the existing and proposed community orchards.

Community Events
Rogerstone has hosted a variety of community events throughout the years, celebrating its cultural heritage and fostering a sense of unity. Unfortunately, the large carnivals were no longer possible but were replaced by smaller village festivals.

Public Houses
As in the rest of the UK Rogerstone has over the last 50 years seen the closure of many public houses. Among these are The Rogerstone Hotel/Jolly Roger, the Three Salmons and The Old Globe. All of which have been Italian or Indian restaurants. Currently the two forementioned are respectively Italian (Dolce Vita) and Indian (The 3 Mughals) while The Old Globe is now a house. More recently The Oak Stave closed and has been replaced by houses. Thankfully, The Rising Sun and the Tredegar Arms remain. Also, lost was The Redwood club run by Lynn and Phil Gibbs (well-known local group artist and minibus driver), The Bush Inn and The Myrtle Grove which were victims of road changes.

Derek Picken



Rogerstone carnival in the late 1970s



Community Gardens



Rogerstone Festival 2006



The Bush Inn



Myrtle Grove



The Old Globe



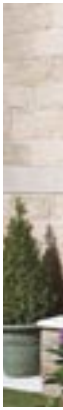
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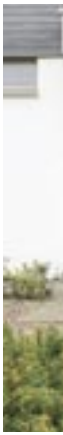
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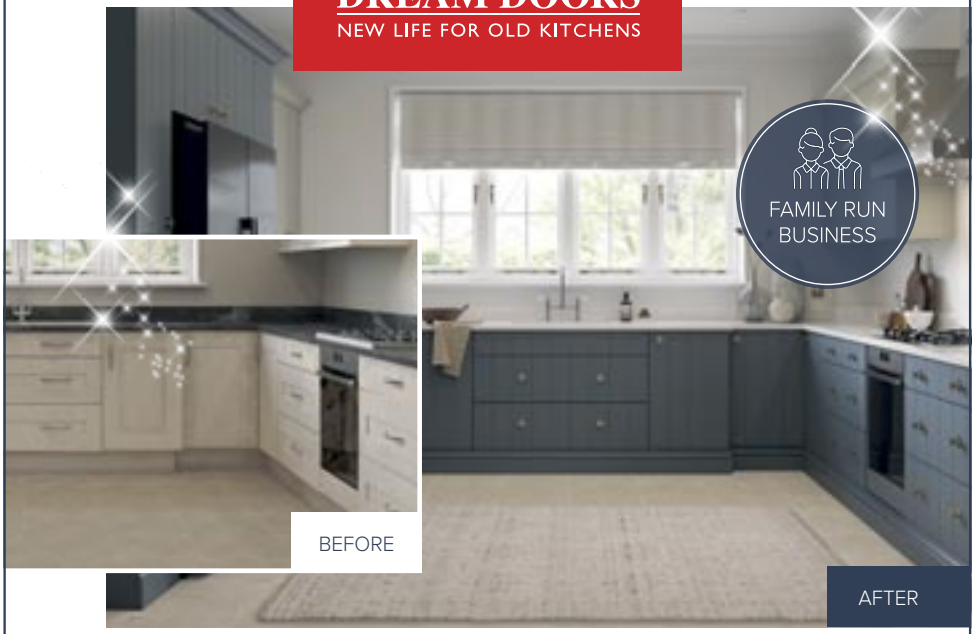
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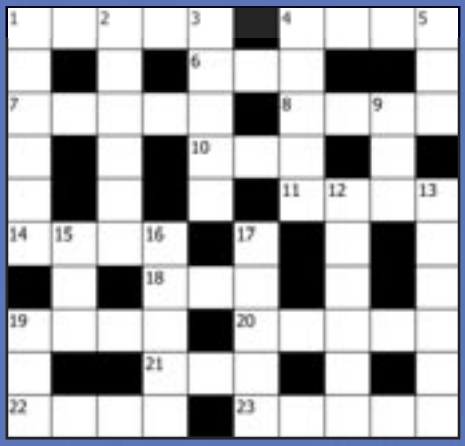
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New Year Puzzles

Crossword



Across

1. Seat (5)
4. In addition to (4)
6. As well as (3)
7. Romantic partner (5)
8. Bird of peace (4)
10. First woman (3)
11. Telephoned (4)
14. Appointment (4)
18. Large seed (3)
19. Worry (4)
20. Desired, wished for (5)
21. Devon river (3)
22. For always (4)
23. Having ascended (5)

Down

1. Named (6)
2. Business promotion (6)
3. Scarcer (5)
4. Poisonous snake (5)
5. Single number (3)
9. Commercial vehicle (3)
12. Takes as ones own (6)
13. Place for fruit & veg (6)
15. Atmosphere (3)
16. Go into (5)
17. Surgical spirit (5)
19. Enemy (3)

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

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 2026













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Sgwd Gwladys

Sgwd Y Bedol

River Nedd Fechan

The Nedd Fechan is a river almost wholly within the county of Powys, Wales. It rises on the eastern slopes of Fan Gyhirych in the Fforest Fawr section of the Brecon Beacons National Park and flows south for seven miles to join with the Afon Mellte at Pontneddfechan, their combined waters continuing as the River Neath (Afon Nedd) to the sea near Swansea.

The start of the Elidir Trail is in the centre of Pontneddfechan. It is an easy walk alongside the river, following the tracks of horse-drawn trams that were once used to move silica (a raw material used to make bricks and tiles) from nearby mines. You'll eventually cross a wooden bridge and you will have the choice to go left towards the impressive Sgwd Gwladus Waterfalls or right towards Pont Melin Fach, which is slightly more uphill and can get very muddy.

There are lots of little waterfalls along this part of the trail, the first big waterfall you will see is Sgwd Y Bedol, meaning Horseshoe Falls. The next waterfall is Sgwd Ddwli Isaf, which means Lower Gushing Falls and the final large waterfall is Sgwd Ddwli Uchaf, which means Upper Gushing Falls.

During the off-season, there is car park at Pont Melin Fach with several picnic benches. However, access to the carpark is via a very narrow single-track lane and to prevent serious issues this carpark closes during peak season.

We have walked from both car parks and it's takes about 1 ½ hour from each to reach the main waterfalls and back.



Sgwd Ddwli Uchaf



Car Park at Pont Melin Fach

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

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A	■	D	■	6 A	N	D	■	■	N
7 L	O	V	E	R	■	8 D	O	9 V	E
L	■	E	■	10 E	V	E	■	A	■
E	■	R	■	R	■	11 R	12 A	N	13 G
14 D	15 A	T	16 E	■	17 E	■	D	■	A
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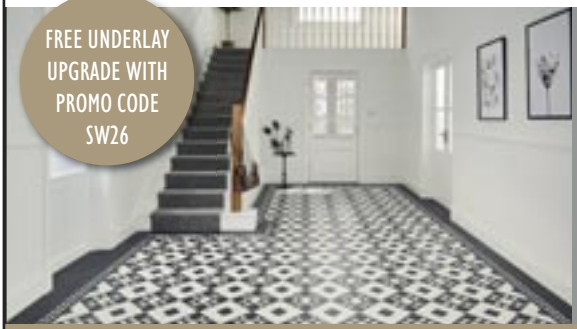
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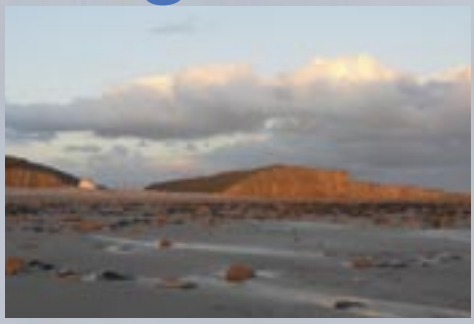
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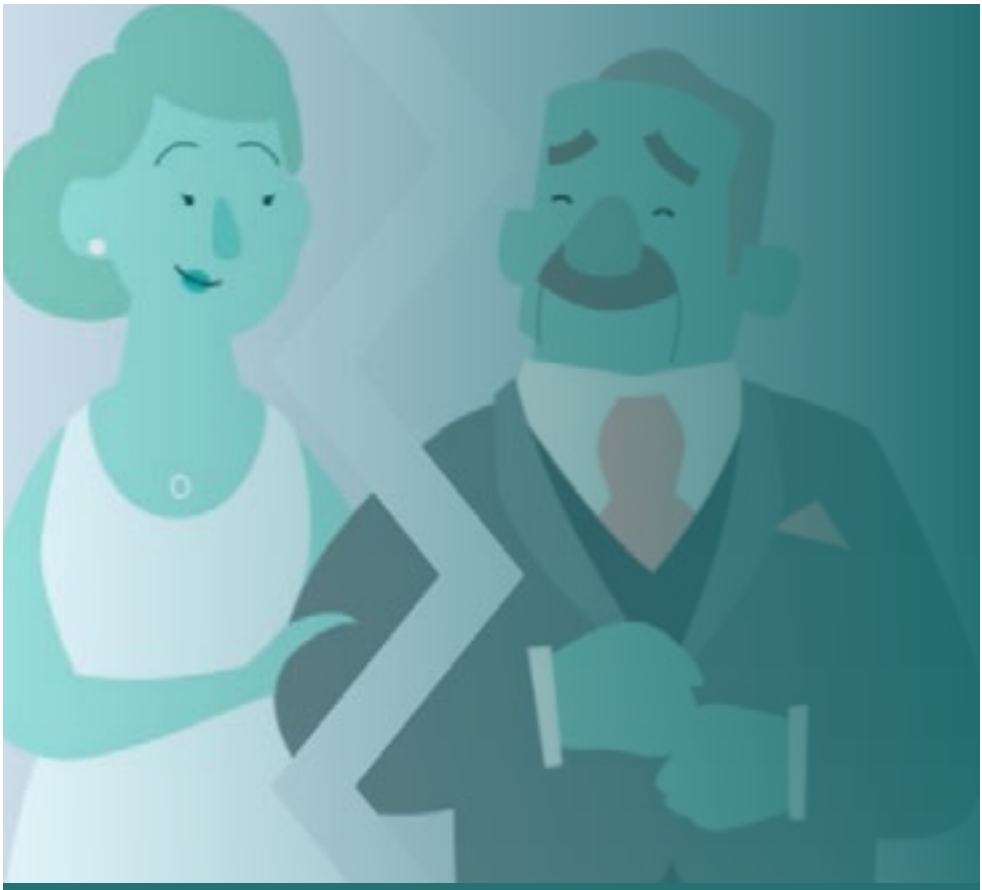
The pretty village of Llantwit Major is located in the Vale of Glamorgan. The town can be accessed from the north by the B4268 from the M4 or by the B4270 from Cowbridge.

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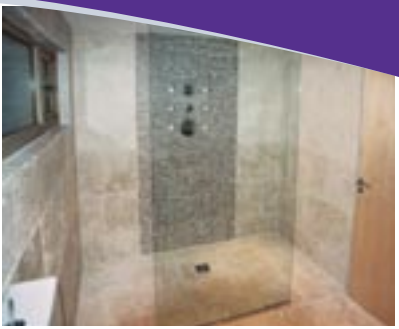
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