CAERLEON

DIRECTORY

ISSUE 111 MAY/JUNE 2026



20 YEARS ANNIVERSARY EDITION

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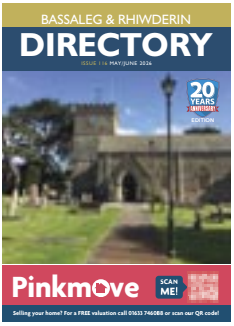
Over the past 20 years the Directories have continued to grow and flourish and I'm pleased to see them still making a significant contribution to both the business and community life in Rogerstone and other areas of Newport.

It's wonderful that so many people embrace and contribute to the success of the Directories, I've been fortunate to meet many interesting and inspirational people who have provided fascinating and entertaining articles for the magazine.

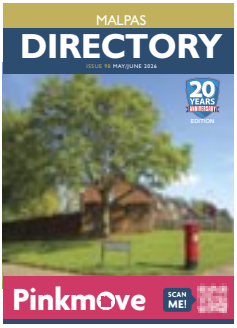
Hopefully, the Directories will continue to grow in the coming years, helping both local businesses and the community to thrive.

Wishing everyone a bright, happy and successful future.

Susan x



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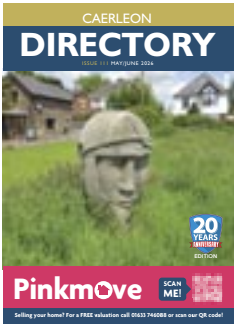
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Caerleon Then & Now



Hanbury Garage from the bridge, 1965. The pump outside the building on the left dispensed paraffin. On the bridge, the pavement has been removed from the left side and the roadway marked for two-way traffic. The traffic lights have been removed and only the redundant column on the left remains. Below is the same view taken in January 2023 from the steel and concrete footbridge which was added in 1974.



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



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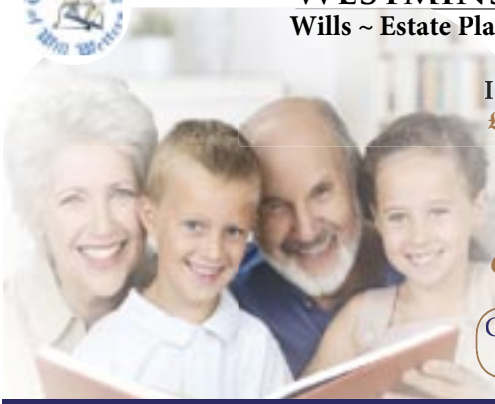


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Dave told SW Directories: "The design process is simple, it just starts with a conversation to discuss styles and individual tastes. Working with a set budget, we can then look at the best suited materials for the job, then it's on to measure to work out an exact cost.

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"When designs have been agreed and confirmed, customers will then receive a supply and fitting quotation based on the products and design chosen. These quotations will include a total cost including the products and the work involved in transforming your bathroom, kitchen or bedroom.

"We usually allow for two weeks as standard, but each installation varies depending on the work involved and will be discussed with you prior to confirmation of your installation date."

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RIVERS IN SOUTH WALES

River Afon Lwyd

Afon Lwyd is a 13-mile long river which flows from its source northwest of Blaenavon, through the Garn Lakes, pass the Big Pit, Llanfrechfa and Cwmbran Boating Lake, Ponthir before flowing into the River Usk just passed the bridge over part of the Twenty-Ten Golf Course.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the river powered forges and waterwheels supporting local industry, especially around Pontymoile and Ponthir.

The river was severely affected by pollution from industry, mine discharge and fly tipping, but during the 1980s efforts were made to improve water quality and improve fish stocks. To aid this, the Environment Agency Wales built a fish ladder at Pontymoile in 2010 enabling fish to ascend past the weir there.

Afon Lwyd Trail

The Afon Lwyd Trail is a shared-use 16-mile path running from Blaenavon Ironworks in the north via Pontypool to Cwmbran in the south. The path initially follows the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal followed by a section on the former Pontypool to Blaenavon railway. The trail incorporates two National Cycle Network routes: 49 and 492.



Big Pit


Boating Lake at Cwmbran


Lake overflow into the river

The village of Ponthir means ‘long bridge’ and it probably comes from the river crossing that was rebuilt around 1800. The river has always been an important part of this community's identity and purpose.

Historically, the river has also been known as the ‘Torfaen’ meaning 'breaker of stones', which gives some indication of the force of the river during surges. Although this name is no longer in use for the river, the name is used to the wider area, now known as Torfaen.

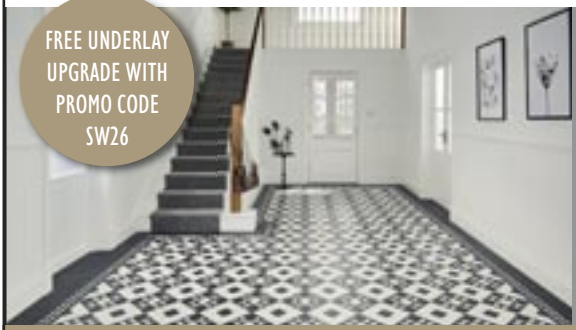
We have visited many of the local places at various times over the past few years but have never realised they were all along the same river!


Bridge over the River Usk by The Twenty Ten Course

Garn Lakes at Blaenavon

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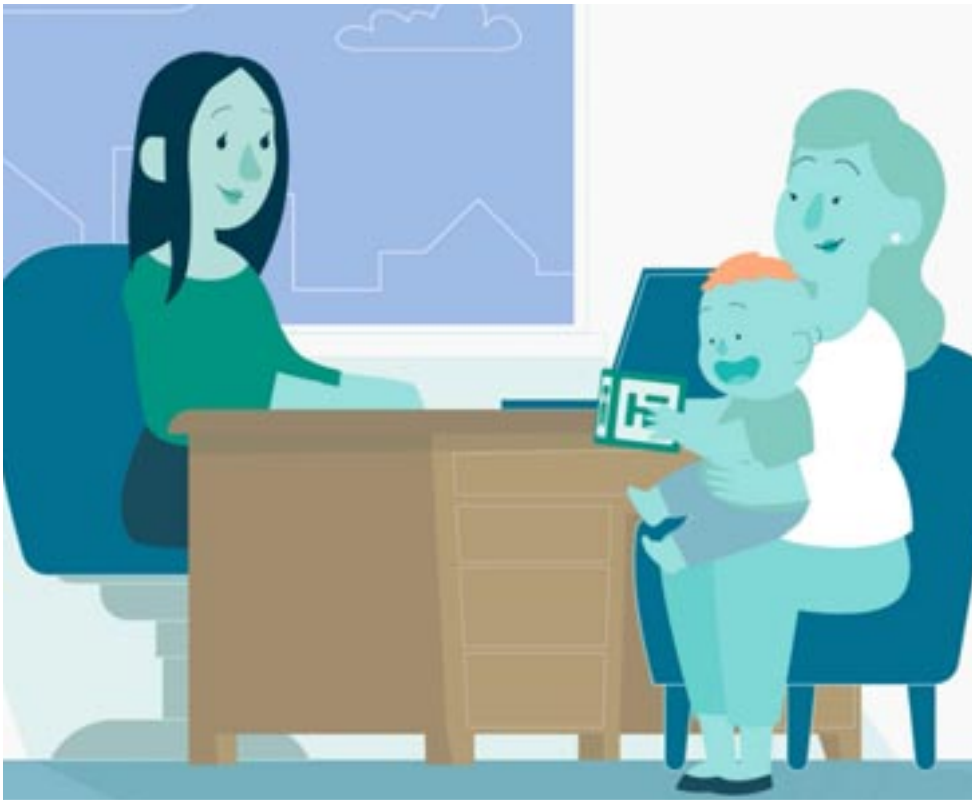
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THE MAINDEE FLIPPERS

by Paul Minton

The 1970s was a golden age of children's television, when parents could leave their kids in front of programmes like Blue Peter and John Craven's Newsround in the hope that something educational might seep into their young minds. One particular favourite of mine was Animal Magic, presented by Johnny Morris.

Each episode contained footage shot at Bristol Zoo, where exotic creatures would be given amusing voices by Morris, who also embodied the character of a zookeeper. It is only in recent years that I learned that he was born and raised in Newport, as detailed in his autobiography, *There's Lovely*. The young Morris was educated at Eveswell Junior School and Hatherleigh Road School thereafter, where his headmaster was none other than Fred Hando, the great Gwent writer and artist.

Animal Magic was first broadcast in 1962 and ran for more than two decades. Over the years, Morris was assisted by different co-hosts, although the only person I remember was a man with the Beatrix Potteresque name of Terry Nutkins. Morris and Nutkins were firm friends outside of the studio and indeed, when the older man passed away in 1999, a large share of his estate was bequeathed to his protege. In his youth, Nutkins had also been unofficially adopted by the author, Gavin Maxwell, whose book, *Ring of Bright Water,* about otters in the west of Scotland, was a bestseller. Besides his connection to Johnny Morris,





however, there is something else that links Terry Nutkins to Newport. It has nothing to do with otters and everything to do with Maindee Pool.

Maindee Pool was an art deco-style swimming baths constructed in the late 1930s at a cost of nearly £40,000 (about £3.5 million in today's money). The baths incorporated a pair of pools: one for youngsters and beginners and another for everybody else. The larger of the two was 100 feet in length and around a thousand spectators could be accommodated amongst the sweeping arches that climbed to the ceiling. The upper windows were said to be capable of being opened 'by merely pressing a button' so that users could experience the effect of an open air pool. Promotional literature at the time of its launch quoted a 'man of international fame in the swimming world', who declared the baths to be superior even to those at Wembley.

In December 1983, Terry Nutkins visited the baths accompanied by two friends. These were a couple of bottlenose dolphins called Sooty and Clyde that he had recently acquired. When they first arrived on site, they were, according to one witness, conveyed through the foyer, up a set of steps, and into the main pool. The animals had been brought along to appear in a series of aquatic shows hosted by Nutkins.

Details of the Maindee performances are scant but there is photographic evidence depicting one dolphin balancing on its tail above the water, waiting for a fishy treat to be presented. Another picture shows a dolphin, mouth agape, inviting an assistant to scrub its teeth with a brush. Following their stint in Newport, Sooty and Clyde travelled to other venues before being purchased by Knowsley Safari Park, near Liverpool.

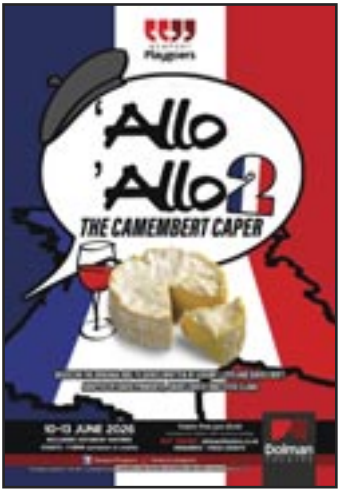
Times have, of course, changed a lot since then. The days of watching marine mammals perform in urban swimming pools are long gone, as is Terry Nutkins himself, who died in 2012.

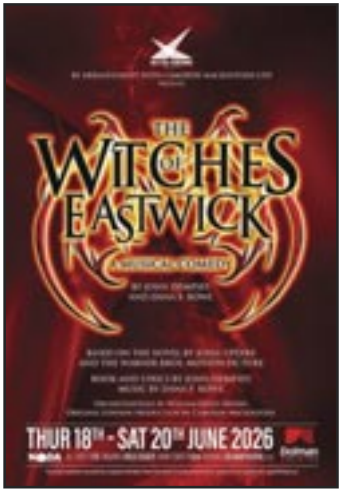
Maindee Pool closed for good in 2005 and its condition has since deteriorated considerably, a situation that was not helped by arsonists, who struck twice in one night in 2007. Whilst the BBC paid for some of the clean up when the baths featured in scenes from the cult TV series, Being Human, it remains a semi-derelict shadow of its glorious past.

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A Mid-Year Financial Check-In:

Are You Still on Track?

As we move through the year, it's a natural point to pause and reflect. The pace of everyday life often means finances are something we 'set and forget'. However, a simple mid-year check-in can make a meaningful difference.

Start by revisiting your overall financial plan. Have there been any changes in your circumstances? A new job, family developments, or shifts in your goals can all impact the direction you should be heading.

Next, look at your savings and investments. Markets naturally rise and fall, but what matters most is whether your portfolio still aligns with your long-term objectives and your attitude to risk as well as your capacity for loss. Small adjustments at the right time can help keep everything on course.



It's also worth reviewing your pensions. With retirement potentially spanning decades, ensuring your plans remain appropriate and that contributions are on track is key to building confidence for the future.

Protection is another area often overlooked. Life cover, income protection or critical illness cover can provide valuable reassurance, particularly if your circumstances have changed over the past year.

Finally, don't forget about allowances and planning opportunities. Making the most of tax-efficient wrappers such as ISAs or pensions can enhance long-term outcomes, but these are often best considered before the year slips away.

A financial plan should evolve with you. Taking a little time now to review where you are can help ensure you remain on track for where you want to be.

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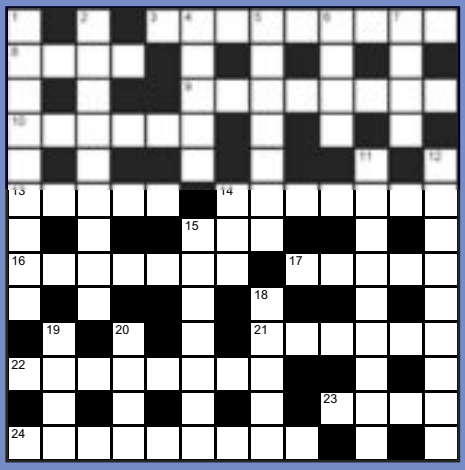
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PUZZLE PAGE

Crossword



Across

3 Pre-decimal coin worth two shillings and sixpence (4,5)
8 British county dissolved in 1996 (4)
9 Natives or inhabitants of Greece (8)
10 Breakfast food of untoasted dry cereals and fruits (6)
13 Country on the Iberian Peninsula (5)
14 Swiss cheese with small holes (7)
15 Nocturnal mammal (3)
16 London-based international news agency (7)
17 Same again (5)
21 Expensive white fur (6)
22 Line of longitude (8)
23 Bird symbolising peace (4)
24 Personification of icy or wintry weather (4,5)

Down

1 Telling fortunes by the lines on the hand (9)
2 French part of the Riviera (4,5)
4 Small plant-sucking insect (5)
5 Hazelnut (7)
6 Lively Scottish dance (4)
7 Tiny, common UK bird (4)
11 Aviator hired to fly experimental aeroplanes in designed manoeuvres (4,5)
12 Instrument for recording the number of steps taken (9)
14 Nitrogen, for example (3)
15 Metal container in which coal or charcoal is burned (7)
18 Roman goddess of love (5)
19 Salty Greek cheese (4)
20 Mammal having partially webbed feet; valued for its fur (4)

Sudoku

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

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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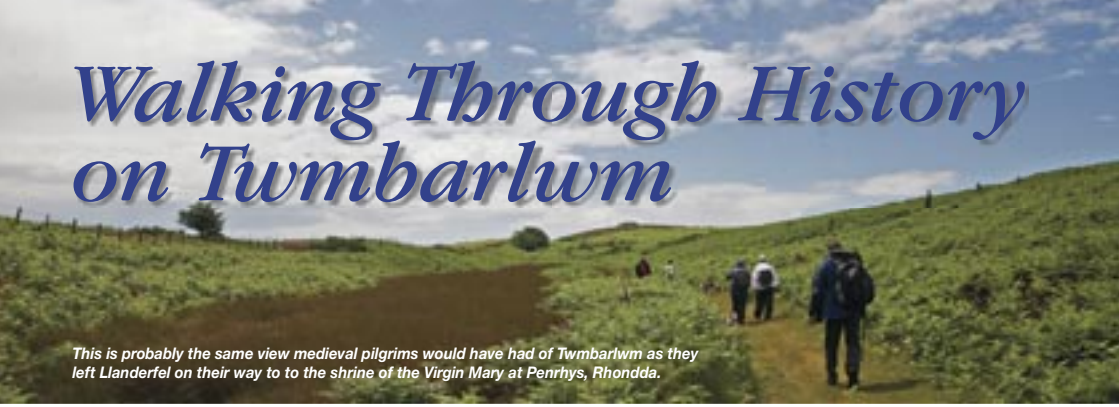
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Walking Through History on Twmbarlwm



This is probably the same view medieval pilgrims would have had of Twmbarlwm as they left Llanderfel on their way to to the shrine of the Virgin Mary at Penrhys, Rhondda.

Summer is just around the corner and my mind is turning once more to getting back out onto our hillsides exploring the bounteous wildlife and nature, magnificent scenery and in our area we are very lucky to be surrounded by sites of historical interest.

This year I hope the society will be able to organise some walks and talks that will fulfill all three of those criteria and we appeal to anyone with suggestions for suitable walks – or better still to any experts who can help lead an interesting walk for us.

Over the years walks and talks have included the Lost Farmsteads of Mynydd Maen, the Legend of Pwll Tra, Iron Age Archaeology and one I particularly remember – the Chapel of Llanderfel. I focus on this one, not only because it's a fascinating story but also because in a couple of days time it's the Feast of St Derfel (5th April). I bet not many readers know this location, yet it's an easy walk across the ridgeway from Twmbarlwm's carpark.

The ruins of Llanderfel lie in a field above Henllys (on private land, so permission is neded to visit it) and the remains of an L-shaped building can clearly be seen - although much of the stone walls have disappeared or re-purposed over the years.

It was a site of pilgrimage in medieval times and lies on an ancient pilgrim route from Llantarnam Abbey to Penrhys in the Rhondda Valley (this is partly the reason we do our traditional Good Friday walk).

Derfel, born c. 466, was the son of Hywel, king of Brittany, according to legend, he fought for King Arthur at the Battle of Camlan.

Being one of only seven warriors who survived the battle, it is said the experience of the bloodshed turned him to religion and he became a hermit, founding two churches, one in Gwynedd, north Wales, the other here above Llantarnam. He later became Abbot of Ynys Enlli (Bardsey) where he died (c.560) and is buried.



Sculpture of St Derfel, by David Lloyd, at the Thornhill Community Centre, Cwmbran



The ruins of Llanderfel above Llantarnam with magnificent views over Cwmbran and beyond

There was a large wooden statue of him at Llandderfel (Gwynedd), depicting him as a warrior astride a horse, to which there was a legend attached that if it was set alight, it would *"…burn down a forest".*

Thus it came to pass, when in the 16th century the much lauded statue was removed by order of Thomas Cromwell after John Forest, a Catholic priest, refused to accept King Henry VIII as the supreme head of the Church of England.

This led to the macabre coincidence, intentional or otherwise, when the statue was used as firewood to burn to death the recalcitrant priest, John Forest, thus fulfilling the prophecy.

St. Derfel's story goes a lot deeper and like much of Welsh legend and history there are many more locations that claim dubious links to historical figures but here at OUR Llanderfel the pilgrim route and placename alone gives us sound credibility. So please watch our website for information on this walk I'm sure we will convince you of Derfel's historical significance.

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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Puzzle Solutions

Crossword Solution

Across: 3 Half crown, 8 Avon, 9 Hellenes, 10 Muesli, 13 Spain, 14 Gruyère, 15 Bat, 16 Reuters, 17 Ditto, 21 Ermine, 22 Meridian, 23 Dove, 24 Jack Frost.

Down: 1 Palmistry, 2 Cote d'Azur, 4 Aphid, 5 Filbert, 6 Reel, 7 Wren, 11 Test pilot, 12 Pedometer, 14 Gas, 15 Brazier, 18 Venus, 19 Feta, 20 Mink.

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
8	9	6	7	3	5	2	4	1
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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Swan
RESCUE

Updates from Cold Knap Barry, and Cyfarthfa, Merthyr Tydfil

In our last article, composed at the end of January, we wrote about a swan rescued from Cold Knap with a peculiar malformation affecting its neck. As noted at the time, in care, he appeared to be flourishing, feeding well and attending well to feather care. Sadly, this improvement did not continue and over the space of a few days, Phoenix, as we had called him deteriorated at what became an alarming rate. With very great sadness we had to conclude, as we had never had to do in 40 years, the right thing to do was to have this poor beautiful long-suffering bird put to sleep, thus becoming another victim of Avian Influenza.

Two months ago, we reported that many entire families of cygnets had already dispersed leaving the way clear for the start of the new breeding season, the family on the lake at Cyfarthfa Castle at Merthyr was a clear exception with all seven cygnets still present and indeed, the adults appearing still to be very laid back. As we reported last time, one of the cygnets (a large male) was already seriously handicapped with a length of medium/heavy gauge fishing line around its upper right leg. It is no exaggeration to say that there was several attempts to catch this swan, and frequently in the most appalling weather conditions. Our victim became increasingly aware of what our game was. Early on, at long range with an extended swan hook, I caught him, only for him to rotate at the critical moment and escape. On the next occasion, with our ace man Mark in his kayak, we were forced to give up when it emerged that our one-legged swan was able to take off and fly the length of the lake not withstanding his disability. This attempt suggested the use of a powered craft was what was needed; this resulted in two massive exercises involving the Severn Area Rescue Association (SARA) who put in substantial resources twice over an extended number of hours, all to no avail, unable to launch a power boat safely at Cyfarthfa. A huge thank you is due to all who took part. During SARA's second visit, the adult cob became very active and all the cygnets had an enormous amount of flying practice, cutting a long story short, our swan ended up on the River Taff, right in the middle of Merthyr.



A sample of weed retrieved from Cyfarthfa during first SARA visit; two different 'hanks' of line each carrying a heavy weight and a hook



James approaching/stalking the swan below Avenue de Clichy

Enter James, an enthusiastic local envoy for wildlife welfare who called to say confidently he could catch the swan, which he did, absolutely brilliantly, stalking the bird with great stealth while carrying a large net on the end of a longish pole. The story continues with a very uncertain outcome resulting from the severe damage caused by the line cutting into the flesh resulting in damage to ligaments and tendons.



The damage, a result of which the swan still has no use of the leg

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

Explore What's On
Archwiliwch Beth Sydd Ymlaen

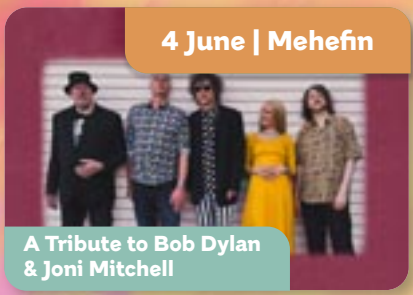
the riverfront glan yr afon

21 May | Mai



Stan Tracey's Under Milk Wood

4 June | Mehefin



A Tribute to Bob Dylan & Joni Mitchell

5 June | Mehefin



Big Girls Don't Cry

11 June | Mehefin



Pianoforte – The Story of Mary Frost

21 June | Mehefin



Sinfonia Cymru – Chamber Music Supersized

28 June | Mehefin



An Early Evening with Johnny Tudor

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Happy Customers Malcolm & Carol Warren



The Louisiana Access Walk In Bath

The latest addition to Newport Bathroom Centre's already extensive catalogue of innovative products now includes Access walk-in baths - a British company based in the Black Country, who specialises in making bathing more than a possibility, they make it a pleasure, with elegant designs to suit any bathroom.

Newport Bathroom Centre Director, Dave Viggers, told us: "We understand you want to bathe with confidence, so the experience is relaxing and enjoyable. This is why every bath has been carefully designed to include multiple safety features without compromising looks. Combine this with outstanding design and affordability, you have a walk-in bathing solution that is unbeatable."

Here is what Carol Warren, who purchased a 'Louisiana' style walk-in bath from Newport Bathroom Centre had to say:

What made you decide to get rid of your old bath for a walk-in bath?
As we (my husband and I) got older, mobility became more of an issue, especially after falling and breaking my ankle. Getting in and out of a regular bath became a serious issue, due having to put one's entire weight on my weaker ankle.

How long did it take to fit?
Fitting took just under a week, which also included waiting for the electrician and replacing the floor covering. It would've probably been sooner, as the work was split over a weekend.

Finally, would you recommend an Access Walk-in Bath and why?
David and his team were really good with sound advice and were able to maintain use of the original bathroom, whilst the new one was being fitted.

Everything was left clean and tidy at the end of the working day.

Where suggestions were made in order to get a good looking bathroom there was no pressure to make the changes, but due to the experience of David and his team we ended up with something that was far better than we could have put together.

David also kept in touch throughout the whole experience and followed up with phone calls to make sure that there were no problems and we were satisfied with everything - Newport Bathroom Centre comes highly recommended in our eyes.

If you are interested in this Louisiana bath or any of the nine other options available, please get in touch with one of Newport Bathroom Centre's experts using the details below:

Call Dave today or email your enquiry for a FREE no obligation quote.

For more info about the walk-in baths on offer, please visit the official Newport Bathroom Centre website.

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The Louisiana with the powered seat





Line Dancing Group

Members of Newport u3a's Line Dancing Group meet twice a month to experience its 'boot-scootin'-rootin'-tootin' rhythms.

The Leader of the Brownies and Girl Guides at Maindee asked if our Line Dancing Group could help the girls gain their Dancing Badges by teaching them two Line Dances. We were delighted to help as dancing is an incredible way for children and adults to express themselves. Also, for older people it helps them to stay active and learn new skills, whilst improving coordination and balance. The girls have to learn three different types of dance to gain the badge, so for our part we got them laughing and dancing on their way to attain them.

Newport u3a runs 40 more active, leisure and cultural groups for the retired at the Dolman Theatre Wednesday to Friday at 9:45-15:00 during term time. LEARN, LAUGH, LIVE is our motto, so if you would like more of that in your retirement come and try us out free of charge for two weeks.



u3a learn, laugh, live

For more information visit www.newport.u3asite.uk or call Angela Robins on 07983 130541.

Hardy Plant Society

The HPS Monmouthshire group is for people who love plants and gardening and enjoy sharing their enthusiasm with other like-minded people.

Non-members are very welcome to come along. Entry is £4 for members, non-members £6. The meetings always take place at Little Mill village hall NP4 0HE on the second Saturday of each month from September to May with the doors open at 2pm and the talks begin at 2.30pm. The group organises garden visits in the summer, discussions, dinners, plant sales and more throughout the year. Before the speaker, there's time to talk to fellow members, enjoy refreshments and perhaps buy some plants.

On May 9th at the hall in Little Mill, we bring you "Grass Consciousness" a talk by Roger Lloyd. Grasses are everywhere in modern garden design. This talk will cover the advantages of using grasses, how they are incorporated in garden design, which grass in which location, their care and maintenance, companion planting and a list of favourites, which will be provided as a handout. Entry is £4 for members, non-members £6.



The new programme for 2026/27 will be available from the local HPS Monmouthshire group: hpsmonmouthshire.co.uk
For further information from the national Hardy Plant Society website: https://hardy-plant.org.uk


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Gwerinwyr Gwent Diary

With the disappointment of only one booking in the second half of 2025, we were eagerly awaiting our fairly busy start to 2026. This began on Saturday 21st February when we travelled to the United Reformed Church in Hereford, to be part of a fundraising concert on behalf of Motor Neuron Disease. A member of the congregation had passed away from this dreadful disease and as he was Welsh, the organisers (members of GG and yes, they travel all the way to Bassaleg every week to practice), thought it would be a fitting memorial to hold a Welsh themed concert, with all donations going to MND.

The concert consisted of harpist Bronwen Wilkins, dance displays from GG, plus a trio of male singers from a railway choir and thus nicknamed The Three Tenders. We each gave two performances with a break in the middle for refreshments, including Bara Brith, Welsh cakes and Glamorgan sausages. The church was packed, making the evening a great success, raising over £1,200 for MND.

The following Saturday morning (28th), we made a return visit to Foxhunters Care Home in Llanfoist, Abergavenny to celebrate St David's Day with the residents. We performed a selection of dances, our musicians played some Welsh tunes, and Barbara Griffiths put together a programme of Welsh culture to get the audience participating. From Abergavenny, we drove down to Tredegar House in Newport, where the National Trust (with funding from the Welsh government), had organised a series of events over the St David's Day weekend. As the weather was dry, we danced outside in the courtyard, but although sunny, it was pretty cold...especially for our poor musicians. We were back again on Sunday afternoon where this time we got to dance inside the house in the large entrance hall. That was well received, with a few visitors joining in with our final easy dance.







On Wednesday 4th March we were invited to Merthyr Tydfil College to present some sessions on Welsh culture to the students. Once again, we relied heavily on Barbara Griffiths to come up with the programme. It was a full and tiring day with two sessions before lunch and one long one after. We displayed dances and got some students and lecturers to join in (after a bit of persuasion), while, in between these, Barbara ran through the language, symbols, unique things about Wales, famous people etc, also getting the audiences to join in by calling things out. It seemed to go down very well and certainly felt worthwhile.



Gwerinwyr Gwent is always seeking new members, and beginners or experienced dancers/musicians are very welcome. Practice night is Thursday 8-10pm at the Graig Community Hall (opposite the Ruperra PH). For more details visit our website www.gwerinwyrgwent.org.uk, or ring 01495 271953.

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