

Welcome...

I am delighted to welcome you to the second issue of Twmbarlwm News. In the months since the publication of the first issue our society has been growing both in its membership and its influence.

The last four months have been extremely busy for Cymdeithas Twmbarlwm Society. Our monthly meetings continued in June with an excellent introduction to the archaeology of the Twmbarlwm area from Dave Standing and Stuart Fry. In July and August we got out and about searching for the 'Lost Farmsteads of the Nant Carn Valley' led by myself, while botanist Dave Richards took us on a walk to reveal the 'Natural History of the Crumlin Arm of the Monmouthshire/Brecon Canal and Mynydd Medart'. Several members also walked part, or all, of the Pilgrim's trail from Llantarnam to Penrhys in the company of historian Dr. Maddy Gray. A big pat on the back for Maggie Thomas who completed the entire route.

Our campaigns have also continued apace. On Sunday 19th June Terry, Roger and I visited Twmbarlwm with the aim of assessing the damage to the Mynydd Henllys Common and the mountain itself. The result of this visit was several photographs of off-roaders sent to Gwent Police, photographs of dumped rubbish sent to Caerphilly County Borough Council, and a detailed 'Action Report' on how our Society would like to see the environment on and around Twmbarlwm improved. More about that can be found inside.

The big news though was our meeting with representatives from Cadw, CCBC and the Trustees of Llanarth Estate on Twmbarlwm on Friday 11th August. We had previously been sent the CCBC plans for the scheduled ancient monument and the meeting

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You'll find more information and photos on our website - so please visit it regularly to keep up to date.

Forces Are Joining To Help Save Our Landscape For Future Generations

Co-ordinates: 51.62736, -3.09365
Height: 419m (1,374ft) above sea level

OS Grid reference: ST 24394 92627

provided an opportunity for all parties to come together to discuss the best way forward. We were joined by two local farmers who I had invited to attend and their input was of great help to the discussions. As a result of Cadw's recommendations CCBC are revising their plans and I expect to be advised of the changes in the near future. We can expect the news to be good as money has already been earmarked and work will commence on the Common and on Twmbarlwm itself early next year.

CTS will continue to campaign to ensure robust fences and other measures are installed to protect the environment of the mountain from the incursions of illegal off-roaders. With this in mind we will continue to patrol the vicinity of Twmbarlwm with our cameras close to hand in case we encounter any law breakers and we ask you all to do the same.

Over the autumn we have further events planned at the Crosskeys Rugby Club. Check out the website and facebook pages for updates. I will be leading another 'Lost Farmsteads' Walk, this time in the

Gwyddon Valley, on Sunday 13th November. This will once again be in association with Islwyn Ramblers but you are all welcome to join us for what is likely to be a nine mile walk. Sturdy footwear, wet weather gear and a packed lunch will be essential if you plan to come along.

On a final note, CTS launched a real ale called 'Twmbarlwm Brew' at the Wheatsheaf Hotel, Llantrisant on Friday 30th September. This has been produced for our society by Newman's Brewery at Caerphilly. It is hoped that the beer will be available in local public houses and other retailers of fine ale so we can all drink a toast to the mountain.

These are exciting times for our society and for the communities that surround the mountain. As a direct result of our efforts the future of Twmbarlwm is more secure and we hope that you will continue to support CTS in the coming year. Please ensure that you renew your membership to help us maintain the campaign to return Twmbarlwm and Mynydd Henllys common to its former glory.

Rob Southall

www.twmbarlwm.co.uk

More Action... Less Talk...

The first aim of CTS was to raise public awareness of the problems around Twmbarlwm and public response has been very positive. But most people asked the question "What, exactly, are we going to do to rectify the situation?"

So with that in mind, a group of us convened on the tump in June to assess the condition of the area, report problems and subsequently to create an 'Action Document' to present to 'the-powers-that-be'.

ON SUNDAY 19th June 2011 committee members Terry Evans, Roger Stevenson and Rob Southall met up to cast their eyes around the vicinity of Twmbarlwm taking photographs and making notes.

The following is a report of that field visit and proposals of possible actions and aims that the society should campaign for.



1. MOUNTAIN ROAD from RISCA

Cattle Grid on lane up from Risca adjoining Mynydd Henllys Common

The cattle grid and fence around is in reasonable repair at the moment but vandal-proof signage is needed to warn and inform people that they are entering Mynydd Henllys Common.

This sign could include a guide to what is permitted on common land and possibly something about the history, flora and fauna of the area. It might also include information about the Scheduled Ancient Monument on the summit of Twmbarlwm.

2. CAR PARK

We understand that the council intends to build a car park but, at the time of writing, its exact location has not been finalised. We believe that the society should be involved in the consultation for all the proposed works on Twmbarlwm and Mynydd Henllys Common. We feel that the best location for the car park would be the area mentioned in point 4 below.

3. HILLSIDE SCARRING

The society should aim to do something about the terrible scarring on the SE side of the hillside up to Twmbarlwm. This is the result of the activities of off-road motor bikers.



4. CROSSROADS

The crossroads of the lane (Mountain Road) from Risca to Pant-yr-Yrfa, the path to Henllys Cwrt Farm and the green lane up to the Mynydd Maen ridge.

This is a major problem area with lots of litter and builders' waste. The rocks at the entrance to the lane down to Henllys farm have been moved to allow access for vehicles. This is also the place where off-road motorcycles park their vans.



The GoogleMap satellite image clearly shows the damage created by illegal biking and off-road vehicles on Twmbarlwm and the ridge of Mynydd Maen

Several were in evidence on the day along with a number of motorcycles and two quad bikes (none with number plates). These were driving on the public road and on footpaths on the common – we reported this to the police.

Until a few years ago the entrance to the green lane was protected by a farm gate. The gate was destroyed by vandals and this area has been deeply scoured by vehicle activity. This "gateway" marks the southern end of the fence which goes up the hill towards the tump and follows the County boundary line. The gate, fence and landscape need extensive refurbishment.

A ditch or gate is needed at the end/beginning of the green lane as this area is a disaster zone due to the activities of off-roaders.



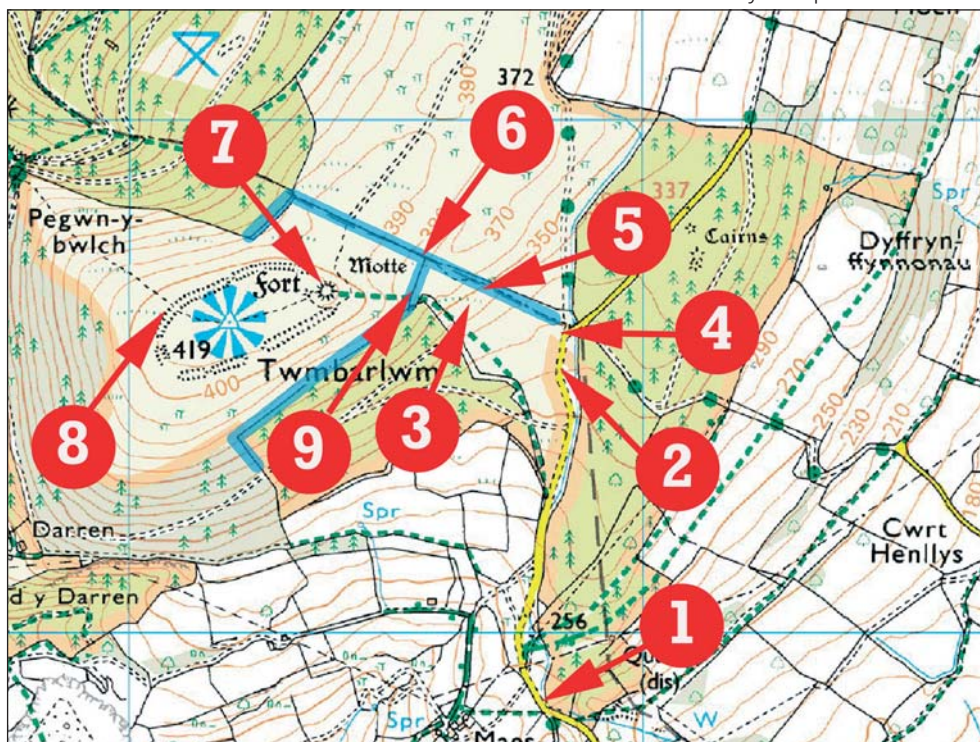
5. FENCING

Much of the existing fencing around the top of the mountain is inadequate and vandalised in many places, so more robust fencing is needed following the existing layout and it will create the first line of defence – approx. 1.5km (marked in blue on map). This might be hawthorn hedging, drystone walls or the 'alamo' arrangement utilised by Blaen Bran Community Woodland – this was described to us by Roger as basically a double skin fence with hawthorn planted in between, which in time will form an impenetrable barrier

6. NE ENTRANCE

North Side of Twmbarlwm adjoining Mynydd Henllys Common

A kissing gate has been fitted here but the fence surrounding this is down allowing easy access for motor cycles. The fence here is the line of the Caerphilly/Torfaen Boundary. The area within the fence includes Twmbarlwm and has been taken out of the common. It is owned by the Trustees of Llanarth Estate and rented for private grazing to Mr Howard Vickery.



There needs to be a gate with a padlock here to allow Mr Vickery to pasture his animals and for vehicular access and for maintenance teams.



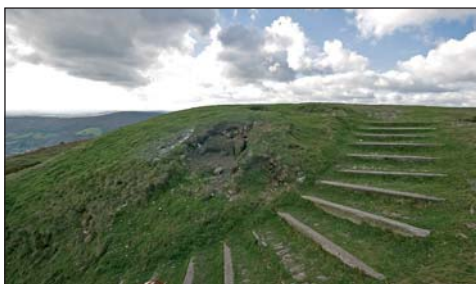
As this is one of the prime entry points to the Tump it is a good location for information and/or a feature gate – but we must ensure it is done sympathetically and low level so as not to obscure the view of the Tump itself.

We have noticed how many people scatter ashes or place memorabilia of loved ones on and around the Tump – whereas it would be impossible to stop this activity, signage could offer advice and information how and where to do so without damaging the historical monument.

This might also be a good place to put an entry feature.

7. SUMMIT AREA AND TUMP

The low fence at the base of the motte/tump is in a very bad state of repair and should be replaced with something similar but more vandal resistant. But it should be remembered that once the fence around the outer boundaries is replaced and properly maintained there should be less need for the knee-high fence inside the ditch.



The two sets of steps to the top of the tump are badly worn and rotting – they are constructed of railway sleeper style timbers and have lasted over 20 years and they need replacing with similar or something more permanent.

There is a serious excavation in the SE corner of the summit which is getting worse by the day – this needs immediate repair – exposure to another winter will be disastrous to this corner of the Tump.

At the point where the footpath from the trig point converges on the south-western side of tump there is serious erosion at several points. We need to define a single pathway here with, possibly, steps and/or edge protection to the path to encourage people to approach at just one point and so reduce the amount of erosion caused by footfall.

8. NW ENTRANCE

The NW corner of the ditch marks the entrance to the site from the Pegwyn-y-Bwlch car park – the pathway is deeply eroded here and again the edges need protection to prevent further erosion.



This is another major entry point and although there is signage at the Forestry Drive car park below – the style of signage and entry should reflect whatever is done on the two other entrances.

9. SE ENTRANCE

Top of path up from proposed car park (SE corner)
Many people regard this as the main entrance as it's the easiest access from the Risca side. Up until now the strongly constructed wooden fence and stile has proved adequate but again the fence has been torn down on one side and bikers can just about squeeze through – immediate repairs are needed (but please remember a dog gate) – but in the fullness of time a more attractive solution should be found.



It was proposed that we have some form of 'proper' entrance here. Large stones or some architectural feature.

Meeting of the Big Guns

ALMOST COINCIDENTALLY, as soon as our "Action Report" had been completed the society was given sight of CCBC's proposals for restorative work on Twmbarlwm. With it came an invitation for all interested parties to meet for a site visit to discuss the plans.

So on Friday 11th August five CTS members met with representatives from Cadw, CCBC and the Trustees of Llanarth Estate. We were also joined by two local farmers whose input was of great help to the discussions.

The meeting started with a discussion on the siting of the proposed car park. This has been a contentious point with CTS members and the area proposed by CCBC even more so. But with guidance from the farmers, particularly their local knowledge of the water courses, we were able to identify an area that suited all arguments. The exact location will be revealed in the revised CCBC proposals.

The group then climbed to the top of the tump taking in all the points of concern raised in our own "Action Document" – most things we had outlined also formed part of the CCBC proposals.

We were joined at the top by Cadw inspector Jonathan Berry who explained Cadw's role and the limitations of their responsibilities for the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Twmbarlwm. Basically, they regularly inspect it and report on its condition yet they do not physically effect repairs – that is up to organisations like ourselves. But Cadw's permission and advice must be sought before starting any work on the tump and its environs.

Clearly, Cadw have the expert knowledge of how such monuments should be treated and Jonathan was able to advise the council's engineer, Don Grewar, on many aspects of restorative and repair techniques that would be permissible.

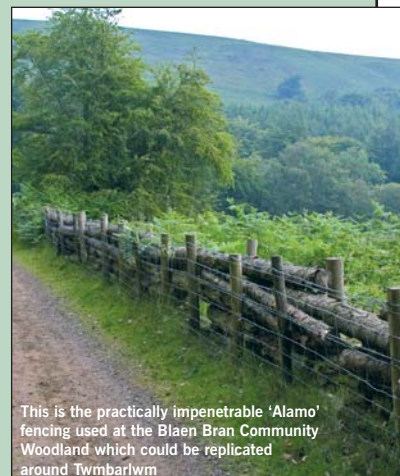
As CCBC already has funding in position to start repair work, it was agreed that they should make all necessary applications to Cadw for approval to proceed.

The whole meeting was steered forward by Ross Murray of Llanarth Estates who was very supportive of all the society's proposals, even throwing in some interesting ideas of his own for future promotions – like the possibility of a beacon on Twmbarlwm for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations in 2012.

One area that CTS members passionately feel must be addressed as soon as possible is the repair and upgrading of fencing around the base of the mountain (marked in blue on the map). This fence is broken in many places and allows scramblers and off-roaders easy access to the mountain top.

We know that in the past, any attempt to repair the fence has often been thwarted by someone else with wire-cutters. But we feel we have found the solution with the "alamo" fencing adopted by the Blaen Bran Community Woodland Trust. Not everybody agreed that such fencing should be a priority, but we believe it is a project in which CTS could take a lead by seeking funding and organising a volunteer workforce and it would send out a positive message to visitors to show that we really care for this area.

In conclusion the CTS members felt this meeting had been the most productive and positive meeting we have ever had. All the parties with an interest in the area had come together as one and in general had agreed on the direction we need to proceed to ensure that Twmbarlwm, the mountain and the ancient monument at its summit, will be restored and kept in the best possible state for future generations to enjoy.



This is the practically impenetrable 'alamo' fencing used at the Blaen Bran Community Woodland which could be replicated around Twmbarlwm

The Abuse Continues...

But remember – the law is on our side and for those who break it, ignorance of the law is no defence.

INCURSIONS BY off-roaders continue to be a major problem on both the top of Twmbarlwm and on the Common below. CTS members regularly walk in the vicinity of Twmbarlwm and we would estimate that there are off-roaders using and abusing the Common about eighty per cent of the time.

In recent months we have observed and photographed several incursions that would be considered serious. Back in July a Land Rover Discovery was seen to drive up the lane from Risca, up the stony track and over the Common. It then passed through the broken down fence and onto the path leading up to the top of the mountain.

Luckily it was unable to get over the rocky outcrop towards the top of the footpath. It was left parked there. Several photographs were taken and sent to Gwent Police who subsequently spoke to the driver.

A few weeks later, following a circular walk of the Nant Carn valley by CTS members, two motorcycles and a quad bike were seen racing about on the Common and were captured on video.

Later a motorbike was spotted actually on the top of the tump. He was then joined by two quad bikers who shortly afterwards rode off in the direction of Cwmbran. These were also videoed but, unfortunately, the images were not good enough to use by the police.

This behaviour is causing immense environmental damage with major scarring to the landscape occurring constantly. This is leading to further soil erosion and the potential



for further damage associated with the heavy rain we have been having in recent years is very great.

Run off from the Common is becoming a problem and a potential flood risk. In addition local farmers now consider the Common to be largely useless for grazing animals.

It should be remembered that it is an offence to drive or ride a motorised vehicle on common land. Twmbarlwm itself is private property that is designated open access land for walkers only. Any vehicles on the top of the mountain are trespassing and committing a criminal offence.

We ask you all to be vigilant and take note or photographs of any off-roaders you see on the Common or on the mountain itself. You can send your report and/or images to us and we will pass them on to Gwent Police.

Rob Southall



Dealing with Typical Offences

Here are some typical offences encountered in the countryside which the Police, Environment Agency or Local Authorities can and should investigate. Any citizen suspicious of an offence being committed is within their rights to report it to the police and they, in turn, are obliged to investigate it.

OFFENCE

Vehicular trespass including off-roading
Vehicle abandonment
Fly tipping or littering
Criminal damage including arson
Abusive, insulting words or behaviour
Possession of firearms including air weapons and imitation firearms
Killing, injuring, taking or disturbing wild animals, birds and plants
Using a vehicle (on bridleway or footpath) in a manner to cause alarm, distress or annoyance

LAW

Road Traffic Act 1988/ Police Reform Act 2002
The Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978
Environmental Protection Act 1990
Criminal Damage Act 1971
Public Order Act 1986
Firearms Act 1968

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

Road Traffic Act 1988/ Police Reform Act 2002 (Section 59)

999 – is the emergency number that we all know – as long as you are using the **999** system in good faith you will not be criticised.

101 – is the routine number for all Welsh Police Services intended for:

- Crimes where time has elapsed since being committed
- Information regarding crimes, incidents and criminals
- Non-emergency incidents that do not require an immediate police response

0800 555 111 – Is the **Crime Stoppers** number – it is a free and confidential number. Using it, information can be passed on anonymously.

Whoever you report to, remember to be as accurate as possible with your information. Give an exact location, what you have witnessed or are witnessing and descriptions of persons and vehicles including registration numbers. A camera is always very useful in such instances but please be careful not to get yourself into a difficult or even a dangerous situation by confronting perpetrators directly.

Twmbarlwm Dump

Fly tipping is unsightly, dangerous, expensive and totally ILLEGAL. Yet there are those who think Twmbarlwm is the ideal location to dispose of their personal detritus and building waste

OVER RECENT MONTHS I have been incensed with the amount of rubbish I have found dumped at the crossroads of Mountain Road and the lane to Cwrt y Henllys.

This area has always been notorious for fly-tipping activity - it is often monitored by the authorities who have made efforts to stop access by the placement of a circle of boulders. But the culprits of the crime have even towed these boulders aside so they can dump their loads further down the lane.

To go to such lengths is surely an indication that these people know that what they're doing is illegal - but do they know to what extent they could be punished...



cleared away within a few days.

At the beginning of August I discovered another pile of builders' waste, further down the lane together with a pile of tyres thrown onto the adjoining Forestry Commission land. I reported it but at the start of September it was all still there - despite CCBC telling me that personnel had been there to check it out.

Early September and I found a new pile of household waste containing many addressed envelopes giving plenty of evidence of its origins. I reported this to the police, CCBC, Forestry Commission and various councillors - all of whom were incensed and promised to do something about it. The rubbish was mostly cleared away but I have not heard whether proceedings have been taken against the perpetrators.

Get involved - report your findings

One reason many people gave for wanting to join CTS was because they were fed up with the amount of rubbish found dumped on the mountainside and they wanted to support our efforts to wipe it out - but even now, how many people actually report what they see?

We encourage everybody to be vigilant - Twmbarlwm is at the end of a remote lane, so why would a builder's white van or flat-bed truck want to be driving up there. Take photographs - most people have a camera-phone nowadays. Report what you find to CCBC - there's a 24 hour hotline on 01443 866566 - or if you'd rather not get involved email us and we'll do it for you.

Terry Evans



Penalties for fly-tipping

Dumping waste illegally is a serious criminal offence that carries a fine of up to **£50,000** (unlimited if the case goes to the Crown Court). You could also face a prison sentence of up to five years for fly-tipping. Local councils treat fly-tipping very seriously and will usually prosecute anyone caught.

You could also face the same penalties if:

you allow someone to fly-tip on your land
a vehicle registered to you is used to fly-tip

You could face penalties of up to £5,000 if you don't check that the company or person you give waste to:

has a licence to carry waste
is not taking it to an unlicensed site

More information and how to check the company or person taking your waste, can be found on the <http://www.direct.gov.uk> website search for "Fly Tipping".

With such punishments possible, I am constantly surprised at the frequency of incidences of serious tipping at this location. The photos show the incidents that I have reported recently.

The first shows a pile of builders' waste and a substantial number of old tyres that I came across in March this year - there was another pile of household waste close by which had been set ablaze and was still smouldering. I reported this to Caerphilly County Borough Council and it most of it was



E V E N T S

OCTOBER

17th Western Valleys Walks and More
Ralph Collins
7.30pm - Crosskeys RFC

NOVEMBER

7th Annual General Meeting
7.30pm - Crosskeys RFC

13th Walk: Lost Farmsteads of the Gwyddon Valley
Rob Southall in conjunction with Islwyn Ramblers. Meet at Blackvein Road, Crosskeys at 9.30am or Graig Wen Houses at the end of Gwyddon Road, Abercarn 9.45am

14th The Silures
Illustrated talk by Dr Ray Howell
7.30pm - Crosskeys RFC

DECEMBER

5th Committee Meeting
7.30pm - Crosskeys RFC

17th Mince Pie Walk
Maggie Thomas in association with the Islwyn ramblers. Trek to the top of Twmbarlwm. Leave Risca Leisure Centre at 9.30am. Leisurely, 6-7miles.

JANUARY 2012

9th Rocks and Stones of Twmbarlwm and Mynydd Maen
David Cavell and Stuart Fry (unconfirmed).
7.30pm - Crosskeys RFC

16th Committee Meeting
7.30pm - Crosskeys RFC

FEBRUARY 2012

3rd Quiz Night
7.30pm - Crosskeys RFC

6th Committee Meeting
7.30pm - Crosskeys RFC

Other events we are hoping to hold include:

- **Welsh Long Houses** with Geoffrey Morris - provisionally booked for 19th March
- **Hot Cross Bun Walk** - the second year for this popular Good Friday walk from Fields Road Pontymister to the top of Twmbarlwm - 22nd April
- **The Cwmcarn Reservoir Disaster** with Tony Jukes - provisionally booked for 21st May

Check the website regularly for more information on events - and if you have any ideas for an event please contact Rob Southall via the website:

www.twmbarlwm.co.uk

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Please remember that annual subscriptions become due in January 2012. Please pay your subs as soon as possible and encourage others to join us in our campaign to SAVE TWMBARLWM.



Mince Pie Walk

Many members of CTS also belong to The Ramblers, as both organisations share similar aspirations for our countryside – many Ramblers have taken part in CTS events too. So for those who know little of the local Rambler group, Maggie Thomas describes a popular walk on their calendar...

MEMBERS OF ISLWYN Ramblers don't join Ramblers just for the walking. The social aspect of being part of the group is very important and as you would expect, at Christmas time, the group celebrates. Of all the celebrations the Mince Pie walk is the most popular. "Mince Pie" is a bit of a misnomer.

Although it is true to say that many of the walkers bring mince pies to the winter picnic, they also bring an abundance of other goodies: pecan pie, truffles, chocolate cake, mulled wine, sloe gin – the list changes from year to year, but there is always far more than everyone can eat. What does not seem to change is the destination, the place where we huddle together from the biting cold and share all sorts of seasonal fare. No matter where we start the walk, we sit down to enjoy our feast at Twmbarlwm, usually huddled at the base of the twmp to avoid most of the raw chill. Even on a bright, clear winter day the icy wind can cut through the layers of clothing.

Over the years we've been lucky – the sun has shone, the temperature not too cold and the rich mix of food has made the occasion one of the most enjoyable of the year.

We have never cancelled the walk because of inclement weather. One year, it is true, we had

to have the picnic just below car park two of the scenic drive. The mist descended, visibility was poor, walkers and cyclists, for whom the weather was no deterrent, must have wondered whether the ghost of Christmas present was around as the revellers belted out, *In the Bleak Midwinter*, *Hark the Herald* and other festive songs. Spooky.

Although the walk has never been cancelled due to the weather, it certainly affects the numbers. December 2010 brought forth the most magical weather. There had been snow a few days before and on the morning of the walk the sub-zero temperatures and a fresh dusting of snow made Twmbarlwm look like a fairy tale scene. Yet only three turned up for the mince pie celebrations. We climbed and slipped up the steep slope from Pegwyn y Bwlch, expecting to be the first to taint the pristine snow. We were disappointed. Someone was there before us. There was more disappointment ahead. All the ramblers who usually bring the really delicious food had not turned up. Terry, Arthur and Maggie were left to celebrate with one mince pie each and nothing else. It could hardly have been worse.

And yet, ask Terry, Arthur or Maggie their thoughts about being on Twmbarlwm on that cold winter's day in 2010. They wouldn't have missed it for the world. The others who stayed home in the warm, missed a treat.

Maggie Thomas

Above: Arthur Hillier near trig point and Terry Wilkins on twmp.

Left: Singing in the mist.

Below: Feasting just below the twmp.



IN THE SPRING issue, Terry Evans' report of the Good Friday walk to the Tump included a reminiscence of a house he remembered in Ty Sign which the kids (and Terry was one at the time) used to call 'the old miser's house'.

Where the house was there is now a playground, opposite the entrance to Fairview Avenue off Rowan Road, the short road that connects Elm Drive near the shops with Holly Road near the flats. The huge conifers are the remnants of the trees that once surrounded the old house.

The house was, in fact Holly House, built around 1880 for John Rosser Jacob, a prosperous corn merchant, Justice of the Peace, Wesleyan minister and sometime Mayor of Newport. His initials are clearly seen inscribed on the gable.

In the 1891 census, Holly House, Risca, contains JRJ aged 53, his wife, 4 children and a domestic servant. JRJ is said to have been born in Cardiff, his wife in Castleton and the 3 younger children in Newport but the oldest child in Risca which suggests that he had lived in the area previously.

JRJ died in 1915 and the house appears to have been sold almost immediately as the 1915 register of electors lists John Price at Holly House. The 1922 register shows John Price, Harriet Ann Price & John Charles Price which I assume to be husband, wife (with newly acquired voting rights) and adult son.

In 1960 just John C Price is listed at Holly House but the fields around him were now being replaced by a 2000 home housing estate, accommodation for the workers at the newly built Llanwern steelworks. His rural mansion became a target for the first generation of Ty Sign urchins and the more he shouted at them the more they taunted him until he became 'the old miser' and Holly House became 'the old miser's house'.

When he died the empty house became a target for thieves and vandals until it was acquired by the council and demolished.

John Venn

CTS member John Venn also belongs to the Oxford House Industrial History Society which meets most Friday evenings and who are responsible for the running of Risca Museum which opens to the public on Saturday mornings. Members research all aspects of local history and are always on the lookout for photographs, maps, documents and other memorabilia to build the story of Risca that future generations can enjoy. The society hosts regular expert talks and field trips concerning local history - which often encompasses the environs of Twmbarlwm - anyone interested in joining or sharing their family's story should contact them via their website www.riscamuseum.org.uk.



s House



Holly House pictured in the 1950s when it was already in serious decline - you can clearly see the initials of John Rosser Jacob inscribed on the gable. The inset shows JRJ himself in his mayoral garb.



This group of impressive trees is all that remains on the site of Holly House



The Twmbarlwm Landslip



RALPH COLLINS, local author, has spent many years walking in South East Wales, and describes the area with a passion. He has a sharp eye for detail of the landscape and he describes its geology and topography clearly in layman's terms in his talks to the society and in his book "*Western Valley Walks and More...*" from which the following is an extract:

THE SHEARED EDGE of Twmbarlwm shows that it was formed by a giant rotational landslip. The landslip extends from the hill fort for a distance of about 2 miles. It was caused by the Nant Carn stream cutting its way down through the Nant Carn valley, deeper and deeper, over time, after the last Ice Age.

The area called Mynydd Henllys became undermined. The pennant sandstone cap of the mountain sits on a coal seam known as the Brithdir. Underlying this coal seam are fireclays, where the forests that formed the seam, put down their roots, and the result is a slippery bed of shaley clays and mudstones. The pennant sandstone cap slopes downwards, towards the north-west, into the valley, and the angling of the bed is known as "dip". As the down-cutting of the valley continued, the pennant cap gradually became unsupported, and a large section of the hill-top slid down into the valley below. Lubrication by the slippery clays helped the process along. The landslip starts at the foot of the Twmbarlwm hill fort. Here the ground has dropped by about 20m, and the remaining edge of the hill fort is very steep, from the shearing effect of the landslip (see photo top right).

This landslip formed the mountain that we now call Twmbarlwm, and this type of mountain is known as a Monadnock. The name comes from Mount Monadnock in New Hampshire, USA, and derives from the language of the Native Americans and means: a mountain that stands alone. If you look at the picture (see photo left), you will see how the land drops away suddenly at the hill fort, runs for about one mile where it rises gently up again, and, before it occurred, the mountaintop would have been level across this section at a height of around 420m.

Another feature left behind after this cataclysmic event, is the long fissure running along the edge of the escarpment for a distance of about 1½ miles, before

petering out as it swings around to the north-west, where it reappears on the other side of the Forestry boundary fence. The fissure is about 40m wide for its running length but wider at the foot of the Monadnock.

A forestry stony road runs up from the Scenic Drive Pay lodge, and walking up the road for about five minutes, you will see the massive amount of debris which was ejected when the landslide hit the bottom of the valley. This debris has formed into a reef, and runs in varying heights, up to about 20m, for a distance of about 250m up the valley (see photo below). It consists of millions of tonnes of blue pennant sandstone, which was shattered and upturned as it struck the valley bottom.



The Nant Carn river bed below it is the stoniest that I have ever seen. It is completely filled with large angular blocks of sandstone, as well as millions of smaller broken stones. Above the reef the river bed has fewer stones, and the vertical beds are now to be found in the bank on other side of the river. Further evidence can also be seen in stream bed near Car Park 1.

With some speculation, I have made a rough estimate of the amount of material that slipped, probably between: 150,000,000 and 200,000,000 cubic metres. Enough to fill the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff – 100-133 times! Imagine what a spectacle it must have been; it is possible that people lived there at that time: the faint rumble, followed by a deafening roar, a massive generation of heat, and the immense cloud of smoke, dust and steam billowing thousands of metres up into the air, like a gray volcano erupting, as the whole mountain top crashed suddenly into the valley - the landscape changed forever, probably in no more than a couple of minutes.

Ralph Collins

Launch of Our Very Own Real Ale

Newman's Brewery of Caerphilly has brewed a fabulous new 'Real Ale' in celebration of the history and legends of Gwent's most iconic mountain.

SHORTLY AFTER the Twmbarlwm Society was first formed committee member Russ Durbridge was at a CAMRA event with brewery owner Tom Newman. Russ knew about Tom's enthusiasm for local history as his highly regarded brewery calls on Celtic traditions for inspiration for his range of real ales - hence its name "The Celt Experience".

Inevitably the conversation soon turned to Twmbarlwm, its place in history and what we, as a society, are trying to achieve.

It was a "Eureka" moment for both men when the idea to develop an ale bearing the name Twmbarlwm could be mutually beneficial. It would help raise the profile of the society and would be an excellent addition to the Newman's range of beers which already includes "Snowdon Pale", "Celtic Spice" and "Red Castle Cream" to name but a few.

Russ presented the idea to the CTS committee who, not surprisingly, enthusiastically endorsed it. Mark Williams offered his painting "Hill of Dreams" to be used on the pump-clip and bottle label.

Because of the folk-tale of the bees that guard the tump of Twmbarlwm, designer Terry Evans decided to combine Mark's painting with an illustration of bees for the beer's labeling. When this was presented to Tom he was very pleased with the result - although he wasn't so

enthusiastic about someone's suggestion for it to be a honey-based beer.

So we had to rely on Tom's brewing expertise and the result is a delicious ale with a beautiful rich brown body, and a sweet spicy, slightly peppery aroma and flavour combined with a light clean citrus fruit aroma. It has an abv of 4.6% and a kick

like the mountain ponies that graze on the ridges of nearby Mynydd Maen.

Our society helped launch Twmbarlwm Brew on Friday 30th September 2011 at the Wheatsheaf Hotel, Llantrisant which is the brewery tap for The Celt Experience and Newman's Brewery.

We organised an old Red & White coach to take members and specially invited guests



Newmans 45 barrel brewery is a state-of-the-art facility brewing a great range of real ales

along and it proved to be a successful evening for all concerned. Pub landlord Tom Barlow (yes that really is his name) said that he's never pulled so many pints of one ale in one night.

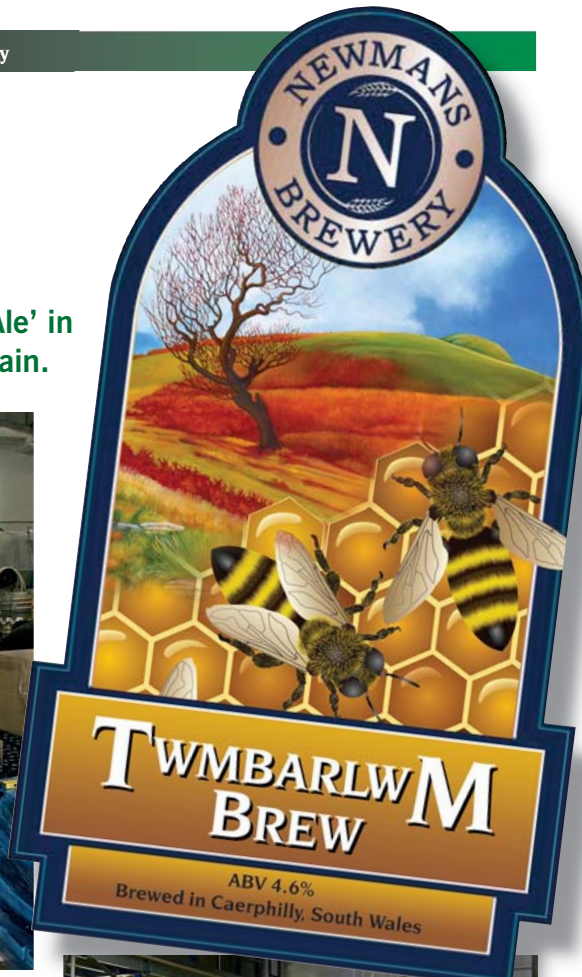
The proceeds from the first barrel of this fine Ale was donated by Newman's Brewery to our society to help us secure the future of our historic mountain.

The ale is now available in many hostelries throughout south Wales and as we go to press, Newman's Brewery is applying for national listing which will ensure that the name of Twmbarlwm is spread far and wide.

Newman's 45 barrel brewery in Caerphilly has won many awards for its real ales since it started in 2003, Twmbarlwm Brew is now in



The Wheatsheaf in Llantrisant, Mid Glamorgan where the launch of Twmbarlwm Brew was enjoyed by locals and society members alike - it will be available there whenever you feel like dropping in.



full production and is being rolled out to Newman's usual outlets. The brew will be available in casks only to start with, bottles would only become available if demand is high enough. But the brewery have an excellent range of bottled beers available through their online shop - visit www.newmansbrewery.co.uk.

Having sampled the new brew I'm sure it will soon gain the same iconic status as the mountain it celebrates.

Cheers!



Help us research, restore and protect Gwent's most iconic landmark - join us today - visit the website for more information

www.twmbarlwm.co.uk