

# “A Special Place” I Will Always Cherish



The western approach to Twmbarlwm at Pegwyn y Bwlch



Photos: Terry Evans

WHY OH WHY DO I DO THIS? – that is getting involved in a society dedicated to saving and protecting the local landscape of Mynydd Twmbarlwm.

It's not for the committee work, that's for sure. I get fed up with the sound of my own voice at the trustees' and members' meetings – yes, I can hear the resounding “Here! Here!” to that comment.

And there's even more work for the trustees at the moment with the Welsh Government funded “Tidy Twp” project underway. Meetings with councils, landowners, contractors and suchlike and a seemingly never-ending stream of emails and form filling. We all volunteer for this organisation for our own personal reasons, but the common, underlying fact is that we do it because Twmbarlwm means so much to us.

My story is simply that I am Risca born and bred, Twmbarlwm has always featured in my life – from being taken up there regularly by my mam and dad when I was a kid, cycling and camping there in my early teens, and I even dragged my art college friends up there. It's always been the first place I've walked any new puppy or “acquaintance” and of course the place to take my grand daughters on their first outdoor excursion.

Nowadays, when I walk up to the Tump and across the ridgeway (at least twice a week) the stresses of everyday life get put on hold – whatever the weather. I invariably have my ‘pack’ of Welsh Springer Spaniels with me and I love to see them bounding about in the bracken and heather – they certainly know how to enjoy life to full – we could learn a lesson or two from them. When I sit in one of my favourite spots to contemplate the view they too settle down alongside me and I'm sure they enjoy the solitude and views as much as I do.

Often, I meet other walkers – I can never resist asking “Have you come far?” and am often surprised at the answer – the past few months I've spoken to visitors from around the UK (Devon, Kent, Leicester, Glasgow, Norwich), Ireland, Canada, USA (Florida, Carolina, Memphis), Armenia, Africa, New Zealand, Japan – most have some sort of family link to the area or are visiting friends, but all are impressed with the mountain and

surrounding landscape.

Woe betide if they ask “Do you know the area, what exactly is the Tump?” – I then start to drone on ... “...always lived in Risca – most of my youth playing up here – before Ty-Sign was built – camping with the Cubs – Iron Age Hill Fort, Romans, Normans, blah, blah...”

I apologise if I've caught any of you and prattled on about Twmbarlwm - but it is a place I am proud to have on my doorstep and I will never tire of its mystery or those magnificent views.

But a great opportunity for me to spout on about Twmbarlwm came in September, when John Griffiths AM, Minister for Culture and Sport answered our invitation to visit the mountain. He was accompanied by Jocelyn Davies AM and Gwyn Price AM.

It was not a great day for taking in the glorious views – it was a cold, wet, misty, autumnal day but they all donned their waterproofs and braved the elements for members of CTS to guide them up the steep slopes to show them the work being done to repair fences and put in barriers to deter illegal off-roading.



John Griffiths AM, Minister for Culture and Sport (right), Jocelyn Davies AM and Gwyn Price AM were shown around Twmbarlwm by CTS members.

The VIPs were impressed with the wide scope of operations already done and proposed by the society – from replanting of hedgerows to in-depth archaeological research of the area.

The AMs were no strangers to the area though – each had happy recollections and stories of previous visits there with family and friends – all agreed that Twmbarlwm is an important community and tourist resource for south-east Wales to cherish and promote.

If you agree with that sentiment and would like to help preserve your environment for future generations then please consider joining CTS – go to [www.twmbarlwm.co.uk](http://www.twmbarlwm.co.uk) for more information or link up to the Facebook group.