

In Defence of Twmbarlwm

Volunteers toiled all day to manhandle logs and trees into position to form a hopefully impenetrable barrier to help defend Twmbarlwm.

THERE IS SOMETHING very rewarding about hard physical work. It becomes even more rewarding on a bright sunny day when you are a volunteer doing something for a good cause.

Our task was to build a fence between Mynydd Maen Common and the ancient monument of Twmbarlwm, which will help to keep sheep and cows off the tump. The site we chose was where illegal off-road vehicles and scrambler bikes have worn two trenches, causing massive erosion to the hillside. This is one of our Society's key objectives for the year in pursuit of our aim to protect this special historical landscape. Our countryside is continually under pressure and we have to value our green spaces.

The Twmbarlwm Society put out a call for volunteers via email and Facebook. One sunny Sunday morning we met at the tump to see who would turn up. So that is why a few teachers, a taxi driver, a civil servant, a graphic designer, a college lecturer, charity worker a school boy and many others could be found working as a team under the expert guidance of Dave, a Society member who handily runs a fencing company, and Howard the farmer who grazes his animals on the Common.

Our plan was to plant 50 yards of parallel fence posts, stretch wire along the outside and to fill the gaps with logs and pine trees. We also installed a kissing gate to allow walkers access to the Common. The next stage will be to plant hawthorn bushes on either side forming an impenetrable barrier which will look entirely natural and attract wildlife. At Blaen Bran Community Woodland in Cwmbran similar fences are very effective and look like they have been there for decades.

It's surprising how much fencing and pine trees a group of enthusiastic volunteers can deal with using a few garden tools and brute force. It's even more impressive how much progress can be made when the team includes a farmer and his strapping sons with a



View of the first 50 yards of fence, affectionately dubbed **"The Alamo"** by CTS and their hard working band of volunteers.

great big tractor for banging in the fence posts and two volunteers who have brought their own (licensed) chainsaws. This freed up the rest of the team for industrial-scale "snedding" which I now know to be stripping the side shoots and limbs from the trunk of a tree. Maggie and Sue kept us well refreshed with food and drink.

After a full day's work in the sun I crawled through the front door, able only to croak in a weak and parched voice "cold beer, I need cold beer". My dear partner looked up and muttered something about some work needing doing in the garden. Voluntary work can be unappreciated sometimes.

Why don't you join us next time? You will get the satisfaction that you are doing your bit to preserve the landscape and heritage of a unique site. You'll also have a lot of fun with plenty of banter, repartee and awful jokes. To see what CTS are up to next check out the website www.twmbarlwm.co.uk or join our FaceBook group for some lively discussion.



*Dedicated to research,
restore and protect
Mynydd Twmbarlwm ~
Gwent's most iconic landmark*