

# Beyond the Call of Duty

A few months down the line since the community group, Cymdeithas Twmbarlwm Society, had the good news of receiving funding from the Welsh Government towards the improvement of Twmbarlwm mountain, the area is starting to show the benefits.

The grant, which is part of the WG's Tidy Towns initiative, supported by Caerphilly County Borough Council, is aimed to encourage community involvement and CTS volunteers come out in all weathers to lend a hand.

On the mountainside above Risca, contractors have all but finished the installation of nearly 1km of fencing which was designed to keep off-road vehicles and trail-bikes off the Scheduled Ancient Monument and so prevent further damage to the iron age hill fort at the mountain's summit. This is no mean achievement considering the amount of rainfall we've had in the last two months.

Volunteers from the society have been doing their bit too. On a cold wet weekend in January, a group donned their snazzy hi-viz vests and did a litter pick on the slopes of the mountain and gathered a large pile of rubbish into bags for the CCBC to collect later.

After the litter pick they went on to help haul timber from the forestry which had been prepared by Natural Resources Wales for use in the fencing project. Despite worsening weather conditions this stalwart group collected enough timber and brushwood to fill at least half the fencing completed so far.

Chair, Terry Evans, said "I am so proud of this group of people – to give up time for volunteer work like this is praise-worthy enough at the best of times – but in such wet, windy, freezing conditions like we had today it is above and beyond the call of duty"

It was just as well that CTS members Sue and Greta set up their "field-kitchen" because the hot drinks and hot dogs they provided were much needed to keep the cold at bay. PC Tump (Simon James), who has always been a great supporter of CTS, was also on hand to ensure that volunteers working at the top didn't get lost in the mist.



Some of the work day volunteers are happy to line up with PC Simon James despite the wet and windy weather.



Photos: Terry Evans

Contractors, with the help of willing volunteers, put the finishing touches to a run of fencing on Twmbarlwm

Over the next few months the society will be organising further volunteer work days to complete the "Tidy Twmp" project – this will include more litter picks, planting hedging into the fences and erecting signage. The society hope to involve other community groups too – if you or your group would like to offer your support, then please contact them through their website (details below).

CTS plan for most of this project to be ready before Good Friday (18th April) because that will be Twmbarlwm's first major event of the year, "The Hot Cross Bun Walk" – that's when, according to local tradition, people from miles around come to walk up the mountain just like pilgrims used to do hundreds of years ago. It's always a great family day out and the society distributes hot cross buns to everyone who makes the climb.

## OTHER CTS EVENTS

CTS is a busy little society, apart from the major restoration and construction work on the mountain there is also a programme of talks and other events to entertain those who enjoy local history and interests. To date we have lined up talks on:

- 'Local Traditions and Customs: How far back do they go?' Peter Brown, University of South Wales.
- 'The Cistercian Grange Farms on Mynydd Maen' Dr Maddy Gray, USW.
- 'Bringing the Ship to the Mountain' - Newport Medieval Ship Project's Toby Jones, Curator.
- 'Pre-Roman road network in Iron Age Gwent' (the Silures) by Paul Thomas USW.

Dates and details of all events will be found on the website [www.twmbarlwm.co.uk](http://www.twmbarlwm.co.uk)

