



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

*Ymroddedig i ymchwilio, adfer a gwarchod
Mynydd Twmbarlwm - tirnod mwyaf eiconig Gwent*

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Press Release

8th October 2018

Twmbarlwm Mountain Rescued by Volunteers

"WOW - what a community response!" was the organisers' reaction when they saw the number of volunteers who turned out last Sunday to help spread grass seed over the fire damaged hill fort on Twmbarlwm in Risca.

Over 40 people climbed to the top of the mountain on a sunny but brisk autumn morning in response to the Cymdeithas Twmbarlwm Society's (CTS) call for help in repairing the fire damaged landscape.

They answered the call because they well remember the traumatic events of the summer when fire spread across the mountain. The resources of the fire services were stretched to the limit for three weeks in July and the community played their part then in supporting them.

Anyone who has visited Twmbarlwm since the fires will have seen how fragile the surface is up there - there are areas where the fire just took the top off the grass and heather leaving the roots undamaged - indeed those areas are already showing signs of good regrowth.

But there are areas where the fire took firm hold and burned down deep into the substrate taking out root systems and turning the soil to barren dust. To make matters worse those areas are now being further eroded by the wind and rain and threatening the underlying archaeology.

CTS, a society that monitors and helps to maintain this local iconic landmark, were in touch with officers from Cadw (the Welsh Government historic environment service) as soon as the fires struck. Together they visited the site on several occasions to establish the extent of the damage caused by the fires to the Scheduled Ancient Monument and what could be done to protect the area's archaeology.

Cadw commissioned a drone survey and a landscape report of the area to ensure an accurate record was made before the site deteriorated further. With the help of a leading landscape engineer and the ecology officer for CCBC, a report was produced describing the damage and setting out a proposal for emergency measures to repair and protect the monument. The general conclusions were that much of the area of the SAM should recover in time but there were significant areas, notably the steep sides of the mound and the crests of the surrounding ramparts, where the fire had burned through all organic matter down to the underlying mineral substrate.

Therefore it was proposed that the severely damaged areas should be re-seeded with native species grasses as soon as possible to help minimise the erosive effect of the coming winter weather.

Thus it fell to CTS to set about raising funds to pay towards the cost of re-seeding the mountain top - and in a relatively short space of time and a major chunk of funding from Cadw, they achieved the

target. The seed was ordered and pleas were made on social media for volunteers to help spread grass seed around the affected areas of the mound and bailey castle.

Terry Evans, chairman of the society said “It may seem late in the year to be sowing seed but we have had good advice and it is vital that we attempt to stabilise the bare surface before the wind and rain of the winter does any further damage to the landscape and, more importantly, the underlying archaeology.”

Mr Evans continued, “I never imagined the amount of support we would get, but it just goes to show that The Twmp holds a unique place in the hearts of the local community. I am extremely grateful to all those who gave up their time on Sunday, to the members of CTS and the Commoners of Mynydd Maen who helped out.

“It would certainly help now if visitors to the mountain do not venture onto the newly seeded areas, and please respect the landscape and its history - and come the springtime, Twmbarlwm and its famous ‘pimple’ will be well on the way back to its former glory”.

For more information on this event and the work of the Twmbarlwm Society please check out our website at www.twmbarlwm.co.uk

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*The castle mound after the fire in July 2018
Photograph © Terry C. Evans*

TERRY EVANS
Chairman Cymdeithas Twmbarlwm Society

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There are many more photographs available (see the website and particularly the galleries section) - and after this event there will hopefully be photos of the volunteers in action.



Over 40 volunteers turned up to help re-seed the top of Twmbarlwm - not everyone lined up for the group photo



Great sowing technique demonstrated on the north ditch of the bailey



The volunteers spread out to distribute seed over the inner part of the bailey



No easy task to carry 20kg bags of seed to the top of Twmbarlwm