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A welcome from the Mayor of Usk

It is a delight to share our remarkable and historic town with you.

Set in the beautiful Usk valley, it has within its boundaries the twelfth-century ruins of the castle and the ever-changing river. Wander at your leisure and seek out the town’s treasures - whether country walks, or the history and architecture via the Usk Town Trail guide. Summer visitors can enjoy the glorious flowers that win the town prizes in Wales in Bloom.

With its choice of inns, hotels and restaurants, whose convivial proprietors offer a range of excellent dining and very comfortable accommodation, Usk and its people offer a warm welcome. We sincerely hope that your visit here is truly a happy and memorable one, such that you will wish to return.
The River

The river is what makes Usk so special. Flowing through the heart of the town, it provides tranquil walks, fishing, two riverside playgrounds, and a place to paddle and picnic in the summer.

One playground can be seen from Usk bridge. The other, a bit more hidden away, is by the church in Llanbadoc, a quarter of a mile or so south of the town on the west bank of the river (reached from the road to Caerleon). This lovely tranquil area of meadow has a specially nice atmosphere, and a few swings.

On the town side, the river bank can be reached from the town bridge, from Conigar Crescent, from a pathway with a kissing gate next to the vet’s in Porthycarne Street, or from the almost-hidden pathway alongside the Royal pub in Newmarket Street. On the other side of the river, the west bank, there is parking a few hundred yards north of the bridge, signposted The Island.

The river is a mecca for fishermen: whilst the salmon fishing is private, anyone can fly-fish for trout, on the purchase of a ‘Town Water’ permit from Sweets Fishing Tackle shop. Permits can be for a day, a week or a season. Jean Williams, who runs Sweets, is something of a legend in the world of fly-fishing. She provides — as well as the permits — an information service about the state of the river, a warm welcome for visiting fishermen and regulars, and enthusiastic appreciation of any fish caught. Her shop in Porthycarne Street is an Aladdin’s cave of fishing flies, boxes of feathers and other fly-tying paraphernalia, rods, reels and landing nets, as well as photos of many past fishing triumphs.

Jean Williams of Sweets

All fishermen need to have a Rod Licence, covering the whole UK, short-term or annual, issued at Post Offices or online at www.naturalresourceswales.gov.uk
Main photo: Mike Longridge This and other Longridge views available as greeting cards locally.
Usk Castle is actually in somebody’s garden. It stands in the grounds of the Humphreys’ house and they are most generous in sharing it. As Rosie Humphreys says, “Usk Castle is here for you to discover. Overlooking the town, with views down the Usk valley, the castle is a delight for visitors – for picnics and playing, for exploring and enjoying”.

Simon Jenkins writes in his *Wales: Churches, Houses, Castles*, that Usk Castle is “everything a Cadw castle is not. It is wild, unmanicured and idiosyncratic. Where a government castle is scrubbed and tidy, Usk respects the dishevelment of age... If ruins must be ruins, let them be like this.”

The building, begun in the 12th century by a Norman Frenchman, and added to over the next 300 years, was reduced to ruins half way through the 16th century.

In 1405 the site of the bloody Battle of Usk involving Owain Glendower, these days the Castle is used for more peaceful purposes. Town pageants and plays are held here and the grounds can be hired for marquee wedding receptions or parties. Civil ceremonies can be held. The Usk Castle Friends organise events – concerts, painting days, history talks – to encourage local involvement and to support conservation grants.

**Entry**

To reach the Castle, follow the sign from the main road, opposite the fire station. It is open nearly every day, during reasonable daylight hours. The few days when the Castle is closed for private events (the main source of fund-raising for conservation work) are shown on the website, and the direction signs. Visitors are asked to put a contribution in the box at the entrance kiosk, towards the upkeep of this splendid piece of history.

The lovely private gardens (fashioned from the outer ward of the castle) are open to the public during the Usk Open Gardens weekend, the last weekend of June, and groups are welcome all year round by appointment, in aid of the National Garden Scheme.

*For more about the history of the Castle, turn to page 10*
For private hire inquiries or group garden visits, contact Rosie Humphreys 01291 672563.

For details of Usk Castle Friends and other castle-based events, see the website: www.uskcastle.com
For such a small town, Usk has lots going on. For details of clubs, societies, meetings and much more, Usk now has a brilliant events calendar, The Diary, produced every two months. It is a not-for-profit community enterprise, available free from several local outlets including the Co-op, library and Sessions House.

The following events happen each year – sometimes each month – and are enjoyed by locals and visitors alike. ➔
**WI Market**
*Country Market*
This lovely sale of home cooking and baking takes place every Thursday morning, from Easter to September, in the Conservative Club, Maryport Street, just a little way down from the car park. Superb value the market has home-made cakes and quiches, jams and pickles, as well as plants, fresh veg and absolutely lovely bunches of flowers, just picked.

*Country Market, Thursday mornings 10am - 12 noon, from Easter to late September, at the Conservative Club, Maryport Street, Usk.*

**The Red Shed Sale**
A monthly sale of the most amazing assortment of second-hand bargains is held on the outskirts of Usk. There are clothes, toys, furniture, china, you name it - it's like a giant charity shop, only more so. This takes place in the Red Shed in Llanbadoc, next to the rugby club. The shed has, confusingly, been green for many years. But before that, it was red.

*Contributions are taken every Wednesday morning from 9.30; the sale is the first Tuesday of the month, 10am – 4pm. Proceeds are in aid of nearby St Madoc’s church and surplus stock goes to charity.*

**Silver Screen**
Once a month, the Memorial Hall transforms into Usk’s own independent film club. Films chosen are those that appeal to all the family. No popcorn, but Fairtrade refreshments and alcoholic drinks; doors open 7pm.

*For further details, see the town website: www.usktown.co.uk and www.silverscreenusk.org*

**Farmers’ Market**
There is a Farmers’ Market on Saturday mornings, held in the Memorial Hall, Maryport Street. There are delicious Trealy Farm award-winning sausages (they have even found their way to the National Portrait Gallery rooftop restaurant), locally produced single-variety apple juice, Tiffy’s fantastic home-made curries, Black Mountain Smokery salmon and duck, organic veg and lots more.

*Farmers’ Market, first and third Saturday of every month, 10am to 1pm, Memorial Hall, Maryport Street, Usk, www.uskf.m.co.uk*

**Car Boot Sale**
The Cricket Club hosts a flourishing Car Boot Sale every Sunday morning from early May to late September when the weather's fine. (Not on wet days, as the cars would wreck the cricket pitch.) Bacon bunnies and coffee are available when you need a break from the bargaining.

*Cricket Club, lower end of Maryport Street, summer Sundays 9am until 12 noon.*
**ANNUAL EVENTS**

**June**
**USK GARDENS OPEN DAYS**

Held on the last weekend in June, around two dozen private gardens are open to the public. This is a wonderful chance to have a wander round gardens you wouldn’t normally see – large and small, from the informal and cottagey, to the magnificent borders of the Usk Castle gardens. Some visitors get to as many gardens as they can in one day, but many take things at a more leisurely pace, and make a weekend of it.

Don’t miss the Gardeners’ Market, the Usk Band playing in the square, and the home made teas on offer around the town.

*Usk Gardens Open days, last weekend of June, 10am – 5pm, tickets with maps of garden locations are on sale in town car parks and in Twyn Square.

www.uskopengardens.com

**July**
**SUMMER FESTIVAL**

At the end of June/early July Usk holds its’ annual Summer Festival, a week long programme of events from music to poetry to gastronomic, hosted by various venues around the town. Included in this is the Duck Race where a flotilla of ducks float downstream, hotly pursued by hopeful punters. The Festival week is rounded off by a colourful and vibrant weekend with a full programme of live music, street food and market stalls in Twyn Square.

*For more information go to :-
www.uskmarketsandfestivals.co.uk/
Facebook: @uskmarketsandfestivals /
Twitter: @UskMarketsFests*
**September**

**USK SHOW**

Usk's much-loved agricultural show is a surprisingly large event for such a small town. It has all the traditional things - farm animals, show jumping, a tent with every conceivable variety of rabbit, and a huge marquee with everything from awesome flower arrangements, to Best Runner Beans to Winning Welsh Cakes. The children's section has the always-popular Animal-made-from-vegetables and the fascinating and painstaking Miniature gardens. Many of these events can be entered on the day (entries in place by 9.30am) — brochures with details are in most town shops. Lots of stalls, too, of course — wellies to wheelbarrows.

*Usk Show is held on the 2nd Saturday of September, ¾ mile northeast of the town on the B4235 - it is well signposted.*

*See www.uskshow.co.uk*

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**December**

**WINTER FESTIVAL**

The first week end of December sees Twyn Square once again the centre of activities with lots of exciting food and drink to taste and plenty of Christmas goodies on offer to get your Christmas shopping off to a good start. There is music and entertainment throughout the whole weekend to suit every taste, with a Carol Service at lunch time on the Sunday. The culmination of the weekend is the now famous Reindeer Parade organised by Usk Town Council. Father Christmas and his reindeer lead the procession through the town before stopping at the Sessions House to meet the children.

*For further details about this event, see posters and banners in the town, and www.uskfestival.co.uk*
The Story of Usk

There is more to Usk than the quiet and charming town we see today. Usk is a place with a past, where history is under your feet and all around you.

The Romans realised the strategic military importance of Usk as a base from which to take forward the conquest of South Wales. From 55 to about 65 AD the fortress they built was the regimental headquarters of the XX Valeria Victrix legion. During this time the legion took part in the destruction of the Druids in Anglesey and the suppression of Queen Boudicca's revolt. Later the headquarters of the legion moved downriver to Caerleon. The fortress was demolished, but a smaller auxiliary fort occupied the north-west corner until the early second century AD. After this the Romans left Usk, the civil settlement declined and the site reverted to pasture. Nothing remains above ground, but the extent of the forts can be traced on the ground, marked by plaques set into the pavement.

The Normans built the first castle soon after the Conquest. The present 13th century stone castle is on the same site on the high ground overlooking the river. Richard de Clare established a planned town soon after 1154, centred on the marketplace at Twyn Square, which provided revenues for the lord.

A Priory of Benedictine nuns was founded by 1170. The gatehouse can still be seen near the entrance to the Priory Church of St Mary, which served...
both the Priory and the town, though it was reduced in size after the dissolution of the monasteries in 1536. The weathered tomb of the last Prioress can be seen beside the path through the churchyard. Another relic of the Priory is Prioress Mill, a listed 16th century water mill, now restored as holiday accommodation. It lies a mile up-river from the town on the route of the Usk Valley Walk.

Leprosy was a scourge in the Middle Ages, and the de Clare lords of Usk or their successors established a hospital for lepers outside the town boundary on the north side of the bridge, a good spot for attracting alms from travellers arriving in the town. Its charitable function probably died out in the 14th century with the disease, and the building may have been used as accommodation for travellers and the lord’s guests. A plaque marks the site.

Usk was virtually destroyed in 1402 during Owain Glyndŵr’s rebellion. No earlier houses survive, with the possible exception of one, now the town’s Rural Life Museum. Two houses next door date from soon afterwards as part of the rebuilding. Both are marked with plaques. At the Battle of Pwll Melin (the Battle of Usk) in 1405 English soldiers from the castle garrison inflicted a resounding defeat on the Welsh rebels. It proved to be a turning point, though Glyndŵr went on fighting for another six years. A plaque marks the site, up a track to the north of the castle.

From the 1760s to 1860 Usk was home to a well-known japanware business. These lacquered and varnished tin trays, jardinières, teapots and other domestic wares were manufactured at premises in New Market Street and enjoyed great success in the early 19th century. A plaque marks the site of the final factory.
Usk has had a gaol since the Middle Ages, when the Garrison Tower of the castle was used. Two sites in Bridge Street were used subsequently and are marked by plaques. In 1842 Usk Prison was built in Maryport Street. Modelled on Pentonville in London, it is still in use. Next door is the Sessions House—more about this on page 31.

Some places in Usk are particularly associated with famous people. Alfred Russel Wallace, born at Kensington Cottage, in Llanbadoc, was a naturalist, biogeographer, author and humanitarian. Based on research carried out largely in the Far East, he independently came to a theory about natural selection, which he and Charles Darwin announced simultaneously in 1858. There is a memorial to him outside Llanbadoc churchyard near his birthplace.

Usk was the site of the martyrdom of St David Lewis, a Catholic priest and Jesuit at a time when it was treason to say Mass. He had carried on his ministry in South Wales for thirty years, but was arrested and executed in 1678 during the Popish Plot. A plaque in the grounds of Porthycarne House marks the spot. The town’s Roman Catholic church, dedicated to him and to St Francis Xavier, is nearby. The saint is buried near the west door of the Priory Church of St Mary, where a modern slab marks the spot.

The Priory Church is also the resting place of Adam of Usk, a native of the town and a distinguished priest, lawyer and historian. He lived through Owain Glyndŵr’s rebellion and the Chronicle of Adam of Usk is a main source for the Battle of Pwll Melin. His will was dated at Usk in 1430 and is commemorated by a brass strip containing an epitaph in mediaeval Welsh, now riveted to the choir screen.

A colourful character, Edward John Trelawney was a traveller, romantic poet and author among other things, and a friend of the Romantic poets Byron and Shelley. He fought with Byron against the Turks. He also organised Shelley’s cremation and arranged for the subsequent burial of the ashes. He lived at what is now the Royal Hotel in New Market Street, and later at Twyn Bell in Llanbadoc.

There is a memorial to
naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace
outside Llanbadoc Church.
Usk Civic Society

Usk Civic Society has published the fascinating Usk Town Trail, which contains more information about the history and buildings of the town. The booklet takes readers on a tour of Usk, giving background information on the blue wall plaques and pavement plaques which mark important buildings or interesting events. The Town Trail is available price £5 at several outlets in the town, including Lindwall’s newsagents and the Rural Life Museum.

The Civic Society exists to promote high standards of planning, architecture and design in the town, as well as to educate the public in the history, geography and conservation of Usk and surrounding parishes. You can find out more about their activities at: www.monmouthshiregreenweb.co.uk/UskCivicSociety
The Rural Life Museum

This endearing museum is easily spotted half way down Usk’s most picturesque street, New Market Street. The Museum portrays life in the Welsh borders as it was at any time between about 1850 and the end of World War II.

The contents are housed in an ancient malt barn and adjoining buildings. They have been collected by a group of local enthusiasts determined that the equipment and machinery on which people depended in their day to day lives should be preserved for posterity.

Something for everyone

Here you can see a typical farmhouse kitchen, or dairy; you can look in on the blacksmith, the wheelwright, the cobbler; see all the farmer’s equipment, from tractors to cheese presses. You can learn about coopering and cider making.

For gadget freaks there are scores of items ranging from a wooden washing machine to a Victorian knife cleaner. Plenty for transport enthusiasts, too – including a splendid penny farthing bicycle and magnificent farm wagons.

Learning how butter is made, with this end-over-end C19 butter churn.
Tourist Information
In addition to local information, maps and guides, the museum has a collection of local books and crafts for purchase. These can be found inside the main entrance off the car park.
A recent addition to the Museum is the Green Flute Café which offers a variety of hot and cold snacks throughout the day and an excellent selection of home-made cakes and beverages.

Community Room Hire
The light, airy community room is ideal for meetings of up to thirty people. Available for hire daytime and evening all year round, it is fully equipped with audio visual facilities and wi-fi. Refreshments can be provided on request; visits to the museum can be arranged to complement your meeting if required.

Open first week in March - October 31st
Tuesday to Saturday 10.30 - 16.30
FREE entry.
www.uskmuseum.org.uk
01291 673777
For over 20 years Usk has had an Open gardens Weekend at the end of June. This is a great chance to have a look round other people’s gardens, chat to the owners, stop for lunch in a pub or by the river, take afternoon tea, and maybe buy a plant or two (or three or four ... ) from the stalls by the Memorial Hall or from one of the town’s two garden centres.

More about this in Events, p6 ➤

Usk in Bloom is a voluntary charity where a growing number of local people plant and care for over 90 tubs and displays throughout the town. The centrepiece is Twyn Square, spectacular when in full bloom, where the volunteers meet every Wednesday. Their efforts are backed by the enthusiastic support of the pubs, banks and shops, as well as public buildings — even the Usk Prison.

Usk in Bloom provides encouragement with their award scheme — Best Shop Front, Best Front Garden, and so on. They also provide a hanging-basket service for our main shopping street.

From June to September Usk is a spectacular display of colour and community enthusiasm — worth a special visit, combined with a stroll by the river, or a visit to one of the town’s quaint pubs or cafes.
The Usk in Bloom flowers are at their best from late June to early September. *The Gardens Open Weekend is the last weekend of June.*
Country Cottages Llangwm

A hidden gem awaits, nestled in the Usk Valley.

A labour of love has transformed six medieval stone barns into stunning country cottages, bursting with character and attention to detail, these cottages nestle seamlessly amidst beautiful rolling countryside, just one mile from the town of Usk.

The project began 10 years ago on the Pentre Farm in Llangwm, when Howard Peterson and Geraldine Griffiths had a dream of transforming their 13th century barns into fully refurbished cottages, that maintained their character and historical value, so that others from all over the world could come to visit, relax, and unwind for a break in the panoramic countryside that surrounds.

‘Oak cottage’ is the largest of the six and was the first to be created, in-keeping with periodic culture, the building has a grand front and rear entrance, this feature was common of barns at the time, as it allowed for a horse and cart to pass through the building without hindrance, as they could not easily turn around or reverse.

The next project was to join the adjacent dairy barns to the calve sheds opposite.

This was first done in 1950 using concrete blocks, the restoration was carried out by rebuilding the original structures with stone, quarried on the surrounding farm land.

The original architecture has been preserved and restored to its former glory for all to see, in-keeping with the unique history, the decor encompasses vintage machinery and agricultural tools, used on the farm many years ago.

Once the barns had been converted, the level courtyard that sits at their heart became a project in itself, Howard and Geraldine decided to create a triple tier fish pond, that would act as the tranquil centrepiece of their newly rejuvenated cottages, which took as much time to construct as one of the restorations.

People from 27 countries have visited and loved their stay in this rural idyll, why not join them?

Contact Geraldine for further information:
Tel: 01291 650219
E-mail: thepentre@yahoo.co.uk
www.uskcountrycottages.com
Usk Brass Band

There has been a Brass Band in Usk since the early 20th century but the current band dates back to 1972 and is very active and highly successful. The band is primarily a community band playing at many of the towns’ functions and events. It is a significant participant in town twinning making several visits to Baden Neudorf our twin town in Germany. Winners of the SEWBBA Welsh League competition and the National Brass Band champions of Great Britain the town is understandable very proud of their achievements.

Contact Lea Jones for further information at welshlea@hotmail.com or on the bands’ website www.uskbrassband.com

Llancayo Windmill

Situated only a mile from Usk on the road to Abergavenny it was built around 1800 and destroyed by fire some 26 years later. This once derelict Mill has been sympathetically restored. Finished in lime render with the joists and balcony replaced, together with working sails, the restoration was completed in 2009. This historic building, a reminder of a bygone age, is once again an imposing landmark and offers holiday accommodation for visitors looking for an unusual retreat.

The windmill sleeps 12 people. It can be rented via the agency Rural Retreats, www.ruralretreats.co.uk, telephone 01386 701177 or www.lancayowindmill.co.uk
The Sessions House opened in 1877 to house the Monmouthshire Quarter Sessions and continued in that capacity for many years. In the late twentieth century, it became a Magistrates' Court, finally relinquishing its judicial role in 1995.

This splendid building was bought by Usk Town Council in 2000 for the community; it has now become the meeting place for local organisations, a concert venue and a prestigious address for local businesses. It has also been the setting for film and TV productions and now adds party and wedding venue to its impressive portfolio, licensed to hold civil wedding ceremonies. Groups can book space for events, including highly-praised home-made afternoon teas.

The building boasts Victorian symmetry with high ceilings, wide oak doors and ornate cornices. The recently restored Court Room, the grand entrance hall and the Mather Jackson Library, together with the remainder of the building, are all in original condition, the only addition being electric lighting.

The Sessions House has an interesting and extensive law library, with over 3,000 volumes dating from 1698–1971. In the Court Room you will find the imposing Judge’s Chair and an impressive collection of portraits of the distinguished judges who held court here over the years. You will also find the gloomy passageway leading down from the dock to the adjoining prison. The Sessions House, with its remarkable history and architectural grandeur, is a source of pride for local people.

If you would like a tour, or to book any of the rooms for an event, please contact the Sessions House Manager on 01291 673011 or email clerk.usk@btconnect.com
Alfred Russel Wallace (1823-1913)
Co-discoverer of natural selection

One of Usk’s most distinguished sons, Wallace was born at Kensington Cottage, across the river in Llanbadoc. A brilliant naturalist, he made major contributions to evolutionary theory. In 2013, his statue was unveiled by Sir David Attenborough at the Natural History Museum in London. Usk had already paid its own tribute to Wallace with a stone memorial next to Llanbadoc churchyard, just a short way from where he spent his earliest years.

His father’s financial misfortunes meant that Wallace received little formal education, but in the Victorian tradition of self-improvement he made up for this, working as both surveyor and schoolmaster. A voyage to Brazil in 1848 fired his passion for natural history, undimmed when he lost almost his entire collection of specimens and notes in a shipwreck on the return.

Undaunted, he set off again in 1854, this time to spend 8 years in the Malay Archipelago. Here he collected more than 100,000 specimens of insects, birds and mammals, thousands of them species then unknown to science. He independently hit on the idea of natural selection as the explanatory mechanism of evolution, and sent an essay on the subject to Charles Darwin. Darwin, who had been working on the theory himself for years, consulted scientist friends, who arranged to publish an outline of his writings, along with Wallace’s essay, in the journal of the Linnaean Society in 1858. Darwin published On the Origin of Species the following year.

Some say that Wallace was robbed of the credit for the theory of evolution, but he did not dispute Darwin’s leading role, in fact during the 19th century he and Darwin were regarded as evolution’s co-originators. His fame waned in the 20th century and it is fitting that in his centenary year steps were taken to recognise his genius again.

Based on material on the Alfred Russel Wallace website (wallacefund.info).

Illustration ‘A Malay Forest with Characteristic Birds’ by JB Zwecker, from Wallace’s 1876 book The Geographical Distribution of Animals.
The Churches of Usk

The Church of St Francis Xavier and David Lewis
The Catholic Church set back from Porthycarne Street was built in 1847, to a simple but charming Gothic design. The main window depicts St Benedict and an unidentified saint. The side altar of Our Lady has a particular charm, whilst the baptistry has a modern window depicting the patron saints. The original dedication was to St Francis Xavier; St David Lewis, the Usk Jesuit priest martyred in 1678, was added after his canonisation in 1970.

The Baptist Church
In residential Old Market Street is the Baptist church built in 1842. It provided at last a permanent home for Baptist worshippers who for over 200 years had met in various houses in and around Usk.

It is a Grade 2 listed building, with most of the original features intact; the 1928 pipe organ, by Charles Gill of Cardiff, has been recently renovated. The schoolroom at the rear is a hive of activity, being used for church-based activities and by several community groups.

Further details from
www.uskbaptistchurch.org
The Priory Church of St Mary

There was a church first built on this site around 1160, together with a Priory for nuns. Additions were made during the following century, and the porches and battlement embellishments were added in the 15th century.

The church has undergone extensive renovation under the guidance of Cadw (the Welsh heritage people) with a re-slated roof and the interior rendered and painted, making it much lighter.

Special features to look out for...
You cannot miss the beautiful carved wooden Tudor rood screen. Also look for the brass strip on the chancel screen, dedicated to Adam of Usk, renowned priest and chronicler and a native of medieval Usk.

The organ
St Mary’s splendid organ, now over 150 years old, came to Usk in 1899 from Llandaff Cathedral; it too has undergone recent renovation.

St Madoc’s, Llanbadoc

This beautiful riverside church dates from the 13th century (though there was an earlier Celtic church here). The tower, new windows and new roof were added 200 years later. The church was altered considerably in 1873, losing many medieval features and treasures. The 20th century restoration saw the interior rubble stone walls returned to their medieval appearance, and the fine 150 year old Conacher organ restored.

Just outside the churchyard wall, at the north-east corner by the river, stands a memorial plaque to Victorian pioneer biologist Alfred Russel Wallace. There is a charming riverside walk heading south from the church, and a small children’s play area.
WALKS AROUND USK

Usk is an excellent centre for walking – whether for a strenuous hike or a gentle stroll. The Usk Valley Walk is a long distance trail following the course of the river from Caerleon to Brecon – see the beautifully illustrated website for more detail: uskvalleywalk.org.uk. Shorter local walks can be found in the handy Llanbadoc Circular Walks leaflets, and the Usk Town Trail (a guided tour around the town), available at Sessions House and the Rural Life Museum.

A WALK THROUGH THE TOWN

1. Turn left out of Twyn Square, along the main street.
2. Just before the bridge, turn right down the footpath which follows the river bank.
3. Where the footpath leaves the river and joins Porthycarne Street, turn left.
4. Just before the railway bridge, turn right up the track.
5. The footpath divides 3 ways here:
   - take a left direction over the disused railway bridge, descend the steps at the far side, and walk back to the bridge along the other side of the river;
   - take the right hand option, a stepped path leading up to the back of the castle. Take in the castle grounds and views, before descending the lane back to the main road. A right turn brings you back to Twyn Square;
   - take the recently restored trail through the railway tunnel and along the line of the old track, joining the main road opposite the primary school.

A POPULAR 3 MILE WALK

This longer circular walk (about an hour) takes you up past the castle, across fields, through woods to a small lake, and back to Usk. The walk is well signed with yellow arrows. Some parts can be muddy; walking boots or wellingtons are recommended. Please keep dogs on leads in the woods to protect wildlife.

1. Turn right out of Twyn Square.
2. Turn left up the path opposite the Fire Station, signed “Usk Castle”
3. Passing the Castle car park on your right, bear right through a gate along a concrete track.
4. Follow the track to Castle Farm, and continue straight on along the clearly defined path.
5. The path goes along a huge field (great views) and enters woodland. When you come out of the wood, follow the fence-line along to a gate on the left marked “Kitty Beech Ride” and turn through it; the yellow arrow sign also shows the direction to take.
6. Keep going straight until you see a small lake to the right of the path – a good spot to sit on a rock and get out the Thermos. Turn left and follow the well marked path, eventually crossing through Gwm Cayo farm and reaching the Abergavenny road.
7. Turn left and walk back to town, where you will arrive at the Three Salmons crossroads. You can take the path along the river bank for part of the way.
Here are two walks for starters – one a short stroll, one a not-too-strenuous 3 miles.
Golf
Monmouthshire has one of the highest number of golf clubs per head of population in the whole of the UK and Usk is within easy reach of a number of courses, both nationally-known and local. The 2010 Ryder Cup venue of the Celtic Manor Resort is only 15 minutes away; the highly regarded Hendre and St Pierre courses are not much further. Woodlake Park and Raglan are all very nearby. With several other courses within easy travelling, Usk is a perfect base for a golfing holiday.

Gliding
If you look upwards on a warm summer day, you may see a strangely silent small aircraft overhead. This will contain a member of the Gliding Club, which is to be found about a mile from Usk, off the old Chepstow road.

Trial flights are possible either early or late in the day when the club is not too busy (usually Thurs, Sat, Sun) to 2,500ft (£98) or 5,000 (£225). To book an evening lesson please speak to Geoff Williams on 01633 882862 www.uskgc.co.uk

Sailing
Llandegveth Reservoir is a venue for water sports. Don’t let the word Reservoir put you off - this is a most beautiful lake in the hills to the west of Usk. Here are commercial wind surfing operations as well as the Sailing Club which offers lessons to beginners - these get booked up early in the season. Membership is very reasonable, and the club’s own sailing boats are available to more experienced members.

There is a restaurant serving teas, snacks and lunches offering splendid views of the reservoir together with a book and gift shop.

www.llandegfedd.org.uk/club
Fishing
See *The River Usk and Fishing* on page 2.

Cycling
Monmouthshire has a wealth of off-road cycling routes, and Usk in the middle of the county is a good centre. Former rail routes, converted to cycle trails, run from Llanfoist near Abergavenny, to Blaina and from Pontypool to Blaenavon. There are forestry tracks in Wentwood Forest, a lovely riverside cycle trail from Monmouth to Symonds Yat along the east bank of the River Wye, and you can cycle the towpath alongside the Newport-Brecon canal. Goytre Wharf is a good spot to start, 10–15 minutes drive from Usk.
www.wyevalleycycling.org.uk
www.sustrans.org.uk

Netball
Usk Netball club prides itself on being a friendly and sociable club which is part of Usk Athletic Club. The club has two courts and plays throughout the year — they were League champions in 2013. Training is on Thursdays 6–8pm.
www.uskathleticclub.co.uk/netball

Cricket
Usk Cricket club is a friendly and ambitious club which has been in existence for over 150 years as part of Usk Athletic Club. It has one of the finest grounds in Wales and regularly hosts County 2nd Team and Wales Minor County matches. The Club has a full time coach during the summer months and boasts a thriving and fast growing junior section with teams from U 9 to U 17 as well as three senior teams.
www.uskcc.co.uk

Waiting for take off at the
Gliding Club, Gwernesney
Sailing on Llandegveth
The Cricket Club, Mill Street

*Activities & Sports continued ➡*
**OTHER SPORTS**

Usk is host to many other sports clubs and activities.

**Rugby**

Usk RFC was formed in 1874 and is one of the founder members of the Welsh Rugby Union. The club is part of the Monmouthshire District and Newport Dragons League; it currently runs two senior sides, a youth side and a large junior section. The Youth and Junior sides play in the local league and friendlies. The Club offers a warm welcome to new members and players wanting to get involved in rugby in Usk.

The clubhouse is available for use by local groups and for social functions, birthdays, weddings etc. [www.usr.fc.wales](http://www.usr.fc.wales)

**Football**

Usk Town AFC currently runs two teams in the Gwent Central League. The first team play in the Premier Division and our second team play in Division two. The Club plays on “The Island” in Usk. All players over the age of 16 are welcome.

Contact Colin Jones 01291 671367

Usk Junior Football Club is part of Usk Athletic Club. The Club enters teams of juniors up to and including the age of 16 in the East Gwent Leagues. The Club is run by CRB-checked parent volunteers and is always looking for willing parents to help out, as well as new players. [www.uskathleticclub.co.uk/junior_football](http://www.uskathleticclub.co.uk/junior_football)

**Running**

The Usk Running Club, part of the Usk Athletic Club, meets for training on Tuesday and Thursday at 6.45pm. The activities include road running, cross country and mountain running. [www.uskrunners.co.uk](http://www.uskrunners.co.uk)

**Tennis**

The tennis club, again part of the Athletic Club, prides itself on being friendly and welcoming. Usk is one of the fastest growing and most successful clubs in South Wales. We have five courts, and coaching is available from a LTA qualified coach.

[www.uskathleticclub/tennis](http://www.uskathleticclub/tennis)

John Barton on 01291 673154

**Usk’s popular tennis club**

**Other sports in Usk include indoor bowling, badminton, keep fit, table tennis, yoga and many more.**

From Summer 2017 there will be a new and exciting children’s Play Park sited in Maryport Street by the Memorial Hall. The funds for the Park have been raised by volunteers, in collaboration with Monmouthshire County Council, and features equipment for toddlers up to young teens and children with disabilities, including a wheelchair friendly roundabout.
BANKS & BUILDING SOCIETIES
Usk has one bank:
Barclays corner of Maryport
and Bridge Streets,
There is a cash point. Other cash points
can be found at the Co-op on Bridge St.
& the One Stop Shop in Maryport St.
Monmouthshire Building Society
25, Bridge Street, UskTel: 01291 673347

CAR REPAIRS AND BREAKDOWN
Usk Bridge Motors
Woodside Trading Estate,
Llanbadoc, Usk NP15 1SS
Tel: 01291 672212

ADH Motors
Unit 1, Church Farm,
Llantrisant, Usk, NP15 1LG
www.adhmotors.co.uk
Tel: 01291 672272 / 07970 758417

Station Garage
Old Railway Goods Yard,
Llanbadoc, Usk NP15 1TJ
Tel: 01291 672687

CHEMIST
Usk Pharmacy
59, Bridge Street, Usk NP15 1BQ
Tel: 01291 672040
Opening hours: Mon — Fri 9am—1pm
& 2-6pm Sat 9am—1pm.

DOCTORS
Both GP surgeries are opposite each other,
on the approach to Maryport St, Car Park.
Drs Alan and Susan Jarrett
The Medical Centre,
Maryport St, NP15 1AB
Tel: 01291 672753

The Usk Surgery
(Dr Fairweather & partners)
James House, Maryport Street, NP15 1AB
Tel: 01291 672633

ESTATE AGENTS
Usk has four estate agents, all on Bridge St:
Elstons
www.elstons.co.uk
Tel: 01291 672158

Digby Turner & Co
www.digbyturnerusk.co.uk
Tel: 01291 672405

Parry’s
www.parrysproperty.co.uk
Tel: 01291 672212 / 672034

Roberts Estate Agents
www.usk@robertsco.co.uk Tel: 01291 672827
Including Town & Country Collection
www.townandcountrycollection.co.uk
Tel: 01291 672502

HOSPITALS (A & E)
Nevill Hall Hospital
Brecon Road, Abergavenny NP7 7EG
01873 732732

Royal Gwent Hospital
Cardiff Road, Newport NP20 2UB
Tel: 01633 234234

USK COMMUNITY HUB
35 Maryport Street, Usk NP15 1AE
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& Community Learning.
For Services Tel: 01291 635700
Other enquiries 01291 426880

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3 Bridge Street, Usk
www.juliandaviesopticians.co.uk
01291 672171

PETROL STATION
Woodside Garage, Woodside Industrial
Estate, Llanbadoc, Usk NP15 1SS
Tel: 01291 673268 Opening hours: 6am—9pm

POLICE
Manned part-time Tel: 01633 838111
Pontypool headquarters Tel: 01495 764711

POST OFFICE
33, Bridge Street, Usk
Opening hours: Mon—Fri 9am—5:30pm
Sat 9am—12:30pm.

VET
Usk Veterinary Centre
Porthycarne Street, Usk NP15 1RZ
www.uskvets.co.uk
Tel: 01291 672 637

RECYCLING CENTRE
In Main Car Park, Maryport Street
Open daily from 8:30—17:50
THREE SALMONS HOTEL
Privately owned hotel dating back to the 16th Century situated in the very heart of Usk. 24 individually furnished en-suite bedrooms. Award winning restaurant uses the finest ingredients from the Usk valley and surrounding area. Welcoming traditional bar provides hearty meals and a selection of local ales and ciders. Licensed for civil weddings and functions for up to 150.
Tel: 01291 672133 (Reception) general@threesalmons.co.uk www.threesalmons.co.uk

USK COUNTRY MARKET
Fresh, local, traceable, seasonal food including cakes, savouries, preserves, honey, bread, eggs, fruit and vegetables, plants, cut flowers and handmade crafts. Tea and coffee available throughout the morning. Held in the Function Room at Usk Conservative Club, Maryport Street, Usk. Every Thursday morning between 10.00am and 12noon from March to December.
Tel: 07792 452939 Email: uskcountrymarket@btinternet.com

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Pontypool Road, Usk, Monmouthshire NP15 1SY
Tel: 01291 672302 / 673202 Fax: 01291 672597 enquiries@glen-yr-afon.co.uk www.glen-yr-afon.co.uk
THE OLWAY INN
Situated just outside Usk town centre, a babbling trout stream runs next to the hotel and garden. Surrounded by picturesque countryside, the Olway makes the perfect retreat. Nicola Cole, head chef and proprietor, uses the highest quality and freshest local produce to produce traditional dishes in a modern way.

Chepstow Rd, Usk, Monmouthshire, NP15 1EN
Tel: 01291 672047 www.olwayinn.co.uk

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Twyn Square, Usk NP15 1BH
Tel: 01291 673037 Email: management@thecastleinn.co.uk
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General Manager Lee Taylor. Maryport Street, Usk NP15 1AD
Tel: 01291 671319 Email: thenewcourthotel@hotmail.co.uk
www.thenewcourthotel.co.uk
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Tel: 01291 672535 Email: crosskeysusk@gmail.com
www.crosskeysusk.com

LLANGEVIEW LODGE

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Llangeview Lodge, Chepstow Road, Usk. NP15 1EY. Tel: 01291 673338
Email: info@llangeviewlodge.co.uk www.llangeviewlodge.co.uk

THE KINGS HEAD HOTEL
The Kings Head dates back to 1588 and maintains its atmosphere and old world charm. We offer a warm welcome and cosy surroundings around our open log fire. We have been featured in the CAMRA Good Beer guide for 25 consecutive years and pride ourselves on our excellent food and en-suite accommodation.

New Market Street NP15 1AL
Tel: 01291 672963 Email: kingsheadusk@gmail.com
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Chainbridge, Abergavenny, NP7 9DS
Tel: 01873 880688 Email: info@pontkemys.com
www.pontkemys.co.uk

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Tel: 01291 650219 Email: thepentre@yahoo.co.uk
www.uskcountrycottages.com

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Tel: 01291 650987 Email: lynchurchfarm@aol.com

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Gwehelog, Near Usk, Monmouthshire NP15 1RB
Tel: 01291 672381
www.thehallinn.co.uk

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Robert Baker BSc (Hons) / MMCA. MCC.
I am a registered chiropractor and a member of the McTimoney Chiropractic Association and the Royal College of Chiropractors.

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Details from the new Time Line, on display at the Sessions House.