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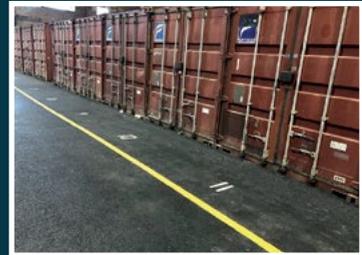
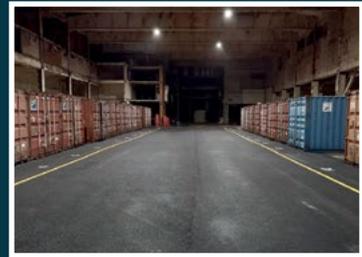
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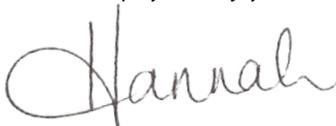
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# Dear Readers,

Isn't it lovely when the sun shows its face? It feels like it's been in hiding for so long, so thank goodness for spring and (hopefully) many sunny days to come. Here at the Focus we're in full spring mode - at home we've had a big clear out, much to my daughter's displeasure, as it means turfing out too small clothes that she claims still fit perfectly (they don't) and rationalising the toy cupboards. Thankfully we can put old toys to good use by donating them to Lucy Weller's Bring and Buy sale in aid of the children of Ukraine, which you can read about on Page 11.

Now that spring has sprung, there are more opportunities to get out and about and more events to attend than in recent years. Don't forget the Abergavenny Writing Festival taking place 7th-9th April (read about that on page 21) as well as the forthcoming toy and collectors fair at the Market coming in May. Both of these annual events had to be postponed because of Covid for the past couple of years, so it's wonderful to see them make a long-awaited return.

We have an Easter themed magazine for you this month, with our top pick of the eggs as well as tips on how to attract pollinators into your garden in the coming months. There's loads more to read, and it's been a pleasure putting it all together for you in this month's magazine. I do hope you'll enjoy it!



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hello@thefocus.wales

**Contributions:**

Kay Blackwell, Dr Giles P Croft, Gaynor Ingram, Helen Morgan, Adele Nozedar, Connie Orbach, Lucie Parkin, Jonathan Powell, Andi Straw, Esther Weller

**Organisations:** Citizens Advice, MCC

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# Contents

Editorial & Contents	5
Weather: April's Outlook	23
Puzzles	61
Focus Directory	62
<b>COMMUNITY &amp; EVENTS</b>	
New trees planted in Bailey Park	7
2wish	9
Gilwern U3A	9
Councils to support Borough Theatre	10
Bring & Buy to Help Ukraine	11
Ukraine Fundraiser at Kings Head Barn	12
A New and Exciting Events Venue	13
Coping with the Rising Cost of Living	14
Toy & Train Collectors Fair 2022	18
Events Calendar	19
Aber Writing Fest	21
Shepherds: Free Ice Cream? YES PLEASE!	27
From Lockdown Loops in Crickhowell to Coastal Path in Pembrokeshire	31
<b>HOP INTO SPRING</b>	35
Best Movie Easter Eggs	36
Butterflies and Bees	39
Best Easter Eggs for 2022	41
Eat your (spring) Greens	45
<b>LIFESTYLE &amp; CULTURE</b>	
Recipe: <i>Pistachio &amp; Wild Garlic Pesto Pasta with Tenderstem Broccoli</i>	51
Wellbeing: <i>Starting Over</i>	53
Books	55
History: <i>Wrecked but not forgotten</i>	57
Moment of Calm: <i>Changes</i>	58

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# New trees planted in Bailey Park



**W**ith help from Cantref Primary School's eco club, Abergavenny's Bailey Park now has five brand new English Oak trees and five Copper Beech trees, which have been dedicated to Her Majesty the Queen for the Platinum Jubilee under the Queen's Green Canopy project.

After inspections of Bailey Park's green infrastructure, a number of the trees in the park had to be removed for safety reasons. To compensate for the loss, 21 trees have been planted this year. Working well as a team in some challenging weather, Cantref Primary School's eco club gave a helping hand to the council's grounds staff with the planting of ten of the new trees, five English Oak and five Copper Beech. The Friends of Bailey Park have also planted wildflowers during the winter and plans to improve the park's green infrastructure will be developed this summer, including a review of the brook and a long term tree management and planting plan.

Grants from Welsh Government, through the Gwent Green Grid Partnership (GGGP), have allowed the council to improve and develop green infrastructure in Monmouthshire, with Bailey Park

being the latest beneficiary. The GGGP is a three-year project running from March 2020 to March 2023.

The GGGP aims to improve and develop green infrastructure – a term used to describe the network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, rivers and lakes that intersperse and connect villages, towns and cities – as well as providing green job opportunities within the area.

A spokesperson for Monmouthshire County Council said: "Improving our green infrastructure is so important to our green spaces. The Gwent Green Grid Partnership aims to improve green infrastructure in the Gwent area, providing real benefits to local communities. Green infrastructure has a crucial role to play in addressing nature, climate and health emergencies. It is wonderful to see the enthusiasm of local school children planting trees in Bailey Park to improve our natural environment, and their local park."

Monmouthshire County Council, working with Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Newport and Torfaen councils as well as



Natural Resources Wales, Forest Research and the Severn Wye Energy Agency, leads the GGG Partnership. The organisations will work together to ensure that the area's natural resources are healthy, resilient to pressures and threats and thereby better able to provide vital health and well-being benefits for current and future generations.

This project is supported by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe Investing in Rural Areas and is funded by the Welsh Government's Enabling of Natural Resources and Well-being Grant.

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**W**hen a family loses a child or young adult the effects are devastating for all who knew and loved them.

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Our aims are to:

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- Ensure every Emergency Department in Wales has a suitable bereavement suite for bereaved families.
- Ensure that bereavement boxes are available for families at each of these hospitals.
- Provide a professional counselling service for suddenly bereaved families.

- Provide support to individuals who witness the sudden and traumatic death of a child or young adult.
- Provide staff support and training.

When you are affected by sudden bereavement, nothing can prepare you for the grief and emotions you will feel. It is important families know that they are not alone and that the feelings they are experiencing are often normal. We offer support to families, friends, witnesses, professionals and support for historic deaths.

Since we began in 2012 we have provided support to over 4200 individuals throughout Wales.

How can you help? Fundraising

Without the help of our amazing fundraisers, we would not be able to continue our vital work.

Fundraising is a fantastic way to support us and helps us ensure we can continue to be there for suddenly bereaved families. From bake sales to skydives, the support that you can provide to 2wish will make a huge difference to the work we do.

To find out more about how you can fund raise for us, please contact our amazing Fundraising Team. [fundraising@2wish.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@2wish.org.uk)

## WE'RE CALLING OUT FOR FANTASTIC VOLUNTEERS IN YOUR AREA!

Volunteering at 2wish is an amazing and rewarding experience. It's a great way to meet people, learn new skills, expand on old skills but most importantly, it is an amazing way to support our work and help us be there for even more families in their darkest hour.

There are so many ways in which you can get involved with volunteering. Whether you want to help us at our events, host a bucket collection, dress up as an elephant or become involved in the support of our families, your time will help us to continue our vital support.

If you'd like to get involved email [gaynor@2wish.org.uk](mailto:gaynor@2wish.org.uk) For more information please visit our website [www.2wish.org.uk](http://www.2wish.org.uk)

If you or someone you know has been affected by the sudden death of a young person, please get in touch! [support@2wish.org.uk](mailto:support@2wish.org.uk)

01443 853125

*Gaynor Ingram*



## GILWERN U3A

NEW SEASON, NEW SPEAKERS,  
NEW GROUPS

**G**ilwern u3a will be starting another season with the AGM taking place on Wednesday, 27th April, and to encourage members to attend, it will be followed by Kevin Walker's talk entitled "The Nature of the Brecon Beacons".

Kevin lives in the Brecon Beacons and has been a professional

mountain leader and hill guide for almost four decades. A self-confessed mountain addict, he has written many books including Wild Country Camping, The Essential Hillwalkers' Guide, Undiscovered Wales, Mountain and Moorland Navigation and the most recent The Nature of the Brecon Beacons. When not teaching or guiding, he spends most of his free time exploring, photographing and writing about the less well-known parts of Wales, with occasional trips to further flung hills, most recently in Australia and New Zealand.

This meeting, starting at 2pm at Gilwern Community Centre, will be face-to-face only, but all Covid-19 precautions will be in place.

Future planned monthly talks include Yuri Gagarin and the Chief Designer, The Human Side of Antarctica, and 45 Years in Forensic Science. Interested? More information on all the talks and activities taking place in Gilwern u3a can be found on their website: [www.gilwernu3a.org.uk](http://www.gilwernu3a.org.uk) and membership is £15.00, payable at the AGM, giving anyone joining cover up to April 2023.

*Kay Blackwell*

# Councils to support Borough Theatre



**A** new deal between Monmouthshire County Council and Abergavenny Town Council has created a partnership to support and develop the town's historic Borough Theatre. The county council is undertaking a major redevelopment of the historic Grade 2 listed facility that is costing over a million pounds. It will create a facility that is fit for purpose and able to serve the local community for many years to come.

The County Council's Cabinet member for Community Wellbeing, Councillor Lisa Dymock, said,

'This deal shows the strength of the relationship between our two councils. We are looking forward to developing a strong partnership with the Town Council to create a theatre of which we will all be proud.'

As the ink dried on the 5-year deal, which will see the Town Council commit £10,000 each year to support the theatre over that period, the Chair of the Town's Policy and Resources Committee, Councillor Martyn Groucutt, said,

'This is a major new partnership for the town. Alongside the fabulous local drama and music groups who have used the Borough Theatre as their base for years, we are looking forward to the return of a wide range of professional theatre and entertainment to Abergavenny.'

A feature of the partnership is that it sees the Borough Theatre and the town's Melville Centre for the Arts, based in Pen y Pound, agreeing to work together to maximise the impact of the two organisations. There is already a strong desire to collaborate and to make Abergavenny a thriving centre for the Arts. The two venues would be in an ideal situation to bring a wide range of live drama, music and film to the town, each bringing their own strengths and expertise. The deal will also see the two venues work together on a range of projects and they have already won a sizeable award for a project to promote drama among young people.

Overall, the people of Abergavenny and the area can look forward to exciting times as the plans for the reopening of the Borough Theatre towards the end of the summer gathers pace.

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# Bring & Buy to Help Ukraine

**L**ucy Weller, aged 10, who attends Llantilio Pertholey Primary school, together with her friend, Lucy, and older sister, Holly, will be holding a Bring & Buy Sale on 14th May between 10am and 12pm in Abergavenny Guide Hall, located in Fairfield car park next door to Bailey Park.

After seeing the images of children in Ukraine being forced to flee their homes, Lucy decided that she wanted to do something to help, so very soon after the invasion began, the girls started planning their Bring & Buy Sale.

They've been fortunate in receiving assistance and support from Llantilio Pertholey Primary School

as well as from Lucy's Brownies unit in preparation for the Bring & Buy Sale. On the day there will be great quality children's toys and books for sale, and the girls are inviting people to donate to the sale from 9.30 onwards on the day itself.

There will be no entry fee to the sale, and all proceeds will be donated to help the children of Ukraine. Cakes donated by The Angel will also be available to buy.

Do go along to support Lucy, Holly and Lucy on 14th May in their fantastic efforts to support the children of Ukraine. Here at the Focus, we wish them all the very best of luck!



**The two Lucys**

*Esther Weller*

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# Ukraine Fundraiser at Kings Head Barn

**On** Friday 18th March, Kings Head Hotel & Regency 59 hosted a quiz night and charity raffle in aid of the humanitarian crisis being experienced by those in Ukraine.

There was a great turnout and everyone enjoyed a taxing quiz in the newly restored and refurbished Events Barn situated to the rear of The Kings Head. After lots of head scratching, conferring and some guess work, quiz sheets were turned in and winners declared.

The evening was a huge success, with £332.57 being raised to assist those in Ukraine. Owners of The Kings Head, Babu and Raj Neupane, were delighted that one of the first events for the new Barn could be something that raised money for such a worthy and deserving cause.



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## A NEW AND EXCITING EVENTS VENUE FOR ABERGAVENNY

Any kind of space in Abergavenny is a rare commodity, especially events space. Regular customers of The Kings Head and Regency 59 on Cross Street may have been aware of the Barn to the rear of the pub, across the courtyard, which offered real potential as an events space. During the pandemic, rather than rest on their laurels, owners Babu and Raj Neupane, together with their staff and a team of contractors, set to work on transforming the eighteenth century Barn, from a rather tired and neglected space to a fully functional and multi purpose events Barn.

The Barn retains the appearance and character of a rural barn, yet is unusually but conveniently located in the heart of the town centre. It is an ideal space for many private functions such as birthday parties, funeral receptions and celebrations. Being flexible, the space is also ideal for larger meetings, which can be accompanied with tea and coffee and a selection of sandwiches.

Following the pandemic, many engaged couples are now looking for venues that offer space that's suitable for a more modest gathering of guests. The

Barn is ideal for this – it happily accommodates between 50 and 70 guests, and with a competitively priced wedding package, this is the perfect solution for couples looking for something that fits their budget without compromising on a character-filled venue. With parking available to the rear, everything has been thought of!

To enquire about hiring the Barn for a forthcoming celebration, event or function, please contact the team at The Kings Head Hotel by calling 01873 853575, 01873 859962 or emailing [info@kingsheadhotelabergavenny.co.uk](mailto:info@kingsheadhotelabergavenny.co.uk).

TEL: 01873 853575 OR 01873 859962

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Rising energy bills, food prices and transport costs have put pressure on household budgets and more people are struggling to cover their essential bills. Listed below are some organisations who can help.



## Citizens Advice (CA)

Contact our energy adviser Carly Bond on our Citizens Advice office numbers below

CA Consumer helpline 0808 223 1133  
(0808 223 1144 for Welsh speaking adviser)

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy)

CA debt helpline 0800 240 4420

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/Wales/debtandmoney](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/Wales/debtandmoney)

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Contact **your energy supplier** to see what help they provide, and if they offer the Warm Home Discount for people on a low income.

Check if you can get a local energy grant at **Simple Energy Advice:**

<https://www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk/>

or 0800 444 20

## NEST Wales;

the Welsh Government Warm Homes scheme, provides funding for energy efficiency improvements to low income households:

<https://nest.gov.wales/> or 0808 808 2244

Contact **Monmouthshire Council** about support available locally:

<https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/utilities/>

<https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/money-matters/>

or 01633 644644

## Step Change

Debt charity offering free debt advice

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## Business Debtline

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[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

# Toy & Train Collectors Fair 2022

It's that time of year when the hugely popular Toy and Train Collectors Fair takes place in Abergavenny Market Hall!

This year will be the thirteenth year that the fair has taken place, after a two year hiatus as a result of Covid lockdowns. This year, the fair sees the return of all the old favourites, with vintage and classic cars, motorbike and vehicle displays as well as a huge array of toys and collectibles for sale. Working train sets will be on display, as will a large model and diorama exhibition to capture the imagination of young and old alike.

There will be something for everyone to enjoy, particularly children; this year there will be free children's funfair rides as well as walk about entertainment and lots of interactive displays.

With so much enjoyment to be had, refreshments are a must and there will be street food traders serving up a storm and keeping visitors well fed and watered.

Don't forget that admission is completely free, so be sure to join the fun on 2nd May in Abergavenny Market Hall from 10am!

**ABERGAVENNY**  
**TOY**  
and Train  
Collectors Fair

**MONDAY 2nd MAY 2022**  
**10am to 4pm**

ADMISSION FREE

IN THE MARKET HALL

**Large Model Exhibition • View Working Trainsets**  
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- Flea Market every Wednesday
- Craft Fair 2nd Saturday of the month (March – December, Excluding September)
- Farmers' Market 4th Thursday every month

### MONMOUTH

#### Shire Hall & Cattle Market Car Park

- General Markets every Friday & Saturday

### CALDICOT

#### Newport Road

- General Markets every Tuesday & Saturday

### UPCOMING EVENTS

Monday 2nd May,  
Toy & Train Collectors Fair,  
**FREE ENTRY**

@MonmouthshireMarkets  
markets@monmouthshire.gov.uk

**01873 735811**

**6TH APRIL & EVERY WEDNESDAY  
FLEA MARKET**

Abergavenny Market Hall

**7TH-9TH APRIL**

**ABERGAVENNY WRITING FESTIVAL**

Various events across the weekend. See Page 21 for more info and visit [www.abergavennywritingfestival.com](http://www.abergavennywritingfestival.com) for all the details

**8TH APRIL**

**Llanfoist Village Hall Film Night  
THE LAST BUS**

Tickets £5 for adults or £3 for children; to be bought at the door. Doors open 7pm, Films start at 7.30pm; Bar available.

**9TH APRIL**

**CRAFT FAIR**

Abergavenny Market Hall

**10TH APRIL**

**GOVILON EASTER FAIR**

Food, stalls, music, raffle  
10.30am, Govilon Football Pitch

**16TH APRIL**

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**23RD APRIL**

**SYNERGY 'LOVE TO SING' WORKSHOP**

Please see advert below for all information. 12pm – 4pm, Llanfoist Primary School, School Way, Llanfoist. For further info contact [johngwales@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:johngwales@hotmail.co.uk) or visit [www.synergysingers.co.uk](http://www.synergysingers.co.uk)

**27TH APRIL**

**GILWERN U3A AGM**

Followed by 'The Nature of the Brecon Beacons' - a talk by Kevin Walker. See page 9 for more info  
2pm Gilwern Community Centre.

**28TH APRIL**

**FARMERS MARKET**

Abergavenny Market Hall

**30TH APRIL**

**THE BEE INITIATIVE CRAFT MARKET**

Girl Guide Hall, Fairfield Car Park, Abergavenny

**2ND MAY**

**ABERGAVENNY TOY AND TRAIN  
COLLECTORS FAIR**

See article and advert on opposite page for more information. 10am – 4pm, Abergavenny Market Hall

**14TH MAY**

**BRING & BUY SALE IN AID OF THE  
CHILDREN OF UKRAINE**

See Page 11 for more information

LOVE  
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[www.synergysingers.com](http://www.synergysingers.com)

# RHIANNON

a fleetwood mac tribute



**CHEPSTOW DRILL HALL**  
**Saturday 23rd April 2022**

**Doors Open 7:00pm**  
**Curfew 10:30pm**

**Tickets**

Reserved seated tickets: £18.00

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Online booking fees

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# Drill Hall Show Update

**APRIL 23RD**

We are thrilled to announce the fantastic  
**'RHIANNON- A TRIBUTE TO FLEETWOOD MAC'**

"Rhiannon brings you the voices, the look and the musicianship into this authentic and truly polished, professional show. They capture the energy and perform stunning versions of the most popular Mick Fleetwood, John McVie, Christine McVie, Lindsey Buckingham and Stevie Nicks hits!"

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 call the box office on 01291 627122

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CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Kizzie Crawford, Graham Hartill, Nicola Davies and Marvin Thompson

# ABERWritingFEST

**A**pril 2022 sees the return of the Abergavenny Writing Festival. From 7 – 9 April there will be 21 events across 3 days at the Kings Arms Hotel, the Melville Centre for the Arts and pop-up events at Abergavenny Library and the Wool Croft.

Nicola Davies will talk about the inspiration behind some of the poems featured in her book, *This is How the Change Begins*, along with her own writing process. The book is a collection of six illuminating poems inspired by the growing threat of climate change.

Graham Hartill will give a talk and lead a discussion on creative writing for well-being. Graham has worked in this field for over thirty years, running workshops for people with mental health issues,

older people, including those with dementia, prisoners and in a variety of other settings. As a tutor on the only Master's degree programme in the field in the UK, Graham will talk about his work, read some examples of writing produced and lead a discussion on good practice and ethical guidelines.

The finale evening 'Saturday Night Shebang' will begin with readings from poets Des Mannay and Lily Sequoia. There will be an open-mic 'TalknTales' created by Cardiff University's Creative Writing MA students. And finally a performance from singer songwriter Kizzy Crawford. To book a slot for the open-mic email [shareurscribble@outlook.com](mailto:shareurscribble@outlook.com)

And there will be many opportunities to participate in the

writing festival remotely, including a session given by Marvin Thompson. In this welcoming, poetry webinar, Marvin will explore the health benefits of creative writing. Participants will explore topics such as journal writing, walks with nature and fantastic futures. This webinar is suitable for those new to creative writing as well as more experienced writers.

The Abergavenny Writing Festival is supported by Arts Council Wales, National Lottery Funding, Abergavenny Town Council, Abergavenny Rotary Club and Christie Residential.

For details of all events and to book tickets visit [www.abergavennywritingfestival.com](http://www.abergavennywritingfestival.com)

Lucie Parkin



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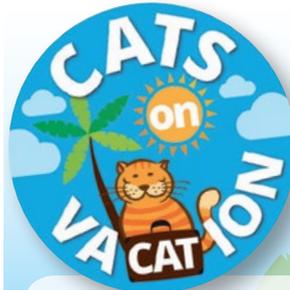
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Email: ruthwatkins007@gmail.com

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**A**s the new season establishes itself with winter's cold hand now unable to interfere with spring as it begins to blossom, some pleasant days are to be expected with blue skies and a distinct warmth offered by the sun. Perhaps a fairly settled start to the month courtesy of high pressure but any dominance is not likely to last, with low pressure eager to influence the weather with showers or perhaps longer spells of rain, accompanied by breezy conditions. However, there are signs that April will retain a more than reasonable amount of dry weather across the thirty days, so whereas we may well enter into a more mixed pattern for the second half of the month, there will still be some fine and settled conditions around. Temperatures will rally rather nicely during any sustained periods of dry weather, with only a minimal risk of any late frost activity. Rainfall is expected to be on or slightly below the average for the month, with temperatures above the seasonal average.

Forecast from Jonathan Powell



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# Free Ice Cream? YES PLEASE!



**If** you love the idea of free ice cream, head to the newly opened Ice Cream Shop in Market Street on 2nd April, where they make their ice cream on site.

The shop is the latest venture for Shepherds Ice Cream, a family business based in Herefordshire and founded by Martin Orbach and Juliet Noble in 1987.

We caught up with their daughter, Connie Orbach, who is putting her own spin on things with this venture and explained the thinking behind the shop. "I moved to Abergavenny two years ago and have been thinking it would be a great place for an ice cream parlour ever since, so when the perfect spot came up on Market Street it felt like we just had to go for it."

"We want to keep things simple but high quality, we make most of our flavours from scratch and buy our ingredients locally whenever possible. We'll have a regularly changing list of ice cream flavours, which we'll also use to make milkshakes. We'll also be selling ice cream cakes by the slice, ice cream sandwiches and tubs of ice cream to take home."

"We're hoping to bring something a bit different to Abergavenny: our ice cream is made from sheep's milk and we try to keep the sugar and fat lower than average ice cream so it has a cleaner flavour. But it won't just be sheep's milk ice cream, we'll make sure there are always vegan flavours available so there is something for everyone."

The Ice Cream Shop opens on Saturday April 2nd at 11B Market Street, Abergavenny and Shepherds Ice Cream will be celebrating with free ice cream all day.

*Connie Orbach*

# Shepherds



## *The Original Sheep's Milk Ice Cream*

### ***Opening 2nd April!***

*Visit us on opening day for FREE ice-cream!*

## **The Ice Cream Shop**

11B Market Street, Abergavenny

[www.shepherdsicecream.co.uk](http://www.shepherdsicecream.co.uk)

# From great times in Monmouth to great plans for Abergavenny!

As we say goodbye to our Monmouth office, it's time to thank all the clients and local businesses for their support. The last five years have been a privilege – and fun as well!



*Heather Cook hands over the keys to the Monmouth office to Joe Parry*



## **After five fun-filled and successful years,**

Parrys have decided to sell the Monmouth sales business to Joe Parry of Archer & Co. Many will remember Joe's father John owning the business which was sold to Vivienne Reece and Heather Cook in 2017. Joe has been keen to open in Monmouth to complement his existing Archer & Co showrooms in Usk, Chepstow and Ross on Wye.

The Parrys Lettings business will continue to be handled by Vivienne Reece and the team.

With all the Parrys Partners living and working in or around Abergavenny, Heather, Vivienne, Ben and Gemma have been working on taking the business in a different direction. Our plan is to create a property hub delivering excellence in every aspect of the business to the Abergavenny, Crickhowell and Herefordshire border areas.

Here's to the next chapter at Parrys – we are excited about the future. And here's a little more about the partners. If we haven't met you yet, we look forward to meeting you soon!

### **HEATHER COOK MNAEA, AssocRICS**

Heather opened Parrys Abergavenny, which held the Fine & Country Licence for the area, with John Parry in 2004, subsequently purchasing the remaining shares in the business in 2012 and the Monmouth branch in 2017.

Heather enjoys the outdoors, walking her dogs through the beautiful countryside of the

*We never forget how lucky we are to live in such a beautiful part of the world!*

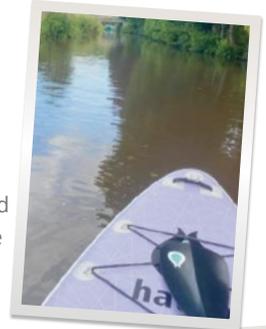




Brecon Beacons National Park and also, practicing yoga and going open water swimming.

**VIVIENNE REECE MARLA, AssocRICS**

Vivienne is passionate about the lettings business and is the ideal property manager with her acute attention to detail and understanding of contracts. She enjoys walking her dog and when not entertaining her grandchildren, can be found on her paddle board either on the canal or on a lake, or enjoying a Zumba session!



**BEN WATKINS MNAEA**

Ben joined Parrys initially as Lettings Manager before moving to a more sales oriented role which encompassed both the Parrys brand and Fine & Country. With this experience Ben can understand both sectors of the business. Ben and his wife Charlotte are kept busy by their two young children. He is a keen mountain runner in his leisure time.



**GEMMA POVEY**

Gemma is a Welsh girl through and through, born just outside Crickhowell and has lived in the area all her life. Gemma is a very driven and motivated lady who is absolutely passionate about not just property but delivering an exceptional service to our clients, and as a result was appointed a Partner in 2021. Outside of work Gemma enjoys time spent with her family and walking the Black Mountains.

*Our expanding offices in Nevill Street Abergavenny*



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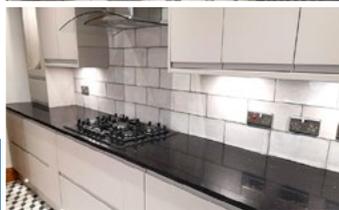
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## From Lockdown Loops in Crickhowell to Coastal Path in Pembrokeshire

**O**ur journey began during the first lockdown in 2020 and has led to both myself and my husband stepping way outside of our comfort-zones.

I have suffered with Ulcerative Colitis for the past 15-20 years and my husband Andy, has been there to support me throughout the whole time. At the start of the pandemic, I had just come through a difficult time with the illness and had very recently begun a new medication route, which involved fortnightly injections plus a concoction of tablets. Things seemed to be working quite well until blood tests revealed that I had become neutropenic, meaning I was extremely immunosuppressed. It was decided at this stage that all medication needed to be paused and I was placed into an "extremely vulnerable / shielding category". This took a toll psychologically, as the label did not sit well with me, but after several months, things started to improve, both in terms of my condition and immune response.

During this time, Andy had to take over the dog exercising duties. In his late teens and early 20's Andy had enjoyed running, but he sustained a knee injury playing football for a work team during his first week in a new job. This

unfortunately put a stop to his running, but exercise has always remained an extremely important part of his life and his means to well-being. Throughout the early lockdown stage, he gradually began to introduce some running into the dog walking times and slowly but surely got to a stage where he was able to run pain-free.

When the medical team, who were overseeing my condition, advised that I could start getting outside again, we began running together. We really appreciated being able to share this time together, exercising outdoors and I know that we both benefitted from it in so many ways, individually and as a couple. It was certainly not lost on us, as to how fortunate we were to be surrounded by such gorgeous countryside, at a time when so many people were struggling. Running was most definitely proving to be a great source of natural health benefits for us both.

We were able to enjoy exploring many new routes around Crickhowell and the local back roads, taking advantage of the reduced number of cars on the roads. Who wouldn't benefit from time out exercising in these beautiful surroundings? We also used this time to really be "in the moment" and take lots of

photographs etc on our routes. We soon became a regular sight, running together with our dogs in and around the area. The small moments of connection, created through a friendly smile or a quick chat, with other people who were out taking their exercise, also had a beneficial effect.

As our fitness levels started to improve, we were able to increase the duration of time that we were out on a run, inevitably we are still nowhere close to matching the fitness levels of our dogs, but maybe we need to keep our dreams realistic on that front and accept they will always be way ahead of us there!

We have managed to maintain our running, although now having to work around our more "normal" work patterns and continue to reap the benefits. As 2022 arrived, I decided that I would like to set myself a challenge (nothing to do with reaching a milestone birthday year!) and raise funds for charity. Being so spoiled with the beauty of our usual running routes, the decision that we both came to, was to attempt the Endurance Life Pembrokeshire Coastal Path Half-Marathon event taking place on Saturday 30th April 2022. My philosophy being, that the spectacular views will keep my mind off the difficulties of the challenge! We are raising money and awareness for Crohn's & Colitis UK. The charity helps people who are suffering with these conditions and funds research into treatments and hopefully one day a cure for these diseases.

If you feel that you would like to support the work of the charity and encourage us on our journey, please see the links to our Just Giving page and to the event website.

[www.justgiving.com/fundraising/andrienna-straw1](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/andrienna-straw1)

[www.endurancelife.com/pembrokeshire](http://www.endurancelife.com/pembrokeshire)

Andi Straw



# Here's to New Beginnings

**T**he first signs of spring offer promise of new life and warmer, lighter days. From snowdrops to the dawn chorus these are welcome signs that winter is soon behind us.

As the world wakes up again it instils in us a new purpose. Giving us energy saved up from our quieter winter months. We are suddenly focused on what we need to do to achieve our goals.

**Now is the time to put your house on the market, whilst you are feeling uplifted. Because you are not alone in feeling this way. Remember your house is someone else's dream home.**



**We have buyers waiting for similar properties**

## Recently Sold



**Bryn-Y-Gwenin, Abergavenny**  
SOLD STC



**Old Hereford Road, Pantygelli**  
SOLD STC



**Penperlleni, Pontypool**  
SOLD STC

# Introducing to the market ... **Hillview, Gilwern,**

**Guide Price - £399,950**



Detached

2



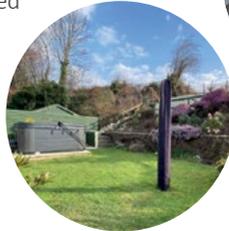
1.5

Gilwern is a highly sought after area with a great range of amenities available within the village- Doctors, dentist surgery, library, butchers, hairdressers and a corner shop. The village also boasts a well respected Primary school.

With all this on your doorstep, this home would suit a small family or a couple looking to live in a quiet yet conveniently located residential area. The property has ample parking and a garage adjoining the house. The downstairs is well laid out with plenty of storage.

Upstairs there are two spacious double bedrooms and again a great amount of storage.

Outside the well-maintained, sunny garden is a highlight of this property. Utilising a good balanced of paved and grassed areas perfect for entertaining and enjoying whilst sitting in the hot tub.



**What Jo says,**  
**“The kitchen offers a great heart to this home with a feature area housing the cooker and a breakfast bar.”**

Jo Francis, Abergavenny Branch Manager



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# HOP INTO SPRING

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out how to entice  
pollinators  
into your  
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# BEST MOVIE



**E**ver heard of Easter Eggs? No, we don't mean the chocolate variety, but the cinematic kind! Movie Easter Eggs are hidden references, inside jokes or clues to a plot's development that are subtly incorporated into the on-screen action. They're not a new thing - in fact they've been appearing in films since the early days of cinema, but why are they called Easter Eggs? One theory involves the filming of *Rocky Horror Picture Show* where legend suggests the cast had an egg hunt on set before filming started. Unfortunately, those hiding the eggs were a little too crafty, and not all were found before the cameras started rolling. As a result, there are three known Easter Eggs to have made the final cut, hidden in plain sight.

Since then, various video games and filmmakers have added Easter Eggs to their art, becoming a fun and interactive way to engage with fans. Here is our top Easter Egg picks for you to hunt out and find:

## FIGHT CLUB

### Easter Egg: Starbucks

The core theme of *Fight Club* is consumerism and director David Fincher emphasizes this point by making the drastic decision to highlight it in every scene, picking the multi-national company Starbucks as his symbol. And believe it or not, there is supposedly a Starbucks coffee cup in EVERY scene, whether it's hidden somewhere or simply in plain sight.



## THE GODFATHER

### Easter Egg: Oranges

Using imagery to foreshadow death, the use of oranges is perhaps the most iconic Easter Egg in film history. Throughout the trilogy of films, oranges are used to indicate a character who is soon to die.

# EASTER EGGS

## STAR WARS

### Easter Egg: THX 1138 references

THX 1138 was George Lucas's directorial debut in 1971. In almost all Star Wars films, Lucas references THX 1138 in some way. Most notably, THX 1138 is the name of the stormtrooper that loses his armour to Luke Skywalker after being knocked out on the Millennium Falcon. Luke claims he is a prisoner transfer from cell block 1138.

## RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK

### Easter Egg: C3PO and R2-D2

In *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, Indiana Jones lifts up the Ark of the Covenant out of its crate to reveal a section covered in hieroglyphs. It's a quick scene, however, some fans have been quick to point out that iconic Star Wars characters C3PO and R2-D2 appear in the imagery on the pillar.



## E.T./PHANTOM MENACE

### Easter Egg: Yoda/E.T. Reference

One of the funniest moments in Steven Spielberg's *E.T.* is during the trick-or-treat sequence, when the titular alien "recognises" a kid in a Yoda costume as a sign from home. Since Spielberg is good friends with George Lucas, this can be seen as nothing more than a charming bit of comic relief, but Lucas took it one step further in *The Phantom Menace*. Menace and returned the favour by placing a couple of E.T. lookalikes in one of the film's Coruscant Galactic Senate sequences.



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# Butterflies and Bees

**We** all know that the population of pollinating insects is in decline in the UK, so it's important that we do our bit to invite them into our gardens whenever we can. Here are our favourite ways to invite pollinators into your garden this Spring and Summer.

## Plant the right type of flowers

Wildflowers are the trick to attracting pollinators into our gardens. Any open-faced flower will do but bees in particular like hellebores, wood anemones and honeysuckle. Butterflies have similar tastes and will happily pollinate on these plants too. They also adore buddleia and hebe. Don't forget that you can't have butterflies without caterpillars – nasturtiums, nettles and hops are perfect for these critters.

## Don't use pesticides

Common insecticides containing neonicotinoids (thiacloprid and acetamiprid) kill bees! They are still approved for home and garden use and are available today at most garden centres and DIY shops. Be sure to read the labels and avoid using them. Also be aware of plants purchased from garden centres that may have previously been treated.

## Create warmth and space

Butterflies enjoy warmth, so pick a sunny spot to cultivate your plants. They also need room to fly, so create a flowerbed full of nectar-rich plants alongside an open area of patio or lawn.

## Leave fallen fruit on the ground

Butterflies need food to be available from the early spring through to late

summer. In August, some species will feed on the sugar inside discarded fruit.

Rotting pears, apples and berries are popular. Butterflies struggle to consume anything too hard, so if you leave fruit out on the compost heap, the riper the better.

## Create Shelter

For bees, you can purchase a bee hotel cheaply from many retailers – be sure to position it at waist or chest height on a fence or a wall. Very importantly, place it facing south in a sunny position, near your bee-friendly flowers and shrubs.

Butterflies like to seek shelter under large leaves, so keep enough trees and shrubs around the garden for butterflies to hide in when the weather turns bad. You could even plant a hedgerow, if you have room.



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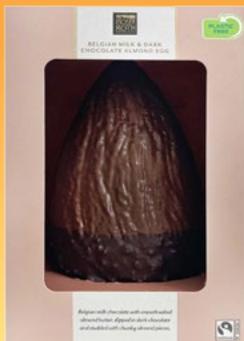
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# BEST EASTER EGGS FOR 2022

*How eggciting....we've put together our top picks of the chocolate Easter Eggs on the market this year, so you can be sure of buying the best for your loved ones (or yourself).*



## BEST BUDGET EGG

### Moser Roth Belgian Milk & Dark Chocolate Almond Egg 250g

This milk chocolate egg is made with smooth salted almond butter, dipped in dark chocolate and studded with chunky almond pieces. It's creamy and moreish and doesn't cut corners on flavour.

£5.99 - Aldi

## BEST EGG FOR KIDS

### KitKat Chunky Salted Caramel Popcorn Incredible Egg 516g

This chocolate egg is textured and has been infused with crunchy salted corn pieces. You'll also get three KitKat chunky salted caramel popcorn bars to enjoy. Ranking highly on dozens of independent taste tests this year, it's widely described as being 'completely irresistible'.

£10-£12 - Various retailers including: Tesco, BM Stores, Wilko, Morrisons



## BEST VEGAN EGG

### HIP Salted Caramel Oat Milk Chocolate Easter Egg 150g

Founded by James Cadbury (of the Cadbury family), HIP has set a new standard for dairy-free chocolate. This egg is made with 41% single origin Colombian cocoa and has smooth caramel chocolate with crunchy salted caramel shards. Utterly delicious for vegans and non-vegans alike! Packaging is also plastic-free and the inner foil can be recycled too.

£7.95 - Ocado.com

## BEST LOCALLY

### Brecon Chocolates – Dark Chocolate Hollow Art Easter Egg 125g

Independent chocolatiers, Brecon Chocolates, are located just off the High Street in a revamped former jewellers (and also have a fab online presence). They offer a wonderful array of Easter themed chocolate and our favourite is the hand made Dark Chocolate Hollow Art Easter Egg. Available online for £10.95 plus p&p your only dilemma will be coming to terms with chomping through such a beautiful looking egg.

£10.95 - [www.breconchocolates.co.uk](http://www.breconchocolates.co.uk)



## BEST EGG FOR BIG BUDGETS

### Classic Ostrich Easter Egg 1kg

Weighing in at over a kilo, this egg is one that's best for sharing, or reserved for the most serious of chocoholics. This immense treat is made with half 40% and half 50% milk chocolate for rich nuanced flavours and a melt-in-the-mouth texture. It's chunky, not flimsy, so expect a thick shell to get your teeth into.

£85 - Hotel Chocolat



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# MORE BOUNCE FOR THE OUNCE - EAT YOUR (SPRING) GREENS!

It's nothing new that as soon as the first green shoots emerge from the dark earth, our thoughts turn to....detoxing! Even our ancestors did it, dishing up something called Spring Pudding as a way of kick-starting the digestive system after the stodgy foods of winter.

A sort of internal spring clean, the detox; but I'm firmly of the opinion that the last thing we need, ever, is any kind of punishing regime. Life's too short. We can kick-start our systems to greater efficiency in a much nicer way.

So, in the quest for that internal spring clean, the first thing I want you to do is to take a walk. Any route. Just for 20 minutes. We're lucky in this part of the world that

we can access open countryside pretty quickly.

Next - look for three plants. This isn't hard. You need to find dandelion leaves, cleavers, and young nettle tops. Cleavers are those long sticky tendrils that have teeny burrs later in the year; you know them. If you're confident in identifying sorrel, get some of that too.

Get a good handful of each and rinse them well once you're back at home.

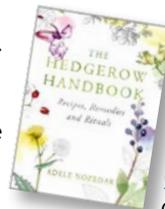
Now you can do a number of things.

1. Pop in a blender with a 50-50 mix of juice/water, plain live yoghurt, a banana if you have one... maybe an avocado too...and glug down.
2. Tear up the leaves, add a little oil,

lemon juice, salt and pepper and blend for the best pesto ever.

3. Add the leaves to a eggs and scramble.
4. Or - easiest of all - throw them in a teapot, steep in hot water, add honey and sip through the day.

The zing that you'll get from these fresh, free leaves is really hard to describe; for me, it feels like my brain's been put through a steam cleaner....in a GOOD way!



Adele Nozedar is author of *The Hedgerow Handbook - Remedies, Recipes and Rituals.*  
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# Pistachio & Wild Garlic Pesto Pasta with Tenderstem Broccoli

**T**his recipe is a delicious vegan alternative to pesto using seasonal wild garlic, which can be foraged right now. If you can't find wild garlic, just use two garlic cloves in the recipe, instead of one.

If you're not familiar with nutritional yeast, you'll find it in the stock aisle of your supermarket in a drum-like tub.

- Serves 4
- 320g pasta of your choice
- 250g tenderstem broccoli
- 70g pistachios, shells removed
- 1 garlic clove
- 3 tbsp nutritional yeast
- 1 generous handful wild garlic leaves
- 2 bunches fresh basil, stalks removed
- 1 handful fresh mint, stalks removed
- ¼ tsp chilli flakes
- juice of 1 lime
- 150 ml olive oil
- salt & pepper

**1.** Begin by cooking the pasta in plenty of salted water, drain and reserve the cooking water.

**2.** Steam the broccoli for 5 minutes. Set aside.

**3.** Place the remaining ingredients in a food processor, together with ½ tsp salt and a good pinch of pepper. Process until the mixture is smooth. Add 2-3 tbsp of pasta cooking water in order to reduce the thickness of the pesto. It should be thick enough to easily coat your pasta.

**4.** Combine the pasta, pesto and broccoli making sure to coat everything with the pesto. Top with a crack of black pepper and a scattering of basil leaves.

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# Starting Over

*“You’re under no obligation to be the same person you were 5 minutes ago.”*

~ Alan Watts



**T**rees are budding and bulbs are flowering, so let’s talk about fresh starts. Let’s make a break from the past and commit to reinventing ourselves, right here, right now. What do you want to create? Who do you want to be?

“Oh come on, Giles,” I hear you object, “it’s not that easy! You don’t know me, or what I’ve been through. Or how I am! Haven’t you heard, a leopard can’t change its spots?”

You’ll be pleased to hear I’m not inviting you to grow a third arm or anything, I’m asking you to deepen your understanding of how you experience life and who you really are.

The Alan Watts quote atop this piece rings true because it contains the word ‘person,’ the Latin origin of which lies in the use of ancient theatrical masks, held up on a stick; a false face through which the voice of an actor was projected. What we see as our personality is not a solid object that defines us, but a recurrent thought, arising in a moment, being believed.

It’s so easy, so familiar, quite comforting in a way, to rest in the

notion that our past is what creates our present. It gives us a story to hold on to; a sense of place in history; a feeling of who we are and what we’re about.

But it’s just a work of fiction; a lifeless re-creation of something that no longer is – a false face, made of thought, through which we speak. The past doesn’t create our present. The present creates our past.

It also creates our future, which brings us back to our initial question, because right here, right now, you can choose to show up in life however you like.

\*\*\*\*\*

Once, my daughter was having a particularly troublesome bedtime. Age five, overtired and overdramatic, she’d fallen out with both of us and dug herself into a bottomless pit of despair. I found her in a corner, wailing something about always-this and never-that. For her, everything was ruined and there was no way out.

It occurred to me to scribble a picture of her unhappy little face on a notepad, inviting her into my office to see what she’d find when she ripped off the top sheet.

Curious, she did so and I feigned surprise at the gleaming expanse of white paper now revealed. “Oh wow! Look at that – a clean sheet! What sort of bedtime do you want to create? Happy? Sad? Loving? Angry? It’s entirely up to you – draw what you like, because that’s how life works,” and I left her to it.

A few minutes later she toddled out, calmly, to brush her teeth with Mum and on the pad of paper I found a smiling face with a sun drawn above it.

A fresh start awaits all of us in each and every moment. Life is created anew, right here, right now. How much we limit it with stories is entirely up to us.



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*If you’d like your own fresh start, then helping people cut ties to the past to create the life they want today is what I do. Reach out via <https://gilescroft.com/contact> and we’ll take it from there.*

# {BOOK•ISH}

BOOKS, CONVERSATION & MORE

April 19 **Barbara Erskine**  
The Manor - 2:30pm



April 20 **Caryl Lewis**  
Book-ish Loft 7:30pm



April 28 **Paul Henry**  
Book-ish Loft - 7:30pm



April 06 **Games Night**  
Book-ish Loft 7:30pm

{GAMES}  
AT BOOK-ISH

April 25 **Writing Group**  
Book-ish Loft - 7:30pm

{WRITE}  
AT BOOK-ISH

April 29 **Quiz Night**  
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{QUIZ}  
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PETER HILL

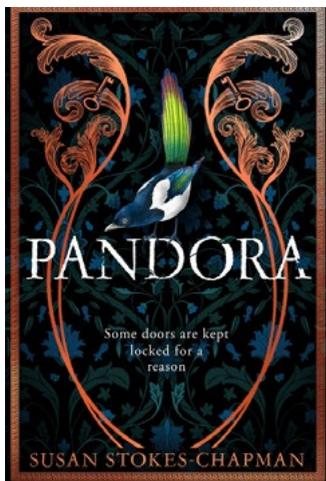
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# Books

*This month's top picks for light-filled days of springtime reading.*



## Pandora

**Susan Stokes-Chapman**

£14.99

A must for fans of historical fiction, this addictively readable novel merges the Greek myth of Pandora with the milieu of Georgian London where a frustrated young artisan and an ambitious antiquarian scholar find their futures enmeshed with the discovery of an ancient vase that holds secrets as dangerous as they are tempting.

## Drift

**Caryl Lewis**

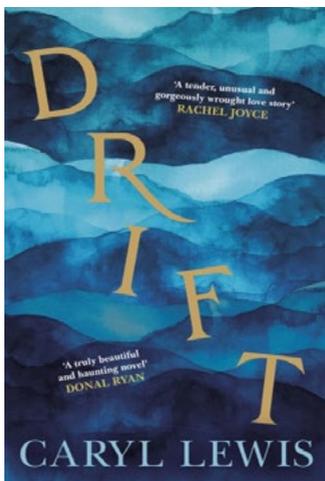
£14.99

Nefyn has always been an enigma, even to her brother Joseph with whom she lives in a small cottage above a blustery cove.

Hamza is a Syrian mapmaker, incarcerated in a military base a few miles up the coast.

A violent storm will bring these two lost souls together - but other forces will soon try to tear them apart...

Moving between the wild Welsh coast and war-torn Syria, Drift is a love story with a difference, a



hypnotic tale of lost identity, the quest for home and the wondrous resilience of the human spirit.

## Careless

**Kirsty Capes**

£8.99

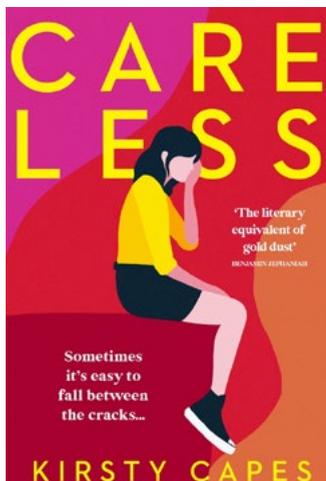
Written with tremendous empathy and compassion, Capes's electrifying debut charts the coming-of-age of Bess - teenage, pregnant and living on the edge of society - and what it means to be young and neglected in twenty-first century Britain.

## The Atlas Six

**Olivia Blake**

£14.99

The Atlas Six is the runaway TikTok must-read fantasy novel of the year. Opening the doors to a world of magic, ancient wisdom and secret societies, this slice of richly imagined and unputdownable fantasy follows six uniquely talented young magicians as they are invited to an initiation that will change their lives forever...



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# Wrecked but not forgotten

*The world's first steam-powered submarine had a short but dramatic life. Helen Morgan from Abergavenny Local History Society reports.*

**T**he *Resurgam*, which sank on its maiden voyage off the North Wales coast in 1880, was lost for 115 years until it was spotted by a scuba diver who had been sent to clear a trawler's snagged nets 50ft beneath the waves. It is thought that the wreck had been buried in the seabed until being dislodged during excavation for a pipe line. The 45ft submarine was built in Birkenhead in 1879 and cost about £1,538, a small fortune by Victorian standards. Steam-powered and large enough to carry three sailors, it was designed to approach an enemy vessel by stealth, armed with torpedoes.

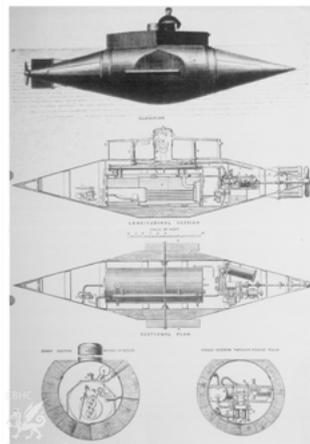
*Resurgam* was the brainchild of an eccentric but far-sighted curate from Manchester. The Rev George Garrett realised in the mid-1870s that submarines could patrol the British coastline and strike at any menacing Russian ironclads. He could safeguard his country by building the ultimate deterrent of his day – and, hopefully, make his fortune in the process.

In 1880, after a successful sea trial, it set out for Portsmouth where it was to be demonstrated to the Royal Navy as the latest in Victorian naval technology. It had got as far as Liverpool Bay when the propeller shed a blade, forcing Garrett to put into Rhyl. Four months later *Resurgam* went to sea again. Now, though, she was under tow from a steam yacht which Garrett had bought to provide occasional comfort for the crew. Disaster struck when the tow boat developed engine trouble. The seas rose and the tow hawser snapped. *Resurgam*'s hatch was open and, like that of any submarine, could not be sealed from the outside. Stationary and rolling in the waves, it was not long before she disappeared beneath the surface. Sadly, *Resurgam*, which means "I shall rise again" was to prove ironic. Garrett's brainchild was no more and his fledgling submarine company was broke. But he didn't give up. In partnership with a Swedish tycoon and arms dealer Garrett designed submarines for the navies of Sweden, Greece and Turkey. In

the 1890s, another clergyman, John Holland, devised the combination of diesel and electric power that drove submarines for more than a century.

*Roger Morgan's talk in the Melville Theatre before a limited audience on April 27th starts at 7:30 and will be streamed via Zoom to members. For details on how to join, visit [www.abergavennylocalhistorysociety.org.uk](http://www.abergavennylocalhistorysociety.org.uk)*

Helen Morgan



**Moment of Calm.**

## **Changes**

As we emerge from the dark days of winter, take a moment to enjoy the rising energy of spring, both in nature and within yourself. Embrace the change, appreciate the longer, lighter days and the sun on your face and notice that there is a beauty in new beginnings.







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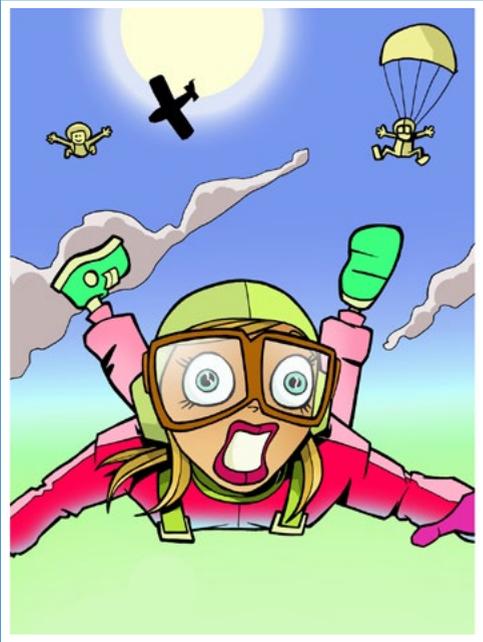
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# PUZZLES

## SPOT THE DIFFERENCE



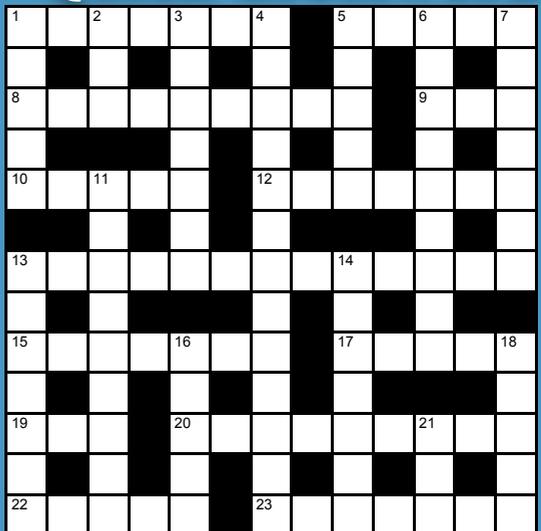
### ACROSS

- 1 Frenzied (7)
- 5 Horizontal (5)
- 8 Regularity (9)
- 9 Prohibit (3)
- 10 Severe (5)
- 12 Set free (7)
- 13 Protest (13)
- 15 Digit (7)
- 17 Used to sweeten (5)
- 19 Frozen water (3)
- 20 Small flower (9)
- 22 Examinations (5)
- 23 Longed for (7)

### DOWN

- 1 After fourth (5)
- 2 Beer (3)
- 3 Strengthen (7)
- 4 Praised (13)
- 5 Faithful (5)
- 6 Shaking (9)
- 7 Portable light (7)
- 11 Recalls (9)
- 13 Repairs teeth (7)
- 14 Replies (7)
- 16 Formal garments (5)
- 18 Quick (5)
- 21 Automobile (3)

## Quick Crossword



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