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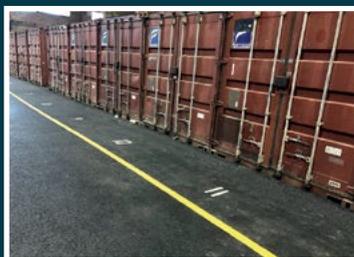
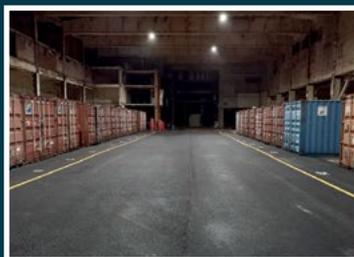
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Dear Readers,

Recently, my family and I went on a much-needed holiday abroad. It was lovely, made extra special by the fact that we were celebrating a milestone birthday. When it came to returning home I was really surprised not to experience that sinking, blue feeling we all tend to get towards the end of a holiday when the reality of coming back strikes. On the contrary – I was looking forward to coming home... the wonderful surroundings, the lush landscape, which seemed to have popped out in full spring glory in our absence, and the familiarity of our lovely local shops and community. Going away on holiday offered me a different perspective and allowed me to return with fresh eyes that were even more appreciative of this wonderful area that we call home.

On returning home, I also realized just how much is going on! I'm sure that more happens here than elsewhere, but maybe I'm biased. The directive to stay at home during the pandemic has given everyone a renewed zest for life, now that restrictions have been lifted. All those postponed events from the past two years can finally take place...and it's a breath of fresh air. All you need to do is leaf through the magazine to appreciate what's going on right here on your doorstep. No need to fly away, it's all happening right here! (Except the reliability of the sun's appearance, perhaps.) Don't get me wrong sun and sangria is lovely, but so is mountains and mud!

We've got lots to keep you entertained this month and we hope that in amongst the joy of all the events that are happening, you'll also appreciate the articles that touch upon the very difficult economic squeeze we're all currently enduring.

Do enjoy this month's read. It's been a pleasure putting it together for you.

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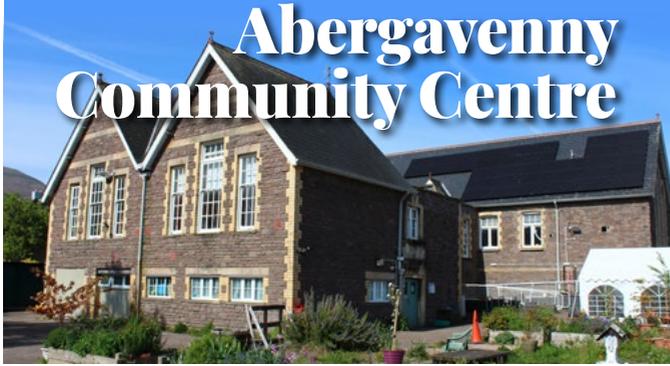
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Abergavenny Community Centre



In March, 56 solar panels were installed on two roof spaces to enable the Community Centre to reduce its carbon footprint and make resources go further.

The Abergavenny Community Centre [Trust] is taking small steps on its path towards becoming a sustainable venture and a local resource that people can rely on.

We are still a young organisation, and the covid years with their unique blend of opportunity and operational challenges have tested our resilience and taught us the value

of consolidation and protecting vital resources for future use.

There is real strength in being small and there are challenges too. In recent months the Trust had to tap its financial reserves to replace the old school boiler and radiators which you also rallied behind, helping to fund these essential works. Thank you for making it possible. We are also very excited to announce a

funding success that will have a significant impact on reducing the Centre's carbon footprint following grants from the Welsh Government's Community Facilities Programme and the Community Green Energy Monmouthshire CIC and the Community Green Energy England / Wales CIC, and the generosity of members of the local community. Thank you to all who worked tirelessly to bring a long held aspiration to life.

This investment in solar energy production is a major step for the Community Centre with it's people-helping-people culture because not only will it make limited resources go further, it also enables us to be innovative in how we share the electricity with fellow residents - helping budgets stretch a bit further and benefiting health and wellbeing through activities and support right on our doorsteps.

For your diary: Join us on Sunday 5th June @ 12.30 for The Big Lunch

Marion Pearce

Welcoming Ukrainians into Monmouthshire Homes



employment support advice to help people find jobs. A number of local people have also come forward to offer their services as translators alongside professional interpreters. The council is also keen to hear from local landlords who may have properties to let which could accommodate families arriving in Wales under the separate Welsh Government super-sponsor scheme.

A spokesperson for the council said:

"We are humbled by the remarkable response from the people of Monmouthshire who have opened their homes to families fleeing the war in Ukraine. We are also incredibly grateful to the businesses and community groups who have been in touch to offer support."

Anyone who wants more information is advised to visit www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/support-ukraine or e-mail ukrainesupport@monmouthshire.gov.uk.

MCC

Monmouthshire Council has praised the incredible response from residents who have opened their homes to families fleeing the war in Ukraine.

and the British Red Cross to provide a service where hosts Ukrainian families will be able to access financial support, health checks, education advice and counselling as well as essential supplies.

More than sixty families in the county have offered accommodation under the Homes for Ukraine scheme. The council has been in touch with all of these people to ensure that safeguarding and property checks are carried out. It is also working with partners including Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, The Welsh Government

The latest figures published by the UK Government show that 48 visas had been issued to people who will be arriving in the county which is the fourth highest in Wales.

Like many local authorities, Monmouthshire will be providing free language classes along with

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Safer at 20

Much has been made in recent weeks over the newly introduced 20mph speed limit restrictions throughout Abergavenny. These extend across Monmouthshire and include Llanfoist and Monmouth among other towns and villages.

The introduction of the pilot 20mph zones is part of an all-Wales scheme that will come into full effect in 2023. Plans for the introduction of pilot 20mph zones across Monmouthshire were raised at Monmouthshire County Council's full council

meeting last December and introduced at the beginning of April.

According to Monmouthshire County Council, 20mph limits on residential roads and busy pedestrian streets reduces the risk and severity of injuries as a result of collisions between vehicles and vulnerable road users. The limit also encourages more people to cycle and walk and makes Monmouthshire more attractive for our communities.

In spite of the cited benefits, local social media has been



awash with angry comments and widespread condemnation from residents regarding the speed limit itself and the blanket coverage that takes in the more major roads in Abergavenny.

The rollout of the limit has been much maligned, largely as a result of placement of signs as well as delays in the supply of signs themselves, causing confusion about which speed limit applies where. Monmouthshire County Council conceded that there had been "a small number of issues", while another spokesperson said "The Abergavenny pilot 20mph project has been widely supported by the local community."

Do you have an opinion about the new limits? Are you in favour or against? Do you think people are sticking to them? We'd love to hear from you. Email your views to hello@thefocus.wales

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No Mow May



for example sports pitches and those that they are contracted to cut such as Monmouthshire Housing Association land, but the majority of spaces will be left to grow to support wildlife and pollinators.

Let it grow... let it groooooow...

At the end of the month, join in with the nationwide "Every Flower Counts" survey. Not only will you receive your very own "nectar score" for your lawn, you'll help contribute to understanding about the health of the nations' wild flowers.

Join legions of gardeners and say "no" to the mow this May to help our bees, butterflies, wildlife and us!

No Mow May is a campaign developed by Plantlife to encourage more people and organisations to manage land to support wildlife and greater diversity of plant species. It doesn't ask you to do much - in fact, it asks you to not do

anything at all... Just lock up your lawnmower on May 1st and let the wild flowers in your lawn bloom, providing a feast of nectar for our hungry pollinators.

During May mowing will be much reduced across Monmouthshire's green spaces and on some verges. Monmouthshire County Council will still be cutting some areas,

People embracing the value of wilder lawns are delivering some thrilling botanical results: Last year the conversion to wilder lawns saw records of bee orchids, snake's-head fritillaries and eyebrights.

What might pop up this May?

For more information about the campaign visit www.plantlife.org.uk



Abergavenny Museum- exhibition of Monmouthshire born author Arthur Machen



This exhibition features artworks by Jon Langford, Pete Williams and John Selway, created to illustrate the writings of Arthur Machen (1863-1947). Machen drew inspiration from his native Monmouthshire, its landscape, history and Roman remains, as well as the strange and supernatural, the weird and the wonderful. World famous horror author Stephen King describing Machen's *The Great God Pan* (1890; 1894) as "Maybe the best [horror story] in the English language".

The exhibition showcases both original works, as well as print reproductions of artwork commissioned to illustrate recent reprints of Arthur Machen stories by the Newport based publishers *The Three Impostors*. This includes a new edition of one of Machen's early works 'The Chronicle of Clemendy', which has just been

launched as a series of stories set in medieval Monmouthshire, complemented by artist Jon Langford's illustrations. There are also first editions of Machen's works, manuscripts, letters and photographs.

Established ten years ago, *The Three Impostors*'s aim is to produce high quality, scholarly versions of interesting, rare and out-of-print books, along with other related new writing. Their first project was the republication of Arthur Machen's three volumes of autobiography, continuing to reprint some of Machen's novels, series of short Machen related stories, and also new and original works by Welsh authors.

The exhibition is now open and will run at Abergavenny Museum until December 18th 2022. It is free admission and open daily from 11am - 4pm except Wednesdays.

For more information, please visit: www.monlife.co.uk/heritage/abergavenny-museum-castle/

Abergavenny Museum is playing host to some impressive works by Welsh artists this year, all inspired by Monmouthshire's own Arthur Machen, best known for his influential supernatural, fantasy, and horror fiction.



Castle Street Car Park Goes Green

If you've ventured into Castle Street Car Park recently, you may have spotted some new arrivals in the form of new trees and plants. It's all part of a plan to improve green infrastructure - the term used to describe the creation of a network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces,

rivers and lakes that intersperse and connect villages and towns - across the county.

Work began at the beginning of April and planting included rowan and field maple trees in wooden planters, and native wildflower turf on existing amenity grassland. Wildflowers such as autumn hawkbit,

betony, birdsfoot trefoil, bladder campion, cats ear, common knapweed, common sorrel, common vetch, common toadflax, crested dogtail and sheep's fescue grasses, will grow in these wildflower areas. These additional native wildflowers and trees will provide more food and habitats for birds and insects, and benefit our pollinators such as bumblebees, honey bees and butterflies.

The new trees and wildflower meadows will also reduce carbon emissions through the storage of carbon, and so help in addressing the issues of climate change. The planting will also support ecosystem resilience, improve water quality, and support general well-being in the town for both residents and visitors.

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Abergavenny Steam Rally *A Welcome Return*



After a two year Covid break, Abergavenny Steam Rally returns on the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Anniversary weekend, bigger and better than before.

This year the show has moved back a week, because the Bank Holiday has moved to Friday 3rd and Saturday 4th of June for the Queen's Platinum Anniversary. But the venue, Bailey Park stays the same and so does the exceptional variety of entertainment on display. There is truly something for everyone.

Organisers have been dusting off the files, contacting show people, trades people, people with big lorries, small lorries, a host of vintage cars, motor-bikes and tractors and many more to ensure that visitors will have plenty to look at and enjoy. And don't forget the arena events. Bands, steam engines, and a variety of processions of vintage vehicles. Besides a superb gathering of Steam Engines and Organs, there will also be displays of Vintage, Veteran and Classic Cars,

Caravans, Motorcycles, Tractors, Military and Commercial Vehicles and Static Engines.

A Model Tent packed with exhibits, Handicrafts and Country Pursuits will also be on display.

Each day there are arena events to delight the whole family including vehicle parades, bands and the ever-popular Tug of War between hundreds of children and a mighty traction engine.

Flyin Ryan has been performing traditional motorcycle stunt shows in main arenas since 1998, Many of today's UK stunt performers have been influenced by Ryan during his time at the top of the main arena wish list. The current show line-up, Jumpin' James and Tasty Tina have benefited from Ryan's experience and knowledge and they add energy and enthusiasm to the show. Daredevil stunts, comedy



routines, fire stunts, and arena entertainment, are the norm for this motorcycle stunt show, and the more the audience clap and cheer the more breath-taking the stunts become.

The experienced entertainer, thrives on the cheers of the crowd, and does his best to get them shouting and cheering, making the wheelies more daring and the jumps bigger and bigger. Tasty Tina and Jumpin' James perform safely alongside Ryan throughout the two different 30 minute displays.

A welcome return to Thomas Longton who has been giving Sheepdog displays and demonstrations with either sheep, geese and ducks all over the British Isles for over 20 years. They are both informative and amusing, especially when the ducks are misbehaving. The ducks are an especially big favourite with the children.

Advance online tickets can be bought online, at a 15% discount, to anyone buying before the day. On application, tickets can be sent direct to an email address (or by text) to be printed off and brought on the day for scanning or there is an option to go green and present them by smartphone. Advance ticket holders also benefit from priority entry on the day.

Go to Abergavennysteamrally.co.uk and click on the QR Code (on the advert) or go to <https://www.ticketebo.co.uk/abergavenny-steam-rally> and click on the 'Buy Now Click Here' Button.

The Abergavenny Steam Rally was in danger of being wound up in the year 2000 due to a decreasing lack of organisers but was saved from extinction by the town's Rotary club which, with a band of enthusiastic volunteers has run it successfully ever since. Covid cancelled the show for the last

two years and now organisers are looking forward to a grand re-opening for the Queen's Jubilee, bigger and better than ever before.

"We are really excited that the Steam Rally is back," said committee chairman David Hassall. "It's a great show, and because we are all volunteers the vast majority of money raised goes to local charities and worthy organisations. It is very much a home-grown show, but still attracts a vast audience of people who travel long distances to experience the sights and smells of a very different day out. By coming bang up to date with advance ticketing online, visitors can buy their tickets before travelling and save some money at the same time."

Doug McArthur

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This 50th Anniversary Celebration features the boys singing all the hits including 'Mrs Robinson', 'Cecilia', 'Bridge Over Troubled Water', 'Homeward Bound' and many more.

There is also projection photos and original film footage taking you back in time! Last seen in Chepstow at Castell Roc Festival in 2016, requests to have them back has been non stop.

The Drill Hall is a superb intimate venue, with tickets restricted to just 200- so... Get your tickets fast as this is an evening not to be missed!

"Fantastic" - Elaine Paige, BBC Radio 2.

www.thesimonandgarfunkelstory.com
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Abergavenny Arts Festival 2022

After a two year break due to the Pandemic Abergavenny Arts Festival is back! We are running a one day festival on Saturday, June 18th between 10 – 4 plus a Festival Family Picnic with entertainment in the early evening, between 6 – 9pm.

The main hub of the Festival will be in the Castle grounds plus nearby, smaller venues such as Castle Street Methodist Church and Hall, St John's Square, Nevill Street and the Community Room in Abergavenny Town Hall. There will also be Fringe events taking place around the town.

Entry will be free as we believe everyone should have access to the Arts whatever their background. There is nothing more inspiring than experiencing the Arts first hand! So families as well as individuals can enjoy a day out without it costing a penny!

The day will be packed with performances, demonstrations, workshops and activities for kids and adults spread across the Stage, Kids Zone, Arts Market and Adult Zone in the Castle, more musical performances in the Methodist Church, exhibitions in the Church Hall, dance activities in St John's Square, literary talks and activities in the Community Room in the Town Hall Hub and various things going on in Nevill Street. A full day of fun!

The Festival Family Picnic is aimed at everyone to come along with a blanket, a picnic and a few hours to spare to soak in the atmosphere of the Festival amongst the gorgeous Castle grounds.

There will be also food and soft drinks available from a variety of companies during the day and evening in the Castle.

More details will be available very soon so visit our website abergavennyartsfestival.com Facebook: [Abergavenny Arts Festival](https://www.facebook.com/AbergavennyArtsFestival/) Instagram: [abergavennyartsfestival](https://www.instagram.com/abergavennyartsfestival/). Or email: artsabergavenny@gmail.com

Jan Thomas





Skirrid the Holy Mountain by Jeremy Thomas

Crickhowell Open Studios Weekend 2022



Pen-y-Fan From Blaendigedi by Louise Collis

Free entry to twenty six venues showing a wonderful variety of art including paintings, printmaking, textiles, sculpture, jewellery, ceramics and glass presents the perfect excuse to visit Crickhowell during the Platinum Jubilee Weekend 2 – 5 June for the popular Crickhowell Open Studio weekend.

The oriel CRiC gallery's Open Art exhibition has become one of the weekend's highlights and after a two year hiatus is much anticipated. As number one in the guide to the Studios and exhibitions, it is the perfect starting point for a wonderful weekend filled with art while exploring, not only all that Crickhowell has to offer, but also Abergavenny and the wider area.

Open Studios organiser Suzette Pratten said, "Visitors this year can explore and discover the joy of meeting artists and collecting affordable art in studios,

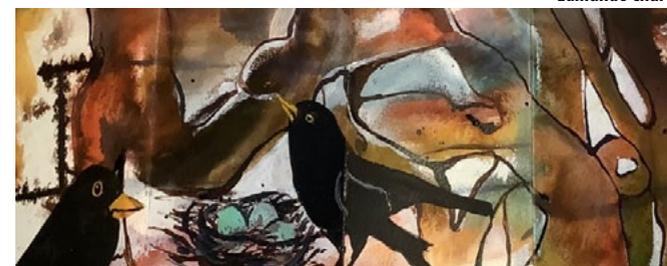
galleries and pop-up artist collectives in unusual spaces across the area. The venues are very varied: in an artist's home, in purpose made studios, with some in cafes, churches and galleries. The beauty of visiting several studios is that each has its own charm - you're sure to have a warm welcome and to come away feeling inspired, taking home a token of your visit or having signed up to a workshop or class".

Free printed guides are widely available in shops, galleries, libraries and tourist information centres across the area or from the Crickhowell Resource & Information Centre, CRiC, Beaufort Street, Crickhowell, NP8 1BN T: 01873 813667
Copies can be requested from: gallery@visitcrickhowell.wales

Suzette Pratten



FROM TOP RIGHT, CLOCKWISE: *Miners Row* by Goff Danter, *Ceramics* by Kim Colebrook, *Champion Ram* by Robert Macdonald, Brecknock Art Society showing at St Edmund's Church



CRiC & oriel CRiC gallery

Open Art Exhibition

1 June – 16 July

Crickhowell

Open Studios Weekend

2 – 5 June 2022

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EVENTS

NOW UNTIL DECEMBER

ARTHUR MACHEN EXHIBITION

11am-4pm daily (except Wednesdays), Abergavenny Museum.

Free entry

See Page 12 for more info

9TH MAY

Book-ish Event: BONNIE GARMUS

Book-ish Loft 7.30pm

See Page 26 for info

13TH MAY

Llanfoist Village Hall Film Night

KING RICHARD (CERT 12A)



Based on the inspiring true story, King Richard follows the journey of Richard Williams, a determined father instrumental in raising two of the most extraordinarily gifted athletes of all time.

Doors open 7pm, Films start at 7.30pm; Bar available.

Tickets £5 for adults or £3 for children; to be bought at the door Llanfoist Village Hall, Church Lane, Llanfoist

14TH MAY

CRAFT FAIR

Market Hall, Abergavenny

14TH MAY

BRING & BUY SALE IN AID OF THE CHILDREN OF UKRAINE

10am-2pm Abergavenny Guide Hall, Fairfield Car Park, Abergavenny.

Free entry. Donate to the sale from 9.30am onwards on the day.

18TH MAY

Book-ish Event: JULIE OWEN MOYLAN

Book-ish Loft 7:30pm

See Page 54 for info

26TH MAY

FARMERS MARKET

Market Hall, Abergavenny

28TH MAY

THE BEE INITIATIVE SATURDAY CRAFT MARKET

Organised by the Bee Initiative charity, this craft market runs on the last Saturday of every month.

Girl Guide Hall, Fairfield Car Park, Abergavenny

2ND JUNE-2ND JULY

HIBERNATORS EXHIBITION

The Art Shop, 8 Cross St, Abergavenny

See Page 45 for info

2ND-5TH JUNE

CRICKHOWELL

OPEN STUDIOS WEEKEND



Many wonderful artists to visit during the Jubilee weekend. See page 20 for more info or visit www.visitcrickhowell.wales

3RD-5TH JUNE

OPEN GARDEN IN SUPPORT OF BEES FOR DEVELOPMENT

Trostrey Lodge in Bettws Newydd comes alive over the Jubilee Weekend. There will be watercolours for sale by Greta Hart and also Art on a Postcard: many small works by talented painters. Cider from the Clytha Arms. Home grown plants for sale by local green fingers. Inside the walled garden, draped with vines, roses and honeysuckle; apples, quince and pears; iris, myrtle, corncockle, foxgloves, lavender and box

EVENTS

topiary... herbs and much, much more making a heady mix, in a wild but cultivated garden.

Trostrey Lodge, Bettws Newydd, Usk, NP15 1JT

3RD & 4TH JUNE

ABERGAVENNY STEAM RALLY



See Pages 16-17 & 23 for more info

5TH JUNE

THE BIG LUNCH

12.30pm Abergavenny Community Centre

LOOKING AHEAD

18TH JUNE

ABERGAVENNY ARTS FESTIVAL

Abergavenny Castle Grounds 10am-4pm

See Page 19 for more info

2ND JULY

ABERGAVENNY SHIRE HORSE SHOW



Meet the gentle giants and most magnificent British Heavy Horse: the Shire Horse, at their best, at the annual show at Bailey Park, Abergavenny.

See Page 24 for more info

16TH JULY

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After some lengthy spells of dry weather during April with temperatures generally sat on the average for the most part, but with quite a number of chilly nights and early morning frosts, May looks like delivering quite a mixed month by comparison. With no dominant pressure system in place, or at least with regard to high pressure, one that manages to anchor down long enough to have sustained influence, expect passages of wetter and cooler weather interspersed with drier, sunnier, and warmer conditions. Despite the mixed pattern, there may still a run of days allowing temperatures to climb quite smartly, with a pleasant surge of late spring, early summer warmth, accompanied by the backdrop of clear blue skies. May looks likely to return the average with regard to rainfall, and an average to slightly above return for temperature.

Forecast from Jonathan Powell



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Our composite garden rooms allow you to create your own unique space, whether it be a home office, gym, art studio – the possibilities are endless.

Relax on your patio area without any weather interruptions with our aluminium verandas.

Perhaps you're looking to update your garden space with low-maintenance products – then check out our composite decking and fencing.

Here at Greenspace Living, we create tailored solutions to fit your vision, budget and space.

Contact us for a design consultation

wearegreenspace@gmail.com

07854 795225



GREENSPACE LIVING



The pair discovered the benefits of the composite timber garden rooms and decided to make this the construction method of choice. Composite timber garden rooms are highly insulated, zero maintenance, robust and require no internal decoration so you can use your room as soon as it has been erected. The rooms are available in a choice of four colours with authentic timber grain.

Greenspace Living was created by brothers-in-law David and Matthew. The ethos of the company is to provide outdoor living solutions for customers to extend their inside space to the outside. An innovative range of composite timber garden rooms, aluminium verandas and composite decking and fencing has proved very popular with their customers.

To continue with the ethos of the company Greenspace living has added stylish aluminium verandas into their range of products. These verandas allow you to extend the use of your patio or decking over the spring and summer providing that extra space to relax or entertain undercover whilst enjoying the feeling of being outside but without the risk of the weather spoiling it.

Complementing the composite timber rooms Greenspace Living also install composite decking and fencing which is maintenance free and available in several colours and finishes.

"As a small family run business Matt and I pride ourselves on finding that perfect solution for your outdoor space, our customers are at the heart of everything we do. Designing and installing their dream space to allow them to work from home, have home gym, hobby room or a veranda to spend lazy summer evenings under gives us great satisfaction." David commented.

Greenspace Living are happy to offer advice and guidance, more information can be found on Greenspace Living's website www.greenspaceliving.co.uk and can be contacted by email at wearegreenspace@gmail.com or 07854 795225.



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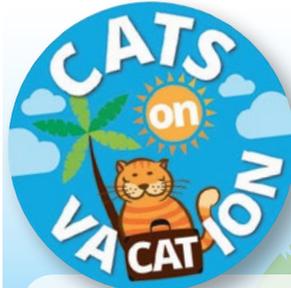
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With the weather warming up, so is the property market. The lighter evenings allow later viewings, meaning if you are busy at work you still get to see a property in the best light.

The warmer weather, the flowers blooming and the soil warming up can add to the lure of spending more time in the garden. However, you may find that your garden has become too much for you to maintain. It may be that it's too small for your horticultural goals.

A garden for many is a make or break when choosing to stay in a home. **If you're garden isn't living up to your expectations give us a call. There is still time to get moving to enjoy the most of summer in your new outdoor paradise!**



How to create the ultimate garden tablescape this summer

1 Set the Base

Dust off your favourite tablecloth (giving it an iron if you need) and lay it across your table to set the tone.

2 Select Tablewear

Get out your best glassware. Use wine glasses (no matter what you're drinking) it'll help add elegance to your table.

3 Centerpiece

Floral centerpieces have the ability to transform a dining table from drab to dazzling. Add the scent of summer to your setting.

4 Atmosphere

Thinking twinkling lights, drapping blankets on chair for those seeking extra warmth and cosying up by a firepit.



Introducing to the market ...

High Street, Raglan,

Guide Price - £425,000

Terraced 3 2

A superb listed period property including a detached outbuilding.

Retaining many period features, the deceptively deep accommodation comprises 3 reception rooms, a large kitchen/breakfast room, three double bedrooms and a family bathroom, part walled garden.

Separately accessed, the detached outbuilding features an open space under a vaulted ceiling with log burner, open kitchenette style area, separate w/c and shower, mezzanine level and outside patio.

Part walled, cottage style, low maintenance garden has space for outdoor dining and storage shed.

We have buyers waiting for similar properties



Recently sold



What Jo says,

"This home has bundles of character and charm. The additional space in the studio would offer a great home office."

Jo Francis, Abergavenny Branch Manager





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A Crown fit for a Queen

This year The Queen becomes the first British monarch in history to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee, after 70 years of service.

The crown used at Queen Elizabeth's Coronation was the St Edward's Crown, a highly decorated solid gold piece, set with 444 precious and semi-precious stones including rubies, amethysts, sapphires, garnet, topaz and tourmalines and is worth millions of pounds. Weighing in at 5lbs, it is one of the most iconic symbols of Royalty and is recognised throughout the world.

St Edward's Crown was originally made for Charles II back in 1661, as a replacement for the medieval crown, which reportedly had been melted down in 1649 by the Parliamentarians during the Civil War. The second version of

the crown was commissioned from the Royal Goldsmith, Robert Vyner, in 1661. When not in use, the crown is on public display at the Jewel House at the Tower of London.

At the beginning of June, people throughout the country will be celebrating the Platinum Jubilee with planned events and street parties. If you and your family are not attending a gathering, why not set your children the task of designing and creating their very own Jubilee Crown to wear at the celebrations?

You can make your own crown from scratch or download a template via platinumjubilee.gov.uk/toolkit/ and by clicking on the **Jubilee Crown Template**.

Your children can go to town decorating their crown with

colouring pens, paint, glitter, sequins and stickers (who says a crown can't be adorned with unicorns?) We'd love to see your creations so that we can share them with our readers and online, so do send photos to us at hello@thefocus.wales. You can also post your creative content on social media using the **PlatinumJubilee** hashtag or email them to the official Jubilee organisers who will be sharing a selection on their website: creativechallenge@dcms.gov.uk

Don't forget to include your name and age with your entries.



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How to Make Your Own Jubilee Bunting

Make Your Flags

You can print out a template or make your own.

If you would like to print out flags, you can find a version by visiting platinumjubilee.gov.uk/toolkit/ Welsh bunting templates are available there too!

If you prefer blank flags you can make your own template as follows:

1. Take an A4 piece of paper long ways up (portrait)
2. Fold over about 2cm at the top
3. Fold the paper in half long ways

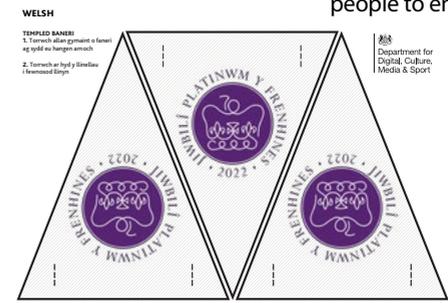
4. Draw a line diagonally from the outside of the paper at the top to the fold in the middle at the bottom
5. Cut along that line through both sides of the paper
6. Unfold your paper to reveal a triangular shaped flag

Decorate your flags but leave the top strip blank. Use paint, pencils, collage, glitter, stickers, pens, crayons...whatever!

When you've decorated your triangles, place string or ribbon beneath your flap, glue or tape it into place and fold the flap over.

Leave a gap between each triangular flag and keep adding to them until you're done, leaving a spare length of string or ribbon at each end for hanging.

Hang your bunting in your garden or in your windows for people to enjoy!



Simple Life Hacks to Reduce your Spending

We all know about the energy and cost of living crisis – it's literally staring us in the face in the form of our energy bills and shopping receipts. With the situation looking unlikely to improve any time soon, we've put together a list of simple life hacks that can go some way in helping to reduce your bills.



Standby

They're called Vampire Devices – our everyday electricals that we leave plugged in that drain a significant amount of electricity even when you're not using them. A TV costs £24.61 per year, while a Sky or Virgin Media box will cost another £23.10, reports the BBC. A microwave left on standby will cost £16.37 a year. A shower will cost £9.80, a washing machine £4.73m a printer £3.81 and a phone charger £1.26. The take home message is switch off at the plug when you can!

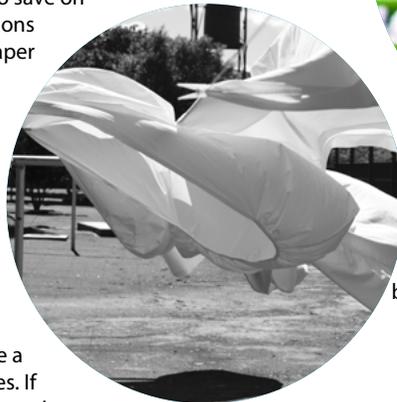


Electric Heaters

If you work from home or spend your day mostly in one room, consider using a small portable electric heater to heat your space to save on the need to heat the whole house. Do your calculations carefully, though, as gas central heating is a lot cheaper than electricity.

Clothes Drying

As we approach the summer months, switch to drying your clothes outside in the fresh air as opposed to the tumble dryer, heated racks or radiators. If you must use your tumble dryer, make sure you clean the filters regularly to ensure maximum efficiency.



Draught Proofing

Stopping heat from escaping through gaps around doors and windows can save a significant amount of energy. Use draught proofing strips around window frames. If you have an open chimney, fit a cap over the chimney pot. Check your loft hatch and use draught-proofing foam strips to keep the heat in.

Wash at 30

Running your washing machine at 30 degrees as opposed to 40 degrees can cut your bills by £28 per year. A 30 degree wash will still get your clothes clean, unless they are extremely soiled.



Shower Power

High-volume power showers can use more water in less than five minutes than a bath. So fit an eco shower head. Your shower will still feel powerful but it'll cut down on your hot water use. Also consider using a shower timer so you know how long you're spending in there. Keeping your shower time to four minutes or under and swapping one bath a week with a four minute shower can save you £35 per person, the Energy Saving Trust estimates.



Make Food Last Longer

39% of the food we throw away is fruit and veg. Combat this by keeping spuds and onions wrapped in paper in a dark and cool place instead of in the fridge. Importantly, don't store them together as they produce gases which can damage each other. Use the bottom shelf of your fridge for meat and poultry as this is the coldest area and will keep it fresh. Wrap cheese and store in a tub to prevent it drying out.



Leftovers

Think Creatively about Leftovers; instead of chucking out those last bits and bobs that are lurking in your fridge, transform small amounts of leftovers into a filling meal. Bulk them out with potatoes or pasta.

Cheap Cuts

Make the most of cheaper cuts of meat. Using chicken legs instead of the breast for 'pulled chicken' style dinners can save you 50% of the cost.

Look Locally

Many shoppers assume that 'local' translates to 'expensive' but that often isn't the case. Studies have shown that prices at farmers markets across the nation were cheaper than or equal to their grocery store counterparts' in recent years. Local produce is also usually fresher and more nutritious, considering it doesn't have to be transported hundreds of miles to sit on a supermarket shelf for a few days.



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Ysgyryd Fach Walk

Abergavenny



Ysgyryd Fach is the smallest of Abergavenny's seven hills at only around 270m high – so this is a short walk; 2.3 miles with only moderate climb – 190m, so a good one if you don't fancy a full-on trek. Park in the layby opposite Abergavenny train station on the A465 Hereford Road. Be aware that this layby is often full on week days!

Focus Magazines cannot take responsibility for any changes, natural or man-made, that may have occurred since we last did this walk.

1 From the layby, follow the footpath sign over a stile and proceed up the path with a field on the right, (full of bright yellow oil seed rape when I went) and a brook to the left.

2 Cross the brook on a small wooden footbridge, and cross the stile immediately afterwards. After the stile, turn left and cross the bottom of the field, but don't go over the next stile – instead, turn right and follow the hedgerow uphill, skirting the left hand side of the field.

3 Cross a stile, a track and another stile to enter the woods. Follow the footpath uphill through the woods. You will cross two tracks that run laterally around the hill; the first is very overgrown, the second is obviously still in use. The tracks go through private land, so stick to the public footpath.

4 When you get to the third lateral track, you'll be out in the open; the top of Ysgyryd Fach was clear felled, giving it's bald appearance. It seems a shame to see all the missing woodland – but then, you'd have no view if the trees were still there. So, continue up to the top and enjoy the view!

5 Coming down the other side, again, stick to the public footpath which travels downhill, skirting the woodland.

6 When you reach a gate and road, turn right and follow the road/track downhill until you reach a junction with right-hand turn.

7 At this junction, look to the left – there you will see a footpath sign and stile. Cross the stile, turn right, and head off downhill skirting the field edge. Cross a second stile and small wooden footbridge.

8 After you pass the white cottage, the track bears left and over another stile into a small copse. Continue on straight ahead over another stile (don't turn left along the track there).

9 You'll emerge on a broad green grassy sward, facing some electricity pylons (maybe they'll put them underground one day!). Follow the hedgerow on your left. Cross two more stiles until you find yourself back at point 2. Return to the layby.

This is Sarah. She's busy cleaning her oven...



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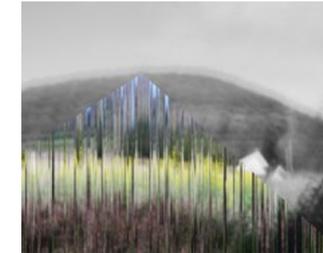
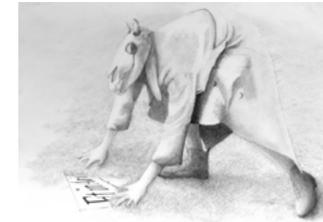
Hibernators: What Artists did When the World Went to Sleep

June 2nd to July 2nd

The Art Shop, 8 Cross Street, Abergavenny.

In a spirit of friendship and collaboration, the Hibernation project started life as a cultural exchange between the twinned towns of Abergavenny and Östringen (as part of Wales in Germany 2021). However, with ongoing COVID-19 uncertainties forcing the postponement of the twinning aspect, the focus is now solely on the quality of contemporary art made in and around Abergavenny. The project could not have happened without the support of the Art Shop & Chapel and the Welsh Arts Council.

The Hibernation project is inspired by the time when the world went to sleep. The COVID pandemic starved artists of the opportunity to show their work, and denied the public opportunities to visit galleries. The exhibition aims to satisfy both these needs, firstly by bringing together and supporting a cohort of contemporary artists from Abergavenny and its rural hinterland, and then curating an exhibition of their work made during this period or inspired



by it. This includes Photography, Painting, Sculpture, Drawing, Video, Ceramics and mixed media from selected artists Catherine Baker,

Toril Brancher, David Collyer, Penny Hallas, Lauren Heckler, Ben Jones, Clare Parry-Jones, David Morgan-Davies, Allison Neal, Rachel Tudor Best, Daniel Williams, Jessica Woodrow and Catherine Wynne-Paton.

The period of Hibernation has taught many of us how the diverse areas of art and horticulture have the power to improve our mental health. To reflect this, and to acknowledge their important work, the Hibernation Project has collaborated on a series of artist led workshops with both Abergavenny based Papillon Art Group and Growing Space. Both of these groups provide valuable support for adults with mental health issues. Examples of work made during these workshops can be seen in the Red Square Community Window, Abergavenny for the duration of the Hibernators exhibition.

Hibernators is an important exhibition for all those involved, we hope it resonates as much with those who visit the exhibition as it does with us.

David Morgan-Davies,
The Hibernation Project

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“Let’s talk about Mental Health”



I have always been passionate about reducing the stigma of mental illness. Although one can argue that it is much more widely spoken about now it saddens me that so many people continue to find it difficult to reach out and get help, to frightened to talk to friends or family, or believe that “nobody will understand.”

So, a little about me. As a registered Mental Health Nurse and Hypnotherapist, I use a range of psychological interventions and skills including Hypnotherapy to support people with mental health problems. I work with the knowledge that we need to address the ‘whole’ person, if one element of our wellbeing is out of sync then this affects the whole of us.

One of the questions that I often get asked is “Can Hypnotherapy help me”? Hypnotherapy works by bypassing the conscious and working with the sub-conscious to bring about effective and positive change. It’s a wonderful feeling of relaxation and awareness in which the client remains in control.



More than ever people are experiencing difficulties over health, finances, lack of companionship, which has only been worsened by COVID and the economic crisis. If I can reach one person to seek help by drafting this article, I will be incredibly pleased. Organisations such as NHS, charitable, voluntary services and private practice are here to support and help you recover and manage your wellbeing. You really don’t have to suffer in silence, people like myself are here to listen and to help in your recovery.

Helen Garrett

RMN, BSc (Hons), Dip (Adv), Cert Hypno CS
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“Change can happen,” negative attitudes are changing, the more we talk about mental illness and mental health and wellbeing the more the stigma will reduce. The more we educate our children now, future generations will accept mental illness as we accept physical illness. I’m so pleased that there is a ‘Wellbeing’ festival coming to Abergavenny to highlight and talk about mental wellbeing, I hope to see you there.

Helen Garrett



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How much is Enough?



"When you let go of trying to get more of what you don't really need, it frees up oceans of energy to make a difference with what you have."

~ Lyn Twist

Hands up who would like some more money? Everyone, right? Me included! It sounds like a no brainer, because if we had more than enough, we could just give the rest away to those less fortunate; do something good with it.

So, this begs the question: where do we draw the line? How much is 'enough'?

It all depends on what we think money is, and what purpose it serves. Ever since we humans created the concept of money, it's become the *de facto* means for the exchange of goods and services. It's also an excellent creative tool – you wouldn't be reading this now, without the magazine it appears in, the computer it was written on and the time that my work buys me, in order to write it. All enabled by money.

Seen through *this* lens, you could maybe work out more or less exactly how much *is* 'enough'.

But we don't usually see money this way, do we? Invite anyone to muse about money goals and before you know it, they'll be off dreaming about holidays and houses and gadgets and that slippery notion of "enough not to have to worry about it any more."

And here's where the wheels fall off, because seen through *that* lens, we've mistakenly endowed money with a power it simply doesn't have: the ability to make us *feel* a particular way.

Oh I know it really *looks* like 'more money equals less worry,' but correlation is not causation, and there's an invisible variable at work here: Thought. Whatever we feel in any moment—be that insecurity, or a sense of total ease—has *everything* to do with our state of mind, and *nothing* to do with our circumstances.

Examine this for yourself: have you ever experienced moments of joy, when there's been little in the bank? How about misery when there's plenty? If money was the cause of our feelings, wouldn't it always work the same way? It takes only the lightest of scrutiny to see through this trick of the mind.

Our thoughts, feelings and moods fluctuate naturally across time; an internal process that is harmless in itself. Then, quick as lightning, the conditioned mind, fulfilling its role as 'The Interpreter of Life Events' makes up a reason and tells us that the *cause* of those feelings is something outside of us! If it's a low

mood we're in, our bank balance often tops the list.

The fact is, neither money, nor any of the things it can buy, has even the *slightest* capacity to put a feeling inside of us... even when it looks like it does.

So now I'd invite you to re-read the quote at the beginning of this piece, in the knowledge that what we "don't really need" is more money *in order* to feel a particular way: happy, secure, whole. The true source of these feelings is within us, each and every time our attention turns away from the bickering mind, and is present to the wonder of life, as it is, now.

Once we see that, we realise that we *are* enough. Enough not to have to worry about money... or anything else, for that matter.



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Vegetable Samosa Party Bites

Ingredients

FILLING

- 225g potatoes
- 225g cauliflower
- 2tbsp vegetable oil
- ½ tsp black mustard seeds
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 2 dried red chillies chopped
- 1 medium sized onion, finely chopped
- 1 green chilli, finely chopped – seeds removed for milder flavour
- ½ tsp ground turmeric
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tbsp chopped coriander leaves

PASTRY

- 225g plain flour
- 50g butter
- ½ tsp salt
- 75ml warm water
- Oil for deep frying

Are you throwing a Jubilee Party or attending an event? Why not spice it up with these delicious savoury bites? They are a bit fiddly to make but are well worth it and they freeze well so can be made well in advance. This recipe makes 18-20 bite size samosas.

Method

1. Boil potatoes until just tender, cool and cut into small diced pieces
2. Blanch cauliflower, drain and cut into small diced pieces like the potatoes
3. Heat 2 tbsp oil and add the mustard seeds. When they start crackling, add the cumin seeds, red chillies, onions and green chillies. Fry on a low heat until the onions are soft. Add the turmeric, coriander and ground cumin and stir
4. Add the potatoes, cauliflower and salt and stir so that the vegetables are well coated in the spices
5. Remove from the heat and add the chopped coriander leaves, cool the mixture before filling the samosa pastry
6. To make the pastry: Pour flour into a mixing bowl and add the butter and salt and rub together until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs
7. Mix to a soft dough by adding the water. Knead until the dough feels soft and velvety
8. Divide the dough into 9 balls. In the palm of your hands roll a ball in a circular motion, then press it down to make a flat cake
9. Roll out each flat cake into 10cm discs and then cut in half. Use each semi-circle of the pastry as one triangle envelope
10. Moisten the straight edge and fold the semi-circle in half to form a triangular cone, press the moistened edges together making sure there are no gaps
11. Fill the cones with the filling and moisten the top edges and press together – you should have triangular shaped samosas
12. Deep fry over a gentle heat until they are golden brown, drain on absorbent paper

Note: Make sure that your parcels are pressed and sealed together well as they have a tendency to puff open when fried.

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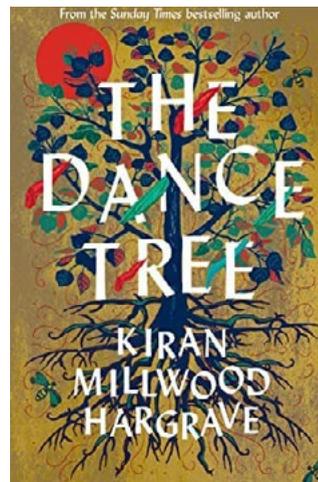
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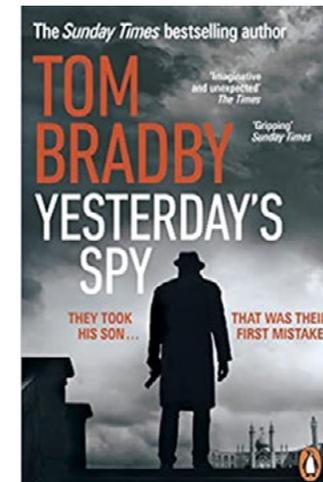
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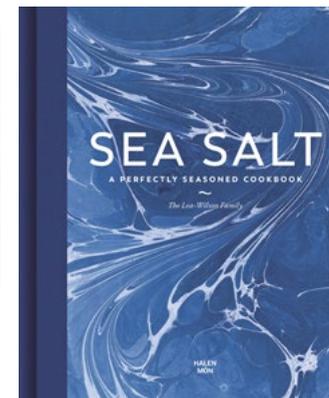
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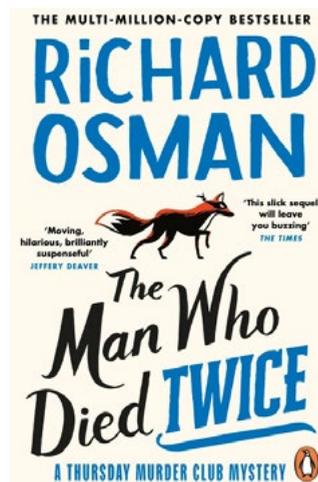
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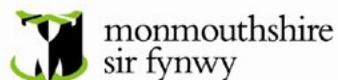
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Wales's Greatest Ruler?

Dolbadarn, overlooking the waters of Llyn Padarn, was a vital link in the defences of Gwynedd

Photo Credit: Cadw - <https://cadw.gov.wales/visit/family-days-out/10-top-family-days-out>,

Before the Normans completed their conquest in 1282, equal division of inheritance between sons meant that few princes came close to ruling the whole of Wales. Helen Morgan from Abergavenny Local History Society reports.

An early contender for Greatest Ruler was Rhodri Mawr, whose rule extended from Anglesey to the Gower. He grew his territory through inheritance and marriage rather than bloodshed but his reign was far from peaceful thanks to Viking marauders. Having kept the Danes at bay, he was killed by Saxons led by Alfred of Wessex in 877.

Another significant ruler was Rhodri's grandson, Hywel Dda, who reigned from 904-950. He inherited Ceredigion and acquired Dyfed through marriage after getting rid of his brother-in-law. In 930 he acquired Brycheiniog and, eventually, controlled all Wales apart from Glamorgan and Gwent. Although called "Good", he could

be ruthless. "Good" came from him rationalising and codifying the Laws of Wales, a written legacy that unified Welsh culture until the 1536 & 1543 Acts of Union.

Into the power vacuum that followed Hywel's death, marched Gruffydd ap Llywelyn. He seized Gwynedd and Powys in 1039, grabbed Deheubarth in 1055 and took over Glamorgan too. Not content with ruling Wales, he crossed Offa's Dyke, although not for long. In 1063 he was pursued and killed, possibly as a result of treachery within his own ranks.

Llewelyn ap Iorwerth, who combined war with diplomacy, is arguably the greatest. When his father died in 1170, his uncles Rhodri and Dafydd divided Gwynedd between

them. Determined to recover his birthright, Llewelyn defeated Dafydd in battle. After Rhodri died in 1195, Llewelyn became King of Gwynedd and soon took control of Deheubarth, establishing himself as the foremost ruler of Pura Wallia — areas not controlled by the Marcher lords. In 1201, Llywelyn raised his political profile with King John of England. In return for John's recognition of Llywelyn's territorial gains, he pledged allegiance to the English monarch and married John's daughter Joan. Territory continued to be lost and won until John was forced to sign the Magna Carta in 1212. By 1215, Llewelyn controlled Carmarthen, Kidwelly, Llanstephan, Cardigan and Cilgerran. He was now leader of the free princes of Wales. A year later the other princes affirmed their allegiance until his death in 1240.

Frank Olding's talk in the Melville Theatre on the Early Welsh Princes follows the AGM starting at 7.30pm on May 18th. Both events will be streamed via Zoom to members. For details on how to join, visit www.abergavennylocalhistorysociety.org.uk



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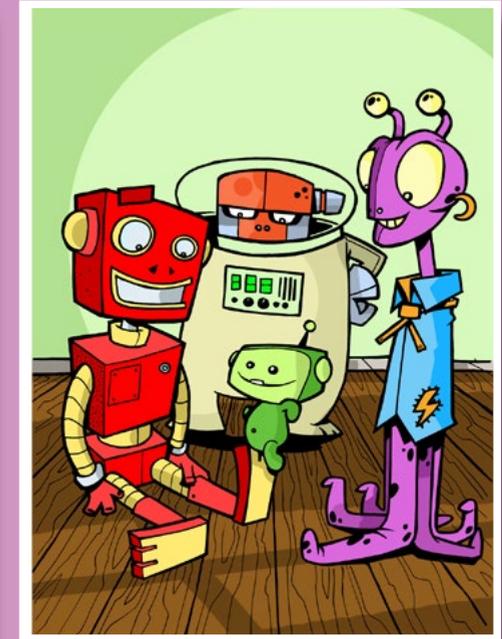
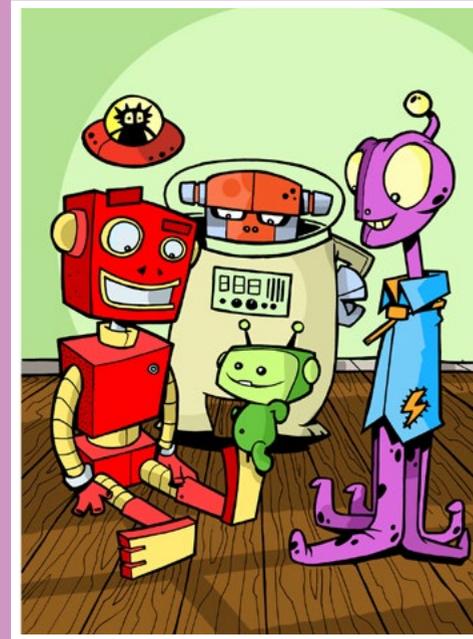
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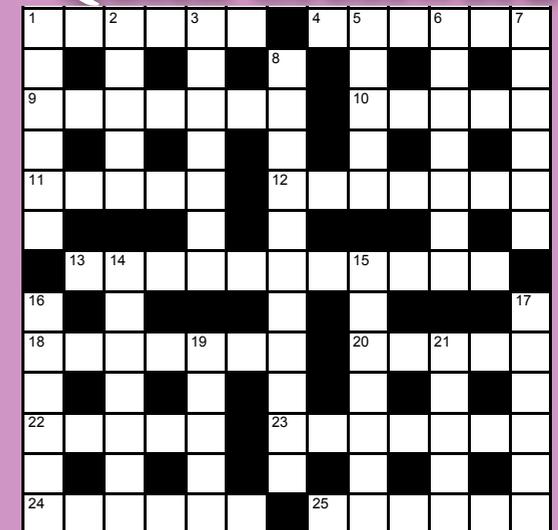
ACROSS

- 1 Small tunnel (6)
- 4 Rubbed out (6)
- 9 Stretchy (7)
- 10 Young females (5)
- 11 Type of music (5)
- 12 External (7)
- 13 Translated (11)
- 18 Window covering (7)
- 20 Nip (5)
- 22 Smell (5)
- 23 Passion (7)
- 24 Female relation (6)
- 25 Harsh (6)

DOWN

- 1 Combines (6)
- 2 Highways (5)
- 3 Result (7)
- 5 Correct (5)
- 6 Outlive (7)
- 7 Bowls (6)
- 8 Escorted (11)
- 14 Becomes thinner (7)
- 15 Blow up (7)
- 16 Reverberates (6)
- 17 Alter (6)
- 19 Consent (5)
- 21 Innocent (5)

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