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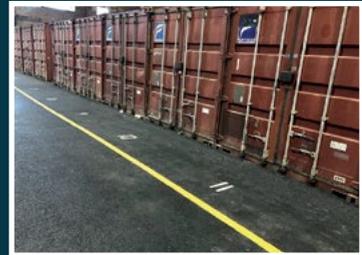
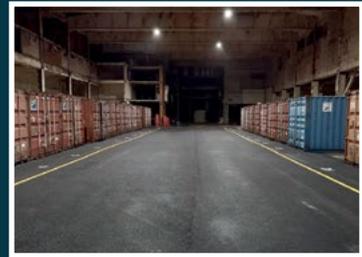
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Dear Readers,



Ten days ago a seemingly quiet and unremarkable weekend was interrupted with the news that my father-in-law had taken a fall and ended up in hospital (he is fine now) coupled with further news that both my septuagenarian parents had contracted Covid on their return from holidays. This felt particularly worrying given that my father was so ill last year with pneumonia. They are both now fine, thank goodness. In amongst all of this, my daughter started a new school and with that came all the usual teething problems of lost pencil cases, forgotten homework deadlines and wandering uniform. Can my life get any more stressful, I raged?

Of course, stress comes in all sorts of shapes and sizes and I completely recognise that what appears to be stress in my own life, may seem like a walk in the park compared what others confront on a daily basis. Nevertheless we all experience stressors in our life - none of us is immune and, as life in general becomes more stressful as the cost of living crisis intensifies, we wanted to put together a magazine this month which refers to stress and how we might relieve it.

There's lots more to enjoy in the pages of this month's magazine, so why not relieve some stress by taking a load off, grabbing a cuppa and having a flick through this month's offering.

Hannah

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THE BEAR HOTEL

Christmas

Party menu 2022

Butternut Squash & Nigella Seed Soup (vg)

Prawn, Pomegranate & Pink Grapefruit Salad

Baked Goat's Cheese & Red Onion, Rocket Salad, Balsamic (v)

Smoked Mackerel Rillette Scented with Horseradish, Pickled Cucumber

Pressing of Duck, Corn Fed Chicken & Parma Ham with Spiced Pear Chutney & Toasted Brioche

Roasted Usk Valley Turkey Crown with Roast Potatoes & Traditional Tracklements

Christmas Ale Braised Welsh Beef with Mushrooms & Onions. Creamed Potatoes

Escalope of Salmon on Champ Potatoes with a Smoked Butter Herb Sauce

Wild Mushroom & Spinach Tart with Celeriac Puree (v)

Roasted Pheasant Breast with Smoked Bacon & Chestnuts, Fondant Potato & Game Jus

Nut Roast, Pigs in Blanket, Rich Vegetable Gravy (vg)

Served with Sweet Braised Red Cabbage, Brussel Sprout Hindmarsh, Chantenay Carrots & Roasted Parsnip

Traditional Christmas Pudding with Brandy Sauce (Vegan option available)

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Abergavenny Community Centre

A Place to Be



Change is in the air and while late Summer moves slowly towards Autumn, over at the Abergavenny Community Centre work continues at pace. In mid-September work started on transforming part of the former school playground into a multi-faceted nature garden funded through the People's Postcode Lottery, installed by Alan Pritchard of Border Landscapes, aiming to serve the different communities of all ages/abilities that come weekly to the Centre.

As well as providing essential wildlife habitat and space for fruiting trees, shrubs and perennials the space features a grassed area with a small tump, a peace garden for quiet reflection, and a bespoke water feature will follow later, in the Spring. A new pedestrian path will be installed, and the area adjacent to the nature garden sensitively landscaped to create an inviting entrance that will also serve numerous activities taking place in the grounds, for example, holiday play, Thursday morning toddlers group and, launching soon, BENTHYG which is a project that encourages people/groups

to borrow items from a 'library of things' instead of buying them. www.benthyg-cymru.org

As the Winter takes hold, you can be assured that you will find company and a warmth of welcome each week, at the 10.30 Friday coffee morning and Midday light lunch, Wednesday's luncheon club at 12.30, and chair yoga on Thursdays at 1.30. There's a dementia friendship group which meets twice monthly on Monday, and we'll also be starting a Wednesday afternoon singing activity - just for singing's sake. If you are looking for a warm place to retreat with a book or a space for co-working you can find what you're looking for in the splendidly fitted out and appropriately named Welcome Room by the entrance along Park Street.

Some activities do need booking in advance such as the popular Chair Yoga, Wednesday lunch and co-working space but in all these things, conversations can also lead to friendships, and shared support and a wider sense of 'home'. We understand that it's not always easy to break the ice so watch out for our next open day, or get in touch via the usual channels.

Marion Pearse

Email: aber.hub@gmail.com
www.abergavennycc.org

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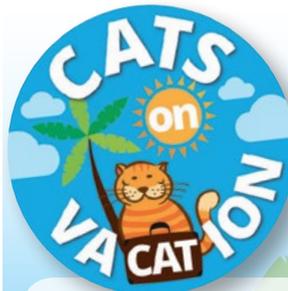


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Abergavenny Round Table Fireworks

5th November at Belgrave Park

It's that time of year again when the endlessly dedicated folk from Abergavenny Round Table light up the skies above town with a dazzling array of colours in the form of their annual fireworks extravaganza.

Now in its 53rd year, the event is a professional pyro-musical firework display and light show,

choreographed to a vibrant and varied soundtrack ranging from chart hits, TikTok tracks and more. Listen out for a bit of Stranger Things in the mix too!

There will be music, food and drinks, light up toys and a small funfair for the kids to enjoy. As with every year, all proceeds will go to charities and good causes in the local area.

Tickets are available online from www.abergavennyroundtable.co.uk Adults enter for £8 per person and children over 2 years old at £5 per person. Gates open at 5pm and fireworks being at 7pm sharp.

Please note the following important information regarding parking and attendance guidelines:

Alcohol, weapons, drugs, fireworks or sparklers are not permitted in the park. Anyone found to be in possession of these will be removed from the event.

No pets, ONLY assistance dogs allowed.

THERE IS NO PARKING AT THIS EVENT. Town car parks are free to use after 6pm and are just a short walk from the park.



Pick Your Own Halloween Pumpkins

Come and visit our brand new Pumpkin Patch at Abergavenny Garden Centre!

We'll be running a seasonally themed photo point where you can take a snap to be in for a chance to win a prize.

No need to book - Parking & Entry is free. Pay only for the pumpkins you pick! First come, first served!

Keep up to date with info via Facebook @Abergavennygardencentre

Every weekend from 8th - 30th October

9am-5pm on Saturdays

10am-4pm on Sundays



Evesham Gardens, Church Lane, Llanfoist, Abergavenny, NP7 9LF
Facebook: @Abergavennygardencentre Tel: 01873 853839



ARE YOU FEELING THE PINCH?

The rising cost of living is affecting us all. Energy prices, petrol prices, and the prices of ordinary, everyday essential items such as food, toiletries, clothing and other household items are spiralling out of control.

Many people are looking to boost their income and earn a few extra pounds. Look no further! Diamond Home Support is urgently seeking people to work with us on a self-employed basis.

We are based in Abergavenny and provide cleaning and home help services primarily to the elderly and disabled. Work will be in Abergavenny and the surrounding areas.

We are looking for people who are:

- Kind, caring and compassionate
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- Reliable
- Trustworthy
- Able and willing to work to high standards
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- Would appreciate the chance to join our small, friendly team.

You should have a full driving licence and access to your own vehicle for work. You should be able to provide two references and be willing to work on a self-employed basis. You will also be required to undergo a DBS check prior to starting work with us.

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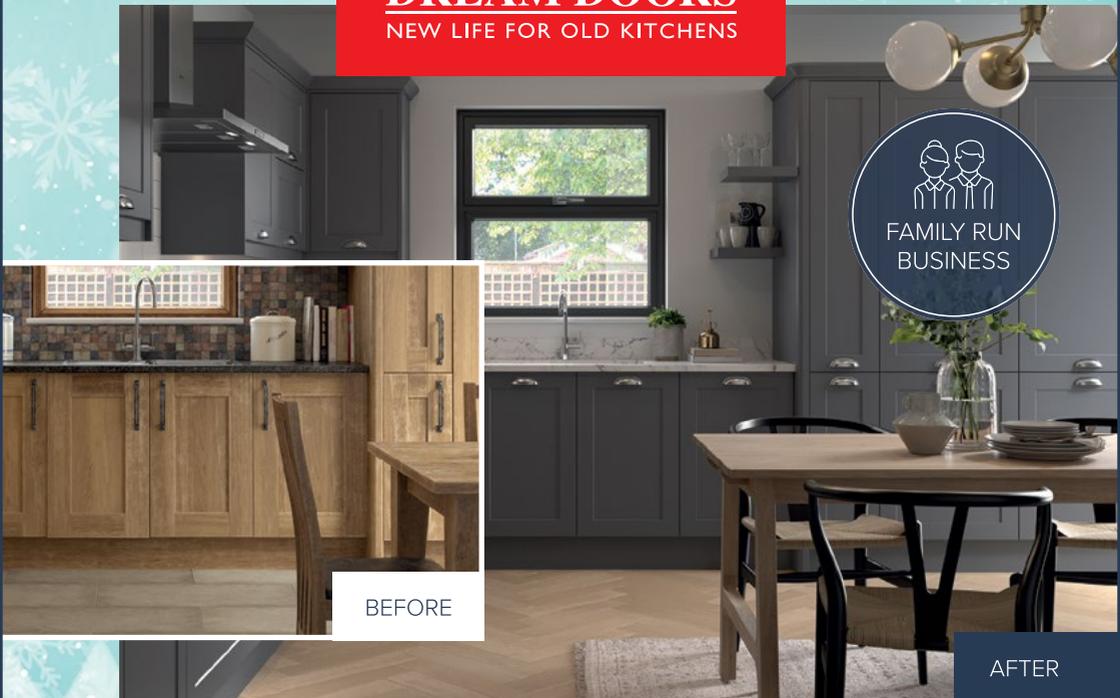
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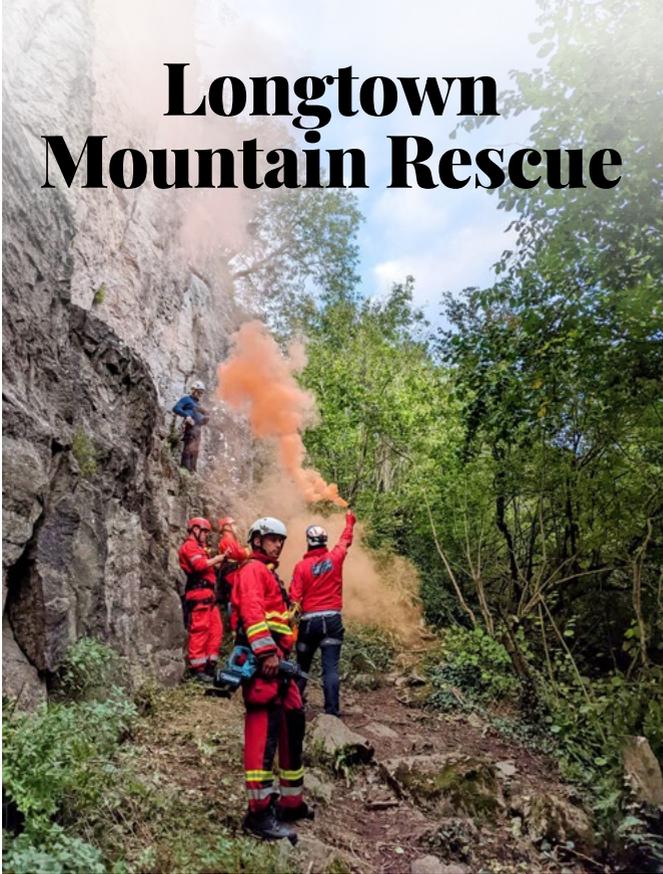
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Longtown Mountain Rescue



It has been a couple of months since we last contributed to the Focus and updated you on what we have been doing.

In August, we had a search for an at-risk, missing person, in the Pontypool area. We helped some injured and exhausted walkers in the Trelleck and Llanthony areas. Also, in the Pontypool area, we had a mountain biker, who took a nasty fall and broke their tibia and fibula. On this call out, we worked with the ambulance HART team who dealt with the medical aid, while we organised and oversaw the evacuation.

In early September, we were alerted to reports of lost walkers on the Sugarloaf. A storm had rolled in and the visibility went to zero very quickly. We mobilised the team,

but thankfully before had deployed anyone, members of the public were able to step in and guide the lost people off the hill. We would like to convey a big thank you to them!

On a recent Saturday, a young lady fell off a horse near Llangorse Lake. Working with our colleagues from Brecon Mountain Rescue Team, we quickly had several people on the scene and provided medical assistance. Once assessed and initial treatment was given, the casualty was packaged up and transferred via ambulance to hospital.

On the bank holiday Monday, we had two back-to-back callouts. A little after 4 pm we were contacted by Gwent Police to report a fallen climber in the St Arvans area. On arrival at the scene, we worked with South Wales Fire and Rescue

Service and the HART team, to get to the casualty and assess their medical condition but also come up with a plan on how best to extract them to the roadside. An initial plan of helicopter evacuation was attempted but not feasible due to the tree coverage and wind conditions. Instead, a rope system was set up and the casualty was lowered to the road for onward travel. This call-out was a brilliant example of interoperability between different rescue agencies.



Not long after getting back to base and replenishing the kit that had been used, we were called out again, this time to assist with an injured walker somewhere on Hay Bluff. We mobilised the team again and after working out the gentleman's location, started getting team members on route to him. Though he had a lower leg injury, our initial concern was the risk of hypothermia as we are now entering the part of the year when people can get very cold, very quickly, especially when they stop moving. We quickly had a team with him, and after warming him up and assessing him medically, were able to slowly walk him off the mountain.

We wish all the casualties a full and quick recovery!

Dan Mazhindu



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Monmouthshire Cubs Pay Tribute to Queen Elizabeth

On 8th September the world was alerted to the historic news that Queen Elizabeth II had passed away. Since then people from across the nation have paid tribute to the late Queen's dedication of service and unequalled period of reign.

Cubs from Monmouthshire were among the 400 Cubs that gathered from all four Home Nations at Goodwood racecourse on Sunday 11th September for the annual box kart championships. The event proceeded with a flag bearer from each of the 40 participating teams being invited to stand around the figure of eight course, where they lowered their flags to the ground. The two minute silence was concluded with the reading of a poem. It was a spectacular sight and a real sense of calm descended over those gathered as they paid their respects to our late monarch.



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EVENTS

2ND OCTOBER

Abergavenny & Crickhowell Friends of the Earth Film Screening: 2040



Damon Gameau's upbeat documentary about the impact of climate change focuses on inspiring innovations that might just help us avert disaster. 3pm, Abergavenny Community Centre, Park St, Abergavenny. For more information and to book your free place visit www.friendsoftheearthabandcrick.wales

5TH OCTOBER

Abergavenny Film Society Screening: HIVE (15)



Fahrije's husband has been missing since the war in Kosovo. She sets up her own small business to provide for her kids, but as she fights against a patriarchal society that does not support her, she faces a crucial decision.

Screenings at 4.30pm and 7.30pm. Entry £5. Melville Centre, Penypound
See advert on Page 8 for full info

5TH OCTOBER

Abergavenny 50+ Group: A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A TUDOR WOMAN

Step back in time with the assistance of Majell Lee who will explain and demonstrate the daily life of a Tudor woman in a fun, illuminating and accessible way. 2pm, Trinity Hall, Baker Street, Abergavenny. All Welcome

8TH OCTOBER

MONTHLY CRAFT FAIR

9am-4pm, Abergavenny Market Hall

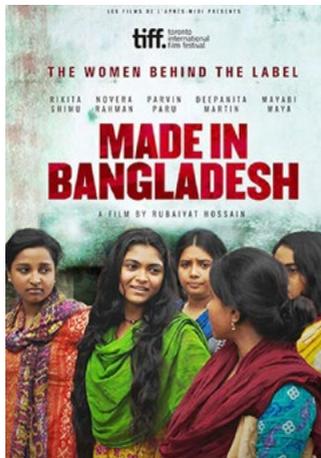
8TH OCTOBER

Book-ish presents: BOOKSHOP DAY EVENT

Evening event with The School of Life in celebration of Bookshop Day 6pm, Book-ish Loft, 18 High St, Crickhowell

19TH OCTOBER

Abergavenny Film Society Screening: MADE IN BANGLADESH (12A)



A textile worker fights for employee rights after a co-worker is killed in a fire at her factory.

Screenings at 4.30pm and 7.30pm. Entry £5. Melville Centre, Penypound
See advert on Page 8 for full info

12TH OCTOBER

Upstairs at the Chapel: THE RHEINGANS SISTERS



Playful, powerful and richly connecting music that is wholly contemporary while deeply anchored in folk traditions. 8pm, Upstairs at the Chapel, Market St, Abergavenny
Tickets £16 + £1 booking fee.
<https://artshopandgallery.co.uk/events/>

12TH OCTOBER

Abergavenny Local History Society Talk: WALES AND SOCIALISM – MARTIN WRIGHT



Streamed from 7:30pm from the Melville Centre. Please see our article on Page 41 for more info

Continued overleaf

1ST OCTOBER – 13TH NOVEMBER 2022



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14TH OCTOBER

**Llanfoist Village Hall Film Night:
OPERATION MINCEMEAT**

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Tickets £5 for adults or £3 for children; to be bought at the door. Cash only.

5TH NOVEMBER

**ABERGAVENTNY ROUND TABLE
FIREWORK EXTRAVAGANZA**



Belgrave Park.

See our article on Page 9 for more info

29TH OCTOBER

**Ebbw Vale Male Voice Choir
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A NIGHT AT THE MUSICALS

Music from Les Miserables, Miss Saigon, Starlight Express and many more.

Tickets £6. For tickets and further information please telephone:

07977 545607

07973 549266

7pm, Ebbw Vale Male Choir Rehearsal Building, Church Street, Ebbw Vale

12TH NOVEMBER

**THE 106TH ANNIVERSARY OF
CWMDU EISTEDDFOD**



The first Eisteddfod took place in 1916 in Cwmdu Schoolroom,

moving in the 1950's to the newly built Village Hall; it has taken place annually since, apart from a few years during WW2 and during the Covid 19 Pandemic. Cwmdu Eisteddfod is one of the few local Eisteddfodau still in existence in South Powys.

Commencing at 1pm, evening session 6.30pm. Programmes and details available from Jean Huxley: 01874 730282

SEND US YOUR EVENTS

Go to <https://thefocus.wales/calendar/>

A Note about Events

All the events listed are correct at the time of publishing. We strongly recommend double checking dates and times prior to attending an event to ensure these have not changed. Focus Magazines accepts no responsibility for errors or omissions

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Weather Outlook



Following on from the elongated spells of dry weather that September delivered, which included some pleasant sunshine and late summer warmth, October too looks set to be a largely dry month with the likelihood of the mild conditions continuing. Whereas we can expect phases of wet weather during October, (as witnessed with September's thunderstorms), any unsettled weather this month probably won't be the dominant feature. As it stands, it is also unlikely that flooding issues will arise. Instead, periods of dry weather look set to hold sway, and with it, temperatures that will not only match but exceed seasonal norms for the time of year. During October, bar some morning dew and mist patches, the risk of frost is extremely low, with overnight values likely to remain on the mild side. On the average or slightly above the average for rainfall. Above the average for temperature.

Forecast from Jonathan Powell

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Avoid a fright this Autumn and move with confidence

The summer is over, and as we say goodbye to the warmer seasons, our attention turns to the cooler months.

For some, it may mean sitting in front of the fire following long walks with the dog. For others, it may mean spending more time in the kitchen- jarring and baking harvest goods to enjoy long after the berries leave the trees.

It could mean the last push to get your house on the market to sell and 'complete' ready for the festive period. Many of us have ideas when walking into a home for the first time of where the Christmas tree will go, and how easily Christmas dinner can be conquered in the existing kitchen.

If this is on your wish list this year, speak to us about how best to get your house in a sale-able position, and if now is the right time to sell. We can help guide you through the process in the current market. Helping you to feel empowered and reassured.

At this time of year the only trick we like is when the children knock on our door on the 31st October and requesting sweets!

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accommodation that affords a welcoming entrance hall with wc off, separate lounge with feature bay window, 23' kitchen/diner, leading to a utility area.

The garage has been converted to provide an additional reception room or bedroom with wet room off. To the first floor are four bedrooms providing 3 double and a further single room, master bedroom having a modern en-suite shower room and fitted wardrobes and three piece family bathroom.

To the fore the property benefits from a driveway providing parking for several vehicles with open plan lawned front garden. Gated side entrance leads to the rear garden which is designed for low maintenance comprising split level patio areas surrounded by raised borders, with timber fencing to either side and mature trees to the rear making it a particularly private space.

With the further benefits of gas central heating, double glazing and a popular residential location, viewing is highly recommended to fully appreciate.

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Stress Relief



A simple ten minute walk can be beneficial

We are living in stressful times so it is little wonder that mental health issues are on the rise. Did you know that mental health related issues cost the UK economy in the region of £117 billion pounds a year – a mind boggling figure that demonstrates the breadth of the problem.

When we feel stressed, it can feel difficult to think about anything other than the source of that stress, however we can combat stress in a number of ways and, while these strategies may not solve the issue itself, they can assist in creating a shift in mindset in order to make confronting our stress a lot easier.

Physical activity is long associated with improving our mental wellbeing. Exercise both improves your body's ability to use oxygen and blood flow. Both of these changes have a direct effect on your brain. Exercise also increases your brain's production of endorphins - the "feel-good" neurotransmitters that are responsible for the coveted 'runner's high'. This is the sense of well-being and euphoria that many people experience after exercise. The type of physical exercise that involves being outside is an excellent way to relieve stress and requires no equipment. Simply going for a ten minute walk gives you a chance to step away from what you're doing, enjoy a change of scenery and, if it involves some fresh air, so much the better.



Have you ever considered engaging in something creative in order to empty your stress bucket? Painting is one of the best ways to relieve stress and anxiety. Engaging in an activity like painting means that you

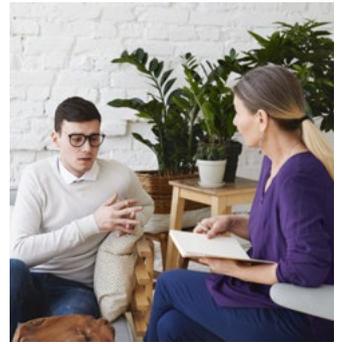
Continued overleaf

are using a different part of the brain – you become caught up in what you are creating, allowing you to temporarily forget what is worrying you. This is called a state of flow, and is akin to meditation. As your mind calms down, so does your anxiety and stress levels. There's also the additional benefit that using colours like yellow, blue, green, purple and orange can instantly uplift your mood. Recent studies have shown that colouring geometric shapes induces meditative benefits that are crucial and helpful to people struggling with stress and anxiety.

It almost goes without saying that diet plays a vital role in determining our mood. While it cannot directly cause stress, it can aggravate and increase our response to stress. Food is our energy source providing the nutrients we require to grow, fight disease and repair so it stands to reason that it can play a vital role

in combatting stress. Naturally, you should consult your health practitioner for professional advice concerning diet, however it's widely reported that eating fewer processed foods and more whole foods can alleviate the production of cortisol – the stress hormone. Likewise, a Mediterranean diet containing fish, poultry, fruit, whole grains and healthy fats is recommended for overall health and wellness, including stress relief.

Connecting with others when you're feeling stressed can lower the body's stress levels and taking time to spend with friends can help us to relax. Talking things through with these friends can also help you to find solutions to the issues that are causing you stress. Take time to spend with family, arrange a day out with a friend, have lunch with a colleague. You could even try volunteering or connecting with



others through local community groups.

Though no stress busting tip is going to completely solve the problem, they can assist in helping you take steps to finding some relief. Remember, however, that if you feel as though stress is beginning to dominate your life, make sure you take action to seek professional help.

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at the Abergavenny Community Centre. When you start to learn meditation it can be very helpful to join a group – this keeps you focused and means you can ask questions as you learn.

Whilst every individual is different it isn't an exaggeration to say that meditation is a useful tool for almost anyone. It can drastically reduce stress and helps us interact more positively with others. You can do it anytime, anywhere and in any situation. Meditation calms the mind and helps us react to problems in a down to earth and effective way. Essentially, meditation can empower you to overcome difficulty.

The sessions are facilitated by Ben Henriques, a Buddhist practitioner with over fifteen years of meditation experience. If you are interested in attending or have any questions please email or call Ben (ben@henriques.org / 07922848765).

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*“If you think you’re free,
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~ Ram Dass

Switching Stress off at its Source

In this month’s edition of willingly-suspending-your-disbelief-in-order-to-uncover-a-better-experience-of-life, I’m going to invite you to question everything you *think* you know about stress. For my part, I shall explode three common stress-myths in turn; insight and realisation will subsequently rearrange the pieces on your behalf. So clear your mind and give yourself permission to be wrong, for a few minutes.

Misconception 1: There is an optimal level of stress

This one’s the happiness-killer,

because when we innocently believe that no-stress-at-all will in some way lead to apathy and ineffectiveness, we unwittingly take a stress-free life off the table. We will *invite* stress, because there’s an optimal level to be achieved, right?

But it’s easy to see that when it comes to the *experience* of stress (the first half of the dictionary definition of which is “*A state of mental or emotional strain or tension...*”) we will *always* perform better in its total absence. Our very best endeavours flow naturally when we experience *no*

stress, while mistakes creep in when we’re distracted by tense, worrisome thinking.

So while it may be the case that to get *physically* stronger we need to stress the body, in the form of exercise, the same simply does not hold true for our psychology. Let go of this unhealthy myth, first and foremost, and you’ll at least be looking in the right direction.

Misconception 2: Some situations are inherently stressful

I’m sure you’re familiar with the *Holmes & Rahe Stress Scale*; the list of life events, developed in the 1960’s that are most likely to stress you out and make you ill? Topped by death, divorce and detention in prison it seems to make total sense, as it echoes the second half of the dictionary definition of stress, which is mental strain “...*resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances.*” There’s only one problem with this widely accepted model – it’s not based in reality!

The very fact that we all experience life’s situations differently, and that even our *own* experience of the *same* thing fluctuates with time, mood and perspective, demonstrates that the quality of stress is not built in to circumstances; it’s something that originates, and is experienced, from within.

The items on that famous stress scale and how we’re supposed to feel as a result of each were merely *correlations* observed in the population, and there’s a confounding, *causative* factor at play: our relationship with thought. As much as the mind rails against the notion,

Continued overleaf

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it's a simple truth that at the fundamental level, there is no such thing as a 'stressful situation.'

Misconception 3: Stress is transmissible

This myth goes hand in hand with the previous one, in fact it's a necessary component of it, because if stress is somehow inherent in a situation or object that sits outside of us, there must be a mechanism by which it subsequently gets *into* us. The thing must *cause* our stress, in some way.

But what is this magical means? Infectious anxiety particles? Stress laser-beams? Again, looking to our own experience, it demands only the lightest of scrutiny to see that this 'outside-in' mechanism can't possibly be the case.

As we slow down and start to see through a lifetime's conditioning, we realise that the feeling of stress—just like

every other feeling we will ever experience—is a reflection of thought, brought to life in our consciousness as the mind creates our picture of reality, moment to moment, from the 'inside-out'.

There is no denying that stress is damaging to your health and the less you experience of it, the better. If you are innocently labouring under the commonly-held misconceptions above, you have but two choices when faced with stress: try and avoid it, thereby severely limiting your life; or do your best to reduce its impact, and watch with mounting dread as your coping mechanisms (both healthy, and unhealthy) stretch beyond breaking.

When we remove these misconceptions however, we discover a *different* understanding of stress. One that switches it off at its source

and releases us from the need for avoidance and barely coping. One that rewrites the experience of stress as a helpful reminder that we are taking our worrisome thinking too seriously; as a built-in pointer back to life, now.

All you have to do is to see these three tricks of the mind at play in your own experience. When you do, you will escape from a trap you didn't even know you were in.



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3 small, ripe bananas
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240ml cold water
150ml vegetable oil
350g golden caster sugar
or granulated sugar
240g plain flour, sifted
65g cocoa powder, sifted
2 tsp bicarbonate of soda
1/4 tsp salt

For the Topping:

200g dark chocolate
200g white chocolate

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Halloween Cobweb Cupcakes

These attractive seasonal cupcakes not only look the part for Halloween, but they taste yummy too. They're a great idea for Trick or Treaters and are deliciously moist in texture. This recipe makes 16 cupcakes in total, so if that's too many just pop them in the freezer once baked (without the topping) and enjoy at a later date! Happy Halloween!

Method

- Preheat oven to 180C/350F and line cupcake trays with cupcake papers (you'll need 16)
- Place bananas in a large bowl and mash with a fork. Add in buttermilk, eggs, water and oil and mix together with a hand whisk until combined. Whisk in the sugar, then add flour, cocoa powder, bicarb and salt. Fold together until just combined. Note: the mixture will be wet and runny.
- Divide the mixture between the cupcake cases and place in the oven to bake for 20 mins. Once

cooked, remove from oven and leave to cool for 5 minutes in the trays before placing the individual cakes on a wire cooling rack to cool completely.

- When you're ready to decorate, melt the chocolate in separate bowls, using a pan of simmering water under your bowl of chocolate, until it melts. Spoon 3 tbsp of the melted white chocolate into a piping bag with a very fine tip.
- Take one of the cakes and spoon on a tablespoon of melted white chocolate, so it covers the top. Now pipe 3 concentric rings on

top using dark chocolate. Finish with a dot of dark chocolate in the middle. Use a toothpick to drag lines from the centre to the outside of the cake to look like a spider's web. Six or seven lines is about right.

- Repeat with the remaining cupcakes alternating between white chocolate base (dark chocolate web) and dark chocolate base (white chocolate web).
- Leave to set before eating.

Pauline Mardell

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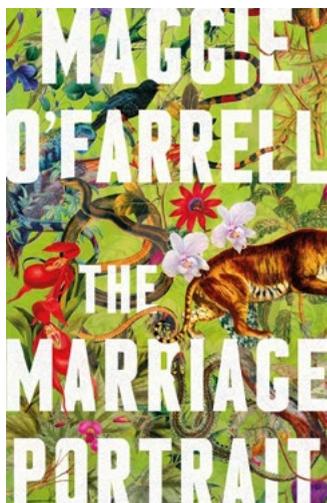
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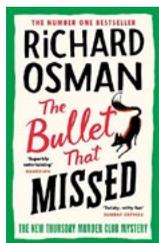
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The Bullet That Missed Richard Osman

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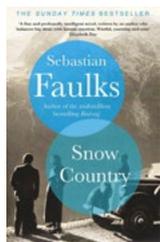


It is an ordinary Thursday, and things should finally be returning to normal. Except trouble is never far away where the Thursday Murder Club are

concerned. Osman's beloved ageing investigators return in another captivating mystery that blends dry wit and deft characterisation with fast-paced, intricate plotting.

Snow Country Sebastian Faulks

£8.99

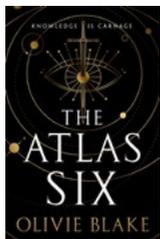


Set in Vienna during the First World War and in the looming shadow of the rise of Fascism, Faulks's elegant, psychologically acute novel tracks a small

group of individuals as they struggle to come to terms with the destruction of an old world and the terrifying new shape of its successor.

The Atlas Six Olivia Blake

£8.99

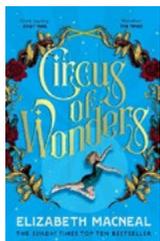


Opening the doors to a world of magic, ancient wisdom and secret societies, this slice of richly imagined and unputdownable fantasy follows

six uniquely talented young magicians as they are invited to an initiation that will change their lives forever.

Circus Of Wonders Elizabeth Macneal

£8.99



The author of *The Doll Factory* serves up another slice of gothic Victoriana centred upon a girl who is kidnapped only to be thrust into

the world of the circus. Moving from

the pleasure gardens of Victorian London to the battle-scarred plains of the Crimea, *Circus of Wonders* is an astonishing story about power and ownership, fame and the threat of invisibility.

How To Kill Your Family Bella Mackie

£8.99

The journalist and author of *Jog On* delivers a scorchingly black satire of family dysfunction and the media's obsession with murder, as the engaging anti-hero Grace reveals the full extent of her gleeful homicidal spree.



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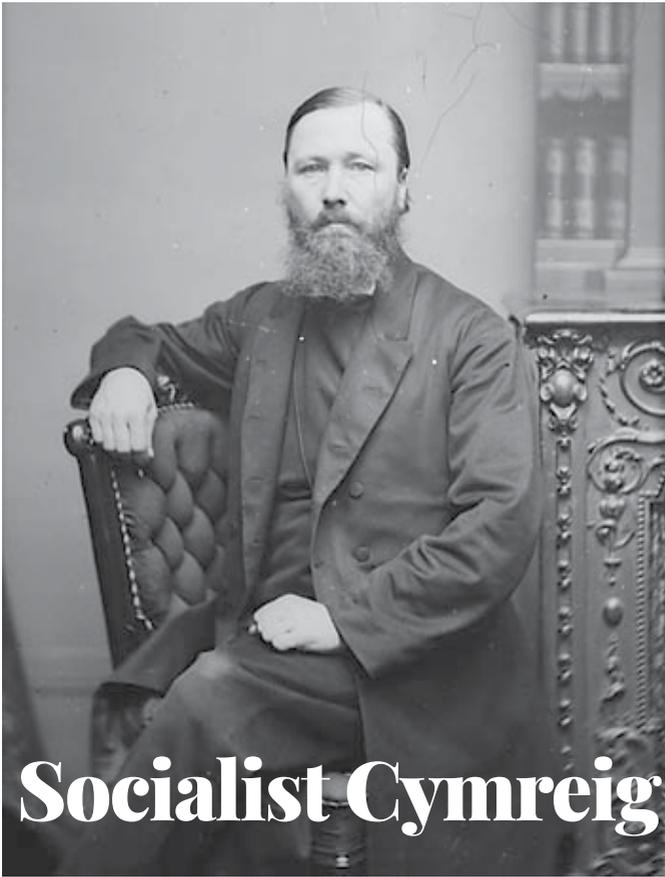


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Socialist Cymreig

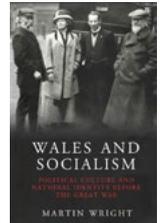
Robert Jones Derfel's most lasting legacy is what became known as Treason of the Blue Books. But there is more to this Baptist minister who renounced religion for socialism. Helen Morgan from Abergavenny Local History Society reports.

He was born Robert Jones on 24 July 1824 on his grandfather's farm near Llandderfel in Merionnydd. At the age of 11, having worked as a farm hand and in a woollen mill he ran away from home. He went to live with his uncle near Rhiwabon. Under his uncle's influence he became a Baptist, learnt handloom weaving and began to write poetry. He went on to win

prizes at the eisteddfodau, having adopted Derfel as his bardic name. Meanwhile he worked as a weaver for 10 years but after frequent periods of unemployment and poverty he moved to England. He arrived there a monoglot Welsh speaker as the only education he had received was at Sunday school. He settled in Manchester and soon mastered English to become a travelling salesman.

By this time, he had become fully cosmopolitan but without forgetting his Welsh agrarian roots. He married twice, both times to Welsh-speaking women, and continued to travel to and fro to Wales to preach and lecture. When the Welsh media declined to publish his satire about the biased 1847 reports into the state of education in Wales (known as the Blue Books), he published the entire text himself. In the text *Brad y Llyfrau Gleision* he mocked the derogatory comments on Welsh culture and religion. By now he had been a lay preacher and writer for various Baptist periodicals for some time and was ordained in 1862. He wrote essays arguing the case for a Welsh-language education system, Welsh daily paper, national library, village libraries, a national museum, a school of arts and crafts and an observatory. He was influenced by Robert Owen and had abandoned religion for utopian socialism. By 1865 he was serving on the Reform League executive alongside the former Chartist leader, Ernest Jones. In the 1868 election, when part of the urban male working class was enfranchised for the first time, he worked to mobilise the Welsh vote. R J Derfel as he became known was one of those who, in 1890, started the Manchester and District Fabian Society. He continued to write pamphlets and songs until his death in 1905.

Martin Wright's talk on October 12th in the Melville Theatre starts at 7.30pm and will be streamed live via Zoom to members. For more details: www.abergavennylocalhistorysociety.org.uk



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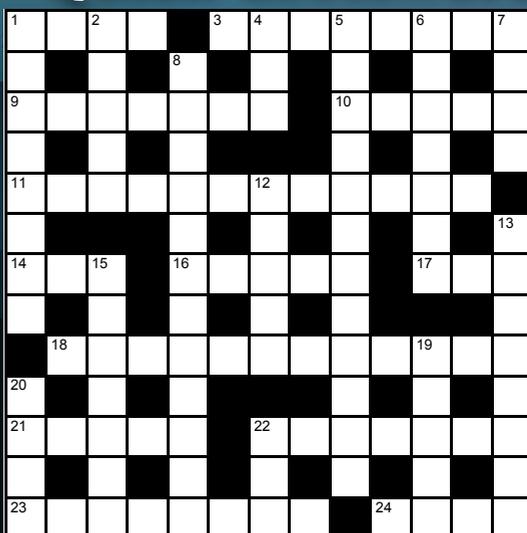
ACROSS

- 1 Fog (4)
- 3 Travellers (8)
- 9 Table support (7)
- 10 Entrance (5)
- 11 Clarifications (12)
- 14 Epoch (3)
- 16 Sphere (5)
- 17 To drink (3)
- 18 Uses camera (12)
- 21 Large sea (5)
- 22 Lawn game (7)
- 23 Mixing (8)
- 24 Steak (4)

DOWN

- 1 Mumbled (8)
- 2 Snooze (5)
- 4 Poem (3)
- 5 Ice-box (12)
- 6 Proverbs (7)
- 7 Painful (4)
- 8 Untangled (12)
- 12 Amid (5)
- 13 Alcoholic appetiser (8)
- 15 Accomplish (7)
- 19 Dwelling (5)
- 20 Grave (4)
- 22 Tin (3)

Quick Crossword



Solutions on our website: www.thefocus.wales



Ydych chi'n Landlord ag Eiddo yn Sir Fynwy?

Mae Gwasanaeth Gosod Sir Fynwy yn cynnig ffordd amgen a chost effeithiol i rentu eich eiddo.

Ein nod yw gwneud rheoli a gosod eich eiddo yn broses syml a hawdd, gan weithio gyda chi i reoli a hysbysebu eich eiddo yn ogystal â dod o hyd i denantiaid sydd wedi'u fetio ar gyfer

CYNLLUNIAU RHENTU PREIFAT

CYNLLUNIAU PRYDLESU PREIFAT

gyda chymorth ac arweiniad gan ein Tîm cyfeillgar, profiadol a Phroffesiynol.

Am gyfnod cyfyngedig rydym yn cynnig i Landlordiaid Newydd

'Groeso Aur'.

Os oes gennych chi ddi-ddordeb mewn gosod eich llety neu i gael rhagor o fanylion am y gwasanaeth a'r hyn rydym yn ei gynnig, cysylltwch, os gwelwch yn dda, â Clare Hamer

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