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SEE PAGE 31

Get to know  
the LOCALS! PAGE 28

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# Dear Readers,



When I first moved to Abergavenny twelve years ago, I didn't know anyone, had never run my own businesses, didn't really know much about the local businesses here and was pretty ill prepared to start running a local magazine. It was difficult to know where to begin! There was nothing for it

but to jump in head first and start introducing myself to people and chatting to anybody who would listen to me. I was determined to become part of the community and started volunteering in a local shop so I could get my hands dirty and a feel for what this place was all about.

Fast forward twelve years and I am happy to say that I really feel part of this community. I am proud to call Abergavenny my home for so many different reasons, but one of these reasons is definitely the local businesses. Yes, sure, it's part of my job to know them, but our local businesses are truly something special. Not only are they totally dedicated to their clientele, they're also such a passionate bunch of people. So, I wanted you to get to know them a little bit more too. Throughout the magazine this month we've given over space to some of our local businesses to tell us a bit more about them and allow us to take a peek behind the scenes. I hope you'll enjoy getting to know them a bit better too and I hope it will encourage you to think local when shopping or using professional services.

Enjoy the read,

**Publisher:** Focus Magazines Ltd

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# Help KAT Keep Abergavenny Tidy



**D**umped rubbish - glass, cans, and bits of plastic - can injure people and animals, pollute water courses and cause unsightly blots around our historic town and scenic countryside.

Now, a pioneering project by Keep Abergavenny Tidy (KAT) is looking at ways to deter litter droppers and encourage them to bin their rubbish or take it home for safe disposal.

But they need more volunteers to carry out litter counts during a six-week trial and have launched an appeal for people who care about the environment to come forward.

The project will focus on recording how much rubbish is dropped in selected hot-spots. The data collected will be a starting point to assess what measures would deter littering and then be rolled out to other areas.

Guidance and support would be offered. If you are interested, please contact [keepabergavennytidy@gmail.com](mailto:keepabergavennytidy@gmail.com).

The project by the volunteer litter-picking group follows a

## POTTERY INTRODUCTION SESSION

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Gilwern Village Hall: 20<sup>th</sup> February

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multi-agency meeting held to discuss strategies to deter littering. KAT coordinator Helen Trevor Davies said a strong start had already been made with the help of Keep Wales Tidy.

KAT is also working with Monmouthshire County Council, Abergavenny Town Council and Gwent Police on the initiative. "The aim is to pool resources and plan effective interventions by creating a new anti-litter strategy and policy," she said."

In addition, KAT aims to get more businesses involved with creating litter-free zones. A survey of businesses in lower Cross Street will be finished shortly and others are planned for Nevill Street and Frogmore Street. One businessman, Paul Cable from Cable News in Frogmore Street, has already joined the initiative.

Other partnerships have included working with Cantref Primary School in a litter picking event to raise funds for school eco bins; and KAT is now working with Gwent Police to support the Eco Committee at King Henry VIII School with another pick.

Links have been made with Abergavenny Community Enterprise Partnership (ACE) chaired by Norma Watkins. The ACE centre in Hillcrest Road have plans to become a hub where litter kits will be available for loan.

The KAT coordinator praised the work of all local litter-pickers "Although the group picks are held in Abergavenny there are litter pickers in Llanfoist, Govilon, on the Bloreng up to Keepers Pond, Mardy and in Llanvetherine. Others litter pick at the Hardwick roundabout and in the laybys off the A465.

Monthly picks are usually held on the first Tuesday of

the month. The next is on Tuesday, February 7th, at 10am meeting in St Johns Square. Litter picking kits are available to borrow. Please book with [stuartabercomcen@gmail.com](mailto:stuartabercomcen@gmail.com) and then collect them from Abergavenny Community Centre, based at the former Park Street school.

For updates, check the KAT Facebook page:

[www.facebook.com/AberLitter/](http://www.facebook.com/AberLitter/) or Instagram:

[www.instagram.com/aber\\_litter/](http://www.instagram.com/aber_litter/)

or Twitter @KeepAbergTidy.

*Irena Morgan*



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# Fairtrade Fortnight

27 February –  
12 March 2023.

**F**airtrade Fortnight approaches ... again. It's held every year, at the end of February and beginning of March. For more than ten years now, Abergavenny has been an accredited Fairtrade Town – which means that our Council formally supports the sale of Fairtrade products in shops, cafes, hotels and businesses.

Our programme of events is not yet complete, so you may see more about this in March 'Focus'. But here are a few events to be going on with:

Shrove Tuesday, Feb 21, 11.30 to 1.30 in the Methodist hall, Castle St: a Fairtrade pancake lunch, all welcome

Friday Feb 24, 2.00 pm in the Abergavenny Football Club, Penny Pound: Kadun Rees of Fairtrade Wales will speak to the U3A monthly meeting

Thursday March 2, 10.30 to 12 at Christchurch hall, North St: a coffee morning with a Fairtrade theme, all welcome

In addition, we're hoping for events like a 'trail' through town, encouraging visits to many of our Fairtrade outlets; events in some schools; and perhaps tastings and displays at one or two Fairtrade suppliers. Visit our Facebook page for details.

Why should all this matter to us? Because millions of workers throughout the world survive if at all on poverty wages. Because millions of women earn less than the men. Because in far too many poor communities, children cannot go to school and the sick cannot afford health care. When you or I buy a Fairtrade product like coffee or chocolate or wine or clothes, we are ensuring that the people, throughout the world, who produced what we consume, are not only being paid a fair wage but are receiving a premium as well. The Fairtrade premium is an additional sum which is given to improve conditions for local communities. For example, cocoa farmers receive an extra \$200 for every tonne of cocoa beans.

And buying Fairtrade is good also for our environment. Fairtrade

standards include the promotion of training for farmers, for example advice on switching to environmentally friendly practices, such as developing nutrient-rich soils that support healthy plants and encouraging wildlife to help control pests and diseases. This has been shown to lead to good agricultural practices, which have encouraged environmentally sustainable production.

Off you go now to the shops or to a coffee bar. Keep your eyes open for that familiar Fairtrade logo. And if you're a shop owner or manager, please go to the Fairtrade Foundation website [fairtrade.org.uk](http://fairtrade.org.uk) to see the amazing range of Fairtrade products, one or more of which you could perhaps offer from your premises. Thank you!

*Francis Buxton*



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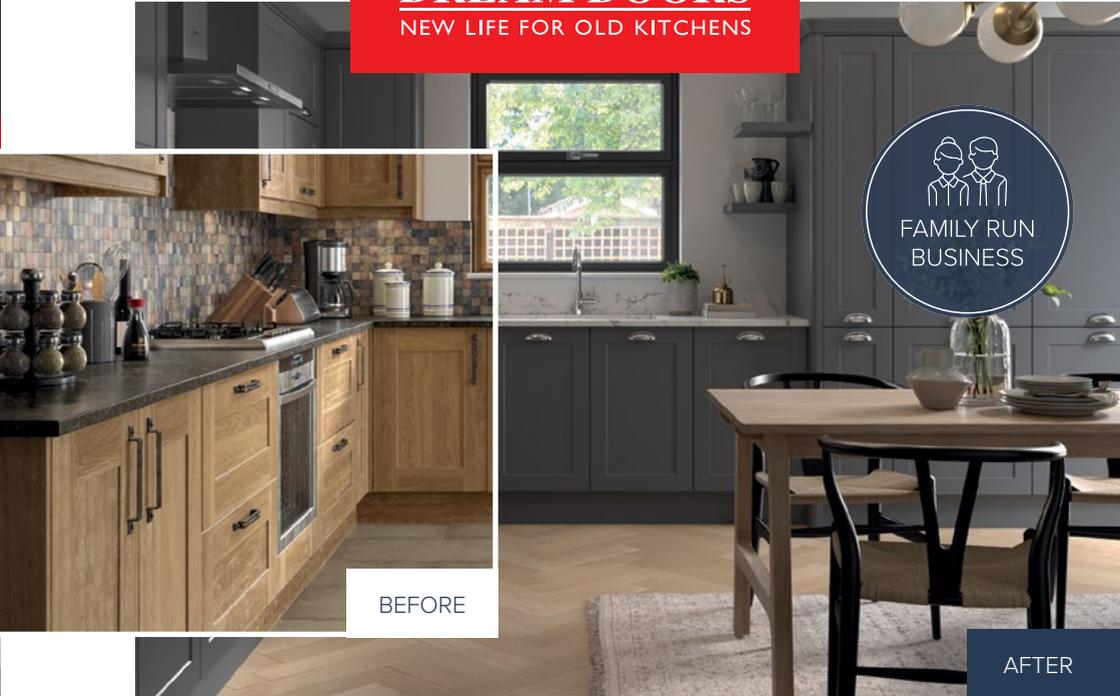


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# Longtown Mountain Rescue



**S**lightly belated but Happy New Year from the team. Since our last update in early December, the team has had quite a few callouts, which have taken us all over the place. Before Christmas, we had a gentleman who took a nasty fall on Table Mountain, above Crickhowell, the team and Welsh ambulance service paramedics were quickly on the scene giving medical support. We were grateful for the support of the Coastguard helicopter being able to come in and help with the evacuation to ensure the transfer to the hospital was as speedy as possible. We wish him a full recovery.

On boxing day, we were requested by the fire service to investigate a situation in which a couple of dogs had fallen into a crevice on one of the hills above Varteg. After assessment from our team, we handed the incident over to our colleagues in South and Mid Wales Cave Rescue, as this is more suited to their skill set. They worked closely with the Fire service for three days, and one of the dogs was thankfully recovered but unfortunately the second could not be found. Our thoughts are with the dog's owners.

We were activated by West Mercia police to help search for a high-risk missing person in Herefordshire but thankfully as we arrived on the scene the person was found.

During the recent cold snap in January, we have been involved

in three incidents relating to the weather, the most notable was a woman who injured her leg on the Sugarloaf. The weather was bitterly cold, with the wind making it worse. We were able to get people to her and her family quickly, with an initial priority of warming them up and then administering medical aid. Once again, we are thankful for Coastguard who helped us quickly get the casualty off the hill and to a land ambulance for onward travel to the hospital. We wish her a speedy recovery.

We have also been training on the Llangattock range, Sugarloaf, Skirrid, and the Red Darren throughout this period. Practicing our medical intervention skills, movement in cold and ice conditions, and ensuring that we are smooth with all our kit.

*Dan Mazhindu*



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Holding a responsible public position, the Clerk will administer the Community Council's affairs and act as its representative and ambassador. In addition to producing minutes, agendas and managing the budget you will work closely with the community councillors to plan and implement the aims and objectives of the council. Good literacy, numeracy, organisational and IT skills are essential.

The ideal applicant will be able to demonstrate previous administrative experience, strong organisational skills and financial experience. You should be confident to work individually as well as be part of a team.

Salary - SCP point 19 on NALC scales plus a monthly allowance to cover use of your home as an office.

Contracted to 15 hours per week, working mainly from home, must be able to attend monthly evening face to face and/or hybrid meetings held on the third Wednesday of every month, excluding August and December where no meetings are held. The role may suit those looking for flexible working arrangements.

Prior experience of working as a Community Council Clerk is not essential but any local government experience would be an advantage.

To apply for the role, please submit a covering letter outlining why you would like to be considered for the role along with your CV to: Gareth Havard (Clerk) at [clerk@llanfoistfawrcc.co.uk](mailto:clerk@llanfoistfawrcc.co.uk)

Closing date Friday, 17th February 2023 with interview dates/times to be agreed.

The successful candidate will be in position to co-administer a first meeting to be held on March 15th 2023, subject to references.



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# Crickhowell Walking Festival 2023

Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> March

**L**ess than six weeks to go to the Festival and it's proving as popular as ever! Well over half the walk places are taken, and a quarter of the walks are fully booked – but there are still places available every day.

CFW 2023 will feature 82 walks throughout the Brecon Beacons National Park and beyond. The walks programme is backed up by informative map and navigation workshops and by evening events, with the headline talk by our annual charity Wales Air Ambulance, with their 3,500 critical care missions a year. Other fine talks include Mark Davis on Beacons cattle droving and a fascinating 50-year mountain man's retrospective from Crickhowell's own Kevin Walker.

As always, the heart of the Festival is out on the hills. Our walks vary from 3 to 16 miles and from town and riverside strolls to strenuous all-day expeditions in the Black Mountains and Brecon Beacons. Since 2020, we have also offered TMS, a challenge to climb Table Mountain up to five times in a day – only a few places left now!

The Festival benefits the CRiC charity ([www.visitcrickhowell.wales](http://www.visitcrickhowell.wales)) and Wales Air Ambulance. With over 42,000 missions flown to date, this vital 24/7 charity needs £8m per year and CFW 2023 will be playing its part. Add a donation to your booking at checkout, come to their talk and hear how lives are saved!

Hearty thanks go to the 100 volunteers who lead the walks,



give the talks and provide the backroom organisation and administration – also to the businesses who sponsor our walks and host our visitors.

Check it all out via the Festival website. Go now to [www.crickhowellfestival.com](http://www.crickhowellfestival.com) to find out more and make your booking. Roll on 4th March, those hills will be waiting for you!

Sue Collins



# EVENTS CALENDAR FEBRUARY 2023

**8TH FEBRUARY AND EVERY 2ND  
WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH**

## GOVILON WI

February's talk is by Andy Karron on the topic of Gwent Wildlife Trust. Visitors £2  
7.30pm, Salisbury Community Hall, Merthyr Road, Govilon

## 6TH FEBRUARY COFFEE & CHAT

Autism Family Support Service  
Coffee and Chat Group  
10am – 11.30am, The Trading Post, St John's Square, Abergavenny

## 7TH FEBRUARY KEEP ABERGAVENNY TIDY – LITTER PICK



10m, St John's Square, Abergavenny

See our article on Page 6-7 for more info

## 7TH FEBRUARY

## Book-ish event AN EVENING WITH TOM BULLOUGH



Join us in the Loft at Book-ish for an evening with Tom Bullough, discussing his new book *Sarn Helen*.

Tickets cost £7 for entry only or £20 with a book

7.30pm, Book-ish, 18 High St, Crickhowell

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## ABERGAVENNY FILM SOCIETY

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<p><b>15<sup>th</sup> February</b> <b>The Invisible Life of Euridice Gusmao</b> (2019) 139 mins Subtitled</p>	<p><b>1<sup>st</sup> March</b> <b>The Toll</b> (15) (2021) 83 mins</p>
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Doors 4pm for 4:30pm screening and 7pm for 7:30pm screening.  
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**10TH FEBRUARY****Llanfoist Village Hall Film Night  
MRS HARRIS GOES TO PARIS**

A widowed cleaning lady in 1950s London falls madly in love with a couture Dior dress, and decides that she must have one of her own.

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

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

**15TH FEBRUARY****Abergavenny Film Society  
Screening  
THE INVISIBLE LIFE OF EURIDICE  
GUSMAO**

Two sisters growing up in Rio de Janeiro in the 1950s are heartbreakingly separated as teenagers. They go on to spend their lives in the city, each grieving for the other, unaware they are living just a few miles apart. Both are repressed by patriarchal and societal norms yet the film is packed with emotion, colour and the ceaseless vibrancy of city life of Rio.

4pm Melville Centre, Penypound

**15TH FEBRUARY****Upstairs at the Chapel  
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7.30pm-9.30pm, *The Art Shop & Chapel, Market St, Abergavenny*

Tickets available here:

<https://www.artshopmaterials.co.uk/glyn-johns-ticket.html>

**21ST FEBRUARY****Book-ish event  
AN EVENING WITH KATE HAMER**

Join us in the Loft at Book-ish for an evening with Kate Hamer, discussing her new book *The Lost Girls*.

Tickets cost £7 for entry only or £15 with a book

7.30pm, *Book-ish, 18 High St, Crickhowell*

[www.book-ish.co.uk](http://www.book-ish.co.uk)

**21ST FEBRUARY****A FAIRTRADE PANCAKE LUNCH**

11.30am- 1.30pm, *Methodist Hall, Castle St, Abergavenny*

**22ND FEBRUARY****Book-ish event  
AN EVENING WITH MARC  
HAMER**

Join us for an evening with Marc Hamer discussing his new book *Spring Rain*

Tickets cost £7 for entry only or £20 with a book

7.30pm, *Book-ish, 18 High St, Crickhowell*

[www.book-ish.co.uk](http://www.book-ish.co.uk)

**22ND FEBRUARY****ABERGAVENTNY LOCAL HISTORY  
SOCIETY TALK**

See Page 57 for full details  
7.30pm, *Melville Theatre, Penypound, Abergavenny*

**23RD FEBRUARY****THE TAP DANCING MERMAID**

The "truly amazing one woman power house" Tessa Bide brings you her celebrated devised solo production, called "just everything a children's theatre experience should be" (Childplays). There are stunning puppets, original live music to sing along to and tap dancing that will make you want to stick 50ps to your shoes and join in! For everyone aged 3 to 133. Adult: £9 Children (up to 12yrs): £5 Family (2 adults & 2 children): £25

Call 01873 853167 or email [melvillecamanager@gmail.com](mailto:melvillecamanager@gmail.com) to reserve your ticket.

2pm-2.45pm, *Melville Centre, Penypound, Abergavenny*

**24TH FEBRUARY****Abergavenny USA Monthly  
meeting  
GUEST SPEAKER KADUN REES  
FROM FAIRTRADE WALES**

2pm, *Abergavenny Football Club, Penypound*

1ST MARCH

## Abergavenny Film Society Screening *THE TOLL* (CERT 15)



An entertaining, clever and darkly comic film set around an old toll booth in Pembrokeshire. Its operator seems to live a

boring existence. However, as events unfold in the surrounding area his complex past life is revealed and chaos ensues as he tries to manipulate outcomes and save himself.  
*Screenings at 4.30pm and 7pm  
Melville Centre, Penypound,  
Abergavenny*

2ND MARCH

### FAIRTRADE THEMED COFFEE MORNING

10.30am-12pm, Christchurch Hall,  
North St, Abergavenny

4TH – 12TH MARCH

### CRICKHOWELL WALKING FESTIVAL



9 days of Guided walks in the beautiful Brecon Beacons National Park. Talks, quiz and audio-visual presentations in the evening also. Walks suitable for all ages and abilities. Visit [www.crickhowellfestival.com](http://www.crickhowellfestival.com) for more info on individual events and see our article on Page 17

8TH MARCH

### Book-ish event AN EVENING WITH ANNE O'BRIEN



Join us for an evening with Anne O'Brien discussing her latest historical novel *A Marriage of*

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# SEND US YOUR EVENTS

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[thefocus.wales/calendar/](http://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

# IRISH CEILIDH 18/03/23

**O**n Saturday March 18th we plan to celebrate St Patricks day with an old Skool evening of dance & Merriment!

And the evening is all thanks to the amazing singer/songwriter 'Dave Riley'! If you don't know Dave, let me tell you a bit about him! I met Dave when he first performed at Castell Roc as the singer with 'UK Guns n Roses' in 2016.

When first meeting the band, I couldn't believe that this quietly spoken, kind, gentle young man, turned into the most amazing 'Axel Rose' when on stage! The transformation was amazing and what a performance it was!

They have since played Castell Roc many times and each time the band put on an amazing performance and I personally struck up a lifelong friendship with them all.

Unfortunately, the boys decided to call it a day and go their separate ways, playing as 'UK Guns n Roses' for the very last time in August 2021 to a sold-out show.

Still being in touch with the boys, I went to see Dave perform solo in a local club, we had a good catch up, and he revealed to me that his one passion was Irish music, so I answered in saying "Lets put an Irish night on then"... and here we are! Appearing at this event we have, Dave Riley joined by his brother Mark Riley, The Shaunessy Brothers, The Cider House Collective, solo artists on ocarina, penny whistle etc. Plus the amazing 'Horizon Dance Group'. Plus more

to be confirmed!

So why not grab yourself a ticket, come along and have some fun!! And we promise to keep the Guinness flowing!!

Carol Mutlow

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# Abergavenny Writing Festival invites young people to express themselves



The presentation at last year's Youth Writing Competition where the Mayor presented the winners with their certificates

**T**he Abergavenny Writing Festival will return from the 21st to the 22nd April in 2023 at The Kings Arms, The Melville Centre for the Arts and other pop-up venues.

The Abergavenny Writing Festival is about encouraging everyone to write and express themselves. Whether for mental health and wellbeing, as a way of making a living, to bring about change, to keep a record or simply for pleasure.

There will be two days packed with events for all ages and abilities. Friday the 21st will be dedicated to talks and workshops for improving writing skills and on Friday evening there will be a hybrid (online and in person) open-mic. On Saturday the 22nd there will be a full day of inspiring sessions for adults based around writing for wellbeing and fun. Running concurrently on Saturday there will be a full day of workshops and activities for young people.

And for the fourth year running the Festival will be running its Youth Writing Competition; appealing to young people to

express themselves. The prize for the winning young writers will be mentoring sessions with some of Wales's most exciting and inspiring writing talent. The competition is free to enter and open to all from school Years 3 to 13. This year the theme is "Express Yourself" and entries are welcomed in Welsh or English and in any written form: from a poem to an article, a speech, a story or a descriptive piece of writing. The deadline for entries is Friday 17th February. There will be a presentation for the winners at The Melville Centre during the Abergavenny

Writing Festival on Saturday 22nd April, followed by the mentoring sessions.

There is a link to enter on [www.abergavennywritingfestival.com](http://www.abergavennywritingfestival.com) and please get in touch with any queries by emailing [entries@abergavennywritingfestival.com](mailto:entries@abergavennywritingfestival.com)

The Abergavenny Writing Festival is supported by Arts Council Wales, Abergavenny Town Council, Christie Residential, the Abergavenny Rotary Club and Ogi's Cefnogi Community Fund.

*Lucie Parkin*



Youth writing mentors, (left to right) Connor Allen, Jonathan Edwards and Rufus Mufasa

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# Weather Outlook: February

by Jonathan Powell



Following on from a January which saw some seasonally cold weather but will be remembered for flooding across the region, February is expected to be another wet month. Whereas there will be drier and brighter spells of weather with accompanying sunshine by day and frosty conditions by night, the likelihood of any snow causing a sustained period of disruption seems remote, with the balance firmly with the rain staying as rain. Granted, at higher levels, a sleet/snow mix will show its hand, but generally at lower levels, the spectre of flooding would seem to be as present as it was in the opening month of the year. A wetter than average February, with temperatures above the average for the month.

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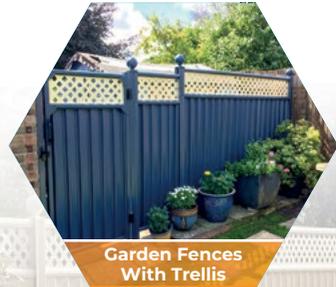
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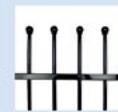
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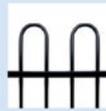
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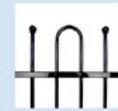
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*How well do you know the local businesses in our area? You'll be familiar with their names, and perhaps with their logo or their shop front (if they have one), but do you really know them?*

*We wanted to get to know the faces behind our local businesses and invited some of them to take part in our fun Q&A session to see what interesting things we could find out about them. Read on if you want to learn who has experienced spooky goings on in their line of work and who has been chased by an emu!*



# KATE TAYLOR

## TAYLOR & CO.

(ADVERT ON PAGE 2)

**Tell us something about your business that people might not already know about?**

The whole team enjoy raising funds for Ty Hafan, the childrens' hospice based in Wales and last year we donated £100 from each of our sales fees to them. So far we have raised just over £7,500 for this amazing charity.

**If you could have any superpower, what would it be and why?**

I'd want to fly so I could get around quicker

**What's your favourite thing about owning a local business?**

Working in the community in which I live and supporting them by employing local residents who I now regard as part of my family.

**If there was going to be a movie made about your life, who would play the lead role?**

Someone practical with an enormous sense of optimism, so let's say Dawn French

**Why should customers come to you?**

Taylor & Co have been chosen by the Guild of Property Professionals as their exclusive member agent for Abergavenny. The Guild only works with the best-in-class agents operating at the highest possible levels of professionalism and service and we are proud Guild members of their nationwide network of 800 independent agents, all committed to delivering exceptional client care and exceeding the individual desired outcomes of our seller clients and landlords.

**If you could go to dinner with anyone in the world, living or dead, who would it be and why?**

My family. We all live around the UK and abroad and I would enjoy nothing more than coming together and spending an evening with them.

**Tell us a funny or weird anecdote about your job**

People often say to me that they'd enjoy being an estate agent but it's not all about properties. We spend quite a bit of time outside and I seem to get myself in quite a few scrapes with the animal kingdom whilst conducting my appointments. I am clearly no Dr Doolittle and have, amongst other scrapes, been chased by emus and discovered that actually I can run quite fast when required; have had a pheasant riding on my rear window for quite some distance whilst I was trying to escape having been chased across a drive; vaulting a fence to avoid an oncoming herd of cows; and finally herding chickens out of a house.



# JANE TURNER

## STONE CARVER

(ADVERT ON PAGE 8)

**Tell us something about your business that people might not already know about?**

I have recently started offering courses in letter-cutting and relief carving at my workshop in Abergavenny. Everyone welcome, from beginner to more experienced carvers!

**If you could have any superpower, what would it be and why?**

The ability to fly, so I could soar over our lovely local mountains enjoying the views.

**What's your favourite thing about owning a local business?**

It's so good to work with local

people, whether it be through my commissioned work, or as a carving teacher. Also it's a very short commute to the end of my garden!

**If there was going to be a movie made about your life, who would play the lead role?**

I asked a friend this one and she said Sandra Bullock. She is now my best friend!!



**Why should customers come to you and not your competitors?**

I offer a very personal service. All of my commissions are unique, bespoke pieces, tailored to what the individual customer wants to achieve.

**If you could go to dinner with anyone in the world, living or dead, who would it be and why?**

Bruce Springsteen. If you need me to tell you why you just don't get it!

**Tell us a funny or weird anecdote about your job**

While working alone in a Medieval church, I saw a cowed figure move slowly across the nave in front of the altar. I read later that the church is said to be haunted by a monk from Medieval times. Spooky!

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# EMMA BEVAN- HENDERSON

## THE MAKERS

(ON COVER)



**Tell us something about your business that people might not already know about?**

Firstly, all our wrapping materials are recyclable! Secondly, the venue used to be the Latvian Consulate for Wales!

**If you could have any superpower, what would it be and why?**

I'd love the superpower of time travel, so that I could be at my workbench, my gallery and my sofa at the same time ;)

**What's your favourite thing about owning a local business?**

The sense of community, of being supported, and being able to support others. I love meeting new people, and am passionate about supporting local. I joined the Just A Card Campaign a few years ago, which aims to remind everyone about the importance of buying local, even if it is "just" a pen, a card, a bookmark, bunch of flowers, etc., and I love telling everyone about it, because their message is simple, makes sense, and helps everyone realise that it is absolutely beneficial to "only

buy a card" (or other small item!) when you visit local independent businesses, because all those little purchases really DO help us sustain the local high street and local businesses. We really are all in this together.

**If there was going to be a movie made about your life, who would play the lead role?**

I love Eve Myles, and she is also Welsh, like me, so I would love her to play that role! When I mentioned this to my husband, he muttered something about being appropriately feisty, though I have no idea if that's relevant?

**Why should customers come to you?**

We are ALL about the handmade! Our Gallery is inclusive, unique, and we pride ourselves on everything here being handmade by us. We are also very careful to ensure that we have items that suit all budgets, so you can pop in and spend pocket money, or treat yourself to a collectors piece, and always be able to find the perfect gift for all occasions. Our Gallery is run as a collective, with members stewarding the gallery on a rota basis, which gives everyone a sense of belonging and responsibility, and I believe you can sense that when you spend time at The Makers. We are a friendly bunch who always provide a warm welcome!

**If you could go to dinner with anyone in the world, living or dead, who would it be and why?**

I grew up listening to the stories of my maternal great-grandmother, Elizabeth Jones,

who worked closely with Aneurin Bevan to help establish the NHS. When her funeral was held in the Welsh valleys in Ebbw Vale, many politicians from across the parties attended it, as she was so well respected. I think it would be fascinating to sit and listen to her tell me all about her life.

**Tell us a funny or weird anecdote about your job**

In addition to the role of Gallery curator, I also run events and workshops. I think the weirdest request I received was from a person who wanted me to travel to her local village to run a needle felting workshop for around 12 people. They wanted to make hares, which can be a day long class depending on the size required. I sent my fees and materials costs, and was met with a very irate response! The person was furious that I was going to charge for my time and materials, when I should be "offering to run it for the cost of Hobbycraft kits which are £3 each"! I took a deep breath, explained how a tutor's time needs to be paid for, how my materials are sustainable and locally sourced, and that I hoped they enjoyed running their own session with their £3 kits...

[themakerscraftsgallery.com](http://themakerscraftsgallery.com)



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Both double bedrooms enjoying views to Llanwenarth Valley and Blorenge mountain.

Outside, a gated gravel driveway provides further parking and a pathway leads to the front entrance. Front and side gardens are lawned with a variety of shrubs and seating area with extensive uninterrupted views. Steps to the rear of the property with a courtyard area and lean-to store. Further grassed area and beyond a fenced landscaped paddock/orchard.

Llwyn Du is a small sought after hamlet on the lower slopes of the Sugar Loaf Mountain

To view or for more information call **01873 856388**



### What Jo says,

Cottage charm, close to town with amazing views of the Llanwenarth Valley

Jo Francis,  
Abergavenny  
Branch  
Manager



# RACHEL SEYMOUR

## SEYMOUR MORTGAGE SOLUTIONS LTD

(ADVERT ON PAGE 15)

**Tell us something about your business that people might not already know about?**

I have been an independent mortgage and protection adviser for 8 years now, following a life-long career in financial services. I give independent mortgage and protection advice to help my clients buy a property or remortgage their existing property. The whole mortgage process can be daunting and confusing, especially in the current economic climate, yet with the help of an independent mortgage adviser like me, you can take advantage of my expertise before making decisions. Not only will you save time and money, but you'll also have peace of mind knowing that you're in good hands.

**If you could have any superpower, what would it be and why?**

My ideal superpower would be the ability to accurately predict future interest rates changes for my clients. However whilst I lack a crystal ball, instead I do my superhuman best to

fully understand my client's needs and goals and I use my industry knowledge and vast experience to give sound advice and find the best solution for them.

**What's your favourite thing about owning a local business?**

It's a simple answer really...my business helps local people and that's my favourite thing about what I do. In Abergavenny and the surrounding towns and villages, we are very lucky to have a friendly and highly supportive local community and I am proud and lucky enough to be part of that fabulous community both with my business and in my personal life. I grew up here, moved away at age 18 and then moved back 11 years later and after 22 years of being back in Abergavenny, honestly, I wouldn't want to live or work anywhere else.

**Why should customers come to you?**

Who client's use to give them advice is always the client's choice. It's an important decision to find someone you can trust and work with, so here are some questions to ask which will help you when choosing a mortgage and protection adviser. Are you independent and whole-of-market? What is included in the service you offer - for example, will you handle all the admin and chase lenders? When will you be available - office hours only, or

during evenings and weekends? Do you also offer independent protection advice for life insurance, critical illness cover and income protection? My answer to all of those questions is yes.

**If you could go to dinner with anyone in the world, living or dead, who would it be and why?**

Nelson Mandela. Nelson Mandela faced extraordinary challenges and hardship in his life, yet he could always see the good and positive in everything, no matter what. He continued to fight for what he believed in, above all in freedom and education. "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." - Nelson Mandela

**Tell us a funny or weird anecdote about your job**

I do sometimes see some very funny personal references on bank statement transactions. A standard descriptive phrase like "Pizza Money" or "Birthday Money" to describe a bank transaction, won't cause any questions or embarrassment when your mortgage adviser and lender need to see your bank statements. Some personal references I see people use, whilst amusing to you or the recipient, can be embarrassing or awkward to explain when applying for a mortgage.

# HANNAH HILL

## FOCUS MAGAZINES



**Tell us something about your business that people might not already know about**

There's only two of us who run the magazine. People are always surprised by this fact. There's me as editor, copywriter, sales person and general dogsbody and Pete, who literally does everything else from sales, accounts and graphic design to stuffing envelopes, managing our distribution team and making the coffee. When you call us, it'll be either one of us who you chat to.

**If you could have a superpower, what would it be and why?**

Invisibility - because I am a mischief maker

**What's your favourite thing about owning a local business.**

Not being faceless. So often big businesses hide behind their brands - it's lovely to own and run a business where I can walk out of my front door and be part of the local community that we represent in the magazine. It's also quite fun being recognised by readers. It's always nice to stop and have a chat and it makes me feel like a bit of a celebrity, albeit a Z lister!

**If there was going to be a movie made about your life, who would play the lead role?**

Somebody gorgeous and dynamic like Nigella. I can dream can't I?

# REBECCA JENKINS

## REFLEX MASSAGE

(ADVERT ON PAGE 43)



*Tell us something about your business that people might not already know about?*  
I took the plunge, started the business in 2021 and haven't looked

back. I am passionate about posture and movement patterns. Where there is bad posture, pain and misery are sure to follow. I help both men and women from all walks of life with a range of conditions and goals.

*If you could have any superpower, what would it be and why?*

Immunity to all illness and disease. Our health is our most valuable possession.

*Why should customers come to you?*

Quite simply because we pride ourselves in doing the very best that we can for all our clients, whether they have a massive budget for advertising and marketing or something very modest. You can be a well established business or a brand new business working from your kitchen table – it doesn't matter at all. We really try to understand what an advertiser needs and wants to achieve and work with them to make that happen. When you're coming from a place of wanting to assist, rather than a place of just wanting to make

*What's your favourite thing about owning a local business?*

I moved to Abergavenny in 2013 and I absolutely love living here, I have met so many lovely people, clients and fellow therapists. Making a positive contribution to the community has been my favourite thing.

*Why should customers come to you?*

We are lucky, there are several wonderful therapists in the area and it's most important that people find a therapist that they feel comfortable with. I am a huge advocate for soft tissue/massage therapy and strongly believe everyone can benefit from it.

*If you could go to dinner with anyone in the world, living or dead, who would it be and why?*

I'm torn between two for this one:

1. John Gibbons, who has developed the 'BodyMaster Method' and written many fantastic books on manual therapy. He is considered to be a true 'guru' in the field. I would love to learn more from him in person.
2. Monty Roberts, 'The Man Who Listens to Horses'. Monty began studying Mustangs and how they

communicate in the wild from a very young age. He has since gone on to develop a hugely effective and internationally recognised, nonviolent training method for horses called 'Join Up'. He has received an MVO distinction from Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the MSPCA honoured him with the George T Angell Humanitarian Award.

*If you could go to dinner with anyone in the world, living or dead, who would it be and why?*

I'm having two - Grayson and Philippa Perry. Grayson because he doesn't take himself too seriously, is utterly fascinating and has such a deep, insightful understanding of the human condition. Philippa, because she can teach me how to be a better parent – something I am always striving for.

*Tell us a funny or weird anecdote about your job*

communicate in the wild from a very young age. He has since gone on to develop a hugely effective and internationally recognised, nonviolent training method for horses called 'Join Up'. He has received an MVO distinction from Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the MSPCA honoured him with the George T Angell Humanitarian Award. Horses are my other passion and Monty once said "My life's goal is to leave the world a better place than I found it, for horses and for people, too." I would be totally star-struck but it would be an honour to meet him and learn more about his work and plans for the future.



GET TO  
KNOW THE  
LOCALS

money for your bottom line, that's where the magic happens and why we build strong relationships with customers that often last decades.

Given that our magazines are community magazines, quite often we get rather random phonecalls about all manner of things that should probably be directed to the local council – questions about bins, or queries about 'joining your group', lost items or 'having a table' (I rarely know what this last one means). It sometimes takes a bit of detective work to find out who or what people are actually trying to get hold of. Rather than simply announcing 'you've got the wrong number' we try to help out where we can. It can be quite funny for both parties involved!



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Our assets play a key role in protecting the local community from flooding and we cannot simply remove CSOs as this would cause significant disruption. However, we understand that this is an important matter for local residents and we are committed to playing our part to reducing our impact on the river Usk.

To find out more about what we're doing to help improve river water quality, visit [dwrcymru.com/riverwaterquality](http://dwrcymru.com/riverwaterquality)



Fel cwmni, rydym yn cymryd ein cyfrifoldebau i ddiogelu'r amgylchedd o ddirfi. Dyna pam ein bod ni wedi bod yn datblygu cynlluniau i ddiogelu ansawdd y dŵr yn afon Wysg. Mae ein hymchwil gyda Chyfoeth Naturiol Cymru yn dangos taw ein hasedau (h.y. ein gweithfeydd trin a'n Gorlifoedd Storm Cyfun neu CSOs) sy'n gyfrifol am 21%-23% o'r ffosffodau yn afon Wysg, a'r Gorlifoedd Storm Cyfun sy'n gyfrifol am gwa't 1% ohonynt. Ffactorau eraill, fel defnydd tir gwledig ac ysgarthion anifeiliaid, draenio dŵr wyneb trefol, draeniau sydd wedi'u cam-gysylltu, yn ogystal â thanciau septig preifat, sydd i gyfrif am y gweddill.

Mae ein hasedau'n chwarae rhan allweddol wrth amddiffyn y gymuned leol rhag llifogydd ac ni allwn gael gwared ar y CSOs am y byddai hynny'n drafferthus dros ben i bawb. Fodd bynnag, rydym ni'n deall bod hwn yn fater pwysig i drigolion lleol, ac rydym ni wedi ymrwymo i chwarae ein rhan i leihau ein heffaith ar afon Wysg.

I ddarganfod mwy am yr hyn rydym yn ei wneud i helpu gwella ansawdd dŵr afonydd, ewch i [dwrcymru.com/riverwaterquality](http://dwrcymru.com/riverwaterquality)



# DONNA & DARREN

## D2 PROPERTY SERVICES

(ADVERT ON PAGE 56)

**Tell us something about your business that people might not already know about?**

Darren and his Dad, Dave, started D2 Property Services in 2012. Dave is now semi-retired and Darren's wife Donna joined the team in 2020.

**If you could have any superpower, what would it be and why?**

Darren would like to be able to control the weather. This way, he would be able to select the right kind of weather for the job we are working on! Apparently being able to control the weather is called Atmokinesis (or so google tells us anyway)

Donna would like the power to heal people by using her mind, because that's her kind of thing!

**What's your favourite thing about owning a local business?**

Getting to know the local community, and seeing the beautiful scenery from different perspectives around Abergavenny.

**If there was going to be a movie made about your life, who would play the lead role?**

Donna: Hmm, this is a tricky one, Claire Danes springs to mind for me. Darren: I've got the mumble of Clint Eastwood, but John Cusack might be a better fit.

**Why should customers come to you?**

Donna: Our customers often say we're a calming presence in the house, we're quiet and tidy up after ourselves, we've also got great attention to detail!  
Darren: Customers are surprised at the wide range of jobs that we can cater to, a lot of people ask us to

come back to do additional work in the house.

**If you could go to dinner with anyone in the world, living or dead, who would it be and why?**

Donna: Aww, only one?! Another difficult question, I think it'd have to be Stacey Solomon, she just seems so uncomplicated, straightforward, light-hearted, sweet and she makes me laugh.

Darren: Bill Bailey, the full entertainment package!

**Tell us a funny or weird anecdote about your job**

We'd love to be able to tell you a funny or weird anecdote about our job. But to be honest, we're both quite serious when it comes to work. Sorry. It's heads down and strictly business at work.

GET TO KNOW THE LOCALS



# LEE MORETON

## CLEAN OVEN CO.

(ADVERT ON PAGE 38)

**Tell us something about your business that people might not already know about?**

The business idea was borne out of necessity. Whilst completing a year out after graduating from Birmingham University my girlfriend became pregnant. We made the decision to return to the family in South Wales and instead of buying a house we put the money into starting a business. That was May 2006 and that child will be turning 18 this year!! How time flies.

**If you could have any superpower, what would it be and why?**

Probably the gift of hindsight. It would be great to see how the decisions we make day to day will actually play out. I know we all learn from mistakes but the ability

to have that knowledge from day one would be invaluable.

**What's your favourite thing about owning a local business?**

Definitely our customers. We are fortunate to have built a core of regular clients that come back to us time and time again and it is important that we never take them for granted. The smile on people's faces when we show them the nicely cleaned oven is still the best part of the job.

**Why should customers come to you?**

We believe that the oven clean should come as standard so we spend a lot of time and effort in getting the smaller details right. From the booking process through to job completion we focus on the customer and their property and not just the dirty oven.

**If you could go to dinner with anyone in the world, living or dead, who would it be and why?**

Billy Connolly. I think he would be

fantastic company and would have some great stories to tell alongside keeping me roaring with laughter.

**Tell us a funny or weird anecdote about your job**

One of our technicians was working in an empty rental property on a dark December evening when he heard the doorbell of the property ring. He answered the door to find nobody there but then he noticed that the property didn't even have a doorbell on the front door. He asked never to be sent there again and on recalling this story to a customer who is also an author, she adapted it and turned it into a short story for one of her publications.



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# Clever Sarah!

# NAOMI CARROLL

## INTERIORS BY NAOMI CARROL

(ADVERT ON PAGE 7)

**Tell us something about your business that people might not already know about?**

That my interior design services are not just for wealthy clients. People have pre-conceived ideas that interior design is a luxury for the rich; I hope to be able to break down that myth, I offer tailor made services that start from as little as £125.

**If you could have any superpower, what would it be and why?**

Not sure if this classifies as a superpower, but sometimes it feels like it should be – but to be able to make

decisions for my own projects at home as swiftly and confidently as I can for my clients!

**What's your favourite thing about owning a local business?**

It's great to be able to work in and around the local area, to be able to meet people and help them to create their home and sanctuary within our beautiful Welsh hills.

**If there was going to be a movie made about your life, who would play the lead role?**

Um, that's tricky! Daisy May Cooper, as I think she'd reflect that dry wit and dark irony that life is full of!

**Why should customers come to you?**

My services are designed so that whether you have a very small budget or very large budget there will be a package that reflects this. When you think about how much a tin of paint costs now, well even

a tester, and how many of them you might go through agonising over a decision, it's definitely worth considering my colour consultations that start from £125. These take away all that stress and wasted time and money and will help you decide on the right scheme and leave you with the confidence to proceed with your project.

**If you could go to dinner with anyone in the world, living or dead, who would it be and why?**

My family: the most important people to me in the world.

**Tell us a funny or weird anecdote about your job**

I try not to change up my own home's décor every time I find a new great supplier or product!



# JANE BRADBURY CRICKHOWELL ADVENTURE

**Tell us something about your business that people might not already know about?**

We started our business in the cellar of No 18 High Street, now Bookish, which used to be called The Cheese Press

**If you could have any superpower, what would it be and why?**

Invisibility! Just think what fun you could have with that, all sorts of mischief!!

**What's your favourite thing about owning a local business?**

Meeting new customers who become friends. It is lovely when people keep returning to tell of their adventures

**If there was going to be a movie made about your life, who would play the lead role?**

Charlotte Ritchie

**Why should customers come to you?**

Coming to us supports our local community, we employ local staff. We love to meet our customers and offer a good service and make shopping fun! We pride ourselves on selling only what the customer needs...sometimes only giving advice.

**If you could go to dinner with anyone in the world, living or dead, who would it be and why?**

British author, adventurer and marathon runner - Rosie Swale-Pope. I'm sure she would have fantastic stories to tell about her adventures. She is an inspirational woman who has achieved such a lot.

**Tell us a funny or weird anecdote about your job**

It was funny at the time! A few years ago, I was working with a colleague who, when looking out of the window suddenly gave a shout and exclaimed 'it's all ok, I

thought it was a squirrel walking past the shop!...I'll have a glass full of whatever she was on!!



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# BARBARA BROMHEAD-WRAGG

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(ADVERT ON PAGE 8)

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*If you could have any superpower, what would it be and why?*

It would be environment based. The power to restore wildlife numbers, especially insects, that are dropping at an alarming rate. Imagine if you could remove harmful chemicals from soils and waterways...?

*What's your favourite thing about owning a local business?*

For me the mix of wildlife and mountain landscape is heaven, I'm so lucky to have that on my doorstep. The people here really make it feel like home though, so friendly and supportive.

*Why should customers come to you and not your competitors?*

I offer a personal service. No templates to wrestle with. No software to download. Just email me the photo and I do the rest. I offer simple editing options, (cropping, colour tweaks etc.) for no extra cost. I work with you to create your special order. It's important to me that you are pleased with the result..

*Tell us a funny or weird anecdote about your job*

One May I ended up raising a three week old Jackdaw chick.

It fell 30ft down the chimney and into the cold wood-burner. It startled me when the wood-burner squawked at me!

The next few weeks meant staying close to home and feeding every half hour during daylight hours. For anyone in a similar situation, I received two great bits of advice. 1. They eat wet cat food – hold a chunk near and the beak automatically opens – no having to dig up the grass for worms! 2. Flight is instinct, so no need to stand flapping my arms, "You need to do this.."

I'd already decided that I wouldn't make a pet of our unexpected guest. Therefore, outside of feedings, Auri ('Orry') lived in a paper lined cardboard box in the spare bedroom – with toilet roll holder as a

makeshift perch.

During the daily mucking out of the box, Auri loved to perch on my shoulder for warmth but the best spot once all the feathers grew in was my head! As soon as Auri began to fly, we moved the box out to the garden shed.

Luckily by the time Auri was flying, the Jackdaw family moved from our chimney to a tall tree in the field next door. So Auri was feeding with us, (overnighting in the shed) and have flying lessons with mum, dad & two siblings.

As June went by, Auri's flying lessons got longer and longer. By July we were used to an empty shed overnight. Gradually the shouts for food stopped and Auri fully left the nest.

We moved the following year but for the rest of that summer, we called out Auri's name when Jackdaws flew overhead. It was a special joy to see one bird break from the group and fly a circuit of the garden, before joining the rest.



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- Improved peak air flow

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- More normal ranges of glucose levels

## Immune

- Research has shown massage to directly improve levels of lymphocytes (immune cells in patients with cancer, HIV and leukaemia( Lederman, 2005) \*

*\* Lederman E (2005), The Science and Practice of Manual Therapy, 2nd ed. London: Elsevier.*

## Gastrointestinal

- Relaxation of the peristaltic musculature (contracting and expanding digestive muscles)
- Improved digestive function

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# CRUG HYWEL

**W**e're all familiar with Table Mountain above Crickhowell, but how many of us have actually climbed up there? Its certainly worth the walk; the level top of Crug Hywel is quite unusual; you can see why it's called Table Mountain and also why your average Iron age chieftan might want to put a fort there.

The walk as described here is a little under 3.5 miles long. If there isn't space to park at point.1, please don't obstruct the road. If you park in Crickhowell car park, its a 5 mile total round trip. As always, wear suitable walking boots. Directions are overleaf.

*Pete Hill*

You can see the walk with more photos online here:  
[thefocus.wales/2015/03/crug-hywel-table-mountain/](http://thefocus.wales/2015/03/crug-hywel-table-mountain/)

*Map is for illustrative purposes only. For an accurate map refer to OS Map OL13. Instructions are intended as a guide only. Focus Magazines cannot not take responsibility for errors or omissions.*

Crug Hywel



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**1** The walk begins above Crickhowell on Llanbedr Road, opposite an electrical sub-station. Ignore the gated farm lane here, and take the tree lined bridleway to the left of it. Follow the path until you reach a right hand turning (about 500 yards). Take this turning and follow the path uphill.



**2** When you reach the second set of overhead cables, follow the path as it bears left. After a short distance, go through a metal gate.



**3** The path follows Cumbeth brook in a wooded gully. Turn right on to it, and follow the path uphill.



**4** After about half a mile, you will need to cross the brook to an open grassy area. Continue to follow the brook on the other side. At a stone wall, follow the stone path alongside the stream to a sheepfold, (a series of enclosures).



**5** Take the path out of the north side of the sheepfold, on to open access land, and follow the stone wall uphill. The path bears right, towards Table Mountain and mostly follows the stone wall. This is the steep bit!



**6** Climb the peak, and admire the view! The earthworks of the ancient hill fort are clearly visible. You'll see two cairns. Head for the second one, and leave the hillfort via a depression on its eastern flank. Follow the path downhill, and when it reaches the more defined path that goes round the hill, turn right.



**7** Follow the path back around the front of the hill, and down into the corner of the field.



**8** Go over the stile here, along a short track and over a second stile to the left. From here the path

follows the field boundary downhill through 3 fields, (through a gate, and over two stiles).



**9** At the third stile, the path enters a tree-lined passage. Follow this to the end and go over the stile.



**10** At this point it's tempting to follow the tracks down to the gate at the bottom of the field, but the landowners are keen that walkers turn left and keep to the field edge. Do this and make your way to the bottom.



**11** Pass the house (*Tyn y Wlad*) and go through the gate onto the road. Turn right and follow the road back to the start.



# The hidden gift



# of down time

**A**ll of us, from time to time, are affected by low moods, but when sadness, apathy and hopelessness become all-pervasive, we call this depression. If you've suffered or been given this diagnosis, then read on, as I want to explore with you the purpose behind it.

"Purpose?!" I hear you splutter, as well you may, if like me you were taught that it's an illness – an affliction we could do without.

But what if depression doesn't signify that there's anything wrong? What if it's evidence of the human operating system working exactly as it should? Let's slow down together and just imagine...

Imagine our experience of life boiled down to a series of moments, in each of which we are either at peace with life, or struggling with it; one, or the other.

When at peace, we are fully present; we have clarity of thought and everything flows nicely: challenges arise, but we deal with them with common sense; we feel love and connection with our fellow humans, forgiving them their faults, just as we forgive ourselves our own. We don't take things too seriously, or personally. In this state, you could imagine we're at one with life, resting naturally in our true nature.

When struggling, it's the

opposite: we're distracted by everything the mind says; caught up in judgemental thinking, about ourselves and others; we feel stuck and struggle with problems. It seems like there's a lot at stake all the time and we feel separate from life – like we somehow don't fit in.

Now imagine that the design of this system is so perfect, there's a failsafe mechanism built in that alerts us immediately we become distracted from the natural, peaceful state. "Ding!" it rings, rousing us from our rumination. We grin sheepishly, realise we're thinking ourselves away from our true nature and relax back into the here and now of life's flow, grateful that we noticed.

Occasionally, we fail to heed the alert and innocently go deeper into our thinking, but it's ok because the system's perfect and the alarm gets louder—"Ding! DING!"—and if we continue to ignore it, louder still: "DING-DING-DING!!!"

Imagine there's only ever this one thing going on—we're either at peace, or we're distracted from it—and the alert correspondingly has one job, that it does flawlessly: tells us how on- or off-track we are, so we can come back home. And for as long as we continue to look in the wrong place for our sense of peace, it will never stop, because it's there to protect us from harm.

Wouldn't that be amazing?

We all have such an alert, and it is our feelings. They are a failsafe mechanism built to protect us from the harm of our own thinking, and they too will get louder, the deeper we go. At their gentlest you'll maybe feel disquiet, but ignored they will escalate to sadness, depression, despair and yes, even to suicidal ideation; all examples of everything working exactly as it should.

When we see that the psychological system is always striving to rebalance itself, then depression starts to make sense as something pointing to a solution that is a lot closer than we think... one that is so simple, and so obvious, that we failed to notice it.

So if you're suffering, please take hope from these words. There's nothing wrong with you. It's just life's built-in alert system, calling you back to your true nature; to the only place you can experience the peace of mind you seek: Now.



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# Raspberry Viennese Cupcakes

*These delicious morsels of loveliness are a great favourite at any time of the day in my household. As I always have the ingredients to hand in my store cupboard and they only take minutes to make, they are a really great treat to cook up when you have unexpected guests. You can use any flavoured jam of your choice, or even a little fruit compote.*

## Ingredients:

- 225g butter (softened)
- 75g sifted icing sugar
- 200g self raising flour
- 50g cornflour
- 1-2 tsp milk
- Raspberry Jam

## Method

- 1** Preheat oven to 180C/160 Fan/gas 4.
- 2** Put cupcake cases into a 12 bun cake tin.
- 3** Place your very soft butter into a mixing bowl – the butter needs to be very soft as the mixture becomes very stiff when all the dry ingredients are added, which can make piping the mixture into the cupcake cases difficult.
- 4** Add the icing sugar and beat mixture until smooth.
- 5** Stir in the flour and cornflour, mixing until well combined. If you feel the mixture is too stiff to pipe, add 1-2 tsp of milk to slightly loosen it.
- 6** Spoon mixture into piping bag fitted with a star nozzle and, in a circular motion, pipe into the cupcake cases.
- 7** Bake for 15-20 minutes until slightly golden and set.
- 8** Cool on a wire rack. Then spoon a teaspoon of raspberry jam onto the centre of each case and dust lightly with icing sugar



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As well as increasing its staff, the clinic will be expanding their premises so that the clinic can provide more treatments rooms and a shoe shop. The expansion means that waiting times for patients will be reduced and local residents of Abergavenny do not have to travel far for footwear advice and fitting services.



More clinic space also means that HB Podiatry will be able to provide a larger range of footwear than their previous location. The clinic currently offers a range of instore footwear including Rieker, Cosy feet, Skechers, Fit flop, Hush Puppies, Crocs, Dr Martens, Fly London and their most popular double award-winning COMFORT/WELLNESS BRAND DB shoes for wider fitting feet. A highly qualified practitioner provides footwear advice and fitting to ensure clients have the best fit possible and optimum comfort.

**HB** Podiatry clinic now renamed as HB Footcare opened in September 2019 Abergavenny Market Street and has since been providing footcare services to the general public, care homes and individuals in their own homes. Now, 2023 sees them expanding their premises, location and services.

who have trained with London SAME Academy. The Only University Approved FHP Course in the UK to run a University Credit Rated Foot Health Course, which is Credit Rated by Queen Margaret University.

Both Camille and Jessica will be providing a large range of services such as diabetics & general nail care, corn and callus removal, Nail reduction, Verruca treatments, ingrown toe nail(s), and fungal nail and assessments using the latest Lanula laser from the USA. Clients may be familiar with the treatment as it has been featured on ITV's This Morning where it was praised for its outstanding results for the treatment of fungal nail infections. It is touchless, painless and involves no pain, no risk and eliminates any embarrassment over unsightly feet.

In January 2023, Director Podiatrist Holly Bowen (BsC Hons), Mentor-Podiatrist Susannah Beckett (BsC, Hons), and Nail Surgery and Biomechanical Foot Specialist Matthew Broderick (BsC Hons), will be expanding and welcoming Camille Watkins and Jessica Fox. Both Camille and Jessica are level 4 Foot Health Care Practitioners

HB Podiatry is proud to offer this expanded and extensive range of footcare services from basic nailcare to advanced treatments. If you have any concerns with your feet or you are simply looking for that extra treat for your feet, contact HB Podiatry and they will ensure your feet are in safe hands.

HB Foot Care Unit 5 Cibi Walk Abergavenny Email: [hbfootcare@outlook.com](mailto:hbfootcare@outlook.com) To book any services telephone 01873 268640

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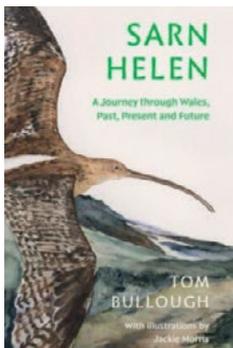
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# {BOOK•ISH}

BOOKS, CONVERSATION & MORE

Author  
Events  
February

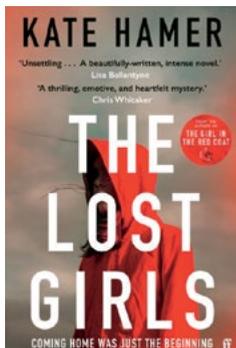


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# Books

*With Valentine's Day just around the corner, the Booksellers at Book-ish have put their heads together to come up with a list of book recommendations inspired by the theme of love in all its colourful, varying and sometimes unexpected forms.*

## Spring Rain

**Marc Hamer**

£16.99



As a young boy in a violent home, Marc found refuge in his small back garden. Here he kindled a lifelong love of nature and learning by observing the plants

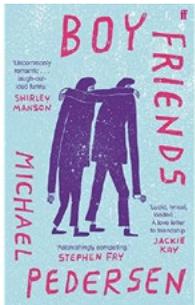
and insects in his private kingdom and reading the old encyclopedias he found in the shed.

Join us for an evening with Marc Hamer on Wednesday 22nd February at 7.30pm.

## Boy Friends

**Michael Pedersen**

£14.99



In 2018 poet and author Michael Pedersen lost a cherished friend, Scott Hutchison, soon after their collective voyage into the landscape of the Scottish Highlands.

Just weeks later, Michael began to write to him. As he confronts the bewildering process of grief, what starts as a love letter to one magical, coruscating human soon becomes a paean to all the gorgeous male friendships that have transformed his life.

## The Long Field

**Pamela Petro**

£20



The Long Field burrows deep into the Welsh countryside to tell how this small country became a big part of an American writer's life. Petro, author

of Travels in an Old Tongue, twines her story around that of Wales by viewing both through the lens of hiraeth, a quintessential Welsh word famously hard to translate. It literally means "long field," but is also more than the English approximation of "homesickness." It's a name for the bone-deep longing felt for someone or something--a home, culture, language, a younger self--that you've lost or left behind.

Join us for an evening with Pamela Petro on Tuesday 14th March at 7.30pm.

## The Things We Do To Our Friends

**Heather Darwent**

£14.99



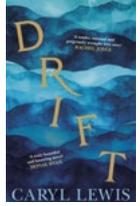
Clare arrives at the University of Edinburgh with a secret. This is her chance for a blank slate - to finally become who she was meant to be. And then she meets Tabitha.

With themes of love and dark revenge, an intoxicating feminist page-turner, this novel will take you on a journey from Edinburgh's dazzling spires to the dripping staircases and dark alleyways of its underbelly.

## Drift

**Caryl Lewis**

£14.99



A beautifully realised modern love story moving between the Welsh coast and Syria, Lewis' meditation on connection, identity and the power of the sea revolves around two lost souls trying to make sense of the world they find themselves in.

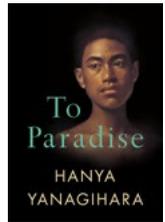
Join us for an evening with Caryl Lewis on Monday 27th March at 7.30pm.

## To Paradise

**Hanya Yanagihara**

**Yanagihara**

£9.99



Traversing three centuries and three alternative versions of the American experiment, the author of A Little Life returns with a spellbinding chronicle of love, the meaning of family and the excruciating cost of unattainable dreams. To Paradise is a fin de siecle novel of marvellous literary effect, but above all it is a work of emotional genius. The great power of this remarkable novel is driven by Yanagihara's understanding of the aching desire to protect those we love - partners, lovers, children, friends, family and even our fellow citizens - and the pain that ensues when we cannot.

For tickets to Book-ish events, visit [www.book-ish.co.uk](http://www.book-ish.co.uk)

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**Moment of Calm**

**Love**

Your task is not to seek for love,  
but merely to seek and find all the  
barriers within yourself that you  
have built against it. ~ *Rumi*

# How Blaenavon Changed the World

*Rich deposits of coal, iron and limestone under the Blorenge and nearby hills fuelled the burgeoning industrial revolution. Helen Morgan from Abergavenny Local History Society reports.*

**T**homas Hill, with his industrialist partners Thomas Hopkins and Benjamin Pratt, recognised Blaenavon's potential in 1782, and made the decision to open a coal mine and iron works in what was a rural hamlet. The Blaenavon Company was soon sending pig-iron and later wrought-iron for bridges, ships, railway lines, engines, tools and machines across the world. Chapels were built as the hamlet became a town.

In 1789 it was Blaenavon that harnessed the power of steam to blow air into its huge blast that furnaces. Almost a century later it was here that Sidney Gilchrist Thomas transformed the world's steel industry by inventing a method to solve the problem of removing phosphorus during the conversion of pig-iron into steel. Thomas's invention consisted of using dolomite or limestone linings for the Bessemer converter rather

than fireclay. With the addition of lime to form a basic slag, the phosphorus was converted to less harmful phosphates that would then separate from the metal into the slag. Another advantage was that the Bessemer process was now producing a more basic slag in the converter, and this could be recovered and used profitably as a phosphate fertiliser. The ruins of the furnaces are visible today alongside the remains of the foundry, cast house and water balance tower.

Ruthless industrialists ran Blaenavon. But it would have been nothing without its workers many of whom lived just yards away in Stack Square. Built between 1789 and 1792, these buildings housed key workers, the company store or truck-shop, the counting house and possibly the manager's house. Keeping the furnaces burning was like hard labour. Working 24 hours a day, in 12-hour shifts, seven days a week, the workforce including children was in constant danger from fire or molten metal,

poisonous fumes and heavy machinery. In 1842 Government inspectors discovered 185 children working at the ironworks and surrounding mines. But furnace manager William Lloyd was far from sympathetic. Recalling that he been sent aged eight to work in a Staffordshire ironworks, he said: "They work in some heat in the summer and sometimes get burned, but not very bad. I worked a good deal harder than the boys do here."

*Mike Woodward's talk in the Melville Theatre on February 22nd starts at 7.30pm. To reserve a seat email [alhs.talks@outlook.com](mailto:alhs.talks@outlook.com). It is also available to members via Zoom.*

[abergavennylocalhistorysociety.org.uk](http://abergavennylocalhistorysociety.org.uk)

*Helen Morgan*



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# MEET OUR PETS

We are a nation of dog lovers aren't we? Here at James Dean we are no different and the incredible countryside on our doorstep lends itself to long dog walks. We thought it would be fun for you to get to

know us through our dogs, so here they are - the James Dean Canine Crew!

We think you'll agree that they're all very cute, slightly mischievous and very friendly...a bit like us!

## BRECON'S PUP



### Ralph

(or Ralphie)

**BREED:** Caverpoo

**DOB:** 11.09.2016

**FAVOURITE TOY**  
Tennis ball

**FAVOURITE FOOD**  
Sunday roast

**PERSONALITY**  
Loveable rogue. Can be a tad needy at times. Always up to no good

**FAVOURITE PAST TIME**  
Chasing squirrels

## ABERGAVENNY'S HOUND



### Indiana

(Indie for short)

**BREED:** Cockerpoo

**DOB:** 12/10/2014

**FAVOURITE TOY**  
Fluffy rabbit - what's left of it.

**FAVOURITE FOOD**  
Sunday roast

**PERSONALITY**  
A real softy who loves attention, and a good cwtch

**FAVOURITE PAST TIME**  
Playing fetch with the tennis ball

## BUILT WELLS' POOCH



### Bouncer

**BREED:** Jackapoo

**DOB:** 11 years old

**FAVOURITE TOY**  
M&S teddy, almost as old as he is

**FAVOURITE FOOD**  
Fussy eater but loves a dental chew

**PERSONALITY**  
Bouncer by name, bouncer by nature

**FAVOURITE PAST TIME**  
Playing with his girlfriend, Sooty



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