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Dear Readers,



I can't tell you how happy I am that March is upon us. For one thing my birthday falls in March. It happens to fall on the 15th which is also known as the Ides of March – the date on which Julius Caesar was assassinated in 44BC. Shakespeare used the phrase 'Beware the Ides of March' as a foreshadowing of ill fortune for Caesar and is a phrase my father keenly adopted in reference to anything happening on 15th as being pretty bad luck! He says it with irony of course (or at least I hope!)

I also like March because of Mother's Day (double present action!) and it's a chance for us to celebrate the important mother figures in our lives, whether they are still with us or not. It can be a tricky time for many – I hope it will be OK for you. We have a special Mother's Day gift edit on pages 20 - 21 to inspire you if you are gift seeking. There are some really cool suggestions!

March also means spring and the promise of lighter, warmer days just around the corner. This always feels to me like something to celebrate. Some of us turn towards the idea of a good, deep spring clean and getting our homes in ship shape condition after a long winter. We've harnessed the idea of 'home' this month with small feature and articles about it as well as book suggestions on the theme.

I really hope you enjoy this month's read!

Hannah

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Contents

Editorial & Contents	5
Weather: March's Outlook	43
Puzzles	45
COMMUNITY & EVENTS	
Tudor Street Building Under Threat	7
Abergavenny Social Meetup Group	8
35 Mile Walk for 85 Year Old Ian Waddell	9
Your friendly, neighbourhood Mountain Rescue	13
Govilon WI	27
Bon Giovo	14
Events Calendar	15
Castell Roc 2023	16
MOTHERS DAY	
That Special Feeling - Dream Doors	19
Mum & Me Gifting Guide	20
HOMES	
Move or Improve? Naomi Carroll	29
Your Property Journey with Taylor & Co	30
We'll Help You Get it Right - James Dean	47
LIFESTYLE & CULTURE	
Wellbeing : <i>Creative Listening</i>	37
Melville Centre for the Arts	38
Book Recommendations	39
History: <i>Hard Times</i>	41





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Tudor Street Building Under Threat

Owen Lewis has been campaigning to save the day centre based in Tudor Street in Abergavenny since the end of 2022. The building closed at the beginning of the pandemic and has remained closed ever since. Here he explains to us about his campaign to keep it open and functioning as a space for vulnerable members of the community.

"I worked at the centre throughout the 2010s, for a scheme called My Day My Life. We supported adults with learning difficulties and mental health issues in individual and group activities. One of the most important aspects of this was the person-centred approach – it was all self-chosen by the service-users themselves. Some of the activities were based within the building, others out in the community, but Tudor Street was the base from where we could develop and

organise the activities and events for the vulnerable adults that we supported. We also assisted them to get jobs, both paid and voluntary.

In November, I was informed that Monmouthshire County Council was to sell the building. I immediately contacted everyone I could think of to voice my concerns. I set up an online petition (which at the time of writing has almost 1,000 signatures) and organised a protest outside the building to help give the vulnerable adults a chance to raise their voices and have them heard. Through talking to them, I found out that too many of them had not been sufficiently supported through the pandemic or when coming out of it.

Our protest managed to make the council call in their initial decision. I have since been attending scrutiny meetings, where I have learned that the decision to close Tudor Street day centre ought to have been a full

cabinet decision. This was not the way the decision had been reached, in spite of overwhelmingly strong opinions in favour of not selling it. There is an ongoing review into the My Day My Life Scheme, however, anecdotally I am told by many service-users that they have not been party to a review, and those that have find it lacking in scope and ability to identify the type of service that is needed.

I have pitched to the council a new scheme for the Tudor Street building, entitled The Gathering – a place that could provide activities, education, safety and wellbeing for everyone in the community, maintaining a focus on the most vulnerable adults. This idea has so far proven very popular and we await the outcome of the review in order to be able to discuss it more thoroughly as a proposal.

Whatever the outcome is, I feel strongly that the building needs to remain dedicated to helping the most vulnerable people of our community. There are no other places in Abergavenny that could provide such a good selection of opportunities, with appropriate disability access and facilities."

If you would like to sign the petition please go to <https://www.change.org/p/save-the-hub-at-tudor-street-abergavenny>

Owen Lewis has recently completed a novel based on his experiences working in care. Vulnerable Voices, by Owen B Lewis available from Amazon and all good book retailers

Owen Lewis

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Abergavenny Social Meetup Group



“You can’t stay in your corner of the Forest waiting for others to come to you. You have to go to them sometimes.” (A.A.Milne)

If you want to get out more, make some friends and have something to do in the evenings, why not join Abergavenny Social Meetup Group?

The Meetup platform is a great way to get people together

to form new friendships, pursue hobbies and network with others. You can join meetups in Wales that focus on activities as varied as kayaking, knitting, learning French and computer coding, but Abergavenny Social Meetup is all about just socialising. Jo Webb started it when she first moved here in 2016, and it’s still going strong, with a current membership of around 300. There are at least two meetups every month, usually a curry night and a local walk.

The group is diverse (ages range from 18 to 87) and we welcome all kinds of people from this lovely town and surrounding areas. Jo is now helped out by several other brilliant co-organisers, who plan meetups that cater to a wide range of interests. It’s only a fiver a year, and there’s no pressure to attend a certain number of meetups. It’s not a dating or a singles club - just an opportunity to socialise in a relaxed environment.

This month alone, we have been to a stand-up comedy night, supported live music at a hillbilly blues gig, danced the night away at Abba at the Borough Theatre, been for a meal at Amos, seen a film at the local cinema and done a walk atop the Blorenge. And we have lots of exciting things planned for next month, including a Town Quiz/Scavenger Hunt around town, a classical Tea Concert and a Sushi night.

So, if you sometimes find yourself at a loose end, we might be the ideal group for you. If local events often appeal but you’ve no-one to go with, there’ll be ready-made company for you in Abergavenny Social Group. All are very welcome.

Sign up via the Meetup platform here: <https://www.meetup.com/abergavenny-social-meetup/>

Jo Webb

35 Mile Walk for 85 Year Old Ian Waddell



On 6th March, 85 year old Ian Waddell from Abergavenny will walk the towpath along the Monmouthshire & Brecon canal from Brecon to Pontypool – a distance of 35 miles – in order to raise funds for Ty Hyfan.

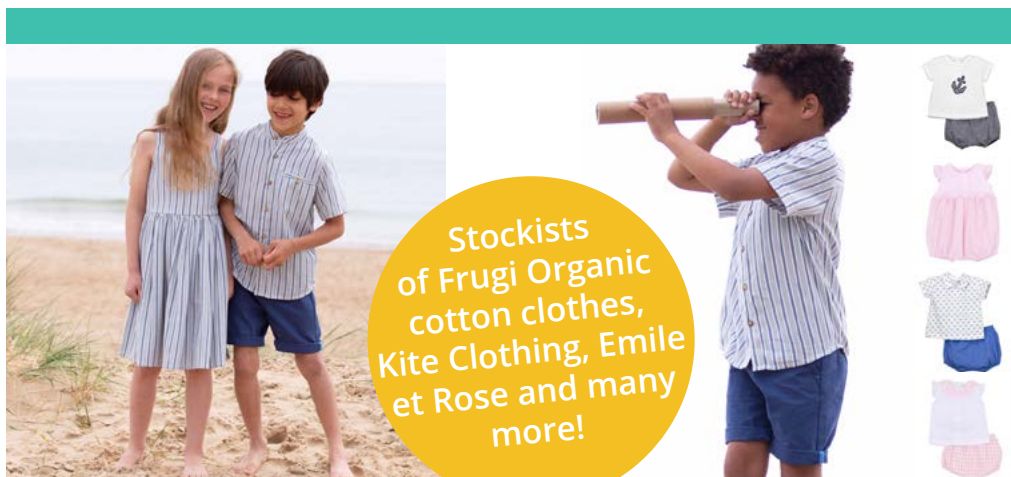
In the past twenty years, Ian has completed numerous charitable walks in support of charity, but feels this will be his swan song due to his advancing years and his severe osteoarthritis, which causes him significant pain. Ian expects this walk to take around 15 hours to complete. He’ll begin in the early hours of the morning and hopes to finish before nightfall.

If you would like to support him on his journey, please visit his www.justgiving.com and search for Ian Waddell. His fundraiser is listed as Ian’s Fundraiser for Ty Hafan.

Best of luck Ian! We know you can do it

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The Abergavenny Community Centre says



to its Supporters for your monthly donations and generous one-off contributions last year. Together you raised in excess of £20k.

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Your friendly, neighbourhood Mountain Rescue



Since our last article, the team has had three callouts all over our patch. Starting in early February we had two back-to-back callouts over a weekend. Both were very similar as they were concerning walkers who had gotten lost and needed our assistance to get off the mountains. The first was near the Grwyne Fawr Reservoir and the second was near the summit of Y Glas in the Northern Black Mountains. In both situations, the individuals were found quickly by team members, were able to be walked off, and then returned to their cars.

In mid-February the team was contacted by Gwent police due to reports that someone was injured in the front face of the Blorenge, the team was deployed and came across a group of three young men, one of which had a severe lower leg injury after taking a tumble. All

three of the lads were warmed up, and medical aid was given to the young man who was hurt. He was helped onto a stretcher and then carried around the hill to waiting paramedics and ambulance for onward transport to the hospital. We wish him a full recovery.

The team has also been out and about training this month. We have been doing medical training, to make sure our skills are up to scratch and we are prepared for anything we could come across on a callout. We have also been up on the Llangattock Crags practicing search techniques and rope rescue skills.

Hopefully, we will see you at the end of March on the 3 peaks walk around Abergavenny. If you are on the walk then do come and say hi to the team who will be at all the checkpoints.



Dan Mazhindu

BON GIOVI

Formed in December 1998, **BON GIOVI** is without compromise, one of the best tribute acts on the circuit today!

The Drill Hall is a very unique and intimate venue with a capacity of just 200, tickets won't be around long for this amazing one-off show, so grab your tickets while you can!

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EVENTS CALENDAR MARCH 2023

4TH-12TH MARCH CRICKHOWELL WALKING FESTIVAL



Time to shrug off those winter blues and get back out into our beautiful mountains and valleys! Nine 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

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 Fortune*. Tickets cost £7 for entry only or £15 with a book. 7pm, Book-ish, 18 High St, Crickhowell www.book-ish.co.uk

8TH MARCH GOVILON WI

'Move it or Lose it' – Fun, adaptable, exercises for older people. 7.30-9.30pm, Salisbury Community Hall, Merthyr Rd, Govilon. Visitors £2 including refreshments

9TH MARCH ABERGAVENNY PROMOBILITY MEETING

Abergavenny Promobility is a group for people who use aids (wheelchairs, mobility scooters, rollators guide dogs) to get around whilst still maintaining their independence. Please join us to discuss your views about accessibility and have your voice heard by those who can act upon our recommendations. 2:30pm Trinity church hall, Baker St, Abergavenny

10TH MARCH Llanfoist Village Hall Film Night: WHERE THE CRAWDADS SING

A woman who raised herself in the marshes of the Deep South becomes a suspect in the murder of a man with whom she was once involved. Doors 7pm, Film begins 7.30pm, Bar available. Tickets £5 on the door. Cash only

11TH MARCH Fairtrade Fortnight Event: COFFEE MORNING

10.30am-12pm Abergavenny Library, Town Hall, Cross St, Abergavenny

12TH MARCH TEA CONCERT

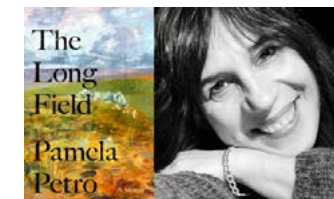
Light classics for flute & harp with local flautist Catherine Handley and harpist Eleri Darkins. Join Eleri and Catherine from 3pm for a cup of tea and relaxing music from 3:15pm. 3pm, Abergavenny Community Centre. Please use car park on Merthyr Road. For more info please call Catherine 07711280329

14TH MARCH POETRY UPSTAIRS AT THE MELVILLE CENTRE

A local institution, Poetry Upstairs has been a staple of the Abergavenny Poetry Scene since 1992. Thirty years on and the readings continue, open to all who wish to pass through or remain with one of the longest regularly running

poetry reading series in Wales. If you've never been... do come along and be part of The Abergavenny Poetry Scene. This month's guest poets are Lily Redwood, Clare E. Potter & Dr. Rhiannon Hooson. £5 – email melvilleccamanager@gmail.com to book.

14TH MARCH



**Book-ish Author Event:
PAMELA PETRO – THE LONG FIELD**
Ticket & Book £15, Ticket only £7, 7:30pm, 18 High St, Crickhowell www.book-ish.co.uk/events or 01873 811256

15TH MARCH Abergavenny Film Society Screening: EVERYTHING WENT FINE (15)

Euthanasia and assisted dying are difficult subjects to address. This film follows an elderly man who has a stroke and is forced to ask his daughter to help end his life. It explores the consequent (and past) family upheavals with a remarkable yet practical lack of sentimentality, focussing brilliantly on family relationships rather than the death itself. 4.30pm & 7.30pm showings. Melville Centre, Penypound

16TH MARCH WANT TO PRACTICE SPEAKING WELSH?

A great chance to come together in an informal setting and practice your Welsh. Whether you are just starting or at a more advanced level, this is a space where you can get some pointers from facilitator, Joshua (Learn Welsh Gwent) and meet other speakers. Sessions are free with a suggested donation of £1. Email melvilleccamanager@gmail.com for more info. 2pm-3pm, Melville Centre, Penypound

Castell Roc 2023

What's the perfect recipe for the perfect evening out? First, take one absolutely gorgeous Welsh castle, add a big stage, a great sound system and quality theatre lighting, squeeze in a superb bar selling local ales, ciders, quality wines and spirits. Mix in locally sourced food outlets, finally sprinkle with an array of amazing stars of the stage and voilà - you have a taste of Castell Roc Festival.

Held over the last 3 weekends of August each year inside the glorious grounds of Chepstow Castle, Castell Roc really does get bigger every year. And once again what a line this year's event up shaping up to be!

Just when you start to think "This line up is amazing", organizers announce the legendary Midge Ure for Friday 18th!

This is how the line-up looks so far:



Friday Aug 11th WELSH LEGENDS

The best tributes Stereophonics, Tom Jones plus more.

Saturday Aug 12th

MASSIVE WAGONS

Welsh rockers with support from GUN, Scarlet Rebels + Attack.



Sunday Aug 13th

ABSOLUTE BOWIE & BOOTLEG BLONDIE

Two fab shows for the price of one.

Thursday Aug 17th

BACK INTO HELL

A classic tribute to the world of Meatloaf & Jim Steinman.

Friday Aug 18th

MIDGE URE

Performing a very special "under the stars" concert.

Saturday Aug 19th

JASON DONOVAN

TV, pop, music & theatre legend performing his hits live.

Sunday Aug 20th

THE BARRICADE BOYS

The supergroup direct from London's West End & Broadway.

Thursday Aug 24th

CARDINAL BLACK

The highly acclaimed, awesome stars of rock/blues/soul.

Friday Aug 25th

MONSTERS OF ROCK

Back by popular demand, 'Hells Bells', 'Dizzy Lizzie' & 'Kiss'.

Saturday Aug 26th

EMILIO SANTORO

Reigning World Champion 'Elvis', plus the 'Graceland Band'.



Sunday Aug 27th

BRONWEN LEWIS

Incredible Welsh TikTok sensation, plus 'The Valley Rock Voices'.

Monday Aug 28th

HAWKWIND

A stellar show is on the cards from these absolute rock legends since 1969.

And with one more show to announce on Thursday August 10th - all are wondering who the organizers are going to pull out of the bag to complete the line-up?

Keep your eyes closely on the website to find out: www.castellroc.co.uk

18TH MARCH

ELVIS THE SONGBOOK

Ward winnine tribute artist, Richard Griffin, honours the songbook and explores the classic hits.

Tickets: £9.90 and available on Ents24. 7pm, Melville Centre, Penypound

20TH MARCH

Book-ish Author Event: CHRIS LLOYD – PARIS REQUIEM

Ticket & Book £20, Ticket only £7, 7:30pm, 18 High St, Crickhowell www.book-ish.co.uk/events or 01873 811256

22ND MARCH

UPSTAIRS AT THE CHAPEL

Film Producer Jeremy Thomas in conversation with Alastair Laurence. Jeremy Thomas began his film career working in the cutting rooms and soon became an editor. In 1974, Thomas produced his first film, Philippe Mora's Mad Dog Morgan starring Dennis Hopper, and then founded Recorded Picture Company.

7.30pm, The Art Shop & Chapel, Market St, Abergavenny. Tickets www.artshopandgallery.co.uk

23RD MARCH

Folk Night at the Melville Centre: PISKEY LED & BRYONY SIER

Cardiff-based folk band Piskey Led play music that conjures a kaleidoscopic mix of traditions and styles, drawn from Ireland, Cornwall, and England. Support comes from Merthyr based acclaimed folk-pop artist, Bryony Sier.

7pm. Melville Centre, Penypound. Tickets £8 from www.melvillecentre.org.uk

26TH MARCH

ABERGAVENNY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA CONCERT

Beethoven – Egmont Overture, Elgar – Cello Concerto, Dvořák – Symphony No 6 in D
2.30pm, Our Lady & St Michaels Church, Abergavenny
Tickets: abergavennysymph.org.uk

26TH MARCH

BLACK MOUNTAIN JAZZ SESSION

Claire Roberts, Carmen McCrae Remembered
7pm, Melville Centre, Penypound www.melvillecentre.org.uk

27TH MARCH

Book-ish Author Event: CARYL LEWIS – DRIFT

Ticket & Book £15, Ticket only £7, 7.30pm, 18 High St, Crickhowell www.book-ish.co.uk/events or 01873 811256

29TH MARCH

Abergavenny Film Society Screening: BANGLA SURF GIRLS



This documentary celebrates the lives of a group of teenage girls growing up in Cox's Bazaar, Bangladesh. They seek freedom from the poverty, oppression and community judgement dominating

their lives. With the help of a dedicated coach, they become their country's first female surfing team to compete internationally. The girls' determination, humour and vivacity shine through and make this film a delight.

Showings at 4.30pm and 7.30pm Melville Centre, Penypound

1ST APRIL

J S BACH: ST. MATTHEW PASSION

This great oratorio is a powerful setting of the story of Christ's arrest, trial, suffering and crucifixion as depicted in the Gospel of St. Matthew.

The choir will be joined by four soloists and "Musical and Amicable Society"

6.30pm, St. Mary's Priory Church, Abergavenny

Tickets: £15 at door, from choir members or gwenbachchoir@gmail.com

SEND IN YOUR EVENTS

Go to 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

ABERGAVENNY FILM SOCIETY
THE LONGEST RUNNING FILM SOCIETY IN WALES

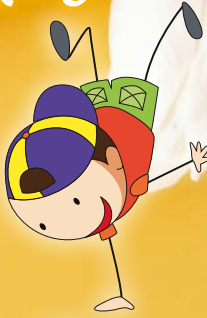
<p>EVERYTHING WENT FINE 15th March Everything went Fine (15) 2021, 113 mins</p>	<p>BANGLA SURF GIRLS 29th March Bangla Surf Girls 2021, 86 mins</p>
--	--

Doors 4pm for 4:30pm screening and 7pm for 7:30pm screening.
Melville Centre, Pen-y-Pound, Abergavenny NP7 5UD
Limited number of seats for non-members aged 18+
@£5 per person (Cash only)
www.abergavennyfilmsociety.com

Mothering Sunday



*"I love you Mother" said little John.
As he said those words, his cap went on
And off he went to play.*



*"I love you Mother" said little Nell,
Then off she ran to play as well.*

*"I love you Mother" said little Nan
Today I will help you all I can.
Then stepping softly, she took the broom
And swept the floor, and dusted the room.
Busy and happy all day was she;
Helpful and happy as a child could be.*



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From All at Dream Doors Newport.

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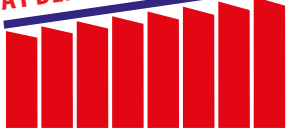
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GovilonWI



On the 8th March, our speaker will be one of our members, Marian Macdonald. Marian is a qualified 'Move it or Lose It' instructor. This is a fitness programme dedicated to improving the mobility, fitness and balance of older people.

Marian qualified as an instructor last year when she appreciated, while caring for elderly members of her own family, the

importance of physical activity as we get older. The programme has a range of exercises which can be done sitting or standing and some of our WI's members already attend Marian's class on a Monday morning at the Salisbury Hall. No doubt her presentation this month will encourage more of us to join in to move it and not lose it.

We will also have our usual monthly competition, which this month is asking members to bring along the music they find most motivational to play while exercising. In addition we have been set an extra competition described as a 'Long Winter Evening Project'. Members have been free to choose and submit a piece of work which can be craft based or literary. This is the first time we have been set such a task so

it will be interesting to see what we as members submit having had 4 months to prepare our entries. On the night members' work will be displayed anonymously and placed in rank order by those at the meeting. Should be interesting!

Our meeting starts at 7.30pm in the Salisbury Hall, Govilon. Visitors and new members will be warmly welcomed.

Jill Nicholson



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MOVE or IMPROVE?

A question that has been playing on my mind recently too! A question that can leave us feeling stumped and unsettled.

What with the steep costs of moving and the cost of living currently, it can sometimes pay just to make the most of what you already have.

We are creatures of habit and can become blinkered in our own homes, it is difficult to stand back and re evaluate our spaces.

A fresh coat of paint, a reshuffle of your current furniture, adding in a new piece, can all make a world of difference. That may be all that is needed to shift your outlook, but sometimes new spaces need to be carved out, say for a home office, an extra bedroom or playroom.



Extensions aren't always required; redesigning your current layout could also be an option.

Making space for home working is in big demand at the moment, even if it's just adding a desk for a teenager to study, but this doesn't have to be segregated to it's own room, nor is this option always even a possibility. Zoning areas, dividing rooms with partitions, screens or furniture is a great way of separating off that desk clutter. Landings are an often forgotten space too. The key is to think outside of the box!

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Founded and managed by Kate Taylor, Kate's long agency career has been geographically diverse, spanning the South East and

South West of England as well as South Wales. Kate's aspiration is to create a leading centre of sales and lettings expertise,

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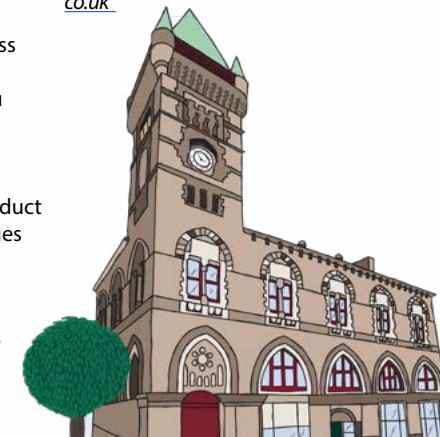
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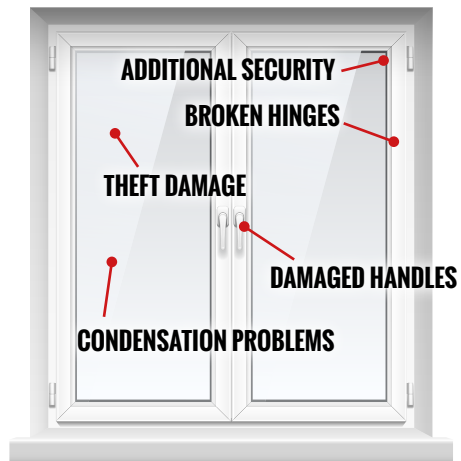
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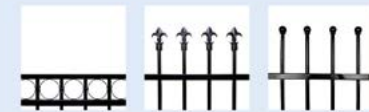
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Rowan from King Henry VIII School has secured a place at Oxford University

Hereford Sixth Form College is one of the most successful sixth forms in the country and has been graded Outstanding in all aspects of its work by Ofsted. With an extensive range of academic and vocational courses on offer, the college has something to suit most students. In 2022, the college was awarded "School of the year" at the Student Social Mobility Awards, recognising a school or college that has made outstanding efforts to boost the career aspirations of students.

The number of students gaining A*, A or B grades is above the national average and the proportion of successful applications to Oxford or

Cambridge is twice that of schools and colleges nationally. This year 23 students have obtained offers for Oxbridge places, including students from Crickhowell High School and King Henry VIII School in Abergavenny.

The College regularly gains one of the highest point scores per A level entry of nearly 100 sixth form colleges nationally and has been identified as one of the best institutions in the country for value-added exam results in government tables; These consider students' performance in the light of their previous GCSE results and measure progress made.

With excellent transport links and subsidised travel for all students, the College welcomes learners to its central Hereford city location from surrounding counties, including Mid and South Wales, Shropshire, Gloucestershire, and Worcestershire.



John, Amy and Alice from Crickhowell High School have also achieved Oxbridge places



The college offers excellent support and guidance, with focus on both personal and academic development. Students also benefit from extensive enrichment activities, such as Theatrical Arts, Sports, Student-led Societies, Debating, Guest Speakers plus much more. A thriving student led Council is elected each year, working to convey the student voice, and raising funds for charities.

Hereford Sixth Form College is renowned for excellent sporting capabilities, with sports academies in Rugby, Netball, Hockey, Football and Basketball competing on the regional, national, and international stages. An Elite Athlete support programme is also in place to support gifted athletes to obtain academic qualifications alongside training and development in their field of sport.

Several open events are held each year for students and families to explore the campus, discover new subjects and talk to current students. More information, including dates of upcoming open events can be found at: www.hereford.ac.uk and on social media @herefordsfsc



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Creative Listening

"O listen! Listen more carefully to what is inside of you right now."

~ Hafiz, 14th Century poem

Let's commit to being better listeners. Imagine you're having a conversation with someone. Here's a simple question: what is it you're listening to?

It's their voice, right? That's how communication works: essentially one person makes noises that are understood by the other, so that's what we're listening to.

Is it, though? What about our own thoughts? How much are we listening to *those*, instead? For example, weighing up what they're saying against what we know, listening in order to agree or disagree; being reminded of a similar thing that happened to us, that's too good not to share; holding on to a good idea we have, about how to respond; making judgements about how they are, or how we are, while they're talking; guessing what they're going to say next and skipping to the end to save time; or just blatantly being lost in thought and not listening at all... There are so many ways for our attention to get sidelined by our own minds, it's amazing we hear anything at all!

So what's the answer? Try really hard to pay attention? Parse their language for expressions of logic, or emotion, matching our responses accordingly, with reflection, empathy or counsel?

You can certainly try, and it may make you a better listener in the short term, but boy is it a lot of hard work and here's the kicker – all of that is giving you *more* to think about, generating more content in your mind, when we've established, you're supposed to be listening to them!

So here's an idea. How about doing nothing? Why not listen to them as you might listen to a piece of music? Just let their words wash over you and experience them without agenda, analysis or judgement. Give another the gift of being fully present with them in this way and you'll both reap the rewards: they will feel they have the space to speak openly and you'll get to really hear what they're saying, *beyond* the words.

Now, we've been taught that listening should be hard work, so it's inevitable that your mind will have a lot to say about this and continue with its incessant voice-over at first... but the more you observe what it's up to and gently dismiss its unhelpful commentary as getting in the way of listening, you'll see a change. It's like listening with your heart, instead of your head.

I'll concede I was nervous when I first tried this myself, for it seems alien, potentially even rude, but the very first time I did—at a conference, advising someone

about career change—I was *completely* blown away by what came to mind to share with them, when the time arrived... as were they!

Because when we really *listen*, having taken our own conditioned thinking out of the equation, we instantly experience a connection to something much bigger; something that incorporates the person we're talking to *and* everything they're saying. Call it wisdom, or intuition, God, life energy, presence, the Now—really, call it whatever you like—but it's an endlessly creative source, it's beautifully contextual to every situation we encounter and it feels really good whenever we relax into it.

So why not give 'creative listening' a go and see what happens? It requires literally *no* effort on your part, and you'll be amazed by the results. What have you got to lose?



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Melville Centre for the Arts



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If you in turn, would like to join the Melville team and strengthen our capacity to manage the Centre's growing programme of events and activities, do contact Katherine, our Centre Manager on melvillecamanager@gmail.com

Meanwhile, don't miss the return of Poetry Upstairs to the Café Bar from 7.00pm on Tuesday March 14th (£5 on the door) or the second session in our Folk Tales series. It's with Piskey Led on Thursday 23rd March from 7:30pm - with support from Merthyr songstress, Bryony Sier. Tickets are now available via the website: melvillecentre.org.uk

Poetry Upstairs
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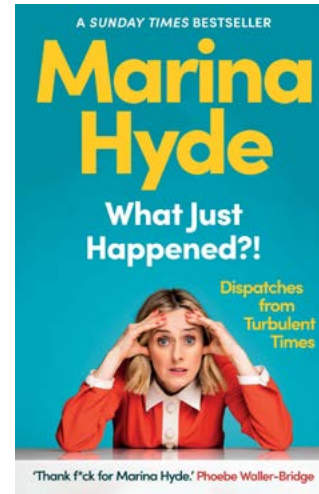
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Books

This month the Book-ish booksellers are really spoiling us! Here are their suggestions for perfect books to gift for Mother's Day and books for the Home. Don't get confused and accidentally buy Marie Kondo for Mum – she might not be impressed!



What Just Happened?
Marina Hyde
£20

One of the wittiest, most lacerating columnists of our times, Marina Hyde collates a carnival of chaos in this splenetic account of post-referendum Britain, wrapping genuine anger and indignation in the sharpest of one-liners.



Start Painting Now: Discover your artistic potential
Emily Powell and Sarah Moore
£20

A practical, accessible guide to discovering your creative spirit, giving you brilliant new tools for relaxation and self-care. Instagram's favourite artist Emily Powell and her sister, doctor Sarah Moore, will guide you through the process of learning to ignore your inner critic and unwind from the stresses of daily life through painting.



Wahala
Nikki May
£8.99

Three mixed-race friends navigate frustrated hopes and thwarted love in modern London, as a single terrible act threatens to spin their lives out of control in this darkly funny and scalpel sharp debut.



MAAME
Jessica George
£14.99

Maddie knows what kind of woman she wants to be. One who wears a bright yellow suit, dates men who definitely aren't on her mum's list of prospective husbands, and stands up to her boss's microaggressions. Someone who doesn't have to google all her life choices. Who demands a seat at the table. But will it take losing everything to find her voice? Unique, unfiltered and unforgettable, Maame is a deeply moving, achingly funny debut about finally finding where you belong.



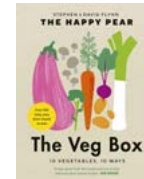
Welsh Quilts
Jen Jones
£12.99

This new, expanded edition of Welsh Quilts is an authoritative guide to the history and art of the quilt in Wales. Expert author Jen Jones has added many new, high quality colour images - some never seen before. Textile legend Kaffe Fassett has written a Foreword to the book.



Plant
Gynelle Leon
£15

Plant is a stylish, practical, modern guide to the world of house plants by the Guardian houseplant columnist, Gynelle Leon, giving you all the knowledge you need to help your plants thrive.



The Veg Box
Stephen and David Flynn
£20

An inspiring guide to making the most of your veg box, this cheery volume from the brothers behind the online sensation The Happy Pear takes ten popular vegetables and shows ten inventive ways of enjoying them.



The Life Changing Magic of Tidying
Marie Kondo
£12.99

Japan's expert declutterer and professional cleaner Marie Kondo will help you tidy your rooms once and for all with her inspirational step-by-step method.

Happy Reading!

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As a company, we take our responsibilities to protect the environment seriously. This is why we have been developing plans to protect the quality of the water in the river Usk. Our research, with Natural Resources Wales, shows that our assets (i.e. our treatment works, Combined Storm Overflows or CSOs) are responsible for 21%-23% of the phosphates in the river Usk, with CSOs only responsible for 1%. The remainder, is caused by other factors such as rural land use and animal faeces, urban surface water drainage, misconnected drains, as well as private septic tanks.

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



Fel cwmni, rydym yn cymryd ein cyfrifoldebau i ddiogelu'r amgylchedd o ddifri. 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 gwrta 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 ymrwmo 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



Hard Times



Donetsk in South-East Ukraine is Russian-speaking now but, when it was established 160 years ago, Welsh was widely spoken on its streets and in the workplace. Helen Morgan from Abergavenny Local History Society reports.

This frontline metropolis was established by pioneering Welshmen whose skills, learned in the valleys of South Wales, transformed an empty plain into an industrial powerhouse. The city that took its original name, Hughesovska, from the Welshman who led its genesis, went on to produce railways and armoured plating for Tsar Alexander II's fleet.

The 1870s were economically hard in Wales and David Cartwright's great grandparents were among many who were drawn to a better life. They left the terraced streets of

Dowlais and followed John Hughes, a barely literate iron maker from Merthyr to Ukraine in search of adventure and a life of affluence. While researching his family history, Cartwright discovered how the exploits of the city's intrepid and resourceful Welsh founders brought wealth and prosperity to the region. Within two years of arriving in Hughesovska, they had built eight blast furnaces followed by collieries, mines, brickworks and railway lines. They were joined by their families who made the lengthy journey from the Valleys via the Black Sea. This led to schools, a hospital, bath houses, tea rooms,

fire brigade and places of worship being built for the Welsh-speaking migrants. However, the decisions they made also sowed the seeds of the social, political and ethnic divisions that would later tear Ukraine apart. Instead of recruiting the local peasantry as unskilled labour, Hughes chose to employ labourers from across the Russian empire. This had repercussions in both 20th and 21st centuries. While many Ukrainians resenting the Russian presence had welcomed the Nazi invasion in 1941, the Russians defended their city to the death. That blood debt probably goes a long way to explain Vladimir Putin's military support for this Russian-speaking region. Nine years ago, Russian-backed forces were welcomed into the city, and it became the fulcrum of the invasion of the rest of Southern Ukraine a year ago. Formerly known as the City of a Million Roses, it has become the city of a million bombs and bullets feeding the Russian forces, says Cartwright whose grandfather was among the last to leave during the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917.

David Cartwright's talk on Hughesovska on March 22nd in the Melville Theatre starts at 7.30. To reserve a seat, please email alhs.talks@outlook.com. The talk is also available to members via Zoom. www.abergavennylocalhistorysociety.org.uk

Helen Morgan

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Weather Outlook

by Jonathan Powell

The new season gradually takes hold as we move out of another winter which on balance has proved relatively tame, with little in the way of snowfall but as a reminder that it was winter, some raw temperatures and sharp frost activity. As March rolls in, a rather indifferent month to be expected with a veritable mix of conditions across the month, and with one eye on the clocks going forward, increasing hours of daylight with summer in the distance. Therefore spells of wind and rain tempered by drier, brighter, and at times sunnier weather, which out of any wind, will afford some tepid warmth. Whereas there may well be some frost activity, it looks chiefly limited and not severe in nature. Rainfall will be around the average for March with temperatures on or above the average.

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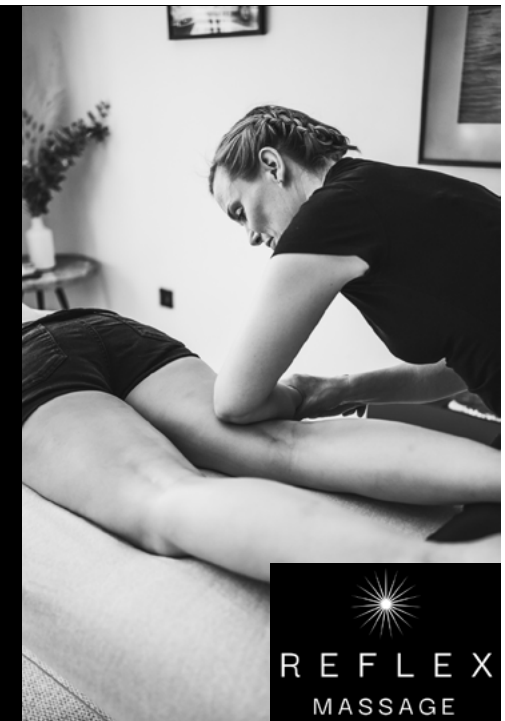
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Ein nod yw gwneud rheoli a gosod eich eiddo'n broses syml a rhwydd, a gweithio gyda chi ar reoli a hysbysebu eich eiddo yn ogystal â dod o hyd i denantiaid wedi'u fetio ar gyfer:

Cynlluniau Rhentu Preifat

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Gyda chymorth ac arweiniad gan ein tîm, cyfeillgar, profiadol a phroffesiynol.

Mae Gwasanaeth Gosod Sir Fynwy'n cynnig cynlluniau gosod tymor byr a hirdymor. At hyn, mae gennym lesoedd hirdymor, rhwng pump ac ugain mlynedd, ar gael drwy 'Gynllun Lesio Cymru' a ariennir gan Lywodraeth Cymru ac a reolir gan Wasanaeth Lesio Sir Fynwy.

Mae grantiau ar gael i helpu dod â chartrefi gwag yn ôl i gael eu defnyddio.

Os oes diddordeb gennych mewn gosod eich eiddo, neu os hoffech fwy o fanylion ynglŷn â'r gwasanaeth a'r hyn yr ydym yn ei gynnig, cysylltwch â Clare Hamer

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Grants are available to help bring empty homes back into use.

If you are interested in letting your accommodation or to find out more details about the service and what we offer, please contact Clare Hamer



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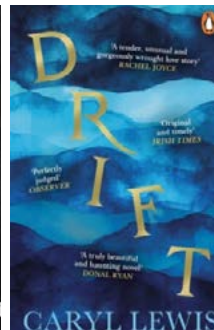
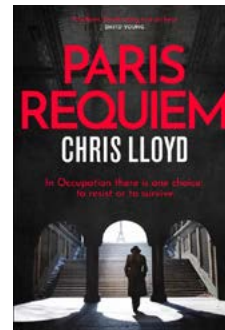
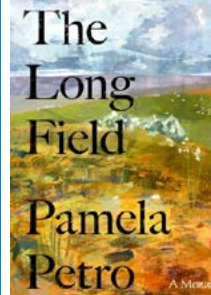
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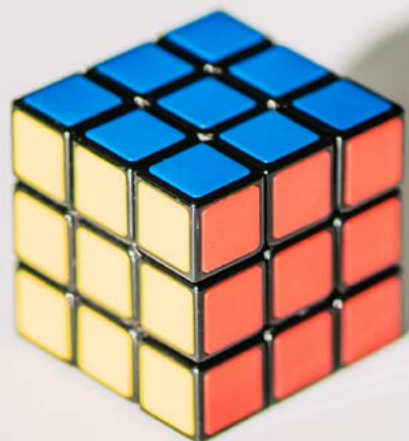
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If you're making a big move,
 we are here to listen ~
 You are our top priority.

Moving home is widely believed to be one of the most stressful events we can experience in our lifetime. However, studies suggest that this isn't always the case. While that might offer a little comfort to those considering a move, if you're currently in the process of one, you'll know how emotionally exhausting it can be, no matter how high up on the life events scale it might be.

Little attention is given to the psychology behind moving home, but those pangs of pain we feel when leaving behind a space in which we've made so many memories is a very real thing and here at James Dean we recognise and understand this. Given that we are an independent, local family firm, we are able to set the time aside to provide that personal touch that so many vendors may be seeking when making a move. We are here to help both vendors and purchasers navigate these trickier aspects of a move and to get it right.



Selling the family home is an emotive experience for vendors, and it's vital that we respect and listen to their needs to ensure their experience is the right one. We can, for example, organise a discreet marketing campaign and arrange specific viewing days to make things easier. We are also able to look after weekly inspections of empty properties as well as provide feedback on viewings. We understand that good, effective communication with our clients is the key to our success so we prioritise this and make sure our clients always know how things are going.

If you're a buyer, your emotions will also be heightened when looking to find your dream home. What if you get it wrong? How will you know when you find the right property? We get it. We start your journey with you by actually getting to know you, talking to you, understanding your needs and what you want from a home. In short, we build a relationship with you. This helps us to properly identify properties that match your needs and wishlist. It also builds trust between us so that we can nudge you towards considering a property that you may have previously dismissed, taking you safely just outside your comfort zone to see what you might discover.

Tips to make a move easier on your emotional health

If you're looking to make a move, either as a buyer or seller, get in contact with us – we're keen to get to know you!

- In amongst all the busyness that comes with a move, remember to take time to rest and relax. Moving can get very stressful and some R&R can make the world of difference

- Enlist the help of friends and loved ones for emotional support



- Make plans to build new memories in your new place. Think about hosting a dinner party or having friends over for drinks



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