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Dear Readers,



As the night's draw in we wanted to give you something cheery to read this month, so we've put together a pet themed issue for you. A little while ago we asked members of Abergavenny Voice to send us photos of their pets along with their names, so that we could create a gorgeous 'Pets of Abergavenny' gallery on Pages 34-35. If you sent us a photo your pet might just be included! Thank you for taking part.

We also ran an Autumn photo competition on Abergavenny Voice. The winner of that is Sally Cooper and her eye-catching image is printed on page 51 where you'll find the weather forecast for the month ahead. We had so many wonderful photos sent to us and we plan to run a similar competition each month. Do join us on the Abergavenny Voice Facebook Page if you'd like to be involved. If you don't have Facebook but you'd still like to submit a photo, please do so by emailing your photo to hello@thefocus.wales

We are also thrilled to be running a competition, again on Abergavenny Voice on Facebook, courtesy of Luminare Wales, who have kindly given us two sets of family tickets to their fantastic light show extravaganza in Margham Park. We're giving them away on Facebook and we close the competition on 25th October, so for all the details join our group as a member and get involved.

We truly hope you'll enjoy this month's pet themed magazine.

Hannah

Publisher: Focus Magazines Ltd

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Contributions:

Sally Cooper, Dr Giles P Croft, Pippa Hill, Tony Hopkins, Georgia Kay, Daniel Morden, Helen Morgan, Nikki Poulton, Jonathan Powell, Tracey Prall, John Prosser, Frankie Wesson, Gwent Wildlife Trust

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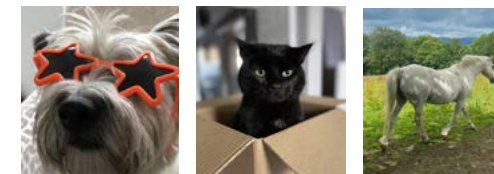
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Abergavenny & Beaupreau - Continuing the Friendship

Thirty five years ago on 26th November 1988, Abergavenny Town Council entered into a Twinning Agreement with Beaupreau Town Council in France. Both councils resolved:

- To honour the twinning arrangement by establishing and maintaining friendly relations with each other.
- To foster and develop mutual understanding and respect between the people of Abergavenny and the people of Beaupreau.
- To encourage and assist youth and adult organisations, clubs, companies, groups and all classes of persons in Abergavenny and Beaupreau to communicate and exchange visits with each other, thereby developing human and cultural relations and establishing a firm foundation for future understanding, respect, and friendship between the people of Abergavenny and the people of Beaupreau for all time.

Over the past 35 years there have been many successful exchanges and visits to and

from Beaupreau including food and music festivals, school exchanges, sporting activities including football and athletics, and even pétanque! Many new friendships have been formed.

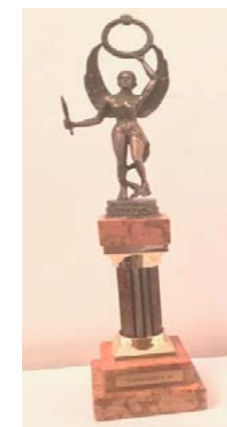
Abergavenny and Beaupreau Twinning Association tries to facilitate the interaction between the two towns and is run by volunteers from Abergavenny. We are keen to engage with new members of the community who might have an interest in joining the association and contributing to the ongoing activities. We hope to encourage younger generations to take part and visit similar groups in Beaupreau. For further

information please contact Chairman John Prosser on 07814 808324 or email johnprosser36@gmail.com.

Abergavenny has received an invite to take part in a Europiad next Easter to coincide with the Paris Olympic year, travelling to Beaupreau on Friday and returning on Monday. The Europiad is a festival of sport where twinned towns from several countries take part. At a similar event in 1991 a team from Abergavenny won an impressive trophy as shown in the picture.

We are currently seeking Abergavenny teams and individuals to take part in next years' event covering football, basketball, and athletics. For further information or to register your interest please contact Simon Mansfield on 07899890509 abergavennyrhinos@icloud.com.

We already have over 60 expressions of interest for this visit so contact us now to secure your place!



*John Prosser
Chairman
Abergavenny and Beaupreau Twinning Association*

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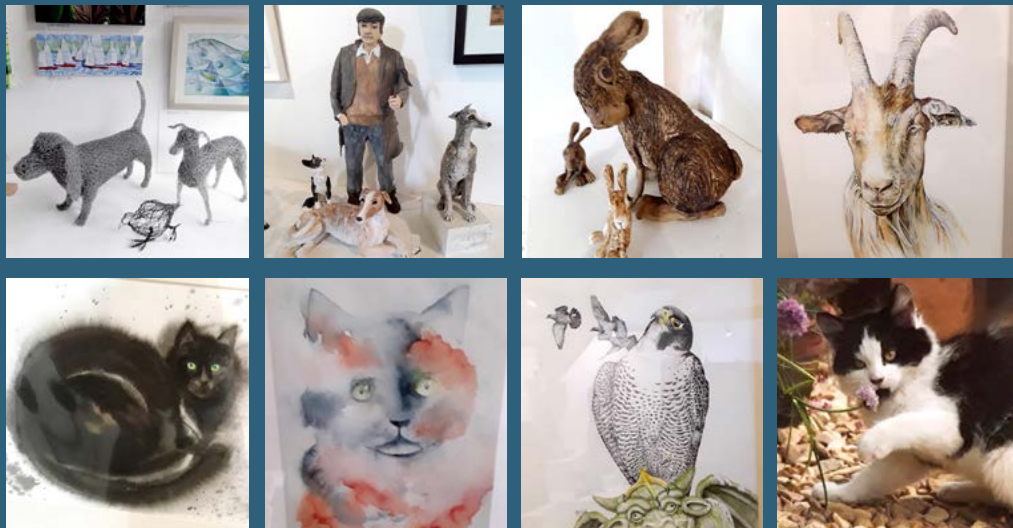
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Stunningly Beautiful Gwent Levels Landscape is Again Under Threat

Having, with others, fought off the M4 Relief Road, Gwent Wildlife Trust is once again having to defend this irreplaceable wetland. The charity has now launched a Senedd petition calling for a halt to significant development on this nationally important wetland.

Adam Taylor, Gwent Wildlife Trust chief executive officer, says,

"The Gwent Levels are an ancient landscape, rich in culture and important for biodiversity, recreation, flood alleviation, carbon storage and food production. It is now facing multiple, adjacent, enormous solar proposals and business parks as well as other development projects. The Welsh planning system in its present form is unable to control such development, and the destruction which these would cause under present arrangements would mean the end of this beautiful, fragile and complex wetland. So, we are calling for a halt to significant development and a coherent, legally binding plan put in place for the protection of this irreplaceable wetland and the wildlife it supports."

"We need to stress that we are not opposed to solar energy, simply that such developments need to be located on land where they will not irretrievably damage a nationally important and designated landscape, teeming with wildlife. We have already seen the damage caused by the existing solar plant on the Gwent Levels, where a hugely important lapwing breeding site was destroyed. This exquisitely beautiful bird was once a common site in our skies but is now a conservation red-listed species due to plummeting numbers."

Gwent Wildlife Trust owns reserves throughout the county, and includes meadows, ancient woodland in the Wye Valley, and unspoilt upland tracts of habitat. One of the trust's flagship reserves is Magor Marsh on the Gwent Levels.

Magor Marsh is one of the last remaining pieces of natural fenland that once covered the Levels. Wetlands like this were once commonplace across Britain but they are now one of the UK's most threatened habitats. It was the threat of losing this important place in the 1960s that brought local naturalists together to fight

for its survival, banding together to form what is now known as the Gwent Wildlife Trust. More recently, Barecroft Common was added to the reserve along with neighbouring Bridewell Common, extending this important habitat for the benefit of the natural world.

The Gwent Levels provide a mosaic of habitats that nurture a rich diversity of wildlife throughout the year. The distinctive, familiar but increasingly rare sound of cuckoo calling heralds the fact that spring is in full swing, while the reeds and scrub house the elusive Cetti's Warbler, its wonderful call piercing the air. In summer, wildflowers carpet the meadows, and the air is full of insects as they feed on the nectar-rich flowers. As autumn approaches, it's the best time to see a brilliant flash of colour as kingfishers dart along the waterways. Flocks of teal and shoveler make the ponds their winter home. Throughout the year, the waterways known as reens are frequented by water voles (one of the UK's fastest declining mammals) and otters.

www.gwentwildlife.org/savethewentlevels

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Reflections on Abergavenny's Castle Meadows



In his next installment of our 'Reflection On' series, Tony Hopkins takes us on a wander through Castle Meadows.

Visitors and those who live in Abergavenny often see Castle Meadows as its most attractive natural feature. Yet, natural they are not. In times long past the area, now the Meadows, was a tangled wilderness, prone to flooding: people lived on the surrounding higher land, where Abergavenny and Llanfoist are now.

About two thousand years or so ago humans developed iron tools, strong and sharp enough to use, to cut down the vegetation alongside the river and on its flood plain. As time passed this gradually made the land suitable for grazing sheep and cattle, and for cultivation: over the centuries, the area was tamed. It developed into the landscape we now take for granted along the Usk, with stands of trees and large stretches of meadow. Much of it still tells its story.

The patches of seemingly boggy land near the castle site show where the river sometimes overflowed, covering the adjacent

flat land. Abundant and assorted willow trees - some with 'weeping', cascading leaves - still thrive where water once flowed. There are stands of poplar, another tree that prefers poor soil and wet conditions. These grow tall with fissured grey barks: the leaves of some species - green on one side, white on the other - cause the trees to seem to change colour in windy weather.

Two of the copses feature splendid horse chestnut (conker) trees, about a hundred years old. Imported into Britain from the east Mediterranean and the Baltic from the 17th century as landscape trees they are handsome with attractive flowers and fruit in season. The inedible fruit have a chemical used in shells. Chaim Weizman, a Manchester University chemist, obtained it from conkers in World War One thus ending a shell shortage. The outcomes? Children collected 'conkers' to aid the war effort: a grateful British Government later underwrote Israel's future independence.

There is an abundance of wild plants on the Meadows. Most prolific is the attractive Himalayan Balsam found along hedgerows and the banks of the Usk. Yellow buttercups - the Creeping, Meadow and Bulbous varieties - are found in the grass all over the Meadows. These are poisonous so after the grass is harvested in August, native Welsh cattle then graze the area. In early autumn people gather the many species of blackberries found along the hedgerows. Numerous other wild plants, such as burdock species, with their large leaves and bristly fruit, also thrive. This cornucopia of wild plants would once have been a principal source of the medicines used to cure the ailments of commonfolk.



There are places to sit and relax near water. One favoured area is a pond that features water weeds, flowers on the bank, trees on a small island and even visiting water birds. This idyllic spot is not natural! It was dug and is maintained by the Friends of Castle Meadows. These volunteers do sterling work in maintaining the Meadows and taking steps to further develop the area. Such continuing commitment helps Abergavenny keep alive its attractions.

Tony Hopkins





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Beef Carpaccio (gf)

Paper thin sliced beef fillet marinated with capers, olive oil, fresh lemon juice and shaved parmesan

Antipasto Misto (gf)

Selection of Italian cheese and Italian prosciutto served with pickles, rocket salad and crackers

Tomato Caprese (v)

Beef tomato stuffed with burrata, homemade pesto and fresh herbs, baked in the oven and served on a bed of rocket

Brandy King Prawns (gf)

Pan fried king prawns with garlic, chilli and fresh herbs in a creamy brandy sauce. Served with homemade bread

Butternut Squash Soup (v) (gf) (vg)

Creamy soup with butternut squash, white onion, carrots, fresh herbs, vegan cream and sage vegan butter. Served with homemade bread

Salmone al Miele

Salmon fillet marinated in honey, soy sauce, lemon juice and thyme served with roast vegetables and coriander brandy creamy sauce

Pizza Gamberi e Avocado

Pizza with brandy gorgonzola cream, baby shrimp, rocket salad, cherry tomatoes and avocado

Beef Short Rib (gf)

Slow oven-cooked beef short rib in red wine, white onion and fresh herbs. Served with homemade mash potato and homemade gravy

Lobster Tortelloni

Homemade Tortelloni pasta filled with fresh lobster meat and fresh herbs, cooked in a creamy tomato, sambuca and sage sauce

Tortelli al Cinghiale

Homemade Tortelli pasta filled with wild boar meat and fresh herbs. Served with a salad of radicchio, walnuts, brie and a touch of cream

Butternut Squash Risotto (gf) (v) (vg)

Creamy risotto cooked with creamy butternut squash

Porchetta (gf)

Rolled pork belly stuffed with delicious fresh herbs: Italian fennel, chilli flakes and fresh coriander. Served with homemade mashed potato and homemade gravy

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OCTOBER EVENTS CALENDAR

SUNDAY 8TH & SUNDAY 15TH
APPLE JUICING DAY



The Laurie Jones Community Orchard is running two October juicing days this year, at Abergavenny Community Centre (parking in Merthyr Road), for people to bring their own apples or help with juicing the orchard's apples, or simply watch and be part of the juicing process. All are welcome. Please bring your own bottles if you can.

11am-3pm, Abergavenny Community Centre, Merthyr Rd, Abergavenny

TUE DAY 10TH (AND EVERY TUESDAY)
CRAFTING 4 CANCER

Weekly crafting and support group
10.30am-1.30pm, Tithe Barn,
Abergavenny

All welcome, free to participate

TUESDAY 10TH (AND 2ND TUESDAY
EVERY MONTH)

THE ABERGAVENNY FOLK, BLUES &
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8pm, Hen & Chickens, Flannel St, Abergavenny

TUESDAY 10TH

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7.30pm, Book-ish Loft, 18 High St, Crickhowell
Book-ish.co.uk/events for tickets

THURSDAY 12TH

BOOK LAUNCH – STRANGE TALES
BY DANIEL MORDEN

7.30pm, Melville Theatre,
Abergavenny. Tickets £11 with book or
£5 ticket only from booki-ish.co.uk
See page 29 for more info

SATURDAY 14TH

ABERGAVENNY CRAFT FAIR

Come along and discover a fantastic collection of arts, crafts and gifts direct from the maker, and support artisans in your local community
9am-4pm, Market Hall, Abergavenny

SATURDAY 14TH

Hardy Plant Society Monmouthshire
'A GARDEN ABOVE THE ESTUARY'
BY ADAM ALEXANDER

Adam, known as the Seed Detective, will be full of tips and techniques so you can enjoy what you grow at reasonable cost and by sustainable, organic methods.
2.30pm, Little Mill Village Hall.
Non members welcome. Entry fees vary between £4 and £8
monmouthshirehps@gmail.com for more info

WEDNESDAY 18TH

TIM WALKER: PARADISE LOST AND RESTORED

A Zoom talk. Tim, the former Director of Oxford Botanic Garden looks at how gardening has changed over the last 400 years...or has it? Zoom at

7.30pm. Non members welcome.
Entry fees vary between £4 and £8
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WEDNESDAY 18TH

Abergavenny Local History Society Talk
DAVID MADDOX ON MABON:
WORKERS' HERO?



7.30pm, Borough Theatre,
Abergavenny

See page 57 for more info or visit
abergavennylocalhistorysociety.org.uk to reserve your seat

WEDNESDAY 18TH

Abergavenny Film Society Screening
LOVE ACCORDING TO DALVA (15)

Dalva is a 12 year old girl home-schooled and isolated at home by her father. Unexpectedly she is forcibly removed from her home and placed into foster care. Here she gradually learns the difference between real love and her father's abuse, helped by social care staff and other children in the home. Very powerful performances, particularly by Zelda Samson as Dalva, help bring to life the realities of the traumas faced by abused children.

Showings at 4.30pm and 7.30pm.
Members free, Guests £5
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CONTINUED OVERLEAF...

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WEDNESDAY 18TH Conversations at the Chapel LAURA CUMMING IN CONVERSATION WITH ALASTAIR LAURENCE



Laura Cumming's latest book Thunderclap is a memoir that connects her own life with that of her father's paintings and those of the Dutch Golden Age. She has been chief art critic of the Observer since 1999.

7.30pm, Upstairs at the Art Shop & Chapel, Market St, Abergavenny
Tickets £13 available at the Art Shop & Chapel or online artshopandgallery.co.uk/events. Online booking fee £1

THURSDAY 19TH Book-is Author Event GARETH HOWELL-JONES: DO NOT CALL THE TORTOISE

In conversation with Owen Sheers
Ticket £5 or with book £11
7.30pm, Book-ish Loft, 18 High St, Crickhowell
Book-ish.co.uk/events for tickets

FRIDAY 20TH FRANKIE WESSON BAND 'UNVIABLE' SINGLE LAUNCH

Launch party for Frankie's new single. Support from Elian and Matt Elliot.

Free Entry, doors open 7:30pm
Abergavenny Labour Hall, Park Crescent, Abergavenny
See Page 27 for more info

SATURDAY 21ST REPAIR CAFÉ ABERGAVENNY

We repair household items including toasters, vacuum cleaners,

printers, electronic items, electric lawnmowers, manual bicycles (safety check), strimmers (sorry no microwaves), basic sewing, sewing machines etc – jewellery, woodwork and sharpening by appointment only. Book or just turn up. Labour free (donations welcome) – parts are not supplied. The object is to keep repairable items out of landfill.

11am-2pm with last book-in for repair at 1.15pm. Abergavenny Community Centre, Merthyr Rd, Abergavenny

SATURDAY 21ST PARENT PARTY

An evening at The Priory Centre for parents in the local area to meet and socialise (child free!). We'll be joined by Toy Share Abergavenny, The Beer Box Company, Detroit Slice Bar by The Towpath and DJ Kite Iya. Tickets £10. Find out more on Instagram @AbergavennyMums

SATURDAY 21ST THE BROTHERS OF BLUES



Get your hats and sunglasses ready as you join Jake and Elwood for an evening of Soul, Motown, Rhythm & Blues. This high energy, fun packed tribute to the Blues Brothers features hits such as; Everybody Needs Somebody, Sweet Home Chicago, Mustang Sally, plus many more! The boys invite you to sing along and enjoy yourselves for an evening of song, comedy and nostalgia. Get ready to Shake A Tail Feather!

7.30pm, Borough Theatre Abergavenny
Tickets from boroughtheatreabergavenny.co.uk

SUNDAY 22ND WORK PARTY – ABERGAVENNY COMMUNITY ORCHARD



Call out for helpers! We'll be holding a work party in the orchard and the more the merrier. Jobs to be done include tidying, litter picking, bramble management, weeding and pond maintenance. Please bring practical and protective clothing such as thick gardening gloves, and tools like secateurs, choppers, strimmers and loppers. The more the merrier - it's a really nice social get together and tea coffee and biscuits will definitely be involved
10.30am-2pm, Community Orchard, Mill St, Abergavenny

THURSDAY 26TH ABERGAVENNY STREET FOOD & NIGHT MARKET




A great evening of delicious street food and amazing crafts!
5pm-9pm, Abergavenny Market Hall

FRIDAY 27TH Book-is Author Event ELLY GRIFFITHS: THE LAST REMAINS

Ticket £12 or with book £25
7.30pm, Angel Hotel, Abergavenny
Book-ish.co.uk/events for tickets

CONTINUED OVERLEAF..



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FOR MORE INFORMATION, OR TO BOOK,
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FACEBOOK GROUP - 'ABERGAVENNY MEDITATION
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4th October
Lunana-A Yak in the Classroom
(PG) 109 mins
Kids' Games
11 mins

18th October
Love According to Dalva
(15)

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)
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MONDAY 30TH
AUTUMN ORIGAMI CLUB

You will be folding some lovely Halloween items. Suitable for all levels, children under 7 must be accompanied by an adult
10am-12pm, Abergavenny Community Centre, Merthyr Rd, Abergavenny
£5 per person. To book your place, email abergavennyorigamiclub@gmail.com

TUESDAY 31ST
HALLOWEEN PARTY

Halloween Party for the kids, with bouncy castle and softplay, hot dogs and spooky treats. FREE ENTRY. 4.30pm, Clydach Village Hall, NP7 0LR

NOVEMBER

SUNDAY 5TH
REMEMBRANCE SERVICE

Raffle afterwards, tea, coffee & refreshments
2pm-4pm, Llanfoist Chapel of Peace, Llanfoist Cemetery

SUNDAY 5TH
**Abergavenny Roundtable
FIREWORKS SPOOKTACULAR 2023**



Get ready for a night to remember as we light up the skies above Abergavenny with a dazzling array of colours! We have 2 displays lined up for you! The first is a quieter, mini display suitable for smaller children and those with additional needs. The second, is our amazing pyromusical display which is choreographed to a

spooky soundtrack, accompanied by a fantastic light show! A general admission ticket will allow you to see either or both displays. There's food and drinks, light up toys and a small funfair for the kids. All proceeds will go to charities and good causes in the local area. **Adults £8 - Kids £5 - Gates open at 5:00pm** Short mini display, suitable for young children and those with additional needs at 6pm Main display at 7pm sharp! For Tickets please visit [Abergavenny Round Table on Facebook](#) and follow links to the [Eventbrite Page](#) for ticket purchases

SHARE 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



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Frankie Wesson Launches new single



South Wales based Singer-songwriter Frankie Wesson who started writing

songs and performing in her hometown of Abergavenny at the age of 16, will be launching her new single 'Unviable' on Friday October 20th at Abergavenny Labour Hall.

An award-winning songwriter, Frankie's previous single 'Just Friends' won her a trophy and opening slot at Tredegar House Folk Festival earlier this year. Her original songs have been featured on BBC Radio 6, BBC Radio Wales, and BBC Introducing as well as Spotify's

'Chilled Pop Hits' and 'New Music Friday' playlists.

The 'Unviable' single launch will see Frankie take to the stage accompanied by her full band. Plus, support from Elian an Indie Funk rock band from South Wales and Matti Elliott a talented vocalist and songwriter from Abergavenny.

The new single 'Unviable' was recorded at AR Studios in Herefordshire, as was the accompanying music video, shot and directed by local talent and Frankie's former King Henry VIII schoolmate Honey McKenna.

Inspiration for the song came from Frankie's experience as a musician during covid lockdowns when everything, including the live music sector, ground to a halt. Frankie said:

"I wrote this song during lockdown when the world came to a stop and I was no longer able to gig or play live anywhere, which as a musician

is a huge part of my identity and livelihood.

It wasn't long before my mental health really started to suffer, and I began to lose motivation to do what I love. Especially with messaging coming from the government suggesting that people in the creative arts should rethink and retrain in other jobs because our careers were no longer viable. This left me at a really low point feeling unvalued and unstable in my career.

This song 'Unviable' came as a much needed cry of anger and frustration from a desperate place of being absolutely done with the situation."

The launch is set to be a great night of top quality local live music. It's free entry and doors open at 7.30pm.

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Since 1989 I have made my living telling traditional stories. I have performed everywhere you can think of- mostly schools, but also theatres, hospitals, churches, universities, forests, hotels, caves, cathedrals, prisons, palaces....

Sometimes the audience is just children, sometimes just adults and sometimes families. Whoever they are, they want the same thing- to forget themselves. To meet a character whom they like who is in a tight spot. What will happen next? How will he/she get out of it?

The question I am asked most is, *is this your job?* -yes! It is a surprise to me too, even after all these years.

The next most frequently asked question is, *do you make them up?* No.

When I was eleven my parents gave me a book of Norse myths. It is on a shelf to my left as I write this. It is a bit battered now, like its owner, but unlike its owner it is still beautiful. The illustrations are ornate and the writing austere. At the tender age of eleven I read that a raven sat on each of Odin's shoulders, and one was named *Thought* and the other *Memory*. Ever since then part of my bandwidth has been devoted to pondering this image.

The old stories are full of such riddles. The glass mountain. The devil's grandmother. The bridge of one hair. They fascinated me then and still fascinate me now. How could I possibly invent images as intriguing? Why bother to try? Why not just tell the old ones?

Many of my favourite stories are in my book *STRANGE TALES*,

launched at The Melville Theatre on Oct 12th at 7.30. You can buy tickets through Bookish 01873 811256 or through the Events page of the Bookish website

www.book-ish.co.uk/event/book-launch-strange-ales-by-daniel-morden/#tribe-tickets_tickets-form





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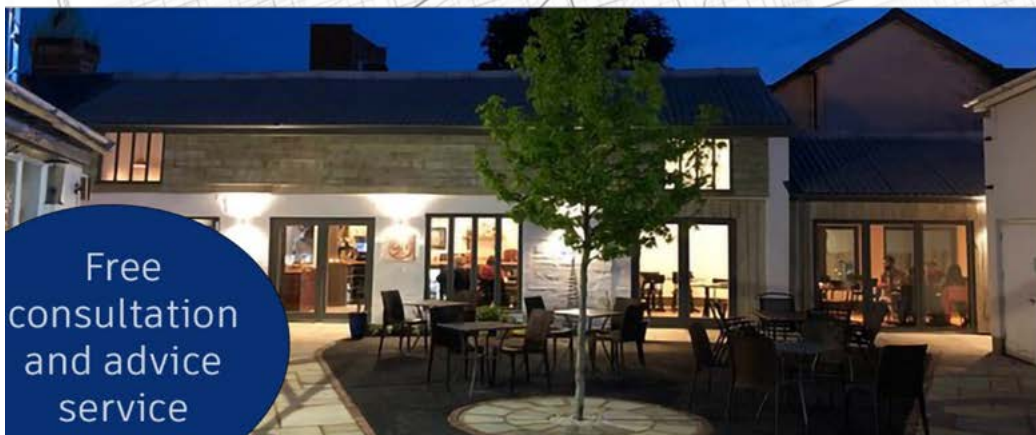
Building regulations

Building Control

SuDS

Consultancy

Mediation



Local Architectural firm offers to help people victimized by rogue builders

A local architectural firm is urging people who have suffered at the hands of rogue builders to get in touch to see how they can help put things right.

Online Architectural Ltd's Jeremy Mead has explained that in the last three years, he has noticed an alarming rise in poor, and in some cases catastrophic workmanship that his practice has been called upon to remedy. Jeremy also believes that the marked increase in poor quality control in the construction industry is an unfortunate legacy of the pandemic.

"Not long after the arrival of COVID-19, we as a practice, began observing more and more new builders on the scene whose names we were unfamiliar with, which is a rare thing when you're operating in such a small geographical area," revealed Jeremy, before adding, "At the same time we began to encounter back-to-back examples of poor workmanship. This ranged from poor finishes to extensions built without proper foundations, and in one case we found a structural wall had been removed; leaving 1.5 tons of brick wall unsupported and in danger of falling."

Jeremy believes the surge in demand for building works, particularly extensions, during the pandemic, coupled with the desperate shortage of reliable and experienced builders, entailed the situation was ripe for exploitation by cynical opportunists and inexperienced contractors. His practice has since nicknamed these rogue traders, "COVID builders."

Jeremy said, "During that period prices went ballistic and these COVID builders who were new to the game with little or no experience, took advantage of the clients' desperation by charging them ridiculous costs. They had no proper references, insurance, or VAT and were an accident waiting to happen."

To compound matters, Jeremy revealed that during the same period, Online Architectural had to put five major projects and four smaller ones on hold because they couldn't find an experienced and reliable builder who didn't have their hands full elsewhere.

Jeremy explained, "Since then we have been inundated with cries of help from people who turned to COVID builders because they felt they had nowhere else to go."

Jeremy who was the designer responsible for converting the Baker Street Police Station into flats, designing the Gaff restaurant in Lion Street's Courtyard, and the Shackletons' development on Brecon Road has a vested interest in the area he has lived and worked in for the past 30 years. As an individual who has worked in the construction industry for the last four decades, he believes people are more at risk of being exploited by rogue builders than ever before.

"I have seen countless times the heartache and misery rogue builders leave in their wake. And although they have been around forever, the situation appears to be getting worse. One individual who came to us in trouble had spent over £650,000 on building works that had gone belly-up. There's another case we are dealing with where a family with children, one

severely disabled was given a build time of three months to reconfigure and extend their home. A year later they are still unable to move back in because of unreliable and poor-quality workmanship," said Jeremy.

When looking to employ the services of a builder, Jeremy stresses that there are a few things to bear in mind.

He explained, "My advice is not to be fooled by a flash website or smooth talker. Take time to research their reputation, experience, and past work. Talk to people they have previously worked for and gauge their feedback. Always insist upon a legally binding contract upfront. Of the failed projects we have dealt with in the past three years, 95% did not have a contract worth the paper it was written upon, or it was totally in favor of the builder. Always insist upon a detailed cost breakdown and not just a final estimate."

Jeremy added, "Remember, when things go wrong the law is not always on your side. Launching legal proceedings against a rogue builder is costly and could put you further out of pocket. Particularly if they have no finances, or assets or have declared themselves bankrupt."

Jeremy concluded, "However, if you have fallen victim to one of these Builders with little scruples or inexperienced opportunist and you feel we can help, please call. No charge just advice, support and if possible, a solution.

"Of course, if you just need a reliable architectural practice that prides itself upon quality design and competitive costs, please also get in touch."

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My Life in Pets



Ice with his field companion Gus

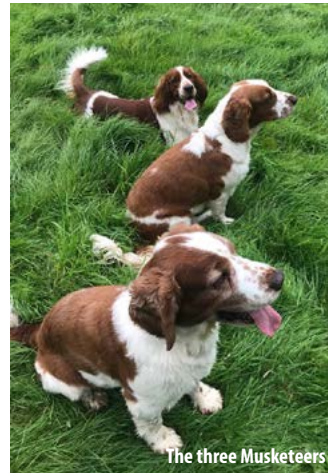


In Germany, I remember owning a guinea pig and looking after the school budgie during the holidays. I still have visions of my Dad struggling with a huge stand and cage bringing the budgie home...

Returning to the UK at the age of 15, I was more interested in going out but Mum and Dad bought a toy poodle called Brandy (note the alcohol theme...). Brandy was a yappy lap dog but kept my father company during his illness, sadly he died not long after my Dad died so Mum had to cope with the loss of her husband and her canine companion.

My ex husband and I bought a house and acquired two cats, Bubble and Squeak, from the Cats Protection League and we bought two English Springer Spaniels Harry, (black and white) and Beau (liver and white). The cats spent most of their time with our retired neighbours, an escape from the dogs and probably, they

received lots of treats and cuddles. I enjoy recalling times with Harry and Beau, we spent many an hour walking them through the countryside, on coastal walks and generally enjoying being outdoors. I recall, when Harry was very young, we decided to go for a day out to Woolacombe in Somerset. With a puppy in arms, we decided to climb over some rocks to reach a small cove, I cut my legs trying to ensure Harry was safe – a foolish thing to do, in hindsight but in my 20s it seemed fun. Both Harry and Beau lived to a good age and moved with me to Wales, where they spent their last few years enjoying romping around the Bloreng Mountain and walking along the River Usk.



The three Musketeers

When we lost Harry and Beau we took on a 2 year old English Springer, a failed gun dog. Rollie was not the brightest but such a gentle nature, I remember when both he and I suffered back problems, I slept on the floor comforting him. Our first Welsh Springer joined us in 2002, Dylan

was from working stock, a very bright, independent dog and pretty special too. And not long after, we bought Morgan, a gentle teddy bear of a dog, from show breeding with Crufts champions as parents, Bryn and Griff came along.

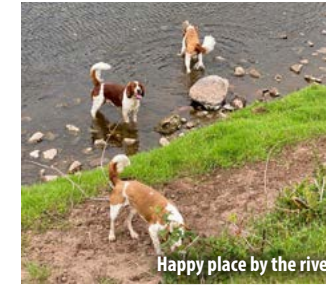
All our Welsh Springers have had different personalities, but all with the playfulness so typical of a spaniel. Bryn and Griff are still with us, Bryn is 10 and a little deaf... he has always been an anxious boy and Griff, whom I mentioned recently in a previous article, is undergoing chemotherapy treatment for lymphoma. Fortunately, he is in remission and is his usual playful, energetic self.



Truffle

In addition to the dogs, I have for the past 30 years owned a couple of horses too. I started to learn to ride in my early 30s to accompany my Goddaughter and enjoy the connection with a horse. I bought my first horse in my early 30s, totally naïve and my first horse Millie, an Irish Draught, was a stubborn and strong character and she knew she had a nervous novice on board. Millie was totally unsuitable as a first horse, I used to keep a bottle of Tia Maria in my tack room to give me some Dutch courage. I remember her rearing on the roads, backing down into small ravines and generally doing

everything she could to unseat me. Eventually, with a heavy heart, I sold her to an experienced rider, they turned out to be a great partnership.



Happy place by the river

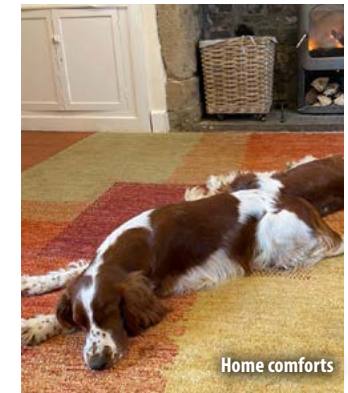
Having learned by lesson, my next horse was a beautiful, Dartmoor cross thoroughbred called Truffle, a pretty bay with a kind heart, very fast but I trusted her implicitly, we spent many a happy hour hacking around the Mendips. In more recent years, until he was retired, Ice an Irish Sports Horse was my riding companion. Ice is a gentle but stubborn soul, typical of a native breed, there have been more times than I can remember when he would turn to his side as I tried to clamber aboard, I would eventually give up, come back and he would stand so still....it was as if he was trying to say we would go out when HE was ready, not when I wanted to go. Ice's is now enjoying a happy and peaceful retirement rambling around a field with other horses and eating in beautiful Welsh countryside, his paddock has spectacular views!

When I meet potential buyers, quite often, their requirements are not only for a house to accommodate the humans, but a garden or paddock to accommodate dogs, cats, chickens, horses and on occasions Llamas or Alpacas. The needs of the pets are often at the top of the listand their comfort a priority. Moving house is a stressful time for animals as well as humans, I recall we lost one sale because, at the

last minute, the buyers decided they could disrupt the life of their elderly cat. Some houses have the most luxurious dog rooms, with their own shower, kitchen and beds, one house I sold was full of scratching posts and almost tree like beds and trunks for the cats – they had more room than the house owners. It is often a difficult time for people when they move, knowing they are leaving their much loved past pets behind who are often buried in the garden.

Any pet owner will know that it is always so very difficult when it comes to saying goodbye....but each hold a very special place in our hearts and we can enjoy the memories of the fun times, especially outdoors enjoying our beautiful countryside....in all weathers.

Heather Cook



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TOFU LIKES SEEDS AND IS EASILY STARTLED



RUDI THE RESCUE CAVALIER LOVES A COOKED BREAKFAST, CATS & WALKS. HATES BEING INDOORS AND FRENCHIES



MOSES AND SULLY. 11 YEAR OLD MOSES LOVES HIS LOCAL WALK ON THE MEADOWS.



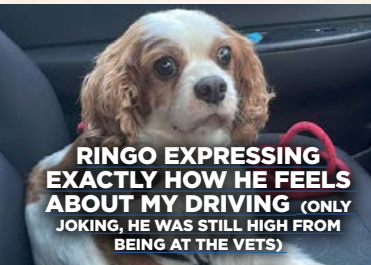
TINABALLERINA



ANDERSON THINKS HE SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO HAVE A PINT WHILST ON HOLIDAY



COSMO LOVES EVERYONE



RINGO EXPRESSING EXACTLY HOW HE FEELS ABOUT MY DRIVING (ONLY JOKING, HE WAS STILL HIGH FROM BEING AT THE VETS)



CLEO & KODA



MISS SUKI



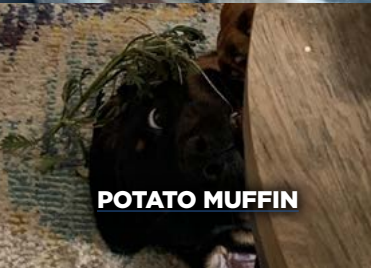
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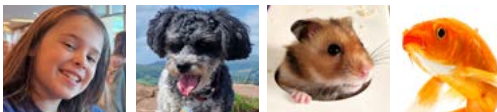
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Pippa's Pets

I like having pets because they will love you and be your best friend. My dog, called Cosmo, loves everyone he passes and will jump up at them to his heart's content. My hamster, called Tofu, is naughty and loves dried sweetcorn! He will pop out of his hole sometimes to say 'Hi'. Finally my fish called Lollypop will swish around in her tank and try to kiss you!



A Wellbeing Walk, Whatever the Weather!

It's been a funny summer with the weather, one day it's hot and sunny and the next it's cold, wet and windy. One thing is for sure, my dogs like to get out and explore.. whatever the weather throws at us. So many fresh smells for them to enjoy every day and they love checking out who has been around during the night. Usually, it's a hedgehog that leaves a calling card and I have to make sure neither of them rolls in it! I enjoy getting out with the dogs, even if it is wet, as long as I have the right gear on and I am warm, then I am happy.

Getting out and walking with your dog, (whatever the weather) is one of the best ways to keep your dog healthy as well as keeping you physically active and mentally healthy. When you have a dog, the 'walk' becomes part of your routine and establishes a healthy habit. We also want our dogs to be happy and they rely on us to provide an outlet for exercise and enrichment. Walking for just 30 minutes a day, five days a week is the current exercise guideline for adults (Chief

Medical Officers Physical Activity Guidelines 2019). I know the majority of us owners do way over this with our dogs, so your dog is definitely keeping you healthier and you are hitting your physical activity target!

So, whatever the weather- sunny or wet -there are a lot of health benefits for you when walking your dog: it helps your cardiovascular system; increases muscle tone; helps strengthen bones and joints; elevates mood and lowers anxiety; keeps you social and part of a community as well as strengthening that all important bond with your best friend!

Obviously, there are circumstances when you need to think carefully about walking dogs: puppies under six months of age need minimal exercise to allow their growing bodies to develop without undue stress and strain; older or arthritic dogs need very minimal exercise in consultation with your vet; dogs

recovering from an illness or surgery and if the weather is hot or humid (anything over 18 degrees needs careful consideration and early morning or late evening walks are needed). Different activities and enrichment are necessary at these times, but providing your dog is fit and healthy, a walk every day is a great way to enhance your wellbeing as well as the wellbeing of your dog.

While on holiday a couple of weeks ago, many people stopped to chat to me about Tiny Timmy, he is a great ice breaker to enable me to have a chat and as an introvert and home bird, it helps me keep my social skills working!

This week I have mostly been in waterproofs on my walks, but despite the rain, my mood has been lifted every day and I know my dogs has as well! Happy walking

Tracey Prall
www.canineconnections.co.uk
07735401076

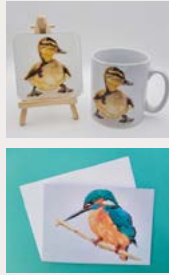
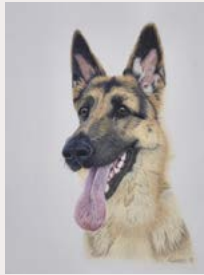
"Allow your dog to take you for a walk everyday. It's good for the body and it's good for the soul"

Eckhart Tolle



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Pet Portraits by CM Creative

I'm Catherine, the person behind CM Creative, and I'm a pet portrait and wildlife artist. I'm inspired by nature and have a passion for pets which is reflected in my work. I use coloured pencils to create highly detailed artwork, capturing the character of your pet in a realistic drawing that will last a lifetime.

I have spent most of my life in the company of much-loved pets including cats, fish, a hamster and my cheeky and loving Labrador Arian (who keeps me company whilst I draw). This is why I get so much enjoyment from creating pieces of art for people that capture special pets and treasured memories.

My pet portraits take around 25 hours to complete, but don't worry I work from photographs so your pet doesn't have to sit still for that long! I also enjoy hearing stories about your pets as it helps me to bring out their character in my drawing.



I've been so pleased by the response to my work from pet owners. They have enjoyed working with me from choosing a photo, to seeing the drawing develop, to having the finished portrait framed on their wall.

My work also makes a great gift for someone special. After starting my business last year

I'm delighted to be booked up for commissions until the new year but if you were thinking of a Christmas present it's not too late as one of my pet portrait vouchers makes a lovely gift.



My wildlife drawings are often inspired by walks with my dog in the countryside around Abergavenny as well as holidays to the Welsh coast. Using these drawings, working with a local photographer and printer where possible, I have created a range of cards and gifts which are perfect for treating yourself or giving as a present.

If you would like to find out more about pet portraits, see more of my work or buy something from my online shop please visit my website www.cmcreative.uk. You can also contact me via email cm@cmcreative.uk, I'd love to hear from you.



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Abergavenny's Biggest Local Celebrity is...a dog!



Those of you who are on Instagram or TikTok may recognise the face in these photos, because local Staffordshire Bull Terrier, Blue, has become somewhat of a global social media sensation with a following of 2.1 million followers on TikTok alone.

In a former life, Blue was used as a breeding dog. Her mum, Georgia was able to get her away from that way of life when she bought her in September 2021. Determined to give her a better

life, Blue was sorted out at the vets and neutered.

At first Blue was very shy and was afraid of both people and other dogs, but bit by bit she came out of her shell and these days is a completely different dog to the breeding dog she once was. She has unusual features that are seal-like, which gives her a unique appearance, different to that of a typical Staffie.

Georgia first started posting images and reels of Blue on Instagram and then TikTok in 2021 and within a month Blue

had gone viral. Two years later and her followers on TikTok have amassed to over two million, with comments on her reels from celebrities such as Jedward and Canadian rapper, singer and songwriter, Drake.

Blue's favourite pastime is to visit Abergavenny's Portico Lounge and Coffi Lab as well as some of the local dog friendly pubs. Be sure to say hello if you spot her!

Blue's social media tag is [@littleblueblee](https://www.instagram.com/littleblueblee)

Georgia Kay

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Our research with Natural Resources Wales shows that our assets (i.e. our treatment works, Combined Storm Overflows or CSOs) are responsible for around 21% 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.

We have permits in place at our wastewater treatment works to protect the river. These permits are set by our environmental regulators and can be changed by them when needed, to reflect the changing needs of the river, or when new evidence is found. When this happens, we work with our regulators to improve and upgrade our treatment works.

We understand that river water quality is an important matter for local residents and we are committed to playing our part to reducing our impact on the river Usk and the wider environment. To find out more visit dwrcymru.com/environment or scan this handy QR code.



Fel cwmni, rydyn ni'n cymryd ein cyfrifoldebau dros amddiffyn yr amgylchedd o ddi. Dyma pam ein bod ni wedi bod yn datblygu cynlluniau i wella'r dŵr yn ein hafonydd.

Mae ein gwaith ymchwil gyda Chyfoeth Naturiol Cymru'n dangos bod ein hasedau (fel ein gweithfeydd trin, o'n Gorlifoedd Storm Cyfun neu CSOs) yn gyfrifol am tua 21% o'r ffosffadâu yn afon Wysg, o'r CSOs sy'n gyfrifol am gwa 1%. Mae'r gweddill yn cael ei achosi gan ffactorau eraill fel defnydd tir gwledig a bow anifeiliaid, dŵr yn draenio oddi ar wynebau trefol, draeniau sydd wedi eu cam-gysylltu, a thanciau septig preifat.

Mae trwyddedau mewn grym yn ein gweithfeydd trin dŵr gwastraff i amddiffyn yr afon. Ein rheoleiddwyr amgylcheddol sy'n pennu'r trwyddedau hyn, a gallant eu newid pan fo angen i adlewyrchu anghenion newidiol yr afon, neu pan fo tystiolaeth newydd yn codi. Pan fo hynny'n digwydd, rydyn ni'n gweithio gyda'r rheoleiddwyr i wella ac uwchraddio ein gweithfeydd trin.

Rydyn ni'n deall bod ansawdd dŵr afonol yn fater pwysig i drigolion lleol ac rydyn ni wedi ymrwmo i chwarae ein rhan wrth leihau ein heffaith ar afon Wysg a'r amgylchedd ehangach. I gael rhagor o fanylion, ewch i dwrcymru.com/amgylchedd neu sganwch y cod QR hwylus.



Pick up the Poop!

Dog mess is a very real and ongoing problem for many towns across the country, Abergavenny included. It is the most offensive type of litter and is consistently raised as a matter for public concern. It can have health risks such as Toxocarasis, an infection caused by roundworm parasites which can be found in dog faeces.

If you are a dog owner, it is your duty to ensure you collect your pet's waste when out and about and ensure that it is bagged and binned to avoid a dog fouling penalty notice of up to £75. Failure to pay will result in Monmouthshire County Council prosecuting the offender in the magistrates court.

Did you know that there are 30 dog waste bins dotted throughout Abergavenny? These bins are emptied weekly, a service paid for by Abergavenny Town Council as Monmouthshire County Council no longer offers this. However, with a further 130 general waste bins located throughout town, MCC actively encourages dog owners to bag up their dog waste and place it ANY of the public litter bins in town as an alternative, if no dog litter bin is readily available nearby. So always remember to... Pick Up the Poop!

Abergavenny Town Council will be holding an action day on Thursday 12th October, and look forward to engaging with dog owners when out on our rounds.




Abergavenny's 30 dog waste bins are emptied weekly; a service financed by Abergavenny Town Council

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PET NUPS

Like anyone entering a relationship, few of us really wants to consider the possibility of break up or divorce later down the line. In fact, very few people enter prenuptial agreements let alone a pet-nup agreement.

Pet-nups are growing in popularity in the UK and aim to set out an agreement about how a couple will care for their pet if the relationship comes to an end. In UK law a pet is not considered as a member of the family, regardless of how we may feel about them. As such the law treat pets in the same way as it would furniture or any other matrimonial property.

Nevertheless, lots of people are now turning to the idea of a pet-nup agreement as a solution to arguments and potential acrimony surrounding the guardianship of a well-loved animal at the end of a relationship. It's important to say that while these agreements are in existence, they are not 100% legally binding and the law surrounding these agreements is relatively new and untested. Ultimately it is up to the court to decide whether the pet-nup

should be enforced, however it is generally accepted that, providing various criteria have been met, they are legally enforceable. Factors such as whether the agreement was entered into freely or through coercion and whether it is fair will be considered. Importantly, a pet-nup cannot override the law on animal welfare, so if the pet-nup doesn't represent the best interests of the pet, the court may refuse to enable the agreement.

If you are looking to draw up a pet-nup, here are some questions that you may like to consider when creating it.

1. Custody – Consider the animal's best interests, such as space or the individual who works from home and can be with the pet during the day.
2. Care and expenses – Who will pay for food, vet bills and grooming.
3. Relocation – If one party wants to move with the pet, how will this be handled? Travel expenses, arrangements for moving the pet ought to be considered as well as the pet's best interests and the agreement of both parties.

4. Changing circumstances – Illness, injury or financial difficulty may make it difficult for one party to care for the pet. Consider the steps to take in this eventuality and who will take over responsibility.
5. Dispute resolution – Outline a process for resolving disputes that may arise about the pet's care. You may consider mediation or arbitration.

Importantly if you are looking at creating a pet-nup, you and your partner must seek independent legal advice and the agreement must be signed at least 21 days prior to the wedding or civil partnership for it to be legally binding. This is to ensure that both parties have had sufficient time to consider the agreement.

While nobody wants to anticipate the end of a relationship, the welfare and future of your beloved pet is something to consider and plan for - a pet-nup can provide peace of mind should the parting of ways occur.

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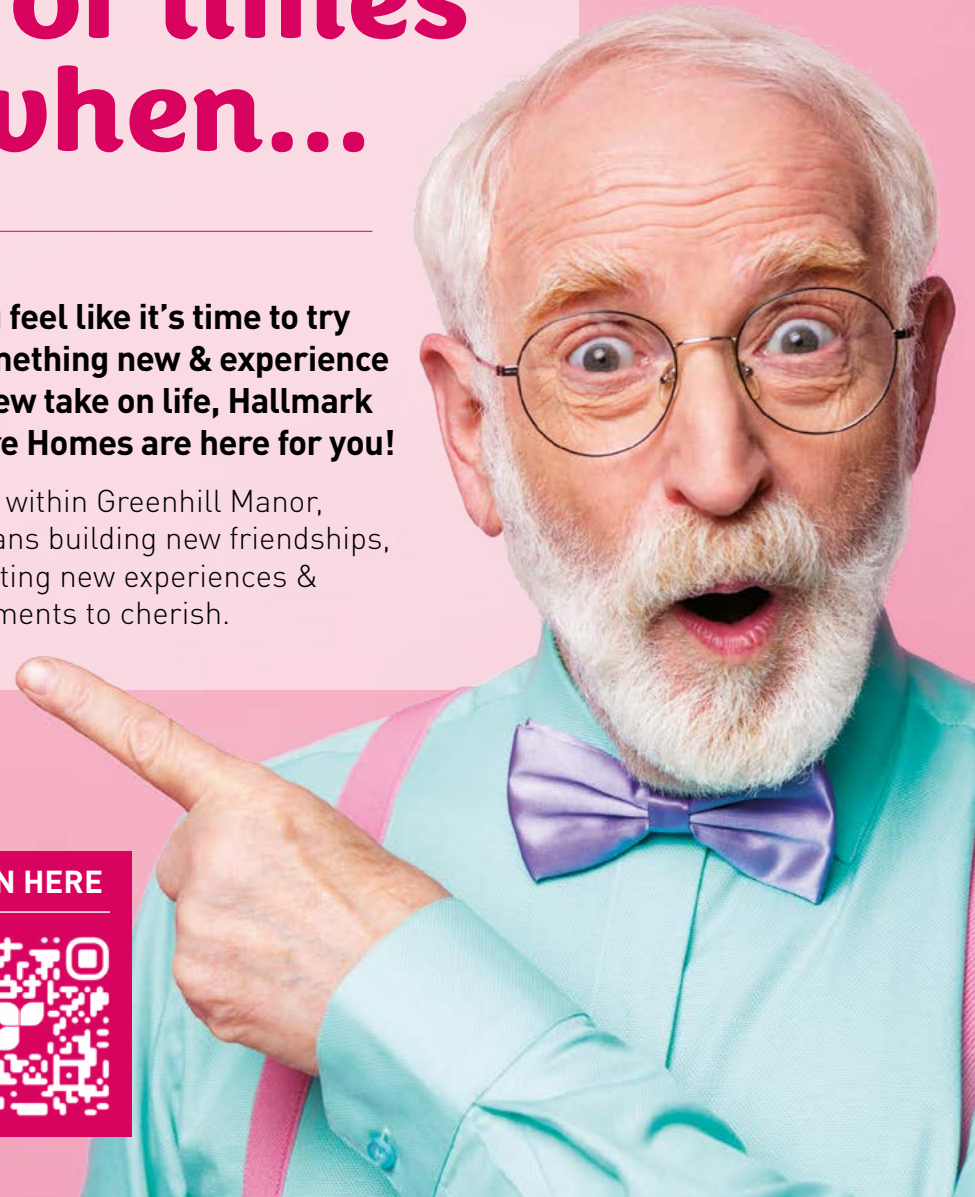
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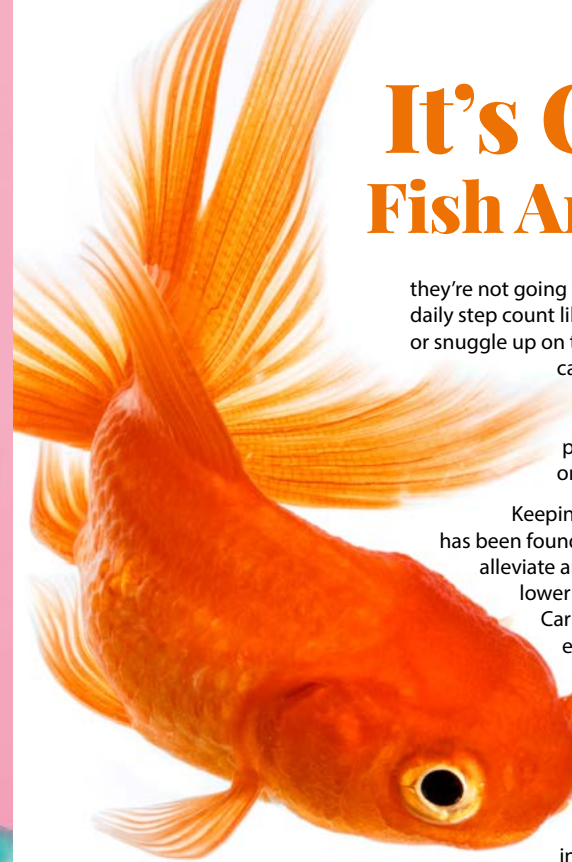
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It's Oh-fish-ial: Fish Are Good for You



they're not going to boost your daily step count like a dog would or snuggle up on the sofa like a cat, but keeping fish has been found to have a profound impact on mental health.

Keeping an aquarium has been found to lower stress, alleviate anxiety and lower blood pressure. Caring for their environment can help improve your focus and studies have also shown that watching fish has increased levels of happiness. They can

You don't need us to tell you that life is stressful. Everything seems to be on the up, from our weekly shop to rent and mortgages. But pets have been shown to significantly reduce stress and support our mental health, even in times of trouble, as proven by the 3.2million households who got a pet during the pandemic!

In our fast paced modern age, a cat or a dog aren't always the best choice, but have you considered fish? There are approximately 5 million households in the UK who keep an aquarium, so you'd be in good company.

Fish might not immediately spring to mind when you're thinking about getting a pet. After all,

aquarium can be so relaxing that it can help you sleep at night - and makes a much better alternative to scrolling a glowing screen before you nod off!

All of that sounds great, but you're probably worried about the cost. And yes, it can be expensive to invest in a large aquarium and lots of fancy fish, but you don't have to start there.

Freshwater tanks with goldfish, tetras and barbs are a much cheaper investment than tropical marine tanks full of angelfish, so be sure to research the difference before you invest. You can always evolve your set up over time, which is another enjoyable part of the hobby of fish-keeping. It's worth remembering that the electrical cost of running the tank is dependent on the electrical equipment it's running and how long it's on for, rather than the size of it.

So if you're looking for a new hobby that has the added benefit of chilling you out after a long day, look no further than the common old goldfish!

Nikki Poulton





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October Weather Outlook

by Jonathan Powell

Photo: The Deri, by Sally Cooper

After quite an autumnal mix to start the new season, October looks likely to follow suit with periods of dry and settled weather battling with the Atlantic intent on sweeping bands of rain across the region. The rain at times may well give cause for concern with regard to flooding issues, with that threat reinforced by the climate extremes that we have witnessed during 2023 so far. With any run of drier and brighter weather, some chillier conditions to be expected, with a heavy dew possible first thing. Generally, October does appear to show a significant lean toward being a mild, indeed at times, rather warm month over all, with November possibly similar in nature. October will potentially return on or around the average for rainfall. Warmer than average.



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"A dog is the only thing on earth that loves you more than you love yourself."

~ Josh Billings

Zen and the Art of Pet Maintenance

Like you, I too am drawn to cute animal videos on social media and saw one recently where, after a brief story about their pet's behaviour, the author concluded, "I think I love him more than I love humans."

So, beyond the obvious - fluffiness, faithfulness, comedy antics, companionship - what is it about pets that engenders *such* affection? Let's take what we know of how the mind works and dig a little deeper.

On reflection, I can see two main aspects that might explain our adoration of the humble pet.

1. THEY ARE A MIRROR OF PURE BEING

What I mean by this, is that they generally exhibit all the characteristics of enlightenment; or how we would behave if we weren't so wrapped up in our human frailties. Just like very small children, if we listen, pets are teaching us how life works best. Here are some examples:

They live in, and act from, the present moment. Now, is the only thing we ever *actually* get to experience (all else is imagination) and pets readily demonstrate their awareness of this simple, liberating fact, by just *being* present to whatever life offers them. (Squirrel!)

They are accepting of life, as it is. Pets don't waste time and energy trying to massage their circumstances into some sort of shape that the ego claims will 'make them' happy. No, they just get on with the business of *being* happy. *Whatever's* going on.

They don't judge themselves. One of the mind's key jobs is to separate, categorise and then compare; a skill we humans have elevated to *such* an art form, we've robbed ourselves of all contentment in the process. Our pets however, will *never* restrict their behaviour on the basis of what we, or the next door neighbour's pet, might think about them. Take heed!

They behave purely from intuition. You, and I, and every living thing on this planet is *indivisible* from the intelligent, omnipresent wisdom of life energy, that guides us to do whatever needs doing to thrive. Pets surf this wave like true pros... while we humans flounder in the shallows, taking most of *our* behavioural cues from the mind's insecurities and doom-mongering.

But more than sharing our time with veritable Zen masters, I believe there's something even deeper to the relationship with our pets.

2. THEY POINT US TO OUR TRUE NATURE.

I've never been inside an animal's head, so I can't know for certain, but by all accounts, our pets seem to hold *no* truck with the notion of a separate self-identity. Sure, each one is unique and has personality, but I don't see *them* limiting their behaviour in order to protect what is no more than an *idea* of who they are.

We, on the other hand, too easily label our selves as being 'like this' or 'like that', spending our lives shoring up these spurious beliefs, going out of our way to verify the mind's imagined picture of self... all the while inadvertently shrinking the canvas of our lives, one stroke at a time.

Because who-we-really-are is something that's *before* the mind, it's impossible for us to conceptualise or understand it, but I can tell you the one place you're going to *feel* the essence of your true nature... and that's when you're with your pets.

Connected and present to their very being, you get to experience life before thought and therefore *without* the creation of the separate self and all its attendant problems. Not thinking about our selves is the very definition of 'peace of mind.'

What's more, given that ego-creation seems to be a uniquely *human* disability — existing in thought alone — our pets do

not recognise, or engage with it. They see *only* our true nature and interact with us accordingly: with unconditional love for the pure being that we are at heart. They understand, that underneath our slavish devotion to our thoughts, we too are *already* enlightened.

Could this be the essence of the love we feel for our pets? By treating us as the divine, spiritual beings we are, they help to point us *away* from what is not true (the stories we live in) and back towards our innate health.

As do I, each month, with these articles for you.



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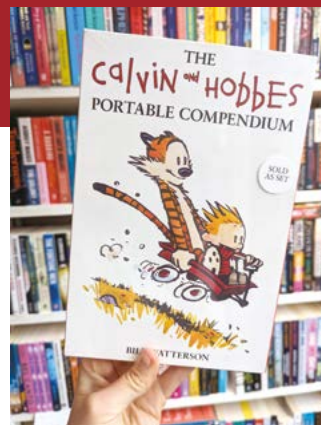
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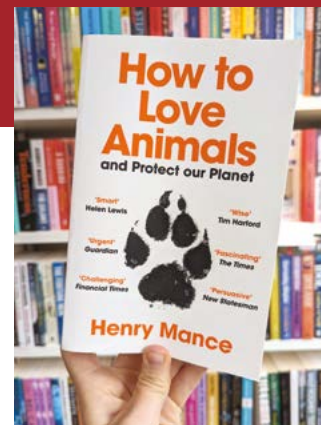
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When a brother and sister find a new furry friend, they decide that it most definitely is a cat. But something's not quite right. It's very loud... It's very hungry... And it doesn't use doors! They eventually decide that it is, after all, an *outdoors cat* and are very happy to leave it to all the outdoorsy things!



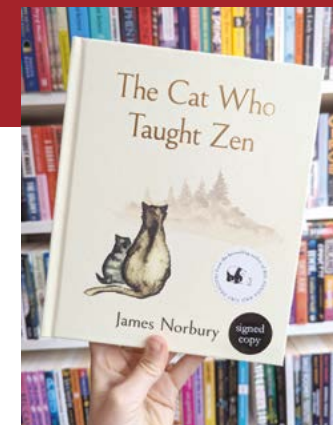
The Calvin and Hobbes Portable Compendium Bill Watterson

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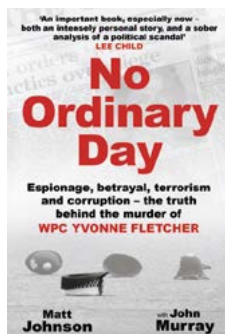
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The Cat who taught Zen James Norbury

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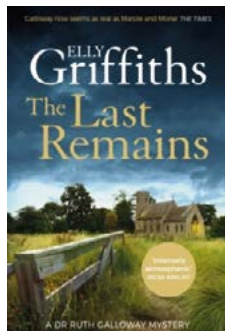
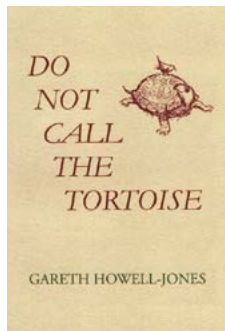


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Michael Pedersen
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The Cat Prince & Other Poems is the third collection from prize-winning poet, and author of Boy Friends, Michael Pedersen. All moggie moxie, Pedersen croons to the beauty and devastation of love, loss, friendship, cats and careless joy. Equal parts tender and trenchant, raw and ribald, plangent and smutty, these poems exhibit an emotionally charged, fantastical playground of language and lore.

Big Swiss

Jen Beagin
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Greta liked knowing people's secrets. That wasn't a problem. Until she met Big Swiss. Big Swiss. That's Greta's nickname for her - she is tall, and she is from Switzerland. Greta can see her now: dressed top to toe in white, that adorable gap between her two front teeth, her penetrating blue eyes. She's a head-turner: including the heads of infants and dogs. Well that's how Greta imagines



seeing her; they haven't actually ever met in person. Nor has Greta actually ever been to Switzerland.

HELP I OSOD EICH EIDDO



Mae Gwasanaeth Gosod Sir Fynwy'n cynnig ffordd wahanol a chost effeithiol o rentu eich eiddo.

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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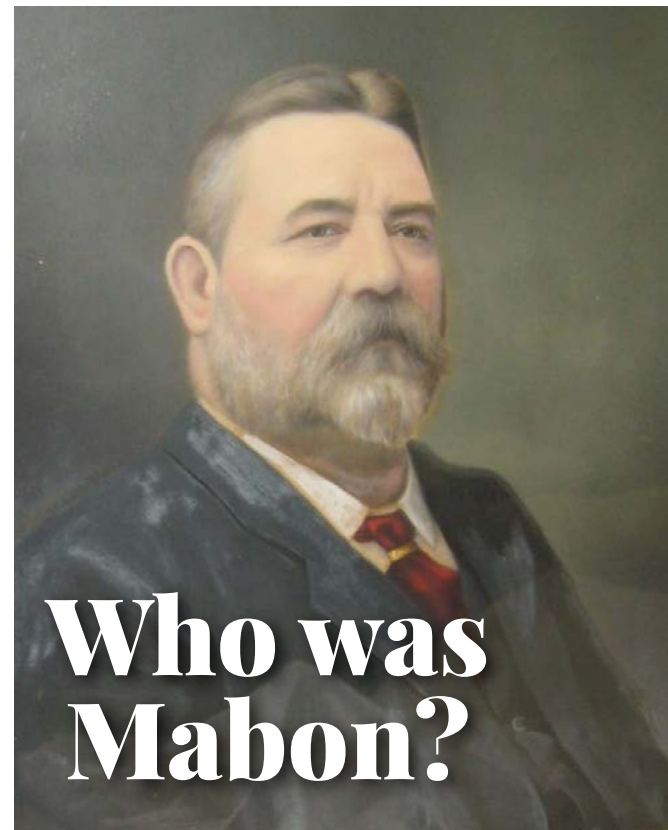


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Gwefan/Website: www.gov.wales/leasing-scheme-wales-guidance



Who was Mabon?

William Abraham was born into poverty but became a workers' hero who surprised his followers when left a small fortune. Helen Morgan from Abergavenny Local History Society reports.

He was born in 1842 in Cwmafan and went down the pit when he was just 10. Yet during the next 70 years, having adopted his bardic name Mabon, he earned a reputation as poet, singer, miners' leader, and MP.

As President of the South Wales Miners' Federation, he rubbed shoulders with the likes of William Gladstone. When he died in May 1922, his funeral was almost worthy of a head of state. Film coverage of the procession past

a grim stone chapel towering above terraced houses and shops tells us that no ordinary man is en route to his grave. Dignitaries, resplendent in silk hats stand alongside miners and owners by the grave. For Mabon was respected by the plutocrats as well as revered by the poor. They knew him as a pillar of the Chapel, for his powerful solos at the eisteddfod — a paragon, it seemed, of all that was good.

Then they read the will. The Workers' Hero had left £33,315,

equivalent to 300 years' pay for a miner. Many former supporters began to see Mabon in a new light. Questions were asked: Were his ideals corrupted by power and the perks it could bring? Where did Mabon's money come from? He had access to business leaders who would have advised him on where to invest, says David Maddox. This would explain the 6% preference shares in the Pearl Assurance Company, but no evidence exists that he ever invested in the coal industry. What he did do was play a prominent part in the struggle which led to the drawing up a sliding scale of wages in the coalfields in relation to prices and profits. When South Wales miners were given a day off on the first Monday each month in 1892 it became known as Mabon's Monday. He was elected MP for the Rhondda in 1885 and remained an MP until 1920. Throughout his career he championed negotiation rather than confrontation. However, although he fought in the best interests of the miners, he was unable to prevent the bitter disputes that led to the first general miners' strike in 1912. Seemingly the coalpit owners were not listening.

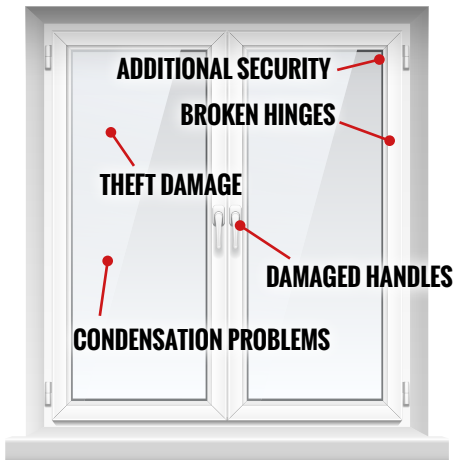


David Maddox's talk on Mabon: Workers' Hero? in the Borough Theatre on October 18th starts at 7.30pm. For details on how to reserve your seat visit abergavennylocalhistorysociety.org.uk

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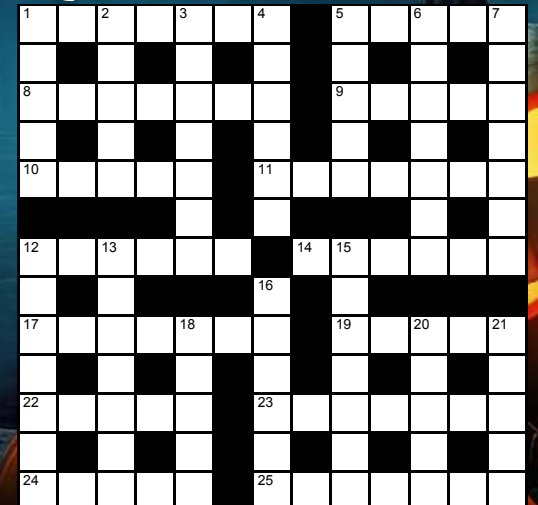
ACROSS

- 1 Cars, vans and buses etc (7)
- 5 Type of sailing boat (5)
- 8 Enhance (7)
- 9 Perfect (5)
- 10 Severe (5)
- 11 Playhouse (7)
- 12 Reliable (6)
- 14 Shovels (6)
- 17 Extremely old (7)
- 19 Endangered species (5)
- 22 Tracks (5)
- 23 Sportsman (7)
- 24 Father (5)
- 25 Female relations (7)

DOWN

- 1 Works hard (5)
- 2 Type of fruit (5)
- 3 Grimaced (7)
- 4 Crates (6)
- 5 Dagger (5)
- 6 Given medical care (7)
- 7 Assistants (7)
- 12 Exchanged (7)
- 13 Elated (7)
- 15 Throws (7)
- 16 Used for drinking (6)
- 18 Assignment (5)
- 20 Waterfowl (5)
- 21 Scottish dances (5)

Quick Crossword



Solutions on our website: www.thefocus.wales

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Ceri Jones is a negotiator here at James Dean, and has been working for the company for almost a year. Property isn't Ceri's only passion, however; she's also head over heels for hedgehogs and she volunteers for Hedgehog Helpline, a charity founded in 1988 by volunteers in South Wales, caring for sick, injured and orphaned hedgehogs.

Ceri unfortunately suffers from hip dysplasia, which means she is unable to get out and about quite as much as she would like. Even though she has a deep love of animals and wildlife, her condition means that being out in nature is often restricted to her garden. It was in her garden a couple of years ago that Ceri discovered a poorly baby hedgehog who needed some help. Not knowing what to do, Ceri did a quick Google search and discovered Hedgehog Helpline.

Over the past 18 months, Ceri has become a fully committed volunteer for the charity, and is now a 'B&B' carer helping hedgehogs to prepare for release back into the wild. Ceri's role is to feed them up, clean them and do general checks. She monitors their weight to make sure they are making good progress and gives them the odd cuddle now and then.



Ceri's garden is also home to some wild hedgehogs



who have made their own nests and gone on to have litters of their own, which has been amazing to watch. She says that she couldn't do this without the amazing support network of other Hedgehog Helpline volunteers in and around the Abergavenny area that are always there to help.

Hedgehogs need our help more than ever. Please support them by

feeding them wherever you can. Dry/wet cat food is plenty and ensure you have water available for them. This will be vital in the next coming weeks as winter and hibernation is just around the corner. And remember that a hedgehog that is out in the day, is not ok.

To learn more about HedgeHog Helpline, visit: www.hedgehoghelpline.co.uk

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