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Dear Readers,



This month marks our 200th issue of the *Abergavenny Focus* which, if your maths is sharp, means we have been publishing the magazine for 16 years. What a privilege it is to do so. The magazine and print industry is a tough place to be and we are so grateful to have the support of readers and advertisers who make every issue possible. Thank you.

This month we are concentrating on **later years**. Ageing means different things to different people and brings with it changes and challenges we may not even think about when we are younger. For children with aging parents their welfare and health is always at the forefront of our minds. We hope our range of articles and advertising businesses will be useful and informative.

February means, of course, that Valentine's Day is just around the corner. We have some top literary picks on the theme of love for you to enjoy - ideal whether you're single or coupled up on Valentine's Day. Don't forget it's a leap year too, and on 29th Feb tradition says that a female can propose marriage, contrary to old traditions. But really, in this day and age, why wait for a leap year?

Lots more to enjoy in the magazine, so settle down and enjoy the read.

Hannah

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Lots going on at Abergavenny's Community Orchard



The Laurie Jones Community Orchard (named in memory of its founder) is situated at the bottom of Mill Street in Abergavenny, and has over 90 apple, pear, plum, cherry and other fruit trees. It was planted around 12 years ago, and has matured into a place of beauty, wildlife and wellbeing. It is managed by a small team of volunteers, but all member of the community are very welcome to come and enjoy the orchard,

and in summer to come and pick and enjoy the fruit, whilst leaving enough fruit for others to enjoy.

Most recently, the traditional wassail celebration has been held, with around 200 people attending. The procession around the orchard was led by the orchard's Green Man puppet, made by Susan Holder and Tom Bramley. The procession was followed by a traditional wassail ceremony, led by Jeff Davies, and children were

invited to places pieces of toast soaked in cider, in the branches of the apple trees, to please the orchard spirits! Cider and apple juice pressed from orchard apples, and apple cake, was then enjoyed by everyone present, and as the evening drew in the braziers and candles were lit to make the orchard look even more magical than usual.

There are activities throughout the year for people to enjoy and celebrate the changing seasons. There will be a Spring Blossom Picnic on Bank Holiday Monday 6th May, with lots of children's activities associated with nature, and lots of picnicking! We have our annual AGM in the orchard on 21st July, accompanied by a communal picnic. In July and August we will be undertaking some traditional haymaking, and in autumn we will be running our popular apple pressing days at the Community Centre. Everyone is very welcome to attend. We also hold monthly maintenance days, when we undertake various tasks, and again everyone is very welcome to pop along. You can get in touch with us via our Facebook page ([AbergavennyCommunityOrchard](https://www.facebook.com/AbergavennyCommunityOrchard)) or emailing us as abergavennycommunityorchard@gmail.com. We hope to see many more people come and enjoy the beauty of the orchard!

Simon Bilborough

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Creative Futures

New Expressive Arts Opportunities for Young People in Abergavenny.

Photo Credit: Hamish Kale - unsplash



Are you ages 11 to 19 and interested in Theatre? Creative Futures is hosting weekly Youth Theatre workshops in Abergavenny. The term-time and holiday programmes will consist of a series of dynamic sessions led by professional theatre practitioners, exploring different modes of self-expression and enabling you to share your stories and experiences.

Sessions will be open to all and free of charge. The Creative Futures Project is committed to opening the power of theatre to as many young people as possible giving everyone the chance to express themselves and tell their story. Sessions will be guided by young people themselves, based on issues and experiences that resonate with them.

Incorporating writing, physical theatre, and numerous other theatrical skills, the Creative

Futures Project is working to establish a permanent Monmouthshire Youth Theatre, based in Abergavenny, and supporting other youth theatre organisations throughout the county. Through opening up more local expressive arts opportunities to young people, creating multi-disciplinary performance, growing their practice, and giving platform for further study and work in theatre, we will build an inspiring and dynamic theatre culture for our young people here in Abergavenny.

The project aims to inspire conversation amongst young people and to develop a genuinely engaging programme based upon the issues that emerge as the most current and important to them.

Funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Creative Futures is a collaboration between The Borough Theatre, Dance Blast,

Melville Centre for the Arts and Monmouthshire Youth Services. Through collaboration, shared knowledge, expertise, and resources, we will build a stronger network that supports young people in their journeys of self-expression.

Sessions will take place at Melville Centre for the Arts each Saturday through term-time, with the Half Term programme running for 3 days of the holiday. Easter Programme to be announced soon!

If you are interested in being a part of Creative Futures and attending term-time or holiday sessions, please contact Katherine McDermid-Smith. Email: katherinemcdermidsmith@monmouthshire.gov.uk Phone: 01633 644008

For more information on the project, please visit www.boroughtheatreabergavenny.co.uk/creative-futures-monmouthshire/

This project is funded by the UK government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

To discover how the Shared Prosperity Fund is active in Monmouthshire visit: www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-spf/



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Are you 50+ and live in Monmouthshire?

Monmouthshire County Council are seeking your feedback to help Monmouthshire become an Age-Friendly community.

If you are aged 50 or over, please take part in our survey and share your experiences and thoughts on everyday life in Monmouthshire.

The World Health Organisation has identified eight key areas that are crucial to the well-being of the 50+ population. This is an excellent opportunity for you to provide us with your feedback on these areas.

The eight areas the survey concentrates on are:

- Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
- Transportation
- Housing
- Social Participation
- Respect and Social Inclusion
- Civic Participation and Employment
- Communication and Information
- Community and Health Care

If you would like to discuss the survey or your experiences with our Partnerships team, they'll visit different locations in

February. Feel free to pop along and speak to them.

- **Tuesday 6/2/24** – Caldicot Community Hub & Library
- **Tuesday 13/2/24** – Abergavenny Market
- **Wednesday 14/2/24** – Usk Community Hub & Library
- **Tuesday 20/2/24** – Monmouth Community Hub & Library
- **Friday 23/2/24** – Chepstow Community Hub & Library

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We are seeking your help to become an Age-Friendly Community.

Please complete this short survey by scanning the QR code or visiting:

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FEBRUARY EVENTS CALENDAR

Abergavenny. Tickets £12 with book or £8 without. Book-ish.co.uk/events

9TH FEBRUARY

Llanfoist Village Hall Film Night **THE GREAT ESCAPER (12A)**

Bernard Jordan escapes from his care home to attend the 70th Anniversary of the D-Day Landings in France. *Doors 7pm, Screening at 7.30pm, Tickets £5 by card payment if possible, please. Village Hall, Church Lane, Llanfoist*

10TH FEBRUARY

ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE ZIMBABWE

A fundraising event for Love Zimbabwe Charity. Featuring: Zim Voices, David Holman's Artificial Intelligence, Tom Ward-Jackson Theatre, Penypound, Abergavenny Tickets £20 adults, £15 children and concessions. *Melville centre box office: 01873 853 167*
melvillecentrearts@gmail.com

13TH FEBRUARY

FAIRTRADE PANCAKE LUNCH

Fairtrade stalls. All Welcome *12.15pm - 1.45pm, Methodist Church Hall, Castle St, Abergavenny*

12TH FEBRUARY

OPEN FUNDRAISING FOR THE GATHERING

Please come along to our fundraising event to help funds for The Gathering. We are based at The Wellbeing Hub (Old Tourist Centre) at the bus station. Music performance, pop up shop, raffles and more! The Gathering is a community group that supports everyone in Abergavenny. Our focus on adults with learning / Physical difficulties and mental health struggles. *10am-3pm*
Thegathering.wales

14TH FEBRUARY

Abergavenny Film Society Screening THE BEASTS (15)

A married couple whose dream of moving to the countryside turns into a living nightmare. After moving to a small village in Spain's Northwest, Antione and Olga's

FEBRUARY/MARCH

YOUTH THEATRE SESSIONS

Creative Futures is hosting FREE weekly Youth Theatre sessions for 11 - 19 year old in Abergavenny. These dynamic sessions are led by professional theatre practitioners, exploring different modes of self-expression and enabling you to share your stories and experiences. See Page 7 for full details of workshop times and half term activities. *Melville Centre, Penypound, Abergavenny*

4TH FEBRUARY

Y FENNI FLUTES

Do you play or have played the flute and fancy playing with fellow flautists in an informal friendly setting, then come along. Suitable for 16+ Contact Catherine Handley for more info and to book a place. £5 per person.

cathhandley@yahoo.co.uk

3pm, Abergavenny Community Centre, Merthyr Road, Abergavenny

6TH FEBRUARY (AND WEEKLY)

CRAFTING 4 CANCER

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

7TH FEBRUARY

ABERGAVENNY FIFTYPLUS GROUP

Richard Purkiss gives an illustrated talk about the American hospital located in Gilwern during the First World War

2pm, Trinity Hall Baker Street, Abergavenny. All Welcome. £2

7TH FEBRUARY

Book-ish Event - KEITH TEMPLE – DOCTOR WHO: PLANET OF THE OOD

7.30pm, Melville Theatre,

peaceful life is drastically uprooted. When they are approached by Norwegian developers who are willing to pay the residents of the neighbourhood to build a wind farm on their property, Antione and Olga are the only residents who vote against the development. This sparks anger in two local brothers whose rising tempers push the situation to the point of no return. *Screenings at 4.30pm and 7.30pm, Max 15 guests per screening. £5 per head. Melville Centre, Penypound, Abergavenny. Thefilmsociety.co.uk*

17TH FEBRUARY

REPAIR CAFÉ ABERGAVENNY – CAFFI TRWSIO Y FENNI

We repair household items, electrical and otherwise. (no microwaves) manual bicycles safety check. Appointment essential for woodwork, jewellery, and electronic (no sentimental/antique teddys or dolls please). Sewing repairs – advice only for zips and alterations. Labour free (donations welcome). Please note parts are not supplied and items can't be left. Our object is to keep repairable items out of landfill. Book, enquire or drop in. Contact repaircafeabergavenny@gmail.com and facebook messenger *11am-2pm. Last booking 1.15pm. Abergavenny Community St, Merthyr Rd, Abergavenny*

21ST FEBRUARY

Book-ish Event - LUCY JONES – MATRESCENCE

7.30pm, Book-ish Loft, Crickhowell
Tickets £25 with book or £10 without.
Book-ish.co.uk/events

21ST FEBRUARY

Abergavenny Local History Society Talk MIKE PARKER: WALES ON THE MAP

7.30pm, Melville Centre and via Zoom.
See page 43 for info

27TH FEBRUARY

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27TH FEBRUARY

Book-ish Event JENNIE GODFREY – THE LIST OF SUSPICIOUS THINGS
7.30pm, Book-ish Loft, Crickhowell
Tickets £18 with book or £10 without
Book-ish.co.uk/events

28TH FEBRUARY

Abergavenny Film Society Screening THE EIGHT MOUNTAINS (12)

Though 147 minutes long this beautiful film is a joy to watch. It tells the story of Pietro, from Turin, whose parents rent a holiday house in the Aosta Valley where he meets Bruno, a local lad. The boys develop a lifelong friendship and we see them meeting up repeatedly, sharing a love of the mountains around Aosta. Predictability their lives and experiences diverge, but their respect for each other and the local Alps endures. Screenings at

4.30pm and 7.30pm. Max 15 guests per screening. £5 per head. Melville Centre, Penypound, Abergavenny. Thefilmsociety.co.uk

28TH FEBRUARY

ABERGAVENTNY U3A PHOTOMARATHON
See our article on Pg. 23 for more info

29TH FEBRUARY

Book-ish Event - LEN PENNIE - POYUMS

7.30pm, Melville Theatre, Abergavenny. Tickets £15 with book or £10 without. Book-ish.co.uk/events

6TH MARCH

Abergavenny Fiftyplus Group 'FINDING FOCUS'

Hannah Hill, owner of Focus Magazines, talks about her journey of discovery which led from South Australia to London to owning Abergavenny's local magazine and finding a place to really belong. 2pm, Trinity Hall Baker Street, Abergavenny. All Welcome £2

7TH MARCH

ABER LAUGH @ THE BOROUGH

Popular Abergavenny comedy club presents a special night of Comedy at the Borough as part of a new series of events. A fantastic group of comedians all ready to make you laugh hosted by local comic Huw Davies alongside headliner Nick Page. 8pm, Borough Theatre, Abergavenny. Tickets £10 from boroughtheatreabergavenny.co.uk or Box Office 01873 850 805

9TH-17TH MARCH

CRICKHOWELL WALKING FESTIVAL

See Page 17 for more info
Crickhowellfestival.com

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

ABERGAVENTNY FILM SOCIETY
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	14 th February The Beasts (15)		28 th February The Eight Mountains (12)
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------

Doors 4pm for 4:30pm screening and 7pm for 7:30pm screening.
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Crickhowell Walking Festival 2024

Saturday 9th – Sunday 17th March



Our 16th Festival is already proving as popular as ever! CWF 2024 will feature 81 walks throughout the National Park and beyond – from 2 to 17 miles, from local strolls to strenuous all-day expeditions. We are again running TM5, a challenge to climb Crickhowell's own summit, Table Mountain, up to five times in a day!

Our evening programme starts with BBNP Geopark Officer Alan Bowring who will conduct us on a tour of the longest river wholly within Wales – from its birth high in the West to Uskmouth, passing by Brecon, Crickhowell and Abergavenny.

Other fine talks include Mark Davis on the parallels (for man and beast) between historical cattle droving and today's long-distance endurance sport, and Crickhowell's own Kevin Walker looking back at how walking became for him a way of life. And don't forget our ever-popular Pub Quiz, this time in the Bear Hotel.

CWF 2024 benefits CRiC, the Crickhowell Resource and Information Centre charity – also Brecon and District MIND, offering information, advice and other mental health support services across the National Park area: www.breconmind.org.uk. Go now to www.crickhowellfestival.com to make your booking.

Sue Collins

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themakerscraftsgallery.co.uk

Crickhowell Walking Festival



9th - 17th March 2024

9 days of guided walks in the beautiful mountains and valleys. Read more in the article above.

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www.crickhowellfestival.com





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Before I was a yoga teacher, I worked with patients with complex or palliative care needs, at home and in the community. It was humbling work.

When I began teaching, I found students in their eighties doing headstands, but in my 'day job', I had patients in their thirties needing opiates to tie their shoes. Keeping people mobile and confident in their body's resilience and adaptability is my main motivation.

It saddens me that people resign themselves to a certain level of inflexibility, immobility, or even pain as aging occurs. None of this need be tolerable, or even inevitable. Gentle exercise, based on natural movement can help with daily activities such as standing, reaching, bending down, walking, dressing, washing, and playing with children and pets.

Over the last decade, it was found that one in eight preventable deaths in England and Wales

involved a fall, especially among older people. Prioritising balance and mobility is essential in later life, not only for longevity, but for personal independence, dignity, and freedom.¹

A society that prioritises speed and productivity overlooks the value and skill of those requiring more time, patience, and general 'slowness.' This negatively impacts people's self-worth, and willingness to participate or try new things.

There are studies now demonstrating how yoga and meditation can slow or reverse cognitive decline, language loss, and visuospatial impairment in susceptible populations. They further report improved executive function, mood, and sleep quality in the groups who did regular yoga and Mindfulness than in those who did other types of relaxation and memory exercises.²

Participating in group exercise classes also creates friendships which mitigate the social isolation and loneliness associated with aging.

I hope to offer as widely accessible classes as possible. Gone are the days of teaching headstands - I have embraced my demographic of mostly middle aged people and older, with varying medical backgrounds - mastectomy, hysterectomy, hip and knee replacements, stroke recovery and early stages of dementia. We move slowly, modify where necessary and relax. We celebrate moving as well as we can, for as long as we can.



*Boo Bond
Body & Earth Holistics*

References:

1. Preventable deaths involving falls in England and Wales, 2013-22: a systematic case series of coroners' reports. *Age Ageing*. 2023 Oct 2;52(10):afad191. doi: 10.1093/ageing/afad191. PMID: 37847796.
2. Changes in Neural Connectivity and Memory Following a Yoga Intervention for Older Adults: A Pilot Study. *J Alzheimers Dis*. 2016;52(2):673-84. doi: 10.3233/JAD-150653. PMID: 27060939; PMCID: PMC4927889.

Photomathon Febuary 28th

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The event is being run by your local u3a. This is an Abergavenny group for the retired or part retired residents of a certain age. These are folk determined to keep their minds active by sharing knowledge, social events, life



experiences and hobbies with a sense of fun. Talks , discussions, and events are usually held in the clubhouse at Pen yPound, but on this occasion we will be wandering the streets of Abergavenny cameras in hand. The competition will be judged by popular vote at our AGM in March where all entrees will be displayed.

If you would like to hear more about our group or come and have a taster by joining in this event contact marilynjcampbell@icloud.com

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Marilyn Campbell

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Every year for the February edition, I think of an article that would align with Valentine's Day and the month associated with love. We have covered 'Love where you live' and 'passionate about property' and included photographs of some of the beautiful properties we are privileged to market.

This year I thought I would consider what I love about being an estate agent. Parrys in Abergavenny celebrates its 20th year in March 2024, we have been in our superb offices/showroom at 21 Nevill Street for 10 years, originally starting out a few doors away at number 17.



Our showroom in Abergavenny.

I am immensely proud of our showroom in Nevill Street, hopefully we have created a comfortable environment for prospective buyers and sellers to call in and discuss their property goals. Sometimes our sofas are just a little too comfortable ...



Technology.

Okay, I don't love technology but I do appreciate the improvement in processes that allows us more time to speak to our clients and potential sellers and buyers. Fortunately, there are people within the team who have the skills and patience to deal with IT.



Views.

I never tire of working in such a beautiful area, there is always a view whether it be a glimpse of the Skirrid, Sugar Loaf or Brecon Mountains from a property in town to the panorama over the Brecon Beacons countryside or views of the River Usk or Brecon and Monmouth Canal. And if I am out driving on a beautiful day, I will sometimes just park the car and take a moment to appreciate my surroundings.

Buyers and Sellers.

Selling houses is as much about the people as the property and I am fortunate to meet interesting people from all walks of life



Progressing a sale.

Often the most difficult, frustrating and time consuming part of the job but conversely, often the most rewarding. Knowing my experience and knowledge has added value to a transaction and helped the buyer and seller achieve their goal

Canines.

Being a dog owner and lover, it's great to meet the canines who occupy the houses, often in a prime position by the fire, on the sofa or on the bed!

Beautiful Homes.

The first comment people make when I say I am an estate agent is 'ooh I would love to go and look at other people's houses'. Of course, I love that part of the job too but when I visit a house I immediately switch into an objective mode looking at what the great features are and what may be compromises for future buyers. And whilst I fall in love with some houses or admire the location, whether it will sell is not a matter of my personal opinion but what will appeal to a buyer.

Helping.

People move to the next chapter of their life, which at times, can be emotional. Practical help too, especially with an absent vendor who may need support organising for a house to be cleared and cleaned.

The Team.

Working alongside a super team all with different skills and personalities, together we are awesome and have over 100 years experience in estate agency between us

Learning.

The phrase 'every day is a school day' is so true. I love learning and expanding my knowledge and sharing with the team too.

Humour.

Like most professions, there is humour to be found often when unexpected. There is a perception that being an estate agent is a glamorous job, walking around gardens and fields in the pouring rain or getting a key stuck in a lock when you have a viewer arriving in a few minutes is the realityand whilst at the time, the situations may be stressful, I can often look back and smile



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with their personal care needs. Penpergwm Club recognises the vital importance of social interaction in everyday life in all its different forms: from enjoying the chance to get some fresh air in the beautiful gardens, to taking part in a wide range of activities to just enjoying a conversation with someone new (or familiar) over a cup of tea and a treat.

The Penpergwm Club helps individuals to develop new relationships, build confidence and enjoy meaningful activities as well as offering a few hours of respite, if applicable, to those who would normally support them. Choice is at the core of everything they do; it is important that any Club members feel totally comfortable with how their day is conducted and they will be at the centre of deciding what suits them the best, each time they are at the Club.

For more information about **taster sessions, prices and availability of joining the Club, contact the Home directly on 01873 840 267 or look the website:** www.penpergwmhouse.org.uk.

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Penpergwm Club is an experienced service and has been tailored to offer Clients an opportunity to be part of the Home and enjoy spending time there to enjoy what is on offer and be supported by not just the staff but dedicated Club Coordinators who are on hand as much or as little as required. The Club runs between 10am – 4pm, every week day, and the aim is to provide comforting and reassuring enrichment which is more than just assisting individuals



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Love & Loss Support Group



Our senior years often bring nostalgia, a reduction in our social circle, loss and the challenge of navigating new twists and turns of life. Grief may become a familiar companion as we say goodbye to loved ones and parts of our earlier identity. All this can leave us feeling isolated and even result in a deterioration in our physical, mental and/or emotional wellbeing.

Loss can come in a variety of forms:

- Retirement can bring a loss of routine and structure and perhaps of a sense of meaning and purpose to our days. It might also mean that we lose our social circle and the regular human contact of a workplace.
- Bereavement can be more frequent as our friends and family are also aging, bringing us face-to-face with our own mortality.
- Moving home, whether downsizing, moving closer to family members or going into sheltered or residential accommodation can mean losing a familiar environment and the sense of grounding and stability it gave.

At times like these it's important to reach out and connect with others, fostering a sense of community, purpose and

belonging. This is deeply healing and helps us to stay young at heart, keeping us active into our later years.

Age often brings a new sense of perspective and a gentler pace of life. Embracing this flow of time, staying curious about each new stage of life and keeping a sense of compassion and fun, helps to make the aging process smoother and more enjoyable.

But, if you find yourself feeling alone or struggling with feelings of grief and grieving, come along to the Love & Loss support group, held on the second Thursday of each month. To find out more contact: Jane – 0773 320 1158 create.ceremonies@gmail.com
Robyn – 07980 669303 robyn@equenergy.com
Find us on Facebook as 'Love & Loss Bereavement Group'.

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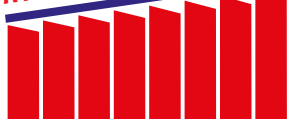
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February Weather Outlook

by Jonathan Powell

With December proving essentially mild, then a shift during January to colder conditions for a time, February could well be the month to provide the sting in winter's tail. The gradual retreating of milder conditions across Europe has left the UK and indeed Wales seemingly more exposed to colder weather during the month February, with the result of an elevated risk of witnessing snowfall. Expect quite a mix for the month with a positional shift in the jet stream allowing bands of rain from the west to encounter stationary colder air positioned across the region, readily turning that rain to snow. Naturally, higher ground will be most at risk from seeing snowfall. There will be frost activity with icy conditions and whereas milder and wetter weather will at times take precedence, wintriness looks to have the lion's share. On or around the average for both rainfall and temperature.

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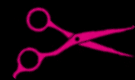
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Feel the Local Love

Recently we asked members of Abergavenny Voice Facebook Group to tell us about a local business that is a standout one to them, and why. As it's Valentine's Day this month, we thought we'd spread a little local love and name them here. Unfortunately, there isn't enough space for us to list everyone mentioned, so this is a random sample. With huge thanks to these people for helping to make Abergavenny a unique and special place to shop, eat and use businesses.



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2ME2U IN ST MICHAELS RD
"For Paul who never considers that a job is either too big or too small"

HAPPY PAWS DOG WALKING
"For Sophie Watkins who goes the extra mile, taking photos of dogs on their adventures to reassure owners that their dog is relaxed and happy"

KEY2SHOES IN LEWIS LANE
"For Ian, for sorting out the shoes of those pounding the streets of Abergavenny"

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“I tried Pilates for the first time...and now I am hooked!”

Let it be known - I am not much of a mover and have always shunned the idea of exercise classes. To me they feel like lycra clad pressure cookers in which you sweat and try in vain to keep. However, one of my new year's resolutions involved trying something new this year, which happens to be Pilates. I mean, I've heard of it, but I've never really understood it, which meant the idea of attending a class filled me with dread and, well, see above.

I'd heard good things on the grapevine about KT Pilates. Kate Thomas is a professionally trained dancer, actor and APPI certified Pilates Instructor with over 15 years teaching experience of dance, movement and Pilates and teaches locally in lots of locations, with lots of classes, including one to one tuition. Unknown to many is that Kate has developed an entire library of easy to access Pilates classes available through her subscription App which costs £10 per month or £89.99 for a full year's access. Once you have signed up, you'll discover a huge variety of Pilates classes made personally by Kate from her studio based near Raglan.

I may have mentioned that I am a beginner, and I really am, so the idea of an App felt like a good starting point for me, especially as there are classes ranging from absolute beginners through to advanced. There are short classes of just 10 minutes, or longer classes of up to an hour. You can wind down in the evening with an evening stretch or take 10 minutes out of your day for an arm toning class - one of my favourites! Not only does an online class from a professional in their field give you the confidence that you're learning from somebody who knows what they're doing, but you can make your exercise fit into your day and your routine - ideal if you're a busy person...and who isn't these days?

I highly recommend Kate's online classes, so much so that I've recently taken the leap and signed up for some one to one classes with Kate who adapts so well to one's individual needs and abilities. She truly instils the belief that you can do it. For the first time exercise, specifically Pilates, has become fun!

For more info about signing up to KT Pilates, visit www.kt-pilates.co.uk and click 'on demand' where you can learn more and gain library access.

Testimonial written by Hannah Hill



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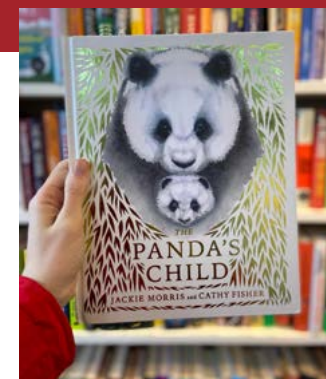
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February's literary picks from the Book-ish Booksellers are all about Love in all its varied forms. Treat somebody important to you, or show yourself some love this Valentine's Day!



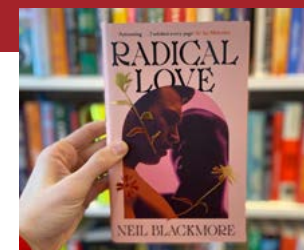
How to think more about Sex

Alain de Botton £9.99
 In this rigorous and supremely honest book Alain de Botton helps us navigate the intimate and exciting – yet often confusing and difficult – experience that is sex. Covering topics that include lust, fetishism, adultery and pornography, Alain de Botton frankly articulates the dilemmas of modern sexuality, offering insights and consolation to help us think more deeply and wisely about the sex we are, or aren't, having.



The Panda's Child

Jackie Morris and Cathy Fisher £16.99
 In a faraway forest a baby is lost and found, protected by a she-panda. Nine years later another baby, the panda's child, is in great danger, and only a boy and the spirit of the forest can save him. This magical, powerful story by Jackie Morris, co-creator of The Lost Words, and award-winning illustrator Cathy Fisher, is a book for all ages to treasure, exploring our most vital connection with wild nature.



Radical Love

Neil Blackmore £16.99
 Welcome to England, 1809. London is a violent, intolerant city, exhausted by years of war, beset by soaring prices and political tensions. By day, John Church preaches on the radical possibilities of love to a multicultural, working-class congregation in Southwark. But by night, he crosses the river to the secret and glamorous world of a gay molly house on Vere Street, where ordinary men reinvent themselves as funny, flirtatious drag queens and rent boys cavort with labourers and princes alike. There, Church becomes the first minister to offer marriages between men, at enormous risk. Based on the incredible true story of one of the most important events in queer history, Radical Love is a sensuous and prescient story about gender and sexuality, and how the most vulnerable survive in dangerous times.



In Love

Alfred Hayes £9.99
 In a hotel bar, a disenchanted writer tells a beautiful stranger the story of his latest doomed love affair. Sipping cocktails, the man reveals how he became transfixed by a lonely divorcée living in a cluttered apartment across the city. When they first met, he had been aloof, uncommitted. But this changed irrevocably when a millionaire waltzed into his lover's life, offering her a thousand dollars to spend the night. With betrayal lurking in the shadows and proclamations of feeling arriving too late, In Love is an exquisite examination of heartbreak set in 1950s New York.

Love in Colour - Mythical Tales from Around the World Retold.

Bolu Babalola £9.99
 Bolu Babalola finds the most beautiful love stories from history and mythology and rewrites them with incredible new detail and vivacity in this debut collection. Focusing on the magical folktales of West Africa, Babalola also reimagines iconic Greek myths, ancient legends from the Middle East, and stories from countries that no longer exist in our world.

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Wales on the Map

Maps like charts are designed to guide us from place to place but they also reflect the social and political standards of their time. Helen Morgan from Abergavenny Local History Society reports.



A blatant example is the early 15th-century map by the monks of Evesham Abbey, drawn at the time of the Owain Glyndwr uprising. They greatly exaggerated England on the world stage and reduced Scotland and Wales to featureless offshore islands. As the Tudor age progressed, however, cartography improved. The first map of Wales as a discrete entity was produced in 1573 as a statement of nationhood by the Denbighshire polymath Humphrey

Llwyd. Notably, his border of Wales stretches as far east as the River Severn, as if the Glyndwr uprising had succeeded and gives place names in Welsh, English and Latin. Then, three decades later the first atlas depicting the 13 individual counties of Wales was produced by John Speed, a renowned historian and cartographer, whose maps are still much prized, and have been copied and imitated ever since.

"In more modern times, the Cold War played its part in mapping,"

says Mike Parker, author of All the Wide Border, about the history of the line on the map between Wales and England. "From the 1920s until early this century, Ordnance Survey maps in Britain contained many gaps because official government policy kept sensitive sites such as military bases, components factories and radar stations off the map. At the height of the Cold War, more than 5,000 such secret sites existed all over Britain, many in Wales. The irony was that the Soviet Union had its own maps containing all the secret stuff unavailable to the British public.

"Maps are the perfect synthesis of art and science. Leading the way in Wales for decades has been the painter Iwan Bala. He is celebrated for his memorised and imagined maps, with work ranging from a fantasy Wales drawn for a prog rock album in the 1970s to a recent advertising campaign by Brains Beer. Maps are incredibly powerful tools, for they burrow deep into our sense of identity and belonging, and can be used for both good and ill."

Mike Parker's talk, *Wales on the Map*, on February 21st starts at 7.30pm. It is available via Zoom as well as live at the Melville Theatre to ALHS members. Email alhsmlvillebooking@icloud.com to book your seat. For details visit abergavennylocalhistorysociety.org.uk.

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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

Cynlluniau Lesio Preifat

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 lesioedd 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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PUZZLES SPOT THE DIFFERENCE



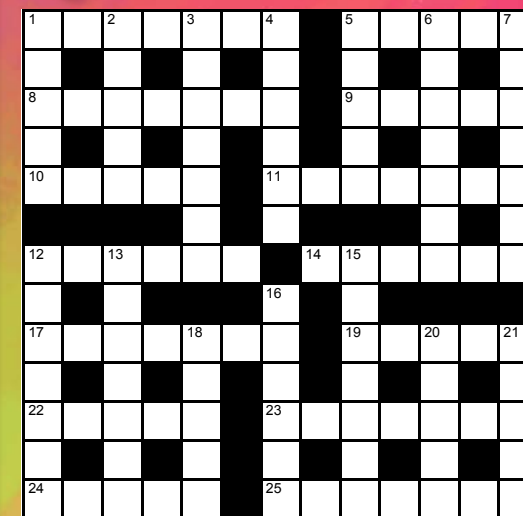
Quick Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 European country (7)
- 5 Scour (5)
- 8 Inflamed (7)
- 9 Precise (5)
- 10 Strict (5)
- 11 Operating room (7)
- 12 Painter (6)
- 14 Lethal (6)
- 17 Non professional (7)
- 19 Likeness (5)
- 22 Edgy, anxious (5)
- 23 Revised (7)
- 24 Father (5)
- 25 Harnessed to ride (7)

DOWN

- 1 Types of transport (5)
- 2 Not tight (5)
- 3 E.g. Crete, Rhodes (7)
- 4 Tiny (6)
- 5 Stage set (5)
- 6 Oven cooked (7)
- 7 Torch power cell (7)
- 12 Made suitable (7)
- 13 Coached (7)
- 15 Once lived (7)
- 16 Destroys (6)
- 18 Including all (5)
- 20 Fourth month (5)
- 21 Finished (5)

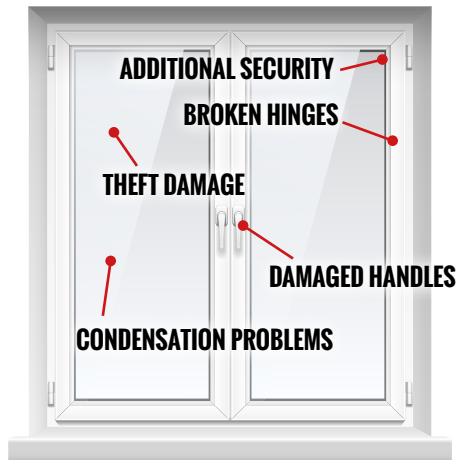


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