

MARCH 2024 ISSUE 201

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**Dear Readers,**



Time marches on and it hardly seems possible that Easter takes place this month, so too does Mother's Day. Spring is just around the corner with - hurrah - the clocks moving forward an hour, heralding lighter evenings.

This month we have some uplifting articles for you to enjoy from inspirational individuals who have made a difference in our community as well as lots of locally-based news and information. We're also delighted to launch our Easter competition on pages 35 which gives you the chance of winning an Easter hamper worth £70. We've hidden virtual eggs all across Monmouthshire and South Powys for you to find, each one designed especially for local businesses. We really hope you'll enjoy taking part.

Enjoy the read,

*Hannah*

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# Local Councillor Donates Bone Marrow



**K**yle Jamie Eldridge has a feather in his cap, both literally and metaphorically. At the age of 27 Kyle, the Abergavenny Town Councillor for Park Ward, has successfully undergone a procedure to donate bone marrow to a critically ill patient who, thanks to Kyle, now has a chance to live.

You've probably seen Kyle out and about in Abergavenny. He dresses smartly in a snappy suit

and trilby hat (with feather!) and a clutch of badges pinned to his lapel. He's not only a councillor, but also the Chair of Gwent Autism Steering Group, he volunteers at both Borough Theatre and the Melville Centre, is a University student, and is a stand-up comedian in training! One thing you won't know about Kyle, however, is that he has exceptionally unique blood.

Kyle has, for the past few years, been an active blood donor for

the Welsh Blood Service, which is how he came to learn about his special blood. As a result, The Welsh Blood Service approached him to ask whether he would be interested in registering as a potential donor for bone marrow and Kyle agreed.

Four months ago, while waiting at Cardiff train station, Kyle received a call from The Welsh Blood Service to inform him that he was needed; he was identified as being a potential bone marrow match - one of four - for a 64-year-old gentleman who was critically ill with an extreme blood disorder in need of a transplant. Lots of paperwork and form filling and tests followed until, thanks to his age, health and quality of blood, it was established that Kyle would be the elected donor.

Kyle says that he didn't really question whether he wanted to do it. His motivation, he says, came from his Christian faith and the chance to potentially save a life. While the donor recipient has been given only a 50/50 chance of survival, Kyle explains that he could not pass up the opportunity to be instrumental in offering hope to a fellow human.

On 30th January this year, Kyle went into the Velindre Cancer Centre in Cardiff after four days of injections (eight overall) beforehand to prepare his blood to ensure it was as healthy as possible. These injections stimulated white blood and

included hormones similar to those given to horses. The side effects were gruelling and unpleasant; headaches, stomach cramps and aching joints to name a few.

Over a period of just over three hours, Kyle donated his bone marrow via stem cell harvesting, which involved a needle being inserted into his arm to remove blood which was placed into a centrifuge to split the cells and plasma, ready for transplanting. The sixty-four-year-old donor recipient would then face a complicated and risky procedure to receive Kyle's bone marrow.

It's a long waiting game. Kyle will not learn whether the recipient of his bone marrow has survived for another six months. In the meantime he plans to recover fully, continue his work in the community, continue giving blood and look ahead to publishing his book and appearing on stage in April when he performs his stand up show!



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# A Mountain In My Heart

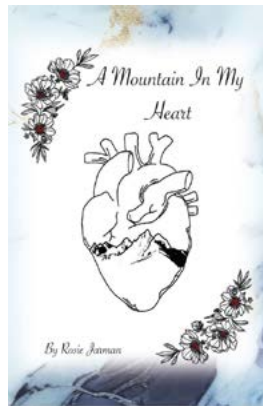


**L**iving in the Brecon Beacons, Rosie Jarman was a bright, active and beautiful 14 year old girl, with a gift for art, passion for fast cars, acting and the outdoors. In October 2021 she was suddenly and unexpectedly hit with the devastating diagnosis, of an incredibly rare heart tumour which has only ever been found in 35 other people Worldwide, only five of those were children.

Instead of dwelling on the crushing news, Rosie made the decision to 'own' her illness by diligently documenting her cancer journey. Her aim was to support other families in similar situations and help medical professionals learn more about her highly unusual form of the disease.

Throughout a gruelling nine months of treatment including Major Open-Heart Surgery, Chemotherapy and Proton Beam Therapy, Rosie would keep a detailed diary of her treatment. She penned advice and tips for parents and children on what to expect in hospital and what things to take ahead of time, alongside extensive research on a range of childhood cancers.

Rosie wanted to publish her book with the proceeds going to the many incredible charities and organisations who supported her on her journey.



*"I found myself smiling and laughing at points, which I didn't expect to do. It gave me such an in-depth view of what happens on this journey, it is so powerful. Rosie writes beautifully"*

- Trish Gray, Evelina Children Hospital

*"What comes through is an indomitable spirit that refuses*

*to be beaten. Her resilience, determination and courage is an inspiration to all and she lives on in the legacy she has created"*

-Lee Harding

*"This isn't just a groundbreaking diary that will help thousands of people: those touched by cancer, those living with it and those studying medicine. It is a beautifully written book told by a young person wise beyond her years."*

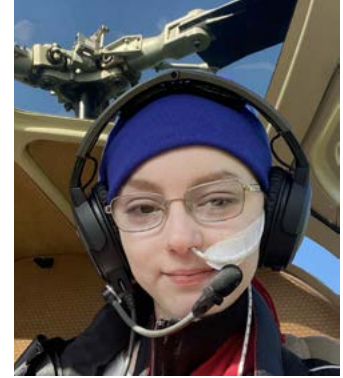
- Rebecca Burn

*"This is her story – raw but funny (the "Finger of Discontent" made me laugh out loud), compassionate but brutally clear about the reality of cancer diagnosis and treatment. I cannot recommend this highly enough to anyone wanting to understand more about the impact of cancer on a young person and their family"*

-Sarah Rose

These reviews speak volumes about the humour, resilience and incredible insight Rosie has provided within her book, 'A Mountain In My Heart' which is available from Book-ish, Waterstones and other outlets including Amazon.

Kathryn Jarman



**We are looking for**  
**Charity Trustees and volunteer advisors**  
 to support the Abergavenny Community Trust  
 to achieve its charitable objectives.

The Trust is an ambitious, progressive charity responsible for maintaining the Abergavenny Community Centre and utilising this safe and welcoming space to improve the lives of the diverse residents of Abergavenny.

As a Trustee you are responsible for making sure that the Charity is run well and is doing what it was set up to do. You should therefore have the skills and knowledge to undertake the role. In particular, a background or experience in fundraising or communications would be welcomed. If you have skills and knowledge that you think could help the Trust, but don't want to be a Trustee, then we would also like to hear from you and explore the possibility of you being a volunteer advisor.

For more information please contact the Trust's Treasurer and Secretary at [treasureraberct@gmail.com](mailto:treasureraberct@gmail.com).

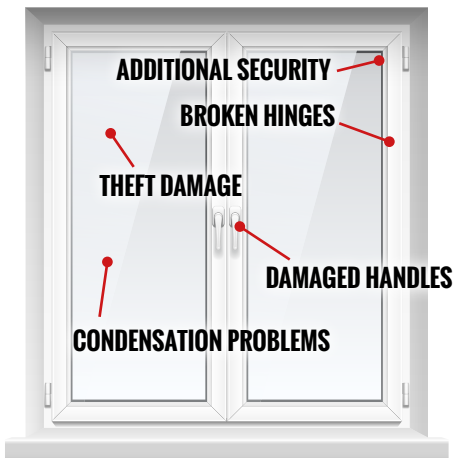
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# Living with Dementia



**L**iving with Dementia (Suzan & Mike Alderton) is a local Society. We aim to raise dementia awareness and to integrate people with dementia, disabilities into the community.

Since its concept 2018 LwD has raised over £60,000. The Charities the money is donated to include Research, Care Help and Social Activities including the monthly Caffi Croeso at Maes-y-Ffynon, Beaufort Street, Crickhowell which continues to grow in popularity, providing fun and laughter. Starts at 1:30pm. Free Refreshments and Entertainment. £1 per book for bingo tickets. It's a place to meet friends, old and new. Let your hair down, join in the dancing and singing or just sit back and enjoy the atmosphere. To Book email: [livingwithdementiacrickhowell@gmail.com](mailto:livingwithdementiacrickhowell@gmail.com). Phone 07876085769

LwD organise a Fun Run/Family Day every year at the Rectory Hotel in Llangattock. This year it will take place on Bank Holiday Monday 27th May 2024. Please see poster below. This is fast becoming a not to be missed annual favourite for all the family, and features a Fun Run for children and adults, a human fruit machine, children's games organised by Gareth James and his crew, Steven & Bledwyn Carrington (Crickhowell Rugby Club), Huw Morgans (Crickhowell Football Club), Julie Cashell (Crickhowell Running Club) and (Abergavenny Swimming Club). Various stalls, BBQ, music, an ice-cream van, a reading of Suzan's illustrated children's book 'The Fairy who Lived in a Pop Can', and her new book 'Rusty Robin and Willo Worm' (not yet published). We thank Tim Jones, [www.asyouseitmedia.uk](http://www.asyouseitmedia.uk) for sponsoring the invaluable publicity of 'The Fairy who Lived in a Pop Can'. £10

per book is donated to Children with Dementia and Children with Cancer. £5 towards printing costs. 55 books have also been donated to various children's hospitals, children's hospices and children with life threatening illnesses in the UK.

The book is on sale at Book-ish Crickhowell. Or please contact [yellowsixpenepublishing@gmail.com](mailto:yellowsixpenepublishing@gmail.com) or phone Suzan: 07876085769 for a signed copy.

Following the success of last year's Elvis Comeback Special (Darren Graceland Jones), Lwd is organising another Elvis Concert on 19th October 2024..If you are able to joint us you won't be disappointed.

Living with Dementia is a tremendous society that makes a practical difference to the lives of so many within our community. None of the above would be possible without the very generous donations and support from everyone and for this Living with Dementia Society is truly grateful.

[facebook.com/LivingwithDementiaCrickhowell](https://facebook.com/LivingwithDementiaCrickhowell)

Suzan & Mike Alderton

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# Abergavenny Combined Armed Forces and Veterans Breakfast Club

*Are you in the Armed Forces or a Veteran? Are you missing the camaraderie of service life. If you are we would love to meet you.*

**C**ome and join us at Abergavenny Combined Armed Forces and Veterans Breakfast Club. We meet on the second Saturday of every month at Brewers Fayre, Llanfoist parading at 09:30hrs; or the Veterans Hub that meets in the St John's Ambulance Hall, Abergavenny, every Monday morning at 10:00hrs and lastly the Royal British Legion Hub that meets on the third Monday of each month at 19:00hrs at the Abergavenny Conservative Club.

Together we served. There is no stronger bond.

For more details please contact Peter Farthing on 07753673762. Chair RBL Abergavenny Branch; Lead Abergavenny Combined Armed Forces and Veterans Breakfast Club; Member Monmouthshire Veterans Hub.

Peter Farthing



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# Local Student's Fundraising Effort



Joe Foster and Joe Fairbank

**F**ourteen year old Joe Foster's passion is environmental conservation, which is why he plans to join Operation Wallacea in Honduras in 2025.

During his fortnight long trip he will assist scientists based in the cloud forests of Cusuco National Park with their incredibly important research into the conservation of this crucial site of biodiversity.

## Abergavenny Promobility Group

**W**e are a small group of people who sometimes have problems getting around town. Some of us are in wheelchairs, use rollators, use white sticks or other means of help.

Occasionally we find that obstacles are in our way, or that planning does not allow us to be safe when getting around town. Indeed, some places in town are inaccessible for us. We bring our concerns to the Promobility Group where there is a town councillor and a county councillor. We voice our concerns or contact the relevant authority. We have been successful with some projects and continue lobbying on others.

Joe plans to bring back the knowledge he gains overseas and apply it to conservation efforts in our local area, particularly in Blaenavon given its status as a World Heritage Site.

The cost of travel to Honduras to join Operation Wallacea amounts to around £4000, and Joe is working hard delivering the Abergavenny Focus each month as well as planning events to raise the funds to make the trip possible.

In mid April Joe and his friend, Joe Fairbank (who is also travelling to Honduras), plan to conduct a sponsored 8 hour litter pick. Not only will the litter pick aid the immediate environment, money raised will go towards funding the Honduras trip.

If you would like to sponsor Joe or donate to his fundraising efforts please contact Amy Foster at [fosteramy20@gmail.com](mailto:fosteramy20@gmail.com)

However, we do not only moan! We welcome the chance to get together with people in similar circumstances who understand the challenges and successes of daily life.

If you would like to join us, we meet on the second Thursday of each month in Trinity Hall at 2.30pm. We would love to meet you.

*Benita Kelly*

# Join the Dance Blast Community this Spring



**D**ance Blast is a community organisation through and through. We are very happy to join you all in celebrating 'Community'

Based in the centre of Abergavenny, we provide dance and aerial circus activities for everybody in Abergavenny and beyond. Whatever your age or ability you will be welcomed to the Dance Blast Family with open arms

Dance Blast has been providing dance activities in Monmouthshire for over 25 years. 12 of those years have been at the current Dance Blast venue; our wonderful centre for Community Dance and Aerial Circus in Pen Y Pound. We introduced Aerial Circus in the Summer of 2019 and haven't looked back!

As well as inviting everyone to our beautiful venue we also get out and about in the community

of Monmouthshire with regular classes and one off workshops in a variety of settings, including local schools, care homes and youth groups.

If you haven't been to Dance Blast, why not pop in, see our lovely studios and talk to us about the activities on offer.

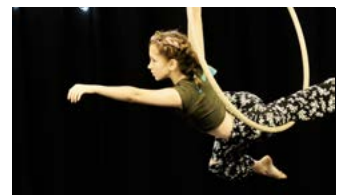
You can see the full timetable and booking forms for all of the classes available at Dance Blast for all ages and abilities by visiting our website. With over 40 classes to choose from and a range of styles, there is something for everyone. Scan the QR code or Go to <https://www.dance-blast.org/timetables>

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact us at

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## Speaking our Truths, Growing Confidence and Making Theatre



**C**reative Futures swung into full flow in Feb half term with 3 days of immersive theatre sessions. A professional and enthusiastic team of facilitators led a full house of 11 – 19 year olds in building relationship, exchanging ideas and expressing themselves through all manner of fun performance challenges.

“It was something I looked forward to everyday” said Logan (15), one of the participants, “it’s so exciting!” Sessions took place in The Melville Theatre and consisted of physical theatre, mask work, improvisation, and a final group performance session. “I’ve absolutely loved it. I’ve made friends and I’ve learnt stuff about myself” – Ross (13)

The workshops helped to build self-esteem through collaboration with others and support from the tutors - “I came in and I felt quite nervous ... but then we talked and communicated. I felt way more confident. I love it here” Rosie (13). Many of the participants had never done drama but everyone was fully immersed and enjoying learning and taking part.

With such a positive response to the initial holiday workshops, a series of term-time sessions kicked off at the end of February, with most places filled in just a few days. Places are full, but you are encouraged to join the waiting list at [boroughtheatreabergavenny.co.uk/creative-futures-monmouthshire/](http://boroughtheatreabergavenny.co.uk/creative-futures-monmouthshire/) Places are all free as the project is funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund through Monmouthshire County Council. Through providing low-cost activities and open opportunities, Creative Futures aims to connect with as diverse a range of young people as possible and showcase theatre as a great way to build community and develop real confidence. In the summer term, partners Dance Blast and Monmouthshire Youth Services will join forces to provide sessions in some of Monmouthshire’s youth centres. More info coming soon!

**Creative Futures Easter Programme:**  
Saturday Morning Youth Theatre Sessions (24th Feb onwards during term-time) 10:30am – 1:30pm  
Melville Theatre Easter Holiday Theatre Immersion Monday 25th – Thursday 28th March 10am –

3pm each day Melville Theatre To take part, please complete the registration form on [www.boroughtheatreabergavenny.co.uk/creative-futures-monmouthshire/](http://www.boroughtheatreabergavenny.co.uk/creative-futures-monmouthshire/) 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](mailto:katherinemcdermidsmith@monmouthshire.gov.uk) For more information on the project, please visit [www.boroughtheatreabergavenny.co.uk/creative-futures-monmouthshire/](http://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](http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-spf)



Join Chepstow's annual celebration as a Walkers are Welcome town

# Chepstow Walking Festival




## 2nd—7th April

walksinchestow.co.uk

 chepstowwalkersarewelcome




# Chepstow Walking Festival

## 2nd - 7th April 2024

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**C**hepstow walking festival is firmly established on the 'walkers calendar' and we look forward to welcoming old friends and new to this ever popular festival.

A programme of 38 guided walks, showcasing the rich heritage and beautiful landscape of Monmouthshire and its borders. As in previous festivals the walks comprise of varying lengths, from 2 - 23 miles to cater for most abilities. Each walk is led by our local experienced walk leaders & guides and there is nothing quite like local knowledge to take you to places that are less frequented but equally beautiful and interesting, with visits to establishments that are rarely, if ever, open to the public.

Chepstow is, and has been, accredited as a Walkers are Welcome town since 2012, and the annual walking festival,

organised by Chepstow Walkers are Welcome, is a celebration of this. Here's a taste of what is on offer. A Story-teller for children; visits to Farms and tastings at local producers; a walk that will test your level of fitness; a themed walk such as wildlife conservation or historical interest or simply a walk in the stunning landscape with glorious views.

There is a 'Welsh Speaking Walk' around Tintern and 'Walk for Health' is less than 3 miles at a very easy pace.

The main objective of the festival is to have fun and enjoy the great outdoors with like-minded people, and to discover the beautiful diverse landscape and history of this stunning area.

Adult Single tickets remain at £5 for a single ticket. Under 16's, 'Walk for Health' and Welsh Speaking are free!

The full programme and how to purchase your tickets can be found online [www.walksinchestow.co.uk](http://www.walksinchestow.co.uk) Booking is essential as places are limited for your comfort. Grab a drink and have a browse there is sure to be something that suits!



# Savour Seasonal Flavours at Abergavenny's new Spring Food Fair



The Crafty Pickle Co

This event - a collaboration between the Abergavenny Food Festival and Monmouthshire County Council - is made possible by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Food Resilience Programme, reflecting a shared commitment to fostering a robust and sustainable local food system.

This Spring Food Fair takes place on just one day, but it serves as a showcase for the year-round food story of Monmouthshire. So see this event as an introduction. Do your weekly shop. Taste something new. Talk to some brilliant producers. And while you're doing all that, take in the great atmosphere. Play your part in helping the people behind the county's remarkable food offering grow new shoots and thrive.

Mark your calendar for 9th March. See the full line-up at [abergavennyfoodfestival.com](http://abergavennyfoodfestival.com) and follow Abergavenny Food Festival and Monmouthshire County Council on social media.

*Abergavenny Food Festival*



St Mary's Priory Courtyard (taken at Abergavenny Food Festival)

Abergavenny Food Festival & Monmouthshire County Council

## SPRING FOOD FAIR FFAIR FWYD Y GWANWYN

**Buy local. Shop sustainably  
Live music. Performances & talks**

**Sat 9 March | 10am - 4pm | FREE ENTRY**  
St Mary's Priory & The Tithe Barn  
Abergavenny, NP7 5ND



View full programme details at  
[abergavennyfoodfestival.com](http://abergavennyfoodfestival.com)

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**T**here's a treat in store for residents of Abergavenny and beyond as the town gears up for a brand new Spring Food Fair. Taking place on Saturday 9th March (10am-4pm) at the historic St Mary's Priory and Tithe Barn, this family-friendly affair is your chance to explore the best fresh produce and artisanal delights from Monmouthshire and the surrounding area. Free entry for all.

Celebrate the flavours of the season! From meeting local growers and producers to sampling delectable treats, the Spring Food Fair is all about buying local and supporting the community.

As well as shopping for seasonal staple foods and signing up to innovative box schemes, you

can enjoy live music, engaging talks, and activities for children. Local groups will also showcase their work, which all feeds into the creation of a fairer, more sustainable, and healthy county-wide food ecosystem.

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13<sup>th</sup> March  
**Y SWŵn**  
(12A)  
89 min

27<sup>th</sup> March  
**The Blue Caftan**  
122 min

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+  
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[www.abergavennyfilmsociety.com](http://www.abergavennyfilmsociety.com)

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## MARCH EVENTS CALENDAR

### 2ND, 9TH, 16TH MARCH

#### TERM-TIME YOUTH THEATRE WORKSHOPS



Creative Futures is holding weekly youth theatre sessions for 11 – 19 year olds at the Melville Theatre. Sessions will be led by professional facilitators and will focus on the issues and aspirations set out by participants. The workshops will focus on many different aspects of theatrical practice and are open to all. Sessions are FREE and will be filled on a first come first served basis. 10:30am – 1:30pm, Melville Centre, Abergavenny. Email: [katherinemcdermidsmith@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:katherinemcdermidsmith@monmouthshire.gov.uk)

### 3RD MARCH

#### Y FENNI FLUTES

This is the 3rd flute gathering where flute players, no matter how rusty can come together and play music together in a friendly setting. Dust those flutes down & come & join in! 3pm-4.30pm, Abergavenny Community Centre, Merthyr Road, Abergavenny

### 4TH MARCH

#### THE CEREAL SKETCHERS EVENING SESSIONS

We will be joined by the fabulous Betty Noir, who will be modelling for us. Untutored session For ages 16+ Limited spaces,

booking essential.  
7pm-9pm, £5 per person, Upstairs at the Hen & Chickens Pub, Flannel St, Abergavenny. For more details visit [www.cerealsketchers.com](http://www.cerealsketchers.com)

### 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](http://boroughtheatreabergavenny.co.uk) or Box Office 01873 850 805

### 7TH MARCH

#### KNIT AND NATTER

Come and join us for a Knit, Crotchet and Natter get together with refreshments and cake. Suitable for complete beginners and more experienced crafters. 6.30pm-8.30pm, Mardy Park Resource Centre

### 7TH MARCH

#### Book-ish Event CLARE MACKINTOSH – I PROMISE IT WON'T ALWAYS HURT LIKE THIS



18 Assurances on Grief 7:30pm, Book-ish Loft, Crickhowell Tickets £10 or £20 with book [bookish.co.uk/events](http://bookish.co.uk/events)

### 8TH MARCH

#### Llanfoist Village Hall Film Night THE OLD OAK

The future for the last remaining pub, The Old Oak, in a village of Northeast England, where people are leaving the land as the mines are closed. Houses are cheap and available, thus making it an ideal location for Syrian refugees. Doors Open 7pm, Film begins 7.30pm, Bar available. Tickets £5 on the door Llanfoist Village Hall, Church Lane, Llanfoist

### 9TH MARCH

#### SPRING FOOD FAIR



Buy local. Shop sustainably. Say hello to the best growers and producers in/around Monmouthshire (25 exhibitors). Shop for staple foods. Have a little taster. Sign up to a box scheme. Enjoy live music and talks. There will be children's activities too. Plus local groups sharing their work, creating a fairer, more sustainable and healthy food system in the county. See Page 24-25 for more info

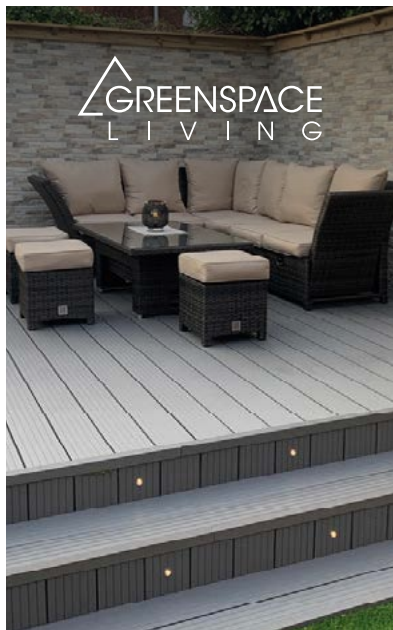
### 9TH-17TH MARCH

#### CRICKHOWELL WALKING FESTIVAL



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

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Weight Loss/Gastric Band Therapy	Travel Sickness



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### 13TH MARCH

#### Abergavenny Film Society Y SWŶN

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[www.abergavennyfilmsociety.com](http://www.abergavennyfilmsociety.com)

### 16TH MARCH

#### REPAIR CAFÉ

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. 11 – 2pm last booking taken 1.15pm Book, enquire or drop in At Abergavenny Community Centre, car parking off Merthyr Road NP7 5YB Contact [repaircafeabergavenny@gmail.com](mailto:repaircafeabergavenny@gmail.com) and Facebook messenger

### 18TH MARCH

#### Book-ish Event ANN CLEEVES THE RAGING STORM

7.30pm, Borough Theatre, Abergavenny. Tickets £15 or £20 with book [bookish.co.uk/events](http://bookish.co.uk/events)

### 20TH MARCH

#### ABERGAVENNY LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY TALK

Free to Abergavenny Local History Society members. 7.30pm, Borough Theatre, Abergavenny  
 See Page 57 for info

### 21ST MARCH

#### Book-ish Event C.L. MILLER – THE ANTIQUE HUNTER'S GUIDE TO MURDER

7.30pm, Book-ish Loft, Crickhowell  
 Tickets £10 or £20 with book [bookish.co.uk/events](http://bookish.co.uk/events)

### 22ND MARCH

#### CHARITY CONCERT & AUCTION IN SUPPORT OF HELP FOR KHARVIV

The Hadron Colliders in concert  
 Doors 7.30pm, Concert 8pm,  
 Auction interlude 9pm  
 Tickets £10 cash only available to reserve or purchase from Kings Arms – 01873 855074  
 Kings Arms Hotel, St John's Square, Abergavenny

### 25TH MARCH

#### THE CEREAL SKETCHERS

Free session, bring your own drawing supplies.  
 10am, Trading Post, Nevill St, Abergavenny. Book your spot at [cerealsketchers.com](http://cerealsketchers.com)

### 26TH MARCH

Book-ish Event  
 JOANNE HARRIS – BROKEN LIGHT  
 7.30pm, Book-ish Loft, Crickhowell  
 Tickets £12 or £18 with book [bookish.co.uk/events](http://bookish.co.uk/events)

### 27TH MARCH

#### Abergavenny Film Society THE BLUE CAFTAN



A middle-aged tailor and his wife

find their relationship challenged by the arrival of a handsome new apprentice. *Two screenings at 4.30pm and 7.30pm. Limited seats for non-members aged 18+ £5 per person, Melville Centre, Penyound, Abergavenny*  
[www.abergavennyfilmsociety.com](http://www.abergavennyfilmsociety.com)

### 27TH MARCH & 3RD APRIL

#### MICHAEL'S MATES – PARENT AND CHILD GROUP

10.30am-12pm, St Michael's Centre, 10 Penyound, Abergavenny

### 30TH MARCH

#### EASTER FAMILY FUN DAY

2pm-5pm, Llanfoist Village Hall, Church Lane, Llanfoist  
 £2 per child

### 30TH MARCH

#### BREAKFAST WITH THE EASTER BUNNY

Breakfast, egg hunt, games and craft. 10.30am-12.30pm, Penyound Clubhouse  
 Tickets £10 from [info@atfc.club](mailto:info@atfc.club)

### 2ND – 7TH APRIL

#### CHEPSTOW WALKING FESTIVAL



Join Chepstow's annual celebration as a Walkers are Welcome town  
 See Page 22-23 for more info

## SHARE YOUR EVENTS

Go to [thefocus.wales/calendar](http://thefocus.wales/calendar)

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

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# March Weather Outlook

by Jonathan Powell

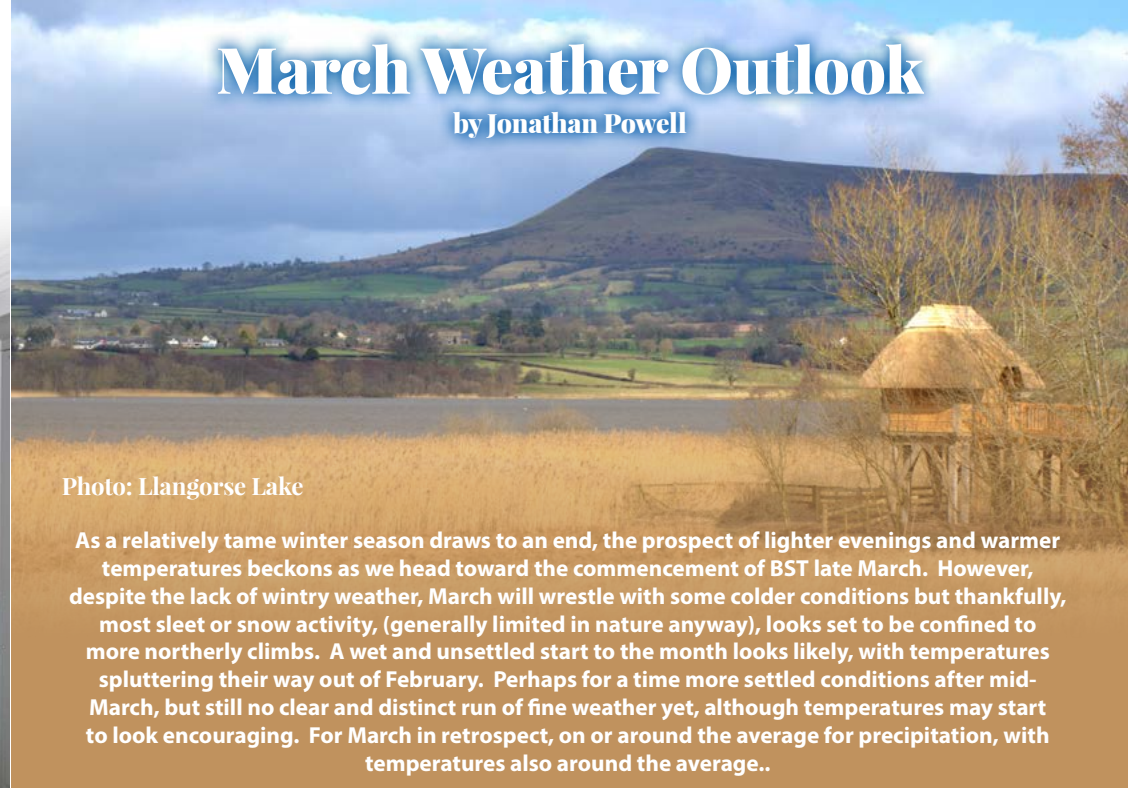


Photo: Llangorse Lake

As a relatively tame winter season draws to an end, the prospect of lighter evenings and warmer temperatures beckons as we head toward the commencement of BST late March. However, despite the lack of wintry weather, March will wrestle with some colder conditions but thankfully, most sleet or snow activity, (generally limited in nature anyway), looks set to be confined to more northerly climbs. A wet and unsettled start to the month looks likely, with temperatures spluttering their way out of February. Perhaps for a time more settled conditions after mid-March, but still no clear and distinct run of fine weather yet, although temperatures may start to look encouraging. For March in retrospect, on or around the average for precipitation, with temperatures also around the average..



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# 20 Years

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7305 days  
175320 hours  
10518975.3 minutes

**The** old adage ...time flies, it certainly has and for the most part, I have enjoyed heading up a fabulous team alongside my business partners, Vivienne Reece and Ben Watkins. It is fair to say,

there have been times that I could have locked the door and thrown away the key but on the whole, the past 20 years have been a combination of a lot of hard work, long hours, fun, laughter, tears, sleepless nights and lots of gin!

For 10 years, Parrys in Abergavenny occupied 17 Nevill Street, moving to larger premises at number 21 Nevill Street on 1st March 2014, a perfect way to celebrate St David's Day. We have

just signed another 10 years lease so intend to be part of both the Nevill Street and Abergavenny community for many years to come.

Our showroom has evolved, gone are the banks of desks and chairs to be replaced with comfy sofas and soon to be coffee machine (when I get around to choosing one!). The one area which has remained consistent throughout our 20 years, is the warm welcome extended to all visitors by the team. It is both heartening and encouraging, after constantly being told the 'high street is dying' or 'the days of high street estate agents are gone' that the number of visitors to the office remains at a steady level, especially people who are looking to move to the area who visit the town and want to know more about the amenities, schools, leisure activities, shops and businesses. And of course, local clients or potential clients who find it easier to pop into the office to discuss their property or future property requirements.



Parrys love being part of the community, we have participated in a number of events ranging from a sleep out to raise money for a local homeless charity to trader's cycle races, raft races, sponsoring football and rugby teams, painting, drawing and writing competitions for children. The whole team live and work in and around Abergavenny and Crickhowell and are not only passionate about the area but know it intimately too.

As a team we have navigated changes in the market working through both buoyant and tough economic times, new technology

and ways of working, a pandemic and learning to communicate remotely and the many happy and sad times that form part of life's day to day journey.

Parrys would not be celebrating our 20 years if it was not for the wonderful sellers, landlords, buyers and tenants who have supported us and many of whom have become friends. We look forward to welcoming existing and new clients in the coming years.

And if anyone is passing through Nevill Street on Saturday 2nd March 2024, please do pop in

between 10am and 1pm for a celebratory glass of fizz and some nibbles.



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# THE Giant Egg HUNT



*Would you like to win an Easter Hamper worth £70? Yes? Well, here's your chance to do just that!*

**O**ver the page you will see 14 local landmarks and locations with a blank egg next to each one. There's an egg located in each of these places. Your job is to find out which egg belongs in which location!

Each one of the giant Easter Eggs that have been hidden belongs to a fantastic business and during March we'll be revealing which egg belongs where. All you need to do is cut out the Easter Egg on page 39 and stick it onto the correct, corresponding location. Once your cribsheet is complete, photograph it and send it together with your name,

address and contact telephone number to [hello@thefocus.wales](mailto:hello@thefocus.wales) From there, providing your answers are correct, you'll be entered into the draw to win our Easter hamper. Please note you MUST be able to collect your prize from Abergavenny.

### HOW DO I DISCOVER WHERE THE EASTER EGGS ARE HIDDEN?

We'll be revealing Eggs and their locations via our website [www.thefocus.wales](http://www.thefocus.wales) and online via our Facebook page: @TheFocusMagazine and across social media channels. Make sure you keep checking, though, as we'll be revealing and concealing the Eggs randomly. Rest assured, however, that by 22nd March,

each Egg will have been revealed a minimum of three times, so you'll have plenty of chances to find out where they all are.

Hot Tip: The businesses listed here can, at any time, reveal the location of their Egg via their own social media channels. As such, be sure to like and follow them online, so you're in with the best chance of finding and matching their Egg to its correct location.

We must receive your completed entry by 24th March 2024

*Happy Hunting*

# THE *Giant Egg* HUNT



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**MON & BREC CANAL**



**LLYN Y FAN FACH**



**CRAIG Y CILAU**



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**LLANGATTOCK ESCARPEMENT**



**CRICKHOWELL BRIDGE**



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**LLANFOIST BRIDGE**



**ABERGAVENNY CASTLE**



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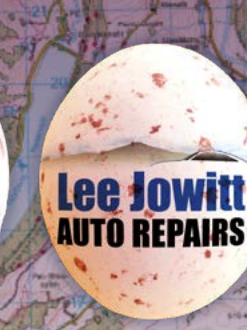
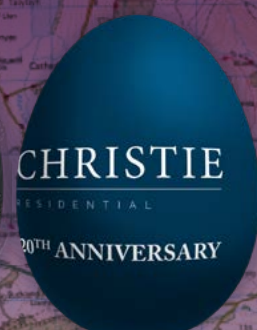
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# THE Giant Egg HUNT



# Boiled Fruit Cake



*This is one of my favourite store cupboard bakes, so called because I always have the ingredients in the cupboard and can bake it whenever the mood takes me. It can be cooked in an assortment of tins – I usually bake it in a loaf tin so that it can be sliced easily and, if I don't want the temptation of cake lying around, I store it in the freezer so that I can defrost slices of it as and when required.*

## Ingredients:

- 350ml of strong tea
- 115g mixed fruit
- 86g margarine
- 86g soft brown sugar
- 280g self raising flour
- 1 tsp mixed spice
- 1 level tsp bicarbonate of soda

## Method

- 1** Preheat oven 180C/160Fan/ Gas mark 4
- 2** Grease and flour tin
- 3** Boil the tea, fat, sugar and fruit together in a saucepan for 2-3 minutes
- 4** Allow to cool slightly
- 5** Meanwhile sieve the flour, mixed spice and bicarbonate of soda into a mixing bowl
- 6** Add the cooled liquid to the flour mixture and beat thoroughly
- 7** Fill your prepared tin
- 8** Bake in a moderate oven for 30 minutes and then turn down the oven by 20 degrees and bake for a further 30 minutes – a skewer inserted should come out cleanly; if not, bake for a further 5 minutes or until cooked through
- 9** Leave to cool – this cake keeps well wrapped in foil.

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# CHANGING WITH THE TIMES...

Riverside  
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**T**he veterinary world has undergone some big changes over the last few years. Riverside Vets in Abergavenny and Ebbw Vale would like to share with you how they are adapting to the current economic climate and making big changes to revolutionise how their clients access veterinary care.

Practice owners Helen Rippin RVN and Bernice Fitzmaurice MRCVS have noticed some worrying challenges facing local pet owners. We all know that veterinary care can be expensive, as it is the equivalent of private healthcare for your pets.

Unfortunately, there are many factors leading to the increased cost of veterinary services. Like every other sector, the cost of materials and services rises all the time. This has especially hit the world of medicine manufacture after the COVID crisis, leading to higher prices for veterinary medicines, and even complete stoppage of supply in some cases.

The cost of wages rises all the time, and this is especially notable this year as the government has raised National Living Wage by 10%, at a time when inflation is now 4.2%.

These costs affect the prices veterinary surgeries need to charge the client in order to stay in business.

In recent years it has also become harder to find qualified vets – although there are new veterinary colleges producing ever-higher numbers of new vets, the rate is not keeping up with the loss from the profession as vets become overwhelmed with the high work load and decide to move away from general practice. Many practices just cannot provide enough appointments and are turning away clients.

A recent survey run by the Riverside team showed that over 50% of pet owners delayed contacting a vet when their pet was sick, because of worries about finding veterinary fees up front. This delay may lead to the animal getting worse, and needing more prolonged or extensive treatment in the long run. Concerns about the welfare of animals led to them coming up with a unique plan.

Riverside Vet Care know that veterinary bills are often unexpected, and even the consultation fee (over £50 in most practices) can be a barrier to getting your pet seen promptly. Riverside are often asked by clients whether they can pay their bill over a period of time rather than upfront, and this has led them to come up with an affordable subscription model which enables clients to pay a small monthly sum in order that their pet can be seen when needed without a consultation fee.

From March 1st, all new clients wishing to register with Riverside will need to enrol at least one pet onto one of their monthly plans – the cost of these varies according to the benefits on each plan, but it is designed so that there is something to suit every budget.

Riverside Vets are the first in the area to offer a plan that is designed to improve access to veterinary care for pets, and hope that by removing the on-the-spot consultation fees that this will encourage clients to seek veterinary advice earlier. Once the pet has been examined by a veterinary professional, treatment options can be discussed and the most appropriate course of action decided upon with the owner.

It will not be compulsory for existing clients to join a plan as long as they visit the surgery at least once a year, for example for their booster vaccinations, or preventative care assessment.

However, Riverside's existing PAW Club offers discounts on everything from dispensing fees, consultation fees, blood samples, X-rays and selected long term medications, as well as including all vaccinations and flea/worm control, so Riverside believe it makes good financial sense for many of their longstanding valued clients too.

Helen and Bernice realise that a subscription model may not suit all pet owners, but they feel strongly that quality veterinary care should be accessible to ALL pet owners and feel that this innovation will help people across the Eastern Valleys and Abergavenny area.

Riverside Vets currently has a waiting list for new clients which can be found on their website [www.riversidevetcare.co.uk](http://www.riversidevetcare.co.uk)



## WAG Club

For £10 a month, clients may have a sick pet seen whenever they need it without paying a consultation fee. This plan also gives 50% off vaccinations. The WAG Club does not include procedures or treatments, but our vets will discuss the different treatment options available and can usually work within your budget to help your pet.



## PAW Club

Our popular monthly plan for preventative treatment. For £21 a month, participating pets receive all the vaccinations, flea and worm treatment that they need and may see a veterinary nurse free of charge. This plan also includes discounts on consultation fees, blood samples, X-rays and ultrasound, prescription fees, hospitalisation fees and long term medications.



## PAT Club

For £31 a month, this plan combines all the benefits of the WAG and PAW Clubs- it includes all consultations, vaccinations, flea and worm treatments as well as all the discounts listed above. For older animals who need to come more regularly this really makes sense.

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# CN Magic

Close magician Chris Nicholls tells us about his career in magic;

I was born in London, my parents moved to Harlow in Essex shortly after. I married my wife, Jean in 1970 and moved to Eastbourne, East Sussex where we stayed for 46 years. It was during this time that I joined a Christian charity called Open Air Campaigners. One of the areas in which they specialised was in taking Christian assemblies in schools. I would often use a magic trick when discussing some moral issue. I quickly discovered that I had a natural gift for entertaining children and was soon being asked to entertain children at birthday parties.

As I developed my craft, I went on to join magic clubs where I would rub

shoulders with professional close-up magicians.

I remember my first booking, walking up to a table of eight people and feeling quite nervous, entertaining them with a ten-minute close-up act. After seeing the joy and laughter this brought to groups of people I was hooked and as they say, the rest is history. Myself and Jean moved to Wales six years ago and have fallen in love with the game of rugby. There is something about all the banter that goes on when I meet with my Welsh friends at the local when Wales and England are playing; it's just magic!

### Award-winning performer

I have won several awards for outstanding performances, including the Best Close-Up Magician award at the Sussex Magic Circle. My talent and dedication to my craft have earned me recognition from both peers and clients alike.

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Chris Nicholls



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# Presence, Connection & Support



**W**hen you imagine self care what do you see? An Instagram carousel of yoga, gym bodies, multistep skin care, sunrise meditations, massages, that new bag, your favourite treat?

How about the less glamorous acts such as meal prepping; automating bills & savings; washing the dishes & laundry; or just taking a nap?

Self care is necessarily both things. It is the frivolous pursuit of joy, and investing in a future self. It is enjoying my Avo Toast while paying into my self employment pension.

As a health & wellbeing practitioner actively investing in my own care, I hear a lot of "I wish I could; I can't afford it; I don't have time." I can hear it in the voices, the mixture of longing- so closely tied to the feeling that rest and pleasure must be sacrificed for...but also the fatigue- Another thing I Have To Do, which we then feel guilty for skipping. Worse are those who glorify the struggle, the martyrs who just have to do it all alone.

As parents, we are expected to work like we don't have children, and parent as though we don't work. We are all more online than ever, able to watch war and natural disaster in real time. We are accessible 24/7, yet experiencing disconnection and loneliness as symptoms of poor mental health (Mind).

We were never meant to do any of this alone, and placing the burden of care exclusively upon the individual alienates both self and community.

When I lived in Cardiff, I was part of a church who would organise cooking and cleaning rotas for anyone with a new baby, or had just come out of hospital. It could be weeks or month's worth. Community care was intentional, planned for, and created strong bonds of belonging and friendship.

In my work as a somatic practitioner, I teach clients how to become witness to, and validate their own lived experience; to identify their body's needs and impulses for rejuvenation and

connection. I embody presence, supporting them to uncover their body's sense of release, comfort, and ease. These skills are applicable in daily life. But we don't know what we are not shown. We learn and grow relationally, in community. We evolve reflexively, rubbing up against the world.

We can form intentional networks of care in our faith circles, yoga classes, and online groups like the Abergavenny Bartering Group. Reaching out and admitting our inability to do or be everything, extends the invitation for others to reciprocate. And while the temptation may be to support everyone else, don't forget to let yourself be held, you deserve to be cared for.

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## Volunteering for Wellbeing

*"It's only when I lose my self in someone else that I find my self."*

~ Martin L Gore

One of the things I'm fond of saying when running workshops, webinars or coaching sessions is that "to experience wellbeing, there is nothing to do, only something to see."

The reason I stress this is that as a culture we've been conditioned to believe that good feelings and peace of mind only come about as a result of *doing* something; that wellbeing is something we have to *add in* to our lives, rather than a kind of factory preset that we find to always be there, whenever we *remove* the obstacles to it, and become fully present to life.

I call this 'Innate Health' because wellbeing is built in to us humans from birth, and it never goes away. This is the "something to see" that puts us back in touch with it.

It may feel like a subtle distinction, but when we're labouring under the false impression that we have

to work hard at wellbeing, it's really easy to fail at it, which only makes matters worse!

Sometimes it seems to me like *all* of our behaviours have one underlying, unifying purpose: they're our best attempt, from where we're at in any given moment, to bring ourselves back to the Now; that timeless place of inter-connectedness that feels like home, where the mind is not busy creating a sense of self, for it to then fret about.

Whether it's sport, music, crafts, meditation, deep conversation, cooking, being engrossed in a film or theatre, or a plethora of less healthy pursuits... don't they all have this *one* thing in common? Aren't they all just pointing us back to a self-less state of presence and oneness?

One activity that really ticks this box is volunteering, whether that's regularly offering your time to a cause, or just performing random acts of kindness for your fellow humans.

Engaging in a pastime that — by definition — serves the needs of others, is a surefire way to remove the biggest obstacle there is to you experiencing wellbeing: the mind's

clamour for attention and servicing of its *own* perceived needs.

When our attention is on others, it is also looking in the direction of a fundamental truth: that we are all one energy, as inseparable from each other as waves are, from the ocean. To rest in this truth, however briefly, is nourishing to the soul, indeed you could almost consider it to be the overarching purpose of our lives.

So lose your self in volunteering, or doing kind things for others. Not for approval or to boost the mind's trivial image of itself, but to reconnect with that literal 'greater good'!

Ironically, the simple act of focusing on the wellbeing of *others*, is the best way to experience it for yourself.



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# Tiny Habits



**T**he wellness industry is booming and everywhere we turn, professionals are giving us advice about what we should be doing or not doing and to be quite honest, it can be overwhelming. Exercise and eating well can sometimes feel like just another thing we have to achieve and when we fall short, we feel like a failure. Deep down, we all know that balance is probably the best way forwards but what does that really look like?

Personally, I find being kind to myself is a good place to start. Knowing that some days I will move lots and eat well and others will be more challenging means that I don't have to feel bad if things don't go to plan. Looking after myself is a lifelong project and I know that there are no short cuts or quick fixes. There are things that I can do to help myself and I've learned to rely on my own opinion rather than be swept along with the crowd.

Taking our health into our own hands can be incredibly empowering and it can start with the smallest of things. As we change one little thing, something shifts and we open the way for more potential change. Bit by bit we start to move forwards. I call them tiny habits. They are choices we make that are easy to stick to and if we don't feel like doing anything at all one day, we've not missed much, so nothing to worry about.

But it is vital that we do something to help ourselves, to be strong for ourselves. To help prevent injury and keep as healthy as we can. To move our bodies and keep our minds alert. Pilates does that for me and I've seen it do the same for



countless others. We all want to live a long life but only if it's a healthy life and so we have to be proactive and choose to make the effort.

My Pilates platform might be a good place to start. You don't need fancy kit or any previous experience and it doesn't have to be time consuming or expensive. All you need is a commitment to yourself and a willingness to learn.

*Kate Thomas*

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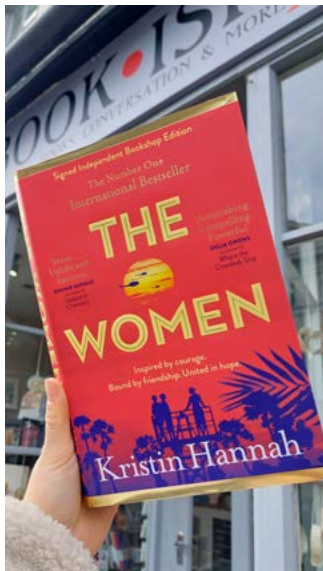
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# Book Recommendations

Looking for a Mother's Day gift? An alternative to an Easter Egg? Look no futher – the Book-ish Booksellers have put together a carefully curated list of wonderful suggestions not only for mum, but everyone.



## The Women Kristin Hannah

£16.99

A sweeping epic of conflict, heartbreak and a changing world, this breathtaking novel from the author of *The Four Winds* centres on a young nurse's experiences during the Vietnam War and the trauma of coming home to an unrecognisable America. It shines a light on the story of all women who put themselves in harm's way to help others. Women whose sacrifice and commitment to their country has been all too often forgotten. A novel of searing insight and lyrical beauty, *The Women* is a profoundly emotional, richly drawn story with a memorable heroine whose extraordinary idealism and courage under fire define an era.



## The Island Swimmer Lorraine Kelly

£20

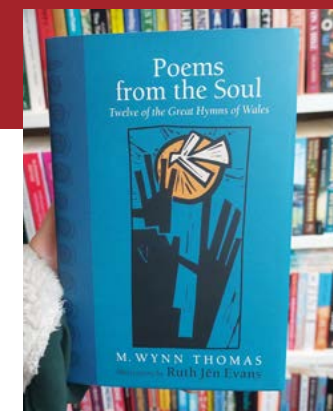
The poignant and captivating debut novel from much-loved broadcaster Lorraine Kelly, *The Island Swimmer* is inspired by Kelly's own passion for the Orkney islands and its people. The story revolves around lonely Evie and the friendship she finds with a group of cold-water swimmers on Orkney and the importance of being true to yourself.



## Carmen and Grace Melissa Coss Aquino

£9.99

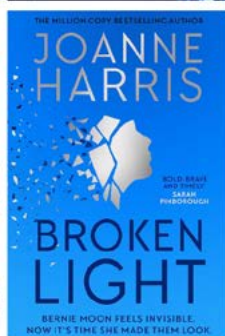
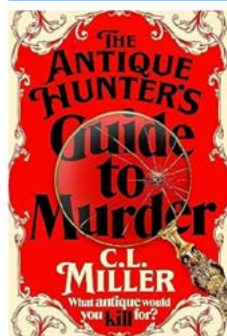
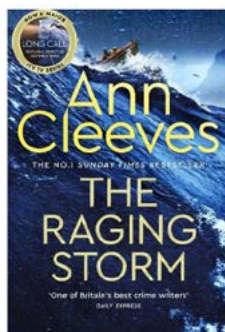
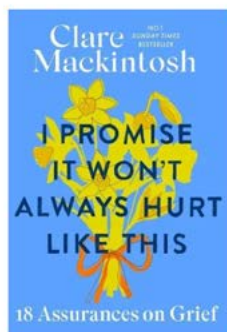
Cousins Carmen and Grace share a traumatic childhood that has bonded them together tightly. That is, until they meet a sisterhood of women known as the D.O.D., who are guided by a leader of an underground drug empire, Doña Durka. This plot-driven novel explores the bonds of found family and the ways in which power and ambition can sever relationships.



## Poems from the Soul Twelve of the Great Hymns of Wales M. Wynn Thomas

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Bringing together twelve of Wales's best-loved hymns, from the eighteenth to the twentieth century, *Poems from the Soul* reveals the heart and soul of a people's poetry. These are the poems of ordinary folk – blacksmiths, farmers and preachers – and they played a vital role in the creation of the Welsh people. With original illustrations by Ruth Jên Evans throughout, this collection offers insights into the making of a modern nation and demonstrates the transformative power of voices raised in song.



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# Excavating Llancadle Cemetery

A rare, early medieval burial ground has been unearthed near Cardiff airport that has taken archaeologists by surprise. Helen Morgan from Abergavenny Local History Society reports



the wider post-Roman world," says Dr Andy Seaman, lecturer in early medieval archaeology at Cardiff University. "The evidence is that these people had access to high quality imported goods — of a type that can only be obtained through trading or exchange networks with people who themselves had the wealth to bring it here.

Llancadle South II cemetery was discovered in 2022 during fieldwork undertaken as part of the Fonmon Castle Landscape Archaeology Project. Over the past two summers, a team has been busy removing the thin layer of topsoil to expose the graves that were carved into the bedrock some 1,500 years ago. "Early medieval sites are notoriously difficult to identify in Wales and few cemeteries with good preservation of bone have previously been excavated at scale," says Dr Seaman. "The excavation will continue for the next few years, but some interesting results are already emerging."

*Andy Seaman's talk at the Borough Theatre on March 20th starts at 7.30pm. It replaces the advertised talk on Vulcana by Rebecca F John who is unwell. To reserve your seat contact the Borough Theatre (free to ALHS members). For details visit [abergavennylocalhistorysociety.org.uk](http://abergavennylocalhistorysociety.org.uk).*

**T**he site is believed to date to the 6th or 7th Century with 18 of approximately 80 graves having been excavated so far.

Some of the skeletons buried in an unremarkable field in the grounds of Fonmon Castle are lying on their backs while others are on their sides, while others, some of them women, are buried in a crouching position with their knees tucked up against their chest. Other similar sites have found bodies in crouched positions such as this but considering the number of graves looked at so far, there

seems to be a high proportion. This could be evidence of some sort of burial rite being carried out. As the archaeologists are starting to learn more about this ancient community, they are also finding some unusual features including glass from Bordeaux, North African pottery and a small bone peg that could have been used as a marker in a game or as a tuning peg for a musical instrument. Add to this evidence of butchery and cooking, and a picture emerges that this community indulged in grave-side feasting rituals. "We tend to think of Western Britain as the Celtic Fringe whereas it was fully a part of



# 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

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



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Gwefan/Website: [www.gov.wales/leasing-scheme-wales-guidance](http://www.gov.wales/leasing-scheme-wales-guidance)



# PUZZLES SPOT THE DIFFERENCE



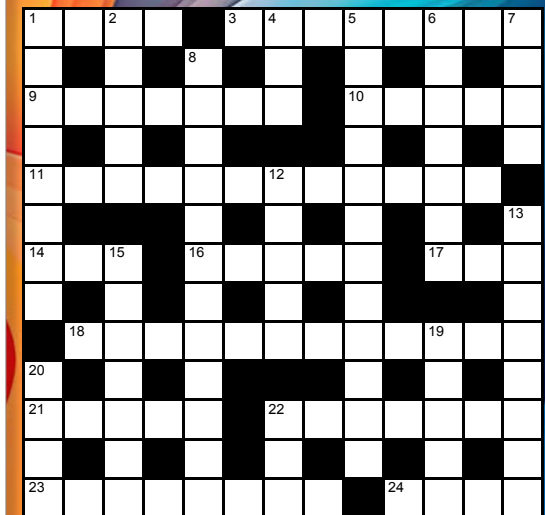
## Quick Crossword

### ACROSS

- 1 Money (4)
- 3 Used in board game (5,3)
- 9 Scold severely (7)
- 10 Electronic post (5)
- 11 Young cabbage plants (6,6)
- 14 To allow (3)
- 16 Type of drum (5)
- 17 Joint (3)
- 18 Seen in a rink (6-6)
- 21 Violent disturbances (5)
- 22 Stabbing weapon (7)
- 23 Supporting column (8)
- 24 Popular sport (4)

### DOWN

- 1 Advises (8)
- 2 Serious (5)
- 4 Stowed away (3)
- 5 Lock picks (8,4)
- 6 Loyal (7)
- 7 Story (4)
- 8 Eats its own kind (12)
- 12 Doomed (5)
- 13 Alcoholic appetiser (8)
- 15 Twice as much (7)
- 19 South American dance (5)
- 20 Hold tightly (4)
- 22 Type of snake (3)



Solutions on our website: [www.thefocus.wales](http://www.thefocus.wales)

# D<sup>2</sup>

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# NOCTURNAL TREASURES

The Brecon Beacons National Park is among only a handful of areas worldwide to be granted the status of an International Dark Sky Reserve.



Photograph by Simon Powell - Black Mountains Photography

**W**hat do you see when you look up into the night sky? Stars? Darkness? Well, did you know that when you do, you're enjoying some of the best views of stars, constellations and meteor showers in the world? In fact Brecon Beacons National Park has been named an International Dark Sky Reserve, only the fifth destination in the world to be granted such a prestigious status and the first in Wales.

The accreditation has been awarded by the International Dark-Sky Association, based in the USA, and the Brecon Beacons National Park now joins an elite group of areas in Canada, New Zealand, Namibia and the UK's Exmoor National Park recognised as possessing an exceptional or distinguished quality of starry nights and nocturnal environment, specifically protected for scientific, natural, educational, cultural, heritage or public enjoyment.

This news will represent a massive boost for local tourism, as astro-tourists, some of whom are already acquainted with the magic of the area, will be drawn here to take advantage of our wonderful glittering skies. Elsewhere in Britain, where night has gradually been lost to light pollution, fewer and fewer people are able to see the details of the night sky. The dark sky reserve in the Brecon Beacons National Park permits visitors to come and see what they have lost to light pollution in their own areas.

Sandie Dawe, Chief Executive of VisitBritain said, "Achieving international Dark Sky Reserve status means visitors to Wales can explore the Brecon Beacons with its lush green valleys, hidden waterfalls, fern-filled gorges and spectacular mountain ranges by day, before settling in to experience the magnitude of the Milky Way in pitch black surroundings at night. The announcement is yet another

fantastic reason for guests from around the world to come and enjoy Britain's great outdoors."

The application to gain Dark Sky Reserve status began in 2011 when the Brecon Beacons Park Society and the National Park Authority set up collaboration with the University of Glamorgan, Dark Sky Wales and the Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales in order to make a bid for the accreditation. The project was made possible thanks to generous funding from the Brecon Beacons Trust, Brecon Beacons National Park Authority's Sustainable Development Fund and seed funding from the Brecon Beacon's Park Society. Julie James, Chairman of Brecon Beacons National Park Authority paid tribute to "our numerous partners for the hard work they have put in to make the dream of a dark sky reserve real."

Locally raised author, Horatio Clare, who often cites the landscape of the Brecon Beacons as a source of inspiration, described the news aptly and lyrically, saying that, "The stars are mankind's first and last navigation lights. They are nurseries and reserves of myth, poetry, literature and science: that the Brecon Beacons is one of the best places in the world to experience them is wonderful news."

So, next time you gaze up at the night sky, be sure to appreciate the view because it really is one of the very best in the world.

Next Month's FOCUS...

# LOCAL GEMS

In April's magazine we'll be encouraging our readers to rediscover local businesses or introducing businesses we may not have known too much about. We'll be championing our local businesses, urging readers to reconnect and use the variety of services that are available right on our doorstep. If you have a business and you would like to advertise, or you have a story to share with us, please contact hello@thefocus.wales or call 01873 856 614

Magazine Distribution: 29th March

DEADLINE DATE FOR APRIL PUBLICATION IS: 20<sup>TH</sup> MARCH

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