

THE ABERGAVENNY FOCUS



GREENER ABERGAVENNY FAIR

ON SUNDAY OCTOBER 20TH

ABERGAVENNY MARKET HALL,
UPPER BREWERY YARD & LIBRARY

SEE PAGE 6

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KASIA OCIEPA



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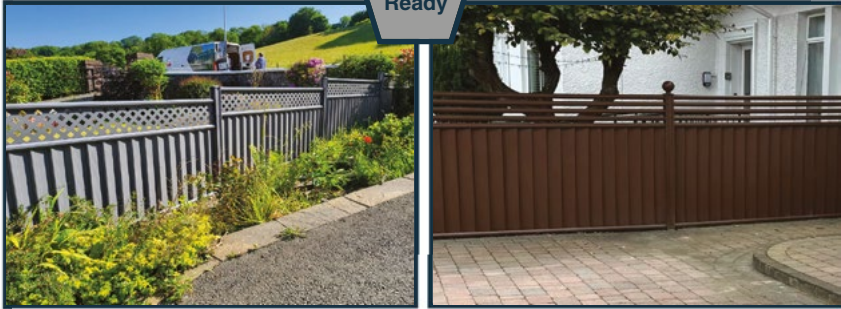
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Dear Readers,



I am the first to admit that I have a lot to learn when it comes to being more sustainable and earth friendly. Like a lot of working mums (and dads!) I am fairly time poor and have a lot of plates spinning all at once. I am sure that, in one way or another, your life is a busy one too. It's really tempting to stick my head

in the sand when it comes to recycling and reusing because doing better can sometimes feel a little bit overwhelming. I'm learning, however, that it isn't a case of reinventing the wheel. Like anything new, it's all about making small changes and doing them consistently rather than attempting to espouse everything. This month we've put together a magazine that hopes to alert you to how we might all live more sustainable, environmentally conscious lives more easily. We hope you will find it inspiring.

As ever there are lots of things going on in the month ahead - it never ceases to amaze me just how much happens in our area! And, of course, there's Halloween at the end of the month, and we've included a recipe and some inspiration for a Halloween that's earth friendly too!

Enjoy the read,

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The Greener Abergavenny Fair is back!



- Squeeze your own apple juice.
- See how **local primary schools** are linking with farmers and growing their own.
- Find the best value **electric bike** to fit your wallet and needs.
- Learn how we could change our domestic water consumption and help to **clean our local rivers**.
- Hear about new plans for 'Green Corridors' through Abergavenny.



**ON SUNDAY OCTOBER 20TH,
ABERGAVENNY MARKET
HALL, UPPER BREWERY YARD
AND LIBRARY**

From 10:30AM TO 4:00PM

Stalls, Activities, Storytelling,
Hands on Activities, Talks, Films,
Music,

**GOOD CLEAN GREEN
FAMILY FUN
AND ITS FREE!**

- View the winning and commended entries in the **Art and Photography competitions**.
- **Explore Career options** in a Greener Economy with advice from Careers Wales, and Black Mountains College will be here to share opportunities locally for training in environmental disciplines
- **Meet the Bees**, and enjoy some "green themed storytelling"
- **Music** performances throughout the day will cater for all tastes
- Advice on **retrofitting your home** to reduce energy bills.
- How to **source local food** from local growers.
- Explore the **future of the private car**.
- Finding outlets to **share and swap** clothes and toys instead of buying new.
- Meet groups looking after our **local green spaces**.
- Celebrate **Abergavenny in Bloom**.
- Learn about the new **King Henry VIII school** plans to live up to net zero carbon.

In the Hall and outside you'll find:

Learn about other initiatives that are proposed and starting locally that will help the town. We are seeing many great ideas already in other parts of Monmouthshire, Wales and UK. Perhaps we can pick those we think could work here, learn, form small teams and make things happen! We want your bright ideas too!

For more information about the Fair, watch our social media #greenerabergavenny (Facebook and Instagram) and look for the posters.

For more about the organisation, please contact GreenerAbergavenny@gmail.com.

The second family friendly 'Greener Abergavenny' Fair is coming to the Market Hall on 20th October.

Following last year's success, we have been organising a second Greener Abergavenny fair. This year even bigger and with many new participants, attractions and activities for all ages.

The Fair is organised by "Greener Abergavenny", a growing collective of local member organisations, supported by many others and reaching out to schools, businesses, and all parts of the community.

There will be over 70 different partners representing a diverse range of environmental charities and organisations, local community groups, schools, public

bodies, experts and businesses, plus speakers, food providers and entertainers.

We cover a very wide spectrum of "green" themes from Green Energy, Green Food and Farming, Green Transport and Biodiversity, to Green Careers, Green Education, Green Health and even Green themed Storytelling!

How can we reduce the future impact of climate change and Biodiversity, and deal with the impacts we are already seeing to be more sustainable and protect our natural resources here in Abergavenny, Monmouthshire and South Wales? You will find lots of people at the Fair who can help you. Collectively and individually, we can all make a difference, with small and larger changes and actions.

Once again, the Fair will shine a light on the great work already being done by many groups locally, to inspire, inform, entertain, and involve all the community to let people decide how they would like to be involved in those things that are already happening, or to get involved in new initiatives.

Last year our talks and forums in the library were very popular. Nearby, a set of films will be showing throughout the day on a range of subjects.

The focus is firmly on **family-friendly hands-on activities**.

- **The Procession** to open the event where children and adults are invited to wear a home-made animal mask or face paint and walk from the bandstand in Bailey Park to the market hall. Join at the Bailey Park Bandstand from 10:15

LEARN ABOUT
Green Energy,
Transport
Food and Farming
Reducing Waste

OUR TOWN
Abergavenny in Bloom
Nature
Our Rivers

LISTEN AND WATCH
Music
Childrens Choir
Talks and Forums
Films

GREEN
Careers
Education
Books

**Greener
Abergavenny
Fair 2024**

Sunday October 20th
In the
Abergavenny Market Hall
10.30am to 4.00pm

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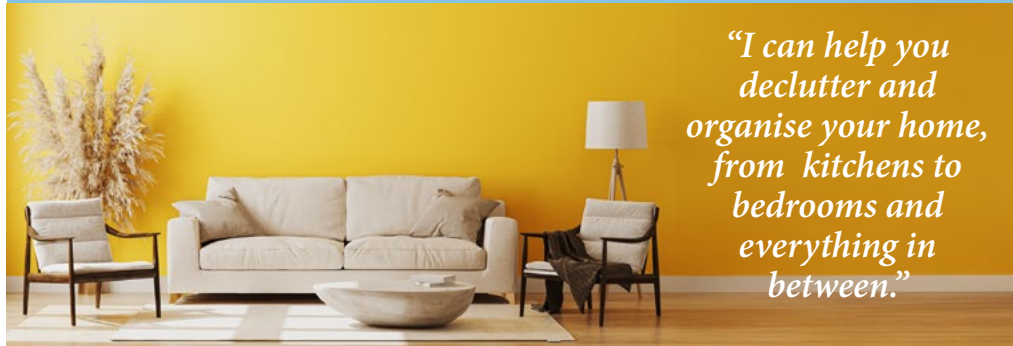
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Live Theatre with Live Music, *The Long Way Home*, by Charles Way



Left to Right: Harry Bowsher (Dog Boy) and Liz Pearce (Old Mother).
Photo by Linda Owen-Hicks.

are produced by companies in Ireland, Europe and America. His latest play, *The Vanishing Elephant*, is currently gearing up for performances at the Royal Opera House, Belfast and in London.

The Long Way Home will be staged in a cabaret-style setting, evoking the ambiance of a Greek taverna. Audience members will be seated at small tables, where they can enjoy drinks, and immerse themselves in the village atmosphere as the story unfolds around them.

As part of *The Retreat* performances, a Greek meal is included in the ticket price, and will be served before the play begins.

The ensemble cast includes some experienced actors who were original members of the professional company Gwent Theatre, together with a band of talented musicians. The musicians are led by Antwn and Linda Owen Hicks, members of the Welsh folk band Carreg Lafar, fresh from their recent success on stage at the National Eisteddfod, Pontypridd. Antwn and Linda have adapted their traditional tunes to provide an original soundscape for the play's lyrics.

The Long Way Home offers a rich theatrical experience, a poignant and humorous script, dynamic cast, and innovative production. Don't miss this delightful evening of theatre.

Tickets from Eventbrite: Rareseed Productions Events – 2 Upcoming Activities and Tickets | Eventbrite

Liz Pearce

If you are craving some wonderful live entertainment – Rareseed Theatre invite you to their production of *The Long Way Home*. There are four local performances for this special event, at **The Clarence Hall, Crickhowell** and **The Retreat, Llanover** and they are selling fast!

The play follows the journey of a recently widowed old woman as she travels from her late husband's inland hometown to her home of origin, beside the sea. Along the way, she finds an abandoned boy who

journeys with her, traversing the landscape, and encountering a host of colourful characters and challenging situations. The Clarence Hall, Crickhowell and The Retreat, Llanover, both excellent, community venues, are hosting this new production, set against the picturesque backdrop of Greece.

To see one of local playwright, Charles Way's plays locally is a rare opportunity in recent years. Way is a distinguished playwright, with a portfolio of over 40 internationally-produced plays. Many of his recent plays

RARESEED PRODUCTIONS PRESENT

THE LONG WAY HOME

by Charles Way

October 4th & 5th
19th & 20th

THE CLARENCE HALL, CRICKHOWELL
Friday 4th & Saturday 5th October

THE RETREAT, LLANOVER
Saturday 19th & Sunday 20th October
The Retreat includes Greek meal

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REBELLION

End of the Beginning



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Further north, Queen Cartimandua leads one of the biggest tribes in Britannia, a vassal state tolerated by Rome to keep the marauding Hibernians on their side of the border. Surely she would join Caratacus when he comes looking to build a new army? No woman could resist the charms of the would-be king? Or could they?

Caratacus rides north to Cartimandua's stronghold, pursued by Lenc the Roman spy, whose mission is to kill or capture him. Will Cartimandua surrender to Caratacus's charms and join him in fighting Rome or will she see through his growing ambition?

The salient points of this gripping tale are enshrined in history, but how they thread together in this novel is due to the imagination of the author. Truth is as strange as fiction.

The history of the Romans in Britain is ill-defined. The Celts did not leave a written record of their history so we are reliant on one or two Roman chroniclers of the time, who were more than keen to show Rome in a good light.

"The details are tantalisingly sparse," says Doug. "I followed the time-line as we knew it, and used the events and battles which were recorded and wove them into the story."



Rebellion and *The Red Mountain* are on sale at CableNews at £10.00 each, but if you buy both, there is a discount making the two £17.00. It is also available from www.douglasmcarthurauthor.com and of course, Amazon.



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LATEST UPDATE FROM Longtown Mountain Rescue Team



The team's activity has picked up over the past month, with nine callouts from the end of August through the last week of September. Once again, the trend is an uplift from 2023, where across the same period last year, LMRT was called upon on just three occasions.

These call-outs have predominantly been in and around Abergavenny, but we've also travelled to the eastern edge of our patch with an incident in Worcestershire. In addition, there have been a couple of occasions when we've gone out of the area to assist our neighbours, the Central Brecons team.

The August Bank Holiday saw us in action close to home with a call out to assist an injured walker on the Skirrid. As the team gathered and prepared to head up to the casualty, the Coastguard helicopter from St Athan arrived on the scene very rapidly. It lifted two parties of people to the summit to assist the initial party that had headed up on foot. Working with the Coastguard paramedic, the team stabilised the

casualty and transferred them to the waiting helicopter before they were airlifted to hospital.

The month ended with a call-out from Dyfed-Powys Police to rescue a walker on Table Mountain above Crickhowell who had slipped on uneven ground, injuring their hip and arm as they fell. After providing thorough medical care on the hill, the patient was stretchered down to a waiting ambulance and onwards to the hospital for further care.

September has seen a mix of incidents involving injured walkers and mountain bikers plus missing person searches. All this

has been interspersed with the scheduled team training sessions that have included both on-the-hill skills training as well as medical focussed sessions aimed at both our qualified casualty carers and the wider team.

The monthly Sunday session saw the team gather at Blaen y Cwm for a full day of activity. However, plans were swiftly abandoned following a request from West Mercia Police to assist with an incident in Malvern. As 28 team headed off to help we can only apologise to any drivers who were heading up the Grwyne Fawr valley to be met by a stream of LMRT vehicles heading the other way!





NOVEMBER EVENTS AT THE BOROUGH THEATRE

The Borough Theatre has a jam-packed November

AODS Juniors return Half Term week for the first time since the Covid-19 outbreak with their version of the beloved tale *The Wizard of Oz*. The society are inviting audience members to don their best Halloween outfits and enter their fancy-dress competition on Thursday 31st October – there are prizes to be won

Mid Wales Opera perform the legendary operatic thriller *Pagliacci / Clowns* on Thursday 21 November. The leader of a touring troupe of comedy actors discovers his wife is having an affair with another performer. Before he finds out who it is, he must go on stage in the role of a despairing husband with a cheating wife. Culminating in a terrifying blurring of reality between stage and real life witnessed by a terrified audience and packed with sensational music, *Pagliacci* retains its cult status as the ultimate operatic 'play-within-a-play'. The second half of the evening will feature a newly created cabaret of popular and entertaining musical items.

There are two world-class classical concerts: One of Europe's leading young string quartets - *The Fibonacci Quartet* present Vienna and the Bohemia a programme of Beethoven, Moravian Folk Songs, Janacek and Schubert. Award winning Romanian musicians - *Maria Gilicel & George Todica* present Kreutzer Sonata a programme of Mozart, Beethoven and Cesar Franck.



Multi-award-winning band, Calan

The multi-award-winning Welsh folk band *Calan* return to wow audiences on Saturday 9 November. The multi award-winning Welsh folk band comprising of four virtuoso musicians formed after they met at a folk music course in Sweden. They won international acclaim at the world-renowned Inter-Celtic Festival in Lorient, France, where they would eventually become the first Welsh ensemble to win the coveted International Band Trophy. In April 2019, they were voted Best Band at the inaugural Wales Folk Awards.

Other music events include tributes to *Buddy Holly, Roy Orbison, Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons* and *Elektrik Light Orchestra* have added an extra night on Friday 29 November.

Tickets can be purchased from the Borough Theatre's Box Office 01873 850805 and the website boroughtheatreabergavenny.co.uk



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TACHWEDD 2024 / NOVEMBER 2024

Beth sydd ymlaen / Whats On

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>▶ Wizard of Oz £12.5 ></p> <p><small>Dydd Gwener / Friday 1 @ 7pm</small></p> <p><small>Dydd Sadwrn / Saturday 2 @ 1:30 & 6pm</small></p> | <p>▶ Pagliacci / Clowns £18</p> <p><small>Dydd Iau / Thursday 21 @ 7:30pm</small></p> |
| <p>▶ Fibonacci Quartet £19 ></p> <p><small>Dydd Mawrth / Tuesday 5 @ 7:30pm</small></p> | <p>▶ Mitch Benn £18</p> <p><small>Dydd Gwener / Friday 22 @ 7:30pm</small></p> |
| <p>▶ Buddy Holly & The Crickets £23</p> <p><small>Dydd Iau / Thursday 7 @ 7:30pm</small></p> | <p>▶ Maria Gilicel & George Todica £19 ></p> <p><small>Dydd Mawrth / Tuesday 26 @ 7:30pm</small></p> |
| <p>▶ Calan £22</p> <p><small>Dydd Sadwrn / Saturday 2 @ 7:30pm</small></p> | <p>▶ Elektrik Live Orchestra £28</p> <p><small>Dydd Gwener / Friday 29 @ 7:30pm</small></p> <p><small>Dydd Sadwrn / Saturday 30 @ 7:30pm</small></p> |
| <p>▶ Oh What a Night £28.5</p> <p><small>Dydd Iau / Thursday 14 @ 7:30pm</small></p> | |
| <p>▶ Barry Steele presents ... £28</p> <p><small>Dydd Sadwrn / Saturday 16 @ 7:30pm</small></p> | |

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Blaenavon Local History Society

Blaenavon Local History Society's September presentation by John Evans to a packed audience at King Street Chapel dealt with the fascinating subject of crime in the 1800's.

John's audio-visual talk used some amazing 'mugshots' of period criminals from the police archives and detailed the sometimes appallingly harsh sentences meted out to very young children for apparently trivial offences. On the other hand, one could get away with murder, quite literally, depending on your position in society. John also touched on how law and order was

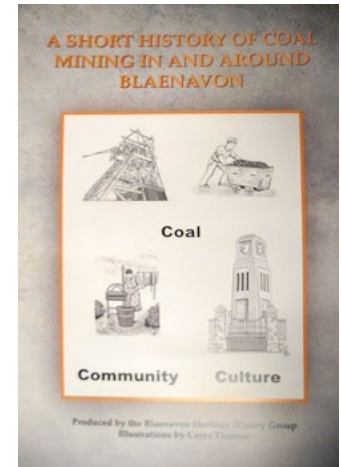
maintained in a very different age from our own.

Our Society meets on the second Thursday of the month in King Street Chapel, Schoolroom. Membership costs just ten pounds per year.

There is a great interest in the past of Blaenavon World Heritage Site and the Blaenavon Heritage History Group that meets weekly at the World Heritage Centre has just published a softback Short History of Coal Mining in and around Blaenavon. The large-format, lavishly illustrated, 150 page book is available from Green Gables Grazing and Deli, 94, Broad Street at a cost of 15

pounds per copy and will appeal to all those with an interest in our past.

Roger Bowen



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Fri 1 November, 7pm At Abergavenny Community Centre

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DIA DE MUERTOS (THE DAY OF THE DEAD)

If you would like to honour a loved one (family member, friend or pet), bring something to put on the altar.

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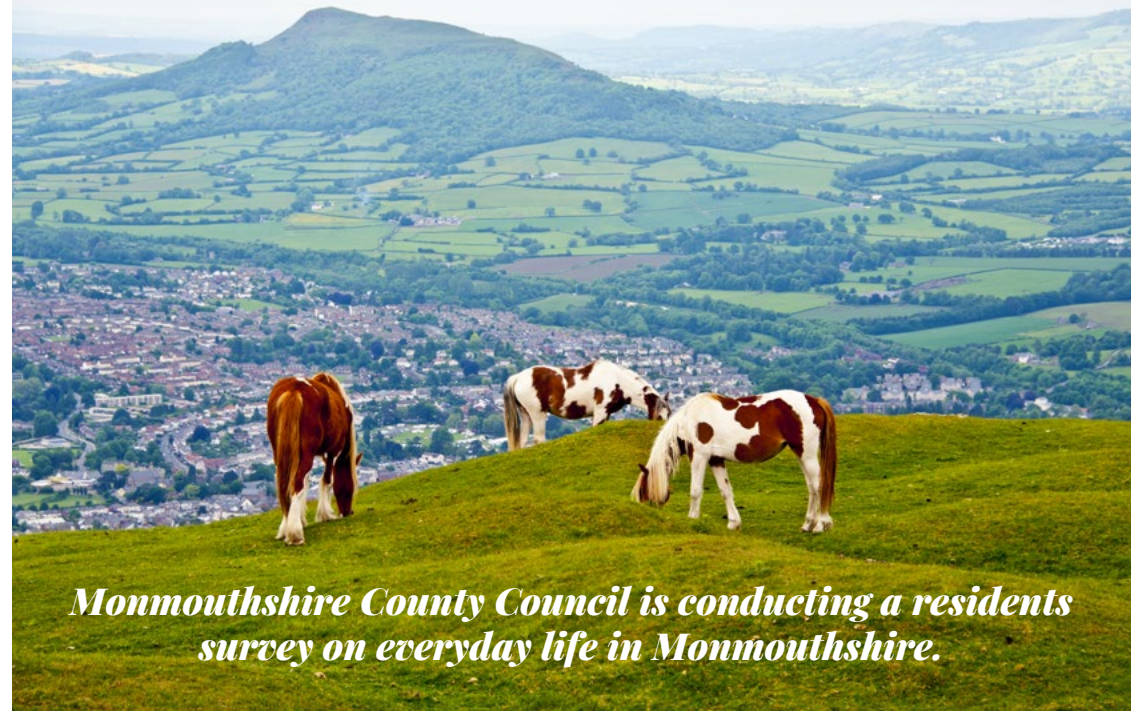
QUIZ Quality prizes: gaming headsets & mics

DRESS Mexican theme, if you like!

For full information, menu details and tickets visit mexican.eventbrite.co.uk



Monmouthshire County Council Launch Residents Survey



Monmouthshire County Council is conducting a residents survey on everyday life in Monmouthshire.

The council wants to hear from you about living in Monmouthshire, your experience of your local area, your views on the council's services, and how we can improve things to make Monmouthshire an even better place to live.

The survey will be open to residents between 13 September and 31 October. It asks questions about the quality of the local environment as well as satisfaction with services such as education, social care, transport, recycling, libraries and leisure centres.

The survey hosted by Data Cymru is part of their National Residents Survey, designed to support local councils in increasing their understanding of performance and perception.

To take part, please follow this link: <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/monmouthshire-resident-survey/>

Monmouthshire County Council's Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement, Cllr Angela Sandles, said: "Monmouthshire is a great place to live, work and visit. However, we are always looking for ways we can refine and improve our

services and we are determined to work alongside communities and businesses to find ways to do this. A vital part of that is listening to what residents have to say about the area and the services their council delivers. This survey will give us a fuller picture of how people feel in the county. Your valuable feedback will allow us to review our services and implement any changes necessary to benefit all our residents. Please share the survey widely.

I look forward to seeing the results, and thank you in advance to everyone who will participate."

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Autumn Fun for Youngsters

Looking for something creative and fun for the kids this October?

As the landscape lights up and puts on the annual Autumnal spectacle, we are treated to all manner of colour and excitement in our local theatres, with a series of exciting events and activities for young people throughout the month, featuring horror themed workshops, interactive performance, puppetry and circus!

Feel Me is a new interactive theatre show from **The Paper Birds**, UK leaders in devised verbatim theatre. *Feel Me* asks, via your mobile phone, who and what you care about from the stories unfolding live on stage in



front of you. Through a stunning mixture of live performance, film, projection, dance and music, *Feel Me* explores the different lenses through which we are told, and connect to stories in the modern digital world. An interrogation of empathy, *Feel Me* asks what makes us 'feel' for another person, as we journey through

landscapes and across borders, through weather storms and paperwork, changing seasons, endless queues and interviews.

"A fascinating experiment"
– **The Guardian**

Audience Experience Guidance.
Suitable for ages 13 years+

Tue 15, 5pm and Wed 16, 11am
October 2024.



Ticket Price: £15

Blake Theatre,
Monmouth

To book, scan
QR code or visit
theblaketheatre.org



A Tigers Tale

Join Titch, Ma and Pa on their riotous adventure into a world where 'all the best stories end with a surprise!' **M6 Theatre** present a fantastical production by the award-winning playwright Mike Kenny. Based on the extraordinary story of Fenella, the Holmfirth Tiger, this delightful show is a high-spirited balancing act of circus, puppetry, live music and song. From a circus train in South Africa, to a steamboat on the Atlantic Ocean and onward to West Yorkshire, a ramshackle travelling troupe tell us the unbelievable true story of a family of acrobats and their adopted tiger cub.

"A delightfully, beautifully judged entertainment. Extraordinary!"

– **The Reviews Hub**

Age Guidance: 4 – 11-year-olds

19th October. 11am and 1:30pm
showings

Ticket Price: £9.50

The Borough Theatre, Abergavenny

To book, scan QR code or visit
boroughtheatreabergavenny.co.uk



Creative Futures youth theatre workshops

A 4-day programme focussing on the darker side of life. Based in a horror theme, young people will have the chance to express their wild sides and delve into the unexplained and mysterious. Using costume, music and the element of surprise, this series of sessions will be about having fun and exploring the genre of horror, and using it as a way of building performance, making friends and celebrating the time of year where we all begin to embrace the dark nights!

11 – 19-year-olds

Tuesday 29th October – Friday 1st
November

FREE

The Melville Theatre, Abergavenny

To sign up, scan the QR code or visit
www.boroughtheatreabergavenny.co.uk/youththeatre



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ABERGAVENTNY FILM SOCIETY
THE LONGEST RUNNING FILM SOCIETY IN WALES

9th October
Robot Dreams (PG) 102 mins

23rd October
The Quiet Girl (12) 94 mins

6th November
Io Capitano (15) 122 mins

Doors 4pm for 4:30pm screening and 7pm for 7:30pm screening.
Melville Centre, Pen-y-Pound, Abergavenny NP7 5UD
Guests welcome (£5). Bar open
thefilmsociety.co.uk





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OCTOBER EVENTS CALENDAR**4TH AND 5TH OCTOBER****Rareseed Productions Presents THE LONG WAY HOME**

See Page 8 and 9 for more info and ticket details *Clarence Hall, Crickhowell*

6TH OCTOBER**QUEER COMMUNITY SUPPER**

A safe, relaxed and welcoming social for the local LGBTQIA+ community. Hot vegan-friendly food, good company, a cozy evening and a few games and activities for the kids. Come along from 4.30pm, food served at 5pm. It's free entry and pay what you can for the meal. *Holy Trinity Church, Baker St, Abergavenny*

8TH OCTOBER**AN EVENING WITH KATE MOSSE**

Tickets £12/£30. 7.30pm, *The Manor Hotel, Crickhowell*. Book-ish.co.uk/events for tickets. See Pg 56 for info

9TH OCTOBER**Abergavenny Film Society Screening ROBOT DREAMS (PG)**

A charming animated French/Spanish film about friendship told through the lives of a dog and the mail order robot companion he builds. The relationship blossoms but is disrupted by unavoidable events, reflecting real life. Will the

pair reconnect and rebuild the friendship they once had?
Screenings at 4.30pm and 7.30pm,
Melville Centre, Penypound, Abergavenny
See Advert on Page 24 for more info

9TH OCTOBER**IAN RANKIN – MIDNIGHT AND BLUE**

Tickets £12/£30. 1.30pm, *Manor Hotel, Crickhowell*. Book-ish.co.uk/events for tickets. See Pg 56 for info

10TH OCTOBER**ABERGAVENTNY FLOWER ARRANGEMENT SOCIETY**

"Walk on the wild side" Jane Pugh demonstrates. Visitors welcome: £6. 2.15pm, *Guide Hall, Fairfield Abergavenny*

10TH OCTOBER**AN EVENING WITH C.J. SKUSE**

Tickets £8/£15 7.30pm, *Book-ish Loft, Crickhowell* See Pg 56 for info
Book-ish.co.uk/events for tickets

11TH OCTOBER**Llanfoist Village Hall Film Night BALTIMORE (15)**

Doors open 7pm for 7.30pm start. Bar available. Adults £5. *Llanfoist Village Hall, Church Lane, Llanfoist*

12TH OCTOBER**A NIGHT TO REMEMBER AT BOROUGH THEATRE**

The musical talents of Abergavenny Borough Band, Abergavenny Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society and Ethan Stockham come together for a night to remember in memory of two much respected Abergavenny residents, Sheila Woodhouse and John Powell. Join us in a musical journey of celebration with all proceeds donated to St David's Hospice. 7pm, *Borough Theatre Abergavenny* Boroughtheatreabergavenny.co.uk Box Office:01873 850 805

12TH OCTOBER**SIMPLE STEPS FOR THE EARTH**

Join us for an informative talk on how we can take practical steps to reduce our impact on our

fragile world. Free Entry. Suitable for all ages. Event organised by Abergavenny & Crickhowell Friends of the Earth
11am – 12pm, *Abergavenny Library*

14TH OCTOBER**THE THREE MUSKETEERS**

Embark on a rollicking adventure brought to you by Black RAT Productions, the company with funny bones! In this fresh new take on the classic novel, a dynamic cast of four energetic actors multirole their way through the uproarious tale. Join our heroes – D'Artagnan, Athos, Porthos, and Aramis – on a riotous journey filled with sword fights, mistaken identities, and hilarious hijinks. Expect quick wit and boundless energy, with non-stop laughs from start to finish. Recommended for ages 11+
Tickets £15/concessions £13 7.30pm, *Borough Theatre Abergavenny*
Boroughtheatreabergavenny.co.uk
Box Office:01873 850 805

15TH & 16TH OCTOBER**FEEL ME**

Through a stunning mixture of live performance, film, projection, dance and music, *Feel Me* explores the different lenses through which we are told, and connect to stories in the modern digital world. Suitable for ages 13+
Tickets £15, 5pm on 15th, 11am on 16th, *Blake Theatre, Monmouth*
See Page 22 for more info

16TH OCTOBER**ABERGAVENTNY LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY TALK**

Peter Wakelin's talk on David Jones and the Llanthony Valley. Free for members - no tickets - just turn up on the night 7.30pm, *Borough Theatre Abergavenny*

17TH OCTOBER**AN EVENING WITH GWYNETH LEWIS**

Tickets £10/£22. 7.30pm, *Book-ish Loft, Crickhowell*. See Pg 56 for info

CONTINUED OVERLEAF...

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19TH AND 20TH OCTOBER **Rareseed Productions Presents: THE LONG WAY HOME**

See Page 8 and 9 for more info and ticket details. This production includes a Greek meal as part of your ticket.

The Retreat, Llanover

19TH OCTOBER **REPAIR CAFÉ ABERGAVENNY**

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. 11am-2pm (last booking 1.15pm), Abergavenny Community Centre, Merthyr Rd, Abergavenny repaircafeabergavenny@gmail.com

19TH OCTOBER **A TIGER'S TALE**

Based on the extraordinary story of Fenella, the Holmfirth Tiger, this delightful show is a high-spirited balancing act of circus, puppetry, live music and song. Age Guidance 4-11 years 11am or 1.30pm, Borough Theatre, Abergavenny. Tickets £9.50 Boroughtheatreabergavenny.co.uk Box Office: 01873 850 805 See Page 23 for more info

20TH OCTOBER **GREENER ABERGAVENNY**



With attractions and activities for all ages, fun and facts, food

and entertainment, this will be another great family day out, and free entry for all. Explore how you can join with others to make a difference and to create a greener Abergavenny. Market Hall, Abergavenny from 10.30am See Article on Pages 6-7 for more info

22ND OCTOBER **UNDERMINED**

It's 1984, join Dale and his mates as they face all the excitement, brutality and fury that the strike throws at them. Punches at the picket line, pints in the pub, battering's at Orgreave, Undermined sees the real story of the strike based on the stories of miners who were there. This powerful, energetic and deeply human story, told with only one man, one chair and one pint will have you laughing, crying and shaking with anger.

7pm, Borough Theatre, Abergavenny Tickets £15/Concessions £13 Boroughtheatreabergavenny.co.uk Box Office: 01873 850 805

24TH OCTOBER **ABERGAVENNY STREET FOOD & CRAFT NIGHT MARKET**

From 5pm, Abergavenny Market Hall

25TH OCTOBER **THE DIME NOTES**

Blues drenched clarinet-driven 1920's jazz with London's hard-swinging vintage jazz band. The Dime Notes dig back into the blues-drenched sounds of clarinet-driven 1920's New Orleans jazz, unearthing a repertoire of stomps, blues, and forgotten gems of the era from musicians such as Jelly Roll Morton, Johnny Dodds, and Red Nichols. 7.30pm, Borough Theatre, Abergavenny. Tickets £18 Boroughtheatreabergavenny.co.uk Box Office: 01873 850 805

26TH OCTOBER **SPOOKY BARN DANCE**

Halloween Barn Dance with trick or treat games, line dancing, music and fun. Free for all ages to enjoy! Fancy dress is encouraged but not

EVENTS

compulsory! 4pm, Llanover Village Hall

28TH OCTOBER **NEW PUPPY CLASSES WITH CANINE CONNECTIONS**

7pm, Trinity Hall, Baker St, Abergavenny. See Advert Page 28 for more info

29TH OCTOBER – 1ST NOVEMBER **CREATIVE FUTURES YOUTH THEATRE WORKSHOPS**

A free 4 day programme. Based on a horror theme, young people will have the chance to express their wild sides and delve into the unexplained and mysterious. Suitable for 11-19 year olds, Melville Centre, Abergavenny. See Page 23 for more info

30TH OCTOBER – 2ND NOVEMBER **AAODS Presents THE WIZARD OF OZ**

Join AAODS Juniors as they set off to see the Wizard! This beloved tale, in which Dorothy travels over the rainbow to discover the magical power of home, meeting the Tin Man, Lion and Scarecrow on the way to the Land of Oz is a truly feel-good musical that will be enjoyed by all the family. Tickets £12 (early bird offer) Various times. See Boroughtheatreabergavenny.co.uk for details. Box Office: 01873 850 805

1ST NOVEMBER **THE WORLD BISTRO – MEXICAN**



7pm, Abergavenny Community Centre, Merthyr Rd, Abergavenny See details on

Pg 19 for more info

3RD NOVEMBER **REMEMBRANCE SERVICE**

Remembrance Service at Llanfoist Cemetery Chapel Tea & coffee and a raffle. Everyone welcome! 2pm Start

CONTINUED OVERLEAF...

NEW PUPPY CLASSES

Start Monday, 28th October
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5TH NOVEMBER ABERGAVENNY ROUND TABLE FIREWORKS EXTRAVAGANZA 2024: AROUND THE WORLD

Get ready for a night to remember as we light up the skies above Abergavenny with a dazzling array of colours! We have 2 displays lined up for you! The first is a quieter, mini display suitable for smaller children and those with additional needs. The second, is our amazing pyromusical display which is choreographed to music from around the world, accompanied by a fantastic light show! A general admission ticket will allow you to see either or both displays. There's food and drinks, light up toys and a small funfair for the kids. All proceeds will go to charities and good causes in the local area. Adults £8.50, Kids £5.50 Gates open at 5pm. Short mini display, suitable for young children and those with additional needs at 6pm Main display at 7pm sharp!

Please note: THERE IS NO PARKING AT THIS EVENT. Town car parks are free to use after 6pm and are just a short walk from the park. Tickets: www.abergavennyroundtable.co.uk/fireworks

6TH NOVEMBER Abergavenny Film Society Screening IO CAPITANO (15)

This tense film tells the story of two Senegalese teenagers who embark on a perilous journey in search of a brighter safer future in Italy. Their experiences, using first-hand migrant accounts, reflect those we see so often in the news and the film is enhanced by exceptional photography and performances. Screenings at 4.30pm and 7.30pm, Melville Centre, Penypound, Abergavenny. See Advert on Page 24 for more info

8TH-10TH NOVEMBER
BODY & EARTH WINTER RETREAT
Fforest Barn, Near Abergavenny
See Advert on Page 60 for

highlights, pricing and booking info

9TH NOVEMBER Monmouthshire Hardy Plant Society 'SUCCULENTS'

Professor Sengpiel, a professor of Neuroscience and Head of the Neuroscience Division at Cardiff University describes himself as a cactophile, a wildlife enthusiast and a Borussia Dortmund fan, an intriguing cocktail of interests. We need to hear more! 2.30pm, Little Mill Village Hall, NP4 0HE
£4 members, £6 non-members
For more information, contact monmouthshirehps@gmail.com or visit www.hpsmonmouthshire.co.uk

SHARE YOUR EVENTS

Go to thefocus.wales/calendar

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

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DANCE AND CIRCUS IS FOR EVERYONE

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Photography by Nicolas Young

Dance Blast is your community dance and circus centre based in the heart of Abergavenny.



Dance Blast is your community dance and circus centre based in the heart of Abergavenny.

We are an inclusive organisation with a great reputation for the opportunities we provide for disabled people of all ages. If you have a family member or friend who thinks they can't dance or enjoy circus activities because they are disabled, please tell them about Dance Blast.

We have a number of children in our weekly classes with additional needs and we give all our dancers the support they need to enjoy the class. For dancers who need more time to explore the movement and a gentler class, we also have our Diversability programme for young people and adults.

Our Diversability programme of classes are designed specifically around the needs of the people who attend each class. Everyone is welcome. If a dancer needs one to one support, we do ask you to bring your support worker with you, to be your dancing partner.

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:

E: danceblastclasses@gmail.com

T: 01873 854811

W: www.dance-blast.org



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| 5PM TO 6PM | |
| DANCEABILITY ADULTS (18 PLUS) | Danceability |
| 6.15PM TO 7.15PM | Fun Dance class for Every Body |
| TUESDAY | DANCEABILITY YOUTH (13 -25 YRS) |
| 6.15PM TO 7.15PM | |
| MCDC (16 PLUS) | Monmouthshire Connected Dance Co |
| 7.30PM TO 9PM | MCDC. |
| | An Inclusive Dance Company, developing Performance & Choreographic skills |
| THURSDAY | DANCEABILITY ADULTS (18 PLUS) |
| WHEELCHAIR DANCE CLASS | CircusAbility |
| 1PM TO 2PM | An adult beginners. |
| CIRCUSABILITY ADULTS | Aerial circus skills to suit every body |
| 2.30PM TO 3.30PM | |
| FRIDAY | DANCEABILITY ADULTS (18 PLUS) |
| 1.15PM TO 2.15PM | |

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It's All About You

Estate agents are very good at sharing how good they are...look at the number of sales we made this month, look at the awards that we have won, we have sold £10 million worth of property, this property didn't sell with another agent but look what we achieved and so on.

But is buying and selling your house all about the estate agent? No, it is all about YOU...and your home.

When you decide to sell your home, not only are you sharing your innermost hopes and desires for the future and disclosing detailed and confidential information, you are handing over your home - more often than not the most expensive asset we own - and more: a place full of memories and evidence of a life well lived.

"...is buying and selling your house all about the estate agent? No, it is all about YOU...and your home."



As an agent, we have our own likes, dislikes and preferences, which is only natural, but we have to look beyond any personal bias and focus on your home as a commodity. It is never an easy decision to sell a much-loved home, but sometimes the decisions are made for us. As agents, we have to consider a number of factors when looking to appraise a property: Size, location, is the garden proportionate to the size of the house, what are the key factors that will attract a buyer and what are the compromises. I often say to potential vendors: once you have made the decision to sell your home, it becomes a business transaction. Easy for me to say because I haven't lived in or loved the house the vendors call home,

but not so easy for the owners who are letting go...they want to move on, but a future move is often tinged with some sadness as well as excitement and, to some extent, anxiety.

Invariably, one of the primary reasons people don't want to move is that they have fantastic neighbours. Despite the battles over shared driveways or boundary hedges that make the national papers, the reality is that most people have built great friendships with their neighbours and are sorry to leave them behind. And then, of course, the worry is 'will someone who will get on with the neighbours buy my house'? What will my neighbours be like when we move? In my 30-something-plus years of being an estate agent, I have only ever dealt

with a handful of sales where neighbourly discord was the given reason for moving.

And now back to you. It is important as your agent that we work with you; it is very much a partnership when handling the sale of a property - we don't need to be best friends but we do need to have an understanding of our clients' needs and what they want from us as an agent. In turn, we need to be clear about what we can deliver. Nothing is achieved by over-promising and under-delivering. So, the initial meeting is so important. Is the agent sitting in front of you more interested in themselves than your property and your hopes and desires? Are they telling you what you want to hear or are they giving you a balanced view of your home - the positives and the compromises?

They should be able to give you an overview of the housing market which, let's face it, hasn't been 'stable' for a number of years and an idea of how it may or may not stabilise moving forward. Are the highs and the lows more frequent than in the past? How do YOU like to operate? Do you prefer telephone calls and written letters over emails and text messages? We all have our systems and processes but these can be adapted to suit our clients.

Sale transactions are taking on average 12 - 16 weeks from the time a sale is agreed until completion (i.e. when you move) takes place. Add to that the time to find a buyer, which can range from a week to a year depending on the type of property, price and timing and, importantly,

CONTINUED OVERLEAF



Having enjoyed our time at Llanwenarth Lodge since we purchased in 1999 we are sad to leave such a beautiful home but we are now of an age when relaxation is the key consideration. Llanwenarth is a home where you can immerse yourself in the stunning surrounding countryside with the knowledge that if you wish to take time or work calls you away then we are fortunate to have easily accessible infrastructure which will take you in any direction."

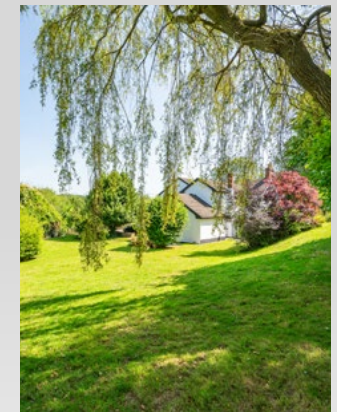
Owners of Llanwenarth Lodge



Our online search to move from London back to Wales took two and a half years, to find the right home in the right location. We wanted to be closer to our families, and to return to the peace and beauty of living in the countryside. As soon as we drove through the gates and up the drive, we both instantly knew this was the one, and we still feel that way today.

We are only the third owners since the Church sold The Old Vicarage. The last 20 years have been wonderful and have gone by in what feels like a blink of the eye.

We love the space in the house, the thick walls in the older parts, the total privacy we have, the quiet location in the village, the mature garden backing onto open fields, and the views of the Sugar Loaf in the distance.



Everything we wanted - calm seclusion, food for the soul, plus the practicalities of being within easy reach of local towns, roads, airports etc.

We hope that the next owners love the house as much as we do, and go on to have many happy times here, as the next chapter of The Old Vicarage's story unfolds."

Owners of The Old Vicarage



windows, new bathrooms and kitchen, new oak flooring, the list goes on. I have a photo of my mother in the back garden where the weeds are taller than her and you can only see her hand waving at us.

It was hard work, but well worth it. I have such wonderful memories of big family gatherings, dancing around the kitchen to the Wurlitzer and all sitting down to a big Christmas dinner. My elder daughter had her wedding here, and we were blessed with glorious sunshine so spent the day celebrating in the garden. Now this house will start a fresh chapter in its life and I hope that its new owners enjoy it as much as I have."

Owner of The Rowans

"I moved here in 2004 with my two young daughters. They say there is a ten second rule for falling in love with a house. It took me five seconds. As we came up the drive, I knew this house was the one for us. I can honestly say I have never loved any other house as much as this one. It is very special.

Initially, it needed a lot of work. We started at the top and worked downwards: new central heating, all the rooms re plastered, new

CONTINUED FROM OVERLEAF

the economy and housing market. All of this means that the relationship you establish with your chosen agent is important. During that time, the agent will be sharing both positive news and sometimes some disappointing news, which is never a conversation we look forward to. When someone decides to sell, quite often they just want to 'get on with it', especially if there are domestic or financial pressures to consider too. Your estate agents' motivation will be to help you along the way and make the process as smooth as possible, however, we cannot control the economy or the housing market, we cannot control potential viewers' thoughts on your property or whether they decide to proceed.

What we can do is help you understand what is happening in the local housing market and what we can do together to make your home more sellable.

A colleague once said to me that she felt that for 3 – 6 months of a seller's life, she was the most important person. Once the sale had completed, the seller had moved on both in terms of the physical move and not needing her anymore. My colleague's comment prompted me to reflect on the most difficult sales I have dealt with over the years and how, at the time, they became my sole focus; helping my client and their buyer navigate the obstacles placed in front of them to achieve a positive outcome for all parties. And within the blink of an eye, they were gone and I was on to the next transaction ...

Although the relationship between agent and seller are, by their nature, very transient,

we take them seriously and we view it as a privilege to have a client's trust during an exciting yet often pressured period. There will be a time, as a seller, when your sale will complete alongside any purchase you might make and you'll no longer need us. We accept that as part of the process and will wave you off with our best wishes in the hope that, should you need us again, we'll be right here, ready and waiting to help you once more. If you buy or sell with us, whether or not we become the most important people in your life for a time, know that we are here to support you.



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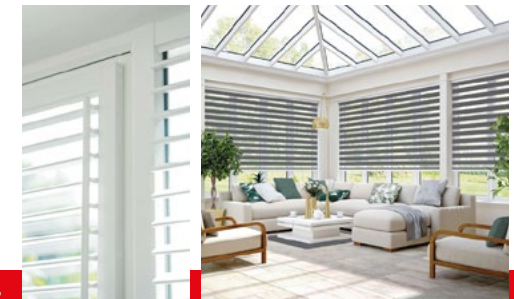


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October Weather Outlook

by Jonathan Powell



Photography by Stuart Baldwin @Blaenavonphotos

After a typical mix of autumnal weather for September, conditions for October look like continuing in a similar vein. Therefore, expect a turbulent mix of rain and strong winds somewhat awkwardly dovetailed with calmer, more sedate weather which with regard to the latter, may see an occasional frost. The rain is likely at times to be copious in amount leading to flooding issues, with the winds similarly positioned to cause disruption, especially across exposed areas. There will be drier, brighter, and sunnier occasions with the flora and fauna colourfully reflecting the time of year and under clear skies, mist and early morning dew patches will follow. Temperatures will fluctuate with the conditions, with perhaps a few extremes. Overall, on or around the average for rainfall, with temperatures slightly above the average for October.



Be Part of the Solution to Plastic Pollution

Autumn is well and truly upon us and I barely feel like we've had summer yet. Thoughts are starting to turn to Halloween, bonfire night and, of course, Christmas.

Despite the weather and economic challenges facing so many people, we have been lucky at Natural Weigh. More and more people have found us and choose to shop with us on a regular basis, for which we are constantly grateful. The feedback from our customers helps us to keep growing and changing to address the needs of this community.

recipe kits have been flying off the shelves, which reminds me we haven't made ours yet!

Crickhowell has a sense of buzz and life that so often is missing from High Streets and that helps businesses such as ours to thrive. The increased custom we have experienced also suggests a shift in people's shopping habits.

We offer planet friendly products, most of them are organic, supporting lots of small, local producers. And it's all free from single use plastic. Yes, it takes a little longer to shop with us, but it is wonderful to hear the conversations between customers and to see the difference it can make to some people who live alone or indeed anyone in need of a chat.

For anyone who hasn't been in yet, or who is daunted by the idea of trying something new, this is how it all works. Bring in your container. Any container. Lots of people bring in plastic sandwich bags. We see everything, from empty plastic

take away containers to beautiful, ornate glass jars and bottles. Weigh your container on our scales. Fill it from the dispensers in the shop. You can have as much, or as little as you like. There is no minimum. If you want to try out the gorgeous new Green Scents washing up liquid, you really can just take 5ml. You then pop your filled container back on the scales to check the price and get a label. And best of all, our fantastic little team is friendly, helpful and always ready to help out.

If you are struggling for time, you can also order online for free delivery. Your order is packed in paper or home compostable cellulose bags and delivered to your door. Check out our website to see our full range and, if you have any questions, please give us a call on 01873 269 493 or email us hello@naturalweigh.co.uk.

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Our bakery section is an absolute hit and continues to be one of our best selling sections of the shop. The oat milk refill machine also draws people in from the surrounding area. We are now starting to put out the winter range, delicious hot chocolate is already on the shelves and the mulled wine sachets won't be far behind. The Christmas cake

ABERGAVENNY TRIUMPHS AT WALES IN BLOOM AWARDS 2024



Abergavenny Town Council is proud to announce the town's triumph at this year's Wales in Bloom Awards, held on 13th September 2024. Abergavenny was awarded the prestigious Gold Award and named Overall Winner in the Town category, marking a fantastic achievement for the community.

Several local groups were also recognised for their efforts, with Bailey Park and Laurie Jones Community Orchard both receiving Level 5 Outstanding, and Our Lady and St Michael School taking Joint First Place in the School Garden Award. Other groups across Abergavenny were praised for their work in community gardening and environmental enhancement.

Visitors to the event praised the warm hospitality and the passion shown for Abergavenny's green spaces, making it a memorable day for all who attended.

Mayor Chris Holland extended his thanks, saying, "These awards reflect the dedication and hard work of so many people in our town. I want to thank everyone involved for making Abergavenny such a beautiful place. The pride and care shown by the community is inspiring."



STAY CONNECTED

Come meet many of the groups involved in Abergavenny In Bloom at the Greener Abergavenny event on 20th October in the Market Hall, from 10:30am to 4pm.

Scan the QR code to read more about all the awards won by the Town's groups.



Scan me



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How do Local Businesses love our Planet?

How do the businesses that you choose to use feel about the planet? How sustainable are they and what are they doing to help our planet? We asked our advertisers this question. Here is some of the work that they're doing towards helping the environment and addressing their carbon or digital footprint

Hayman & Stone Travel (pg.10)

At Hayman & Stone Travel we follow an ethical approach, opting to recommend suppliers and hotels that are sustainability certified. As we are certain you do, we want the people and places you visit to benefit from your holiday as much as yourself.

Focus Magazines

We are careful about choosing the right supplier for our magazines. Our printers are local, and the paper that is used in the production of The Focus is carbon-balanced via World Land Trust with donations supporting their many conservation schemes.

Tower Gallery

We do our best to only use paper packaging instead of cellophane bags. We make a concerted effort to have environmentally concerned themes in many of our pieces.

Abergavenny Film Society (pg.24)

Abergavenny Film Society no longer prints paper copies of the programme or membership cards and we encourage online payments rather than paper cheques. We generally sell fair trade chocolate during intervals and, of course, switch off lights and heating until areas of the building are to be used.

We'll be looking at our digital footprint later! We encourage anyone coming along to one of our screenings to attend, where possible, without using their car as transportation.

Helen Whitney (pg.42)

A few years ago me and my partner watched David Attenborough's powerful documentary 'Climate Change The Facts' which sent us through a roller coaster of emotions from anger, guilt and grief to hope and a feeling of agency. From then on, we have become conscious of making more ethical and environmentally friendly choices in our personal and working lives. The first and easiest choice we made was switching to an ethical bank for our personal/business accounts. These days I am exploring how I can use my coaching skills to contribute, albeit in small ways, to a brighter future and have just found a wonderful coaching question (from a respected ecological and climate conscious coach, Peter Hawkins): "What can I (or we) uniquely do, that the world of tomorrow needs?" So far, I have shared this question with two senior managers and witnessed a dramatic lift in their energy levels as they ponder what they can do in their organisations. I am excited to see what happens next; how will they use their unique strengths and experience to make a difference and what positive impact will it have on them, their organisation and the planet?





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Easy Switches for the Eco Conscious



Use LED Lighting

Something as simple as switching your bulbs could make a difference! LED lights typically use anything from 25% - 80% less energy than traditional bulbs, reducing your carbon footprint. LED bulbs are more expensive upfront, however they last longer than standard bulbs, so work out cheaper over time - and they're much easier to recycle, so you aren't contributing to landfill. They're also cheaper to run, helping you reduce your energy bills.

Eat Less Meat

Vegetarianism and veganism is on the rise around the world - you've only got to check the 'non-dairy' milk options in your local supermarket to see that! But the global demand for meat, particularly beef, is still impacting the environment due to the greenhouse gasses the industry creates and the deforestation it demands. We're not suggesting you go cold turkey (pun intended), but it's worth considering having a meat free day or two per week, for a few reasons.

Wash Your Clothes Less

This might be a tricky one to get your head around, but the way

we take care of our clothes has changed over the last few decades. Many people these days will wear something once and then put it straight in the wash, but it's time to change that habit.

Start to really think about whether something really needs washing yet. Gym gear, for example, needs washing after every use. But the t-shirt you wore to watch TV last Sunday probably has a few more wears in it before it needs freshening up.

By reducing how much you wash, you'll be saving on energy and water consumption - great for your bills and the environment. But you'll also be prolonging the life of your clothes and reducing your chore list - win, win!

Choose Refurbished

Nothing quite beats that shiny new tech feeling - but have you considered how much you could save by going for a refurbished model? It might not be the very latest on the market and it will have been pre-loved, but it could save you hundreds and you will be helping keep something out of landfill.

Embrace Inbox Zero

Did you know that emails use energy? There is a network of data centres across the world which store our communications, all of them. Just being more ruthless with your emails and deleting any that you don't need will save power. While this one won't save you money, it might provide you with inbox zen, which is worth a king's ransom.

We all know that we need to do our bit to protect the environment, which can all feel a bit daunting ... But did you know that there are some quick switches you can make that aren't only brilliant for the environment, but also could save you a few pennies? Something we all need these days as costs skyrocket.

Meat tends to be more expensive, so you can reduce the cost of your weekly shop by cutting back on how much meat you buy. You can also increase your vegetable intake by focusing on purely vegetarian recipes - and we could all use some help getting to our 5 a day!

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Solar Panels and Energy Storage



Having Solar Panels installed is great for the planet. Solar panels replace their own carbon footprint within just 2-3 years - and over the next 25 to 30 years will produce pollution free Green Energy. The output of an average domestic PV system equals the fuel input of two fossil fuel cars. Having Solar Panels installed reduces pollution and reduces your carbon footprint - it is also a rewarding financial investment.

As the cost of electricity continues to rise sharply (virtually 50% in the last decade according to the Consumer Price Index) it has become ever more essential to use every scrap of electricity that is produced by your panels. Solar Energy that is not used in the home is not wasted, a 'Smart Export Guarantee' (SEG) payment ensures that all solar production is valuable. With the rising cost of electricity today Solar Panels can pay for themselves very quickly - typically within 10 years - but to really get the best of the energy produced a battery should also be added.

Having a battery system with your new Solar Panels (or retro fitted to an existing system) means that every bit of solar energy can be used, further reducing your bills and your carbon footprint. Some battery systems will even keep your lights and freezer on when

there is a power cut. With the advent of Smart Meters Utility (supply) Tariffs have become more variable, so you could have a battery system set up to sell stored energy back to the grid at a high price in the evening and then buy it back at a low price in the early hours, as you sleep.

Green Park Power can give free, no obligation, advice on Energy Storage batteries and can provide a 12.5% discount on batteries that are purchased alongside a new Solar Panel system this Autumn (to 31st November) - **just mention The Focus.**



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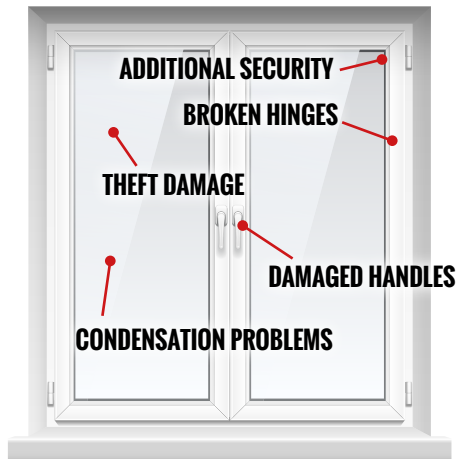


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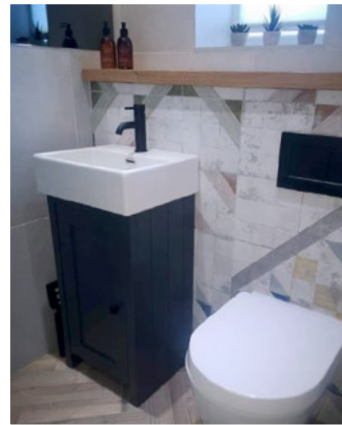
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HALLOWEEN GREEN

How to do Halloween the Green way and save the earth at the same time!

Everyone loves a jack o'lantern! Where are you buying yours from this year? Rather than buying your pumpkins and gourds from the supermarket, make sure you buy yours from a place where you know it's been grown locally and hasn't been subjected to many food miles. We're lucky to have plenty of farms in our local area. Or why not pick your own? A simple search will guide you to where you can cut your own pumpkin from a pumpkin patch.

When it comes to pumpkins, don't let the interior goodness go to waste. Toast the seeds for a tasty treat and make use of the pulp in

pies or muffins. If that's not to your taste, make sure you compost it!

If your kids are going out trick or treating, you'll find that shops produce candy buckets made of plastic at this time of year. Consider using old household items to collect treats – a bucket, a pillowcase or an old bag can be decorated inexpensively and then used year after year. When thinking about treats to give out to callers, some people can be averse to 'home-made' bakes or sweets because of dietary restrictions and risks. Look for goodies that have minimal amounts of packaging or those that use recycled materials in their packaging. If you can't find these, then buy in bulk to minimise excess outer packaging.

Kids love to dress up to go trick or treating, and it's tempting to buy cheap costumes online or at the larger supermarkets, but these invariably end up in landfill and have been made far away on the other side of the world, so have already made a big carbon footprint. Spend some time planning ahead, visit a charity shop or jumble sale to find pre-loved clothes that can be upcycled and find new life. This is your chance to allow your kids' imaginations to run wild and make something completely unique for themselves, without breaking the bank.

When it comes to decorations, keep away from cheap poundshop plastic junk. You can use jam jars decorated with glass paints and place tealights inside to create an eerie ambience. Paint creepy messages on a wooden board: 'Turn Back Now' 'You're Entering the Land of the Living Dead!' It's amazing what effect drippy red paint can achieve. Ghosts can be made by stuffing a rolled-up towel inside an old white sheet, tie it with twine and hang it up. Those small Styrofoam lengths that are used for packaging – often referred to as packing peanuts – look great when painted to resemble worms or slugs.

Whatever your plans this Halloween, it needn't be an expensive or consumerist time of year. With a little thought, a little planning and some small adjustments, you too can enjoy a greener Halloween.



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CREEPY ABERGAVENNY

Wales is a land of myth and mystery. In celebration of Halloween we have delved into some local and very creepy tales revealing some spooky sightings of ghosts, apparitions and chilling encounters. Be safe out there!

MUD MAIDS

Not quite as attractive a name as a mermaid or siren, but similar in nature! Look out for these in the rivers and waterways of South Wales. These mythical malevolent creatures lure their victims into a watery grave by appearing to passers-by as a distressed young woman in need of assistance. All too late it becomes apparent that there is no girl in need in the river, and instead her rescuer is pulled beneath the water!

GHOST OF A MISER

One dusky day the Rev H Elwyn Thomas was walking along a deserted stretch of road in Abergavenny, having attended the home of a parishioner earlier in the day. As he made his way home he spotted an odd looking figure standing with his back to him. Thinking he was a pauper in need of aid, the Reverend cautiously approached him, but as the man turned to face him, the clergyman was struck with horror. The stranger's face was horrifically withered and

appeared to be decaying, his skin was greenish grey and he had pallid, sunken black eyes and a toothless mouth with no lips. In shock, the Reverend ran in fear, but before he made good his escape, he was overcome with a sense of shame at having scorned this poor soul. He recollected his status and the story of the Good Samaritan and so turned to return to pauper. However, he soon realised that his initial apprehension had not been unfounded. The terrifying figure was literally floating down the road with its arms stretched out, pursuing the Reverend.

WOMAN IN BLACK

The apparition of a "tall female" figure in black wearing "a shawl which covered her head" is said to walk along the banks of the Monmouthshire-Breconshire Canal. The sighting was said to have occurred near a bridge over the canal where the old road ran from Abergavenny to Pontypool, by a house called "Ty-Part".

AN EDWARDIAN HAUNTING

An Edwardian house that stood on the corner of a street on the outskirts of Abergavenny was the scene of a number of reported paranormal phenomena. These included curious noises during the early evening, of furniture "tumbling down a stairway"; a young boy (the son of the occupant) stated that he was having conversation with "a man standing at the foot of his bed"; people were thrown from their beds; occupants were the victim of a series of unfortunate events.

CREEPY COUNCIL HOUSE

The terraced Abergavenny council house built in the 1950's was the scene of a haunting during the 1970's. The tenant reported the feeling of being watched, inexplicable noises, presences and the appearance of a female figure in brown. Was it a former tenant coming to see if she approved of the new residents?

Excerpts from The Ghosts of Gwent by Alan Roderick

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HALLOWEEN CHOCOLATE ORANGE FUDGE

This fudge will keep in the fridge for up to two weeks and makes a yummy alternative to shop-bought treats!





Ingredients


225g White chocolate
200g Orange flavoured dark chocolate
397g tin Carnation Condensed Milk
A few drops of Orange food colouring
Sugar sprinkles, to decorate


You will also need:

20cm square tin and baking parchment

 Chop the white chocolate and tip into a microwave safe bowl. Add half the condensed milk and heat in the microwave, stirring frequently until completely melted. Repeat this step for the orange chocolate.

 Add a few drops of orange colour to the white chocolate fudge and mix through.

 Line the tin with baking parchment so that it overlaps the sides (this will help you lift the fudge out once it's set). Place the dark chocolate fudge into the base of the tin, pushing it out to the edges with a spoon or spatula to form an even layer. Leave this layer to set in the freezer for 5-10 minutes then repeat with the orange layer (you can warm it for 10 seconds if it's too thick to spread easily). Sprinkle the top with the sugar decorations, pressing them down gently so they stick.

 Chill the fudge for 1-2 hours in the fridge or until completely set before cutting into small squares or longer bars, as preferred.



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 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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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



The Difference Between Yoga and Pilates



If you've ever wondered what the difference is between Pilates and Yoga, read on. Both are great for fitness and relaxation but there are some key differences which mean that one may be a better fit for you than the other. Both practices can improve posture, flexibility and balance as well as mind-body awareness and they both strengthen the core muscles but in different ways.

Yoga originated centuries ago, transitioning from spirituality to exercise over the years. There are many different types of yoga (Hatha, Iyengar, Ashtanga, Bikram, Vinyasa to name a few) and some methods are more dynamic than others. All types of Yoga encourage awareness and connection between body and mind through breathing and movement. Positions are held and sequences flow from one to another. Accuracy whilst holding each pose is essential to achieve maximum benefit and the breath is key. It's fantastic for both body and mind and leaves you feeling energised and uplifted.

Pilates was developed in the twentieth century by Joseph Pilates and, as he practiced yoga himself, its influence can definitely be seen

within his repertoire. He created 34 exercises on the mat which emphasise precise control of the body and muscular strength. The movements can be very small and because they are so precise, concentration and connection to the breath is also vital. Repeating these tiny movements causes the muscles to fatigue and over time, get stronger. All the movements come from holding a strong centre and when executed properly, the practice is both incredibly challenging and rewarding. Pilates also helps with focus and mind-body awareness.

Choosing one method over the other really just comes down to personal preference and individual goals. Personally, I practice them both as I find one compliments the other. I learned Pilates first over 30 years ago (I knew it as Body Control) but found Hatha and Bikram Yoga in my late twenties and have practiced for over 20 years. I occasionally use some Yoga poses within my classes and find that both disciplines have such profound benefits, that doing either one of them (or indeed both) will enhance your life no end.

Kate Thomas

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Letting Go

“Just as a snake sheds its skin, we must shed our past over and over again..”

~ *Gautama Buddha*



To this very day, I can still feel the indignation of my reply, as I furiously typed out just how much these bikes meant to me; all I'd invested in them; how much of a part of me they were...

I've kept his response, because — after I'd got over myself — it was *exactly* what I needed to hear. He said,

“Well, I guess nothing ever stays the same. Best not to attach our emotions to our possessions and instead take joy in the places they've taken us.”

The fact that he followed up with a quip that “*You can have that for your next Focus column*” really shook me from my slumber, making visible a bunch of beliefs I'd not even noticed were the source of my misery. (We all get caught out by our thinking from time to time, me too!)

For what was I really being asked to let go of here? The known! Nothing more than an *idea* of how things 'should' be, based on the mind's story of past events and the meaning it had attached to these.

By clinging to the way things *had* been, I was making a right old mess of life right now. *Seeing* that, in that moment, loosened the mind's grip and enabled me to move on.

Almost a year later, I'm besotted with the new (more suitable) bike and rediscovering all sorts of two-wheeled joy. Both of my 'dream machines' have gone to new homes now, and in letting them go, I get to savour memories of the adventures they took me on, *and* enjoy everything that life has to offer me, here and now.

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If you'd like to start your day with a quick, light-hearted reminder of how your mind works and how being human is ok, then sign up to my FREE Daily Reminders newsletter here: <https://gilescroft.com/newsletter>

Having spent years working with many minds, as they whirr along inside my clients' heads, creating problems, I've observed a pattern of sorts. It's a bit of an over-generalisation, but when it comes to the time-related issues that get generated, there seem to be two kinds of mind: those that look to the past, and those that are future-focused.

This means the troubles that people present with tend to fall into two broad categories: past-related emotions, such as grief, regret, guilt, sadness, anger, shame, resentment and depression; or future-related ones, such as anxiety, fear, confusion, stress, uncertainty, discomfort, resistance and procrastination. (You'll know which way you tend to lean.)

I had always placed my own mind firmly in the future-camp — I'm way more likely to get tricked into hanging on to anxious thinking, than, say, thoughts of regret — until I recently endured a period of cycling-related sadness.

You see, years ago, as an agile, ambitious road-racing speed-junkie,

I laid out an inordinate amount of cash on two of the finest steeds money could buy: a titanium winter bike and a super-lightweight carbon summer one. Competitively racing bikes was the focal point of my life at that time, so it made total sense to research and upgrade every single component to the highest, fastest standard.

Jump forward 15 years, with nigh-on a decade *off* cycling, for one reason or another, and this somewhat less agile body returned to my 'dream machines' only to discover they were a lot less comfortable than I remembered, leaving me feeling battered after long rides.

No bother, I thought, there are plenty of adjustments to be made to get me into a more middle-aged-friendly position... and make them I did. But each incremental change saw diminishing returns in comfort, and I found myself resorting to increasingly outlandish solutions, none of which seemed to prevent me from picking up injuries.

Desperate for help, I reached out to a friend for advice, who had the temerity to suggest I consider buying something more suitable!

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The Book-ish bookselling team guides us through their top picks for pursuing a greener, more sustainable earth-friendly lifestyle.



#Futuregen
Jane Davidson
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In *#futuregen*, Jane Davidson explains how, as Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing in Wales, she proposed the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015—the first piece of legislation on Earth to place regenerative and sustainable practice at the heart of government. Unparalleled in its scope and vision, the Act connects environmental and social health and looks to solve complex issues such as poverty, education and unemployment.

Davidson reveals how and why such groundbreaking legislation was forged in Wales—once reliant on its coal, iron and steel industries—and explores how the shift from economic growth to sustainable growth is creating new opportunities for communities and governments all over the world.

#futuregen is the inspiring story of a small, pioneering nation discovering prosperity through its vast natural beauty, renewable energy resources and resilient communities. It's a living, breathing prototype for local and global leaders as proof of what is possible in the fight for a sustainable future.



Green Living Made Easy
Nancy Birtwhistle
£10.99

We all want to do our best for our homes and the planet, but it's often hard to find the time and energy to think of alternatives. Nancy Birtwhistle makes it easy with 101 indispensable tips, ideas and recipes that will help you to live a more eco-friendly life without giving up on any home comforts.

This practical book is the ultimate guide to reducing your environmental impact while saving you time and money. Inside are tips and home hacks on everything from eco cleaning, upcycling and making the most out of your weekly shop to small-space gardening and creative crafts, plus a selection of Nancy's delicious recipes. Clearly explained, accessible and beautifully illustrated with black and white line-drawings, *Green Living Made Easy* is the perfect guide for anyone looking to pursue a more sustainable lifestyle but unsure where to start.



Resilient Garden
Tom Massey
£27

Award-winning garden designer Tom Massey shares essential tips on how to analyse your garden looking at everything from soil type to sun exposure, before recommending practical projects and plant choices that will be perfect for your plot. Discover how a hedge can reduce noise and trap pollution, how a patio affects waterlogging, how to harvest your rainwater, and much more.

This gardening guide enables readers worldwide to analyse the needs of their plot, looking at wind, sun, soil, water, wildlife, air quality, and carbon, and will only become more relevant as gardeners worldwide experience changes in weather and want to adapt their outdoor space so that it will continue to flourish.

Together we can garden more sustainably, mitigate extreme weather conditions and ensure our outdoor spaces remain resilient, beautiful, inspiring places to enjoy for years to come.



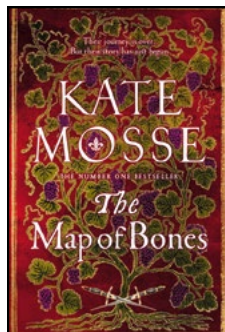
Don't Waste Your Pumpkin
Emily Gussin £8.99

Supermarkets are stuffed full of pumpkins in the run-up to Halloween. So many people just carve them for Jack-o'-lanterns then throw away the seeds and leftover flesh, not knowing how easily they can be cooked and eaten. *Don't Waste Your Pumpkin* offers all sorts of tasty recipes to make use of every part of the pumpkin and majors on avoiding waste. There are also simple craft projects to take you beyond the usual carving traditions and celebrate all kinds of pumpkin. There's so much more to the cosy autumn season than pumpkin spice!

Nature
Carol Ann Duffy £10.99



One of the English language's best-loved living poets, in *Nature* Carol Ann Duffy presents us with her favourites among her poems on the natural world. Drawing on work written over four decades and arranged chronologically, Duffy also adds to her selection one wholly new poem.



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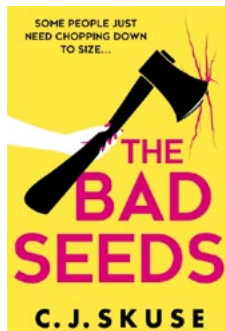
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HISTORY

to promote Welsh art, would trick visiting critics by surreptitiously leaving paintings leaning up against the wall for them to see on multiple occasions until their initial incomprehension was overcome. Another observer noted in 1927: "His exaggerated simplicity seems to repel at first, but I think all his detractors will have to admit themselves in error."



Turning Point

The artist and poet David Jones was 29 years old when he arrived at Capel-y-ffin in the mid-1920s. For him this was a new awakening. Helen Morgan from Abergavenny Local History Society reports.

From the moment he arrived at Capel-y-ffin, Jones was challenged by the landscape. Its enclosing mountains were quite unlike anywhere he had worked previously, and he felt the different history of the borderlands. After years of art training followed by service in the First World War, he had found his sense of direction as an artist.

He clearly loved the strong hill rhythms of the valley, incorporating rushing streams, stone walls and hill ponies into his paintings and carvings. He had a crispness of form and a discordant sense of space — reminiscent of the post-Impressionist landscapes of Paul Cezanne. Looking back, he explained that a change of place or subject cannot be the driving force in an artist's work unless accompanied by new or more developed perception relating to the formal problems, says art historian Peter Wakelin.

The next four years transformed Jones from an uncertain student into a noted modernist and a leading illustrator. Within a decade Kenneth Clark, then Director of the National Gallery, described Jones as the most gifted of all the younger English [sic] painters. His Capel-y-ffin period is his most accessible. Yet even then, before his writing and painting accumulated extra layers of complexity, his work was sometimes characterised as difficult. His first dealer, Arthur Howell from Cardiff, endeavouring



David Jones's depiction of the crucifixion hanging in the church at Capel y Ffin

He certainly had his share of bad reviews, and later detractors too. The art historian Malcolm Yorke described his work as "arcane, fey and idiosyncratic". However, as John Petts wrote for the Arts Council retrospective of 1954: "Works of art which are by their nature subjective, intimate and transcendental, are sometimes condemned by those who have not learned to read them." After leaving the Llanthony Valley, Jones's work continued to change and develop, but Capel-y-ffin persisted in his visual and poetic work until his death in 1974.

Helen Morgan

Peter Wakelin's talk on David Jones in the Borough Theatre on October 16th starts at 7.30pm and is free to ALHS members. For details visit: abergavennylocalhistorysociety.org.uk.



David Jones in the early 1930s

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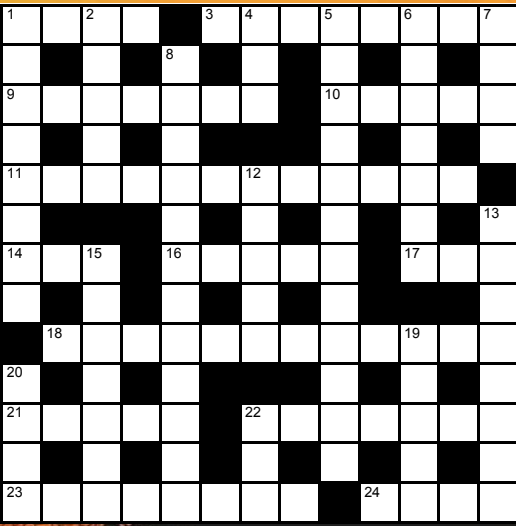


PUZZLES SPOT THE DIFFERENCE



Quick Crossword

| ACROSS | DOWN |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 Fog (4) | 1 Mumbled (8) |
| 3 Travellers (8) | 2 Snooze (5) |
| 9 Table support (7) | 4 Poem (3) |
| 10 Entrance (5) | 5 Ice-box (12) |
| 11 Clarifications (12) | 6 Proverbs (7) |
| 14 Epoch (3) | 7 Painful (4) |
| 16 Sphere (5) | 8 Untangled (12) |
| 17 To drink (3) | 12 Amid (5) |
| 18 Uses camera (12) | 13 Alcoholic appetiser (8) |
| 21 Large sea (5) | 15 Accomplish (7) |
| 22 Lawn game (7) | 19 Dwelling (5) |
| 23 Mixing (8) | 20 Grave (4) |
| 24 Steak (4) | 22 Tin (3) |



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Next Month's FOCUS...

Here Comes Winter

In November, we'll be getting ready for all things seasonal, bringing you all the news of what to expect in the lead up to the Festive season. We'll have all the dates you need for those Christmas Markets and events!

If you're a business and have Christmas menus, seasonal crafting workshops or anything to promote, make sure you're included with an advert of your own!

Gift Makers & Sellers – Save Hundreds by being included in our *Local Christmas Gifting Guide!*

In November's issue, we'll be including our Christmas Gifting Guide for 2024. Last year our Gifting Guide was incredibly popular with local crafters, makers, retailers and artists. The Guide provides an opportunity to showcase gift ideas to local people who may be looking to spend their Christmas gifting money on something closer to home by way of supporting local businesses.

This year, the Gifting Guide will feature in both the *Abergavenny Focus* and *South Powys Focus* in both November and December's issues as well as on our website and promoted across our social media platforms. This means it will be printed and delivered 28,000 times as well as being seen widely across social media.

Here's an example of how our Guide looked in 2023. A listing in the Guide includes an image of a product to promote, the cost, a bit of blurb about it (around 100 words) and a listed link/address of where it can be purchased. Given the constraints of a listing versus an advert, the cost is significantly

lower than that of a standard advert. At just £45 plus VAT to cover insertions into both NOV & DEC magazines as well as online promo and digital copies, inclusion into the Gifting Guide saves you over £200 on our standard advertising rates. We've kept prices as low as we possibly can to provide a platform and exposure for as many

local crafters, makers, artists and retailers as possible! If you own a business and would like to promote your products and services to the people of Abergavenny and South Powys, make sure you book a spot in our Christmas Gifting Guide. We are taking bookings NOW and spaces are going like proverbial hotcakes!

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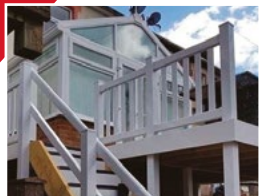
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