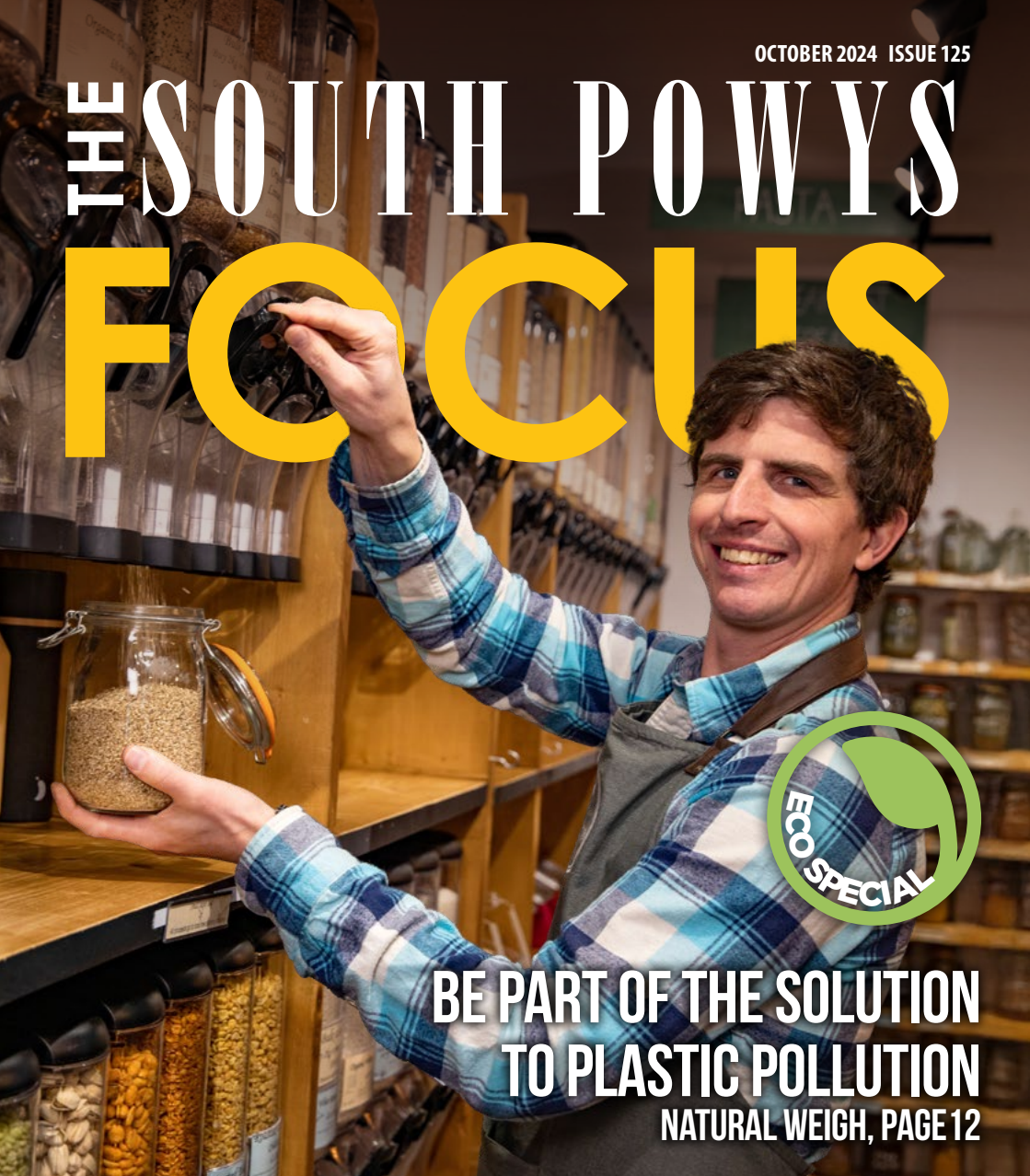


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TO PLASTIC POLLUTION**
NATURAL WEIGH, PAGE 12



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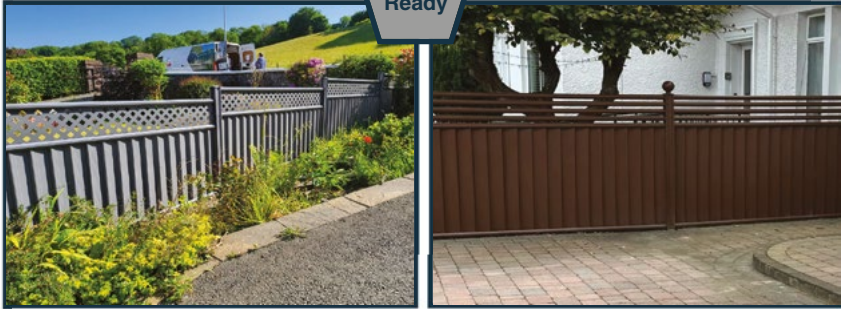
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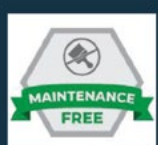
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Dear Readers,



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,

Hannah

Publisher: Focus Magazines Ltd
Tel: 01873 856614
hello@thefocus.wales

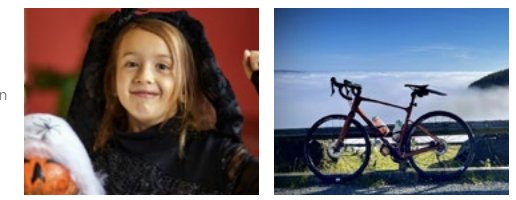
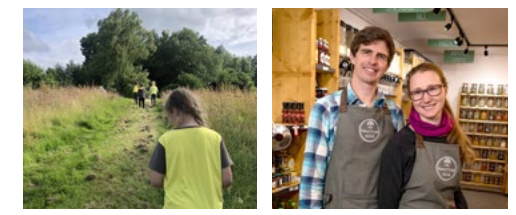
Contributions:
Joe Aldworth, Stuart Baldwin Jane Bradbury, Heather Cook, Dr Giles P Croft, Andy Green, Robin Masefield, Nikki Poulton, Jonathan Powell, Michelle Thompson.
Contributing organisations:
Theatr Brycheiniog

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2nd Brecon Brownies



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2nd Brecon Brownies is 60!



Come and celebrate with us on **Saturday 19th October** at St David's Hall, Llanfaes, from 2.30-4.30pm

There will be displays of brownie memorabilia from past and present; games and activities for all the family; and tea, coffee and cake for sale.



Come along and reminisce about your days as brownie or guide, or come along and find out what Girlguiding can offer you and your family, or just come along to have some fun and enjoy the refreshments.



Everyone Welcome!





A Brownie unit in Brecon will be celebrating its 60th Birthday in October. 2nd Brecon Brownies, based in Llanfaes held its first meeting on 1st October 1964 and has met weekly in term-times ever since, providing girls aged 7-10 with a space to be themselves, get creative, explore new experiences and have fun. They have met in various places over the years, including the mission hut opposite the Cwm Inn, St Joseph's School, and most recently, St David's Church Hall. Past members have fond memories of camping holidays, singing and campfires with hot chocolate, and reminisce about past Brown Owls and Tawny Owls with affection.

2nd Brecon Brownies are celebrating this impressive milestone by inviting the whole community to a birthday party on Saturday 19th October from 2.30-4.30pm at St David's Hall, Llanfaes. Everyone is welcome – if you used to be a brownie or a guide you can come along to reminisce about guiding when you were young; if you are interested in what Girlguiding can offer you and your family you can come along to find out more about being a brownie today; or if you are simply looking for a fun afternoon for all the family then you can come along and join in the activities.



Brownies is full of firsts: she might grow her first plant, bake her first cake, put up (and take down) her first tent, light her first fire, go on her first fun-packed weekend away with guiding friends.

There's something for every girl at Brownies, and plenty of moments she'll never forget.

To find out more search Brownies at girlguiding.org.uk

Registered charity number: 306016

There will be displays of Guiding memorabilia past and present, a range of fun games and activities for all the family, and tea, coffee and cake available. An afternoon of fun and nostalgia not to be missed.

2nd Brecon Brownies is part of Girlguiding Cymru – the leading charity for girls and young women in Wales, with nearly 11,000 young members, which shows girls from 4 to 18 a world of possibilities big and small. One where every girl can laugh and learn and be herself. To find out more or register your interest go to www.girlguiding.org.uk/joinus

Michelle Thompson

A Packed Line-up for a Day of Local Food and Drink Delights

The Brecon Beacons Food Festival, one of the oldest food festivals in Wales, is set to return on Saturday 5th October 2024, from 9:30am at Brecon Market Hall. Founded in 1997, this annual celebration of local food and drink continues to be a key event in Wales' culinary calendar, attracting thousands of visitors eager to sample the finest local produce.

A Celebration of Local Welsh Produce

The 2024 festival promises a fantastic mix of over 60 exhibitors, showcasing everything from freshly baked bread, artisan cheeses, and handcrafted beers, to local meats, preserves, cakes, and much more. With most items travelling fewer miles than the visitors themselves, it's the perfect opportunity to support local producers and indulge in the best that Welsh cuisine has to offer.

Exciting New Additions for 2024

This year's event will see the introduction of exciting new features, including an exclusive Tasting Table hosted by renowned S4C chef Nerys Howell, where visitors can sample a range of local treats, all prepared by the chef herself.

Another new addition is the Cookery Theatre, a collaboration with NPTC Group and CK Deli, featuring live cooking demonstrations in Bethel Square. Led by Shaun Bailey, BBC Celebrity Chef and Head Lecturer, along with students from Powys, the theatre offers festival-goers the chance to pick up new recipes and cooking techniques in a vibrant outdoor setting.

Headline Sponsors and Community Support

The Brecon Beacons Food Festival has also confirmed support from

several local businesses, including headline sponsors Beacon Foods, Castell Howell, and WW Bowen Ltd. Their contributions, alongside the efforts of exhibitors and local producers, ensure that this year's event will be a true celebration of the region's culinary talent.

A Day of Free, Family-Friendly Fun

Entry to the festival is free, making it a fun and accessible day out for all ages. In addition to the Tasting Table and Cookery Theatre, visitors can look forward to live music, and a huge range of food stalls to explore throughout the day.

Don't miss out on this year's Brecon Beacons Food Festival—an unmissable event for food lovers, families, and anyone with a passion for supporting local Welsh businesses. For more information on confirmed exhibitors, sponsors, entertainment, and how you can support this year's event, visit www.breconbeaconsfoodfestival.co.uk.

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OCTOBER EVENTS CALENDAR

5TH OCTOBER BRECON BEACONS FOOD FESTIVAL

From 9.30am, Brecon Market Hall
See more details in our article on
Page 7

8TH OCTOBER AN EVENING WITH KATE MOSSE

Tickets £12/£30. 7.30pm, The Manor
Hotel, Crickhowell. See Pg 28 for info
Book-ish.co.uk/events for tickets

9TH OCTOBER IAN RANKIN: MIDNIGHT AND BLUE

Tickets £12/£30 . 1.30pm, Manor
Hotel, Crickhowell. See Pg 28 for info
Book-ish.co.uk/events for tickets

10TH OCTOBER AN EVENING WITH C.J. SKUSE

Tickets £8/£15. 7.30pm, Book-ish Loft,
Crickhowell. See Pg 28 for info
Book-ish.co.uk/events for tickets

11TH -14TH OCTOBER BRECON BAROQUE FESTIVAL

breconbaroquefestival.com for full
programme of events and tickets

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

13TH OCTOBER HARVEST SERVICE

Guest speaker: Cynan Llwyd,
Tearfund. 9.30am, St Catwg's Church,
Dardy, Crickhowell. Refreshments
following the service

16TH OCTOBER NATIONAL DANCE COMPANY WALES: FRONTIERS & GORWELLION

A double bill of brilliantly crafted,
life-affirming dance. 7.30pm, Theatr
Brycheiniog, Brecon. See Page 10-11
for more info

17TH OCTOBER AN EVENING WITH GWYNETH LEWIS

Tickets £10/£22. 7.30pm, Book-ish
Loft, Crickhowell. See Pg 28 for info
Book-ish.co.uk/events for tickets

17TH OCTOBER NATIONAL DANCE COMPANY WALES: ZOETROPE

See Page 10-1 for more info
1pm, Theatr Brycheiniog, Brecon

18TH OCTOBER UNDER MILK WOOD SCREENING

See Page 10-11 for more info
7.30pm, Theatr Brycheiniog, Brecon

19TH OCTOBER 2ND BRECON BROWNIES TURNS 60!

Celebrate with them from 2.30pm-
4.30pm, St David's Hall, Llanfaes
See Page 4 and 5 for more info

19TH OCTOBER COMMUNITY HARVEST SUPPER

Two course hot meal including
vegetarian option. Bring your own
drinks – water and squash provided
Quiz, raffle and music from members
of St Catwg's Church Choir.
Adults £10, Children £5, tickets from
members of Bethesda Chapel or
from Geoffrey Davies: fgdavies@gmail.com tel: 01873 810648
6pm, Llangattock Community Hall

28TH OCTOBER LEGENDS OF AMERICAN COUNTRY

See Page 10-11 for more info
7.30pm, Theatr Brycheiniog, Brecon

29TH OCTOBER THE THREE MUSKETEERS

See Page 10-11 for more info
7.30pm, Theatr Brycheiniog, Brecon

31ST OCTOBER THE WELSH DRAGON



See Page 10-11 for more info
2pm & 7pm, Theatr Brycheiniog,
Brecon

1ST NOVEMBER CRICKHOWELL FC FIREWORKS

Gates open 5.30pm, Fireworks from
approx. 7pm. Elvicta Football Club,
Crickhowell. Visit Crickhowell F.C on
Facebook for updates on tickets and
pricing (info not available at time of
publishing)

8TH-10TH NOVEMBER BODY & EARTH WINTER RETREAT

Fforest Barn, Near Abergavenny
See Advert on Page 22 for highlights,
pricing and booking info

10TH NOVEMBER ACT OF REMEMBRANCE 2024

10.30am, St Mary's Parish Church
Garden followed by:
Service at Brecon Cathedral
at 11.30am

11TH NOVEMBER REMEMBRANCE SERVICE

10.50am, St Mary's Parish Church
Garden, Brecon

LOOKING AHEAD 23RD NOVEMBER BRECON WITH BELLS ON

SHARE YOUR EVENTS

Go to thefocus.wales/calendar

A Note about Events
All the events listed are correct at the time of
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checking dates and times prior to attending
an event to ensure these have not changed.
Focus Magazines accepts no responsibility for
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National Theatre Live Screening: *Prima Facie*

Prima Facie takes us to the heart of where emotion and experience collide with the rules of the game.
Thu 3rd Oct | 7.15pm

Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour

Blue Film Programme Featuring a collection of short films filled with extreme journeys, untamed characters and captivating cinematography!
Fri 4th Oct | 7.30pm

National Dance Company Wales: *Frontiers & Gorwellion*

A double bill of National Dance Company Wales' signature blend of brilliantly crafted, life-affirming dance.
Wed 16th Oct | 7.30pm

National Dance Company Wales: *Zoetrope*

Is an hour enough to learn the whole of human history? Probably not. Is it enough time to be amazed, intrigued, and delighted? Definitely.
Thu 17th Oct | 1pm

Under Milk Wood Screening
Kevin Allen's radically updated version of Dylan Thomas's iconic poetic prose work, *Under Milk Wood*.
Fri 18th Oct | 7.30pm

Legends of American Country
Multi award winning show returns for another fantastic night of toe tapping Country nostalgia.
Mon 28th Oct | 7.30pm

The Three Musketeers

A fresh new take on the classic novel, a dynamic cast of four energetic actors multirole their way through the uproarious tale.
Tue 29th Oct | 7.30pm

The Welsh Dragon | Theatr Iolo
Featuring music, rap, and a historical twist, this bold new play for children explores Britain's black ancestry.
Thu 31st Oct | 2pm & 7pm

Theatr Brycheiniog, Canal Wharf, Brecon, LD3 7EW
Box Office: 01874 611 622 | www.brycheiniog.co.uk

THEATR
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OCTOBER @ THEATR BRYCHEINIOG

Get ready for another a month filled with spectacular shows at Theatr Brycheiniog!

Theatr Brycheiniog invites you to embrace the vibrant performances lined up this October. This month promises an exhilarating array of events that cater to all tastes, from breathtaking films to captivating live performances.

Kicking off the month with the screening of *Prima Facie* on the 3rd October at 7.15pm. **Jodie Comer** (*Killing Eve*) makes her West End debut in the UK premiere of Suzie Miller's award-winning play. Tessa is a young, brilliant barrister. She has worked her way up from working class origins to be at the top of her game; defending; cross examining and winning.

Then join us on Friday 4th October at 7.30pm, when the **Banff Mountain Film Festival** (Blue Film Programme) will transport you on thrilling adventures across the globe. Showcasing the world's top adventure filmmakers as they take you on extreme journeys filled with untamed characters and stunning cinematography.



From October 11th to 14th, immerse yourself in the **Brecon Baroque Festival**. Join us at Theatr B! for *French Connexions* on Saturday 12th October at 7.30pm, featuring free pre-concert talks at 6:15 pm and 6.45pm in the Studio; enjoy a night of exquisite performances

that promise to resonate in your heart. And don't miss the *Pot-Pourri* finale concert on Monday 14th October at 6pm.

Dance enthusiasts should mark their calendars for National Dance Company Wales on Wednesday 16th October at 7.30pm. This double bill of **Frontiers & Gorwellion** showcases brilliantly crafted, life-affirming dance that will leave you spellbound. For a family-friendly option, join us on Thursday 17th October at 1 pm for *Zoetrope*, where an hour of delightful storytelling awaits.

On Friday 18th October at 7.30pm we have a screening of Kevin Allen's film of *Under Milk Wood* to celebrate the play's 70th Anniversary. The film opens at nightfall, whilst the eccentric residents of Llareggub are fast asleep, and through blind Captain Cat (Rhys Ifans) - the story's living portal - we gradually become aware that we are bearing witness to the townspeople's deepest dreams.

We have some more dance with an Encore Screening from The Royal Ballet of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* on Sunday 20th October.

The excitement continues on Saturday 26th October at 7.30pm, when **Brecon Town Concert Band** present *The Last Night of the Proms - James Bond Spectacular*. Experience the magic of Bond films as renowned concert pianist Catherine Nardiello takes to the stage, complemented by classic British sea songs and patriotic favourites. Feel free to dress as your favourite Bond character for an evening of elegance and fun.

On Monday 28th October at 7.30pm, country music fans will love *Legends of American Country*, an award-winning show featuring tributes to icons like Dolly Parton and Johnny Cash. This must-see musical extravaganza promises a night of toe-tapping nostalgia.

Finally, don't miss **Black Rat Productions'** fresh adaptation of *The Three Musketeers* on Tuesday 29th October at 7.30pm. This hilarious take on Dumas' classic tale features sword fights, mistaken identities, and non-stop laughs, perfect for audiences aged 11 upwards.

We conclude the month with a half term show for families, ideal for children age 7-13 years. *The Welsh Dragon* by **Theatr Iolo** on Thursday 31st October explores identity and heritage through music and rap, weaving historical truths with engaging storytelling. Performances are at 2pm and 7pm.

For our youngest audience members, **Baby B! Storytelling Group** is a free parent and child activity group every Wednesday at 11am. Join us for interactive and inclusive sessions filled with songs, rhymes, and stories.

Lastly, if you're looking for a midweek pick-me-up, join the **Uplift Singing Sessions** led by Tanya Walker every Tuesday at 12pm. Let the power of singing uplift your spirits and bring joy to your week.

Plus, our canal side cafe is such a great place to relax and spend time, whether it is before a show, for breakfast, lunch or coffee and cake, we have menus for all occasions.

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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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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.

4 ECO WATCH WORDS FOR YOUR OUTDOOR KIT: Ethical • Green • Quality • Repairable



As a business who encourages people to get out and enjoy the great outdoors, we do as much as we can to preserve our planet and to this end we try to run our own business sustainably, for instance recycling our own rubbish and especially packaging. We donate bubble wrap and any other packaging we receive from our suppliers to our local charity shops, saves them money and helps us out by reusing it. Other suitable plastic goes to our local Zero Waste shop, Natural Weigh who have an arrangement to have plastic recycled.

We try to sell products from brands who are also striving to do their part in helping the environment by focusing their energy on the 5 key areas that make most sense, health, equality, a sustainable economy, responsible production, and the climate.

These are companies who respect the rights, work and dignity of, not only their employees but also the employees of their suppliers. They ensure that their suppliers maintain good labour conditions and workers rights.

They try where possible, and if it doesn't have a negative impact on performance, re introducing

recycled fabrics from Pertex, Goretex, Primaloft, Feather and Down products, into the manufacturing process, thereby reducing the demand on virgin resources.

If using natural products, great care is taken to ensure that it is responsibly sourced. Merino wool is certified as being mulesing-free. This is the barbaric practice of removing any infected flesh due to fly strike from the sheep, often without anaesthetic. Any down used is again responsibly sourced, none come from birds that have been live-plucked or force-fed. The welfare of the animals is as important to them as the welfare of the human workers. Their entire supply chain is inspected to guarantee complete traceability and compliance. Manufacturing is often close to the warehouse so minimising the impact of logistical movements.

By changing manufacturing methods so less water is used in the dyeing process and using renewable energy all goes towards making the industry greener and kinder.

We think, personally, it is also important that products are manufactured to the best design and quality thus extending their life and usefulness, reducing the throw away culture. Most Brands now offer a repair service to further extend

the life of a garment, Keela, RAB and Montane to name just a few of the ones we stock. Their are local businesses too who can carry out repairs to your kit...we like that idea!

The same is true for footwear. More and more footwear can be resoled so instead of being tossed

away they can have their useful life span extended. If the uppers are sound and the soles have no tread, this makes perfect sense. Not only saving the environment but another way to keep your cash in your pocket!

As a purchaser and user of these products, we have our own responsibility to look after them.

Waterproof garments need regular maintenance. Clean and reproof them to allow these fabrics to continue as efficiently as possible. Footwear also needs regular cleaning and if they are leather, they need 'feeding' to keep the leather supple, not dry out and crack.

We all need to do our bit...

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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.

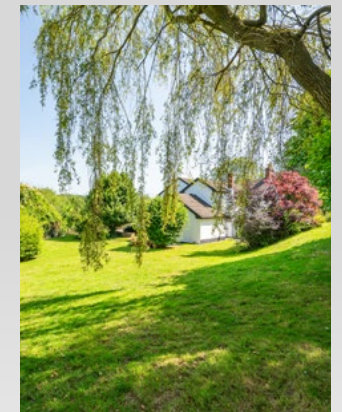
Sale transactions are taking on average 12 - 16 weeks from the time a sale is agreed until completion (i.e. when you move) takes place. Add to that the time to find a buyer, which can range from a week to a year depending on the type of property, price and timing and, importantly,

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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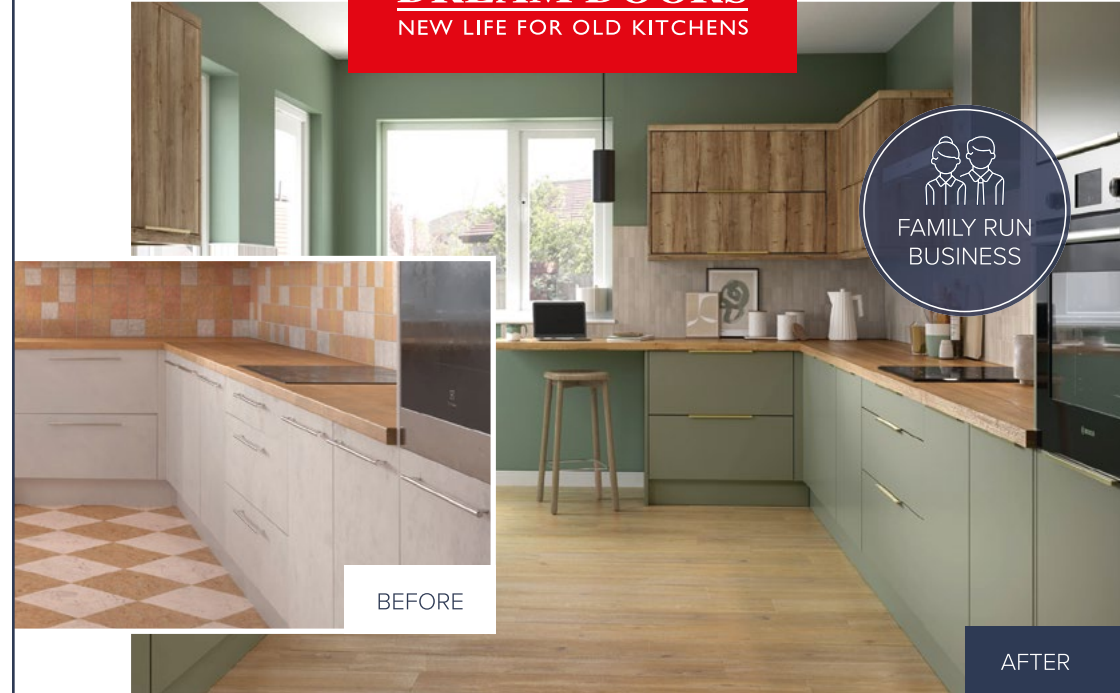
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Use LED Lighting

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.

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!

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.

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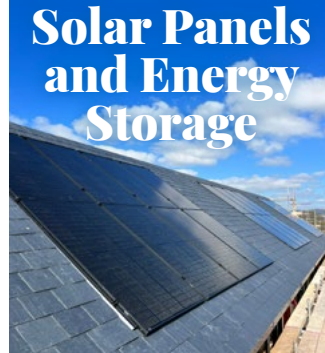
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Solar Panels and Energy Storage



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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Christmas Menu

A glass of Prosecco on arrival and mini mince pie with coffees

<p>Starters</p> <p>Smoked Salmon Bellini's Premium smoked salmon served with caviar</p> <p>Chicken & Smoked Ham Hock Terrine Served with grilled ciabatta</p> <p>Celariac & Truffle Soup (V) Creamy celariac soup served with a mini loaf</p> <p>Garlicky Tiger Prawns Garlicky Tiger Prawns with a lemon butter</p>	<p>Mains</p> <p>Turducken Three Bird roast, Turkey, duck & Chicken served with all the trimmings including brussel sprouts, yorkshire puddings, roast potatoes, honey mustard cabbage.</p> <p>Roast Salmon Crispy skin roasted Salmon served with new potatoes and green beans</p>	<p>Desserts</p> <p>Brio & Cranberry Wellington (V) Served with all the trimmings including brussel sprouts, yorkshire puddings, roast potatoes, honey mustard cabbage.</p> <p>Beef Bourguignon Served in a red wine sauce & creamy mash</p>
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<p>Prices</p> <p>2 Course £13.95</p> <p>3 Courses £28.95</p>	<p>After Eight Cheesecake Served with ice cream</p> <p>Bread & Butter Pudding Served hot with custard</p>	<p>Christmas Pudding Served hot and with brandy butter</p> <p>Sticky Chocolate & Orange Cake Served with double cream</p>
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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.



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 *South Powys Focus* and *Abergavenny 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 South Powys and Abergavenny, make sure you book a spot in our Christmas Gifting Guide. We are taking bookings NOW and spaces are going like proverbial hotcakes!

NOVEMBER EDITION DEADLINE: 23RD OCTOBER.
EMAIL: HELLO@THEFOCUS.WALES PHONE: 01873 856 614

Letting Go

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

~ Gautama Buddha



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!

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.

Dr Giles P Croft gilescroft.com
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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>

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

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



#Futuregen
Jane Davidson
£14.99

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.



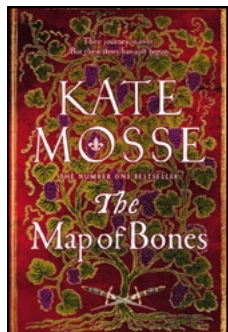
Don't Waste Your Pumpkin
Emily Gussin £8.99

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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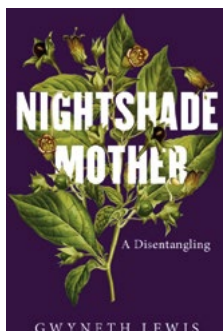
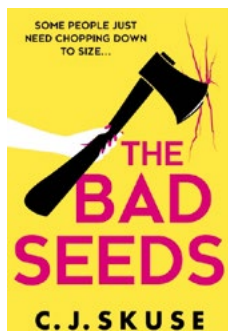
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THE MANOR, CRICKHOWELL
TICKET £12 | WITH BOOK £30

IAN RANKIN: 9TH OCT - 1.30PM
THE MANOR, CRICKHOWELL
TICKET £12 | WITH BOOK £30

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The Difference Between Yoga and Pilates



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.

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

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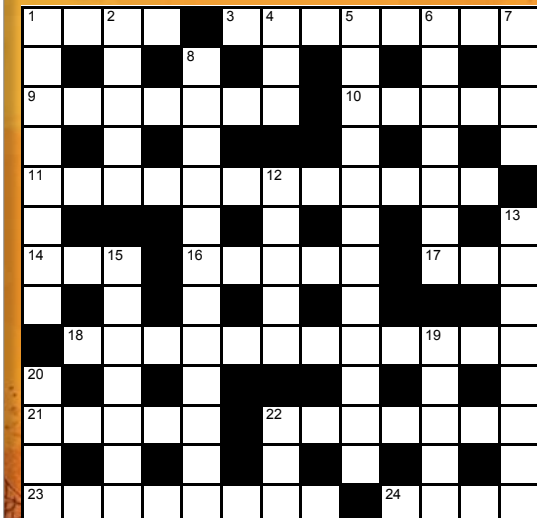
Quick Crossword

ACROSS

1. Fog (4)
- 3 Travellers (8)
- 9 Table support (7)
- 10 Entrance (5)
- 11 Clarifications (12)
- 14 Epoch (3)
- 16 Sphere (5)
- 17 To drink (3)
- 18 Uses camera (12)
- 21 Large sea (5)
- 22 Lawn game (7)
- 23 Mixing (8)
- 24 Steak (4)

DOWN

- 1 Mumbled (8)
- 2 Snooze (5)
- 4 Poem (3)
- 5 Ice-box (12)
- 6 Proverbs (7)
- 7 Painful (4)
- 8 Untangled (12)
- 12 Amid (5)
- 13 Alcoholic appetiser (8)
- 15 Accomplish (7)
- 19 Dwelling (5)
- 20 Grave (4)
- 22 Tin (3)



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