

THE SOUTH POWYS FOCUS



**LOCAL
CHRISTMAS
GIFTING GUIDE**

Inside

**CHRISTMAS
MARKET DATES**



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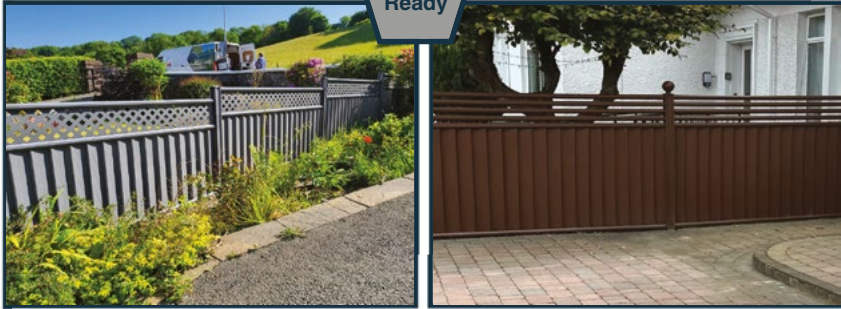
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Dear Readers,



I suppose at some time I have to face the fact that the seasons have well and truly changed. The leaves tell me so! I always find the end of British Summer Time really quite difficult; the clocks shifting back an hour not only discombobulate me for a good few days, but also leaves me with a slight sense of dread about the enveloping darkness of the mornings and late afternoons. Then, of course, I remember there's also a lot to enjoy about this time of year not least Christmas, which brings light and conviviality to the darker months.

We're giving you plenty of time to get prepared this year by presenting you with our Local Gifting Guide for 2024 on pages 15-21. Take a look at all the wonderful local businesses who are featured. Got a tricky person to buy for this Christmas? We've absolutely got you covered!

We're all about supporting local businesses and makers over the Christmas period because it's these businesses who keep our local economy thriving. You can also support them by attending a local Christmas Market. These are fast becoming a main staple of the Festive Season, so we thought it would be handy to have a quick reference of all the seasonal markets taking place in streets and village halls across our area. We've collated them and you can find the info on Page 5

In putting together this month's magazine, I am reminded that despite the nights drawing in and the increasing lack of daylight, there's much to be grateful for at this time of year and so much to get involved in. We hope you'll find this month's magazine uplifting!

Happy Reading,

Hannah

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Christmas Markets

During November and December there is a flurry of Winter and Festive Markets to enjoy locally. These markets are great places to find inspiration, to support local artists, crafters, makers and independent businesses as well as affording you the chance to soak up the festive atmosphere.

- 14th December**
CHRISTMAS FOODIE & CRAFT MARKET
 9.30am, Brecon Market
- 5th December**
CRICKHOWELL CHRISTMAS MARKET & LATE NIGHT OPENING
 From 4pm
- 2nd November**
BRECON CHRISTMAS MARKET
 10am-4.30pm, Brecon Market Hall
- 16th November**
CHRISTMAS BAZAAR
 2pm, St David's Parish Hall, Llanfaes
- 9th & 10th November**
ARTISAN WINTER MARKET
 10am-4pm, Tretower Court
- 23rd November**
BRECON WITH BELLS ON
 From noon onwards. Light switch-on at 6pm
 Brecon town centre
- 7th December**
GROW FOR TALGARTH CHRISTMAS MARKET
 10am-2.30pm, Talgarth Town Hall
- 14th December**
HAY CHRISTMAS FAYRE
 10am-4pm, Memorial Square, Hay on Wye
- 23rd November**
CHRISTMAS MARKET
 10am-4pm, St Mary's Church, Brecon

The Coach & Horses

Llangynidr

CANALSIDE BEER GARDEN
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GOOD LOCAL BEER

JOIN US THIS FESTIVE SEASON!

Our Delicious Christmas Menu is available from 28th November until New Years Day. Plan your Christmas get-together now.

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 ciabbatta</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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Pre-Order Essential

Please speak to a member of the team about any allergies



Harmonizing Success: The Rise of Piano Orchestra South Wales

In just over a year, the Piano Orchestra South Wales has blossomed from a modest ensemble of 17 pianists to a thriving musical community. This remarkable group now boasts both a Senior and Junior orchestra, with over 40 young musicians sharing their passion for piano.

Due to overwhelming interest and high demand, a second orchestra group will be launching in January 2025 and any child or teenager eager to join this exciting venture should contact Hannah Merrett at hannah@pianogilwern.com.

Based in Gilwern, the orchestra meets weekly for an hour, providing a nurturing

environment for budding pianists. Their numerous local concerts have not only delighted parents and carers but have also been instrumental in fundraising for their forthcoming tour to Paris.

The highly anticipated trip, scheduled from October 28th to 31st, will feature unforgettable experiences such as a visit to Disneyland Paris and a scenic cruise along the River Seine. The highlight, however, will be their performance at the iconic La Madeleine, where they will captivate Parisian audiences with specially arranged scores prepared by their teacher Nichola McCloy, during a one-hour concert.

The group's dedication to fundraising has been amazing, ensuring they have the funds necessary to purchase technical equipment to deliver top quality performances. Additional keyboards have also been necessary to accommodate new orchestra members, and the odd "bump" to enable the show to stay on the road!

If you're interested in supporting the South Wales Piano Orchestra, please visit our GoFundMe page here - Fundraiser by Hannah Merrett: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/piano-orchestra>

Sarah Jeremiah

01874 730245 INFO@COACHANDHORSESLLANGYNIDR.COM
CWM CRAWNON ROAD, LLANGYNIDR, NP8 1LS

Let's Talk: Living in Powys



to share their opinions on life in the county and their experiences of using Council services.

By responding to this survey, you will help the Council to better understand:

- What is important to you
- Your experience of your local area
- How you view and interact with the Council

Cllr James Gibson-Watt, Leader and Cabinet Member for an Open and Transparent Powys, explained, "Your views can help shape your local area and your local services. The questions being asked are also being asked in many other local councils across Wales.

"It is important to hear from as many residents as possible.

Please encourage your family, friends, and neighbours to complete this survey."

Complete the survey online here: <https://surveys.data.cymru/s/524ArolwgPreswylwyrResidentSurvey/>

Please respond by Friday 13 December 2024.

For more information and to access downloadable print and Easy Read copies of the survey, please visit: <https://www.haveyoursaypowys.wales/powys-survey>

If you would like any further information, or have any difficulty completing the online survey, please email surveys@data.cymru or call 029 2090 9500.

Data Cymru is running this survey on behalf of Powys County Council.

Residents have an opportunity to share their views on living in Powys to help shape future planning and service delivery, the county council has said.

The survey called "Let's Talk: Living in Powys" is an opportunity for residents

Mental Elf

Festive Fun Run



That's right... Mental Elf has arrived in Brecon for winter 2024!

Take part in the festive family 5km fun run at The Promenade park, Brecon, on Sunday 8th December.

Registration opens at 10.30am and the run begins at 12 noon.

Join us at our festive fun run where you can walk, jog, skip or run our 5km route. As well as the fun run, there will be festive activities for the family, a hot drink station, a choir

performance, a goody bag with your very own medal and more. And don't forget your elf ears or Santa hats! While Christmas fancy dress is not required, it's very much encouraged and there will be prizes for best dressed on the day. Mental Elf is open to all abilities and ages and children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult, well behaved dogs on leads are welcome.

Mental Elf is an inclusive and non-competitive event which

focuses on bringing people together, not only to fundraise, but to raise awareness of mental health and wellbeing. It promotes the benefits of physical activity, connecting with people and doing something to help others.

All donations raised during Mental Elf stay here in Brecon and District Mind to help fund our vital services to support people in our community with their mental health and wellbeing.

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Rude Science

A lively show blends comedy with education, making science accessible and fun for children and adults alike.
Sun 3rd Nov

Encore Screening

The Wolf Witch and Giant Fairy

Straight from the Royal Opera House, this tale of magic, myth, and adventure is set against a backdrop of enchanting choreography and musical grandeur.
Thur 7th Nov

Little Red Riding Hood / Yr Hugan Fach Goch

Perfect for families. Audiences will enjoy following the familiar story of the fearless Red Riding Hood as she outsmarts the Big Bad Wolf. Performed in Welsh and English.
Tues 12th Nov

Mochyn Myrddin (Merlin's Pig)

Tells the charming story of a magical pig, whisking the audience away to a world of fantasy and fun. This family show is ideal for younger viewers with a taste for adventure. In Welsh.
Thur 14th Nov

The Fight

A powerful and gripping drama exploring the complexities of family, conflict, and resilience.
Tue 19th to Thur 21st Nov

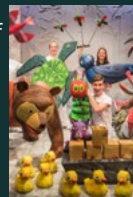
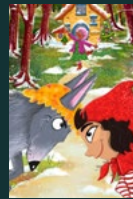
The Very Hungry Caterpillar

The story of the caterpillar's transformation will mesmerise young audiences, making it a magical family outing.
Sat 23rd to Sun 24th Nov

Buddy Holly and The Crickets

The golden age of rock 'n' roll at Theatr Brycheiniog. Relive Holly's greatest hits and enjoy an evening of energetic performances in this toe-tapping tribute to a music legend.
Mon 25th Nov

THEATR BRYCHEINIOG



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

NOVEMBER @ THEATR BRYCHEINIOG

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



Caterpillar from Saturday 23rd to Sunday 24th November. Through vibrant puppetry, the story of the caterpillar's transformation will mesmerise young audiences, making it a magical family outing.

Buddy Holly and The Crickets on Monday 25th November brings the golden age of rock 'n' roll to Theatr Brycheiniog. Relive Holly's greatest hits and enjoy an evening of energetic performances in this toe-tapping tribute to a music legend.

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. So, there you have it, a taste of what's to come in May at Theatr Brycheiniog.

November is packed with an exciting array of performances at Theatr Brycheiniog, offering something for everyone. From family-friendly classics to opera screenings and creative Welsh-language productions, the lineup promises to entertain and inspire audiences of all ages.

Prepare for a wild ride into the world of quirky experiments and hilarious scientific facts with Rude Science on Sunday 3rd November. This lively show blends comedy with education, making science accessible and fun for children and adults alike.

For fans of the majestic, this Encore Screening of The Wolf Witch and Giant Fairy on Thursday 7th November brings the beauty of ballet to life on the big screen. Straight from the Royal Opera House, this tale of magic, myth, and adventure is set against a backdrop of enchanting choreography and musical grandeur.

A delightful bilingual take on the beloved fairy tale, Little Red Riding Hood / Yr Hugan Fach Goch on Tuesday 12th November is perfect for families. Audiences will enjoy following the familiar story of the fearless Red Riding Hood as she outsmarts the Big Bad Wolf, performed in both Welsh and English.

Presented in Welsh, Mochyn Myrddin (Merlin's Pig) on Thursday 14th November tells the charming story of a magical pig, whisking the audience away to a world of fantasy and fun. This family show is ideal for younger viewers with a taste for adventure.

The Fight on Tuesday 19th to Thursday 21st November is a powerful and gripping drama exploring the complexities of family, conflict, and resilience. Its intense storyline and captivating performances make it a must-see for theatre lovers seeking a thought-provoking night out.

This much-loved children's classic by Eric Carle is brought to life on stage in The Very Hungry



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NOVEMBER EVENTS CALENDAR

FOR CHRISTMAS MARKETS SEE PAGE 5

1ST NOVEMBER

CRICKHOWELL FC FIREWORKS

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

2ND NOVEMBER

BRECON CHRISTMAS MARKET

10am, Brecon Market Hall

3RD NOVEMBER

RUDE SCIENCE

Theatr Brycheiniog
www.brycheiniog.co.uk See Page 10

5TH NOVEMBER AND 1ST TUESDAY OF THE MONTH

VETERANS' GROUP

10.30am, St David's Church, Llanfaes
For more info contact Rev'd Rich Wootten: Richardwootten@CinW.org.uk or 07739 474 327

5TH NOVEMBER

BONFIRE NIGHT & FIREWORK DISPLAY

Refreshments (cash only) including hot dogs, burgers, soup, hot chocolate and mulled wine. Children £2, Adults £5. Parking at Talybont Market, Station Rd from 5.30pm. Gates open 6pm, Fireworks at 7.15pm, Henderson Hall, Talybont on Usk

5TH NOVEMBER

CRICKHOWELL U3A MEETING

Join Crickhowell's thriving u3a for its monthly meeting. Coffee is served from 10.00am, with announcements and u3a business matters at 10.30am, followed by the guest speaker. Non-members are welcome to attend monthly meetings free of charge.

Clarence Hall, Crickhowell

6TH NOVEMBER

JASMINE DONAHAY: BIRDSPLAINING

7.30pm, Book-ish, Crickhowell
See Book-ish advert on Page 28 for ticket prices and booking info

7TH NOVEMBER

THE WOLF WITCH AND GIANT FAIRY

Theatr Brycheiniog
www.brycheiniog.co.uk
See Page 10

8TH NOVEMBER

FIREWORK DISPLAY

Infantry Battle School, Dering Lines, Brecon. Tickets £7 for adults, £5 under 16s, free for under 5s
Gates open from 5pm

8TH-10TH NOVEMBER

BODY & EARTH WINTER RETREAT

Fforest Barn, Near Abergavenny
See Advert on Page 9 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

11TH NOVEMBER

FIRE: JOHN BOYNE

7.30pm, Manor Hotel, Crickhowell
See Book-ish advert on Page 28 for ticket prices and booking info

12TH NOVEMBER

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD / YR HUGAN FACH GOCH

Theatr Brycheiniog
www.brycheiniog.co.uk
See Page 10

14TH NOVEMBER

MOCHYN MYRDDIN (MERLIN'S PIG)

Theatr Brycheiniog
www.brycheiniog.co.uk
See Page 10

14TH NOVEMBER

BOB DYLAN IN TEN RARE OBJECTS

7.30pm, Book-ish, Crickhowell
See Book-ish advert on Page 28 for ticket prices and booking info

19TH – 21ST NOVEMBER

THE FIGHT

Theatr Brycheiniog
www.brycheiniog.co.uk See Page 10

21ST NOVEMBER

WOMAN'S WALES

7.30pm, Book-ish Crickhowell
See Book-ish advert on Page 28 for ticket prices and booking info

23RD NOVEMBER

CRICKHOWELL CHORAL SOCIETY AND BRECKNOCK SINFONIA SCHUBERT'S MASS IN A FLAT, HIS GREATEST CHORAL MASTERPIECE

With works by Mendelssohn, Haydn and Beethoven. 7.30pm, Brecon Cathedral. Tickets £15 and free to Under 18s and students
www.crickhowellchoralsociety.org
for more information.

23RD-24TH NOVEMBER

THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR

Theatr Brycheiniog www.brycheiniog.co.uk See Page 10

23RD NOVEMBER

BRECON WITH BELLS ON

See page 5

25TH NOVEMBER

BUDDY HOLLY AND THE CRICKETERS

Theatr Brycheiniog www.brycheiniog.co.uk See Page 10

8TH DECEMBER

BRECON AND DISTRICT MIND FUN RUN

Festive family 5km fun run
Registration from 10.30am,
Promenade Park, Brecon
See Page 9 for full details

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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THE FOCUS

LOCAL CHRISTMAS GIFTING GUIDE





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Kick back with a hot chocolate or a mulled drink and get all your Christmas shopping done in one hit with the help of our guide. By buying some wonderful presents, you'll also be helping to support a local business, so you'll be giving the gift of joy twice over. Who could ask for more?

Happy Shopping!

Hannah



MAGICAL EXPERIENCE OF LIGHT UP CANOEING IN BRECON!



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Jayne makes eco-friendly jewellery in the Black Mountains of South Wales, her work is inspired by the things she loves- Wales, nature, mountains and the sea. The Abergavenny 3 peaks are best sellers; prices start at £75. All of her creations are handmade, everyone is different and perfectly imperfect, just like life. You can follow her on various social media channels @blodau_arian (insta) Blodau Arian on Facebook.

Blodau Arian

Available at: Craft Renaissance Gallery, Little Green Refills, Crystals & Holistic in Crickhowell and www.etsy.com/uk/shop/BlodauArian



POTTERY VOUCHERS



Make and Decorate a Pinch Pot: Unleash your creativity in a stunning setting near Pandy. No experience required - Jo will guide you through making and decorating your hand-built design in clay. A fun-filled 3 hour session. £25 - £65 - includes all materials, equipment and firing.

Pottery Painting: Come and spend a morning/afternoon or evening with Jo in a beautiful, tranquil setting, painting ready-made pottery. No experience required and you don't need to be an artist. 2 ½ hours - includes all materials, £12 studio fee, equipment and firing. Based near Pandy. Vouchers can be booked for 1-10 people. £25-£40

£25 - £65

Break for the Border

breakfortheborder100@gmail.com, www.breakfortheborder.co.uk

THE MAKERS AT CRAFT RENAISSANCE

There are a myriad of gift ideas at The Makers Crafts Gallery! You can choose your favourite greetings cards, and wrapping paper, to complete your purchases. The gallery offers beautiful presents for all of your loved ones, from jewellery to textiles, paintings to sculpture, ceramics to woodturning, willow to photography, to name just some... you can choose a little treat or a collector's piece. But if you are unsure what you'd prefer, then you can also choose a gift voucher! You can pop in to buy, or email for a digital version. We are open Wednesdays to Sundays.

£5-500

The Makers at Craft Renaissance

Kemys Commander, NP15 1JU (near the Chainbridge Inn)
www.themakerscraftsgallery.co.uk





KINGS ARMS CHRISTMAS VOUCHER

Why not treat that someone special this Christmas to a relaxing night away, a chilled evening of drinks with live music, or a delicious home-cooked Sunday Lunch. All available for purchase with our vouchers. For more information, please contact us now.

£25-£50

Kings Arms Hotel

01873 855074 Kingsarmsabergavenny@gmail.com

kingsarmsabergavenny.co.uk/gifts-vouchers/

2025 WELSH LANDSCAPES CALENDAR BY LOUISE COLLIS

Plan all your exciting 2025 holidays and events in a calendar of Welsh Landscape Paintings by local artist Louise Collis. Produced on high quality card so the colourful pages can be framed as prints after use.

Paintings include Pen y Fan, Sunflowers, Llangrannog, Sugarloaf, New Quay, Tenby, Manorbier and Pontypool. Original oil paintings, prints and cards also available for perfect presents and treats.



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Crickhowell Adventure

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CHRISTMAS ICE CREAM CAKES

For gifting or for an easy festive dessert option, we have 5 flavours of ice cream cake available this year: Toffee Apple, Bonnet, Black Forest Gateau, Strawberry & Chocolate and Christmas Pudding. Pre-order closes December 15th, collection from the Ice Cream Shop, Abergavenny 22nd, 23rd or 24th.

From £25.60

The Ice Cream Shop

www.shepherdsicecream.co.uk/christmas-ice-cream-cakes

11B Market Street, Abergavenny, NP7 5SD



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£160

Abergavenny Baker Cookery School

www.abergavennybaker.co.uk



ROBIN MUG AND COASTER SET

Perfect for nature lovers, this robin mug and coaster set is based on one of my drawings and is printed locally. I also have other animal and bird designs available. See website for full selection of wildlife art and homeware gifts that all feature my drawings.

£13 + P&P

Catherine from CM Creative

www.cmcreative.uk/shop



A DAY AT TEXTILES AT THE WEIR

Stuck for ideas for Christmas? Lots of us want to try new things so what better than treating them to a Gift Voucher for a day at Textiles at The Weir. They can learn new skills and by the end of the day will create their own, unique textile landscape. The cost of the day is £80 which includes all materials needed for the course.

£80

Textiles at the Weir

info@textilesattheweir.co.uk, 01873 840299, The Weir, Llanddewi Rhydderch. Abergavenny NP7 9TW



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£60

www.360yogawithcoral.com



ART CLASSES AT CHAPEL COTTAGE STUDIO



Give the gift of creativity with a place on one of our art classes or workshops at Chapel Cottage Studio! This thoughtful gift offers an inspiring escape to explore painting and drawing in a friendly environment. Whether they're a beginner or an experienced artist, they'll leave with new skills, a unique piece of artwork, and maybe even some new friends. For a meaningful gift, booking a class at CCS could be the perfect choice.

From £40 pp

Chapel Cottage Studio

chapelcottagestudio.co.uk/courses/workshops



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www.blackmountainfabric.co.uk



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Tees £25 plus P&P

Mountain Heights

mountain-heights.sumupstore.com



POTTERY WHEEL GIFT VOUCHERS

My pottery wheel gift vouchers offer a unique experience combining learning a new craft with great fun, whether for a beginner or improver you can give the gift of creativity. Purchase a pottery wheel gift voucher online and inspire someone to create their own masterpiece. Participants will get expert guidance on a pottery wheel. Select your voucher for an instant e-voucher via email. Vouchers redeemed at the recipient's convenience for a Taster session, One Day Experience or 3 Week Course. Sessions held at my home pottery studio on Llanelly Hill, 15 minutes from Abergavenny.

£55 - £65pp

Melanie Made Mud

www.melaniemademud.com



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£25 (Instruction and walk session)

Ed Woolley

[07906365280](tel:07906365280) etwoolley@hotmail.co.uk



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November Weather Outlook by Jonathan Powell

Following on from an October that provided a typical autumnal mix of conditions, but with no real extremes, November looks set to continue in a similar vein. With high pressure expected to make its presence felt across southern areas, the Atlantic, whilst keen to barrel through the usual procession of rain and wind bearing systems, may well find its endeavours somewhat derailed, with decent passages of more stable and quieter weather proving hard to dislodge. That said, periods of rain and strong winds are not completely absent from November's forecast. October was also notable for just temporary dips in overnight values and bar perhaps late month, November too could well see only limited bursts of low values per night, and perhaps even some surprisingly mild temperatures by day. An average month with regard to rainfall with temperatures on or above the average.



Photography by
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Slowing Down

it's much better to be honest than to go to a party because we feel we have to.

Movement is another way to counter the stress response and it doesn't have to be intense exercise. A walk in nature, a morning stretch, or a gentle class can help us to process thoughts and work through problems. Moving our bodies releases endorphins that can literally change our mood.

So the advice I'll be giving to myself over the coming weeks is:

- Slow down and breathe - Inhale through the nose for a count of 3, hold the breath for a count of 4 and exhale through the mouth for a count of 5. Repeat 3 or 4 times.
- Have fun – laugh and truly connect with people, share stories and listen.
- Make sure I move every single day - stretch my body, walk in nature and be grateful for the movement I have.

Ps If you see me looking frazzled in the supermarket, please remind me!

Kate Thomas

With the excitement of Christmas approaching, it's very easy to get caught up in the whirlwind of it all, without giving ourselves time to breathe out. The pace of life can be overwhelming for many of us much of the time, but with the added festivities, present buying, food shopping, hosting and general rushing about, some of us are close to breaking point.

Slowing down and looking after ourselves is imperative if we're not to crash and burn in this frantic world. We can do small things to help ourselves during the day; stop for a moment and take 3 deep breaths to calm the nervous system, have a long, relaxing bath, sit still with a hot drink or a book. When life is hectic, stopping for a moment may seem like a luxury we can't afford but it's these moments that centre us and keep us well, recharging us so that we can function properly.

Finding the fun within the chaos will also help us to thrive. When we play and let go of inhibitions, we produce oxytocin, serotonin and dopamine which combat stress and keep us balanced. So if you've been invited to a party, and you've said yes, try to genuinely connect with others. Let yourself go! Or say no to the invitation if you think it's too much to manage. People pleasing can be so draining and

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Next Month's Focus

IT'S CHRISTMAS!

DECEMBER EDITION DEADLINE: 27TH NOVEMBER
EMAIL: HELLO@THEFOCUS.WALES PHONE: 01873 856 614

The December edition of the Focus will feature all things Christmassy, so get in touch with your submissions, contributions and advert bookings! We'll be running our Local Christmas Gifting Guide again, so why not list your gift idea for December? Our Christmas Competition will give local businesses an opportunity to get involved with the Christmas Fun - Get in touch now to find out more!

Where's your Focus?

step carefully, so as not to trip over the brambles, stretching from one side to the other.

It was like a metaphor itself, for those two different ways of being: big picture (right hemisphere) versus detail (left hemisphere).

And while we were concentrating hard on the details of our progress through the undergrowth, we didn't get to experience any of the big picture beauty of the forest we were in.

Until we stopped, and looked up to discover it was still there.

Just like our forest walk, in life there are times when the path is wide, we can breathe easily and it's very obvious that life is a beautiful, wondrous adventure.

Then there are times when life's path is twisty-turny and strewn with brambles. Sometimes it's appropriate to focus on detail, but... we can slow down, or stop and appreciate the big picture at *any* moment.

Because it's a constant in our lives. It's free. It's just part of who and what we are (the bigger part; *much* bigger!) and it's the space from which we heal.

McGilchrist posits that as a species we have become too enamoured by the left hemisphere's focus — detail, "usefulness," separation — to the exclusion of the right (oneness, being, connection).

It's natural, and very human, to get sucked into the intellect's stories, but remain mindful of what is always available to you in life, *before* the left brain analyses all the juice out of it.

Take some time to shift your focus in this way, and let healing commence.

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>

"The mind runs because you are giving it the power of your attention. Withdraw your attention, and the thinking mind falls away." ~ Michael A. Singer

One way or another, my whole medical career has been concerned with understanding how these mind-bodies of ours work; the various ways they can get out of whack, and what we, as practitioners, can do to help them regain their natural balance.

Back when I was practicing orthopaedic surgery, in the simplest of terms, our job was to keep two broken ends of bone together, stop wounds from getting contaminated with bacteria, step back and let life do the healing.

My work with the mind, these days, is not that dissimilar. There's such a wisdom to life itself, that when contaminated thinking is removed from a predicament and we step back from our urge to *manage* our experience, healing tends to occur quite naturally.

In terms of *how* we let go of this very human compulsion to obsess about the details of our thinking, as I've continued to explore and learn about the workings of the mind, it's become clear that, in the simplest of terms, it's all a matter of focus.

In his pioneering book *The Master and His Emissary*, Professor Iain McGilchrist examines the two halves

of the brain; not in the hackneyed left-does-this and right-does-that manner (which has since been disproved), but more how they offer two different ways of attending to the world. Two ways of *being*, both of which play out in our lives, constantly.

Using pigeons to explain how the left and right hemispheres work, they discovered that a pigeon's right eye (left hemisphere) is involved in separating out objects, sees everything in terms of its usefulness, and does things like hones in on individual details such as seeds on the ground, to peck at.

Meanwhile the left eye (right hemisphere) is scanning the sky for predators and is aware of the bigger picture – how it all fits together. The whole, inter-connected nature of experience.

It's a really nice demonstration that came to mind when I was out walking & talking with a client recently.

Our route took us from wandering freely through beautiful forests on a wide, unobstructed path, where we could widen our focus and marvel at the bigger picture around us, to a twisty-turny, narrow, overgrown path where we had to choose every

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BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

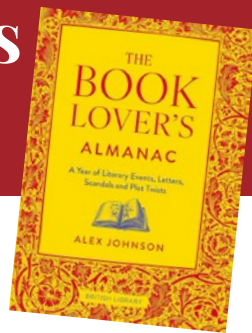
The Book-ish Elves have been hard at work, curating some wonderful festive gift ideas, suitable for even the hardest to please...

For the Little Nature Lover

A Story for the Seasons

Anna Wilson £20

Discover the secrets of the changing seasons in this enchanting and fact-filled guide to nature. Follow wildlife season by season, finding out about the exciting - and sometimes surprising - stories of the animals, plants and places you see around you. Meet tiny tadpoles growing into frogs in spring and colourful butterflies clustering around the summer wildflowers. Follow hedgehogs as they find safe places to hibernate among the falling autumn leaves, and birds searching for berries to eat during the coldest winter months.



For the Book Lover

The Book Lover's Almanac

Alex Johnson

£19.99

This book draws on the incredible collections of the British Library to find new, surprising and entertaining ways to celebrate every day of the year. Each month opens with a list of significant births and closes with a selection of pertinent last words, while entries roam across history from the great classics to modern authors.



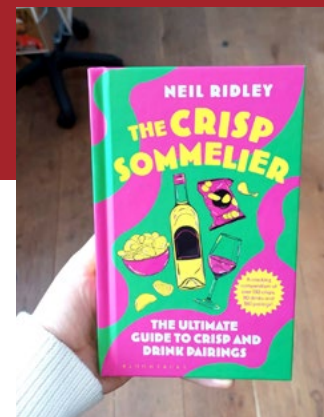
For the Foodie

Rick Stein's Food Stories

Rick Stein

£28

Accompanying the major new BBC2 series, Rick Stein's Food Stories is an exciting collection of new classics that celebrate modern Britain. Rick's recipes reflect his mouth-watering and heartfelt exploration of today's British cuisine and how different cultures have influenced the nation's evolving palate.



For the Crisp Connoisseur

The Crisp Sommelier

Neil Ridley

£12.99

Looking for snacking euphoria? Look no further than crisps and drinks! From classics such as Roast Beef Crisps and a pint of bitter, Salt & Vinegar Crisps and Sauvignon Blanc, or BBQ Crisps with Argentinian Malbec to the more unlikely sounding pairings of Pickled Onion Monster Munch and a gin-based Gibson cocktail, Scampi Fries and Smoky Scotch Whiskey or Japanese Chilli Rice Crackers and a Shiraz, as well as illustrations throughout, this book is your gateway to sensational snacking.



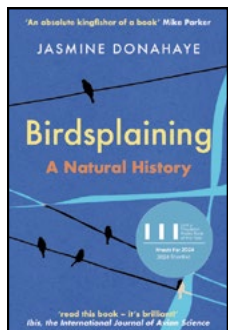
For the Art Appreciator

Still Waters & Wild Waves

Angela Harding

£25

In this gorgeous book, Angela Harding takes readers with her on her travels across rivers and seas, featuring beautiful paintings and prints, pages from Angela's personal sketchbooks and stunning photos. It is a joyful celebration of water and wildlife across Britain - perfect for art admirers and nature lovers everywhere.



{BOOK•ISH}

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BOB DYLAN IN TEN RARE OBJECTS:
14TH NOV - 7.30PM
BOOK-ISH LOFT, CRICKHOWELL
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WOMAN'S WALES: 21ST NOV - 7.30PM
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TICKET £8 | WITH BOOK £16

BOOK ONLINE: WWW.BOOK-ISH.CO.UK/EVENTS

For the Jigsaw Puzzler

Fungarium

Curated by Katie Scott

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This intricately designed 1000-piece puzzle captures the beauty and complexity of fungi. Illustrated by Katie Scott, this jigsaw puzzle brings the magic of the natural world indoors.

For the Thriller Seeker

The Blue Hour

Paul Hawkins

£22

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For the Woodland Wanderer

The Tree Almanac 2025

Dr Gabriel Hemery

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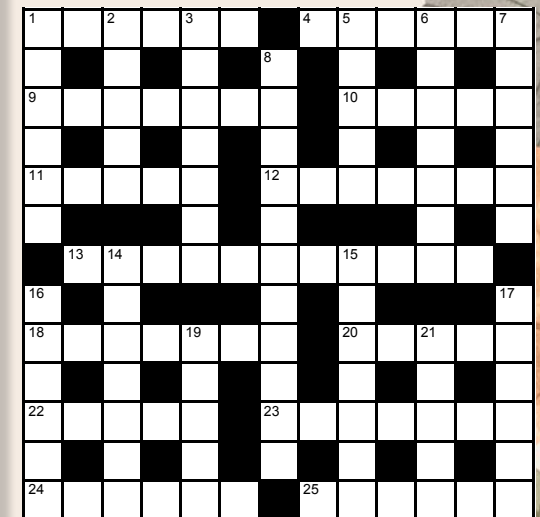
Quick Crossword

ACROSS

- 1. Ten years (6)
- 4 Pictures (6)
- 9 Level high land (7)
- 10 Tag (5)
- 11 Poem (5)
- 12 Selections (7)
- 13 Demolition (11)
- 18 Pharmacist (7)
- 20 Perfect (5)
- 22 Spoils (5)
- 23 Against (7)
- 24 Scale (6)
- 25 Grown ups (6)

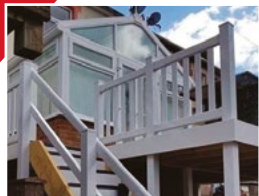
DOWN

- 1 Leave (6)
- 2 Absurd (5)
- 3 Lowest (7)
- 5 Greeting (5)
- 6 Used for smoking (7)
- 7 Spatter (6)
- 8 Commas, colons. (11)
- 14 Dusk (7)
- 15 Stumbled (7)
- 16 Afraid (6)
- 17 Play equipment (6)
- 19 Edition (5)
- 21 Artists frame (5)



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