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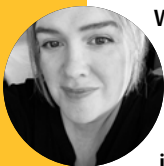
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Dear Readers,



When was the last time you stepped outside your comfort zone and tried something new? I've realised that, the older I get, the easier it is to stick with what I know. Routine is comfortable, but it can also be limiting.

Research regularly shows that being part of a group or community activity can do wonders for our mental health. Strong social connections help reduce loneliness and isolation, both closely linked to anxiety and depression, so getting involved isn't just enjoyable, it's genuinely good for us.

While putting this month's magazine together, I've been struck by just how many clubs, groups and organisations are out there locally, all offering a chance to try something different. It's a great reminder that here in Abergavenny, community really is the heartbeat of the town, and a big part of what makes it such a special place to live.

I've loved discovering what's on offer and I hope you will too. Maybe this issue will inspire you to give something new a go; you never know where it might lead.

Enjoy the read.

Hannah & Pete

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Contents

Editorial & Contents	5
Weather outlook for May	29
Puzzles	61
Next Month's Focus: <i>The Local Advice Issue</i>	62

COMMUNITY & EVENTS

Long Town Mountain Rescue	7
Abergavenny Steam Rally	8
Night of Heart & Harmonies	11
Danceblast	13
Abergavenny U3A	15
Volunteering for Wellbeing	17
Whats On Events Calendar	21
Weekly Events	27

LOCAL BUSINESS

Leigh Day: <i>Pollution in rivers Wye, Lugg and Usk</i>	31
Parrys: <i>Becoming a Homeowner</i>	32
Loving Presence Massage	49

TRY SOMETHING NEW!

Young Girls and Women's Cricket	37
Learn Piano with Lisa Jewel	39
There's a new Yarn Group in Town	41
More Than Craft	43
Try something new on your doorstep	45
Abergavenny Petanque Club	46
Abergavenny Bridge Club	47

LIFESTYLE & CULTURE

Recipe: <i>Grilled Vegetables with Haloumi & Mixed Herb Pesto</i>	51
Book Recommendations	52
Wellbeing: <i>The Thought Police</i>	55
Wellbeing: <i>Try Something New</i>	57
Local History: <i>The Lost Herbert Tombs</i>	59



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Try Something New:

Discover Hillwalking Around Abergavenny SAFELY

Living in and around Abergavenny, we are lucky to have some of the best hillwalking terrain in the UK right on our doorstep. From the rolling ridges of the Black Mountains to the iconic summit of the Sugar Loaf, there is no shortage of opportunities to get outside and try something new.

Hillwalking is a fantastic way to improve fitness, clear your head and explore the landscape from a different perspective. It does not require expensive equipment or years of experience to get started, but it does demand a bit of preparation and awareness to stay safe.

Start Simple

If you are new to hillwalking, begin with shorter, well known routes. The Sugar Loaf or Blorengae are great options, offering clear paths and rewarding views without being overly demanding. Build your confidence gradually before moving on to longer or more remote walks.

Give yourself plenty of time. What looks like a short distance on a map can take longer on uneven ground, especially if you are stopping to take in the scenery.

Dress for the Conditions

The weather in the hills can change quickly, even on a day that starts bright and calm. A basic clothing system should include:

- Waterproof jacket and trousers
- Warm layers such as a fleece or insulated jacket
- Hat and gloves, even outside winter months
- Sturdy footwear with good grip

Avoid relying on a single warm layer. Several thinner layers allow you to adjust as conditions change.

Navigation Matters

Mobile phones are useful but should never be your only means of navigation. Phone signal can be unreliable, and batteries can run out more quickly in cold conditions. Avoid relying on standard apps like Google Maps for hill navigation. Instead, consider using dedicated mapping apps such as OS Maps or similar, which provide accurate terrain mapping and public access routes.

Carry a paper map of the area and a compass, and take some time to understand how to use them. Even sticking to well trodden paths, it is easy to lose your way in mist or poor visibility.

Take the Right Kit

A small rucksack with a few essentials can make a big difference:

- Food and water
- Spare warm layer
- Torch or headtorch
- First aid kit
- Whistle
- Fully charged phone

These items are lightweight but can be crucial if something does not go to plan.

Tell Someone Your Plan

Before heading out, let someone know where you are going and when you expect to be back. This simple step can save valuable time if you do get into difficulty.

Know Your Limits

One of the most common causes of incidents in the hills is people pushing beyond their experience or fitness level. Turn back if conditions worsen or if you are running out of time. The hills will always be there for another day.

If You Need Help

If you do get into trouble and need assistance, call 999 and ask for the Police, then Mountain Rescue.

If possible, stay where you are, as long as it is safe to do so. Put on all the layers you have to keep warm, eat some food, and try to conserve your phone battery. These simple steps can make a big difference while help is on the way.

Enjoy It

Hillwalking is about more than reaching the top. Take time to enjoy the views, the wildlife and the sense of space that makes this area so special.

Trying something new does not have to mean going far or doing something extreme. Sometimes it is as simple as stepping out onto a local hill with a bit of preparation and a sense of adventure.

Stay safe, start small, and you might just discover a new passion on your doorstep.

Longtown Mountain Rescue Team

ABERGAVENNY



The steam engines remain the heart of the show. Few visitors will remember when these giants were common on roads, farms and factory floors, powering Britain's industrial age and exported across the world. The dedicated owners who bring them to Bailey Park spend their leisure hours keeping every pipe and rivet polished and every brass fitting gleaming. Unique to our show, you can watch them drive on the main roads along with the shires around the park.



How do you keep a show rooted in nostalgia feeling fresh and exciting? Abergavenny Steam Rally has the answer – and this year it arrives on four legs.

OG Performance Horses bring their team of specialist riders and horses to showcase trick riding, dressage and the breathtaking *Airs Above the Ground*. The team has performed across Europe and their horses and riders have appeared in productions including *Napoleon*, *The Winter King*, *Rings of Power*, *House of the Dragon* and *Game of*

Thrones. With Spanish horses from the family stud, expect beauty, power and jaw-dropping theatrics. If you're bringing children, OG's spellbinding display will be the highlight of their year.

Returning as firm favourites, the award-winning Gentle Giants Shire Horses are unmissable – in the arena and again on the Sunday morning steam run through the roads surrounding the park. Majestic, unhurried and utterly commanding, these magnificent animals are a living piece of history that will stop you in your tracks.



STEAM RALLY

At the rugby pitch you'll find two hundred or more classic cars from Britain and around the world. Also in the park, classic motorcycles, tractors, commercial vehicles including double-decker buses, leviathan breakdown trucks, lots of lorries and vans, and military vehicles from a bygone error.

Don't overlook the stationary engines, puffing and clanking while their proud owners sit nearby, occasionally stirring to oil these little but essential marvels of engineering glory days.

There's also steam organs, a miniature steamer, a children's area with fair rides galore, a food village, arts and crafts, wood carvers, auto jumble and dozens of stalls selling things you didn't know you couldn't live without. A Welsh love spoon? A steering wheel from a forgotten Jaguar? It's all here.

The arena programme features Shire Horse displays, classic vehicle parades with passionate owners interviewed about their pride and joys, the legendary tug of war – a mighty steam engine against lots of willing kids determined to show their strength. The John Saunders Stage keeps the music going all day, with magic shows for the youngsters and, for the adults, old-time music hall dancers delivering a spectacular high-kicking display.

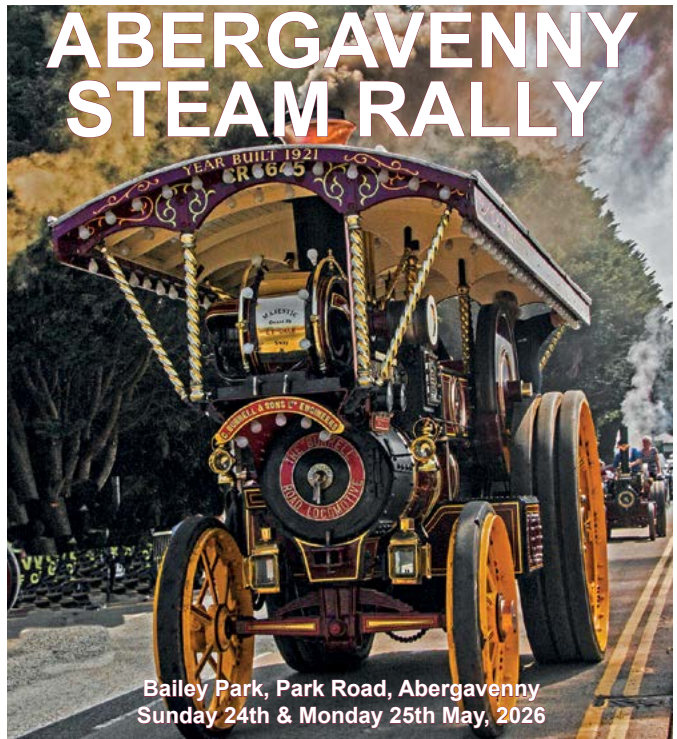
At the bandstand the borough band will sharing the stand with kids street dance groups.

Since Abergavenny Rotary took over the Rally more than 25 years ago, the show has raised hundreds of thousands of pounds. All the money raised going to local charities and worthy causes, with

recent beneficiaries including new motorcycles for Blood Bank Wales, a communications vehicle for Longtown mountain rescue, defibrillators installed throughout the town, and numerous youth activities and sports clubs to mention just a few.

"It makes me very proud to head such a great set of hard working individuals, who turn up year after year to help make the rally such

a success, said Rally Chairman David Tod. "Twenty-five years, a world-class show, with all the money raised helping our local community. That's only possible because of the extraordinary dedication of our Rotarian and non-Rotarian volunteers. It's a family day out, great fun and great value – and every penny goes back where it belongs, into the community."



Bailey Park, Park Road, Abergavenny
Sunday 24th & Monday 25th May, 2026



For advance tickets scan the QR code,
visit our Facebook page or
www.abergavennysteamrally.co.uk

Early Bird Advanced Tickets £10 per adult up to and including Sunday 17 May 2025. Thereafter the Advanced Ticket price will be £12.50 per adult, which is the same as the on the day gate price but saves queuing.

Children under 16 are FREE for all ticket types.



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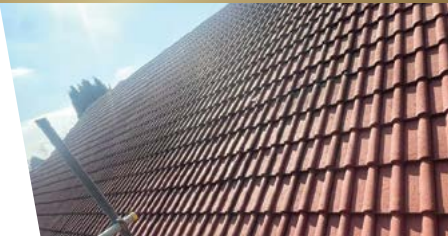
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Night of Heart & Harmonies



The North Gwent Cardiac Rehabilitation and Aftercare Charity is hosting a special fundraising concert at Crickhowell's Clarence Hall on Saturday 13 June, and we'd love you to join us!

Our Night of Heart & Harmonies will feature the stirring voices of the Tredegar Orpheus Male Voice Choir and special guests Stephanie Webber and Clara Phillips.

Appearing fresh from a performance at London's Royal Albert Hall, the Tredegar Orpheus have been sharing the joy of male voice harmonies since 1909. Their song book reflects their long history and the power of music to connect people across the generations.

Stephanie Webber, originally from Ebbw Vale, got her big break on TV's *The Voice* back in 2015, when Tom Jones selected her for mentoring. Stephanie has gone on to a stellar career and is currently touring her "Songs from the Heart" show on some of the world's most prestigious cruise ships. Her warm Welsh charm and big, big voice have won her fans around the globe.

Crickhowell High School student Clara Phillips, meanwhile, is just 15, but already a rising star. The Gilwern youngster is one of Crickhowell Choral Society's talented Choral Scholars, and also performs in the fabulous Piano Orchestra of South Wales.

Expect an uplifting evening, with everything from traditional hymns, to musical theatre hits and contemporary classics – plus a few surprises! Doors open at 6:30pm for a 7pm start, and we'll be running a licensed bar throughout the evening.



Tickets cost £12.50 and are available from ticketing platform [zeffy.com](https://www.zeffy.com); just scan the QR code. Or call 07985 564188.

Proceeds from the evening will help fund the charity's work, providing a weekly programme of community-based cardiac rehab exercise classes for people living with heart conditions across the region. For more info, including our class timetable, go to:

cardiac-rehab.org.uk



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Street Dance for all ages

Thursday evenings

Minis Aerial for 5-7yrs

Saturdays 9:30-10:30am & 12-1pm

Looking for something new for adults?

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Thursdays 7.30-8.30pm

Adult Floorwork

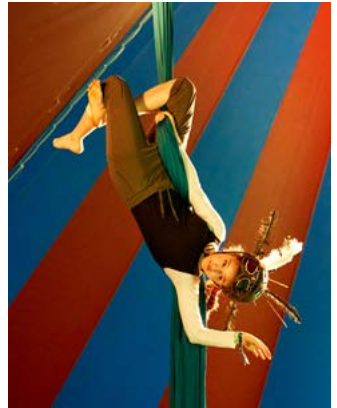
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Abergavenny U3A is part of the National U3A, (The Third Age Trust). It is run locally by our members, for our members. Each U3A is a charity and relies on volunteers to fill all the roles to ensure that the organisation runs effectively and meets the needs and wishes of its members.

We hold most of our meetings at Thursdays Football Clubhouse in Pen y Pound, which provides an accessible and friendly venue for our groups, with good parking space. The Club house is available to us on Tuesday and Friday mornings and afternoons.

Your annual membership (£35) entitles you to attend our monthly general meetings, coffee mornings and other events and to join as many of the interest groups as you wish, at no extra cost.

U3A membership is open to any individuals who have ceased full time work roles, who wish to meet others in a similar situation and wish to keep on learning and sharing their interests and expertise.

We have a programme of around 21 Interest Groups each of which meets monthly. The groups

are led by a Group Leader who organises talks, discussion and activities. Members of the group are encouraged to take part and to contribute to sessions. We welcome suggestions for new groups.

The current interest groups are: Around the World

- Art & Design Appreciation
- Aspects of Language
- Board Games
- Book Clubs (2 groups, 1 in person, 1 online)
- Circle Dancing
- Discussion and Debate
- English Literature
- Gardening
- History
- History of Ideas
- Lunch & a Chat
- Music Appreciation
- Opera Appreciation
- Personal Finance
- Poetry Appreciation
- Quizzes
- Science Matters
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- Welsh Conversation for Beginners

To find out more about what is going on each month, see our website:

<https://abergavenny.u3asite.uk>



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Try Something New: Volunteering in Your Community



If you're looking for something new to try this year, volunteering could be the perfect place to start. It's a great way to meet new people, learn new skills and make a real difference in your local community.

The Volunteering for Wellbeing Project, part of the Bridges Charity, supports people across Monmouthshire to get involved in meaningful volunteer roles. With more than 500 volunteers already active throughout the county, there is a wide range of opportunities to suit different interests, skills and availability.

Some volunteers offer companionship through befriending, while others help by driving people to appointments, supporting young people with disabilities, or spending time completing puzzles and activities with people who might otherwise feel isolated. The variety of roles means there is often something

to match both the needs of the community and the interests of the volunteer.

Volunteering doesn't have to mean a big time commitment either. Some people choose to help out a few times a week, while others volunteer once a month. Every contribution, big or small, makes a difference and helps build stronger, more connected communities.

Getting started is simple. The team always begins with a friendly conversation to learn more about what someone might enjoy and how volunteering could fit into their life. This might be over a cup of coffee at a local café, on the phone, or via Zoom—whatever feels most comfortable. There's no pressure to sign up; it's simply an opportunity to explore the possibilities and discover how you could make a difference locally.

For certain roles, a DBS check may be required, which the project can arrange free of charge. If any

additional training or guidance is needed, the team is also happy to organise that so volunteers feel confident and supported from the start.

The project also recognises that volunteering can sometimes feel like a big step. That's why they have a dedicated engagement officer, Jill, who offers extra support to anyone facing barriers—whether that's a disability, concerns about confidence, or simply uncertainty about getting started.

Volunteering is not only about giving back—it can also boost wellbeing, build confidence and help people feel more connected to their community.

If you're thinking about trying something new and making a positive difference, the Volunteering for Wellbeing team would love to hear from you.

Volunteering for Wellbeing Project
wellbeing@bridgescentre.org.uk

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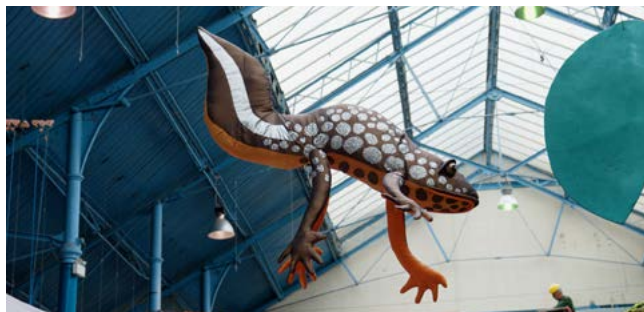
CREATED BY THE COMMUNITY

The Abergavenny Market Hall installation returns, transforming the space with this year's amphibian theme.

Led by Bettina Reeves, supported by Mayumi Takahagi, and brought to life by a team of passionate volunteers, the display features an array of detailed handcrafted 3D creations from frogs to newts, celebrating both nature and craftsmanship.

A tradition that continues to bring people together, the installation is a testament to the town's creativity and community spirit.

Visit the Market Hall to see it up close and check out our social media for a behind-the-scenes look at how it all came together.



To find out more or get involved, contact:

office@abergavennytowncouncil.gov.uk

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WHATS ON

MAY

1ST & 8TH MAY

ABERGAVENNY BOWLS CLUB FREE TASTER SESSIONS

Are you interested in playing Bowls? Our Free Taster Sessions are a great opportunity to discover what a great game it is. Just come along to Avenue Road with a pair of flat soled shoes and a sense of humour and our coaches will give you all the guidance that you need.

5:30pm – 7pm, Abergavenny Bowls Club, Avenue Road, Abergavenny

1ST-4TH MAY

CRICKHOWELL MUSIC FESTIVAL



This year will see Crickhowell's 30th Music Festival, opening with Friday's Folk Night and the *Kosmos Ensemble*, a trio of dazzling virtuosity and impeccable musicianship. On Saturday and Sunday the Choral Society and a star line-up of soloists will perform music by Purcell, Bach, Whitacre and Mozart's revered Requiem Mass as well as hidden treasures from Caldara, Zelenka and Mondonville. Monday's finale brings together some of our much loved former and present music scholars in this, the 10th Anniversary of our Choral Scholars programme

promoting young musicianship in the area.

For tickets and more information go to www.crickhowellchoralsociety.org

CRICKHOWELL MUSIC FESTIVAL

3RD MAY

AM FEST



Abergavenny Music Festival (AM Fest) is a fantastic day out for all the family with two stages of live music all day, street food, drinks, stalls, children's entertainment, and a children's funfair!

There's an amazing lineup of bands and artists and all proceeds will go to charities and good causes in the local area.

12pm-8pm, Abergavenny Castle Grounds. Adults £14, children £7 Tickets via ticketsource.com

4TH & 11TH MAY

WATERCOLOUR CLASSES WITH HELEN ABSALOM ART

4th May – *Wrens & Blossom*

11th – *Spring Landscape*

£22 per class. Suitable for beginners and improvers.

10:30am-12:30pm, Digby's Café, Abergavenny Garden Centre, Church Lane, Llanfoist

Bookings: 07785951974

helengarlick@yahoo.co.uk,

[facebook.com/helenabsalomart](https://www.facebook.com/helenabsalomart)

7TH MAY

Club 33.3 presents:

TALK TALK – THE COLOUR OF SPRING

Come and listen to a full vinyl album, no phones, no distractions, new friends! Tickets from £10

7pm, *The Loft @Book-ish*, 18 High St, Crickhowell

See advert Page 52 for info

8TH MAY

Llanfoist Village Hall Film Night HAMNET (CERT PG13)

Doors 7pm, Film at 7:30pm, Bar available. Tickets £5 on the door
Llanfoist Village Hall, Church Lane, Llanfoist

9TH MAY

SPRING DUCK RACE

One thousand yellow ducks head down the river at Swan Meadows in Abergavenny. The ducks will launch from the road bridge over the river, then travel downstream, navigating boulders, steep drops and pond weeds before each duck is collected again by our team of Hope Rescue volunteers. £1 a duck to be in with a chance of winning £100!

12pm set off, *Swan Meadow, Abergavenny*

9TH MAY

TRADITIONAL WOOL SKILLS COURSE – DROP SPINDLE SPINNING

Learn how to spin your own wool for knitting, crocheting and other crafts. This course will introduce you to the ancient tradition of hand-spinning with a drop-spindle, a relaxing and meditative skill using minimal technology. You will also learn how to process raw wool, washing then carding to make rolag ready to spin. Finally, how to ply your wool and create skeins.

susannahhall.london/workshops/

10am-4:30pm Llanwenarth Hall, Abergavenny, NP7 7EN

12TH MAY

CLWB BABYCCINO

Friendly, informal mams and dads meet up.

Ticketed, Free, fortnightly
11am, *Book-ish*, High St, Crickhowell

See Advert Page 52 for info

CONTINUED OVERLEAF...

12TH MAY

ABERGAVENTNY & DISTRICT STEAM SOCIETY MEETING

AGM and Nigel Lewis: *Early Railways of Abergavenny*
8pm, Kings Arms, Nevill St, Abergavenny

14TH MAY

WATERCOLOUR CLASS WITH HELEN ABSALOM ART

Spring Landscape

£22, suitable for beginners and improvers.
10:30am-12:30pm, Llanellen Village Hall, NP7 9HT
Bookings: 07785951974
helengarlick@yahoo.co.uk,
facebook.com/helenabsalomart

14TH MAY

ABERGAVENTNY FLOWER ARRANGEMENT SOCIETY

My family and other animals - Selena Deham demonstrating.
Refreshments & sales table. Visitors £8
2pm-4pm, Guide Hall, Fairfield Car Park, Abergavenny

16TH MAY

ABERGAVENTNY REPAIR CAFÉ

We repair household items, electrical and otherwise. (no microwaves) manual bicycles safety check.
Appointment essential for woodwork, jewellery, and electronic (no sentimental/antique teddys or dolls please). Sewing repairs – advice only for zips and alterations.
Labour free (donations welcome). Please note parts are not supplied and items can't be left.
Our object is to keep repairable items out of landfill.
11am-2pm, last booking at 1:15pm.
Book, enquire or drop in. Contact repaircafeabergavenny@gmail.com and Facebook messenger
Abergavenny Community Centre, Merthyr Rd, Abergavenny

18TH MAY

GAVENTNY GARDENING CLUB

'Spring Migrants' – guest speaker Andy Karran
Visitors welcome
7pm-9pm, Mardy Hall, St David's Rd,

Llantilio Pertholey, NP7 6HF

19TH MAY

AN EVENING WITH... JOHN DOYLE

7:30pm, Book-ish Crickhowell
Book-ish.co.uk/events for tickets
See advert Page 52 for info

22ND – 25TH MAY

FLOWER FESTIVAL

'Through the Eyes of the Artist' – Designs created by Abergavenny Flower Arrangement Society
10:30am-5pm, St David's Church, Llandewi Rhydydderch

22ND – 25TH MAY

BRECON BIG FOOD FESTIVAL

Brecon's Big Food Festival takes over the Promenade from 22–25 May, offering a lively bank holiday weekend of street food, live music and riverside relaxation. Visitors can enjoy a handpicked selection of global food traders, fully stocked bars and a welcoming, community-focused atmosphere.

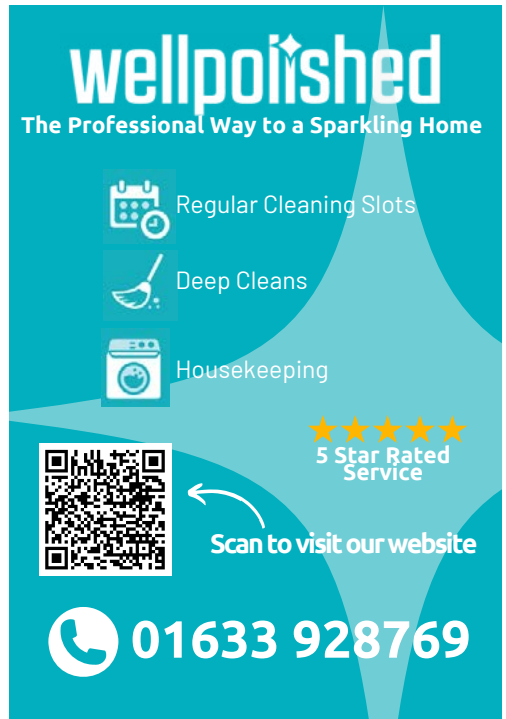


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All day free event. Brecon Promenade

23RD MAY

GROSMONT MARKET

Grosmont Market is a warm and welcoming community gathering at the heart of the village. Around the nave, a collection of local artisan stalls and craftspeople share their work, from handmade goods to seasonal creations, each with its own story. There is a free craft table for children and families, inviting little hands (and grown up ones too) to make, create and enjoy time together. Free Entry. 10am-2pm, Church of St Nicholas, Grosmont

24TH & 25TH MAY

ABERGAVENNY STEAM RALLY



Abergavenny Steam Rally blends nostalgia with excitement through spectacular new and returning attractions. OG Performance Horses deliver thrilling equestrian displays, while Gentle Giants Shire Horses and working steam engines celebrate living history. Visitors can enjoy classic vehicles, arena entertainment, fair rides, and artisan stalls. Run by Abergavenny Rotary, the event raises vital funds for local charities, making it a fun, family-friendly day out with a strong community purpose.

10am-6pm daily, Bailey Park, Abergavenny

See article on Page 8 for more info

25TH MAY (1ST, 8TH & 15TH JUNE)

WATERCOLOUR CLASSES WITH HELEN ABSALOM ART

25th – Fab Lolly, 1st – Crab & Lobster, 8th – Sweet Peas, 15th – Summer Floral £22 per class or £80 for all classes. Suitable for beginners and improvers.

10:30am-12:30pm, Digby's Café, Abergavenny Garden Centre, Church Lane, Llanfoist

Bookings: 07785951974

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[facebook.com/helenabsalomart](https://www.facebook.com/helenabsalomart)

26TH MAY

AN EVENING WITH... ROB COWEN

7:30pm, Book-ish Crickhowell

[Book-ish.co.uk/events](https://www.book-ish.co.uk/events) for tickets

See advert Page 52 for info

28TH MAY (4TH, 11TH, 18TH JUNE)

WATERCOLOUR CLASSES WITH HELEN ABSALOM ART

28th: Fab Lolly, 4th: Crab & Lobster,

11th: Sweet Peas, 18th: Summer Floral. £22 per class or £80 for all classes. Suitable for beginners and improvers.

10:30am-12:30pm, Llanellen Village Hall, NP7 9HT

Bookings: 07785951974

helengarlick@yahoo.co.uk,

[facebook.com/helenabsalomart](https://www.facebook.com/helenabsalomart)

29TH MAY

U3A MONTHLY TALK

2pm, Stadium Clubhouse, Penypound, Abergavenny

3RD JUNE

MANAGEMENT & WILDLIFE ON CASTLE MEADOWS

Join Mark Langley for a 2 hour barrier-free tour around the meadows. Suitable for disabled. Mobility scooters available from Shopmobility 0800 2983656.

Start 10am from Shopmobility in Castle Street.

3RD JUNE

FRIENDS OF GILWERN LIBRARY QUIZ NIGHT

Join us in Gilwern library for a fun quiz. Come as a team, or come on your own and join a team when you arrive.

7pm, Gilwern Library, Upper Common, Gilwern

6TH JUNE

ABERGAVENNY ARTS FESTIVAL

An inclusive community arts festival – free admission, free drop-in workshops, activities and performances. *All day event, Abergavenny Castle*

6TH JUNE

TITHE BARN ARTISAN MARKET

Craft stalls will take over the courtyard at The Tithe Barn, St Marys Priory, Abergavenny. Parking adjacent, cafe open for light refreshments. Stroll around our stalls while enjoying Abergavenny arts festival.

10:30am-3:30pm

7TH JUNE

SALE OF PLANTS, TEA & CAKE

Tea, coffee, cakes and plants as well as garden/kitchen produce, tombola stall. In Aid of Llangynidr Show 2pm-5pm, in the Orchard Garden at Belmont Cottage, James St, NP8 1NN

10TH JUNE

GOVILON WI

'Volunteering in the Aneurin Bevan Health Board' Volunteers play a

key role in the services we provide, supporting people in hospital and in their own homes, and make a real difference to people's lives.

7:15pm-9.30pm, Salisbury Community Hall, Merthyr Rd, Govilon

13TH JUNE

NIGHT OF HEART AND HARMONIES

Charity fundraising concert.

6:30pm, Clarence Hall, Crickhowell

See Page 11 for information and tickets

SHARE YOUR EVENTS

Go to [thefocus.wales/calendar](https://www.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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WEEKLY EVENTS

MONDAYS

ANDYS MAN CLUB

7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Free peer to peer mens group. Aimed at ending the stigma surrounding men's mental health, through the power of conversation in a safe and non judgemental space.
Tithe Barn, Monk Street, Abergavenny
andysmanclub.co.uk

PARKINSONS SUPPORT GROUP

11:00 am - 12:30 pm

Tithe Barn, Monk St, Abergavenny

TUESDAYS

GENERAL MARKET

9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Abergavenny Market Hall

CRAFTING FOR CANCER

10:30 am - 12:30 pm

Weekly crafting and support group. All welcome. Free to participate
Tithe Barn, Abergavenny

WEDNESDAYS

FLEA MARKET

9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Browse the stalls for unique antiques, marvellous curios, repurposed and upcycled furniture, bric a brac and lots more!
Abergavenny Market Hall

COFFEE MORNING

10:30 am - 12:30 pm

Come join us for our Community Wellbeing Café Coffee Morning
Tithe Barn, Monk St, Abergavenny

SEE YOU FOR LUNCH

12:30 pm - 1:30 pm

Abergavenny Community Centre

CRAFTERNOON

1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Free Crafting afternoons, includes free hot drink. *The Wool Croft, Nevill St, Abergavenny*

ABERGAVENTY PETANQUE CLUB

1:30pm

See Page 46 for more info
Bailey Park Pavilion
abergavennypetanqueclub.org.uk

THURSDAYS

LIFE MUSIC (fortnightly)

2:00 pm

No need to book, instruments provided, no experience needed
Open to all & free of charge!
Tithe Barn, Monk St, Abergavenny

CRAFT CLUB

10:00 am - 12 noon

Just drop in. £7 per session, includes tea, coffee & biscuits
Wool Croft, Nevill St, Abergavenny

YARN ADDICTS

5:30 pm - 7:00 pm

Free to anyone with an interest in yarn crafts. All welcome
Portico Lounge (upstairs), Abergavenny
[facebook.com/Abergavennyarnaddicts](https://www.facebook.com/Abergavennyarnaddicts)

ABERGAVENTY BRIDGE CLUB

6:45pm

See Page 47 for more info
Abergavenny Community Centre

FRIDAYS

LIGHT LUNCH

12:00 pm

Abergavenny Community Centre

CRAFT CLUB

10:00 am - 12 noon

Just drop in. £7 per session, includes tea, coffee & biscuits
Wool Croft, Nevill St, Abergavenny

GENERAL MARKET

9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Abergavenny Market Hall

SATURDAYS

PARKRUN

9:00 am

Free 5k run/jog/walk. Meet from 8:50am, Llanfoist Crossing
parkrun.org.uk/llanfoistcrossing

CRAFT CLUB

10:00 am - 12 noon

Just drop in. £7 per session, includes tea, coffee & biscuits
Wool Croft, Nevill St, Abergavenny

GENERAL MARKET

9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Abergavenny Market Hall

BENTHYG ABERGAVENTY

11:00 am - 1:00 pm

Lending library of household DIY items. *In the green portacabin within the grounds of Abergavenny Community Centre, Merthyr Road, Abergavenny NP7*
monmouthshire.benthyg.cymru

SUNDAYS

SUNDAY AFTERNOON TEA

(Last Sunday of the month ONLY) 3:00 pm

Abergavenny Community Centre

ABERGAVENTY CRAFT MARKET

(Second Sunday of the Month)

10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Abergavenny Market Hall



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May Weather Outlook

by Jonathan Powell

As we edge into the final month of spring, May whilst generally still fairly unsettled, should at least furnish us with some decent temperatures. Following on from a changeable April that gave us some significant temperature swings in very short periods of time, May looks set to start with showers or longer spells of rain, mixed in with some sunshine. Temperatures are expected to be rather flat with high pressure struggling to establish itself. By the mid-May, there would appear to be a shift toward a more stable period of weather and it's here that the month will have its chance to shine, with better conditions seeing a decent upward trend in temperatures, albeit for a relatively curtailed period. With high pressure there or thereabouts, the trend for the remainder of the month would appear to be in favour of the settled conditions continuing, although not without some intervention from showers. Temperatures for the final week or so of May looking not as responsive as they could be. May looks set to return an average or slighter wetter than average month, with temperatures above the average.



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Has your business suffered from the effects of pollution in the rivers Wye, Lugg or Usk?

More than 4,000 individuals and local businesses have joined the biggest ever group legal action to be brought over UK environmental pollution. The claim, led by leading law firm Leigh Day, alleges that excessive phosphorus from the spreading of chicken manure by the Avara Foods Poultry Group (which includes Avara Foods Limited and Freemans of Newent) as well as sewage from works by Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water, are the main causes of pollution affecting the rivers.

The major action, issued at the High Court, was prompted by changes to the Wye, its tributaries including the Lugg,

and the Usk, with alleged impacts on wildlife, recreation and the livelihood of business owners. A growing number of business owners across the Wye, Lugg and Usk catchments are joining forces in a landmark legal action, as environmental damage continues. Those who have joined include people from your local area and small businesses reliant on tourists such as bed and breakfasts and other hospitality businesses, people with AirBNBs, and swimming or fishing businesses.

The claim is led by Leigh Day partner Oliver Holland. He said: "If the claim succeeds it could bring real change. Some people just want to protect their rivers, and the claim could help

stop the pollution and clean up the rivers. Other people and businesses have suffered serious financial losses, and the claim could help put them back where they would have been if the rivers weren't polluted."

The claim is open for other business owners to join. To join the legal action or to find out more, visit <https://www.leighday.co.uk/our-services/group-claims/river-wye-claim/> or scan the QR code



Your business shouldn't pay the price for pollution.

Join over 4,000 individuals and local businesses in the biggest ever group legal action to be brought over UK environmental pollution.

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TRYING SOMETHING NEW: Becoming a Homeowner

The theme for this edition of the Focus is “*Try something new*”, and Georgi, our Marketing Manager, is just about to complete on her first house purchase. Keen to share her experience, she has written about the journey from a first-time buyer’s perspective.

Georgi is not a property professional, rather her expertise is in marketing, so in navigating her purchase, she and her husband were very much in the same position as any other first-time buyer. The views and experiences shared here are entirely her own and reflect her personal journey, rather than the professional advice or position of Parrys.

As Georgi was not purchasing in the Abergavenny or Crickhowell areas, Parrys were not directly involved in her transaction, although I was able to offer some informal guidance along the way where helpful.

As estate agents, we aim to support both buyers and sellers through each step of the process, but as many will know, there can sometimes be challenges along the way. At Parrys, we are always happy to act as a sounding board and offer guidance and reassurance where we can.

If there is anything property-related you would like to discuss, please don’t hesitate to get in touch via email, telephone or social media, or pop into our office on Nevill Street for a coffee and a chat on the sofa.



Heather Cook
FNAEA, AssocRICS Partner



By the time this article reaches you, I will (solicitors and chain willing) be the proud owner of my first house - eek!

A daunting process, my husband Max and I were saving into Lifetime ISAs for about 6 years, and a few months ago were finally able to put an offer in on a house.

Despite working with Parrys for a couple of years now, every step of this process has felt like trying something new. Viewing a house from the perspective of handing over our hard-earned cash rather than looking at how to make it look as nice as possible to sell brought so many new questions. I quickly found that there's a real need to listen to your gut when choosing where to buy. Of course, in Heather's words – "location is the most important factor when choosing a house", which is true. However, I've found it's also important to take note of how you feel when you leave a viewing. Balance head and heart equally, and you'll eventually find somewhere perfect. Oh, and get a survey. ALWAYS get a survey.

We've learnt a lot through this process, firstly that it's never too early to speak to a mortgage advisor. We first touched base with ours, Nathan Scola from The Right Broker, last May, and from there were able to work out a solid plan for how to get onto the ladder. When I became pregnant last November, Nathan was able to immediately adapt the plan to our new circumstances, and we were able to progress months sooner than originally anticipated.



"We'll be moving with our menagerie in tow"

It's also vital to choose a solicitor you can trust, as a huge amount of the sales progression comes from how much time they can give your case. We were recommended Emma Baldwin at Fonseca Solicitors based here in Abergavenny, who honestly couldn't have been better. If you're about to buy or sell your first property, she's your woman.

With liaising with agents, brokers and solicitors, you will find there are considerable periods of waiting, followed by sudden onslaughts of queries and forms to fill. I've learnt to get ready and wait, with patience being key whilst also not being afraid to chase things up.

Another lesson learnt is choosing a good removals company. Trying to keep costs down, we initially looked online and found a nationwide company, only to have them never show up to the appointment they set to give us a quote. Back to the drawing board, we're now only dealing with local and highly recommended companies, who so far have been a pleasure to deal with.

Completion is set for tomorrow, which feels so abstract and yet is something we're so ready for. I'm aware of what a huge privilege it is to be a new homeowner in my generation, and it's not something I'll take for granted. I can't wait to put pick up the keys with Max, enter the property armed with a million paint swatches, and start to make a house our home. How's that for trying something new?"



*Georgi Wills
Marketing Manager*



Pop into our showroom, give our office a call on 01873 858990 or email abergavenny@parrys.com to organise a viewing.

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Cricket now a Choice for Young Girls and Women

Whatever your age, experience or ambitions there is a place for everyone in cricket. The once male dominated sport is in the past, as there has been a substantial growth in young girls and women playing cricket over the past 5 years. Abergavenny Cricket Club is working hard to make cricket more welcoming, accessible and inclusive for young girls and women, no matter what their background, age, experience, or confidence.

We are committed to making cricket a truly gender balanced sport, from entry level at All Stars aged 5-8 years old, to Dynamos for 8-11 years old, and then into junior girls and our women's team, you will learn cricket skills and make new friends. We will be running All Stars and Dynamos for 8 weeks during the summer on a Friday night, with a BBQ and bar, so please come and join in.

In 2025, we had more young girls than boys register for our entry programme.

We will also be running girls only sessions for under 12s and under 16s throughout the 2026 summer and mixed sessions where appropriate, please follow us on social media. Our aim is to make participation for young girls and women easy, have fun and enjoy the sport of cricket. We would also encourage and support female members or parents to complete a free recognised coaching qualification in cricket at the club.

So, as the demand in cricket from young girls and women increases, we recognise that our facilities need to change. This will see the extension of our clubhouse over the next 18 months with a commitment to redevelop our changing room facilities from communal showers to individual

cubicles. An example, of the club's ambition and commitment to providing an inclusive environment for all who want to play cricket.

When it comes to role models Abergavenny Cricket Club is proud to say that we played our part in the development of Eve Jackson who now plays for Glamorgan CC Women's team. Eve is an outstanding young allrounder who comes from a cricketing family closely associated with the club.

So, please come and join us this summer, if you are interested in playing or a parent that wants to volunteer, we have many roles around the club, please contact us:

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"I don't remember why I gave up piano lessons as a young teenager, life took over and there were more fun things to do. Suddenly I was an adult, probably busier than ever, but still wanting to learn, use my brain differently and go back to something I used to love. Lisa has been amazing, full of enthusiasm and support, she really understands what my

motivations are, what music to suggest and for how long to push it before moving onto the next piece. The most amazing thing, I hadn't really forgotten anything, it's all come back to me but as an adult I am playing because I want to, I appreciate the peace it brings to me and thanks to Lisa I am learning and developing all the time."

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Learn Piano with Lisa

As a piano teacher with more than 20 years' experience teaching all ages and stages, one of the great perks of the job is sharing with pupils the joy of discovery as they embark on a lifelong musical journey, at whatever age they're starting it.

It's quite natural perhaps to expect that children will get excited by finding something brand new – and teaching children is something I love – but it might be surprising to learn that just as rewarding is the sheer delight experienced by adult pupils.

So often in our busy grown-up lives we forget to stop and just be full of wonder at something new, to leave the well-trodden path and explore a different one. But I've seen more and more adults in recent years: I think lots of us have that feeling there's something in us we've not discovered yet, or have forgotten.

Of course, it can take a bit of hard work to learn a new skill, or sharpen up one that's got rusty, but the sense of achievement adults get is remarkable – perhaps because as adults we know from experience how important it is to keep growing and learning throughout our lives.

Adults start piano lessons for many reasons: whether it's about exploring their creativity, keeping those grey cells ticking, accompanying a life or career change or retirement, or just finding a new challenge.

Whatever the motivation, the journey is as personal as the goal, and with all my pupils – whether aged 9 or 90 – it's through one-to-one attention and bespoke tuition that I get to help people navigate their creative growth, through that physical connection with the instrument. It's an exploration worth making – as pianist James Rhodes has said: "there are 88 keys on a piano – and within that, an entire universe".

"I have wanted to learn to play the piano for years and finally started taking lessons with Lisa four years ago at the age of 44. I wanted to find a new hobby to help me develop a new skill and to give me something to focus on outside of work, and I love the sound of piano music so this felt ideal. It's been the best thing I have done in a long time, I love my weekly lessons, the challenge of learning new pieces and understanding more about music more broadly. Learning piano has proven to be a brilliant way for me to relax and be more mindful, plus it is a lot of fun thanks to Lisa who is a wonderful teacher and supports me in finding new pieces and practise techniques moulded to my interests and abilities. I recommend it highly!"

"In the January of 2021 I inherited an electric piano from my brother who had sadly died during the COVID years. The piano sat in my spare room for quite a long time until one day I decided I would sit down at it and 'have a go'. I downloaded an App and tried to learn how to play. It had been a few decades since I had even touched the keys of a piano so I had no confidence in my ability to learn. Was I too old? I'm in my late sixties and I knew it would be hard. The Christmas of 2024 I had a wonderful present of four piano lessons given to me by my children. They were with Lisa and so began my journey of rediscovering this wonderful instrument. These lessons would be the beginning of a very exciting and rewarding learning experience. Between us, Lisa and I decided that I should go down the route of learning through the grade system. To cut a long story short, I passed grade one with a distinction!! I am now working towards grade 2 and with Lisa's amazing patience and expertise, I am hoping for a similar result!"

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Needles and Hooks at the Ready! There's a new Yarn Group in Town

If you've been meaning to pick up a new hobby but don't quite know where to start, a warm and welcoming group in Abergavenny might be just the nudge you need. Abergavenny Yarn Addicts is a newly formed crafting club that's already weaving together a vibrant little community.

Meeting on Thursdays from 5.30-7pm upstairs in the Portico Lounge, the group invites anyone with an interest in yarn crafts to come along whether you're a seasoned knitter, a crochet enthusiast, or someone who's never held a pair of needles before. There's no pressure and no pretence - just a shared love of making things by hand.



What makes this group particularly special is its mix of ages. With members ranging from just 13 to nearly 70, it's a lovely example of how creativity can bring generations together. Conversations flow easily, skills are shared generously and there's always someone ready to help you untangle a tricky stitch

or cheer you on as you learn something new.

Although the club has only been running for four weeks, it's already built a reputation for being friendly, relaxed and genuinely sociable. It's the kind of place where you can drop in after a long day, pick up your project and feel instantly at ease.

In a world that often feels fast-paced and disconnected, trying something like this can be surprisingly rewarding. You'll not only learn a new skill but also become part of a supportive local network. So if you've been thinking about giving crafting a go, why not take that first step? You might just find your new favourite pastime and make a few new friends along the way.

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More Than Craft

Find Your Community in Abergavenny



Would you like to try something new? That's how we started. We are Abergavenny Crafty Women charity, and we get together on a Friday morning from 10 am to 12 midday. And this year, we are celebrating our 15th anniversary as a charity and providing a welcome, therapeutic Creative and chat space to our community in Abergavenny, and we wanted to take this opportunity to share with others what we do and provide opportunities to anyone who would like to join us, thanks to The Focus and their May edition theme of Trying something new!

We are a small, inclusive group of women from all walks of life who enjoy coming together to learn new skills, share ideas, and support one another. Our sessions are relaxed and fun, filled with conversation, creativity, laughter—and, of course, cake! From crafting projects to simple chats, everything we do is designed to boost wellbeing and provide a positive, supportive environment. Everyone is welcome, regardless of experience or ability, and there is no pressure to be perfect. We believe that creativity is for everyone and that simply taking part can lift your mood and build confidence. Our sessions offer

a chance to pause from daily pressures, enjoy the moment, and connect with others in a meaningful way.

Our ethos centres on promoting health and wellbeing through creativity and connection. We follow the NHS Wales “Five Ways to Wellbeing”: learning something new, connecting with others, staying active, giving your time, and taking notice. We've seen firsthand how these simple principles can make a real difference, helping both our members and volunteers feel happier, more connected, and supported.

We currently welcome new volunteers to join us. Whether it's making tea and coffee, offering a friendly chat, or sharing a skill or hobby, every contribution matters. Volunteering with us is a rewarding experience, and many of our volunteers find that giving their time not only supports others but also enhances their own well-being.

If you have a skill to share or simply want to be part of a warm and welcoming group, we'd love to hear from you. You can contact us at abercraftywomen@gmail.com or reach out via our Facebook page.

Come and discover the therapeutic power of creativity with Abergavenny Crafty Women. Try something new, meet friendly faces, and enjoy a welcoming space where small creative moments can make a big difference to your wellbeing.





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Try Something new on your doorstep



As we know, mixing with people is good for us, but breaking into new circles isn't always easy. The evidence tells us that keeping active and involved are antidotes to loneliness and social isolation. Building social bonds brings about personal and public good, but where do we begin?

A community solution began to emerge in 2005 with a school closure, and gathered momentum a decade later when a building lease was granted and residents set up a charity called Abergavenny Community Trust to run the

Abergavenny Community Centre as a venue for local people, groups and services to use, and, to act as an anchor in the community, helping people to connect, contribute and live well.

Now, every week, hundreds of people of all ages, creeds, backgrounds and abilities use Abergavenny Community Centre either for their own activities, or to socialise over lunches and coffee mornings, singing for fun, exercise, arts and crafts, baby and toddlers' group, children's holiday clubs and to volunteer.

TRY SOMETHING NEW

In addition to Centre-led activities, partners offer Yoga, Meditation, Chair Tai Chi, Circle Dancing, Qi Flow, Fit Steps, Line Dancing, Qigong, Movement for Seniors and interactive baby, toddler sessions.

Maybe you're new to the area, or perhaps you're living on your own or caring for a loved one. No matter your story, if you are able to travel under your own steam - you will find yourself in good company with access to local knowledge about things to do and places to be, in and around Abergavenny. For example, you may want to know about the fortnightly Wednesday session for girls and non-binary young people aged 13-17yrs, run by the Autistic Girls Network volunteers, or plans for the next World Bistro later this year, or details of The Big Lunch picnic that's coming in early June.

To break the ice, we warmly invite you to pick up the phone or send an email, and for those who are ready to dip your toes in, why not pop along to the weekly Friday Coffee Morning, or come to the Monday Social Circle that offers a bit of everything - exercise, music, indoor curling, table tennis, quizzes, games - to help keep us active and involved as we age. Suitable for everybody.

To see the calendar of changing activities and events, to learn about the charity, and where to find us please visit the website www.abergavennycc.org/ calendar or send an email to aber.hub@gmail.com

*Marion Pearce, Trust Manager
Registered Charity 1177133*

Abergavenny Petanque Club



Hello and welcome to Abergavenny Petanque Club founded in 2002 and since 2005 situated in Bailey Park, Abergavenny.

If you are looking to Try Something New, that's a social activity, is easy to learn and good for your body and mind? Then Petanque may be just what you need.

Petanque is an affordable, accessible sport that delivers surprising health and wellness benefits.

Petanque, sometimes called "boules," is a game where players toss hollow metal balls as close as possible to a small target ball, known as the cochonnet.

One of the best parts about Petanque is that nearly anyone can play. There's no need for special athletic ability.

We are a friendly social club meeting a few times every week and while Petanque is suitable for all genders and age groups it also provides camaraderie as matches

are typically played in groups, it also helps with your physical health by providing low impact exercise, and helps improve your coordination and balance and of course being outside boosts your Vitamin D levels.

We hold weekly practice afternoons on Wednesdays, these Practice sessions are open for all to come along and have a go so please feel free to attend if you wish.

If you don't have any boules we have some spare you can use, you can find us in Bailey Park Abergavenny, just outside the Pavilion at the top end of the park, we will be there from 01:30pm for a few hours, please come along. Don't worry if you haven't played before we all had to start somewhere, and we have some coaches who will show you the ropes.

If you would like to know more about Petanque or our club please log onto our website at: www.abergavennypetanqueclub.org.uk Or you can Email us at: - abergavennypetanque@gmail.com



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Shuffle Up & Join In



Bridge is often described as the ultimate card game. It's a strategic trick taking game played by two partnerships of two players, where each pair bids for the right to play the hand, by predicting how many tricks they can win. The challenge is then to play the cards well enough to make that bid (called a contract).

The game combines memory, communication through bidding, and thoughtful card play to

outscore your opponents. If you've played whist, you'll recognise some similarities – though bridge offers an extra layer of depth and satisfaction. Bidding can feel a little daunting at first, but the club runs friendly courses to guide new players through everything at an easy pace.

A typical evening involves playing around twenty hands and lasts about two hours. The time flies by, making it a great way to keep your mind sharp and forget the day's little worries. Along the way, you'll meet new people and make friends through a game enjoyed all over the world. There are even bridge holidays and cruises for the truly enthusiastic.

So, who plays bridge? Just about anyone – from students to pensioners. If you have a few hours



a week, enjoy a stimulating and sociable game, and like a bit of friendly competition, bridge could be for you. The best way to find out is to contact us and arrange a visit to the Abergavenny Community Centre on any Thursday evening from 6.45pm.

Mobility issues? No problem – you can also play online using RealBridge. It's the closest thing to playing in person, as you can see the other players, and the club is happy to help you get started.

Why not email John today. John Dewsnap Chairman . Email vernferig@gmail.com

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I give conscious, careful and attentive massage, offered in a calm and respectful space where you can slow down, switch off, and reconnect with yourself. Each session is guided by your comfort and boundaries. There is no set routine and no expectation to be or feel a certain way - definitely no need to perform. Instead, I focus on creating a space where you can relax deeply, feel supported, and experience a sense of ease and

confidence in your body—often in a way that's hard to find elsewhere.

Alongside individual sessions for women, I can also offer couples massage together with my wife (an experienced practitioner herself), creating a shared experience where both partners can unwind together and feel held in a safe, nurturing environment. For couples looking to deepen their connection, we offer gentle, down-to-earth intimacy coaching, supporting communication, trust, and a more relaxed, natural closeness—always at your own pace.

Who is this for?

This work is particularly suited to women who are feeling stressed, overwhelmed, or disconnected, and who are looking for time and space to reset. And it's for women who are



missing caring, conscious touch, for any reason. It's also for couples who want to slow down, reconnect, and enjoy a more present, comfortable connection with each other.

Do you have questions? I'll be happy to have an informal chat to see if it feels right for you.



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Grilled Vegetables with Halloumi & Mixed Herb Pesto

A great veggie alternative to the usual meat-focused barbeque

INGREDIENTS

- 2 large courgettes
- 1 large red onion
- 1 aubergine
- 1 red pepper
- 1 block of halloumi
- Salad potatoes to serve

For the Pesto

- 50g flat leaf parsley
- a handful of pine nuts
- 30g basil
- 50ml olive oil
- 2 cloves of garlic, crushed
- 2 tbsp parmesan, grated.
- 1.5 tbsp lemon juice

METHOD

1 Set the oven to 190° and get a heavy griddle pan on a high heat, or the barbeque up to temperature.

2 To make the pesto, first briefly toast the pine nuts in a hot, dry pan. Allow to cool slightly. Combine

the parsley, basil, oil, pine nuts, garlic, lemon juice and parmesan in a blender. Season with salt and pepper and whizz until well blended. Set aside.

3 Cut the aubergine lengthways into 1 cm thick slices. Cut the courgettes into rounds at a diagonal angle, 1 cm thick. Quarter the pepper. Quarter the onion keeping the root end so that the pieces hold together.

4 Place all the vegetables in a tray. Drizzle with a little olive or rapeseed oil, and season generously with salt and pepper. Mix the vegetables so that they all receive a coating of the oil.

5 Get the potatoes on; cook them in salted water, at a simmer, for 15 minutes.

6 Cook the vegetables, in batches, on the hot griddle or barbeque. Don't move or turn them until you have good seared grill lines on them; about 5 minutes. Once a

pan-full/barbeque-full of vegetables are done, transfer them to the baking tray and put in the hot oven to finish – this way, the ones you do first will get longer in the oven – Grill the vegetables in this order: onion, aubergine, peppers, and lastly courgette.

7 Once all the vegetables are cooked, transfer to a serving platter, and spread generously with about half of the pesto. Save the other half to have another day, with pasta.

8 Heat a teaspoon of oil in a small, non-stick frying pan. Cut the halloumi into 5mm thick slices and add to the pan. The cheese will sizzle. Wait until you have a good golden colour, then flip the slices. The second side will colour much quicker than the first.

9 Plate everything up, and eat it before the cheese cools and goes squeaky!

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

This month, our bookseller friends at Book-ish are encouraging us to try something new with a selection of cool and fascinating books designed to inspire curiosity and discovery.

Discover...Translated Fiction!

Hooked

Asako Yuzuki

£14.99

Eriko appears to have a perfect life: devoted parents, a pristine apartment, and a high-flying job in the seafood division of a major Japanese trading company. Her ambitious project to reintroduce Nile perch into the Japanese market reflects her drive, yet beneath the surface she is consumed by loneliness. She becomes captivated by Shōko, a housewife who writes a popular blog about messy homes and convenience-store food, far removed from idealised domestic life. When they meet, a friendship begins, but Eriko's fascination soon turns into obsession. How far will she go to keep her closest connection? Beautifully translated by Polly Barton, *Hooked* is a darkly compelling exploration of food, identity and womanhood in modern Japan.



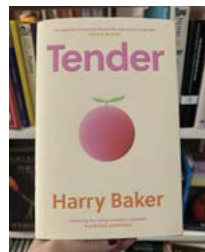
Discover... Poetry!

Tender

Harry Baker

£14.99

Tender is the hilarious and heart-warming new poetry collection from World Poetry Slam Champion Harry Baker, exploring fatherhood for the first time. It captures the fragile, magical moments of new life and early parenthood, from sleepless nights to quiet wonder. With his trademark wit and warmth, Baker reflects on the first 100 days with his son as they get to know each other. Parents will recognise themselves in these snapshots of love, exhaustion and everyday tenderness.



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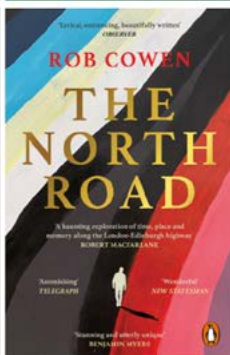
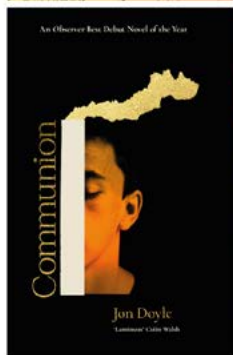
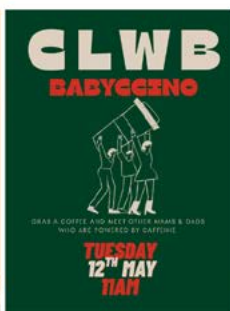
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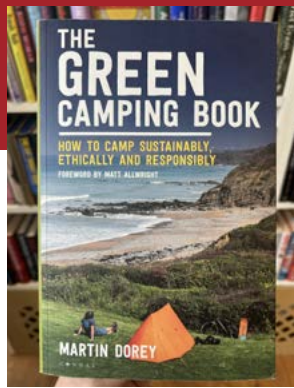


Discover a new...Sport!

Start Where You Are – The Beginner's 5k Running Guide for Women

Sabrina Pace-Humphreys
£16.99

Want to take up running but have no idea where to begin? Consider this book your personal cheerleader - a motivating and practical beginner's guide designed for women to take you from your couch to your first 5k in just 10 weeks. It combines friendly expert coaching with inclusive real runners' stories and advice for every woman, at every stage of life. Includes an easy to follow, 10-week training plan to get you to 5k; technique and safety advice; strength and conditioning exercises to support your running; advice on running through your menstrual cycles and menopause; expert nutrition advice, health tips and motivational ideas to keep you on your running journey.

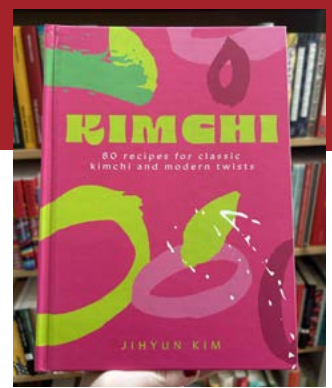


Discover a new...Activity!

The Green Camping Book
Martin Dorey

£23

From lifelong camper, campervanner and environmentalist Martin Dorey comes a practical manifesto for greener, more responsible camping. With climate change affecting everyone, this book encourages campers to recognise their role in protecting the natural spaces they love. It offers clear guidance on making more sustainable choices, from kit and clothing to travel, campsites and everyday habits outdoors. Rather than asking people to stop exploring, it shows how to do so with a lighter footprint. Aimed at those who want to reduce their environmental impact but aren't sure where to start, it's a call to get outdoors, enjoy nature and take meaningful steps to preserve it for the future.



Discover a new...Skill!

Kimchi - 80 Recipes for classic kimchi and modern twists

Jihyun Kim

£20

Bring the heart and soul of kimchi into your kitchen with a collection of authentic, classic recipes alongside modern, creative ways to use this beloved fermented dish in everyday cooking.

This beautiful cookbook explores the craft of kimchi through traditional seasonal methods and inspiring dishes that show just how versatile it can be. From Kimchi Grilled Cheese Sandwich and Kimchi Mac and Cheese to Kimchi Quesadillas, Summer Rolls and Stir-Fried Kimchi Udon with Greens, there are endless ways to enjoy its bold, tangy flavour.

This book blends old and new, helping you connect more deeply with cooking while discovering fresh, exciting ways to use kimchi every day.



Kids...Discover new facts!

My Little Museum - Ancient Egypt

£9.99

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The Thought Police

“You don’t need to interact with the mind. You don’t need to do anything. Just be the one who notices.”

~ Michael A Singer



Let’s try something new this month, shall we? How about we leave our thinking alone? As in, don’t get involved with it at all.

Sounds a bit irresponsible, doesn’t it? Especially when you’re told—by me, here!—that thought creates your reality; and there are books and blogs and all manner of social media encouraging you to ‘manage your mindset’, and ‘stay on top of your mental game’.

Mental health treatments, too, like CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy), encourage awareness of thoughts, in order to challenge, and modify, those considered negative or irrational.

But give this subjective instruction to a chronic over-thinker, and you’ve just added even *more* to their checklist of mental tasks, not to mention giving them an opportunity to ‘fail’ at taking their mental health into their own hands.

That doesn’t seem altogether *kind*, to me, and if our end goal is to get *stuff* off our minds and enjoy what life has to offer in the here and now, it also seems a little counter-productive. Because surely, the *only* tool we have at our disposal to *manage* thought is... more thought?

I worked with a client once whose job had a regular task that got them all up in their head. They were plagued with insecurity about it - not being good enough, making mistakes and the like - and they noticed that every now and again, when they were in a lighter mood, they were able to rationalise that they weren’t so bad at it after all.

Which seems better, doesn’t it? Almost like it’s putting the mind in its place: *Hey, be off with you, and all your bad vibes – I call the shots round here!*

But look a little closer and you’ll see that ‘rationalising’ is just more of the same. It’s pouring thought-fuel onto an already raging fire of over-analysis.

By engaging thought on its own terms - trying to out-positive all its negativity - my client was innocently, inevitably, strengthening its hold over them, and keeping the cycle of insecurity alive.

A simple rule of thumb is that thought will continue to trouble us, for just as long as we *see* it as troublesome. Which is why your best bet could be to just let the mind get on with whatever it’s doing, and not get involved.

To aid you in this novel quest, it’s worth remembering what you do whenever you have the misfortune to bruise yourself. We’ve been gifted these amazing bodies that miraculously heal themselves, so you know as well as I do, that you don’t go prodding it, hoping to speed up the process. Not only would that hurt, but in tinkering with it, you’d be getting in the way, and actually making it worse.

‘Bruised’ thought is just another part of this same, self-healing system: it arises, it’s a thing for a while, and then it resolves, without intervention. If you go prodding around in there - monitoring, judging, cajoling, bemoaning - not only will it hurt, but you’re just prolonging the agony. As, I’m sure you’ll agree, experience bears out.

The greatest irony I find in this merry dance of meta-cognition (i.e. thinking about our thinking) is that both the notion of *needing* to manage your thoughts, *and* the belief in some sort of ‘better’ version of you that’s busy *doing* all that managing, are themselves... just more thought.

This could well be the first new thing you’ve tried that requires nothing from ‘you’ at all.

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
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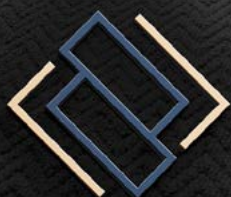
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Try Something New

I always like the idea of trying something new. There's something about it that feels hopeful, like a fresh start, a different direction, a chance to shake things up a bit. But if I'm honest, I also know that alongside the excitement, there's usually a bit of hesitation too. The unknown can feel uncomfortable, and it's often easier to stay where I am.

Often when I try something new, I tend to make it a bigger deal than it needs to be. I imagine committing fully, showing up every week, getting it right straight away. That's the perfectionist in me but is also where I usually come unstuck. Life is busy, working full time and being a mum means time is always tight, and sometimes my confidence wobbles. Suddenly the 'new thing' feels harder than it should.

I joined a tennis club because my son loves it and has become obsessed. I had this lovely vision of us playing together, but in reality, I've barely been. Not because I don't want to, but because it feels like a bigger step than I'm always ready for. The same with a book group I joined, full of brilliant women I'd like to get to know and something I was genuinely excited about, but I haven't quite found my rhythm with it yet.

What I'm learning is that trying something new doesn't have to mean diving in headfirst. It can be much gentler than that. It might be showing up once, just to see how it feels. It might be doing five minutes instead of an hour. Being happy to be a beginner, without any pressure to be good.

Even with movement, which is my job, I remind myself it doesn't have to be all or nothing. A short stretch, 5 minutes of mindful exercise, a walk with the dog, it all counts. Trying something new isn't about getting it right. For me, it's about being open enough

to begin. And starting small, making it manageable so that I'm able to continue without pressure.

If you'd like to try something new, without making it a big deal, why not give Pilates a go? I run classes locally every week and have an online video platform to help you learn from home. It doesn't have to be a huge commitment, just see how it makes you feel and if you like it, you can come back. It's worth a try and I'd be very happy to welcome you.

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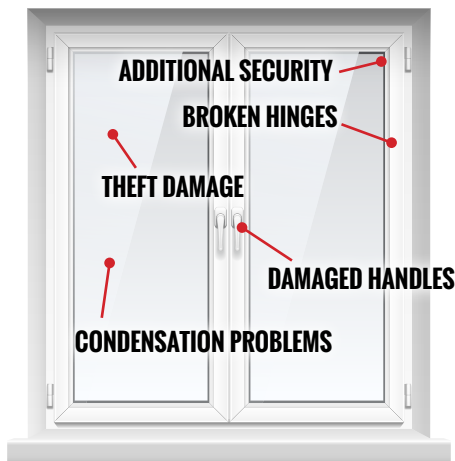


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The Lost Herbert Tombs



Gwladys Ddu and her husband, William, were buried in Abergavenny Priory but their son and grandson (also called William) were laid to rest in Tintern. Helen Morgan from Abergavenny Local History Society reports.

A 17th-century manuscript, known as the *Herbertorum Prosapia*, contains drawings purporting to be the tombs of William Herbert, first Earl of Pembroke, his son, Earl of Huntingdon and their wives. William senior was a personal friend of Edward IV and a leading power-broker during the early Yorkist period. So, when Warwick the Kingmaker turned against Edward IV in

1469, William was the obvious person to resolve matters. It did not work out as planned: the battle was a disaster for the Yorkists. William and his brother Richard were captured and executed.

William had already made his will. In the first version, he asked for burial in Abergavenny, near his parents. He then added a codicil asking instead for burial at the Cistercian

abbey of Tintern. His final will, made on the morning of his execution, reverted to burial at Abergavenny but his body made it only as far as Tintern. William junior's political profile was lower than his father's but he was well-connected. Despite his Yorkist contacts, he readily made peace with Henry VII (they had after all been brought up together at Raglan Castle). In his will, made shortly after his first wife's death, he asked for burial with her at Tintern.

Sir Thomas Herbert, presumed author of the *Prosapia*, owned land in Tintern. This was the title he took when he obtained his baronetcy in 1662, but he spent little time in Wales. Some of his drawings are clearly fiction. Yet some are perfectly accurate, says Professor Madeleine Gray. "One tomb is unlike any of his other drawings. The costume and armour are clearly inaccurate. The whole appearance is 17th century. The text beneath cannot be from the original tomb as it makes no reference to prayer for the dead. And what about the weepers? Kneeling weepers are unusual in the 15th century. The other tomb that Herbert describes was that of William junior and Mary Wydeville. It is even more of a puzzle - the only example where Herbert has drawn railings around a tomb, possibly reflecting something he saw for himself or had heard about. Yet the description of the Tintern tombs as defaced and ruined does imply that there was still *something* there."

Professor Gray's talk in the Borough Theatre on May 13th starts after the AGM at 7:30pm
abergavennylocalhistorysociety.org.uk

MAY EVENTS AT THE



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Saturday 2 May | 7:30pm

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Thursday 7 – Saturday 9 May | Various times

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Tickets: £15 (+ £1 booking fee)

Friday 15 May | 7:30pm

Catrin Finch – Notes to Self

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Saturday 16 May | 7:00pm

Tuesday 19 May | 2.30pm (Subtitled)

National Theatre Live: All My Sons

Arthur Miller's classic drama filmed live from the West End. Starring Bryan Cranston and Marianne Jean Baptiste, directed by Ivo van Hove. A gripping exploration of responsibility, guilt and the American Dream.

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Wednesday 20 May | 7:30pm

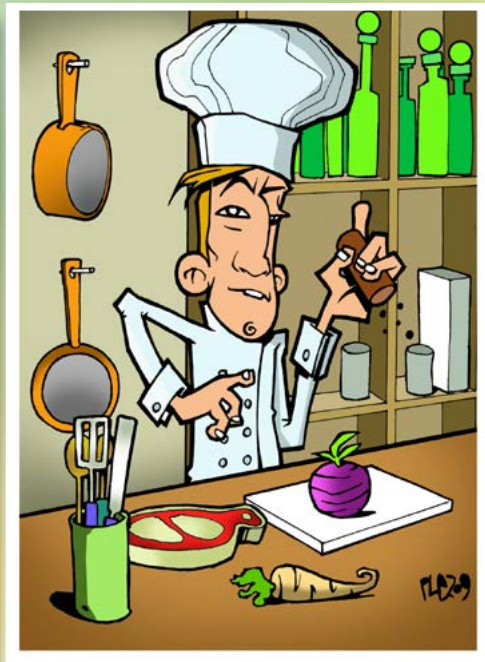
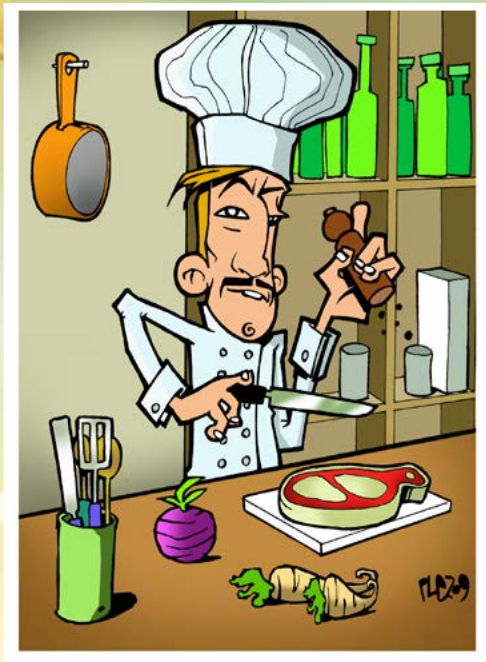
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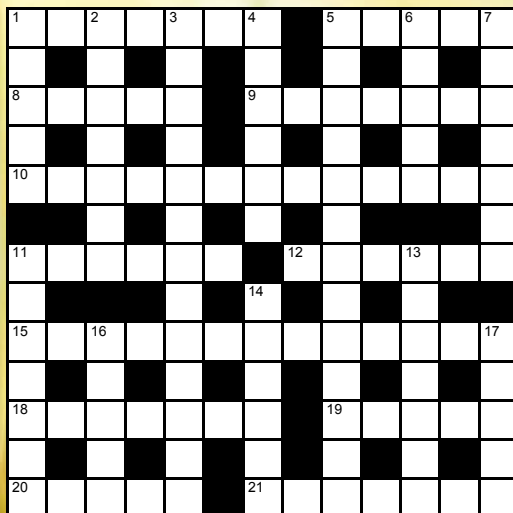
Quick Crossword

ACROSS

1. Sketch (7)
- 5 Naval map (5)
- 8 Expel (5)
- 9 Woman's holdall (7)
- 10 Promotional literature (13)
- 11 Informal (6)
- 12 Thick-set (6)
- 15 Used to cool food (13)
- 18 Conclusions (7)
- 19 Perfect (5)
- 20 Sea rising and falling (5)
- 21 Medicinal syrup (7)

DOWN

- 1 Musical drama (5)
- 2 Robbers (7)
- 3 Worldwide (13)
- 4 Pertaining to cultural group (6)
- 5 Deep thinking (13)
- 6 Saunter (5)
- 7 Firmly (7)
- 11 Right (7)
- 13 Nearest (7)
- 14 Receptacle (6)
- 16 Dimmed (5)
- 17 Bottom of the feet (5)



NEXT MONTH'S FOCUS

The Local Advice Issue



We're uncovering what to look for when choosing a tradesperson, from the truth behind cheap quotes to the costly mistakes customers often make and how to get it right from the start.

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space, or a nearby hall becomes the setting for a class or club you'd never have considered before.

For many, relocating is about more than bricks and mortar - it's about creating the life you've been thinking about but haven't yet taken the leap to start. We often meet buyers who are looking for a slower pace, a stronger sense of community, or just a change of scenery. What they discover is that alongside a new home comes the chance to reconnect: with nature, with neighbours and sometimes even with themselves.

It's also a chance to reset habits. A new environment can be the

perfect motivation to try that yoga class, join a local group, or simply spend more time outdoors. These small changes can have a big impact on wellbeing and happiness.

At James Dean, our tagline is 'let our family move yours,' and that's exactly what we aim to do, supporting you through one of life's biggest changes with care and understanding because we know that behind every move is a story and often, the start of something new.

If you've been thinking about making a change, this could be your moment. A new home might just be the beginning of a whole new chapter.

Let our family move yours!

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01874 624757
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