

Inspiring and celebrating greener living in Exeter, Plymouth and across South Devon

DECEMBER/JANUARY 2014/15 ISSUE 34

reconnect

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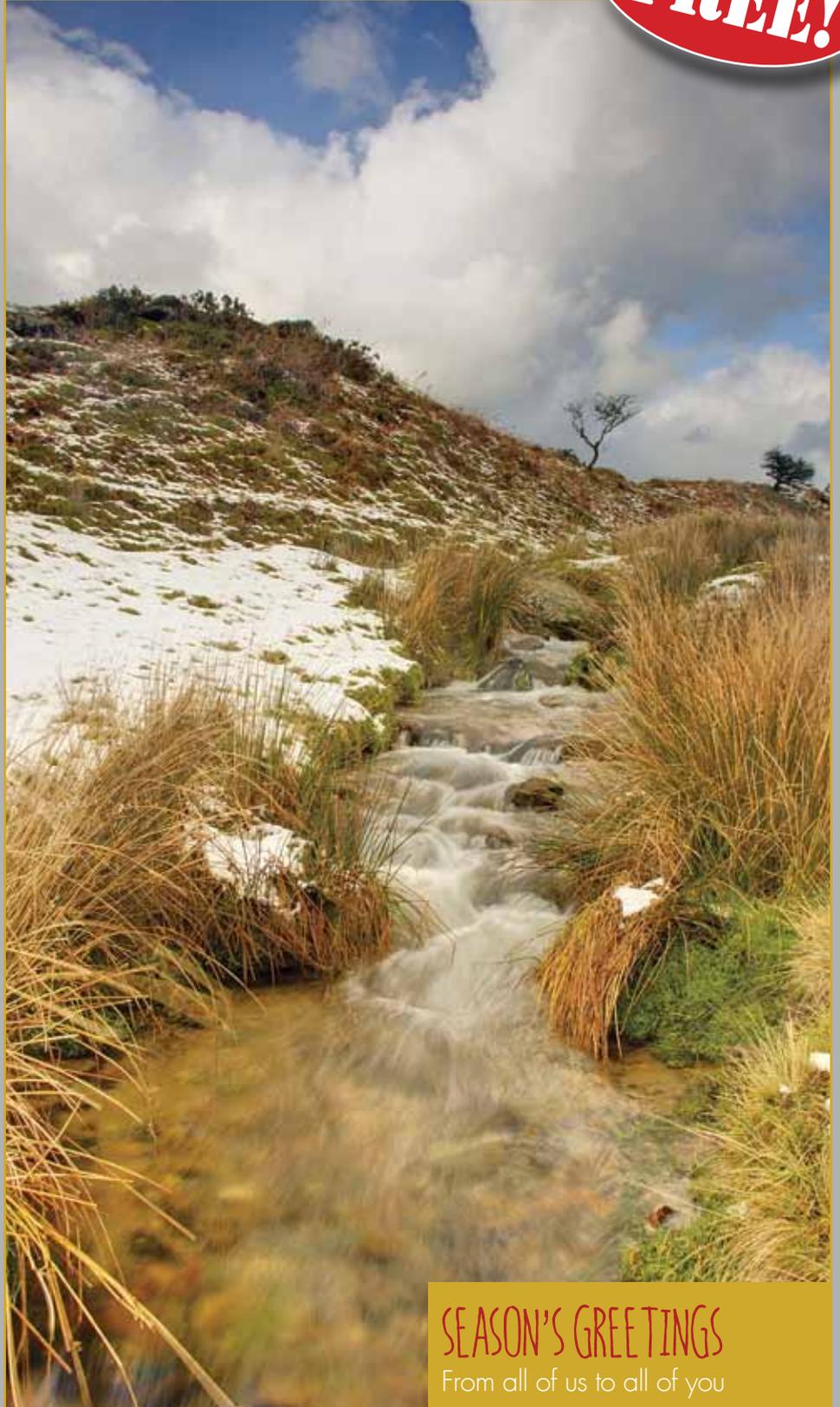
ALTERNATIVE GIFT IDEAS

Pressies for a greener Christmas



A TOUCH OF HEALING

For you and your animals



SEASON'S GREETINGS

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Goingout

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Upfront

IT'S WHAT WE'RE ABOUT

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Our 1/8-page advertisements

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Our 1/2-page advertisements

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discount, so you pay £845.10. That's a saving of £93.90. Or book at least three issues and pay £140 a month.

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WELCOME...

MAY we first wish you a joyous and peaceful Christmas - or whatever festival you celebrate at this time of year. If it's all just another day, week or month for you, have a really great one anyway. And we can all celebrate the New Year.

You'll find all manner of festive goodies in this issue: gift ideas, places to go, things to do and a mouth-watering guide to local produce.

Even if you usually buy your food and drink in the local supermarket, how about this year sourcing your Christmas fare from local, independent shops, markets and producers? Support the community that supports you.

You'll also notice a few changes in this issue: a splash of new design here; a new feature there (you can't fail to notice our BIG new Going Out guide). What you won't know about are a few new faces, left, behind the scenes making it all happen - except you will because I introduce them all in And finally... on page 42.

Enjoy Reconnect, enjoy the holiday!

Martin x

COVER STORY...



Main image by local landscape photographer Phil Hemsley (see page 14 and www.philhemsley.co.uk). From top of left: mindfulness image from Gaia House (page 22); GroCycle mushrooms (page 11) and Reiki healing with Claire Dannatt (page 36).

THE SMALL PRINT...

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ECO ETHOS

Reconnect is written, designed, printed and distributed locally, using materials from sustainable sources. It is printed using vegetable-based inks and biodegradable fountain solution. The paper is 50 per cent post-consumer waste and 50 per cent virgin fibre (from a sustainable source), chlorine-free and FSC Certified (www.fsc-uk.org). All by-products of the production and printing processes are recycled. Please recycle this magazine by passing it on to someone else after you've read it

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Showcase of art and crafts

THE Winter Gift Fest, at Exeter Community Centre in St David's, will "showcase the creative talent of the many skilled artists, craftspeople, writers and musicians who live in the area, amateur and professional," say the organisers.

As well as a wide variety of art and craft, there will be books and CDs by Exeter's writers, poets and musicians for sale and gift items made by local schoolchildren. Live music, seated massage, creative activities for children and refreshments available from the Centre's Mulberry Tree cafe will add to a warm, welcoming, relaxing day.

All welcome, admission free. Exeter Community Centre is a few minutes' walk from the High Street, with numerous car parks and on-street parking nearby. Contact 01392 427185, haldoncontact@gmail.com.

Kids' world

A NEW website, based in Kingsbridge, offers children and adults the opportunity to discover more about the world - and the impact our lives have on it.

www.1world-kids.com has features on people, place and planet, free downloads and helpful hints and tips to help your kids foster a renewed sense of responsibility.

Artisan event

LOOK out for another artisan market at The Rotherfold in Totnes on Saturday December 6. Expect wonderful food (it's organised by Sima and Hannah of The Kitchen Table), plus locally produced gifts and entertainment.

Radio AGM

SOUNDART Radio, the community radio station for Totnes and surrounding villages, will hold its AGM at Studio 45, Dartington, on Thursday December 4, from 7pm. Visit www.soundartradio.org.uk.

Cause and effect of Oxfam's bookshops

If you love books you will have done your time combing the dusty shelves of charity shops in search of that bargain read.

But as enjoyable and sometimes fruitful as charity shop trawling can be, there's nothing as rewarding as the richer literary waters of the dedicated bookshop, with its classified sections and extensive choice.

Since the end of the 1990s, Oxfam has been successfully combining the two and around 100 of its 750 charity shops across the UK are devoted entirely to books.

Key to the shops' success (and Oxfam makes around £1.6 million every month from its book sales) is supply and, thanks to the generosity of the public, the books just keep on coming.

Reconnect spent a couple of hours behind the scenes (well, ok, and browsing the shelves) at the Totnes branch and we saw them arrive by the bag and boxful - including a collection from the shops' three local book banks; two in Totnes (in the Morrisons and Nursery car parks) and one in Dartington (next to the school).

So, just like in a conventional bookshop, the books arrive daily (if somewhat randomly and less professionally packed) and Oxfam bookshop shelves have the same classified sections, from children's books and modern fiction to lavish art books and mind, body, spirit titles. The Totnes branch sells four times as many of the latter as other branches, incidentally, as you might expect.

But it's what happens between the books arriving and being sold that sets the Oxfam shops apart.

The major difference is that they are run by just one paid, but part-time, manager and a whole team of volunteers.

Minda Bunce, who has managed the Totnes branch since it opened in 2006, said: "We're fortunate to have a brilliant team here in Totnes and without them it simply wouldn't work. We're always looking for more people, though, to work regularly for anything from a half-day upwards, on the counter or out the back."

'Out the back' in the Totnes branch is surprisingly small and cramped but

amazingly busy and fascinating.

The aim is to find the best home for every book (and they always want more - just drop them in and say we sent you).

First, anything seriously damaged or out of date (travel guides and academic books, for example) go into recycling sacks.

Minda says that shoppers expect their modern fiction to be in near-perfect condition, so tatty copies are bagged up and sold on. Reference books, and particularly classic literature, can carry a few scars but again anything too damaged is recycled.

The high quality and wide range is reflected in the pricing. Modern fiction is £1.99 or £2.99 and literature can start at £1.99 but go up to £10 for a leatherbound classic.

"We can't always compete on price," admits Minda, "but we can't be beaten on range and quality. The whole point is to make as much money as possible for Oxfam."

To that end, the less common titles - from obscure artbooks to super-rare antiquarian gems - are researched thoroughly on the internet and sold at the lowest market price.

Some of the more specialist titles are sold on the internet to find a larger audience, through Oxfam's own online shop (www.oxfam.org.uk/shop/books) and also at www.abebooks.co.uk.

But the shops themselves remain key to the Oxfam fundraising operation and to keep the stock fresh, and punters coming



The Oxfam Book and Music shop in Totnes High Street.

in to browse, anything that's been on the shelves for more than six weeks (there's a date code penciled inside the cover of every book) is 'culled' and passed onto the Kingsbridge branch.

So, just like any book retailer, Oxfam bookshops aim to provide shoppers with a wide range of high quality and affordable books. But unlike most shops, it's thanks to the efforts of an almost entirely volunteer workforce and it's to raise money for a respected and hard-working international charity.

As Minda says: "Somehow, working hard to maximise profits feels quite virtuous when the proceeds are going to Oxfam."

Reconnect readers can find their Christmas books (and DVDs, vinyl records and CDs, plus cards and wrapping paper) at Oxfam bookshop branches in Totnes, Exeter, Kingsbridge and Teignmouth.



Peter Scott of Funky-Bizness caught in mid-exercise

Voice coaching - with help from a moped

SINGING at Christmas, or any other time, can be brilliant, but not everyone has enough confidence to join a group and get involved.

Luckily there are a few classic little exercises that can help in a big way. And there's one in particular that Peter Scott of the Funky-Bizness Community Choir has found invaluable.

"I struggled for years trying to improve my voice," said Peter. "I wanted to sing high, soul-style. I just couldn't work out how. Then I found a video of this exercise on the website of a New York Afro-American voice coach:

- 1 Sing any note using the sound 'booo' (and make the 'ooo' sound long).**
- 2 Repeat, but this time make your lips vibrate together (so you sound like a moped engine).**

If you find it hard try different sounds like 'bwoooo' or 'pwooo'. Anything to get the vibration in the lips.

3 Try it on different pitches - some high some low (high is easier)

4 Take the first line of a familiar tune, and sing it with vibrating lips. Repeat a few times. Then sing it normally. If it works for you as it did for me, you will find your singing voice more relaxed and powerful, and if you keep on for a few days you will find it just gets better and better."

And if you then want to have fun singing, try Pete's Funky-Bizness Community Choir at the Barnfield Theatre every Tuesday 7.30pm. Their Spring term starts January 6. Find out more (including a singing exercise 'how-to' video) at www.funky-bizness.co.uk.

Latenight traders throw open their doors

ASHBURTON, just off the A38, is well-known for its many independent retailers and there's a chance to really explore them when they throw open their doors for late-night shopping on Thursday, December 11.

Look for unique gifts, indulge yourself with tasty tipples and delicious delicacies, check out the

craft and market stalls, and enjoy the storytelling and 'carol crawl' through the town.

Parking is free from 6pm and North St will be closed from 4.30pm with diversions in place. A free park and ride service will run all evening between Glendinnings, the Bullring and the car park.

Heartsong - singing for one and all

HEARTSONG, the regular harmonious singing workshop in Exeter, has no less an aim than to "unite singers from any background whatsoever".

"We sing a wide variety of songs," says choir leader, singer and composer Alison Whittall. "Some may be energised and even funky and fun, others may be slow beautiful and deep. A session could include a beautiful Taize song, harmonic temple, a meditative Buddhist chant, uplifting Gospel, rocking, funky African rhythms, soothing lullabies - and all within an atmosphere of respect and celebration, in beautiful candlelight."

Harmonies are taught by ear and require no previous experience as songs are easy to learn, broken down into bite size chunks.

Heartsong is held on the last Sunday of each month, with a break for Christmas, so they're back at 7-9.30pm on January 25 in the Friends Meeting House, in Magdalen Street.

Call Alison on 01363 774324, email alising@btopenworld.com, or visit www.alising.co.uk.

City meet-up

FIND out more about the Three Principles, described as "a profoundly different understanding of how we create our human experience", at www.meetup.com/Exeter-Three-Principles-Meetup, erica_lewis@btinternet.com or call 01803 867209.



Knitting community

KNITTERS in Exeter are being given the chance to raise money for community causes by a new social enterprise.

Neighbourworks is the brainchild of Debbie Judd who was involved with the civil society Americorps in her native US and since coming to the UK in 2008 has been looking for a way to support talented knitters to raise funds for the causes closest to their hearts.

Debbie provides teams of knitters (existing groups or people who have come together specially for the project) with patterns to make quality knitwear, each item of which carries a 'I am your neighbour' tag.

She then sells the knitwear on her website and between £7-12 goes to the group's charity or good cause.

Said Debbie: "Neighbourworks was born out of a belief that local knitting talent, combined with the gorgeous fibres produced in Devon and the UK, could come together to benefit local causes, and local people. To date, already over £1,000 has been raised by participating knitting groups."

Currently there are five groups producing knitwear but the plan is to expand the project.

Find out more (and buy knitwear items) at www.neighbourworks.co.uk.



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www.bicton.ac.uk



Tuesdays

9:30 - 15:30

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Radio-thon marks first year on air

HANNAHS radio station, Access All Aerials, marked their first year of online broadcasting by completing a 24-hour Radio-thon at Seale-Hayne.

24-hour radio host Dean Mottershead and the entire Access All Aerials team even created their own song to celebrate. Their live show has now been enjoyed by over 40,000 listeners.

Launched two years ago, Access All Aerials went live online in November 2013, run by people

with a range of abilities, and the station is going from strength to strength. There are more than 15 regular presenters hosting 10 shows weekly between them with 12 hours live programming.

The presenters offer a variety of shows with a wide range of music to discussions on topics such as poetry, politics and horse racing. There are regular shows every Wednesday to Friday.

To tune in visit www.spreaker.com/accessallaerials.

Dance star runs project

THE star of Matthew Bourne's famous production of *Swan Lake* has launched a new urban jazz dance company in Plymouth

"There is no dance class like this in Plymouth," says international dancer and choreographer Maryam Pourian who is now inviting 14-25-year-olds to join her new urban jazz dance group, Company j.

The company was set up by Barbican Theatre in Plymouth to give young people the opportunity to train with Maryam for two hours every week, learn her unique, energetic blend of jazz, soul, street and urban dance, and work towards performances for the national U.Dance festival to be held in Plymouth in 2015.

Visit www.barbicantheatre.co.uk, call 01752 267131.



Try this gift idea for scythe

LOOKING for an alternative present for the special gardener or smallholder in your life?

An Austrian scythe might not be the first thing that comes to mind, but scythe specialist Alastair Inglis says they will thank you many times over for freeing them from the noise, smell and vibrations of strimmers.

Said Alastair: "Austrian scythes are lightweight, easy to use and versatile tools for cutting long grass and tall weeds, harvesting small grains, cutting fertility crops (like comfrey beds) and, with practice, mowing your own lawn."

"Be the first to rid your neighbourhood of the trimmer's weekend whine!"

Prices start from £125 for a basic set up to £165 for a set with a bar-peen anvil, all including delivery. Alastair also has vouchers for scythe sets, beginners and improvers scything courses and peening workshops.

Call Alastair Inglis on 07796-805453, or email al.inglis@yahoo.co.uk.

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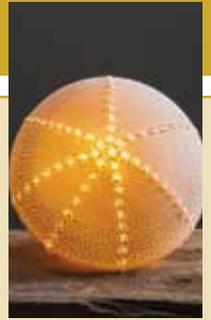
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Be the maker at leather school

FOR some visitors to Tanner Bates' Leather School, it's enough to learn a little of the leatherworker's craft and leave with a hand-crafted belt or bag.

But for others, the smell of that leather, the feel of the quality metal brass buckles, has a stronger hold – they need to get involved.

And the school gives them the chance to do just that.

Intrigued by the idea of sharing his craft and consistently delighted by his students' transformative experiences with making, owner John Hagger has expanded the principles and practice of teaching into Leather School, which combines a learning environment with retail and small-scale production.

Since it opened at The Shops in Dartington last summer, dozens of iPhone cases, notebooks, wristbands, bags and belts have been lovingly made by Leather School Graduates.

And from January 2015 Leather School will be offering scheduled kit classes, masterclasses and weekend workshops too.

The school/shop is also the HQ for tannerbates.co.uk, which sells bespoke leather goods online.

Provenance is important for John: "I know by name the people who provide my raw materials," he says.



Making a difference at The Leather School.

"Malcolm, who tans the hides at the oak bark tannery; Owen Jones in the Lake District who coppices the oak and strips the bark; Barry, who casts the buckles at the Walsall foundry.

"And from time to time, I take on locally-culled deer from the Dartington Estate or Dartmoor and tan the skins myself."

To book a class at leatherschool.co.uk, drop into the shop or phone 01803 866788 or 07738 634136. Gift certificates also available online or at Leather School.

Craft exhibits up for sale

FIFTY of the UK's best designer/craft makers are exhibiting their work at Make 2014, at the Devon Guild of Craftsmen in Bovey Tracey. But what sets this collection apart from the rest of the year's extraordinary work is that all the pieces can be bought for Christmas presents (or just for yourself – we won't judge).

And things get even more Christmassy on Saturday December 6, when the guild stages their Christmas Celebration Day with free mulled wine and seasonal home-made shortbreads, free entertainment with folk music and poetry by Barron Brady (2-2.45pm) and free drop-in Christmas card and print-making workshops by Sarah Morris (10am-1pm and 2-4pm).

The Devon Guild is in the Riverside Mill and includes two galleries, craft shop and café serving locally-sourced produce.

Visit www.crafts.org.uk or call 01626 832223.



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Two steps closer to eco-home dream

MANY of us would like to see more affordable, eco-friendly homes and living spaces – but how do we make it happen?

Selena Mara, who describes herself as "a long-time pioneer of sustainable lifestyles", believes we first need specific visions of what those homes would look like - and second, we need skilled people who can create them. Then there's just the matter of finding suitable land, of course...

So Selena is driving forward two initiatives as part of the Dartington Neighbourhood Plan Housing Task Group.

She wants to hear from eco-builders, architects, designers and landscapers to create an Eco-Builders Database for the South Devon area. Send details to ecobuildersdatabaseSD@gmail.com.

She's also setting up a Community

Vision Gallery. Selena said: "This will be a real-life display of ordinary people's sketches, drawings, paintings, designs and photographs of what their ideal eco-home would look like.

"Let's inspire ourselves and others, by showing the strength of vision and enthusiasm for really green homescapes!"

Send your on-paper designs to: CVG, c/o Lower Hood Barn, Dartington TQ9 6AB.

Selena is also planning a one-off presentation of her slideshow, 'Self-build Eco-homes in Britain', "a visual feast of over 100 images of diverse eco-dwellings from around the country."

And if anyone's got land for sale...

Find out more at www.ecohomesinbritain.co.uk.

● There's more eco homes news and views on page 20.

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Visit the Moretonhampstead workshop for more felted items; a large range of Dartmoor hats, tea cosies, insoles, small wall pieces, and more...

Or check out the shop on the website.

Opening times: Mon - Fri 10am till 5pm

info@bellacouche.com 01647 441405 www.bellacouche.com

OUR regular local produce section opens this time with a seasonal focus on local festive fare, with the help of Traci Lewis of the Soil Association and Holly Tiffen from Transition Town Totnes. Then the

festive feast continues with stories about locally made raw chocolate, home-grown gourmet mushrooms, new freefrom cookery classes, local ale, bountiful markets and much more!

Will you buy lo-ho-ho-cal at Christmas?

HOW we feel about Christmas (or any of the other festivals at this time of year) on a spiritual level might vary, but feasting with friends and family seems to be the one unifying activity of the season.

If you are the person responsible for making it all happen, however, the pressure is on...

And we suspect some Reconnect readers will be juggling ethical issues on top of the usual questions of how much (lots, obviously), where and when to buy.

Do you prioritise local over organic? Vegetables grown locally in heated greenhouses or shipped from where they grow naturally in the sun? Vegetarian or meat? And do we buy from a small independent business, or in bulk from ethical wholesalers, such as Essential or Suma?

Never ones to miss a chance to pick the brains of experts, we spoke to

Traci Lewis, who works for the Soil Association and has played a part in many community food projects in the Plymouth area, and Holly Tiffen, who runs the food group at Transition Town Totnes.

Traci agreed that shopping today is about much more than where to find the bargains. "Around 30% of an individual's carbon footprint is made up of their food choices, so food is the single most important, everyday way for people to reduce their own environmental impact," she said.

"Choosing the most climate-friendly food choices means supporting



LUSCIOUS local veg - pic courtesy of The Real Food Store in Exeter.

sustainable agriculture and buying organic, local and seasonal food."

The Soil Association estimates a typical Christmas dinner can rack up a staggering 49,000 food miles in imported ingredients – equivalent to two journeys around the world. So even buying just 10% more of your food locally this Christmas will make a real difference.

And it's not just about what and where you buy. One of the simplest ways to benefit both the environment and your purse this Christmas is to really plan your portions well.

Says Holly: "On average, people eat 2.5 times their normal intake of calories on Christmas day, yet we still manage to throw away 230,000 tonnes of food during the festive season in the UK.

"Love Food Hate Waste has some good advice on both portion sizes and how to use up those valuable leftovers. Keeping waste local is important too: anything that is left

over, and can't be re-used, can go in your home compost bin, to fertilise your soil next year!"

And eating ethically need not necessarily be prohibitively expensive.

"Eating a local and organic diet on a budget is easy if you get creative in the kitchen and rethink your shopping list," says Traci. "For example, eat less meat, buy dried goods in bulk, make a shopping list to avoid waste and sign up to an organic box scheme."

And Holly agrees that giving it some thought is crucial.

"Start planning now," she says, "because buying local requires preparation to avoid that last minute dive to the supermarket to get everything."

We'll hand over now to our local experts to highlight some interesting and varied local producers and suppliers – Traci concentrating on Plymouth and Exeter, and Holly focusing on the Totnes area.

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All classes in Belinda's cosy farmhouse kitchen near Totnes with numbers limited to six.

Full details at www.belindaconnolly.com or call 01803 762574



Traditional loaves from Emma's Bread, right, are available from The Real Food Store in Exeter, which also stocks a wide range of wholefood - including Figgy's Christmas puddings, below.

Keep it local with produce from Exeter and Plymouth

If you're a meat-eater, keeping it local in the Exeter and Plymouth areas is as easy as it is tasty, says the Soil Association's **Traci Lewis**.

The Well Hung Meat Company (www.wellhungmeat.com), on the A38 near Buckfastleigh, sells a huge range of meat produced by a small group of local farmers – and it's delivered fresh to your door.

Wonnacott Farm (www.wonnacottfarm.co.uk) is a small, family organic farm tucked away in the Devon countryside near Okehampton. They're best known for their delicious traditional Norfolk Black Christmas free-range organic turkeys and also produce organic beef from a small herd of South Devon and Aberdeen Angus cattle.

You can also buy organic turkeys from **Eversfield Organic** (www.eversfieldorganic.co.uk), a family-run farm on the edge of Dartmoor (and who also produce their own meat and veg boxes) and from **Devon Turkeys** (www.devonturkeys.co.uk), who keep them free-range near Exeter.



West Town Farm (www.westtownfarm.co.uk), less than three miles from Exeter, operate an organic meat box scheme and farm shop selling beef, lamb and pork. They welcome visitors too.

Darts Farm (www.dartsfarm.co.uk), at Topsham have an on-site master butcher – along with a fishmonger, baker, deli, cider maker and restaurant.

Shillingford Organics (www.shillingfordorganics.co.uk) also offers a wide range of locally grown produce and through a number of



different outlets – their own shop and box scheme near Exeter, and also local shops and markets.

Award-winning ruby red beef and traditional lamb can be sourced from **Moostone Meats** (www.moostonemeats.co.uk) and **Wembury farmshop**, while **Gribbles Butcher** (www.gribblesbutchers.co.uk) supply top quality traceable local meats to shops in Plympton, Ivybridge and **Ocombe Farm**.

Local markets are a one-stop source of all manner of local produce. There are **Farmers' Markets** on Fore Street in Exeter, from 9am-2pm every Thursday, and there's now also an exciting weekly **Exeter Street Food Market** (www.streetfoodexeter.co.uk) - well worth a visit when Christmas shopping in the city.

Plymouth City Market (www.plymouthcitymarket.co.uk) is open every day, Monday to Saturday, selling tasty fresh, local, ethical food and fresh fish. And the **Good Food Market** is at Plymouth's Royal William Yard from 10am-3pm on the first Sunday every month.

Plymouth event company Leap (www.leapsw.com) are putting on **three new markets in Plymouth** in December: Devonport Guildhall 12-13; Sutton Harbour 13-14; and Plymstock Broadway 19-21. And **Tamar Grow Local** (tamargrowlocal.org/local-markets) is also running

December food markets in the Tamar Valley.

Tamar Valley Food Hubs is an online farmers market bringing the best of Tamar Valley local and organic produce into one place; order Tuesday to get Plymouth delivery on Friday. www.tamarvalleyfoodhubs.org.uk.

Nothing says local food more than a local bread shop that bakes traditional loaves on the premises.

Emma's Bread (www.emmasbread.co.uk) is based at **The Real Food Store**, the community-owned food shop in Exeter, and makes bread "to satisfy the stomach and the soul." Specialities include rye, white and seedy sourdoughs, delicious gingerbread and seasonal fare.

Column Bakehouse (www.devonportguildhall.org/eat/artisan-bakery) is Plymouth's award-winning artisan bakery, open Monday-Saturday, 10am-4pm, serving bread, cakes, pastries and soup – they also supply **Fairport Co-op**, which is definitely worth a visit in **Plymouth City Market**.

And if you're looking for restaurants in the Plymouth area, check out **River Cottage Canteen**, **Dolphin House Brasserie**, **The Treasury**, **National Marine Aquarium**, **Rockfish**, **Jolly Jacks** and **Rocksalt**.

For more sources of local produce, visit Food Plymouth's Good Food Map at www.foodplymouth.org.



Mushrooms ready for delivery from the Tamar Valley Food Hubs.



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GroCycle 

Produced for you in Totnes

FOR many of us, Christmas wouldn't be the same without a spectacular roast bird at the centre of the table, says **Holly Tiffen** of Transition Town Totnes. **Frenchbeef Farm** at Chagford (www.frenchbeeffarm.co.uk) sells free-range turkeys direct from the farm to your door and through farm shops and butchers all over Devon.

Jolly Farm (www.jollyfarm.org.uk), based at Halwell, sells grass-fed, responsibly reared frozen beef, lamb and pork roasting joints, delivered to School Farm, Dartington, or available for pick up from the farm on Monday December 15, between 3-6pm. They also have their own sheepskins for sale – a great Christmas present.

Moor Wholesome Produce (www.moorwholesome.co.uk) will be at the **Ilington Christmas Community Market** (December 6, 1-4pm) - why not try their Dexter beef rib roast this Christmas, or a delicious slow-roasted leg of mutton? They also make willow Yule wreath bases.

Sladesdown Farm (www.sladesdownmeat.co.uk), near Ashburton, has teamed up with South Hams veggies to offer 500 grams of sausage meat free with every large veg box you buy from them.

Christmas isn't just about food (well, not entirely). Dawn and Frankie grow beautiful flowers at **The Walled Garden** in Bridgetown, Totnes, and sell them at the town's only organic fruit and vegetable stall in the Friday market. They prioritise locally sourced fruit and veg and this year are even selling Totnes-



Foodie gifts and street food at the latenight street markets in Totnes.

grown grapes!

The **Greenlife** shop is also a fantastic supporter of local growers and will prioritise buying from small scale local organic growers over those from further afield.

Christmas isn't complete without a tippie. How about making local mulled apple juice or cider? Just add ginger, cloves, cinnamon, star anise and local honey to sweeten.

Peter Webb from **Milltop Orchard** sells a vast range of apple juices, many from old Devon varieties, including mixes with other fruit that he has grown himself at his orchard near Newton Abbot. You can find him at the **Good Food Market** on the third Sunday of the month in Totnes' Civic Square.

One of the highlights of the year for me is the Totnes Christmas market, to be held on each of the three Tuesdays before Christmas, where you can enjoy a glass or two of spicy, hot mulled cider from **Thompson's Cider** stall. You can also drink it in **The Bay Horse pub** during the festive season, purchase it from **Riverford Shop** or visit www.thompsonscider.co.uk.

Look out too for Daniel Dawson at the Totnes Christmas market - he will be selling his **Dreaming Bean** homemade spiced vodka and whisky liqueurs made with locally foraged sloes and Devon honey.

Also at the Christmas Market are the Queen's of Local Cuisine – Sima and Hannah, of **The Kitchen Table** (www.thekitchentable.org.uk). Visit their stall and sample some of their fine Winter-warming stews - and book them for an event.

Christmas wouldn't be complete without a slab of cheese and we are spoilt for choice at **Country Cheeses** on Ticklemore Street in Totnes. The knowledge of the staff is fantastic and they will let you try a sample before you buy.

And also right on our doorstep is **Sharpham**, which sells award-winning wines and delicious cheeses.



Sima who with Hannah runs The Kitchen Table - stars of Totnes local food and catering.



GroCycle's gourmet mushroom kits - just watch 'em grow (and then eat them)!

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www.mimsemporium.co.uk

The gift that keeps growing

GROCYCLE is gearing up for its biggest Christmas ever at their Urban Mushroom Farm in Exeter. The project grows oyster mushrooms on the city's coffee waste and has been supplying local restaurants with the produce since it opened last autumn.

As the evenings draw in, they have been focusing their attention on producing thousands of grow-your-own mushroom kits for people to buy as Christmas presents.

Company director Eric Jong said: "This time of year is always our busiest and in the last two years we have sold out weeks before the last posting date. This year we're stretching at the seams and working hard to produce more than ever!"

The not-for-profit organisation recently won recognition for its

initiative from the Chartered Institute of Waste Management by winning an Innovation Award. It follows a year in which they also set up a mushroom growing project in Dartmoor prison and won a grant award from UnLtd to help teach their idea to projects around the world via an online training programme.

Fellow director Adam Sayner said "It's great to think that this year we've recycled 15 tons of waste coffee from Exeter's cafes - that's the waste from around 1.5 million cups of coffee. Even more fun is to think that thousands of people will wake up on Christmas day and grow their own delicious oyster mushrooms with it!"

You can pick up a kit at www.grocycle.com or at the Totnes late-night Christmas markets.

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Visit us at www.trinityholistics.co.uk



Mim's show their love for food

IT'S one of the joys of working on Reconnect that everyone we speak to, and feature in the magazine, has a passion for what they're doing.

Su and James at Mim's Emporium, in the food hall of Newton Abbot market, are active vegan and animal welfare campaigners and every shelf of their busy stall reflects the love and care they put into their business.

They are open for Newton Abbot's late-night Wednesdays, and Sunday December 21, and Christmas specials include dairy-free advent calendars and chocolates and beautiful handmade soaps and bags.

And if you want to tailor a tasty gift to someone's personal taste, they will put together a special gift basket/hamper.



Just some of the Christmas stock at Mim's.

All this is in addition to their usual massive range of fine foods: gluten-free products, including freshly baked bread from Jackson's of Torquay, jams, preserves, chutneys, herbs and spices, wholefoods, groceries, vegan products and chilled and frozen foods - plus toiletries and supplements (including Viridian). You can find them online at www.mimsemporium.co.uk.

international
MACROBIOTIC
school

NEW YEAR New Healthier You

Winter desserts

February 7th
Healthy eating doesn't mean cutting back on tasty treats! On this day you will learn to create a scrumptious array of dairy- and sugar-free goodies.

Love health Love cooking

Feb 28 - March 1
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Looking after your Health

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www.macroschool.co.uk
Tel: 0044 (0)1803 762 598
Email: info@macroschool.co.uk

Belinda's sad farewell to market

THE New Year will mark something of a landmark on Totnes market when long-time stall holder and cake-maker extraordinaire Belinda Connolly packs up her stall for the last time.

Belinda, who recently published *The Deliciously Conscious Cookbook*, full of gluten-free, vegan and low-sugar recipes, will now be concentrating instead on her freefrom cookery teaching, therapy and nutritional business.

"So it's farewell to all my loyal customers with whom I have had such fun over the past seven years," says Belinda. "I hope to see some of you at my classes which are open to all skill levels and I welcome group bookings for families and friends."

Her courses, run from her farmhouse kitchen near Staverton with optional B&B, are useful for both the experienced and first time freefrom home cook and also offer nutritionally informative tips for wellbeing.

Said Belinda: "Cooking can be so therapeutic when given time and space and I hope these courses will nourish us all."

The classes cover gluten, sugar and dairy-free cooking, plus vegan and Valentine special recipes. Find out more at www.belindaconnolly.com.

● Belinda, pictured right, and making one of her wonderful pies, above.



YOU might have tasted Mulu organic raw chocolate, the glorious rich indulgence that's also good for you.

But what you might not know is that it's made in Dartington, smack in the middle of Reconnectland.

And after establishing itself as a national and then international brand, selling through the big wholefood distributors, Mulu is now also turning its attention to the local market and is looking for new outlets.

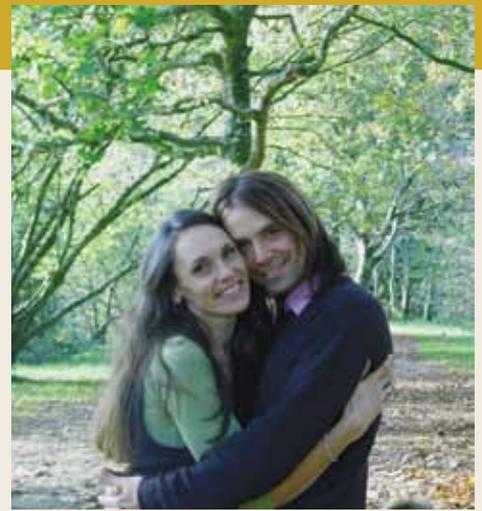
The good news, for retailers and us consumers, is that when they sell it straight to the shops, in Devon or Cornwall, it keeps the cost down – and there's no minimum order, so the small, independent retailer gets a good deal too.

Mulu director Kaycee Fordham says: "It all began back in 2007 when my partner Ben and I escaped with the kids to Cornwall for a month.

"He set about creating the 'perfect' raw chocolate recipe and when we returned to Essex, where we then lived, the real work began – equipment was purchased, the chocolate alchemy continued and the dream began to unfold."

Mulu launched the original range in 2008 and slowly developed new products over the next few years before moving to a larger "creation location" at Dartington.

"Chocolate has long been our



Sweet (and local) success

passion and Mulu is a unique chocolate brand," says Kaycee, "bridging the mainstream and health food markets. Our products are all soya, dairy, refined cane sugar, gluten and nut-free, handcrafted at low temperatures and packaged in earth-friendly degradable cellophane and recycled board boxes.

"Our cacao is ethically sourced from Ecuador, actively supporting biodiversity in the rainforest and all of our ingredients are organically certified too."

Mulu's 'everyday' raw chocolate products include the Silk bar (a milk chocolate alternative) and the Dark bar with raw cacao nibs. There are also children's chocolate buttons, Christmas Stars, solid raw chocolate Easter Eggs and vegan truffles.

Find Mulu at local wholefood outlets - there's a full list at www.muluchocolate.co.uk - or call on 01364 649191 to become a stockist.



Thrive Café
thrivecafe.co.uk



Thrive Café is now open Friday and Saturday nights in December

Offering organic alcohol, live entertainment and organic Vegetarian and Pescetarian (seafood) Pizzas.

Our high street front terrace is open for evening Al Fresco dining and socialising and with the return of our acclaimed Chef Matti Clarke we are now confident in providing the highest standards in vibrant health food cuisine, with a fishy option!

Thrive Café Bar is filling the gap, providing a true Totnes ethos evening venue with integrity, style and awesome organic food and drink. Come and enjoy!

Thrive Café - Licenced Café Bistro

47 Fore Street Totnes TQ9 5NJ 01803 840202

All you need - including parking

THE small, but perfectly formed, local produce market at Tuckers in Ashburton has everything you need for Christmas – and parking right outside the door.

The market is run by Helen Wakeham of local meat producers Proper Pork, so the range of meat is impressive as you would expect, including their own prize-winning pork and hams and turkeys.

There's also a local and organic fruit and veg stall, plus wholefoods, bread and homemade cakes and Fairtrade produce and gifts.

When you need that all-important Break From The Shopping, there's somewhere to sit and



have a cup of tea (Reconnect magazine supplied) and most days you can enjoy a barbecue lunch too.

The market is open all day Monday to Saturday with a Christmas late-night opening on Thursday, December 11.

Brewing up the perfect gifts

THE New Lion Brewery in Totnes aims to capture the town's reputation as a place that's 'proud to be different' – "beers that can truly be described as Totnes in a bottle," says Rob Hopkins, a co-founder of the Transition movement and a founding director of the brewery.

The business also brings history back to life – the original Lion Brewery owned 26 pubs across the area before it ceased trading 1926.

In addition to their three basic ales – Mane Event bitter, Pandit IPA and Totnes Stout – they are also working with local businesses and community groups

to create experimental and one-off beers, including a pumpkin ale, a chilli beer and a mushroom stout.

The brewery will have a stall at all the Totnes late-night markets, on the three Tuesday evenings leading up to Christmas, where you can buy gifts for the beer-drinker in your life (which could also be you), like beer gift packs and 2015 brewery membership, which includes discounted beer and a fancy t-shirt.

And look out for the ultimate community beer development in 2015 – home delivery!

Find out more at www.newlionbrewery.co.uk.

Cafe's a winebar by night

AN already established and popular destination for hungry daytime visitors to Totnes Fore Street is poised to also open its doors in the evenings to "provide a place and space for a more contemplative crowd".

Thrive Cafe Organic Wine Bar and Bistro will open Friday and Saturday nights from December, selling organic beer, wine and pizza.

"We're there for those who are interested in drinking responsibly by drinking organically, eating well and enjoying alcohol for conversation more than for the consumption," said Steve Hopwood, one of the team who run Thrive.

The bar is well-stocked with organic wine, organic ales, lagers and ciders, organic cocktails, live entertainment and gluten-free vegetarian and pescetarian (seafood) pizzas. It is licensed to open until midnight, with the front terrace open for evening al fresco dining and socialising.

"We are also pleased to announce the return of our acclaimed chef Matti Clarke," said Steve. "We will offer the highest standards in



The wonderful old coffee machine at the Thrive Cafe (Wine Bar and Bistro).

vegan, gluten-free cooking - with a healthy fishy option! We will also continue to offer antipasti tapas and our soups, stews and organic fresh salads into the evening."

The Winter evenings will also include live entertainment, talks and community events, and discussion-provoking films and presentations in the New Year with a three-screen surround sound and vision cinema.

Thrive opens at 9am, Monday to Saturday (10am on Sundays), with an organic breakfast menu, including coffee and fresh croissant for £3.

Visit www.thrivecafe.co.uk.

Kids' party? Just add some chocolate!

WHAT'S the one thing that's certain to amuse and delight kids at a party? How about making chocolate?

Chocamigos runs children's parties where the kids can make healthy raw chocolate, pour it into moulds and create lollies,

chocolate animals and other fun shapes. There's even party bags to take home.

They can also do something similar for special events like Christmas, easter and Halloween.

Visit www.chocamigos.co.uk or call 07881 547253.

NATURALLY NOURISHING

THESE long Winter evenings can be bad news for sufferers of Seasonal Affective Disorder but our food writer, JANE HUTTON, has some advice...



Mood food for happy meals

SAD, or seasonal affective disorder, is more common in the UK than we might think. Weak, watery Winter sunshine, if we get any at all, doesn't exactly encourage us to get out and about, leaving us at risk of low vitamin D and serotonin levels. So if you, or someone you know, seems to retreat into their shell in the darker months, feel down or lacking in energy, suffer mood swings or find their appetite significantly increases or decreases, they could be suffering from SAD.

Luckily, there are things you can do to help yourself. Getting enough daylight is the most important; at least 30 minutes, preferably with forearms uncovered, but if you're wrapped up, stay out longer. This will keep vitamin D production going, allowing your brain to keep up levels of serotonin (a brain chemical essential for mood regulation). Eating vitamin D fortified foods, and supplementing will also help - vitamin D is fat soluble, which means you need to eat fat to absorb it. It is naturally found in oily fish (and fish oils like cod liver oil), beef liver, cheese, milk, egg yolks, button mushrooms, and oysters.

Eat foods rich in tryptophan too, which the body uses to make

serotonin (such as chicken, turkey, fish, beans, milk, and bananas), but ensure a nutritious, fresh, unprocessed diet to optimise all the nutrients your body needs to keep mood and motivation high. Choosing complex carbs and good quality protein while avoiding caffeine, sugar, and refined products will help blood sugar levels stay stable. Exercise will stimulate the release of endorphins, promoting a positive mood, doubling your reasons to get out for a stroll in the daylight.

For those who find these steps are not relieving their symptoms quite enough, a lightbox may be the answer. Reasonably priced ones can easily

be found on the internet, and they only need to be used for around 30 minutes daily to be effective. Make sure the one you buy has a strength of at least 10,000 lux units.

A good vitamin D supplement can work wonders when all else fails; recent research has linked low levels to many diseases, and discovered that many of us could do with boosting levels. Don't overdo it though - natural nutrients from natural sources are always better utilised, so get this lovely, unctuous pie down you this Autumn. It has all the ingredients to help you stay merry and bright this Winter!



Guinea fowl and broccoli pie

(Or you can eat it supreme-style instead of a pie, with leftovers cold or made into pasties)

1 kg cooked guinea fowl/chicken; 500g baby onions; 500g broccoli florets, steamed; 50g butter; 225g mushrooms; 350g mascarpone; 1 egg, lightly beaten; 3 tbsp chopped parsley; zest of 2 lemons; 225g puff pastry; 1 egg, to glaze, beaten with a pinch of salt; seasoning.

Preheat the oven to 200C/gas 6 with a baking sheet on the middle rack. Fry the onions in butter for about five minutes,

until just beginning to colour; remove and set aside. Cook the mushrooms gently for a few minutes, until softened. Beat the mascarpone until smooth, adding any liquid from the pan. Stir in the egg, then the parsley and zest. Add the broccoli, onions, mushrooms and meat; season. Pour into a 1.4-litre pie dish, adding a pie funnel. Brush the edge with egg, and top with pastry, trimming and crimping the edges. Glaze with more egg, and bake for 30 minutes, until golden.

Naturally Nourishing is written by Jane Hutton, who describes herself as "a nutritionist and confirmed foodie". Find out more about her consultations, workshops and blog at www.trinityholistics.co.uk.

Use real shops to save High St

If you buy someone a book from a bookshop this Christmas you'll be doing more than giving a great gift – you'll be doing your bit to stop the destruction of the high street.

That's the message from Douglas Cockbain, owner of Totnes specialist bookshop Arcturus.

"It's important that we support real shops for the benefit of future generations," he said. "Online shopping is killing small, independent shops."

The Arcturus Bookshop is best known for its huge range of wellbeing books, including health, psychology, spirituality and self-help titles.

But the shop is now also stocking more bargain nature and environmental books, ranging from birds and trees to flowers and insects.

You'll find Arcturus in Fore Street, opposite Thrive Café.

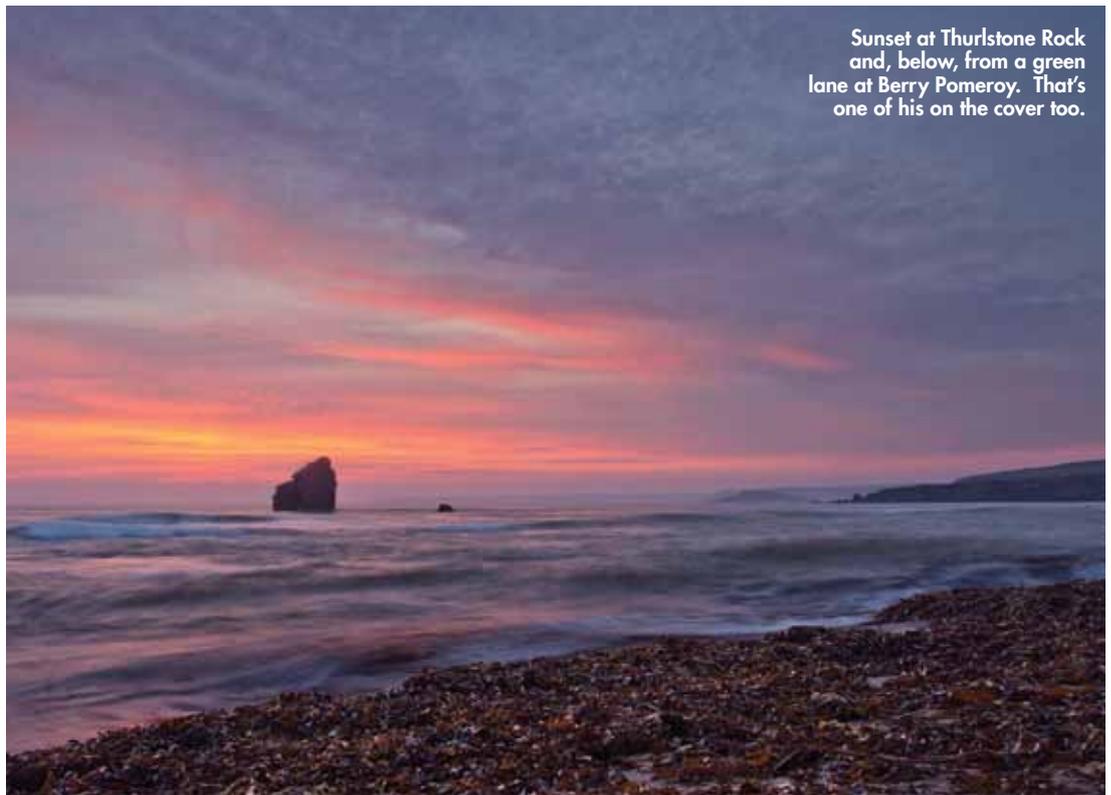
A wise choice

THERE'S an opportunity to see the film *The Wisdom to Survive: Climate change, Capitalism and Community* – and then take part in a spiral council "for deeper engagement with the realities that the film brings to you".

The screening and discussion is at 7pm on January 7 in the upstairs hall at The Mansion on Fore Street, Totnes (entrance next to the library). Visit www.theDANCEwebsite.org.

AONB grant

SOUTH Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Unit has secured a Heritage Lottery grant of £10,000 for their project, *Routeways and Connections*, on the Kingswear and Brixham peninsula.



Sunset at Thurlstone Rock and, below, from a green lane at Berry Pomeroy. That's one of his on the cover too.

Picture yourself in these dramatic Devon scenes

SOUTH Devon photographer and friend of Reconnect Phil Hemsley invites viewers to "step into the scene" of his landscape photography.

"It is an unending delight to live in South Devon and I hope my photographs will allow people to smell the ocean breeze, to hear the sounds of the gurgling whitewater racing over the boulders in the moorland, to want to reach out and touch the gnarled bark of the trees..."

And with a collection of soulful prints for sale on his website, his studies could make the perfect present for anyone in love with our local countryside.

Phil's prints are available as fine art giclee (mounted) prints or as finest quality canvases. "These are prints with real gravitas," said Phil, "which will bring a lifetime of pleasure."

And if you'd like to learn how to get more creative and truly be in control of your camera, you can join Phil on a bespoke landscape photography workshop at a time of year to suit you. Gift vouchers are available towards the cost.

Find out more at www.philhemsley.co.uk.



Spring to Life Now running at Sharpham.

The project supports young people who have experienced some form of mental health distress or may be having a tough time of it at home, work, school or socially.



Lower Sharpham Barton Farm, Ashprington,
Totnes TQ9 7DX Tel: 01803 732747

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INSPIRED? BOOK A COURSE AND JOIN US

Woodland courses at The Hillyfield

WOOD Land Culture, the new community interest company at The Hillyfield, has two great workshops lined up for January.

And there's 50% funding available, from the Rural Development Programme for England, for people engaged in woodland work.

On January 10, Extracting Timber from Small Woods will include horse logging with Will Hampton and Mike Gardner.

There will be hands-on demonstrations of using small-scale forestry equipment to pull down hung-up trees and extract timber from difficult to get to and environmentally sensitive areas. The cost is £75 (with that 50% funding for woodland workers), 10am to 4pm (light lunch included).

On January 24, there will be a chance to learn about non-timber forest products and diversifying woodland income, including green-wood craft, bow making, herbal medicines, wild foods, cultivating mushrooms, forest school education and other non-timber forest products like floristry, wild weaving and more.

It will run 11am to 3.30pm and the cost is tbc (but will include that 50% funding for woodland workers).

The Hillyfield Woodland Farm on Dartmoor is the venue for both these courses – and the place to go for woodland volunteer weekends on the second weekend of the month, including December 13/14 and January 10/11.

Find out more at www.thehillyfield.co.uk, or call 07976589927.

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I've run adverts in a total of four local publications over the past few weeks and ALL my leads have come via Reconnect

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION CONCERNING THE ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR STEINER ACADEMY EXETER

Notice of a statutory Admission Arrangement Consultation

In accordance with the 2012 School Admissions Code notice is hereby given that the Board of Governors for Steiner Academy Exeter propose to alter the admission arrangements applying to the Academy for the 2016/17 academic year.

A statutory admissions consultation will commence at 4 pm on 15th December 2015 and will end at 4 pm on 20th February 2016. You are invited to view the proposed 2016/17 Admission Arrangements on the Academy website and to submit any comments during the consultation period using the email link provided below or by writing to the Academy. A paper copy of the arrangements can be provided upon request.

The proposed 2016/17 admission arrangements reflect the statutory requirements of the 2012 School

Admissions Code and School Admission Appeals Code and fully embed the responsibilities of the Board of Governors, as the admissions authority for the Academy. Please especially note the oversubscription criteria set out in section 2, which are different from those currently applying. Both the 2014/15 and 2015/16 admission arrangements are set out on the School website by way of comparison.

The authority's Admissions Committee will meet shortly after the consultation closes in order to consider any comments received during the consultation period and a response will be sent to those who contributed. A final version of the 2016/17 admission arrangements will be published on the Academy website by 15th April 2016 following which no further alterations will be made unless for a matter of legal compliance.

Please submit your consultation response to:
By email: consultation@steineracademyexeter.org.uk

By letter post: Admission Arrangements Consultation, Steiner Academy Exeter, Foxhayes, Gloucester Road, Exeter, Devon, EX4 2EE

Book introduces real revelations

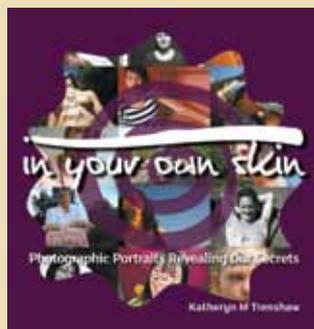
RECONNECT has followed the progress of the community art project In Your Own Skin over the past year or so and we're happy now to announce the publication of an introductory book – which would make the perfect locally sourced Christmas gift!

Katheryn Trenshaw, the person behind the multi-media project, has travelled the globe asking people to share the answer to one simple question: What is true of you that is not obvious to strangers?

Katheryn and the subject then arrive at a phrase that encapsulates their answer, paints it directly onto the skin of the interviewee and takes a photograph of it.

The result is revealing, surprising and often very moving.

The In Your Own Skin book includes some of her photographs



with text written by Katheryn It is available from bookshops (ISBN 978-0-9905420-0-1) and Amazon. The RRP is £21 but the first 30 Reconnect readers to contact Katheryn will get a copy for just £15.

Visit www.passionatepresence.org, or email post@ktrenshaw.com.

Karen gives free marketing advice

MARKETING, like 'doing the books', can feel like a necessary evil for many people in business – and particularly those of us in the 'ethical sector', who might not be comfortable with mainstream marketing techniques.

But marketing is just a (very necessary) form of communication and once you find the right person to help you, it's possible to get your message out there effectively without compromising your ethical ethos.

Karen Hunt, a transformational marketing coach based in Totnes, says she "helps heart-based small business owners to challenge their beliefs about marketing by showing them practical step-by-step strategies to create the life and business they desire."

Since June, she has been running free marketing surgeries with

the REconomy Centre in Totnes – initially two-hour sessions, but soon expanding to three hours.

Said Karen: "The feedback's been great and every month now seems to get booked up quicker than ever. So I'm offering two dates a month from January – one exclusively for newcomers, who will get 30 minutes with me, and the other for subsequent visits, with 20 minutes 1:1."

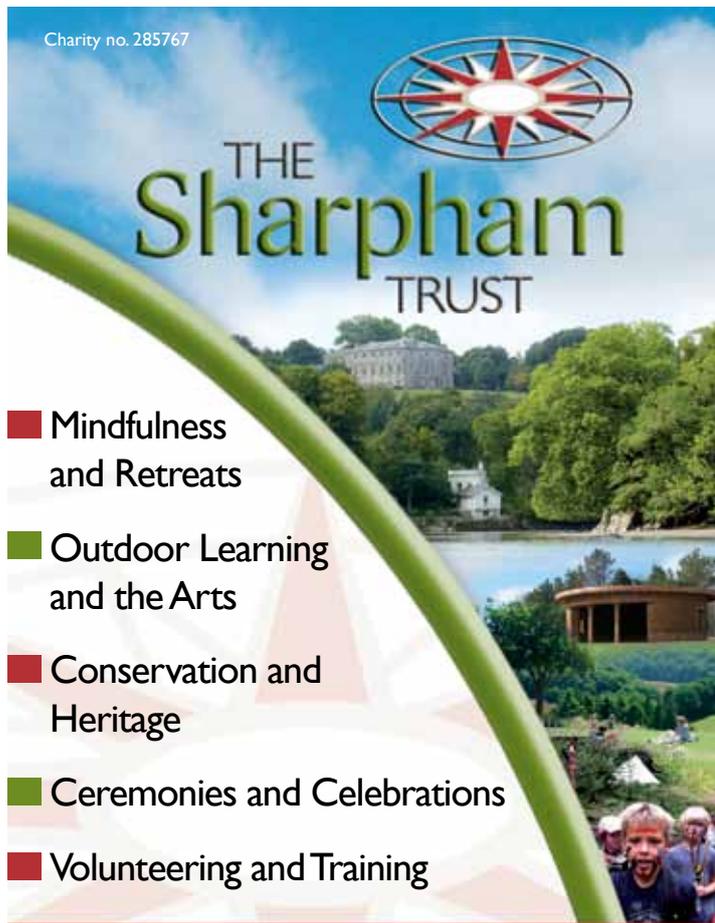
"These free sessions don't replace my paid-for intensive sessions, when my client and I co-create a marketing roadmap, but they are great for quick tips and ideas, which can be very helpful when people feel stuck or need a bit of guidance or encouragement."

To find out more, call in at the REconomy Centre in Leechwell Street, or visit www.karenhunt.co.uk.

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Crafty different gift ideas

If you're looking to buy something different, shop somewhere different.

Artworks, now in its tenth year, is a small flourishing and unique gallery in South Brent. Owned and run by the lovely Jane and Penny, Artworks exhibits the work of over 100 artists and designer makers, from around Devon, and occasionally beyond, but particularly those based in the South Hams.

The gallery stocks a wide choice of artist cards and prints, ceramics, jewellery, textiles and books for children and adults, many by local authors. New to the Artworks shelves this winter are luxurious alpaca and merino wool socks from John Arbon Textiles and Survival International cards and calendars.

Artworks is also the home of Jane Wellens Ceramics and Foxgloves Knitwear.

South Brent, just off the A38 with plenty of free parking, has a number of other specialist shops to explore – and when you've had enough of shopping, you can take to the nearby moors.

Artworks is open Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 10am-5pm, and Wednesdays 10 – 1. Visit www.artworkssouthbrent.co.uk.



Students join battle for community bookshop

A GROUP of Bicton College students have joined the campaign to save a secondhand bookshop by turning it into a community-run project.

As Jon Stein reported in his story about local bookshops in the Aug/Sept issue of Reconnect, the Belle, Book & Castle in Totnes has been run by a group of passionate and dedicated volunteers since its founder and owner Belle Collard died in 2013.

Their plan is to launch a community bookshop in 2015 and the Bicton College students are helping by organising a series of Christmas



Making big savings on your big day

If you're planning to get married in 2015, look out for a new ethical bridal shop opening in the Narrows at the top end of Totnes High Street.

After studying permaculture, Lorna really wanted to make a difference to high street shopping habits.

"With just under 250,000 weddings in the UK per year," she explained, "and an average of seven yards of fabric per dress, that's a whopping 1,750,000 yards of non-organic, bleached imported fabric being used per year!"

"To make a difference, she is recycling by putting beautiful wedding dresses back into the market place."

Most dresses are brand new end of lines, with a sprinkling of pre-loved.

When wedding dresses cost an average of £1,200, Lorna aims to ease the financial impact of a wedding or hand fasting by pricing her dresses at between £99 and £499.

With 80 dresses in stock, ready to take away, she has styles to suit everyone in sizes 6-24. And she has a full collection of veils, tiaras, sashes and shoes to match the dresses.

Visit the shop, email discountbridal2014@gmail.com or call 07598 611297.

Carol-esque events celebrating the past, present and future of the bookshop, complete with a Pop-Up Bookswap stall outside the shop as well as children's activities, book signings, live music and storytelling.

They will also be inviting the community to celebrate the history of the shop by writing personal stories in a special Book of Memories.

Call in at the shop any time and join in their festive celebrations on the town's late-night shopping evenings. Email debee48@gmail.com or call 07530 936396.

Going out

THE SOUTH DEVON EVENTS GUIDE

DECEMBER/JANUARY



Rachel Foster

Welcome to the BIG what's on guide for South Devon...

WELCOME to the first of our new, extended and downright wonderful Going Out guides to what's on across South Devon.

And check out the online diary on our website for even more events in Reconnectland. We send out daily Tweets of events news too - follow us at twitter.com/reconnectmag.

Going Out editor is Rachel Foster (yes, Martin's daughter).

If you'd like a free entry in our next (Feb/Mar) issue, email info to her at goingout@reconnectonline.co.uk and we'll do our very best to get you in.

An advertisement like those below costs £93 - email us at adverts@reconnectonline.co.uk to find out more.

And if you DO buy an advert here in the mag, we'll run the same ad in our online diary - FREE!

AND we'll guarantee you some entries in the diary too.

If you're planning to check out one of the events listed - ENJOY! And please note that the info was correct when added to the listing but it's always a good idea to visit the website or call to check nothing has changed.



Martyn Joseph - Dec 5

DECEMBER

TUESDAY 2

Until Dec 7

ART: Exhibition of work by artist Arthur Glendinning looking at interaction of human form with sea and sand, Harbour House gallery, Kingsbridge (TQ7 1JD), www.harbourhouse.org.uk.

Until Jan 17

KIDS: Goldilocks and The Tree Bears, a mix of puppetry, music and mischievous moments for anyone over two. Theatre Royal, Plymouth (PL1 2TR), www.theatreroyal.com

POETRY: Poetry Conversations hosted by Alice Oswald, Octagonal Room, Sharpham House, www.sharphamtrust.org.

WEDNESDAY 3

COMEDY: Comedy Night, B Bar, 7.30pm, Plymouth (PL1 2NJ), www.theb-bar.blogspot.co.uk

KIDS: Jabberwocky Workshop, a ripping yarn for all primary school kids that will leave you grinning like a cheshire cat, times vary, Exeter Phoenix, (EX4 3LS), www.exeterphoenix.org.uk

ART: Victorian Gothic: An All Consuming Passion, 7.30-9pm, RAM Museum and Art Gallery, Exeter (EX4 3RX), www.rammuseum.org.uk

THURSDAY 4

FILM: Exhibition on Screen: Rembrandt. From the National Gallery, London & Rijkmuseum, Amsterdam, 7pm, The Flavel Arts Centre, Dartmouth (TQ6 9ND), www.theflavel.org.uk

GIG: Gareth Lee and Annie Baylis, an up and coming

acoustic folk duo from South of Cornwall, 8pm, The B Bar, Plymouth (PL1 2NJ), www.theb-bar.blogspot.co.uk

GIG: Bombay Bicycle Club, 7pm, Plymouth Pavilions (PL1 3LF) www.plymouthpavilions.com

FRIDAY 5

GIG: Martyn Joseph, 7pm, Kingkerswell Parish Church, Totnes (TQ12 5LD), www.kingcof.org.uk

THEATRE: Devon-based Puppetcraft with Monkey, a family show with string puppets, shadow puppets and live music, 6pm, Harbertonford Village Hall, 01803 732668.

GIG: The Roving Crows, folk, Celtic and country-rock, 7.30pm, South Devon Arts Centre, Totnes (TQ9 5LE), www.southdevonarts.co.uk

SATURDAY 6

MARKET: Ashburton Makers Market, affordable quality handmade gifts, 10am-4.30pm, St Andrew's Church Hall (TQ13 7DT)

FOOD: Christmas food poverty appeal collecting food in return for entertaining, feeding and thanking you. The Hall, Exeter (EX1 1BD), www.thehallexeter.org

MARKET: Exeter Winter Gift Fest, 10am-4pm, Exeter Community Centre (EX4 3RG), haldoncontact@gmail.com

CRAFT: Christmas Wreath Making, 10am-2pm, Sharpham Trust, Ashprington (TQ9 7UT), www.sharphamtrust.org

GIG: Ros Brady and Simon Barron perform songs of Devon people, 2pm, Devon Guild of Craftsmen, Bovey

Tracey (TQ13 9AF), www.barronbrady.com

SUNDAY 7

MARKET: All things Vintage and Festive Fair, 45 stalls, live music, workshops, 10.30am-4.30pm, Dartington Hall (TQ9 6EL), www.dartington.org

SOCIAL: Tree Planting. River Avon, Near Iddiswell 01548 821391.

TUESDAY 9

Until Dec 14

ART: The Eclectic Collective Five, exhibition of work by local contemporary practitioners in arts and crafts, Harbour House Gallery, Ivybridge (TQ7 1JD), www.harbourhouse.org.uk

GIG: Bella Hardy, winner of the Radio 2 Folk Singer of the Year Award, 7.30pm, South Devon Arts Centre (TQ9 5LE), www.southdevonarts.co.uk

WEDNESDAY 10

POETRY: Ghosts and other Grave Doings, poetry linked to RAMM's major exhibition Art & Soul: Victorians and the Gothic, 7.30pm, Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Art Gallery (EX4 3RX), www.rammuseum.org.uk

THURSDAY 11

FOOD: traditional milling, 11am-12.30pm, 2-3pm, Otterton Mill (EX9 7HG), www.ottertonmill.com

POETRY: Rhymewarp with Mama Tokus, new poetry and spoken word night, The B Bar (PL1 2NJ), www.theb-bar.blogspot.co.uk

FRIDAY 12

GIG: The Simmertones, 8pm, The Barrel House (TQ9 5PB), www.barrelhousetotnes.co.uk

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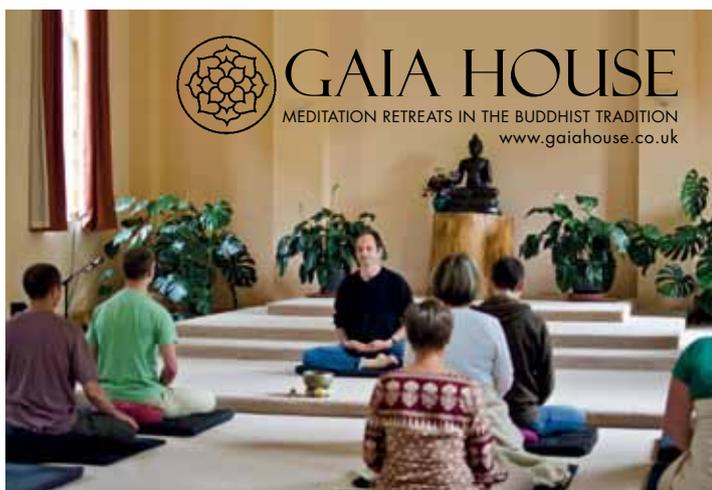
Exeter Cathedral - Dec 23



Girl with the Pearl Earring - Jan 14



Elephant Man - Jan 26



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www.funky-bizness.co.uk

Craft market

A GROUP of local artists and crafts people get together every year to organise the Ashburton Makers' Market, now in its seventh year.

This year it's on Saturday December 6 in St Andrews Church Hall, in West St, and will feature affordable gifts, plus an all-day cafe. It's open 10am-4.30pm. Call 01364 653468.

Wassail time

THE Friends of Stoke Gabriel School (FOSS) are once again running their very popular Wassail on Saturday, January 17. This mid-Winter community event has built up quite a following and will feature morris dancers, folk singers, mummer players, lantern procession, children's craft area and glorious food and a bar (mine's a mulled cider, thank you). Gates open at 4pm.

Ceilidh day

DANCE to the music of Buttoned Up, with caller Tom Addison, at the Twixt Christmas and New Year Ceilidh on Saturday December 27 at South Brent Village Hall, 7.30pm. Visit www.southbrentfolk.org.



Plymouth Morris Men - December 26.

FRIDAY 12

SOCIAL: Christmas Ceilidh with Random, 7.30pm, Dartington Hall (TQ9 6EL), www.dartington.org.

WALK: Nature Walks with Nigel Pinhorn, Organic Arts West Town Farm (EX2 9TG), www.organicarts.org.uk.

SATURDAY 13

GIG: Jill Cole, 9pm, The Boringdon Arms (PL9 9TQ), www.boringdonarms.co.uk.

ART: You've Been Framed. Drop in and design your own self-portrait, 10.30am-1pm, Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery (PL4 8AJ), www.devonmuseums.net.

SUNDAY 14

GIG: Exeter Children's Orchestra, 6pm, Exeter Corn Exchange, St Georges Hall (EX1 1BU), www.exeter.gov.uk

ART: Brian Rice, Brook Gallery (EX9 6NH), www.brookgallery.co.uk.

TUESDAY 16

DANCE: ROH Live, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, ballet based on Lewis Carroll's book, 7.15pm, The Flavel Arts Centre (TQ6 9ND), www.theflavel.org.uk. Wednesday 17

GIG: The Old Gaffers, shanty crew perform at Totnes late night shopping, 8pm, Bay Horse Inn (TQ9 5SP).

GIG: Andy Quick, 9pm, The B Bar (PL1 2NJ), www.theb-bar.blogspot.co.uk

THURSDAY 18

GIG: Dartmouth Orchestra, music by Haydn and Rutter as well as Christmas favourites, 7.15pm, The Flavel Arts Centre (TQ6 9ND), www.theflavel.org.uk.

GIG: Big Band Christmas Special, with composer/bandleader Mike Westbrook and his 19-piece Big Band, 8pm, Barnfield Theatre, Exeter, www.barnfieldtheatre.org.uk.

FRIDAY 19

Until January 17

THEATRE: Jack and The Beanstalk panto with Bobby Davro, Challis, Chico and Jeffrey Holland, Theatre Royal, Plymouth PL1 2TR www.theatreroyal.com

GIG: Mad Dog Mcrea, blend of folk rock, pop, gypsy jazz, bluegrass and 'shake your ass' music, 7.30pm, South Devon Arts Centre (TQ9 5LE), www.southdevonarts.co.uk.

SOCIAL: Murder Mystery Dinner with Moonstone Theatre Company. Enjoy a three-course dinner - and a murder!, The Edgemoor, Bovey Tracey (TQ13 9LE), www.edgemoor.co.uk

SATURDAY 20

SOCIAL: Coutyard Christmas Carols, hot mince pies and mulled wine as you sing with Otterton Church choir, 3pm, Otterton Mill (EX9 7HG), www.ottertonmill.com

GIG: Sunday Brunch Session with Tom Unwin at the ivories, Hazelwood House (TQ7 4EB), www.hazelwoodhouse.com.

CRAFT: Festive craft session, 11am-12pm, Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery (PL4 8AJ), www.devonmuseums.net.

SUNDAY 21

GIG: Locked Horns: Winter Solstice Special, 20-piece jazz band, 8pm, The Monkey Suit (EX4 6RH), www.themonkeysuit.co.uk.

GIG: Candlelit Acoustics, local talent headlined by The Mafia Babies, 8pm, Pier



Mad Dog Mcrea - December 19.

Point (TQ2 5HA), www.pier-point.co.uk.

COMEDY: The Noise Next Door, six time sell-out veterans of the Edinburgh Fringe, age 16+ only, 8pm, The Watermark, Ivybridge (PL21 0SZ), www.ivybridgewatermark.co.uk

GIG: Glorious Chorus - Christmas Extravaganza with a seasonal feast of song plus new material, 7pm, St Johns Church, Totnes (TQ9 5AD), www.stmarystotnes.wordpress.com

TUESDAY 23

GIG: Lunchtime Carols for Everyone, free admission, 1pm, Exeter Cathedral (EX1 1HS), www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk

WEDNESDAY 24

CRAFT: White Christmas craft session, 11am-1.30pm, Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery (PL4 8AJ), www.devonmuseums.net

FRIDAY 26

THEATRE: Plymouth Morris Men with special guests the Plymouth Maids and the Mummers Play, The Morley Arms, Plymouth (PL9 7HP) www.morleyarms.co.uk.

SATURDAY 27

SOCIAL: Twixt Christmas and New Year Ceilidh - chill out and enjoy the music or dance your (new) socks off, 7.30pm, South Brent Village Hall (TQ10 9BE), www.southbrentfolk.org.

JANUARY

SUNDAY 4

TOYS: The Toy Train and Collectors Fair - thousands of toys and models for sale from dealers all over the country, WestPoint (EX5 1DJ), 10.30am-3pm, www.westpointexeter.co.uk.

SOCIAL: Work/play session at Follaton Community Forest Garden - join part or all of a monthly volunteer session to establish a community forest, 10am-1pm, Follaton Arboretum, www.transitiontowntotnes.org

TUESDAY 6

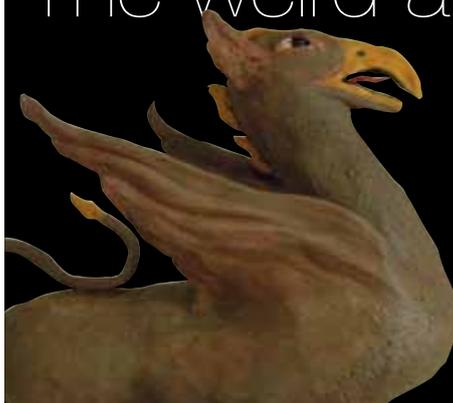
POETRY: Poetry Conversation hosted by Alice Oswald in the Octagonal Room, Sharpham House, 7.30pm, Sharpham Trust (TQ9 7UT), www.sharphamtrust.org

FOOD: Edible flowers and fruit on the Rockery near the Rugby club, Borough Park playing field, 1-2pm, Steamer Quay (TQ9 5AL), www.totnesconsciousnesscafe.blogspot.co.uk.

WEDNESDAY 7

FILM: The Wisdom to Survive: Climate change, Capitalism and Community - film screening and discussion, 7-9.30pm, upstairs hall at The Mansion, Totnes, www.theDANCEwebsite.org

The weird and the wonderful...



Robin would be delighted for you to check out his ceramics - and buy one if you really like it! You can see the 'Weird and wonderful' ones on his website at www.robincurrie.co.uk - and some aren't even terribly 'weird'!

Tel: 01392 22 11 29



FRIDAY 9

GIG: Singer-songwriter Sally Barker, cakes and refreshments in the interval; BYO alcohol, glasses available, St Mary's Parish Church, Totnes (TQ12 5LD), www.sallybarker.co.uk.

SATURDAY 10

FILM: The Tourist will be showing in the Chart Room. 7pm, Salcombe Yacht Club TQ8 8JQ, www.salcombeyc.org.uk

THEATRE: Puppetcraft back with Monkey, a family show, with string puppets, antique shadow puppets and live music, 3pm, Rattery Village Hall, 01364 643741.

THEATRE: Circus of Horrors, as seen on finals of Britain's Got Talent, Palace Theatre (TQ3 3HF), www.palacetheatrepaignton.co.uk

MARKET: Food and Craft Market - tasty food and fun craft supplies and activities, 10am-4pm, Devonport Guildhall PL1 4EL, www.devonportguildhall.org.

WEDNESDAY 14

FILM: Exhibition on Screen, Girl with the Pearl Earring, 7.30pm, The Flavel Arts Centre (TQ6 9ND) www.theflavel.org.uk.

GIG: Cafe Acoustica hosted by singer-songwriter Jessie Mullen, 8.30-11.55pm, The B Bar (PL1 2NJ), www.theb-bar.blogspot.co.uk.

MUSIC: Drumming the Sacred Medicine Way, drums provided but feel free to bring your own hand drums, 7.30-9.30pm, The Quaker Centre (PL4 6LF), www.spiritofthesound.co.uk

FRIDAY 16

Until January 24

ART: Exhibition fo work by Keith Stott, 10am-3pm, Harbour House (TQ7 1JD), www.harbourhouse.org.uk.

SATURDAY 17

SOCIAL: Stoke Gabriel Wassail, morris dancers, folk singers, Bovey Tracey

Mummer Players Lantern procession & wassail ceremony, children's craft area, 4pm, Stoke Gabriel's community orchard and Church Walk.

FILM: Met Live - The Merry Widow, 5.55pm, Dartington Hall (TQ9 6EL), www.dartington.org

GIG: Miranda Sykes & Rex Preston, BYO alcohol, glasses available, 7pm, St Mary's Parish Church (TQ12 5LD)

SUNDAY 18

GIG: ZUM3, violin, cello and accordion, selection of blues, jazz, Celtic, bluegrass, klezmer and kolk, 3pm, The Courtenay Centre (TQ12 2QA), www.nadsa.co.uk.

GIG: Thomas Ford Blues 'n' Harp - "The rising star of British blues", The B Bar, Plymouth (PL1 2NJ) www.theb-bar.blogspot.co.uk.

TUESDAY 20

Until February 14

THEATRE: Winner of 100 international awards, Wicked is a re-imagining of the stories and characters created by L. Frank Baum in 'The Wonderful Wizard of Oz', recommended for ages 7+, 7:30pm, Theatre Royal, Plymouth (PL1 2TR) www.theatreroyal.com

THURSDAY 22

THEATRE: Treasure Island broadcast live from the National Theatre, suitable for 10 years+, 7pm, The Flavel Arts Centre (TQ6 9ND), www.theflavel.org.uk

SUNDAY 25

THEATRE: Puppetcraft back with Monkey, a family show, with string puppets, antique shadow puppets and live music, 3pm, Chudleigh Community School Hall 01626 852553.

DANCE: Bolshoi Ballet' Swan Lake, (Live), 4pm, Dartington Hall TQ9 6EL www.dartington.org

SINGING: Heartsong, harmonious singing workshop on the last Sunday of every month, 11am-4pm, The Friends Meeting House Exeter (EX2 4HU), www.quaker.org.uk/exeter.

MONDAY 26

FILM: Celluloid Gothic: The Elephant Man, directed by David Lynch, linked to RAMM's major exhibition Art & Soul: Victorians and the Gothic, Picture House (EX4 3AJ), www.picturehouses.co.uk.

WEDNESDAY 28

GIG: Gypsy Dreamers, collaboration between classical and jazz musicians 6.30pm, East Portlemouth Village Hall, 01548 842185

GIG: Cafe Acoustica, fortnightly showcase of unplugged talent hosted by singer-songwriter Jessie Mullen, 8.30-11.55pm, The B Bar (PL1 2NJ), www.theb-bar.blogspot.co.uk.

THURSDAY 29

Until 31 Jan

CRAFT: Craft4Crafters, thousands of crafting supplies, 10am-5pm, WestPoint (EX5 1DJ) www.westpointexeter.co.uk.

GIG: Umberto Giordano's Andrea Chénier, opera in four acts, sung in Italian, 7.15pm, The Flavel Arts Centre (TQ6 9ND), www.theflavel.org.uk.



Alex Roberts - at Acoustic Haven in January.

Students turn up sound at the Haven

ACOUSTIC Haven, the monthly community music night in Totnes, will sound even better in the future – no matter who's performing.

The event attracts some of the hottest names on the acoustic circuit and has now teamed up with the South West's foremost live sound company, dBs Music in Plymouth.

Two college students will take to the controls of the top-notch sound desk at each Haven gig.

"This means the sound quality has just lifted to another level" says event organiser Doug King-Smith. "And every gig will now be recorded live – so watch this space for an Acoustic Haven Live CD one day!"

Coming up soon at Haven gigs, in St John's Church in Totnes, are the truly amazing improvising The Adventurists (their last visit was rated as one of the 2014's top local gigs by editor Foster) on January 30.

And on February 27, don't miss Alex Roberts.

Buy tickets at Sacks Wholefoods Totnes and www.wegotickets.com (£10/8advance, £12/10 door) - doors open 6.30pm.

FEBRUARY

If you are involved in a local event in February or March, we want to know about it.

Send us details and we'll add them to our online Going Out diary - and include as many as we can in the Feb/Mar issue of the magazine.

Email details to goingout@reconnectonline.co.uk.



Circus of Horrors - January 10



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Learn the skills of eco-building

ECO building is about more than a few lengths of recycled wood. NINA FARR of Embercombe explains what it means to them...



As the bite in the air intensifies and high winds whip up the forest around us, our thoughts at Embercombe are turning to one of the most basic of human needs – shelter. Making sure our community is warm, dry and safe is high on our priorities before the first frosts fall. Ensuring that all our buildings work in harmony with our land is even higher.

Achieving this balance between human needs and the needs of the natural world around us is a challenge we embrace wholeheartedly.

In December our Sustainable Build Week will give a team of enthusiastic volunteers the opportunity to roll up their sleeves and raise a building up out of the ground.

In the experience, we know they will build something unseen too: community, a sense of belonging, shared ownership and joy in the experience of creation.

Eco-building is a term that covers all kinds of structures, from yurts to Hobbit houses, timber framed structures to repurposed shipping containers. In general, eco-builds use locally sourced and sustainable materials that have a low impact on the environment. Often materials that would otherwise be waste, such as car tyres, glass bottles or aluminum cans are worked with.

Atmos really does break new ground!

IT'S not easy to write about Atmos Totnes, the community development on the old Dairy Crest site, without using words like 'ground-breaking' and 'leading edge'.

But let's run through the facts and you can make up your own minds.

In August an agreement was signed between land owner Dairy Crest, developer McCarthy and Stone and Totnes Community Development Society (TCDS).

TCDS is managing the project, working closely with McCarthy and Stone, which will develop part of the site.

Next Summer, TCDS aim to submit a Community Right to Build Order, described as "a new route to planning," which basically means plans for the site will be put to the vote in a referendum – and will only go ahead if approved by the community.

If successful this will be a national first.

At that point, part of the land will be sold to the community for one Totnes pound by Dairy Crest. McCarthy and Stone will be developing housing for older people, within the masterplan for the whole site.

Plans for the site are currently



being discussed and developed at the Atmos Totnes Hub, which uses creative and participatory exercises to involve local people in designing the brief for the architects.

Over 500 people have already visited to share their vision for the site and this initial phase continues until December 6.

The consultation then continues after Christmas with concept designs based on initial consultation.

TCDS's Rob Hopkins said: "The development model and the social and environmental aspects of Atmos Totnes will be considered as leading edge in the development industry. We hope they will be swiftly replicated elsewhere to address this country's desperate need for affordable carbon neutral housing within communities around the UK."

See, it really is ground-breaking and leading edge.

Find out more at www.atmostotnes.org.



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- sustainable insulation
- traditional plastering

Learn techniques to help you create your own sustainable building.

YOU ARE INVITED

to join a team of master craftsmen and building experts to learn the techniques and tasks required to complete a number of exciting building projects happening at Embercombe.

Sustainable Build Week dates:

December 1-5 2014

February 9-13 2015

March 2-6 2015

April 7-10 2015

To book your place or for more information visit www.embercombe.co.uk/sustainablebuild or call Clare on 01647 252983

*for specific weekly programme please contact clare@embercombe.co.uk



www.embercombe.co.uk

Working with natural materials and traditional building techniques at Embercombe.

Natural renewable resources, such as timber, bamboo, earth, clay and straw take the place of industrial materials. Secondhand resources found at recycling centres, on Gumtree or Craigslist, cut costs and are sustainable, ecologically sound choices.

Eco-builders also think about how the structure they build will work in harmony with the land base on which it is built. Living roofs, passive solar, rainwater collection systems, rocket mass heaters and excellent insulation may all be part of the design.

Here at Embercombe we have been installing solar panels wherever possible over the Summer and regularly review the water use and energy consumption across the site.

It is not just the materials that make a build sustainable or 'eco'. The ways in which the building is raised have just as much impact on the environment. Limiting the use of power tools, motorised vehicles and electric powered machinery all have an environmental impact. It's true that to use truly sustainable building techniques does take longer and require more labour hours, but there is a growing movement of skilled and unskilled laborers willing to do the work this way.

If you have ever wanted to be part of an eco-build or harbor a desire to build your own home, you are not alone. Sustainable Build Week bookings at Embercombe are open now, and you'll meet a whole



community of like minded co-creators, from the expert to the total beginner.

Could this be the start of your own eco-build vision? What could YOU create with just a little help from your friends? **Nina Farr**

Sustainable Build Week Dates

**December 1-5; February 9-13;
March 2-6; April 7-10**

**Book for a day or a week at
embercombe.co.uk or call
01647 277520 for more info.**

Refurnish recycle for their refit

TRUE to the spirit of recycling, the new home for Refurnish, the community furniture project, features plenty of recycled fixtures and fittings.

"We're a not-for-profit community business so we're careful how we spend our limited funds," explained Refurnish's David Banks. "At our new Wrangaton HQ, and at our new store in Newton Abbot, old battered scaffold boards, left behind by the previous occupiers, have been made into window sills."

The new Wrangaton HQ (just off the A38, south of the South Brent junction - follow the Wrangaton signs) will have workshop space on a mezzanine level for furniture repairs and upholstery work.

"We'd love to hear from any volunteers, of course," said David, "but particularly from those who have furniture restoration skills."

The new Newton Abbot store is in the old A1 Signs building at the entrance to the Brunel Industrial



One of the room displays at the new Newton Abbot Refurnish store.

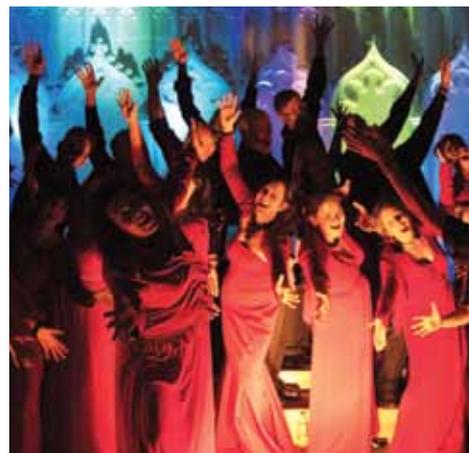
Estate - so if you have furniture and household goods that can be reused (they really don't want complete junk!), you can drop them off at Refurnish on the way to the recycling centre. It's worth giving them a call first to ensure they're open - please don't flytip (they then have to pay to have it taken away).

Email David at davidbanks@refurnish.org.uk, or visit www.refurnish.org.uk.

Glorious return for bigger choir

GLORIOUS Chorus, the now 50-strong performance choir, is back after a year's break with a seasonal feast at St John's church in Totnes on Sunday, December 21.

Director Helen Yeomans has put together a typically unique and moving set for the occasion, including a mash-up of John Lennon's Imagine with Frankie Goes To Hollywood's The Power Of Love.



Glorious Chorus is back!

Says Helen: "It's great to be back! We were overwhelmed with singers wanting to audition and now have a 50-strong choir, the biggest ever. "This concert will be a fundraiser for Rowcroft, a charity dear to our hearts because we have lost two beloved singers to cancer in the

last few years. This is our way of giving something back."

The evening will also include support from barbershop choir The Kingsmen.

For tickets and more info, visit www.gloriouschorus.co.uk or call 01803 862028.

Alternative approach to lingerie

LINGERIE and nightware are popular gifts for Christmas – but how does the ethical shopper overcome the dilemma of toxic materials and less than humane working conditions?

Lingerie Naturally is an online business that brings together products made of alternative materials.

Devon-based Julia Penhaligon-Todd of Lingerie Naturally said:

"We want to offer a real alternative to the polyester offerings on the High Street – and for every woman, young and old, all shapes and sizes, at all stages of life.

"We'd love to do that with entirely organic cotton and eco fabrics, but this is a very new sector of the market, so we also have silk and cotton clothes in our collection.

"Both rank well on the sustainable textiles index and both are biodegradable - unlike polyester, which is made using a manufacturing process riddled with petro-chemicals and containing multiple toxins."

Julia says they want to promote ethical and Fair Trade where possible and a number of their designers are certified or accredited under different schemes, including Pants to Poverty, AIKYOU and Underprotection.

Their collection includes all kinds of lingerie - everyday, maternity, mastectomy, bridal, sporty, yoga - plus nightwear and some pieces for children (nightwear) and men (underwear and dressing gowns).

Find out more at www.lingenaturally.com.

Yuli's natural and creative gift solutions

FELTING specialist Yuli Somme offers what she calls "natural, ecological and creative Christmas gifts" from her Bellacouche shop - online and in person.

She has a wide range of felt products and her new needle felting kits contain all natural materials and turned wood needling tools.

On December 6, 6-8pm, she will be joined by others, including Penny Simpson (ceramics), Green Shoes and Greenhill Arts, all throwing open their doors and offering "warming mulled wine, hot chocolate and



other deliciousness to consume" while you browse their locally produced art and craft.

Visit the shop in Moretonhampstead or find out more at Yuli's website, www.bellacouche.com.

Five tips for planning your own pension

The sweeping changes to the pension system have put retirement planning in the spotlight. Barchester adviser Tim Bradford offers five quick tips, drawn from experience in pension advisory work for individuals and corporates.



1 Don't wait until it's too late. Individuals can expect to have to support themselves for around 20 years in old age. The UK state pension does not provide much to live on and makes the need to plan and save for retirement more critical than ever.

2 Know your investments. We always recommend an annual review to ensure you know both what you are invested in, and whether those investments are performing. Recent FE research indicates that a staggering 80% of funds are underperforming.

3 Regularly review the fees you're paying. In 2002 individuals could expect to pay plan charges of nearly 2% per annum. Since then, pension management fees have dropped significantly and I have recently been arranging pensions with plan fees of less than 0.5%.

4 Consider the long term. Retirement planning requires long-term consideration of how investments perform. However too many pension investors put undue focus on the short term, judging success over a period of a few months rather than a few years.

5 Don't underestimate the amount you need to save. The average UK pension pot at the time of retirement is just £36,800. A small increase to the amount you put away each month can have a considerable impact on your income level at retirement.

If you would like to have an initial conversation or ask any questions about the forthcoming changes please call Jackie Adams on 01722 331241 or email info@barchestergreen.co.uk

More info on the back page of this magazine.

Mindfulness. It seems to be everywhere these days. But what is it? Where has it come from? And how can it benefit you? Jon Stein sits comfortably, becomes aware of his feet on the floor, and explains...



Taking a mindful approach to gardening in the grounds of Gaia House



How slowly eating a raisin gave me

GETTING together with a group of people to eat a raisin slowly has never been my idea of a good night out. But from this preliminary exercise on an eight-week mindfulness course I did back in 2010, I realised how much of my experience I miss when I hurry. Over the following two months I learned to slow down and become more aware of the unhelpful patterns of thinking and behaviour which adversely affect my health and happiness.

Since completing the course I've tried to maintain this practice of awareness and have noticed how many other people are exploring similar techniques – whether formal meditation or mindfulness exercises. Here in Reconnectland, of course, we have a wide range of mindfulness resources, so where to begin?

Relax!

Knowing what mindfulness is – and isn't – makes a good start.

In the words of Jon Kabat-Zinn, the American professor of medicine who first applied mindfulness to stress reduction, it is "the awareness that arises through paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally."

So, nothing bizarre or mysterious; still less religious - just a way of cultivating a state of calm from which we can notice what's really going on within us and around us. In our modern, complex lives it is easy to lose touch with our centre and disconnect from the place of calm-knowing;

something we experience again when we slow down and relax.

Over the last few decades the West has seen an explosion of interest in techniques and therapies to help restore this state of balance. Mindfulness has grown from its roots in Buddhist meditation into a secular 'movement' embracing a multitude of courses, trainings, and books.

The eight-week course

Following Jon Kabat-Zinn's work in the 1980s, a standard model has emerged of an eight-week mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) course. Each session – usually around two hours long – introduces exercises to cultivate deeper awareness of the mind, body, and environment. Most of the work is done seated, although there may be some lying-down and gentle movement. An important element of the course is the encouragement to practice between sessions.

Jenny Wilks teaches the programme at Exeter University's Mood Disorders Centre. She says: "The key to mindfulness is not simply paying attention to our experience, but also learning to respond to our changing sensations, emotions, and thoughts non-reactively and compassionately. With practice this helps to alleviate distress and enhance our wellbeing."

As the MBSR programme became established, a body of scientific evidence grew about the therapeutic benefits of mindfulness. In time, the practices were refined to meet the needs

of people suffering with mental health issues. Mindfulness-based approaches are now used to address a range of conditions, including anxiety and depression.

Many paths, one goal

With mindfulness spreading across various sectors, including business, sports, and education, there are a number of avenues for community counselling and mindfulness as a therapy. In Exeter, we have a number of people who run courses at Devon Mindfulness Centre, and others who are offering a special 'Mindfulness for Children' Therapy (see page 30).

Meanwhile, a course is being offered in January by the Exeter Mindfulness Network. Facilitator Jon Stein, who would like to see more people cultivate a kinder approach to life, is offering a course.

There is also a range of courses offered by the Waterlark Wellbeing Centre in Plymouth, including a series of sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and practice mornings on Thursday evenings, and practice mornings at Crownhill Fort on Saturdays. See page 30 for details.

Finally, those interested in the Buddhist roots of



Scrapstore supporter Sonia Kemp in the store with some of the scrap materials.

Scrapstore has even

OVER the last 30 years the Scrapstore in Exeter has provided a wealth of arts and crafts materials to families, community organisations, schools, playgroups and artists across Devon. Now entering its fourth year as a charity, the Scrapstore is looking to the future.

The Scrapstore collects surplus materials and offcuts from manufacturers that might otherwise go to landfill and makes them available for



the taste for mindfulness

with severe depression and cognitive therapy (MBCT) address a range of symptoms and addiction.

the mountain

leading into all walks of life, sport and education, there are many paths to pursue. Those in the field might want to explore a therapeutic approach. Heartwood, Exeter and Plymouth offer a diploma in Mindfulness in 2015.

in Mindful Self-Compassion is 2015 by the Exeter Mindfulness Society. Penny Wilks says it's "for anyone who wants to overcome harsh self-criticism and approach to life."

of mindfulness activities

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Sources of more mindfulness information:

www.exeter-mindfulness-network.org

www.heartwoodcounselling.org.uk

www.psychotherapyplymouth.co.uk

For retreats see www.gaiahouse.co.uk

www.sharphamtrust.org/The-Barn-Retreat and

www.freelygivenretreats.org

For apps see www.mindful.org/mindful-magazine/mindfulness-apps

everything you need for craft projects

education, creative activities and play.

From its Belmont Park site the Scrapstore also provides a shop selling new arts and crafts materials as well as running creative workshops and hiring equipment.

Members pay an annual fee and pay as they go for materials.

Scrapstore Trust chair Alan Caig says: "We are investigating rebuilding or refurbishing our building which at 75 years old is near the end of its life.

We are also looking at providing new services. To obtain funding we need to have a clear understanding of what potential members might like to see, so we're asking them to complete a quick survey."

Alan says it takes just five minutes to complete and you can find it at www.surveymonkey.com/r/scrapstore.

Everyone who completes this survey has the chance to be entered into a prize draw to win a lovely gift from Lush.

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Eco volunteers to help cut bills

TEAMS of volunteers are being trained to help Plymouth households save energy.

Plymouth Energy Community (PEC), a member's co-operative, is starting training in December and qualified volunteers will create Energy Teams to visit homes and help make changes. The free service will initially be available to 10 areas of the city most at risk of fuel poverty.

Clare Mains, PEC's new Volunteer Co-ordinator, says: "The Energy Team can go to a home and offer hands-on help. It can stop draughts, set timers on thermostats or simply help to decipher the bills.

"The aim is to encourage greater confidence in managing energy and share some of the knowledge needed to transform homes."

If you'd like to hear more about becoming a Plymouth Energy Community volunteer, contact 01752 477117 or email volunteer@plymouthenergycommunity.com.

PEC is also set to become the UK's first community energy group to become part of OVO Communities and sell

energy to local residents via its own bespoke tariffs.

OVO Communities has been developed by energy supplier OVO Energy, "to democratise the energy market" and allows communities to cut out the middle man and become an energy company themselves.

Alistair Macpherson, CEO of Plymouth Energy Community, said: "The energy revolution is well underway in Plymouth; we have already launched services related to fuel debt, energy switching, home insulation and locally owned renewables. Bespoke tariffs, specifically designed to meet our community's needs, are logically the next step. We are confident we could potentially save Plymouth residents well in excess of £1 million per year."

The details of tariff types to be offered are still being worked out but PEC hope to offer competitive tariffs for monthly/quarterly and also key/card meter users as well as a renewable energy tariff as soon as possible. More information will be available in the New Year. Visit www.plymouthenergycommunity.com.

Community scheme that works

WHILE high-profile proposals for windfarms, and the hostilities they've stirred up, have been all over the mainstream media, one South Devon community has been quietly getting on with planning, installing and now benefiting from their own turbine project.

And all that with no objections at all.

The idea of a wind turbine owned by the community of South Brent was first suggested in 2006 when Sustainable South Brent was set up.

A site at Marley Thatch seemed perfect: reasonable wind; access to a National Grid connection; and other development to help mitigate the visual impact.

SSB members consulted everyone affected, sorted the detailed technical issues and put in a planning application which was approved by South Hams District Council in April 2010 without any objections raised.

South Brent Community Energy Society (SBCES) was formed in 2011 and a share offer was launched in November 2012, raising £430,000 by March 2013 from about 190 individuals or jointmembers - two thirds of them with local electric connections.

Ground works by Pavilion Construction of Staverton were started as soon as SBCES had the funds and the Vestas V27 turbine was installed by Spectrum Energy Systems of Worksop in August/September 2013. The 45 metre high turbine had previously operated for a number of years in Sweden before being remanufactured by the Spanish firm Solvento Servicia SL so that it should be viable for another 20 years.

Annual production is between 320-360,000 kWh, the equivalent of 80



SBCES director David Butcher with Penny Wainwright, one of the fund raising team.

- 100 average houses' requirements. Any surplus from the sale of electricity (after paying for the insurance, maintenance and other operating costs) goes into a Community Energy Fund to support a variety of energy generation or efficiency improvements on community.

First year surplus funds paid for a 9.88 kW Photo Voltaic array on Palstone Park sports pavilion which will reduce their electricity bills and heat the water for showers.

Find out more at www.sustainablesouthbrent.org.uk.

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TRESOC and Beco taking a break from SDRHA discussions with coffees from the solar-powered Beanbug

New solar for association homes

A TOTNES community energy project is putting solar panels on the roofs of more than 70 South Devon Rural Housing Association (SDRHA) tenants.

Totnes Renewable Energy Society (TRESOC) is funding the scheme - and also planning to purchase a 50kW roof at Hatchlands Farm - with £230,500 of members' share capital and a loan from Charity Bank.

TRESOC and installer partner Totnes-based Beco Energy Solutions are particularly excited about the SDRHA project because it will give tenants a welcome relief from rising energy bills.

Beco also completed a 500-home project for Cottsway Housing Association and the client says it's "coming up trumps" - on time and

on budget.

The SDRHA project aims to address fuel poverty by delivering renewable energy systems, paid for by neighbours and community members who are looking for an ethical, secure place to invest.

TRESOC MD Ian Bright said: "We are part of a growing movement to shift ownership of energy resources into the hands of the community. 71 individual roofs across South Devon present unique challenges, but we are fortunate to have a professional team with the right skills to make this happen."

TRESOC's 7kWp system at Follaton Community Centre has outperformed predicted output by 11%. Their share issue remains open through the Winter. Visit www.tresoc.co.uk or call 01803 867431.

ORGANIC GARDENING



YES, things are a little quieter in the garden over the Winter months but there are still plenty of jobs to catch up on...

Step away from the armchair!

WE might be well into the Winter but don't get too settled in your armchairs - there's still plenty of things to be done in the vegetable garden or allotment.

This is a great time to catch up with all the jobs you didn't get done because you were busy at the beach enjoying the late Indian summer we had in the Autumn!

There's probably a patch of land you didn't quite get round to digging. Make sure you chose a dry, sunny day when the soil is frost-free. And I know I've said this before but I'm a great believer in the old saying, 'If the soil sticks to your boots, stay off the garden'. Not only does it make digging hard work but it can also destroy the soil structure by compacting it down too much.

Winter can also be a great time to redesign the vegetable garden so that it's all ready and raring to go in the Spring. Maybe the compost bin needs moving to a more convenient spot, or even replacing; perhaps you could add a raised bed or two.

At Growers organics we use traditional New Zealand-style wooden compost bins, with removable wooden slats to give you easy access to your compost. They

also allow the compost to breathe. Plastic Dalek-shaped bins can sometimes turn valuable garden waste into a slimy mess rather than rich dark sweet smelling compost.

Wooden compost bins and raised beds can be ordered from us at www.growersorganics.com.

The new seed catalogues are out now and quite a few are starting to list a small selection of organic seeds. For those of you with greenhouses or polytunnels it won't be that long before it's sowing time again.

I always sow our first batch of seeds for the season at the end

of January (on my birthday to be precise). For those of you without cover, you may find it easier to buy ready-grown vegetable transplants in the early spring.

Bare root fruit bushes are now available to purchase for immediate planting. Be sure to buy from a reputable nursery and ask when they were dug up. If they have been out of the ground for too long it's really hard to tell whether they will survive!

A mistake a lot of people make is to plant the fruit bushes too close together: what looks just like a couple of sticks now will turn into a metre high, metre wide bush within a couple of years.



Strawberry fields forever

ON the subject of fruit, we had a fantastic strawberry crop earlier this year but now it's time to tidy up the bed. For those of you wanting to increase your stock now is a brilliant time to remove and pot up some of the larger healthier strawberry runners (the smaller plants that grow from the parent plant). Place them in a cold green house or cold frame and plant them out to their final position nearer to Spring.

Then take the shears to the rest of the plants and give them a damn good haircut - they will love you for it by coming back stronger and more vigorous next year.

If your strawberry bed is over five years old, it's probably time for you to be thinking about buying new plants and putting them in a new position in the garden. The plants themselves probably won't be available until Spring but the new bed could be prepared now.

Strawberries love well-rotted leaf mould, so dig plenty in if you've got it!

What ever you get up to on your plot this Winter, stay warm and fit and enjoy. The Growers nursery and market stall at Totnes will both be open again mid-February. See you all then!

Reconnect's Organic Gardening column is written by Joa and Charlie Grower of Growers Organics. Meet them at Totnes market on Fridays and Saturdays. Visit www.growersorganics.com, or call 01752 881180.

Plymouth Energy Community

WE WANT YOU TO JOIN THE ENERGY TEAM

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- Join a regular group or one-off activities
- Make like-minded friends

To join us:
plymouthenergycommunity.com
 Or call for a chat: 01752 477 117

The High Oak

THREE friends decided to walk across Dartmoor, linking three ancient high-altitude oak woodlands, Piles Copse, Wistmans Woods and Black-a-Tor Beare.

The High Oak is a beautiful, moving and informative 140-page book they produced as a result of their journey and it includes photography, prose, poetry, haiku, illustration and sculpture.

The High Oak, by Jamie Grant, Marcus Gladstone-Noble and James Richardson, is £14.99 from local bookshops.

Late news

LATE night shopping evenings in Totnes have become something not to be missed:

Expect stalls all the way up Fore Street (and around the market square too), plus delicious street food, mulled wine and cider and entertainment from local schools, choirs, drummers, lantern parades and the real Santa!

They're on the three Tuesdays before Christmas – December 9, 16 and 23.

Employees are the owners

So what happens when, after putting years of work into building up a business, the owner wants to sell and/or retire?

Selling to a competitor might not be a very attractive proposition, and what about the future prospects of that loyal team of workers who have played such a valuable part in the firm's success?

One solution, which is proving increasingly popular, is for it to become an employee-owned business.

Typically, a minimum of 20% of shares would be held by all employees - not just managers. This shareholding is then underpinned by structures, operational practices and procedures that promote meaningful employee engagement in the company.

The result is a better, more successful, long-term business.

The number of employee-owned businesses in the UK is growing at 10% a year, and



Peter Matthews

their contribution to the UK economy is growing too - employee ownership delivers 4% of UK GDP – around £30bn per year.

Peter Matthews of Capital for Colleagues, a company that helps businesses follow the employee-owned route, says: "Employee-owned businesses achieve

higher productivity and greater levels of innovation too and are more resilient to economic downturns. They also have more engaged, more fulfilled and less stressed workforces."

Giving employees shares can be done in three ways; direct share ownership, indirect ownership normally through a trust and a combination of both.

"There are a number of approved tax schemes that are attractive for employee share owners," says Peter, "as well as additional Capital Gains Tax relief that will be of interest to selling owners."

Visit capitalforcolleagues.com.



Andy crafts fine guitars

IF you're looking for a craftsman-made guitar, made using native woods, you need look no further than a small but highly creative and industrious workshop in Dartington.

Andrew Davidson creates custom-made instruments with a rich, professional tone and is offering a half-price deal on three guitars and commissions over the next few weeks - £1300-1800 according to specifications. He can provide classical and steel string guitars.

"Feel free to call in at my workshop and have a play on some fine guitars," says Andy.

And if you're looking for something with an even more personal touch, Andy also runs courses so you can make your own. These one-month intensive courses are run at Dartington and now also in Spain – there are a few places left on one coming up in March.

To find out more, call Andy on 07914 805970, email andrewdavidsonguitars@hotmail.com, or visit www.andrewdavidsonguitars.com or www.andalucia-guitar-experience.com.

Heart & Soul Funerals

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Riverstone, 18 Dart Mills, Buckfastleigh, TQ11 0NF

Riverstone, the home of Heart & Soul Funerals, is friendly and comfortably furnished, situated on the banks of the River Dart at Buckfastleigh. The hall provides sanctuary for vigil and a beautiful space for ceremony. Easily accessible to Totnes and the A38.

01364 643522



7 High Street, Totnes, TQ9 5NN

Meet us at the shop for friendly advice, information and funeral planning. We are available most of the time.

Either drop in, or phone us if we are not there to meet for a chat.

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wellbeing

THE NATURAL HEALTH AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PAGES



Kate Philbin

Welcome to Wellbeing

WELLBEING is Reconnect's unique guide to natural health and personal development across South Devon.

Every issue provides an insight into the work of dedicated local practitioners - in a whole range of therapies and treatments.

Spreading the word through Wellbeing is surprisingly inexpensive - a 1/8-page advertisement (like those below) can cost just £41.85 a month, if you book a series.

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And there's lots more to read inside

Stephen Jenkinson (and below) - returning to Devon



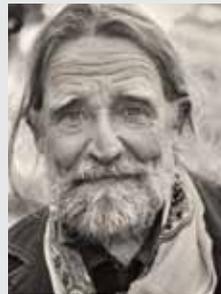
What would UK school look like?

BACK in April, South Devon was paid a visit by Stephen Jenkinson, the man behind the Canadian-based Orphan Wisdom School, which he describes as "a learning house for the skills of deep living and making human culture."

Now Stephen is returning to host a special weekend to explore "what the setting up an Orphan Wisdom School here in the UK might look like".

Stephen said: "I would not simply airlift some one-size-fits-all school into the English countryside. If we are to make something together worth doing, and faithful to these strange and troubled times, we will do so in a way that honours where it will live, there among you."

The man behind both of Stephen's visits is Duncan Passmore, already known to some Reconnect readers for his work with wood (he worked on the natural shelter at the



Sharpham burial ground and built shepherd's huts at Schumacher College).

The weekend, Being Human in a Perilous Time, will be held at Sharpham House Estate - and it's on December 5, 6 and 7, so if you're interested, act quickly (and if you miss the event but are interested, Duncan

would still like to hear from you). Attendees can be residential (£315) or daily visitors (£305) and meals will be provided.

"We will see," said Stephen, "if we can build a learning house, there where you live, not by throwing desires, dreams and loneliness into a pile and hoping they stand on their own, but with diligence by growing the capacity among you to live in such a house."

To find out more, and book, email Duncan at otaboy@googlemail.com and visit Stephen's website, www.orphanwisdom.com.



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A retreat from the festive frenzy

If the Christmas preparations are starting to get too much, or you are wondering how to kick start your healthy Spring regime, local juice therapist Kate Harris could have the answer.

She is holding two nourishing and relaxing spa days at Sandwell Farmhouse Retreat near Totnes over Christmas and the New Year. The chill-out Christmas Spa Day on Saturday 13 December is billed as the perfect antidote to festive stress. There will be a cozy fire to welcome visitors, a nourishing home-cooked vegetarian lunch, juicing demonstrations and delicious fresh juice. Guests will be able to relax in the heated indoor pool, enjoy a yoga session, or book a choice of therapies or life coaching.

In February, the Fresh Start for Spring retreat promises to cleanse and reboot a sluggish system and create healthy habits for the year ahead.

Kate said: "Although Christmas is an enjoyable time for many, it can be hard on our systems, with the combined pressures of over-indulgence, not enough sleep and too much stress.

Our Christmas Spa Day will provide an oasis of calm for people who would like to recharge their batteries before the big day.

"At our February retreat, we'll be looking to make a fresh start and revitalise ourselves in preparation for Spring."

In addition to the spa days, Sandwell Farmhouse also offers longer retreats, which can be tailored to the individual guest.

Spa Day or Retreat vouchers are available for anyone looking for Christmas or birthday gifts.

For more information call: 07779 496240 or 01803 847674

Visit www.sandwellfarmhouse.co.uk.

Clinic team works holistically

THE mix of clients at The Exmouth Osteopathy and Complementary Health Clinic, which provides treatments for back, neck and joint problems, ranges from babies through to elderly people.

Doctors, midwives and health visitors all refer clients to the clinic, although anyone can come along without a referral from a health practitioner.

The clinic's Gemma Bachle said: "We offer treatment for babies and children using cranial osteopathy, which can help with sleep disturbances, irritability, colic, reflux, ventouse and forcep trauma, ear infections, hyperactivity and behavioural problems, to name but a few.

"As well as the treatment of all ages, we are also experienced in treating the elderly, through massage, osteopathy, McTimoney Chiropractic and Bowen Therapy, and we have specialists in the treatment and management of arthritis."

The Exmouth Osteopathy and Complementary Health Clinic is located on the High Street in the town. It works holistically as a team to deliver the most effective treatment for individual clients.

Gemma added: "We work in a friendly, supportive and caring environment.

"Our practitioners treat an extensive range of muscle and joint complaints, including muscle strains, joint restriction and irritation, sciatica, disc lesions, fibromyalgia, headaches and migraines, RSI, tennis/golfers elbow, IBS, neuralgia, carpal tunnel syndrome, stress, nutritional imbalances, insomnia and much more."

The clinic is currently offering free assessments and 15 per cent off your first treatment with any therapist. This includes babies and children.

For more information (they also have a room to rent) call 01395 278220.

Have a good (enough) Christmas

'TIS the season to be jolly – but not for everyone. Counsellor Ruth Jenni, right, says we can give ourselves permission to be sad over the holiday...



isn't an easy time.

- Find someone to talk to. Seek out people who make you feel better and won't judge you. This may not be a family member, it may be easier to talk to a stranger. Try internet chat rooms.

CHRISTMAS is meant to be merry. Right? All those pictures of mince pies and roaring log fires are supposed to give us an inner-glow. It can feel a huge pressure to have the perfect Happy Christmas.

However, many of us will find ourselves experiencing feelings which are neither merry nor happy during the Christmas period. Anxiety and depression can have us feeling especially isolated at this time of year.

Day-to-day health or money worries do not necessarily take a holiday, and family tensions and expectations can be high. And if you are suffering a recent breakup or bereavement, Christmas can be particularly painful.

If you find yourself suffering through, rather than enjoying the festivities, here are some tips that may help:

- Give yourself permission not to be happy all the time; be gentle on yourself, recognise that for you this

may be easier to talk to a stranger. Try internet chat rooms.

- Consider doing less. Are your expectations too high? If anxious about organising and shopping, you can ask friends to help. Instead of creating the perfect Christmas how about one that's good enough?

- Physical activity. Any form of exercise can help lift your mood.

- Go easy on sugar and alcohol. Big changes in blood sugar levels affect your mood; alcohol, although it feels good initially, is a depressant overall.

Useful numbers: SANEline - 0845767 8000 www.sane.org.uk. Samaritans - 08457 909090 (24hrs) www.samaritans.org.uk

Ruth Jenni is a Creative Counsellor working in Dartington and Buckfastleigh. Find her in the classified ads on page 40.

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Helping students be mindful of this increasingly popular method

WE hear a great deal about mindfulness these days – but what is it and how could it help you? LEIGH SMITH (right) of Heartwood Counselling explains...



approach and embody the qualities they are advocating in others.

The beauty of mindfulness is that it is relatively simple to learn and implement, but the impact can be huge. Studies show mindfulness techniques appear to change the brain, shape our behaviour, release us from pain and stuckness and offer us intuitive insights about how to

AS a psychotherapist and teacher I keep a close eye on the new trends to hit the therapy world. Mindfulness is not a new technique. In fact, it draws on a 2,500-year-old tradition, which has its roots in Buddhist philosophy. However, right now, it is popping up everywhere as a therapeutic approach and I'm noticing many counsellors seeking out information on how to incorporate mindfulness techniques into their own counselling practice.

So, what is it?

Acceptance, awareness, observation, compassion and attention in the present moment are some of the key principles of mindfulness, all of which are designed to bring you into a more connected, and conscious relationship with yourself. Mindfulness involves a personal practice of meditation. Through this, you learn to be open to your own difficulties, to cultivate a moment-by-moment awareness which is held in compassion and kindness, and to develop a greater awareness of how your body communicates with you. You learn, too, how to use your breath as a powerful force to still your mind and bring you back to your centre.

Living a more mindful life means embracing mindfulness as an integrated part of your own existence. Psychotherapists and counsellors wishing to integrate mindfulness into their practice should first attend to their own wellbeing and embed a mindful approach into their own lives. This allows them both to model the

live more fully.

Mindfulness proves beneficial in breaking cycles of depression, addiction and anxiety. It enables clients to regain dignity and confidence in themselves, and in their relationships.

The Heartwood Counselling and Psychotherapy Training Centre in Dartington has launched a specialist diploma called Mindfulness in Therapy to support therapists in developing their own personal mindfulness practice at the same time as giving guidance, techniques and skills that can be used with clients. The teaching is both experiential and includes theory, demonstrations, exercises, instruction and supervision.

The course is open to counsellors teachers, social workers and coaches who wish to incorporate mindfulness into their existing work. Participants will be offered the space to explore the approach in a creative, compassionate and supportive environment.

As director of studies for Heartwood, I am particularly excited to be offering the new diploma, having personally felt the benefits of mindfulness in my own life. We have been working closely with Buddhist Chaplin Justin Andrews to develop the diploma and it is great to welcome him as part of our team. The course is unique in focusing on both the practitioner (therapist) and their clients.

For more information contact Heartwood on 01803 865464, visit www.heartwoodcounselling.org.uk or email heartwood1@btconnect.com.

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ENVIRONMENTAL artist and former lecturer in the environmental arts at Plymouth University, Sue Claire-Morris and a former student, Zoe Hudson have teamed up to create Healing Hearts and Landscapes.

Healing Hearts and Landscapes is described as a way of deepening our relationship with self, each other and the earth and offers a range of environmental arts programmes that explore inner and outer landscapes.

Sue explained: "We get participants to engage creatively with the earth and oceans, through poetry, story, movement and dance. We consider a range of issues such as climate change and its effects on our own health, our oceans and our earth. Through this process, we hope people will become creative agents of change and stewards of our oceans and earth."

Sue-Claire and Zoe have worked together since 2008 and are trained as Moving Mandala Teachers and Veriditas Labyrinth Facilitators.

Satish Kumar, chief editor of Resurgence and Ecology Magazine said: "Sue-Claire and Zoe are



Zoe Hudson and Sue Claire-Morris

engaged in pioneering work to bring arts and environment together. I am a great admirer of their educational programme. They have a great vision to serve the earth through the arts. Their commitment, their dedication and hard work are truly inspiring".

The Moving Mandala programmes take place in East Devon on the Winter Solstice (December 19-22), the Spring Equinox (March 19-22) and the Summer Solstice (June 19-22). Other programmes include: The Healing Power of the Labyrinth and The Essence of Water - Healing Our Relationship with Water and Save our Oceans.

For details call 01395 443179 or 07826 440931 or visit www.healingheartsandlandscapes.co.uk.

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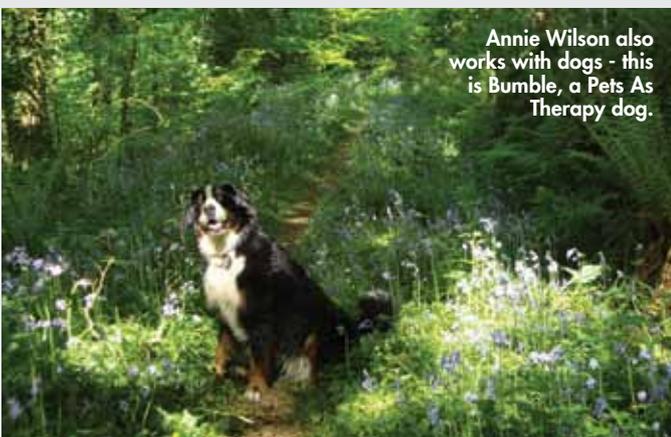
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Annie Wilson also works with dogs - this is Bumble, a Pets As Therapy dog.

Annie works with equine therapy team

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The organisation recently welcomed Annie Wilson, from Nature's Way Counselling, to join its Therapeutic Horsemanship Team.

Director Dr Hannah Burgon said: "Annie brings invaluable experience of working with young adults to our therapeutic horsemanship team. She will continue to run her private practice in Brixham alongside working with us."

She added: "Ours is a costly service to run and we have a waiting list of people who'd like to participate in therapeutic horsemanship. We would be delighted to hear from anyone who'd like to volunteer, donate or offer grants to help us expand our work."

Visit www.sironacic.com and www.natureswaycounselling.co.uk.



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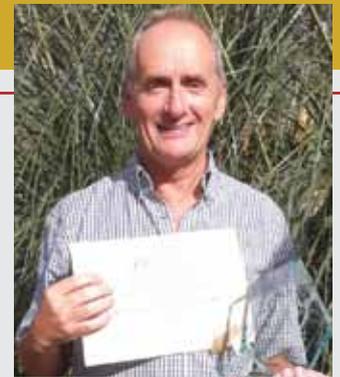


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Technique wins ICNM award

THE Transformational Breath Foundation UK is celebrating after winning the Best Complementary Medicine Organisation Award for 2014 from the Institute for Complementary and Natural Medicine (ICNM).

Transformational Breath is a gentle, simple technique that helps people to develop the full potential of their breathing. Facilitators teach a way of conscious breathing that is natural, safe and healthy, and benefit include more energy, a better immune response and an improved ability to deal with stress.

Transformational Breath was developed by Dr Judith Kravitz. It incorporates her knowledge of conscious breathing techniques with other healing and spiritual principles. The technique has

been used by thousands of people worldwide for over 30 years.

Les Elms, based in Teignmouth, is South Devon's Transformational Breath facilitator. He offers one-to-one sessions and introductory workshops in Teignmouth and the surrounding area.

Les said: "Transformational Breath is a powerful self-help tool. It can be used to great effect either on its own, or in combination with other types of therapy/treatment."

For more information call Les on 07828 566553 or email: les@breathsouthwest.com

Reboot at 'new concept retreat'

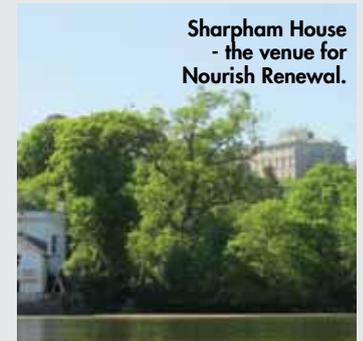
IF your mind, body and spirit are in need of a reboot after the festive season, Nourish Retreats could be just the thing. Describing itself as "a new concept in retreats", Nourish combines stunning locations and delicious food, with some of the best mindset gurus and the chance to try out a range of different creative workshops.

The organiser is Reconnect's own Naturally Nourishing columnist, Jane Hutton. She said: "You can choose from four different Nourish breaks: Renewal, Recovery, Health and Soul. Each has a different emphasis and all are held in a location that totally reflects the core purpose of the retreat, from Cornwall to Somerset."

Participants enjoy a variety of experiences, including: foraging walks, juice and smoothie masterclasses, healing how-tos, cooking demos, plus creative workshops, such as creating aromatherapy creams.

Jane describes the retreats as "a mental makeover" and says: "Our

Sharpham House
- the venue for
Nourish Renewal.



mission is to give you the ultimate holistic infusion of nourishment, knowledge and experiences, with plenty of time to just be."

Nourish Renewal kicks off the programme at Sharpham House, from April 16-19 and on November 5-8, 2015. A deposit will secure your place, with full payment due by March or October.

For more information visit www.nourishretreats.co.uk or call Jane on 07841 344934.

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Ross was left pain-free and inspired

AFTER injuring himself while working as a tree surgeon six years ago, Ross Adams was left with five broken ribs, chronic back pain, sciatica and pain in his left shoulder. He tried many different therapies with no real success before discovering The Bowen Technique.



Ross Adams

"I was amazed by how little effort was required, how relaxing it was and, most of all, that my pain disappeared," said Ross. "I am now pain-free but I still get maintenance sessions every four to six weeks to keep on top of things. The best bit is that I am no longer prevented from enjoying my two other passions in life - gardening and surfing."

Ross trained as a Bowen Technique therapist so he could help others to benefit in the same way he has. He now practices at the OLA Chiropractic Clinic in Totnes every Friday from 9am-1pm, and specialises in treating back pain. The Bowen Technique is a gentle

remedial therapy. It involves a series of rolling moves in specific stress-loaded parts of the body, which encourage the body to come back into balance. Due to the gentle nature of the technique, there is nobody who cannot be treated.

Ross added: "The Bowen Technique treats the person instead of the symptoms so a wide variety of issues can be addressed. It is very effective with back, shoulder and neck pain as well as stress-related conditions such as sleep disorders and IBS."

Bowen works most effectively as a course of treatments, starting with three sessions at weekly intervals. Sessions cost £35, reduced to £30 a session if six sessions are paid for up front. Free 20-minute taster sessions are available and throughout December and January there is 50 per cent off the first treatment.

Find out more from Ross Adams cert ECBS on 07811 608359.

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Giving the gift of that blissful buzz

YOU might remember Reconnect editor Foster wrote recently about having a Thai massage from Isha Olsen-Wells – resulting in a perfect balance of blissful relaxation and energised buzz. Now imagine if you could give that feeling as a gift...



Thailand.

Last year she returned there to relearn and learn anew before entering practice in Totnes. She now works at the OLA Chiropractic Centre and offers a range of Eastern and Western massage styles (including Thai foot massage, Thai

If you're stuck for the ultimate present for someone close to you this Christmas, you might like to consider massage gift vouchers from Isha.

She trained in massage after becoming "enchanted and inspired" by yoga massage during a three-month visit to

step-on massage and holistic oil massage). She concentrates on a fusion of Eastern and Western techniques adapted to each individual client.

To find out more, call 07805 419864 or email ishahahaha@hotmail.com.

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Lucie works closely with angels

UNSEEN energies have played an important part in Lucie Dudley's life since childhood. Coming from a family line of clairvoyants, psychics and intuitives, she says spirits and elementals have been coming through to her for as long as she can remember.



occurred literally overnight and I now work closely with them on a daily basis, in everything I do." Lucie believes angels guided her to move to Totnes six years ago. She now helps others to develop their spiritual and psychic gifts, empowering people to develop their own connection with the angels and coaching them

"An important part of my journey has been learning how to harness these energies," said Lucie. "My father gave me my first tarot deck when I was 13 and he showed me how to decipher the images and interpret the feelings and emotions behind each card. I never looked back."

Lucie spent a few years in her twenties, "doing the PR corporate thing" in London. She recalls feeling like a square peg in a round hole. Thirteen years ago she discovered angel teacher Doreen Virtue and, subsequently, Diana Cooper.

"My life expanded to the next level. My opening to the angelic energies

towards a deeper understanding. With qualifications in counselling, mediumship, past life regression and energy healing, her one-to-one consultation may use any combination of techniques, according to the individual's needs in that moment. Lucie works intuitively to devise the ideal session.

A new psychic/spiritual development circle runs every Wednesday from 11am-1pm at Lucie's home in Totnes. An additional Friday group will be starting in the New Year.

For more information call Lucie on 07979 988753 or email luciedudley@btinternet.com

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Chris Smith's own photograph of a Devon bank.

A natural journey to healing

HAVE you ever found that simply by being outside in nature your mood starts to lift and you feel less stressed?

Chris Smith, a counsellor based in South Devon, is one of a growing number of counsellors and psychotherapists who are using the inherently therapeutic benefits of being outdoors as part of their practice.

Nature Therapy or Eco-therapy is the practice of working with clients outdoors to help them to experience the healing properties of nature as part of their therapy. Chris said:

"In addition to my usual room-based counselling service, I also offer Nature Therapy sessions where we use the experience of being outdoors in the natural world as a source of inspiration for personal development and creative expression.

"There are many advantages to working therapeutically outdoors. Some clients simply find it easier to talk while walking in nature, but also, the natural environment itself can be a source of inspiration, helping clients to find words and metaphors to describe what it is they are trying to express."

Nature Therapy incorporates specific techniques for deepening the client's sense of connection



Chris Smith

to nature, and then uses that sense of connection to find effective and lasting practices that the client can continue to use beyond the counselling sessions.

Chris offers Nature Therapy both for one-to-one clients and also through group therapy workshops. In these workshops, Chris and his support staff

guide the group through a series of experiential exercises.

Chris explained: "I might encourage the participants to create things using the materials they find around themselves, sometimes to help them tell their story, sometimes to represent things they want to celebrate or focus on in some way. Other exercises can involve using poetry and creative writing, or even photography."

Workshop participants benefit from supporting, and being supported by, other members of the group, as well as the facilitators. Chris points out that the workshops are a great way to meet like-minded people and have fun.

Nature Therapy sessions take place all year round. For more information visit www.heartseedcounselling.co.uk or call 07886 917937. To see how other therapists are using Nature Therapy across the UK, visit www.ecopsychology.org.uk.



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Claire's Reiki healing for animals

ANIMAL Reiki offers the chance for domestic pets, farm animals, horses, birds and other small animals to experience the energy balancing healing of Reiki.

Qualified Animal Reiki practitioner Claire Dannatt has combined her love of animals with 15 years' experience of Reiki to create Sunrise Animal Reiki, based in Totnes.

She said: "In a Reiki treatment, the practitioner channels life energy from its source to the recipient. It is a safe, non-invasive method that brings relaxation and promotes the body's natural ability to balance and heal. In this way, it is ideal for animals as well as people."

Claire gives her treatments in the animal's home environment, as this

is where they are most at ease.

She explained: "The animal does not need to be restrained or confined and Reiki can be given with my hands on or off the recipient. Animals will often place the area where they need healing into, or close to, my hands".

Reiki can help animals with a range of problems, including arthritis, anxiety, grief, loss of appetite and recovery from illness and injury. Animal Reiki can also be a good support to conventional veterinary treatment.

Claire is offering a half-price initial treatment to all Reconnect readers. For more information call Claire on 07880 551 108 or visit www.sunriseanimalreiki.com

Change your story, change your life

WHAT would you like for Christmas? Chocolates? Clothes? Or to change your life?

Seale Hayne-based InterBe is offering a Transformational Training Programme, starting in January, that promises to change people's lives through a process called Narrative Transformation.

InterBe's Mike Brodie said: "Each of us has stories we keep telling – stories about ourselves, about the world, about other people, about the way life is. These stories shape our perception of reality and what is possible.

"As long as we believe these stories to be true, life can only continue in the way in which we are currently experiencing it.

"But when you change these

stories, your experience of life transforms. Things become possible that would not have been possible before."

Reconnect's Wellbeing Editor Kate Philbin will be attending the course and has been receiving Narrative Coaching from InterBe since April.

"I know it sounds a bit dramatic to say this stuff is lifechanging, but it really is," she said. "So far, I have found forgiveness where, previously, this was completely impossible and I have transformed a fractured relationship.

"I am working to change my disempowering narratives and am looking forward to starting the New Year with the Genesis programme."



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Taking inspiration from human spirit

THE latest of what Simon Smith (right) of Heart & Soul Funerals calls his Postcards from the Edge...

MANY people assume that working as a funeral director and celebrant must be depressing, even morbid, asking how I cope with the level of upset, sadness and grief which is part of everyday life; how I cope each day with the reminder of life's fragility; how easily the body is broken and how disease ravages? And especially when the death is "out of time", perhaps around my own age of 58 or less?

Of course there are times when the sense of sadness can feel quite overwhelming. I find that loud, emotional music and a good cry can be beneficial, and often exactly the right piece of



music for the person who has died finds its way to me. But there is nothing more inspiring than the human spirit in adversity – the ways people cope are quite miraculous – and if they are not coping the chance to accompany them through this few weeks is a privilege.

American poet Mary Oliver wrote "There are three things you must be able to do in this life. To love what is mortal. To hold it against your bones knowing your own life depends on it. And when the time comes to let it go, to let it go." To play some small part in this painful and tender process is life affirming. When death is understood as a consequence of life, then can we truly live with the exquisite pain of grief and ask ourselves "What shall I do with my one wild and precious life?"

Learning about life with dementia

DEMENTIA champion Gina Awad visited The Maynard School in Exeter to talk to fifth and sixth year students about what it's like to live with the condition.

Gina told the students how to relate and communicate with people living with dementia and highlighted the effect it can have on everyday life.

The Maynard School is already taking part in the volunteer scheme, Kissing It Better, and hopes to become a dementia-friendly school in the near future.

She said: "People with dementia sometimes need a helping hand to go about their daily lives and feel included in their local community. Dementia Friends is giving people an understanding of dementia and the small things they can do



Gina Awad at The Maynard School

that can make a difference to people living with dementia - from helping someone find the right bus to spreading the word about dementia."

Call Gina on 07941 459439 or email her at ginasfreespirit@yahoo.co.uk to arrange a Dementia Friends session, or search for a public session in your area at www.dementiafriends.org.uk



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The Power of Allowing

David Boldick brings his healing gifts to Hannah's at Seale Hayne

For over 20 years David Boldick has been transforming lives in the UK, Poland and Spain. A Craniosacral Therapist and Reiki Master, he recognises that his healing goes beyond any specific therapy and now refers to his work as "The Power of Allowing". His gentle touch allows the release of the root trauma (often unconscious) underlying any condition, whether physical, emotional or spiritual.

In addition to his work with adults, David specialises in treating babies and children. Releasing trauma and restriction at an early age not only helps with physical and behavioural issues, but can prevent problems developing later on in life.

David is available at Hannah's and at his home in Teignmouth. You can try a half hour taster session for only £15.

To book a session call David on 07831 336762
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InterBe

Shiatsu's Oxfam aid

FOR the price of a cup of coffee, Oxfam customers have been given the opportunity to experience one of the oldest and fastest-growing complementary therapies in the UK.

Shiatsu practitioner Kirsty Hurd-Thomas offered taster treatments throughout Shiatsu Awareness Week for a minimum donation of £2.50. All proceeds went to Oxfam. Kirsty said: "I held the taster sessions in the shop and, throughout the time I was working there, I kept catching a glimpse of Oxfam's promotional video, which shows how the money they raise is spent. I felt proud to be donating my time to a cause that helps so many people in so many different ways." The sessions raised £150.

Kirsty hopes Oxfam and the Shiatsu Society might consider rolling this idea out nationwide next year.

"Whatever happens, though," she said "I'll be back in Oxfam Totnes next September doing more taster sessions. And, in the meantime, anyone who would like to experience the wonderful healing benefits of Shiatsu for themselves is welcome to contact me."

Call Kirsty on 01803 862808 or email kirsty.shiatsu@btinternet.com.



Time to get your life (and death) in order

ACTRESS Joanna Lumley, renowned for her down-to-earth attitude to life (and death), spoke out recently about the importance of getting things in order before you die.

Saga magazine quoted her as saying: "When you're young you think life is for ever, but it is finite. I'm 68, so even by the maddest measurements, I'm in the last bit of life. Get your house in order. That's what I want to do before I'm too gaga to do it."

To some of us, it can seem morbid to plan our own funeral but independent celebrant Sarah Chapman believes special ceremonies like these give greater meaning to moments of change in our lives, particularly when shared with family and friends.

She conducts ceremonies for weddings, funerals, renewal of vows and naming ceremonies.

Sarah said: "By planning your ceremony in advance you can design and specify the exact type of ceremony you'd like, so your friends and family celebrate you as you wish."

She guides people through the whole process and creates a Funeral Wishes document for them to give to your next of kin. This can include letters, photographs, poems, etc.

For more information, visit www.celebrationceremoniessouthwest.com or call 07870 763304.

Introduction to sandplay

A COURSE covering the process and theory of sandplay is aimed at participants from a range of backgrounds, including counsellors, psychotherapists, students, psychologists, social workers and teachers.

Find out more from Ruth Baker on 07736 334454 or email ruthbaker1@gmail.com.

BEING HUMAN IN A PERILOUS TIME

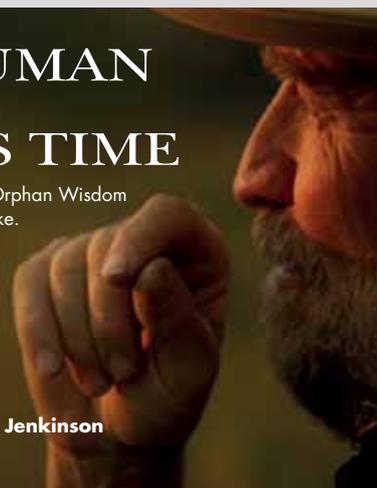
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Breathing for asthmatics

THE Buteyko breathing technique is coming to the Exeter Health Centre.

Chartered Physiotherapist Sue Willer, right, who has personal experience of asthma, is giving three free introductory talks at the Exeter Health Centre to explain the technique on Monday 19 January at 7.30pm, Tuesday 27 January at 2pm and Saturday 7 February at 10am.

The Buteyko Method is a system of breathing exercises, first developed in the 1950s by Professor Constantin Buteyko. It involves re-training the patient's breathing to help asthmatics manage their symptoms. Asthma patients report significant benefits and it has also been shown to help other conditions including hay fever and sleep problems.

Sue said: "Buteyko is based on solid scientific evidence and is complementary - it does not replace conventional treatment. As people learn to breathe normally and feel better they can reduce their drug treatment, with the agreement of their doctor or asthma nurse. It is completely safe and there have been no adverse effects reported to date. It can take some time to master the technique, so it does require commitment. Patients usually start to notice improvements after a week or two."

Call 07906331413 or 01297 32332, or email sue.willer@googlemail.com.



Why moments with our dead are so precious

AFTER his hugely popular piece in the Aug/Sept issue (read the back issue online), Rupert Callender of the Green Funeral Company is back - this time he's exploring the power of seeing our loved ones after they've died...

I wasn't until I had decided to become an undertaker at the age of 29 that I realised I hadn't ever actually seen a dead body. Clearly this Rubicon needed to be crossed before I went any further. So, with the help of a Quaker funeral director, a quietly compassionate woman who taught me everything I needed to know, I came face-to-face with my first corpse.

I can see him now. An elderly man, dressed in his tweed suit with his cloth cap between his clasped hands. He was unembalmed, spared the make-up and wax and fuss that shames and disfigures so many of our dead, dignified and peaceful and utterly natural.

At first I felt awe and fascination at the uncompromising solidity of death. Then, empathy for him and his family. Then, an unexpected and sudden upsurge of grief for myself and for my own dead that I had not witnessed - my father, my mother, my aunt, my grandparents - avoided out of fear or circumstance or because of well-meaning advice to 'remember them as they were,' as if remembering them as they were could undo what they had become, gone forever from my sight, from my reach and touch.

There is a disconnect that can occur between the head and heart when someone we love dies. The



head understands, or pretends to. That stuttering internal voice, repeating over and over 'they're gone.' But our heart, oh, our heart does not give in so lightly. Faithful old war horse, angry with love and loyalty, it stamps and snorts with fierce disbelief. No, it beats again and again. No, not true.

And, if we're lucky, someone takes us by the hand, we summon up all our courage and go into the room where our love lies - or rather, where what they used to be lies - and we experience that awful fascinating contradiction, the presence of an absence, the person we love so changed, so... departed.

And in that moment, the head and heart come together, are reset like a snapped bone, comforted and broken at the same time. Comforted, because this truth is what we knew inside all along; that we die, all of us, and there is a strange peace in knowing this. And, broken because all we want in the world is for that person to open their eyes, to come back to us, and we can see so clearly that that will not happen, they have gone from our understanding.

These moments with our dead are precious, sacred moments outside of time. Take them, hold them tight.



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DECEMBER

WED 1

CPD Facials for Therapists (1 day), £69, Devon Academy, 01392 826033, www.devonacademy.co.uk.

THURS 4

INTRODUCTORY Reflexology Taster (evening) £20, Devon Academy, 01392 826033, www.devonacademy.co.uk.

FRI-SUN/5-7

WONDERING what an Orphan Wisdom School here in the UK might look like, Sharpham House, Ashprington, Totnes. Email otaboy@googlemail.com.

SAT/SUN 6/7

METAMORPHIC Technique workshop in Dartington. From 10am-5pm. Great way to start the New Year. £145. Hélène Demetriades, Psychotherapist & Metamorphic Technique teacher, call 01803 868655, visit www.helenedemetriades.co.uk

MON 8

CPD Deep Tissue Massage Course (back - 2 days) £129, Devon Academy, 01392 826033, www.devonacademy.co.uk.

WED 10

CPD Onsite/Seated Massage Course (1 day) £69. CPD Sports Massage Taster (evening) £20, Devon Academy, 01392 826033, www.devonacademy.co.uk.

SAT 13

ITEC Reflexology course (4 modules) £899, Devon Academy, 01392 826033, www.devonacademy.co.uk.

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JANUARY

SAT 3

ITEC Reflexology course (4 modules) £899, Devon Academy, 01392 826033, www.devonacademy.co.uk.

TUES 6

ITEC Indian Head Massage Course (evening) £299, Devon Academy, 01392 826033, www.devonacademy.co.uk.

THURS 8

INTRODUCTORY Massage Taster (evening) £20, Devon Academy, 01392 826033, www.devonacademy.co.uk.

FRI 16-SUN 18

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SAT 17/SUN 18

METAMORPHIC Technique workshop in Dartington. From 10am-5pm. Great way to start the New Year. £145. Hélène Demetriades, Psychotherapist & Metamorphic Technique teacher, call 01803 868655, visit www.helenedemetriades.co.uk.

THURS 22

INTRODUCTORY Aromatherapy Taster (evening) £20, Devon Academy, 01392 826033, www.devonacademy.co.uk.

FRI 30

ITEC Sports Massage Course (3 modules) £699, Devon Academy, 01392 826033, www.devonacademy.co.uk.

SAT 31

QIGONG workshop with Brad Richecoeur, at Harberton Village Hall, South Devon. 10am-5pm. This is also an introduction to an ongoing Qigong group throughout 2015, suitable for all levels, new students welcome. Call 01364 644040 or visit www.qigong-southwest.co.uk.

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AND FINALLY...

Editor Martin Foster takes you behind the scenes at Reconnect. Mind that dirty coffee mug...



This could be the start of something big

SO, assuming you read magazines from the front to the back, we hope you enjoyed the first issue of the new-look Reconnect. And if you start at the back, we hope you will do. We keep on about it being YOUR magazine, so we'd better tell you why we thought you'd like us to change it. Come on, Foster, you've got some explaining to do...

WELL, that all went pretty well, didn't it? The first of the new-look Reconnects is in your hands (or on your screen if you're reading it online) and I just hope you like the changes as much as I do.

The design changes aren't too radical but have hopefully cleaned things up a little and the content hasn't changed too much either.

The most obvious improvements are the expansion of the Going Out diary section and the extra pages in Wellbeing. And these changes have come about as the result of a big (but not very obvious) change behind the scenes - introducing the Reconnect team!

As regular readers will know, my partner in crime for the past five years of Reconnect (and for some years before that on the original Connect magazine) was one Pete Hardy, who has now left Reconnect to concentrate on his freelance work.

So, after working in a very successful partnership for all these years, I find myself instead part of a whole exciting, creative and inspiring team of people, which has played a big part in the changes you see in this issue - and some more we have planned for the coming months.

“I find myself now part of a whole exciting, creative and inspiring team of people...”

Now, you might not care who bolts all this together, and that's fine. Move along - there's nothing for you here. But I know many of you like to know who you're dealing with, so I thought I'd give you a quick conducted tour of the mag and introduce you to who does what.

Probably the toughest role (in that it involves sharing an office with yours truly) is Admin Manager, so it probably helps that the newly arrived Beth is also my daughter.

If you're an advertiser, Beth will sort your invoice or direct debit mandate and generally keep things (and me) in order.

Her sister Rachel has also been roped in as Going Out Editor. She too is highly qualified having devoted much of her career to organising events and making happen what the creative minds dream up. She is busy collating entries for our BIG (yes, it deserved capitals) Going Out diary pages - and for spreading the word through new media.

She'll be helping out with the relaunch of our website too - coming soon to a screen near you.

Completing the family line-up is my wife Jenny, who has always provided a vital supporting role and has finally earned a title to go with it - Editorial Assistant. And I've got some great writers helping with the editorial too. Our new Wellbeing Editor, looking after our natural health and personal development stories, is Kate Philbin, who some of you will already know as a



copywriter working in that very field.

Our Features Writer, Jon Stein, has already contributed some superb articles on subjects as varied as bookshops, youth projects and, in this issue, mindfulness.

Our regular columnists will be known to you too: Joa Grower on organic gardening and Jane Hutton on food and nutrition.

And that just leaves the editor: still me and still crazy after all these years - but with a new enthusiasm to get the word out about all aspects of greener living here in South Devon. I have, like the rest of the team, got a new photo and all the credit there goes to the lovely Samjhana Moon who took all the new photos of the new team (including the group shot above).

In fact, it was actually much more than just a photographic session. With a bottle or two and cake provided by our ever-efficient editorial assistant, it

was also a chance to spend some time together and to muse (more than once) that, hey, this might just be the start of something big...

But even with a mention for Samjhana (check her out at www.samjhanamoon.photoshelter.com) that's not quite everyone - there's all of you (sorry, don't expect individual namechecks), our warm, loyal and responsive readers.

And we want you to keep on responding (preferably warmly, but cooler comments welcome too) and let us know what you think about Reconnect. What we're really about is you - so thank you for being there and being wonderful.

Finally, a quick sits vac ad: if you'd like to be part of the Reconnect team, we're looking for someone to look after all our lovely advertisers. See the ad on page 41 and get in touch - we'll fix up the photo session!

Martin x



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