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FEBRUARY/MARCH 2015 ISSUE 35

reconnect

produce * energy * land * homes * community * wellbeing * arts

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FESTIVALS & SHOWS 2015

Our guide to Westcountry events



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Community plugs into PV benefits

Going out

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Upfront

IT'S WHAT WE'RE ABOUT

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WELCOME...

WORKING weeks and sometimes months ahead to keep within our production schedules means I live in a constant time warp - while everyone else was getting ready for Christmas, I was already well into the Feb/Mar issue.

It does have its advantages, though. As I write this, just before we go to press in the middle of January, the weather is introducing us to what the forecasters tell us is now called 'thundersnow'.

But I've just spent a happy few hours working on our annual guide to Westcountry festivals (see page 13) and I'm left experiencing an appropriate blend of excitement and mellowness.

There are more places to go and people to see in our Going Out diary on page 9. And if, like me, you didn't go to nearly as many gigs and festivals as you planned last year, read And finally... on page 38.

Look out too for all manner of natural health information, a rather wonderful place called The Brake and a whole lot more great stuff. Enjoy!

Martin x

COVER STORY...



Main image: festival pic by Stone - find more of his work at www.stonefree.org. See page 13 for our 2015 festival guide. Bottom images, from left to right: The Brake - home of artistic inspiration (p18); land project volunteering at Trees for Health (p22); community PV projects in Plymouth (p12)

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Our 1/4-page advertisements

These cost £148 for one issue. If you book three, you get a 10% discount, so you pay £399.60. That's a saving of £44.40. Or book at least three issues and pay £66.60 a month by direct debit.

Our 1/2-page advertisements

These cost £313 for one issue. If you book three, you get a 10%

discount, so you pay £845.10. That's a saving of £93.90.

Or book at least three issues and pay £140 a month.

Our full-page advertisements

These cost £522 for one issue. If you book three, you get a 10% discount, so you pay £1409.40. That's a saving of £156.60. Or book at least three issues and pay £234.90 a month.

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Apr/May issue out end of March - deadline March 6

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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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Busy life in song

IT continues to be a busy life in song for choir leader Alison Whittal.

She runs Heartsong at The Friends Meeting House in Exeter on the last Sunday of the month (February 22 and March 29 are the next two dates – 7-9.30pm), as we reported in the last issue.

But she is also leading Crediton World Music Choir while Alise Ojay has a year's sabbatical and is planning to take them to the annual Bristol Choir Convention on April 25.

To find out more, call Alison on 01363 774324.

Necks, please...

GRAB your garlic necklace and head for Kingskerswell Parish Church on February 4 for a special performance of Dracula.

From the team who brought you Great Expectations (World Unlimited), this one's suitable for adults and older children (they suggest 12+).

The doors open at 7pm and tickets are £8 in advance on 01803 875527 or 07815 620402, or online from ticketsellers.co.uk and wegotickets.com. Visit worldunlimited.co.uk.

Mindful cookery

A RETREAT at Sharpham will combine cookery with mindfulness techniques to "heighten awareness and help maintain a calm and focussed way of being".

Creative Vegetarian Cookery and Mindfulness with Linda Vincent runs March 3-8 (arrive 4-6pm on the Tuesday and leave after lunch on the Sunday).

Book on 01803 732055 or bookings@sharphamtrust.org, or visit sharphamtrust.org.

Tarte Noire

THE incomparable Tarte Noire Women's Playback Theatre Company have performances planned for February 24 (United Reformed Church, Teignmouth), March 10 (Bogan House, Totnes) and March 17 (New Cygnet Theatre, Exeter).

The doors open at 8pm, entrance is £10/£8 (by donation in Totnes) and you can find out more at tartenoire.co.uk.

Toddler leader

THE Children's Garden in Exeter is looking for a toddler leader with Steiner experience to work two mornings a week. They also have kindergarten spaces – and rooms to let in their beautiful garden.

Call Helen Wilkins on 01392 427200 or 07971385166, or email thechildrensgarden@phoncoop.coop.

Who should own land on which we live?

AROUND 200 years or so ago, there was a fierce debate raging on both sides of the Atlantic: is it moral to own people?

Today, the organisers of a conference coming up in March argue, a similar debate should be had around the ownership of land.

If one person's life depends on a small piece of land and this land is owned by another person then the first is owned by the latter, says one of the organisers, Tal Leshem.

"We believe this is wrong.

"No one should be able to charge other people to live on this earth because the land belongs to all (human and non-human beings) and the time has come to

find a more just way to share this earth.

"If this resonates with you, please join us for A Land Conference in Totnes."

Speakers will include: Simon Fairlie (Radical approaches to accessing land); Jyoti Fernandez (Access to land - an international perspective); Jonty Williams (Economics for taking care of the Earth); Julian Pratt (Stewardship - an alternative to owning the Earth) and Tal Leshem (Who does the land REALLY belong to? A moral perspective).

A Land Conference will be held at Totnes Civic Hall on March 21, 9.30am-5pm. Book tickets (£10-20, including lunch by The Kitchen Table, concessions available) at landconferencedevon.co.uk.



Simon's cover illustration for Ros's book.

Poems of Dartington

SOME Reconnect readers will already know Ros Brady and Simon Barron as the folk duo Barron Brady (fans can see them at The Ley Arms in Kenn, 8pm, on March 20, incidentally).

But the husband and wife team has created another project together – a book of poems by Ros, beautifully illustrated by Simon - Next To Me, A Robin.

The book's title pays tribute to the seminal study The Life Of The Robin, researched and written on Dartington Hall Estate by ornithologist David Lack.

And Ros's poems were written on the estate, many of them pencilled outdoors on scraps of paper as she wandered through the grounds there between 2005-2009.

"My main motivation for compiling this book," says Ros, "was to share with readers those special years at Dartington, in Chacegrove Woods, Staverton Woods, Still Pool Copse and in the water meadows by the Dart where I first reconnected with nature powerfully like I did as a small child in Australia.

"I wanted to share them spontaneously, directly and honestly, so have made very little alteration to the originals, which have been kept in a box in the cupboard all this time."

Find out more about the book at www.nexttomearobin.eu, and about their folk music at barronbrady.com.

Comedy can be seriously helpful

FOR many people the idea of performing stand-up comedy is one of the most frightening things imaginable.

Being alone on stage in front of a crowd of people and attempting to make them laugh seems like the ultimate challenge and a sure-fire way of being humiliated should it all go horribly wrong.

But, like most types of performance, it's a skill that can be learned and understanding the techniques is half the battle. Thanks to a course currently being run in Torquay by poet and comedian Chris Brooks the art of stand-up comedy can now be learned and mastered by anyone willing to give it a try.

Lifecoach Jeff Sleeman took Chris's course last year and has been performing regular comedy gigs since then.

Says Jeff: "Stand-up comedy is a great way to



Jeff Sleeman on stage.

increase self-confidence, stretch your capabilities and, rather surprisingly, develop a high level of self-awareness. Ultimately, what makes a comedian funny is their own individual take on a situation and to do this successfully one has to have a very good understanding of one's own eccentricities, foibles and limiting beliefs.

"Chris is a great teacher and his course is very accessible for all levels of ability. I would highly recommend it, both as a means of personal development and for having a lot of fun."

Chris also runs the Jocular Spectacular Roving Comedy Club at the Blue Walnut Cafe in Torquay on the second Thursday of every month and he and Jeff will be supporting Radio 4

comedian Arthur Smith at a special comedy night at the Barnfield Theatre in Exeter on Thursday February 5.

For details of Chris's course and comedy gigs visit www.chrisbrookspoetry.com. For information on Jeff see www.jeffsleeman.com.

VDay's night for One Billion Rising

ONE Billion Rising is a global call to action based on the statistic that one in three women on the planet will be beaten or raped in their lifetime – that's more than one million women and girls worldwide.

The Totnes event is known as VDay (One Billion Rising is held on February 14) and has developed into a joyful family-friendly evening of celebration and connection.

This year it's at Totnes Civic Hall and doors open at

6pm for cake and chai and activities including talking boards and doll making.

From 7-10.45pm there's reggae, folk and soul, groove and dance plus African dancers and drummers! It all wraps up

around 10.45 with a lullaby and visionary storytelling by the amazing Isha.

Tickets are available in advance from Harlequin bookshop. Proceeds will go to Devon Child Assault Prevention Project (devoncap.org.uk),

which offers education, guidance and support by giving children positive messages on how they can protect themselves.

Visit VDay Totnes Rising on Facebook.



Families need a little Embercombe

THERE'S a chance to get a taste of the Embercombe experience at an Open Day there on Saturday, March 21.

Embercombe, whose mission is 'To touch hearts, stimulate minds and inspire committed action for a truly sustainable world' promise a fun day out for the whole family – and free entry!

You can watch live theatre, try your hand at green woodworking, take a tour and let your children loose on the 'take home' planting activity devised especially for them.

Embercombe is famous for its



yummy food and drink and you can enjoy local venison burgers, homemade cakes, cider and apple juice. There will also be storytelling, local produce for sale, tractor rides, competitions and much, much more.

Visit embercombe.co.uk.



Coming soon from Villages In Action: Kathryn Roberts and Sean Lakeman and (inset) Little Soldier Productions.

Coming soon to a hall near you

VILLAGES In Action (VIA), as you surely all know by now, is a group of wonderful people who bring top quality professional arts events to rural communities.

So, thanks to them (and a recent £10k boost to their funding by the Big Lottery Fund), people across Devon get to see some amazing entertainment in their village halls.

Such is the wealth of riches in the VIA's 2015 programme, and so varied and widespread are its venues, that we can't cover it all here. But we will mention some highlights, and mention at least some of the places you can see and hear them. For the full story, including times, prices and booking details, you can pick up a VIA leaflet or visit villagesinaction.co.uk.

First up is Rabbit Theatre (actually Cornwall-based one-man show Dave Mynne) with a production of Dracula at Kingskerswell, Cornwood and Buckland in the Moor.

The Sands School in Ashburton is the venue for Oliver Meech's When Magic and Science Collide, one of VIA's Young Promoter events, giving young people at the school a chance to learn about all the aspects of promoting a show.

Cirkus Spectakular comes to town at

the Kenn Centre in Kennford - another colourful, magical tale from the regular VIA puppet company.

Synergy is a flamenco guitar and voice duo which will bring a little Spain to Manaton. And Puppetcraft perform the classic Monkey at Chudleigh and Buckfastleigh.

Female traditional music trio Lady Maserly return to the VIA circuit, performing at Abbotkerswell and Lustleigh, and the JT Collective will take a selection of music - from blisteringly fast tunes to slow ballads - to Combeinteignhead.

Then there's dark Scandinavian tales and brooding folk music courtesy of seriouskitchen at Stokeinteignhead, Harbertonford and South Brent, while Bigbury gets a taste of "sophisticated and accessible" modern jazz from the Ronnie Jones Quartet.

Local folk heroes Kathryn Roberts and Sean Lakeman will perform at Highweek and Harberton, and Little Soldier Productions with The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha at Denbury.

Finally (for us – there's more online, remember), Clive Carroll gets through One Thousand Years of Music in just one evening at Ashprington.

Visit villagesinaction.co.uk.



The Children's Garden

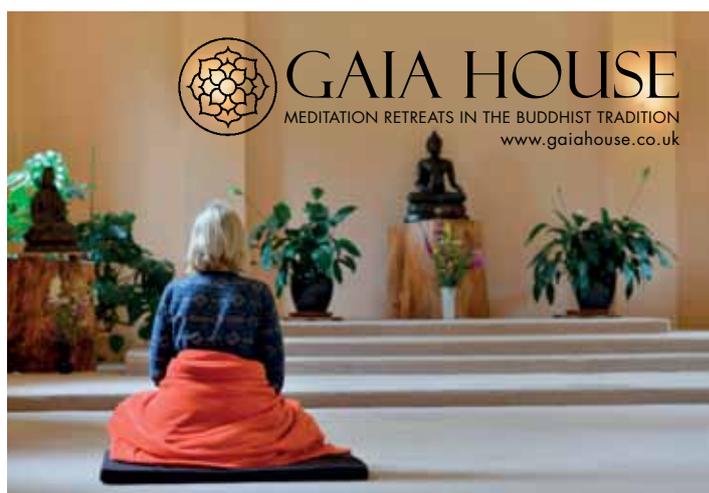
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Group offers help and advice on badgers

THE Devon Badger Group was formed in 2010 to "offer help and advice to Badgers with people problems".

Badgers, though protected by law, face many and varied threats, says the group's James Stewart.

The group is affiliated to the Badger Trust and its 24-hour helpline receives calls from the public needing advice on diverse issues including: badgers in back gardens; badgers under sheds or trapped in outbuildings; sets under threat from development; people asking where they can watch badgers - and everything in between, says James.

Casualty rescue is a major part of the group's role and collection officers are on-

call day and night to assist sick, injured or orphaned badgers across the county.

The group currently finds itself involved in the political arena campaigning against the controversial badger cull.

While it recognises there is some transfer between species, it also points to the decade-long Randomised Badger Culling Trial and recent research by Durham University and says badgers play no significant role in TB in cattle.

"Vaccination of cattle and badgers, together with improved cattle controls are a more appropriate method of controlling bTB," says James.

Visit www.devonbadgergroup.org.uk. The group's 24-hour helpline is 07710 971988.



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Sheep graze at cathedral

LOOK out for a flock of sheep grazing in the grounds of Exeter Cathedral in February, accompanied by a very special shepherd's hut.

It's all designed to draw attention to the launch of OneHutFull, a project to support farming on Dartmoor.

The sheep will be Whiteface Dartmoor, the traditionally constructed hut is painted a less traditional orange and black - but the real surprise is inside, where a futuristic, multi-sensory experience explores the story of hill farming past, present and future.

Paula Wolton, project leader, says: "OneHutFull aims not just to help people understand just how precious hill farming is on Dartmoor, but to inspire the start up of new enterprises and businesses that will help to ensure a healthy future for the farmers and their animals."

Visit onehutful.org.

Multi-media at TEDx

TEDx returns to Exeter in April with a mix of speakers, performance artists and film.

TEDx is a programme of local, self-organised events licensed by TED and made possible by local volunteers.

"We aim to take the long view back into the past and explore how it has shaped the world we now live in," said Claire Kennedy, licensee and organiser.

The day-long event spans a wide range of topics from the death penalty to Magna Carta; from feeding yourself on £10 a day to sculpture and much more.

"It's a day not to be missed," said Claire. "As with our previous conferences there will be music, a delicious locally-sourced lunch and plenty of opportunities in the breaks to meet and mix with your fellow TEDxers and continue the conversation."

Tickets are £50, with a limited number of concessionary tickets at £25 for benefit claimants, disabled people, full-time students and under 18s. Visit tedxexeter.com.

Top reviews award for B&B

WE hear Heather Nicholson, who some of you will know from her work with Reconnect in the past, has received the Best Reviews for 2014 Award from bookings.com for her B&B in Torquay.

Set in beautiful gardens and just a walk from the seafront, she describes Norwegian Wood as "organic, sustainable bed and breakfast with en suite wellbeing". Find out more at organicbedandbreakfast.info or call 01803 528575.

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Community cinema's nine for 2015

A COMMUNITY-run cinema in Totnes has revealed its 2015 programme – and it's nine absolute gems! Reconnect editor Martin Foster (ie, me) should declare an interest here because I'm chair of the Follaton Community Cinema (FCC). But they are great films, the project is run by local volunteers for the whole community and the refreshments do include some superb home-made cakes, so I make no apology whatsoever.

If you picked up your copy of Reconnect super-quickly, you might just catch the first film, on January 31. The Master stars Joaquin Phoenix and the great Seymour Hoffman, who sadly died last year.

All the FCC screenings are on the last Saturday night of the month (with a Summer break for July and August) and the doors open at 7pm for a 7.30 start, giving you time to buy that cake and a cuppa and have a natter



before the programme kicks off with a short or two and trailers for forthcoming screenings.

Forthcoming in February (Saturday 28) is *Good Vibrations* (15), a real feel-good story of Seventies music in Belfast.

And in March (Saturday 28 again), *The Lunchbox* (PG) is a subtitled Indian film that tells how a relationship grows out of a misdirected meal in Mumbai's famous lunchbox delivery system.

The rest of the year includes *Pride*, *Blue Jasmine*, *Strangers on a Train*, *Philomena*, *Twenty Feet from Stardom* and *The Past*.

Leaflets listing the full programme are available around the town (including Tourists' Information and the library) and you can also find info, and watch trailers for each film, on the website - follatoncommunitycinema.co.uk. If you want to know anything else, you can call me on 01803 868455. See you there!



Celia Minoughan, from Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership (centre), with walkers from Walk this Way, including Nigel Rhys (far left).

Take a walk from Riviera Line stations

IT never quite feels right somehow driving somewhere in order to go for a walk.

But a booklet just published gives details of six walks based around the Riviera Line railways stations at Torquay, Paignton, Dawlish, Teignmouth and Starcross.

It's all part of the promotional campaign being run for the line by the Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership as part of the EU Interreg Citizens' Rail project.

Celia Minoughan, the Partnership's Riviera Line project officer, said:

"The booklet is a great companion for people who like exploring South Devon and is just a taster of what's out there - more walks can be found on our website, www.therivieraline.com"

For the launch, Celia was joined at Dawlish Station by members of Dawlish Walk This Way at the start of their weekly Wednesday walk.

Walk leader Nigel Rhys said: "We welcome the Walks from the Riviera Line booklet. Every week we lead up

to 40 people on walks from Dawlish Station, including the Dawlish Town Trail featured in the booklet. A few of our group regularly come from Starcross by train to join us at Dawlish Station."

30,000 copies of Walks from the Riviera Line have been printed and it can be found at stations throughout the First Great Western network and at local tourist information centres. Copies can also be obtained by emailing railpart@plymouth.ac.uk

Local partners in Citizens' Rail, which is 50% funded by the EU's Interreg IVB programme, include Devon County Council, Torbay Council, First Great Western, Plymouth University and the Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership.

Find out more about Walks from the Riviera Line and the Citizens' Rail project, including how to get involved, from Celia at the Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership on 01752 584777, email celia@citizensrail.org, or visit www.citizensrail.org.

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Sing with an open throat!

HAVE you ever been told something but just couldn't get your head round it? Or even know what questions to ask to make sense of it?

Peter Scott, of the Funky-Bizness Community Choir, says learning to sing is full of moments like that.

"I remember once being told by a singing teacher to 'keep that throat open' - and thinking: 'Well, how could I be singing if my throat was closed?' I later discovered it was actually a very valid point - and there's a good way to demonstrate it."

Peter suggests you try this simple exercise:

1 Open your mouth fairly wide, but not uncomfortably, and breathe silently, noticing how big and wide your throat feels.

2 Now do the same thing again, but make the breathy sound 'hah'. Instantly the throat feels more closed.

3 Now do the same thing one last time and breathe as if you have asthma, gasping for breath, with lots of hacking sound. It feels horrible, and the throat is very closed.

4 Now go back to the first way, breathing silently. What an open throat is then becomes obvious; and feels good.

"There are lots of things that need simple and direct explanations in singing!" says Peter. "If you are interested in exploring more of them, visit www.funky-bizness.co.uk. There are lots of videos with great tips."

If you want to have fun singing, call in at the Funky-Bizness Community Choir every Tuesday, 7.15pm, at their new home in St Sidwells Community Centre.



Peter Scott



Take a tour of UK eco-homes

FANCY an armchair tour of some of Britain's self-built eco-homes?

Eco-homes in Britain is a new website/online gallery which showcases over 20 projects, communities, homesteads and smallholdings in which ordinary people have created beautiful low-impact dwellings and structures, and a sustainable lifestyle around them.

The website, put together by Selena Mara, South Hams resident and founder member of Landmatters Permaculture Project near Totnes, displays photos of each of these autonomous projects, as well as a bit of the stories of how they came into being - and the planning issues the creators had to tackle in the process.

"These stories are likely to make you laugh and cry!" says Selena.

She aims to continue to inform, inspire and support the grassroots movement of eco-lifestyle creators through her online gallery and the resources that can be found there.

Visit www.ecohomesinbritain.co.uk.

● **MORE Eco Homes on pages 20/21.**



The hallway at the Exeter Natural Health Centre.

Business rooms to hire in city

CHOOSING the right room is crucial when you're planning a business event.

If you're one of the thousands who work at home, you might need a room for a simple one-to-one meet with a client or another business.

Or maybe you're looking for the right space to run a training course or workshop - you need something professional, but friendly too, to create the right atmosphere.

When we've needed rooms in Exeter (both for interviews and for workshops), we've called on the Exeter Natural Health Centre and they're now putting the word out to other businesses.

"We've always been popular with therapists," says centre manager Ali Morrish, "but we'd be happy to make rooms available on a pay-as-you-go basis for any green, ethical or sustainable businesses."

The centre is smack in the middle of the city (just off Gandy Street and Queen Street) with nearby parking and just down the road from Central Station.

Call Ali on 01392 422555 or email info@enhc.org to find out more.

Going out

THE SOUTH DEVON EVENTS GUIDE FEBRUARY/MARCH



Rachel Foster

Places to go, people to see - it's our BIG new events guide!

WELCOME to the second appearance of our new-format Going Out diary.

The diary and its online counterpart (which has even more listings) are compiled by Rachel Foster.

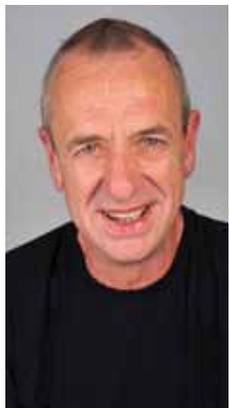
To get your event in the next (Apr/May) issue, simply email the details to Rachel at goingout@reconnectonline.co.uk.

Rachel's also working hard at spreading the word online, including daily Tweets of events news, so follow us and get in touch at twitter.com/reconnectmag.

An advertisement on the Going Out pages (like those below) costs £93 - AND you get a FREE advertisement on the diary pages of our website.

Look out for more exciting website news in our next issue, but if you want to be in it, email or call now on 01803 868455.

If you're booking tickets for any of the events, please mention that you saw it in Reconnect. And although all the diary info was correct when added to the listing, it's always a good idea to visit the organisers' websites, or give them a call, to ensure nothing has changed.



Arthur Smith - in Exeter on February 5



Harbour House from Saturday February 7



Tarte Noire - Teignmouth on January 24

FEBRUARY

SUNDAY 1

GIG: John Ashton Thomas & Ian Richie + special guests, jazz/ambient duo, The Barrel House, Totnes (TQ9 5PB), 7.30pm, www.barrelhousetotnes.co.uk.

MUSIC: Phil Banks (Balaeric House), Bread and Roses pub, Plymouth, 8pm, www.breadandrosesplymouth.co.uk.

GIG: Jefferson Starship Celebrate 50th Anniversary of Jefferson Airplane, featuring David Freiberg and Paul Kantner from the original band, Exeter Phoenix (EX4 3LS), 8pm, www.exeterphoenix.org.uk.

MONDAY 2

SCIENCE: Exeter Phoenix and University of Exeter present Café Scientifique, monthly talks and discussions, Exeter Phoenix (EX4 3LS), 8.30pm, www.exeterphoenix.org.uk.

GIG: The Blow-up, cinematic jazz groove drawing on 60s and 70s soundtrack tunes, The Bread and Roses pub, Plymouth, 8-11.30pm, www.breadandrosesplymouth.co.uk.

TUESDAY 3

POETRY: Poetry Conversations hosted by poet Alice Oswald, Octagonal Room, Sharpham House (TQ9 7UT), 7.30pm, www.sharphamtrust.org.

THEATRE: Kiln Ensemble present A Journey Round My Skull, a tale of passionate and painful love affair told by a neurosurgeon, Exeter Phoenix (EX4 3LS), 8pm, www.exeterphoenix.org.uk.

WEDNESDAY 4

COMEDY: German comic Henning When's Eins, Zwei, DIY tour, Exeter Corn Exchange, St Georges Hall, Exeter (EX1 1BU), 7.15pm, www.exeter.gov.uk.

THEATRE: World Unlimited production of Dracula - One-man performance by David Mynne. Suitable for adults and older children (12+). Kingskerswell Parish Church (TQ12 5LD), 7pm.

COMEDY: Josie Long: Cara Josephine, Exeter Phoenix (EX4 3LS), 8pm, www.exeterphoenix.org.uk.

THURSDAY 5

COMEDY: The Jocular Spectacular Roving Comedy Show featuring headliner Arthur Smith, Barnfield Theatre (EX1 1SN), 8pm, www.barnfieldtheatre.org.uk.

ART: Based on Dartmoor featuring work of Peter Randall-Page, Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery (EX4 3RX), 6.30pm, www.rammuseum.org.uk.

FRIDAY 6

MUSIC: Sibelius Spring Song, Grieg Piano Concerto, Rachmaninov Symphonic Dances, conductor Joshua Weilerstein, piano Alessandro Taverna, The Great Hall, Exeter University, 7.30pm, www.exeternorthcott.co.uk.

GIG: Wille & The Bandits, rock to world music to blues and roots, The Barrel House, (TQ9 5PB), 8pm, www.barrelhousetotnes.co.uk.

SATURDAY 7

UNTIL FEBRUARY 25

ART: Primary Colours - exhibition of artworks from 13 local primary

schools, Harbour House, Kingsbridge (TQ7 1JD), www.harbourhouse.org.uk

And Sunday 8

CONFERENCE: Future Homes Conference - informing, inspiring and invigorating neighbourhood planning, Dartington Hall, 8.30am-5pm, free - booking required on 01803 847070, www.transitiontowtotnes.org

DEBATE: Devon Convergence - Forum for New Local Economies, free but booking required - www.transitiontowtotnes.org, 9.30am-4.40pm, jay@transitiontowtotnes.org.

SOCIAL: Death Café, talk about death in a sociable setting, Devonport Guildhall, Plymouth, 2-4.30pm, www.devonportguildhall.org

GIG: Leddra Chapman, acoustic singer/songwriter, South Devon Arts Centre, Totnes (TQ9 5LE), 7.30pm, www.southdevonarts.co.uk

SUNDAY 8

COMEDY: Ross Noble with new UK show, Gentleman. Plymouth Pavilions, (PL1 3LF), 8pm, www.plymouthpavilions.com

COMEDY: Jo Caulfield: Uninformed Opinions - pure stand, Exeter Phoenix, (EX4 3LS), 8pm, www.exeterphoenix.org.uk

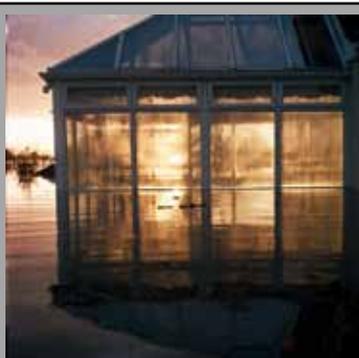
MONDAY 9

GIG: Gruff Rhys with a full band featuring Y Niwl, Kliph Scurlock (Flaming Lips) and John Evans, Exeter Phoenix, (EX4 3LS), 8pm, www.exeterphoenix.org.uk

TUESDAY 10

FILM: Endless Summers (33mins), the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



Plymouth Arts Centre Art Film Food

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

story of a rural Devon community and An Autumn Diary (30 mins), Sussex resident investigates fracking. Transition Town Totnes film night, Civic Hall, doors open 7.30pm, www.transitiontotnes.org

WEDNESDAY 11

UNTIL FEBRUARY 14

THEATRE: Humble Boy - play that draws parallels to the plot of Hamlet, Palace Theatre, Paignton (TQ3 3HF). 7.30pm, www.palacetheatrepaignton.co.uk

THURSDAY 12

DEBATE: Rethinking the Face - World-leading facial surgeons, artists and campaigners discuss the face and disfigurement. Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery, Exeter (EX4 3RX). 1pm, www.rammuseum.org.uk

GIG: VDay Totnes (see page 4), Totnes Civic Hall (TQ9 5SFh). 6pm. www.onebellionrising.org

THEATRE: Phonic FM present Love Is... by Widsith and Deor Storytelling Theatre Folk and fairytales of love, longing and downright idiocy! Exeter Pheonix, (EX4 3LS). 8pm, www.exeterpheonix.org.uk

DANCE: Chinese dancing and tea ceremony, part of RAMM's activities celebrating the Chinese New Year: the year of the Goat. Royal Albert Memorial

Museum & Art Gallery, (EX4 3RX). 11.30am, www.rammuseum.org.uk

GIG: The Staves - perfect three-part harmony from three sisters, Exeter Pheonix, (EX4 3LS). 8pm, www.exeterpheonix.org.uk

SOCIAL: Valentine's Vintage Ball - dance, music and theatre, Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery, (EX4 3RX). 7pm, www.rammuseum.org.uk

SUNDAY 15

GIG: folk star Cara Dillon, Exeter Pheonix, (EX4 3LS). 8pm, www.exeterpheonix.org.uk

POETRY: lighthearted poetry and prose by Words for Voices with songs by Tom Morris, Great Hall, Hannahs at Seale-Hayne, Newton Abbot, tickets £8 (under 16s free) on 01626 325825.

GIG: English fiddle player and singer Nancy Kerr and her Australian partner James Fagan (bouzouki, voice), Topsham Folk Club, (EX3 0HF). 8pm, www.topshamfolkclub.co.uk

SOCIAL: Winter Open Day - Apple orchard tree care and Wassail, Sharpham House (TQ9 7UT), www.sharphamtrust.org

MONDAY 16

FILM: Giovanni's Island Japan. 2014. Director Mizuho Nishikubo combines historical-political contexts with animation, Exeter Pheonix, (EX4 3LS). 7.30pm, www.exeterpheonix.org.uk

TUESDAY 17

KIDS: A chance for under-fives to take a journey of discovery - book in advance through The Creation Station, Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery, (EX4 3RX). 10.30am, www.rammuseum.org.uk

THURSDAY 19

CRAFT: Shadow puppet making with Clockwork Moth to celebrate Chinese New Year. Free family drop-in event - children must be accompanied by an adult, Devon Guild of Craftsmen, Bovey Tracey (TQ13 9AF). 1pm, www.crafts.org.uk

FRIDAY 20

SYMPOSIUM: Climate Change and Art, bringing together scientific and creative communities, Plymouth Arts Centre, www.plymouthartscentre.org

SATURDAY 21

GIG: Ska Au Go-Go - Simmertones front-man Glyn Wilcox returns, The Barrel House, (TQ9 5PB). 8pm, www.barrelhousetotnes.co.uk

SUNDAY 22

GIG: The Unthanks, Tyneside sisters Rachel and Becky Unthank, Exeter Corn Exchange, St Georges Hall (EX1 1BU). 7.15pm, www.exeter.gov.uk

TUESDAY 24

THEATRE: Tarte Noire - Women's Playback Theatre Performance (women only), United Reformed Church, Teignmouth (TQ14 8TB). 7.45pm, www.tartenoire.co.uk

OPERA: ROH Live - Der Fliegende Hollander, opera transmitted live, Dartington Hall (TQ9 6EL) www.dartington.org

THURSDAY 26

BUSINESS: Marketing Club - mix of workshop, 1:1 and mingling, REconomy Centre, Totnes, 1-3pm, gift - visit www.transitiontotnes.org to book.

FRIDAY 27

GIG: Acoustic Haven, singer/songwriter Carrie Tree with multi-instrumentalist Alex Roberts as support. St John's church, Totnes, doors open 6.30pm - see story page 10.

SATURDAY 28

FILM: Good Vibrations - the owner of record shop in Seventies Belfast becomes a record producer and promoter - a truly vibrant, feelgood, music-driven movie. Follaton Community Hall, (TQ9 5FQ). 7pm, www.follatoncommunitycinema.co.uk

MARCH

MONDAY 2

UNTIL MARCH 7

THEATRE: Macbeth, The Northcott Theatre, (EX4 4QB). 7.30pm. www.exeternorthcott.co.uk

UNTIL MARCH 14

THEATRE: The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time. Winner of seven 2013 Olivier Awards, highly acclaimed National Theatre production, Theatre Royal, (PL1 2TR). 7.30pm. www.theatreroyal.com

FILM: The Imitation Game - new immersive cinema experiences, special post screening events, plus discussions and Q&As, Exeter Pheonix, (EX4 3LS). 7.30pm, www.exeterpheonix.org.uk

TUESDAY 3

UNTIL MARCH 7

ART: Annual exhibition of fine art, photography and art textiles by VI Form students of Kingsbridge Community College Harbour House, Kingsbridge (TQ7 1JD), www.harbourhouse.org.uk

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

WEDNESDAY 4

GIG: Kim Churchill, mix of folk, rock and blues, The Barrel House, (TQ9 5PB). 7.30pm, www.barrelhousetotnes.co.uk

TALK: Dr Richard Scrivenor, formerly of the British Geological Survey, talks about tin mining in the South West, Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery, (EX4 3RX). 1.10pm, www.rammuseum.org.uk

THURSDAY 6

GIG: King King plus special guest Lawrence ones Band. Soulful blues/rock, Exeter Pheonix, (EX4 3LS). 7pm, www.exeterpheonix.org.uk

SATURDAY 7

PAGANISM: Pagan Federation Spring Conference, Penstowe Manor, Bude, book at www.paganfederationdevonandcornwall.co.uk

GIG: Welsh singer/songwriter Judith Owen, South Devon Arts Centre, Totnes (TQ9 5LE). 7.30pm www.southdevonarts.co.uk

FOOD: Go Vegan campaign launch with information, recipes and free food samples, St Stephen's Church, Exeter, www.ffa-uk.org

GIG: Dreadzone celebrate 20 years of recordings, live music and performance, Exeter Pheonix, (EX4 3LS). 8pm, www.exeterpheonix.org.uk

SUNDAY 8

GIG: Martha Tilston - captivating performer, singer-songwriter, Exeter Pheonix, (EX4 3LS). 8pm, www.exeterpheonix.org.uk

MONDAY 9

COMEDY: Alexei Sayle - preview of second volume of his memoirs, "followed by questions and answers and shouting," Exeter Pheonix, (EX4 3LS). 8pm. www.exeterpheonix.org.uk

TUESDAY 10

UNTIL MARCH 15

ART: Shifting Tides - work of painter Lyn Whiteman, Harbour House, Kingsbridge



Good Vibrations - Follaton Community Cinema on Feb 28.

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





Last two at The Haven

THE February and March gigs at the Acoustic Haven in Totnes mark the end of this season's run - and they are definitely not to be missed.

On Friday February 27 there's acoustic singer/songwriter Carrie Tree and her band. You can hear her at www.soundcloud.com/carrie-t-lurvly

version of Portishead's Glory Box. Support on the night comes from multi-instrumentalist Alex Roberts (www.alexrobertsmusic.com).

Then on Friday March 27, the John Langan Band (www.thejohnlanganband.com) bring what organiser Doug King-Smith describes as a "jaw-dropping gypsy folk spectacular". Their support is a one-of-a-kind set featuring UK organist Ian Curra and beat-boxer Treva Who, plus other special guests.

Add visuals by Mike Boyer (who we're assured is 99% funky) and you are assured two great nights out.

Delicious food and drink includes Tideford Soup, Katie's cakes and ale from The Albert (brewed across the road - local enough for you?) and the New Lion Brewery.

Tickets are on sale at Sacks Wholefoods in Totnes Narrows and online at www.wegotickets.com. Doors open 6.30pm.

(TQ7 1JD), www.harbourhouse.org.uk
FILM: Juliette of the Herbs, portrait of herbalist and traveller Juliette de Bairacli Levy, Transition Town Totnes film night, Civic Hall, doors open 7.30pm, www.transitiontowntotnes.org

THEATRE: Tarte Noir - Women's Playback Theatre Performance (women only) Bogan House, Totnes (TQ9 5NP). 7.45pm, www.tartenoire.co.uk

THURSDAY 12

UNTIL MARCH 28

THEATRE: After Electra - witty black comedy challenging what it means to be a mother, Theatre Royal, (PL1 2TR). 7.45pm. www.theatreroyal.com

FILM: Go Vegan film night. Exeter Phoenix, (EX4 3LS). www.ffa-uk.org

GIG: Sheelanagig delivers complex arrangements of original and traditional works in a Balkan style, South Devon Arts Centre, (TQ9 5LE). 7.30pm, www.southdevonarts.co.uk

FRIDAY 13

GIG: The People's String Foundation, scaling the heights of jazz, hip-hop beat-work, Middle Eastern melodies, The Barrel House, (TQ9 5PB). 8pm, www.barrelhousetotnes.co.uk

SATURDAY 14

GIG: Dartmouth Rock - Dartmouth's cappella pop/rock choir returns in a fundraising concert for the Flavel, The Flavel Arts Centre, (TQ6 9ND). 7.30pm. www.theflavel.org.uk

GIG: Mad Dog Mcrea, with support from Sam Green & the Midnight Heist + Sound of the Sirens, Exeter Phoenix, (EX4 3LS). 8pm, www.exeterphoenix.org.uk

GIG: The Little Unsaid returns with his full band, South Devon Arts Centre (TQ9 5LE). 7.30pm, www.southdevonarts.co.uk

GIG: Jo Harman and Company play a dynamic mix of styles from soul, blues and gospel fused with rootsy rock, Exeter Phoenix, (EX4 3LS). 8pm, www.exeterphoenix.org.uk

SUNDAY 15

THEATRE: Dr Seuss's The Cat in the Hat, first theatre experience for young children aged 3+, The Northcott Theatre, (EX4 4QB). 1.30pm, 3pm, www.exeternorthcott.co.uk

TUESDAY 17

THEATRE: Inside Out of Mind - a fusion of love stories, crisscrossing time and space, The Northcott Theatre, (EX4 4QB). 7.30pm, www.exeternorthcott.co.uk

DANCE: ROHLive Swan Lake - The Flavel Arts Centre, (TQ6 9ND). 7.15am. www.theflavel.org.uk

THEATRE: Tarte Noir - Women's Playback Theatre Performance (women only) New Cygnet Theatre, (EX2 4AZ). 7.45pm, www.tartenoire.co.uk

WEDNESDAY 18

UNTIL MARCH 20

THEATRE: Diaries of the Deceased: Courtyard Interruptions, with performance artists from Encounter Theatre & Therapy, Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery, (EX4 3RX). 11am, www.rammuseum.org.uk

FRIDAY 20

UNTIL MAY 2

ART: Mike Ricketts is interested in the ways in which urban planners and developers design and regulate public spaces, Exeter Phoenix, (EX4 3LS). 10am, www.exeterphoenix.org.uk

THEATRE: All's Well That Ends Well, Shakespeare presented by Countess Wear Community Theatre, Great Hall, Hannahs at Seale-Hayne, Newton Abbot, 7pm, tickets £8.50 (under 16s £6) on 01626 325825.

SATURDAY 21

GIG: Philip Henry and Hannah Martin, winners of 2014 Radio Two Folk Award for Best Duo, The Flavel Arts Centre, (TQ6 9ND). 7.30pm. www.theflavel.org.uk

SOCIAL: Embercombe Spring Open Day, FREE entry, lots of parking, yummy food, traditional outdoors childrens games, storytelling, local produce for sale, tractor rides and more. Embercombe, near Exeter (EX6 7QQ). 11am. www.embercombe.co.uk

FOOD: Go Vegan street stall with information, recipes & free food samples. High St, Exeter, www.ffa-uk.org

SUNDAY 22

GIG: Radioland - Kraftwerk's Radio-Activity Revisited. Exploring Kraftwerk's seminal 1975 album Radio-Activity as a live performance experience, Exeter Phoenix, (EX4 3LS). 8pm, www.exeterphoenix.org.uk

THURSDAY 26

THEATRE: Performances by Exeter College dance and textile students inspired by RAMM's collections, Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery, (EX4 3RX). 11.30am, www.rammuseum.org.uk

GIG: Yehudi Menuhin School Recital, The Flavel Arts Centre, (TQ6 9ND). 7.30pm www.theflavel.org.uk



Martha Tilston - at Exeter Phoenix on Sunday March 8.



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PEC's second share offer invites the community to co-own a new solar PV installation on the roof of Plymouth's Life Centre.

Buy a share in Life Centre solar

FOLLOWING the overwhelming success of Plymouth Energy Community's (PEC) first, multi-award winning solar share offer last year, it is launching its second.

PEC is now looking to ethical investors to co-own 1.2MW of solar PV installations on Plymouth's iconic Life Centre leisure centre, as well as a number of smaller community buildings.

"This scheme aims to save the City well in excess of £1million over the next 20 years," said PEC's CEO Alistair Macpherson. "It will pay a fair return to investors and provide valuable community benefit for PEC to continue its projects addressing fuel poverty and carbon emissions."

Last year, PEC raised over £600,000 from ethical investors through its renewables investment vehicle PEC Renewables - more than 50% of it from Plymouth residents.

Combined with a loan from Plymouth City Council, it financed 21 schools and community centres having free solar PV panels

installed. This first scheme totals 0.8MW and increased Plymouth's PV generation by 6% in just one year.

PEC already offers a number of energy services to achieve its aims: instant supplier switching service; fuel debt advice service; home energy improvement schemes; advice and mentoring service; energy advice at numerous community events and a training and volunteer scheme.

It will shortly be launching a home Energy Team service, providing free energy efficiency advice to residents in their homes. And future projects include offering bespoke tariffs, a supplier referral service and more share offers.

PEC Renewables chairman Dave Garland added: "These projects will leave a permanent and positive legacy, with a clear message about the community's energy future. Over the next five years PEC aspires to increase its solar installations to 5MW."

Find out more at plymouthenergycommunity.com.

Community power link to veg box farm

EXETER'S energy co-op has signed an agreement with a local veg box scheme to set-up the city's first ever source of community-owned electricity - and create an income for more community projects.

Exeter Community Energy (ECO) is getting local people to team up and invest in solar panels which will supply Shillingford Organics with cheap electricity. And the income created by selling electricity to the farm will then be used for community projects that tackle fuel poverty and energy efficiency.

Shillingford Organics owner Martyn Bragg said: "This is exciting for our business and for the local community - working together I



Martyn Bragg of Shillingford Organics and ECOE Exec Chair Gill Wyatt celebrate the community energy agreement.

believe we can use community energy to make a big, practical difference to people's lives in Exeter."

Visit ecoe.org.uk and shillingfordorganics.co.uk.

Festivals & shows '15

OUR UNIQUE GUIDE TO WESTCOUNTRY'S FINEST

FORGET mowing the lawn and washing the car (both of which do the environment no good at all) - we can fill almost every weekend of the Spring and Summer with festivals and shows.

As we go to press, not all of them have finalised their line-ups, but we've got website addresses for all of them so you can get the latest information.

And don't forget to drop by our own online festivals diary where you'll find even more amazing places to go.

Maybe you need to give up your job too...



Laugh out Loud Comedy Festival
Exeter Phoenix/Bike Shed Theatre, Exeter
February 4-8

EXETER'S comedy festival is back with gigs at two venues and a line-up including Jo Caulfield, Josie Long, John Shuttleworth, Andrew Lawrence, Ivo Graham, Sheeps, Liam Williams and lots more.
www.lolexeter.com

Infer Varsity Folk Dance Festival
Various venues across Exeter
February 27 - March 1

THE UK's longest-running folk festival offering a series of concerts, ceilidhs and barn dances from a selection of folk artists and this year hosted by Exeter.
www.ivdf2014.org.uk

Peninsula Arts Contemporary Music Festival
Plymouth University
February 27 - March 1

THE theme of the 2015 event is BioMusic: Music at the Cutting Edge

of Science and Creativity and the programme includes symposium, installations, film and a gala performance.

Dartmouth Comedy Festival
The Flavel, Dartmouth
March 4-8

MORE big laughs, this time hosted by The Flavel arts centre and including Andrew Lawrence, Alexi Sayle and Tony Law, plus some locals and up-and-comings.
www.theflavel.org.uk

Bristol International Jazz and Blues Festival
Colston Hall & O2 Academy
March 5-8

ALL flavours of jazz and blues from an impressive line-up that includes Dr John, Andy Sheppard Quartet, The Louis Armstrong Story (a tribute to the man who played Colston Hall more than 50 years ago), Paradox Ensemble, Slowly Rolling Camera and more.
www.bristoljazzandbluesfest.com

Teignmouth Classical Music Festival
At various Teignmouth venues
March 6-8

CHORAL, operatic and orchestral performances in venues from church to coffee shop.
www.south-devon-singers.org

Poetry Teignmouth
Various Teignmouth venues
March 19-22

THE comic and poignant poetry of Matt Harvey opens this festival, headlined by Mimi Khalvati, with workshops by Roselle Angwin and Penelope Shuttle.
www.poetryteignmouth.com

Exeter open Studios Artists' studios
March 20-22

A CHANCE to see the source of local creativity as artists throw open their studio doors to show their work in the spaces in which it was created.
www.exeteropenstudios.co.uk

Teignmouth Drama Festival
Teignmouth Community School
March 28-30

NOW in its 19th year, this competitive festival is for one-act plays. Some expenses will be paid and a whole range of awards will be handed out.
www.teignmouthdramafestival.org.uk

Budleigh Jazz Festival
Budleigh Public Hall
April 17-19

THREE big concerts featuring Devon Youth Jazz Orchestra, past and present members of the BBC Big Band in the BBC 'Small Band, and Clare Teal and her band.
www.budleighjazzfestival.org
Crediton Folk Weekend
Cheriton Fitzpaine
April 17-19

A MASSIVE line-up of folk music and dance performers in (and outside of) venues in Cheriton Fitzpaine.
www.creditonfolkweekend.co.uk

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

There are more festivals in our online diary - visit: www.reconnectonline.co.uk

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Conductor Brian Kay - at the Shaldon Festival.

Festivals

across Bath.
www.bathfestivals.org.uk

Plymouth Film Festival
Plymouth Arts Centre
May 16-17

NOW in its second year, the Plymouth Film Festival is already showcasing shorts by national and international filmmakers alongside the finest Westcountry offerings. Screenings, Q&As, networking, etc.
www.plymouthfilmfestival.co.uk

Devon County Show
Westpoint, Exeter
May 21-23

WE all know this one. The usual irresistible mix of all things rural and the commercial. Rare breeds and jacuzzis.
www.devoncountyshow.co.uk

Ashburton Blues Ashburton
Seale Hayne, Newton Abbot
May 22-24

SOMETHING for every blues fan - from pure acoustic, to blues/rock, to soul, to 60s R n' B, to country blues.
www.discoverhannahs.org

Bath Fringe Festival
Venues across Bath
May 22 - June 7

DAYS and days (and nights and nights) of music and comedy and theatre and visual arts and creative programming that keeps a very established event still fresh and still exciting.
www.discoverhannahs.org

Exeter Respect
Belmont Park, Exeter
June 6-7

EXETER'S annual celebration of community diversity with music, dance, visual arts, food and everything that makes us all different and all equal.
www.exeter-respect.org

Shaldon Festival
St Peter's Church, Shaldon
June 18-21

OVER 25 years, this classical music festival has drawn audiences from all over Devon and from further afield and in 2007 was nominated for the Royal Philharmonic Society Festival Award 2007.
www.shaldonfestival.co.uk

Gold Coast Ocean Fest
Croyde, North Devon
June 19-21

A HEADY mix of music, surf, beach games and sea air. The organisers say: "It's a lifestyle thing!" Sell your shoes and buy some decent shades.
www.goldcoastocceanfest.co.uk

Teignmouth Folk Festival
Various Teignmouth venues
June 19-21

TRADITIONAL folk festival featuring solo artists and bands - already confirmed for 2015 are The Young 'Uns, John Kirkpatrick, The New Scorpion Band and Nick Dow.
www.teignmouthfolk.co.uk

Ways With Words
Dartington
July 3-13

ONE of the top literary festivals - and it's right on our doorstep. No authors named as we go to press but it always attracts the big names. Check out the website for updates.
www.wayswithwords.co.uk

Glas-Denbury Music Festival
Fairfield Farm, Denbury
July 10-11

A POPULAR and family-friendly festival with acts from across the UK. This year's line-up include Billy Bottle and the Multiple (as seen on BBC's The Voice!), Land of the Giants, The Simmertones, Showhawk, Duo, Tankus The Henge and lots more.
www.glas-denbury.co.uk

Priddy Folk Festival
Priddy, Somerset
July 10-12

ORGANISED by volunteers not for profit, the festival started as a fundraiser in the village hall and although it's now much bigger, it remains true to its roots. The music performers haven't been revealed as we go to press but you can expect a wide selection of traditional performers. There's also a dance festival-within-the-festival.
www.priddyfolk.org

Rock oyster Festival
Dinham House, Wadebridge
July 11

PROMOTED as a midsummer celebration of food, music and art, visitors to the festival eat their way through thousands of Cornish oysters. There's also live music (Land of the Giants along the line-up), circus acts, children's entertainment, alternative performing arts and a shopping bazaar
www.rockoysterfestival.co.uk

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

Cheltenham Jazz Festival 2015
Cheltenham venues
April 29-May 4

NO names available as we go to press but the 2014 line-up included Jamie Cullum, Gregory Porter, Laura Mvula and Curtis Stigers...
www.cheltenhamfestivals.com

The Gathering 2015
Tapely Park, Instow
May 1-3

THIS North Devon festival is dedicated to didgeridoos but with no set performances - just non-stop, open mic jam sessions.
www.tapeleymusic.info

Paignton Bike Festival
Paignton
May 1-3

BIKE show, bands and all manner of bike-related fun - organised by Bikers Make A Difference with ALL takings going to charity.
www.bmad.co.uk

Bristol Folk Festival
St Georges and Bristol Folk House
May 2-3

BIG one for folkies, held at two top Bristol venues, St George's and Bristol Folk House. Currently confirmed for 2015: The Full English (featuring Seth Lakeman), Home Service and Steve Tilston.
www.bristolfolkfestival.co.uk

Dart Music Festival
Venues across Dartmouth
May 15-17

AN annual three-day music festival with a 'music for all' policy and more than 100 performances at a variety of venues from pubs to churches - and all free!
www.dartmusicfestival.co.uk

Bath International Music Festival
Venues across Bath
May 15-25

AN established and rich festival of classical, jazz, world, folk and electronica music, hosted by venues

Changes at Quest

IT'S good news and bad news for fans of Quest, the natural health and music festival that's been held at Newton Abbot racecourse for the past 19 years.

The bad news is that after a change in circumstances for the owner, the decision has been taken to have a year off - after all that time, maybe it deserves a break!

But the good news is that the Quest team are exploring the possibility of holding a one-off birthday party this year - and as we go to press, the rumour is that it might be at Seale-Hayne. Watch this space!

In the meantime, the owners would love to hear from anyone interested in getting involved to take the project forward.

Email dan@questuk.co.uk.

Right: the Carrivick Sisters at Quest.



&shows '15

Beautiful Days at Escot
Park - August 21-23

Galhampton Party in the Park, Near Castle Cary, Somerset July 11

A POPULAR and well-run little festival in the village of Galhampton, now in its eleventh year. Seven bands plus an acoustic stage, easy parking and locally sourced food and drink. This year's line-up includes The Real Thing and Talisman.

www.galhampton.com

Larmer Tree Festival Larmer Tree Gardens, Salisbury July 15-19

THERE'S a really varied programme at Larmer Tree, including music, comedy, circus, children's zone, theatre, talks, carnival – but no names as we go to press.

www.larmertreefestival.co.uk

Chagstock Whiddon Down July 17-18

CHAGSTOCK is hugely popular locally and strikes a perfect balance between size and atmosphere – big enough to feel like a proper festival but small enough to still be friendly and very family-friendly. Line-up not yet announced, but expect a mix of up and coming bands and some classic big names.

www.chagstock.info

Seed Festival Hawkwood, Stroud July 17-19

AS well as top World music performers, Seed Festival also offers speakers, eco-art, dance, poetry and lots more. The line-up includes Satish Kumar, Jonathan Porritt, Matt Harvey, Natalie Bennett and Nigel Shaw.

www.seedfestival.co.uk

WOMAD Malmesbury July 23-26

WOMAD is THE world music and dance festival and attracts big-name acts from around the planet. Watch their website for line-up details but it doesn't actually make much difference who's appearing there.

www.womad.co.uk

Kozfest Uffculme July 24-26

THE organisers describe Kozfest as "an old-skool style festival" and say proudly that there are no corporates, no sponsorship and no profit. "The music is current, not archaic, although the styles are, for the most part, pure psychedelia," they add.

Search 'Kozfest' online.

Green Gathering Chepstow August 13-16

SLIGHTLY out of our patch but the Green Festival is so special it's worth travelling for – its 2015 strapline is 'Performance meets

permaculture'. Four solar-powered stages feature over 100 up-and-coming bands, festie legends, DJs and poets. You can also enjoy crafts, campaigns and alternative technology. Headliner is the wonderful Martha Tilston.

www.greengathering.org.uk

Port Eliot Festival St Germans, Cornwall July 30-August 2

THE beautiful Port Eliot setting is impressive but its clever mix of music and words really sets it apart. As well as big-name music acts like Public Service Broadcasting, Cate Le Bon and Julian Cope, there's also comedy, drama, dance, discussion and... you really do need to check out the website for the full story on this one. It is very impressive.

www.porteliotfestival.com

Sidmouth Folk Week Venues across Sidmouth July 31-August 7

EVERY, and we mean every, folk music is featured in this festival's amazing programme – and at every type of venue. A must for every folk fan. Big names include Altan, Show of Hands (back after a year off) and Martin Carthy.

www.sidmouthfolkweek.co.uk

Dartmoor Folk Festival South Zeal August 7-9

IT'S been said that this one manages to be DIY and at the same time professional. The line-up is varied and impressive (including The New Rope String Band) and also includes traditional dance and ceilidhs.

www.dartmoorfolkfestival.org.uk

Holicair Festival Gweek, Cornwall August 7-9

THIS family-friendly fundraising celebration includes 30 live



bands, talks, cabaret, barn dance, kids area with loads of great workshops, dance tent, chillout space, walkabout acts, firepit, theatre, storytelling, bar, craft and wellbeing area – all raising funds for The Holifield Farm Project Day Care Centre for people with Special Needs.

www.holifieldfarmproject.co.uk

Love Summer Surf Camp Secret location August 14-16

AFTER the success of their DiscoCamp last year, the organisers are back with this one for 2015. No line-up revealed yet, and although the Devon beach venue is booked and licensed, it's remaining a secret. Probably the most fun you'll have this year for £50, say the organisers.

www.lovesummerfestival.com

Green Man Brecon Beacons August 20-23

AGAIN a little out of our region, but if you're into new music, this one has a truly impressive line-up right across the wide choice of stages and areas. Try Daughter, Augustines, The War on Drugs, First Aid Kit, Nick Mulvey, Polica plus all manner of wacky comedy and theatre.

www.greenman.net

Beautiful Days Escot Park August 21-23

ANOTHER local 'big little' festival – big enough for top bands and festie feel, small enough to stay family-friendly. No line-up announced as we go to press. We'll tell you more when we know it. In the meantime, keep an eye on...

www.beautifuldays.org

Purbeck Folk Festival Purbeck Valley Farm August 27-30

PROUD to call itself 'a small festival', the organisers say it's a unique and compact farm 'arena' with professional stages in barns. "It's a little farm yard so it doesn't take you ages to walk from one stage to the other, and it's always easy to find your friends," they add. Sounds cute.

www.purbeckvalleyfolkfestival.co.uk

End of the Road Festival Larmer Tree Gardens September 4-6

THIS is one of the last big-name festivals of the season and boasts an impressive (already announced) line-up, including The Flaming Lips, John Grant and St Vincent. Plus workshops, film, comedy and literature stages.

www.endoftheroadfestival.com

Stone rolls back the years in a festival of photography

THE amazing bubble picture on the cover of this issue was the work of Stone, award-winning photographer and friend of Reconnect.

He's taken thousands of festie pics over the years and 2015 will be his 25th time at Glastonbury. This image, right, was taken there in 1995.

Stone doesn't only work at festivals, but it is important to him that he establishes a deep and meaningful connection with his subject.

If he sounds like the kind of photographer you're looking for, call him on 01837 851793 or search for 'stone the photographer' on Facebook.



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Pudding us right over sugary foods

SCONES and sticky toffee pudding have virtually become British institutions but, although it's taken a while, experts seem finally to be accepting refined sugars play havoc with our bodies.

But why is the white stuff so bad?

"Well," says Oliver Cowmeadow at the International Macrobiotic School near Totnes, "refined sugar contains no nutrients; only energy and empty calories."

"To process sugar our body has to deplete its stores of vitamins, minerals and enzymes from healthy cells to metabolise it. And by depleting the body of minerals such as calcium, sodium, potassium and magnesium, your bones become more susceptible to osteoporosis and teeth are likely to decay."

A whole host of other degenerative conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease and auto-immune diseases are linked to over eating sugar.

And a single can of Pepsi contains nine teaspoons of sugar, so it can be hard for people to understand how much they are consuming and what harm it is doing.

There are, though, plenty of healthy



alternatives so you don't have to give up your favourite foods.

The Macrobiotic School is running a Winter Desserts workshop on February 7, looking at sugar and dairy-free alternatives, and a whole weekend of wholefood cookery (Love Health Love Cooking) on March 7/8.

Find out more at www.macroschool.co.uk or call 01803 762598.

Giving veganism a try with the EFFA

EXETER Friends For Animals (EFFA) is once again offering free help and advice to anyone wanting to try veganism this Spring and beyond.

Now in its fourth year, this Exeter-based initiative has snowballed from a basic mentoring scheme into a full month of events and activities across Exeter, including food tastings, street stalls, film nights, cookery demos and social events such as drop-in drinks nights and meals at local eateries.

EFFA coordinator Martin Fox says: "Everyone is welcome to our events, whether meat-eaters thinking about going veggie, vegetarians looking to take the next step or vegans seeking like-

minded company and inspiration. We can even provide you with a 'vegan buddy' to help you on your way!"

The group has also produced a Vegan Guide to Eating Out in Exeter and Devon, available at all its events and on the EFFA website.

Go Vegan with EFFA launches on Saturday March 7 at St Stephen's Church in Exeter, and culminates in a grand Vegan Bake Sale and Food Fair at the Palace Gate Centre on Saturday April 18.

Details of all events at www.ffa-uk.org or facebook page www.facebook.com/exeterfriendsforanimals. Call 01395 579353.

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Thrive Café
thrivecafe.co.uk

Thrive Cafe is now open every Friday & Saturday Night as a Wine Bar & Pizzeria - Including Takeaway!



Offering Organic alcohol, Live Musicians and Poets and awesome Organic Spelt Vegetarian and Seafood Pizzas - Thrive really is worth checking out as potentially the best Pizzas in town!

Thrive Cafe is establishing itself as an evening venue and from February will be offering weekday Film Nights and Talks with our new surround sound and vision HD Cinema covering controversial, cultural and cutting edge issues.



Thrive Cafe is now filling the gap, providing a true Totnes ethos venue with integrity, style and the highest standards of vibrant health food cuisine.

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



NATURALLY NOURISHING

FOOD markets and small, independent stores are the best source of real food argues our food writer, JANE HUTTON



Markets for real, healthy food

SO, Christmas is a distant memory, the January blues are over with, and it's all down hill to Spring!

Winter is such a busy foodie time for me, with all the celebratory cooking that goes on. This Winter, and Christmas in particular, have been even more foodily fantastic, thanks to the incredible upsurge in local producers and markets.

The best thing was seeing how popular the markets were. I could barely move at Royal William Yard's monthly producer market, or at Crocadon, or Totnes - people from all walks of life had their taste buds out in force, appreciating everything from Devon Ruby beef to fruit juices, goat's cheese to veggie curries, and even eggs from a chap who knew the name of each hen (and which eggs they'd laid) who delivers to your door!

The plethora of Christmas markets also featured a healthy selection of artisan food businesses, all here for life (I hope), not just for Christmas. How wonderful to see small farmers bringing a whole range of produce - including the staff of life, bread.

Many times, when a client has stomach problems, I've suggested eating true artisan bread. In the

majority of cases, with a couple of other tweaks, they discover wheat and gluten weren't the problem - ingredients and processing were triggering other issues.

My point here is that fresh food is real food; real food is healthy

food. Packaged equals processed, with most of the goodness stripped out; fruit and veg might look fresh, but how fresh are they in reality? Sometimes weeks old, nutrients degrading with every day that passes.

Properly made loaves used to be hard to find, but not any more - all you need is a monthly market, and that's your bread sorted (as long as you have a freezer). The variety, taste, nutrient

and health benefits offered by well made bread can't be beaten.

The supermarkets have cottoned on to the demand, but ask the right questions and you find that the artisan offerings aren't as fresh and unprocessed as the clever marketing suggests.

So do yourself and your tummy a favour: visit a monthly market and stock up, and not just on bread.

And when you've got a lovely loaf, some fresh eggs, and a few rocket leaves, have a go at this hollandaise sauce for a gorgeously decadent meal. Enjoy!



Hollandaise - a taste of decadence

INGREDIENTS: four large free-range egg yolks; 250g cold unsalted butter, diced; one tbsp of lemon juice (adjust to taste); seasoning.

PUT a cold, heavy-based pan (like Le Creuset) on the hob, add the yolks, butter and two tbsp of water. Begin to heat very gently, whisking the contents constantly. The butter will melt, and the sauce will begin to thicken, but keep the heat low - this is not a quick process, but worth it! Overheat and it will split.

Once the butter has melted, you can increase the heat a little, whisking vigorously until the sauce thickens. Should it begin to get hot, take off the heat, but keep on whisking.

When the sauce is thickened to the consistency you like, stir in the tablespoon of lemon juice (more if you like it sharper) and season.

Serve immediately, or keep warm in a bowl over a pan of hot water (don't let the water touch the bowl) Spoon over your eggs, asparagus, or anything else you fancy!

Naturally Nourishing is written by nutritionist and "confirmed foodie" Jane Hutton. Find out more about her eating plans, masterclasses and recipe blog at www.trinityholistics.co.uk.

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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

March 7th - 8th
A weekend of whole food, plant-based cookery. Learn how to create nourishing healing meals that will delight your whole family.

Looking After Your Health

March 11 - 15th
5 days of amazing food and hands-on cookery lessons. Understand the condition of your health using oriental diagnosis, to create balance in your life and lasting positive changes.

International Macrobiotic School - Totnes
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The Brake - in among the trees and with a view of Start Bay, below left.

Home is where the art is

FOR a long time, Nick and Dolly Kary knew exactly what they wanted – to combine their family and creative lives and then to inspire others to free their own creativity.

But first they needed to create the space in which this alchemy could take place. And that's where things became a little more tricky.

Eventually their dream began to find form when they discovered a one-acre plot in South Devon, overlooking Start Bay. It had "roses over the shoulder of an arching spruce, great sentinels of towering beech trees and a glimpse of pink to the sea beyond". It was perfect.

Today, some 15 years later, that piece of secluded land is home to The Brake, which in turn is home to the Kary family and a haven to which people come from far and wide to get away from it all.

Among the beech trees there are now wooden cabins, designed and hand-crafted by Nick (with the help of friends and family) comprising the main family house, workshop, studio and bakehouse, where everyone gathers around the large cob oven to bake bread, cook and enjoy pizza evenings. There is also a holiday cabin and a seaview apartment, both of which are available as holiday lets.

The result is a perfect blend of beauty and practicality - and all the more amazing when you consider all the wood is locally sourced, and all the furniture and fittings made from local wood dried on the premises.

Nick admits: "It has taken a huge amount of time and effort to get there, while all the time keeping the needs of the family as a constant focus. But we knew that as well as creating our perfect family home, one day we would use it as a creative centre to inspire people to reconnect with their hands through art and making."

And that day has come.

Nick, who has worked as a furniture maker and designer for the last 30 years, now runs a Wednesday evening class called Journey to Making, which "allows anyone who has ever wanted to learn more about working with wood the opportunity to fulfil their dreams."

He explained: "Over the last 10 years I have increasingly used my love of wood and word to facilitate and teach. Wood and words, trees and people, material and ethereal - it is here I love increasingly to dwell."

From May, Dolly will run her Creative Being art workshops on regular weekends through the year.

"In the calm of my studio, participants will be able to play and experiment through a unique combination of techniques I've developed over the years," said Dolly.

"From our home and creative environment, I manifest my dream to develop a place where people from all walks of life meet through a shared desire to free their creative spirits," says Dolly. "I have a passion for facilitating and promoting the opportunity for others to explore their own creativity."

Towards the end of the year, the couple will together run Earthdrawn Courses, which will integrate various hands-on experiences.

Visit www.thebrake.net, or call 01803 712303 or 07735 424583.



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

www.embercombe.co.uk

Upcyclers plan new workshops

REFURNISH'S upcycling project, Re-Store in Dartington, recently celebrated its first birthday and is hosting a series of public workshops.

They start in February/March and will all focus on the re-use of materials, including seat upholstery, seat caning, mosaic work, wild weaving, rag rug-style peg looming, soft toy making and materials plaiting.

The Re-Store is a social enterprise and part of the local charity Refurnish Devon, which aims to reduce waste and provide training, employment and volunteering possibilities.

Volunteer Mel said: "I always enjoy my time at The Re-Store. It's such a great place to meet new people, learn and share skills and experience."

Project coordinator Adrian Porter said: "The sessions will be affordable and give people the chance to learn new skills and share skills they already have. Let us know if there is a particular skill you would like to learn or if you have skills you would like to share."

The Re-Store is also hosting regular drop-in Repair Cafes, 10am-1.30pm on the last Saturday of each month. People are invited to take in items needing attention and get advice along with a cuppa and cake.



"The shop displays the work of 20 volunteer artists and makers who rejuvenate, re-store and re-create donated furniture and accessories into fabulous and funky items for your home," says Adrian. "Each piece is unique."

The Re-Store shop and workshop are at The Shops at Dartington, in the old Pottery on the cycle path leading from the shops towards Totnes.

To book a workshop, if you have any items or materials to donate, or if you are interested in volunteering, email dartington@refurnish.org.uk or call 01803 868637.

Follow The Re-Store at www.facebook.com/ReStoreDartington.

ORGANIC GARDENING

IT'S time for Operation Clear-up in the garden but if you have a greenhouse you are going to be SOW busy, says JOA GROWER



It's time for sowing and spuds

WELL, here we go with another growing season ahead of us. For those of you with greenhouses it's time for sowing, sowing and more sowing. But that doesn't mean you have to sow a whole packet every time - the majority of seeds will last two or three years if you store them properly in a cool dry place (a sweet or biscuit tin in the shed is ideal).

And don't forget to keep an eye on the forecast for frosts because plants in an unheated greenhouse may still need just a little more extra protection.

Those of you growing your seeds on the window sill indoors should remember that as soon as your seedlings start to appear, you must turn the pots or trays every day to prevent them becoming tall and straggly.

Outside it's tidy-up time. Clear away any old and unwanted plants and weeds from the previous season and spread homemade compost or well-rotted manure over your beds. No need to dig it in - the worms will do that for you.

Feed any Autumn-planted brassicas with liquid comfrey or a general fertiliser and pick your purple sprouting broccoli regularly to encourage more spears. You've

waited months for it to produce so you might as well get the maximum crop from it!

Seed potatoes are now available. We have a selection of certified organic early and main crop both at the nursery and on our market stall at Totnes Market (we'll be back there from the second Friday in February).

Chitting (or sprouting) potatoes is not essential but it does help them get off to a good start. Simply place them in seed trays or egg boxes for a few weeks in the greenhouse or on a window sill. The growing shoots should be nice and short and stocky, not tall, pale and

spindly because these will probably get damaged when planted out.

Also, when planting don't forget to label which are your earlies and which are your main crop. Early potatoes you dig up from July onwards, as and when you need them, and your main crop are for harvesting in the Autumn - for using and storing over the Winter months.

Onion sets and shallots are also available now. After planting them out, keep an eye on them because the birds have great fun pulling them back up! They can usually be deterred by a few shiny CDs.



Pick purple sprouting broccoli regularly to encourage spears.

Beware late visits from J Frost esq

IT'S always tricky knowing when to plant out newly raised seedlings or recently bought transplants (we will soon have a large selection to choose from at Growers Organics), so here are a few tips on protecting them from those late frosts.

Probably the easiest thing you can do is cover your plants with horticultural fleece - it's amazing stuff and really does keep the frost off. A simple cloche is also fairly simple to erect - use rigid blue water pipe (available from builders' merchants) to create the hoops. Make them no lower than 60cm high so you can use them later in

the year with netting to protect your plants from birds or butterflies. Then cover with fleece - or polythene to create a mini poly tunnel.

If you want to get really posh you could try making a cold frame. For this you will need to find one or two old windows (the local recycling centre is always a good place to look) and some good solid boards or bricks. Again try to make it high enough to accommodate taller plants throughout the season.

Growers Organics nursery at Yealmpton will reopen for the new season on Saturday February 14.

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

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An image from the symposium on Climate Change and Art at Plymouth Arts Centre.

Climate change through lens of art

THERE'S a chance to get close to the work of Gideon Mendel, widely regarded as one of the world's leading documentary photographers, at an exhibition at Plymouth Arts Centre.

Much of the work in the exhibition focuses on the Somerset and Thames Valley floods of the 2013/14 Winter - images of landscapes vanishing underwater and portraits of flood victims in their own homes.

The exhibition, in collaboration with Fotonow CIC, runs until 15 March.

A symposium on Climate Change and Art, at Plymouth Arts Centre on Friday February 20 will look at the role the arts can play in encouraging communities to take an active part in

climate change measures. Speakers will include: authors Gina Glover and Jessica Rayner; Dr Catherine Butler from the University of Exeter; Regen programme manager SW Chloe Uden; and Tao Wimbush (via Skype), a founding member of Lammas eco village.

The Symposium costs £30 for the day. Visit www.plymouthartscentre.org or phone 01752 206114 to book a place.

A screening of the film *Chasing Ice*, featuring hauntingly beautiful time-lapse video, will follow the Symposium on February 20 at 6pm. Tickets for the film cost £7.50 (£6.50 conc) and advance booking recommended.

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South Devon has a long history of alternative education. Among the providers is a new independent school in Totnes. JON STEIN dusts off his satchel and goes to find out more...

New kid on the block

STEPPING through the door of Totnes Progressive School (ToPS), behind the town's central library, is like visiting the home of a large, friendly family. One lad is meditating on a sofa; another cheerfully plays air-guitar to an imaginary soundtrack. Some girls are chatting animatedly at the far end of the hall. It's early afternoon, and the students are waiting to begin their optional activities including music, drama and outdoor pursuits.

Head teacher, Ross Robens, brings me some tea and leads me to a classroom upstairs.

"I was getting disillusioned with the way learning was going in the mainstream," he says, "and felt I could use my teaching and management experience in schools to create something that put a higher value on the children's wellbeing."

From a home-schooling group set up in Sept 2013, the idea arose of starting an independent school in Totnes. Ross head-hunted some expert teachers and quickly attracted more pupils from the local community – both from state, and other alternative schools.

Moving to the present site in Sept 2014 and now registered with Ofsted, ToPS currently has 27 students and a regular staff of eight.

No homework!

What distinguishes ToPS from the more established

alternative schools in the area? Ross points to the balance between freedom and discipline. "We replace discipline with a therapeutic approach. If there's a problem, the child can speak to anyone on the staff, including a life-coach."

This emphasis on empowering the children extends to the classroom, where students are encouraged to take some responsibility for their own education.

There is no formal homework, but pupils will sometimes put in extra time to learn out of interest and curiosity. Their autonomy has limits. "We're not a democracy in the sense of putting everything to the vote," explains Ross. "Sometimes the adults have to make decisions, for example on moral issues."

Small is Beautiful

These boundaries are reflected in the structure of the school day. Beginning with circle time (an opportunity for community sharing), the morning follows a curriculum-based timetable covering all KS3 topics and GCSEs. The results show this balance of directed and self-directed learning works. Of 2014's GCSE results, 87% were grades A* to C. Ross is proud of the results but says it doesn't matter "whether a kid wants to be a doctor or a woodcutter. What's important is that the experience of school be positive."



Pupils outside T

Staying small is to maintain a safe, environment. They are plans to add for A levels in 20 (and eventually to larger premises) intake must be g important we gr says Ross, "to m family feeling." As I leave I see y enjoying a dram

Libraries booked artworks

A DEVON artist who works with "old, redundant, antiquarian" books has created 12 of his Speaking Volumes, which will be given to libraries across the county.

Derek Finch received an Arts Council Grant for the Arts Award to create seven works based on famous Devon people and five on well-known Devon stories.

All 71 libraries in Devon were offered the books on a first come, first-served basis, with priority being given to those with a connection with the subject or subject matter.

The allocations were made in December with Plymouth Central Library, Devonport, Torquay Central Library, Plympton, Kingskerswell, Bovey Tracey, Totnes and

Chulmleigh all being awarded books.

Derek's subjects are Beryl Cook, Alfred Wallis, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Agatha Christie, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Captain Robert Falcon Scott and Dr Mabel Ramsay.

And the five traditional Devon stories portrayed are: the first humans at Kent's Cavern; Hallsands; the 'witches' of Bideford; the blitz in Plymouth; and the



Derek Finch's wo



Totnes Progressive School.

one way to
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ough there
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015/16
to move to
student
radual. "It's
ow slowly,"
aintain the
youngsters
a class, their

faces bright as they rehearse. The scent of incense warms the atmosphere along with their enthusiasm. Stepping outside, I feel like I've visited a healthy, happy school.

To find out more, visit www.totnesprogressiveschool.co.uk or call 01803 864484

Jon Stein is a writer and musician living in Totnes. See and hear more of his work at: www.jonstein.co.uk



Work on Agatha Christie, part of Speaking Volumes.

story of Sir Francis Drake's leat...
The work will be on display in libraries from the middle of April.

Question time for Boomers

BABY boomers should ask themselves some questions about their retirement plans, says Andrew Hillier of Barchester Green Investment...



IN 2014, around 870,000 people in the UK reached their 50th birthday - for the first time the entire generation of post-war Baby Boomers (born between 1946-1964 when there was a dramatic increase in Western World birth rates) are all over 50.

The Westcountry has the highest number of baby boomer hotspots in the country, making up 25% of the population and with an average life expectancy of 20 years from the age of 65.

2015 will see a year of major pension reforms, with George Osborne's announcement that from April legislation will change to allow greater freedom and flexibility in drawing your pension benefits, allowing people to start accessing their pension pots from age 55.

So what does all this mean to those approaching or nearing retirement? And what actions should you consider with existing savings, investment and retirement plans?

1 First check if your existing plans are on course to provide the income and capital you need in retirement.

2 Then, will your existing provider offer you the flexibility to draw your benefits as you wish?

3 Check if any plans from the 1970s and 80s have guaranteed rates of return.

4 Are you making the most of the available and increased tax allowances?

5 Charges on retirement plans have fallen in recent years - are you paying too much to your pension provider?

6 Is your money invested in funds that offer value for money and meet your appetite for risk?

7 If you are not sure what to do, take advice from an adviser remunerated for giving advice, not based only on product sales. Yes it costs, but it costs an awful lot more if you make the wrong decision.

8 And, last but not least, are your funds invested in a way that matches your social conscience?

If you would like to have an initial conversation or ask any questions about the forthcoming changes, call Barchester on 01722 331241 or email info@barchestergreen.co.uk. For more details, see the advertisement on the back page.

This article is for information only and does not constitute advice. If you require advice, contact your financial adviser.



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Community hopes for secure future

AFTER years of battling with planners, Steward Community Woodland, on the edge of Dartmoor near Moretonhampstead, is now a thriving community of thirteen adults, children and teenagers.

And after 15 years of successful experimentation in sustainable living, they are now applying for permanent planning permission to be able to continue their project into the future with certainty.

Community residents argue it's a perfect example of low-impact, off-grid living, using natural resources for fuel, building

materials, water and power.

Through their courses, open days, volunteer weeks and educational trips, more than a thousand people visit each year to learn about and participate in sustainable living, permaculture, and nature connection.

If you would like to volunteer at the woods, check out their courses, or support the planning application, go to www.stewardwood.org, phone 01647 440233, or search for StewardCommunityWoodland on Facebook.



Steward Community Woodland - a positive example of sustainable community building, living and working.



Volunteers planting at Trees for Health.

On course for busy year

TREES for Health, at Beeson near Kingsbridge, is branching out in 2015 with its agroforestry project, Discover Forest Foods.

The three-acre site grows foods using methods that mimic nature, including perennials, a one-acre forest garden and creating a balanced ecosystem.

Trees and shrubs planted three years ago are becoming increasingly productive and the project is now offering more workshops, volunteer opportunities and produce.

On February 6, a workshop called 'Tree Planting: what, where, how' will look at food, medicinal, craft and wood uses, as well as appropriate planting and tree care.

On February 8, there's a tree planting day. And on February 25, a willow workshop will cover care for willow beds, planting and maintaining a living woven fence, weaving small craft items and looking at their new woodfuel willow bed.

In March they will run a chestnut fencing workshop and from Spring onwards: wild food, how to build a compost toilet, green woodworking, scything and edible perennials from the forest garden.

Workshops cost £50 per day but subsidised places are available on application. There are also weekly volunteering opportunities.

If you would like to donate to their work, visit www.localgiving.com/charity/treesforhealth to give monthly or make a one-off payment.

Find out more at www.treesforhealth.org.



First woodland workshop 'a great success'

WOOD Land Culture, the community interest company set up to teach rural skills and promote sustainable rural livelihoods, has held its first workshop.

Extracting Timber From Small Woodlands, at The Hillyfield on Dartmoor National Park, was led by two experienced forest workers, who shared skills in horse logging (Will Hampton from Dartmoor Horse Loggers) and extracting timber from small woodlands (Mike Gardner from Woodmanship).

"It was a great success," said The Hillyfield's Doug King-Smith. "I had no idea it would be so popular - 22 people turned up to learn new skills and they all said the workshop was exceptional."

The event was supported by RDI Associates and ADAS through the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) for which Defra is the managing authority, part-funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

"It was great to have such experienced foresters share their skills here," said Doug.

There's also the chance to get involved in another Wood Land Culture workshop on



The magnificent William with Will Hampton at The Hillyfield workshop.

February 21. 'Non-Timber Forest Products - diversifying woodland income' will include 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 from 11am to 3.30pm and the cost is £75, or just £35 for anyone who

works in woodland.

To find out more, or if you are interested in getting experience in felling trees (The Hillyfield is about to embark on felling more larch due to a disease in the trees), email Doug at thehillyfield@gmail.com.

To find out about more events, join the Facebook page 'The Hillyfield Woodland Farm on Dartmoor'.

Aye-up, me ducks...

IT'S been a busy few months at Hillyfield Hens, the poultry project on The Hillyfield Dartmoor woodland farm.

We can exclusively reveal news of the arrival of rare-breed Buff Orpington ducks - a drake called Coco and two, as yet anonymous, females.

The hens have all been moved onto fresh pasture and the layers spend happy hours grubbing around under the brambles and bracken for bugs. The eggs are amazing!

Also new are Hillyfield Goldies - a cross between Light Sussex hens and a rather handsome Gold Silkie cockerel.

We're planning a full catch-up in the next issue but in the meantime, search Facebook for the new Hillyfield Hens page.



The newly arrived trio of Buff Orpington ducks.

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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Call Martin on 01803 868455 or email wellbeing@reconnectonline.co.uk.

Inside wellbeing...

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And there's lots more to read inside



Inside David's 300-year-old cave that is home to David and his retreats.

Absorb the wisdom of Spain

ON a cold day in early Spring, the appeal of a Summer retreat in rural Spain seems almost irresistible.

Therapist David Boldick realised a long-held dream back in June 2008 when he held his first healing retreat at Le Teja in Andalucia. This year he will again be offering small groups the chance to experience the uniquely healing atmosphere of his 300-year old cave home.

He explained: "I have always felt this place has deeply peaceful healing energies and wanted to share that with other people.

"For the last few years, I have run retreats which provide a mix of workshops and treatments, combined with the natural healing energies of this unique environment. They have proved incredibly popular and I am offering them again this year. Dates are yet to be finalised but they will be in the Summer and Autumn."

The house is called Un Sueno Hecho Realidad - literally translated as A Dream Come True - and David is dedicated not only to making his own dreams come true but those of other people too.

The retreats provide a rare opportunity for people to leave behind their hectic lives and explore the nature of healing in a profoundly peaceful place. Treatments offered include Reiki, Indian Head Massage, Craniosacral and Iahinoor, a powerful transmission for healing and awakening. Alongside organised healing activities, there is plenty of time for walking, swimming and chilling out.

"Notebooks are not a prerequisite," added David. "Wisdom can be absorbed from the atmosphere and the energy around and within."

For more information visit www.cavehealingretreat.com or call 07831 336762 / 01626 777748.



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House is home to new retreats

MINDFULNESS means focusing your awareness on the here and now, at the same time as acknowledging any thoughts, feelings and sensations that occur within your body, in order to achieve peace, calm and connection.

Much has been written about the benefits of mindfulness (including here in your very own Reconnect) and it is now regarded by the NHS as a clinically-proven practice that can help towards reducing stress and enhancing overall levels of health and wellbeing.

The Sharpham Trust has been recognised as a centre for mindfulness since the 1980s and is now offering two retreat venues to help people to discover the life-changing benefits of mindfulness practice.

In addition to the Barn Retreat Centre, which was named by The Daily Telegraph in 2011 as one of the top eight retreats in the UK and Europe, mindfulness retreats now take place within Grade I-listed Sharpham House. These include beginners' retreats and themed retreats including mindfulness with yoga, gardening, singing, cookery, qi-gong or walking.

Ben Ballard, programme manager at The Sharpham Trust, explained: "The practice of mindfulness lies at the core of many of our activities. It allows us to pay attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally. The Barn Retreat Centre has offered retreats based on the Buddhist tradition for more than 25 years and we are now

complementing this with retreats within Sharpham House itself.

"These retreats are secular and suitable for anyone looking to restore, rejuvenate, relax, de-stress and reconnect with themselves and nature in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. They are perfect for those newer to mindfulness and meditation as well as those with more experience, keen to integrate their practice into everyday life."

Unlike the Barn Retreat Centre, which is self-catering, retreats within Sharpham House are fully-catered with support from house staff. This allows participants to relax fully and make the most of the venue's peaceful atmosphere. Sharpham House is set within a 550-acre estate beside the River Dart.

For more information and to book securely online visit www.sharphamtrust.org/Whats-on, or call 01803 732542. Join the mailing list via the Sharpham Trust website to hear about new retreats as soon as they are available.



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Sample yoga forms at Totnes festival

YOGA taps into our innate source of stability, gives strength to our bodies and expands our awareness into the present moment.

The annual Yogafest returns to Totnes on Saturday April 11, offering the chance to try nine different styles of yoga in one day. These include familiar forms such as Dru Yoga and Ashtanga, and less familiar forms like Womb Yoga.

Yoga Kitchen will be providing delicious healthy foods

throughout the day and the event culminates in chanting "to lift the spirit even higher."

A day ticket costs £35 (£30 concession), including chai and Kirtan (the chanting), and 10% of the proceeds go to the Guru Ram Das project to help people in need through the practice of Yoga. £6 drop in-classes will be available, where space allows.

For more details visit: www.yogafest-totnes.co.uk. Email yogafestotnes@gmail.com or call 07894 444506.

Reconnecting with inner-wisdom

THE reason any of us become unhappy or ill, according to Xenia Berndt, is that we have lost connection with parts of ourselves. As a qualified Creative Kinesiologist, Movement Medicine apprentice facilitator and psychological astrologer, with a degree in Business Administration and Psychology, Xenia helps to bring people back into connection with the inner-wisdom of their body, heart, mind and spirit.



Xenia Berndt

Xenia had worked as a psychological astrologer for four years when she came across Movement Medicine.

She explained: "Movement Medicine is the bedrock of my astrological counselling and healing work. This is a movement meditation practice designed to connect us with ourselves and the wider world.

When we are firmly anchored in our body and in the present moments, we have the capacity to reconcile and heal our emotional wounds and physical illnesses."

Alongside this, she uses Creative Kinesiology to identify imbalances in the physical, emotional, mental and energy system, using the biofeedback mechanism of our bodies. It works with gentle non-invasive touch and guidance to bring people back into balance and health.

Xenia is holding a workshop in February called 'Find out who you really are'. It takes place on Saturday February 21, from 2-5pm in Exeter. For more details contact xenia@healing-insight-guidance.com or call 07748 614961.

She explained: "I hold a space in which people gain access to their inner-world and their capacity to heal. Psychological Astrology works by shedding light on the dynamics below the level of consciousness. "This is the place where patterns and habits are held that we seem to have no control over and which can make our life extremely difficult at times. I help people to identify and work with those patterns and habits constructively. Astrology provides a map to our inner-world. Once we understand this map and learn to walk our inner-territory we begin to create our lives consciously so we can become happy and fulfilled."

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These are just some of the programmes offered by The Sea School of Embodiment in Dawlish.

The school aims to “help people to reclaim their sexuality” and hosts a programme of international training events and group workshops, as well as one-to-one coaching and therapy covering sexuality, intimacy and sex education.

Co-founder Kian de la Cour is a somatic sex coach, sexological bodyworker and teacher of erotic massage and sensual touch workshops.

He explained: “We work with individuals and couples of all sexual orientations, gender identities, characteristics and expressions. We believe all of our pleasures and wounds are stored in the mind of our body - our bodymind - and that touch can be a profoundly integrating bridge to access this wisdom.”

Kian holds a degree in Health Sciences: Nutritional Therapy from the University of Westminster and has studied shamanic sexuality (Quodoushka) and completed Body



Electric’s Sacred Intimate Training in California in 1994.

Co-founder Katie Sarra is a sex and relationship therapist, sexological bodyworker, sex educator and tantra teacher. She holds a post graduate diploma in art psychotherapy from the University of Hertfordshire.

She also paints people naked “to heal their body image” and says many men and women have overcome the obstacles in the way of them loving themselves through this experience.

The Sea School events are aimed at various levels of experience and include introductions to tantra and sexological bodywork as well as classes in sensual touch and anatomy.

The school works with

women, men and couples and, as well as holding group events, offers individual sessions between two to four hours in length. For professionals working in the field of sexuality, the school offers a wide range of Continuing Professional Development.

Both Katie and Kian follow the Code of Ethics of the Association of Certified Sexological Bodyworkers.

Visit www.seaschoolofembodiment.com or email katie@katiesarra.com. Call Kian de la Cour on 07952 469848 or Katie Sarra on 07540 571745.



Katie Sarra and Kian de la Cour of The Sea School of Embodiment

Jo offers massage to the whole community

MASSAGE should be accessible to everyone, regardless of how much time or money is available to them, says therapist Jo Raeburn.

Jo offers Indian head massage in the community – in Totnes market square, at Leechwell Gardens and inside Greenlife store.

Treatments can be anything from five-minutes to an hour in length

and range from no-cost to low-cost. Jo also works with the gift economy and invites exchanges (including food, vegetables, sewing and wood).

Jo also offers candlelit treatment in your home, so you can climb straight into your jimjams afterwards and go to bed.

Call Jo on 07746 714636 or email joraeburn@hotmail.co.uk



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sue.willer@googlemail.com

Herbalist offers free checks

FREE blood pressure checks and five-minute health advice chats are on offer from Dawn Ireland, medical herbalist MURHP MCPP.

Dawn said: "Herbs are brilliant at treating chronic conditions, and those which can only be symptomatically improved by orthodox medical care.

"They often work by gradually nudging the body to a state of good health. Acute conditions can also be treated and preventative herbal health care is very effective for degenerative diseases. However, because of recent EU law changes, herbalists can no longer sell medicines over the counter which means I can only prescribe medicines from my dispensary to patients who have had a consultation.

"The good news is once you've had a consultation, you are on my patient register and can get in touch at any time for any future needs. Everyone is different, so two patients with the same illness may be prescribed different herbs specifically suited to them. That is why the extensive knowledge provided by a qualified medical herbalist is important."

Dawn has a dispensary of more than 100 herbal medicines



Dawn Ireland - free health checks.

that cannot be bought over the counter. She creates many of her own medicines, both internal and external preparations, and produces a range of herbal skincare products under the name of Green Wyse, www.greenwyse.co.uk.

She regularly runs workshops and courses and leads herb and wild food foraging walks.

The health checks are available on the first Wednesday of each month, 10am-1pm, starting in February, at Chelston Wellbeing Centre in Torquay.

Visit www.torbay-herbalist.co.uk.

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Learning to work with anxiety

IN the same way that our body works to restore health whenever it experiences an imbalance, with the right support our minds can do the same, according to Women's progressive counsellor, Melissa Moss, right.



Melissa Moss

She sees anxiety as part of a natural process of restoration and, after more than 20 years of trying to 'treat' her own anxiety, believes the best way to overcome it is to face it head-on using talking therapies.

Melissa said: "Winter and Spring are a time of creation. Psychologically, the introspection of Winter and the celebration of Spring can inspire progression. However, if you suffer from anxiety Winter can feel more like a time of oppression, and the appreciation of Spring may be overlooked entirely. If you can learn how to work with your anxiety naturally you can create

real change!"
Melissa is clear that 'talking therapies' refers to the person doing the talking, rather than the therapist.

She says: "I'm not talking about therapies where the therapist does all the talking - analysing you, offering you 'shoulds' and tools which only divert your

behavior.

"This implicitly sends you the message that anxiety is a separate entity trying to harm you. I am talking about therapists using 'person-centered' communication tools to help you to achieve complete self-awareness and personal growth."

She advises: "Trust your anxiety - it has something to offer you. Try working with it naturally to achieve real growth."

Email melissa.moss@womens-progressive-counselling.com or call 07843 159737.

Grow your business - with soul

MANY of us in Reconnectland are self-employed practitioners or run our own small business. Between us, we offer a fantastic array of ethical products and services, inspired to help make the world a better place.

We love what we do, but the business side of things isn't always our strong point - especially selling, marketing and making enough money.

When she founded Thrivecraft in 2003, Maggie Kay (pictured above - then known as Srimati) quickly identified the need for business coaching and the popular course Mind Your Own Business was born. Reconnect's own Martin Foster participated then co-presented later courses, bringing his journalistic and



marketing expertise in typically friendly style.

Maggie Kay is now again offering a business-boosting Thrivecraft workshop for ethical entrepreneurs and practitioners. On March 14/15, Soulful Marketing will "guide participants through practical and magical ways to find your niche, get known, attract ideal clients and

customers, and increase income - without selling your soul."

The workshop, at Totnes Natural Health Centre, costs £149/£99.

Find out more about Soulful Marketing, Maggie's one-to-one coaching and meditation training courses, see www.maggielaywisdom.com and contact Maggie at maggie@maggielaywisdom.com or 07905 628905.

Free talks on asthma breath method

ASTHMATICS have the opportunity to learn The Buteyko Method, which has been shown to help significantly in the management of symptoms, at Exeter Natural Health Centre.

Sue Willer, a Chartered Physiotherapist with personal experience of asthma, is giving a series of free introductory talks and offering one-to-one treatments.

The Buteyko Method retrains patients to breathe and is based

on solid scientific evidence. The treatment is complementary and 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 no adverse effects have been reported. Patients usually notice improvements after a week or two.

Email sue.willer@googlemail.com, or visit buteyko-southwest.co.uk.

Emily Faircloth having coaching with Simon Daly from InterBe.



How Emily chose happiness

ALL of us tell stories, all of the time... stories about ourselves, about others, about the world around us.

For InterBe, getting people to recognise the stories they tell, to identify when these stories don't serve them, and to consciously choose more empowering stories, is the secret to living a happier and more fulfilling life.

They call this approach Narrative Transformation and it transforms the lives of people they work with, either through coaching or training or both.

One of these people is Emily Faircloth. Emily is a commissioning manager for the NHS in Plymouth. She first encountered InterBe in 2011 when they delivered a training course for her organisation.

Her first impressions weren't especially favourable: "The training was like nothing I'd experienced before. I remember thinking "I haven't got a clue what they're talking about."

Despite this, Emily chose to stick with it and this decision changed, and arguably even saved, her life: "Before I started this journey, I survived. My life held little value to me. Now, I am

approaching my life from a place of love rather than fear and this makes a powerful difference.

"The 'musts' and the 'shoulds' that used to dominate were born of fear. Now, I choose. I am inspired and my life shows up completely differently as a result. I recognise that there is nothing I need to fix and that I am the author of my own experience."

Through working with InterBe, Emily has transformed her personal relationships, she is more confident at work and she coaches others to change their stories. She believes changing her way of being also led to a physical transformation – she is 35lb lighter and no longer suffers from chronic eczema.

"I've finally realised, it's not about the destination, it's about the journey. Happiness is a choice to be made right now. I am grateful to InterBe for helping me to see how to live in a way that is about thriving rather than simply surviving."

InterBe, which is based in Seale Hayne, is running its Narrative Transformation programme, Genesis, from March 13-15. The cost is £349. For details, and to read the full story of Emily's transformation, visit: www.interbe.co. Or call 01392 346224.





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New mindfulness silent retreat at Gaia House.

Deeper mindfulness in silence

THE sound of silence will help participants in a new Gaia House retreat to deepen their mindfulness practice and explore more of what it means to be mindful.

People who have completed Gaia House's eight-week course in Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT), or equivalent (such as Breathworks) are being given the opportunity to attend the two-day silent retreat to extend their learning.

Two regular Gaia House teachers, Jenny Wilks and Jake Dartington, will lead the new retreat. Jenny trained in clinical psychology and works as an MBCT therapist and trainer at Exeter University. Jake trained as a meditation teacher with Christina Feldman and then as an MBCT teacher with Dr Patricia

Collard and Helen Stephenson. He also teaches mindfulness, philosophy and religious studies in Nottingham.

The programme will include guided practices and time to practice in silence. There will also be opportunities for inquiry, one-to-one meetings with teachers, and talks about the theory of mindfulness, including its roots in Buddhist psychology.

Gaia House is situated near Newton Abbot, and offers a sanctuary of contemplative calm open to all. The retreat runs from Friday March 6 to Sunday March 8. It costs £120 for the weekend including food and accommodation. Participants are also asked to make a donation for the teaching.

Visit www.gaiahouse.co.uk.

Find your true public voice

THE man behind Embercombe, the earth-based learning centre near Exeter, is running a two-day workshop for people who want to learn to speak in public with impact and authenticity.

Mac Macartney is famous for his moving and inspiring talks – at Embercombe, at public events and online – but he faced his own personal battle to overcome fear and self-doubt.

He explained: "Many of us desire more influence in the world. We find ourselves in situations in which we wish to speak, and yet we either draw back from the invitation or, if we do speak, feel we did not do justice either to the subject or ourselves.

"We may struggle with fear, lose our thread, ramble, apologise, or wish we'd never tried in the first place. Speaking Out will arm you with practical skills, helpful techniques and useful information to help you meet your deep intention, to be authentic and develop strong self-esteem. It cuts a path to resolving underlying issues that have inhibited your full and free self-expression."

Mac will co-facilitate the programme with Jonathan Snell, who said: "As well as preparing you for the straightforward aim of speaking



Mac Macartney

in situations, where it is important your voice is heard, the programme will also go some way towards exploring the deeper issues that influence your ability to confidently meet the challenge public speaking brings. The challenges most people experience while speaking to an audience have their roots in complex issues connected to self-esteem. Speaking Out approaches this delicate territory sensitively, tackling seen and unseen issues."

The course takes place at Embercombe, near Exeter, February 18-20 and costs £450, including tuition, accommodation and full board. A non-refundable deposit of £100 secures a place. It starts with dinner at 6.30pm on Wednesday 18 and ends at 4.30pm on Friday. For more information visit www.embercombe.co.uk/speakingout.

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Andy's revolution in sports massage

EXETER may seem an unlikely place for the start of a revolution but therapist Andy Kerr believes his approach to sports and remedial therapy is so different that he's christened his business Revolution Massage.

Andy doesn't just treat the problem but addresses the root cause. That is the only way, he says, to achieve sustained and long-term relief.

Prior to qualifying as a therapist, Andy spent many years competing as an elite-level cyclist in Europe. He received sports care at the highest level and began learning from some of the top practitioners.

On his return to the UK, he completed his formal studies in Oxford and currently holds

the highest level of Clinical Sports and Remedial Massage qualifications available in the UK.

Andy said: "This type of massage can help with relieving muscle tension, improving circulation, increasing flexibility and eliminating toxins from the body.

"It is not just effective for sports-related injuries but for more day-to-day problems too like backache caused by poor posture at work, soreness after driving and helping to improve overall flexibility."

Revolution Massage is based at Lotus Loft in Exeter.

For more information visit www.revolutionmassage.co.uk or call 07792 613580.

Introducing health coaching

HEALTH Coaching is relatively new on the holistic healthcare scene in the UK.

It was pioneered in the USA by The Institute for Integrative Nutrition (IIN), which is where Hilary Martin trained for the last 12 months.

Hilary is now combining health coaching with 30 years' experience as a counsellor, life coach and trainer.

She explained: "Most people have an inkling of what they need to change in order to feel healthier – such as exercising more, cutting down on junk or sugar, saying 'no' more, managing stress better, and so on. Despite this, many of us fail to make these changes.

"Health coaching addresses this through a combination of encouragement, strategy development, accountability, collaboration, information and recommendations. In this way, clients achieve real and sustainable results."

Hilary added: 'This is the final piece



Hilary Martin

of the jigsaw for me in offering a truly integrated approach to wellbeing. I have worked for years counselling women with stress and mood problems, and not addressing the food they put into their bodies intuitively seemed wrong. I know from my own experience how essential diet is in creating whole health. Similarly, those who fixate on diet alone and don't address life choices are unlikely to create overall health."

Hilary's training has taught her the importance of bio-individuality, which is the principle that no single diet works for everyone. Instead of restrictions and 'shoulds', she focuses on finding whatever is best for the individual.

Hilary works face-to-face, via Skype or phone. She is planning to run groups and classes in 2015 including a Sugar Blues workshop.

To find out more and to book a complimentary health consultation visit www.hilarymartinhealth.co.uk or call 07971 444564.

Dramatherapy looks at eco issues

DO you ever feel overwhelmed by your sense that the world is in crisis? Have you ever felt depressed as result of your unrealised desire to help the world?

A new ecological dramatherapy group is offering people the chance to explore these feelings within a safe, creative environment. The group has been set up by Lia Ponton, a masters student in dramatherapy, as part of her MA dissertation project.

She said: "Sessions will include drama and theatre-based therapeutic exercises, play and improvisation, collective rituals, being outside, art-making and sharing in a supportive atmosphere."

There will be 10 free weekly two-hour sessions near Totnes, starting on Thursday 5 March from 10am to 12noon.

Email for more information: lia@liaponton.com

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What stops us making changes?

HOW is it we frequently make the same New Year pledges year after year? What makes it so difficult to keep our promises to ourselves?

Psychotherapist and researcher Peter Crowe explains: "Change demands we step into the unknown, which raises anxieties. And our own inertia can itself cause frustration and dejection - we can easily become disheartened and lose faith in our ability to do things differently."

But rather than give up, he says, we need to shift the focus off our repeated failures and find some compassion for ourselves.

"Compassion is a word we more often use when talking about other people, but we need more than strong will to effect real transformation.

"Harvard professor Robert Kegan makes a distinction between technical change, which entails gaining new skills and resources, and transformative change, which involves real lasting change in



Peter Crowe

ourselves as people. Changing our lives requires a 'being-change', not just a 'doing-change'."

And when we do push ourselves to change we often unwittingly challenge those around us. The same workmates, friends or siblings we turn to for help may have a strong desire to see things remain the same.

Peter says: "Others mean well, but can be part of the problem. If we want to understand what's holding us back, it's worth finding someone independent of our social systems to help us."

On March 7, Peter will be addressing these issues in a workshop that looks at what holds us back when we attempt to do things differently and alter the direction of our lives. It explores the often unconscious commitments we make that maintain the status quo and offers practical strategies for overcoming our resistance to change.

Visit www.petercrowe.co.uk/events or call Peter on 01392 966845.

Sarah picks up celebrancy title

SOUTH-WEST-based celebrant Sarah Chapman, right, is one of only five celebrants in the country to be awarded a Diploma in Celebrancy - the only celebrancy qualification accredited by Ofqual, the Government's office of qualifications and examinations.

She is an independent celebrant who conducts ceremonies for weddings, funerals, renewal of vows and naming ceremonies.

Sarah said: "People don't always realise they can create a ceremony that is exactly the way they'd like it to be. That is what an independent celebrant can do for you."



In the case of wedding ceremonies, the individuals must be legally married first at the registry office and, after that, they are free to design the ceremony of their dreams.

"You can choose your own vows, readings, poems, music and anything else you

desire. I offer Hand Fasting, Rose Ceremony, Candle Ceremony, releasing balloons, exchanging rings and can include all of your family and friends - even your pets!" explained Sarah.

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

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Chelston Well-being: reception, left, the new health food shop below that and, bottom, manager Debbie Thorpe with a client.



Working for whole community

THE therapists at the Chelston Well-being Centre in Torquay pride themselves that they go the extra mile for their clients.

But as a social enterprise, the team behind the centre also works hard to ensure it provides support for the whole community.

"Since we opened four years ago," says centre manager Debbie Thorpe, "we've earned a strong reputation for providing a professional and friendly service. But beyond that, it's important to us that we tailor our services to meet the growing needs of the community – to ensure everyone has easy access to all the services they need - all under one roof."



When a nearby health food shop closed, the centre stepped up and opened one on their premises.

And as well as providing treatments, the centre hosts a number of weekly activities including talks about all aspects of wellbeing (7.30pm every Monday for just £2), drop-in mindfulness sessions and meditation courses.

They also plan talks and workshops throughout the year on topics such as Ayurveda, yoga, acupuncture and mindfulness – visit thechelstoncentre.co.uk for details.

The Chelston Centre is open six days a week, 9am-6pm (8pm on a Tues). "Pop by and see what we have on offer," says Debbie.

To find out more, visit www.thechelstoncentre.co.uk



The Alexander Technique

A five-week introductory course with Jenny Quick
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Ola takes over Align Chiropractic

ALREADY the leading Network Spinal Analysis (NSA) Clinic in Devon, Totnes-based Ola Chiropractic has expanded its services by taking over Align Chiropractic in Newton Abbot and Exeter.

It now has four Chiropractors taking care of spines in the South West, including its newest recruit, Silas Keeling, who graduated with a Masters degree in Chiropractic from the Welsh Institute of Chiropractic.

Silas is a sports Chiropractor,

specialising in injuries related to sports or strenuous work. He believes the key to healthy living is living healthily and focuses as much on addressing the root cause of pain as the pain itself.

In 2015 Ola will be extending its Totnes premises. It already offers a range of therapies including: Bowen, Nutritional and Ayurveda Therapies, Acupuncture, Massage, Shiatsu, Reflexology and Psychotherapy.

Visit www.totneschiropractic.co.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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The technique is known to be effective in relieving or preventing back pain, neck and shoulder tension; helping with poor posture or stoop, developing excellence in performance arts and sport; increasing vitality and restoring poise.

Formerly an NHS physiotherapist for 13 years, Jenny Quick qualified as an Alexander Technique practitioner shortly after her 50th birthday with the aim of learning something that would sustain her in her middle and later years.

"There is a beauty and peacefulness to The Alexander Technique that is hard to define but which, for me, is its very core," said Jenny.

She is running a five-week introductory course, starting on February 26 at Dartington Village Hall from 10am-11.30am.

Jenny explained: "The course will explore different aspects of the technique and its practical applications in everyday life. The Alexander Technique can be invaluable for improving the



performance of musicians or athletes but it can also have far-reaching effects in all the more usual activities of life, from brushing our teeth to riding a bike."

The classes are described as "a mixture of presentation, inquisitiveness and playful group activities, concluding with mindful attention in the lying position."

Previous participants said:

"Sensitive, surprising and fun. That's who Jenny is."

"I found I could choose to experience a new sense of peace and space and energy using very simple Alexander guidelines."

Places are limited. Email jennyquicktm@gmail.com or call 07925 654228. To find out more about Alexander Technique, visit www.jennyquick.co.uk.

New centre for mind-based practices

EXCITING news for counsellors, psychotherapists and mindfulness teachers - a new centre is opening soon in Totnes.

As we go to press, things have yet to be finalised but if everything slots into place (you know, the ways things do in life), The Nautilus Centre will open

soon in the centre of town. It has specifically been created for mind-based practices, with one-to-one rooms and a larger space for meetings.

If you are interested in hiring a room, contact Ruth or Peter at nautiluscentre@gmail.com or Ruth Baker on 07736334454

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Practical weekends and courses running throughout 2015 - visit www.greenlaneherbs.co.uk for prospectus and dates

Read Frances Wright's blog - click the link on the website home page

The nourishing Barefoot Doc

SPEND a day in the company of The Barefoot Doctor at The Nourish Retreat at Sharpham House this April.

Known worldwide as a teacher of Taoism – its medicine, philosophy and meditation practices – The Barefoot Doctor will be on hand to teach, inspire and answer questions from participants on this four-day retreat run by Reconnect's own food writer, Jane Hutton.

He is just one of a range of experts who will be joining together to offer what the organisers are calling "The Ultimate Mental Makeover" in a series of retreats throughout the year.

Jane said: "The Nourish Retreat in April is the perfect opportunity to get up close and personal with The Barefoot Doctor, alias Stephen Russell. He will be spending a whole day with us at Sharpham so if you have any burning questions to ask him, or would just like to experience his unique brand of wisdom and inspiration, this is your chance.

"As well as guest appearances from experts like Stephen, we will be offering nutrition know-how classes (also known as real food for real life), juice and smoothie masterclasses, an introduction to vibrational medicine techniques, creative workshops and meditation. There will also be optional activities like yoga, foraging walks, and



The Barefoot Doctor

pampering sessions. That's why we describe this as the ultimate reboot!"

Nourish Retreats take place in the beautiful setting of Sharpham House, with its extensive grounds.

Nourish Renewal runs from April 16 to 19. Prices start from £595 for a single room, all-inclusive. A £200 deposit secures a place and full details of this and other retreats are available on the website www.nourishretreats.co.uk.



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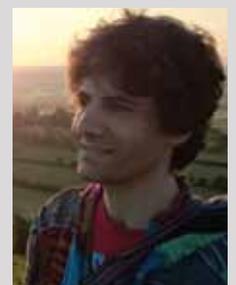
over five dates: April 6-9, May 1-4, July 3-5, August 28-31, September 18-20. Free info sessions: Feb 7+22, March 1, 10.30am-12.30pm. Contact WildWise on 01803 868269 or visit www.wildwise.co.uk.

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FEBRUARY

WED 11

SHAKTI Tantra Taster
Evening, with Kian
de la Cour and Katie
Sarrra, The Sea School
of Embodiment,
Dawlish, 7.30-
9.30pm, £10, 07952
469848, www.seaschoolofembodiment.com.

SAT 28

POWER of 3
workshop; Yoga,
Juice/Herbs and
Massage therapy.
10am-3pm, Newton
Ferrers, £40 incl lunch.
Sara Hills, Herbalist
sarajanehills@gmail.com.

MARCH

TUES 3 - SUN 8

CREATIVE Vegetarian
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with Linda Vincent,
Sharpham House,

Ashprington, Totnes
TQ9 7UT, 01803
732055, bookings@sharphamtrust.org,
www.sharphamtrust.org

WED 4

INTRODUCTION to
Sexological Bodywork,
with Kian de la Cour
and Katie Sarrra,
The Sea School of
Embodiment, Dawlish,
7-9pm, £10, 07952
469848, www.seaschoolofembodiment.com.

THURS 5

SHIVA Honouring:
Your Potency as a
Lover, with Kian de la
Cour, The Sea School
of Embodiment,
Dawlish, 7-10pm,
07952 469848, www.seaschoolofembodiment.com.

SAT/SUN 14/15

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AND FINALLY...

In the Spring an old man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of... getting out more. So why doesn't MARTIN FOSTER get to see (and hear) more live music?



Why I should (no, WILL!) see more live music

SO, turns out video didn't kill the radio star after all. Back in the late Seventies, a massive hit by The Buggles (aka Trevor Horn and Geoff Downes – younger readers, ask your dad... or granddad) told the somewhat scanty tale of a radio broadcaster pushed aside in the video age.

But while they might not have got the direction quite right, there's no disputing that entertainment technology has transformed itself as its transformed our lives, even since the Seventies.

Today, radio is thriving, while video was overtaken by DVD, which in turn is being pushed aside by online streaming. (And just to prove 'progress' can't have it all its own way, 2014 was the first year in the last two decades in which vinyl sales topped one million - Industry Experts will no doubt file that away under 'Exception that proves the rule'.)

What's so reassuring about all this, is that while many of us can now access hundreds of films at the press of a button or two, cinemas are flourishing. We still love a night at the movies.

And perhaps most encouraging of all, live music is thriving too. Total revenue from ticket sales now easily tops that from recorded music and, although a disproportionate amount of that goes to a relatively few big-name bands (proving that market forces are just as effective at developing the music industry as they are at providing social justice in the wider society), smaller gigs

and festivals are booming too.

Now you might have seen more gigs than me over the past 12 months (very likely), or you might have seen fewer, but I can pretty much guarantee we leave most live music events with a similar thought on our minds – we really should go to more.

If you're at either end of the age spectrum (where we can get away with endlessly repeating ourselves), we'll probably say it too: "I really must go to more gigs." See, I did it right there.

But, aside from pursuits that are illegal and/or bad for your health (I'll just give you a moment to mentally tick them off your list of 'favourite things to do'...), there's really not much to compare to the buzz of live music.

Plato called music "a moral law". He said: "It gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and charm and gaiety to life and to everything."

And to be sharing a place with the people who are making that music; to be together in that moment, part of that creative process, is surely the most magical thing of all.

We leave the performance feeling elated, enlivened and almost certainly saying, "I really must go to more gigs." Or have I already mentioned that?

So why don't we get along to more gigs? There are certainly plenty of events to get along to. It's no coincidence that I'm musing on this subject in the very issue that features our annual guide to Westcountry festivals and shows – and there are more than ever, touching on an ever-widening range of musical genres and in venues that range from pubs and churches to concert halls and fields.



John Grant (and his amazing Icelandic band) with the Royal Northern Philharmonic - one that Foster's glad he did catch in 2014.

And exactly the same theory applies to live theatre too – dance, plays, shadow puppetry... it all stimulates the mind as it raises the spirits as it feeds the soul.

Now I've been conducting a small straw pole (well, ok, asking my friends and family) on the subject and while not all of them say so after every gig (and would I mind stopping, please?), they agree that they would like to see more live music and generally don't because the rest of life simply fills up any available space. Leave a night free and life will simply take it over, claim it for its own, stick a metaphorical flag in it.

Having established there's a problem, and pinpointed the cause, is there a solution?

Well, yes, I think there is, but you might not like it. Simply, it's all about planning. I know, I know, we're all free spirits and we prefer to just let life unfold and see what the universe has in store for us, but the sad truth is that unless we

actually book tickets for that gig or show we really don't want to miss (like the 2014 Nick Mulvey concert I didn't get round to checking out until it was sold out – damn it), chances are the universe will just leave us to our own devices. And that could mean another episode of House of Cards, which is ok but really doesn't compare with a night of foot-stomping (or emotion-stimulating) live music.

I don't want to nag, but can I at least humbly suggest that the next time you see the latest Villages In Action programme, you check it out, right then, and book something? Read through our festivals guide and get online and buy some tickets. Check out our Going Out diary (we've got even more online), call some friends and Go Out.

I'll see you there. I'll be the bloke saying as I leave: "I'm really pleased I'm going to more gigs"...

Martin x

there's really not much to compare to the buzz of live music...



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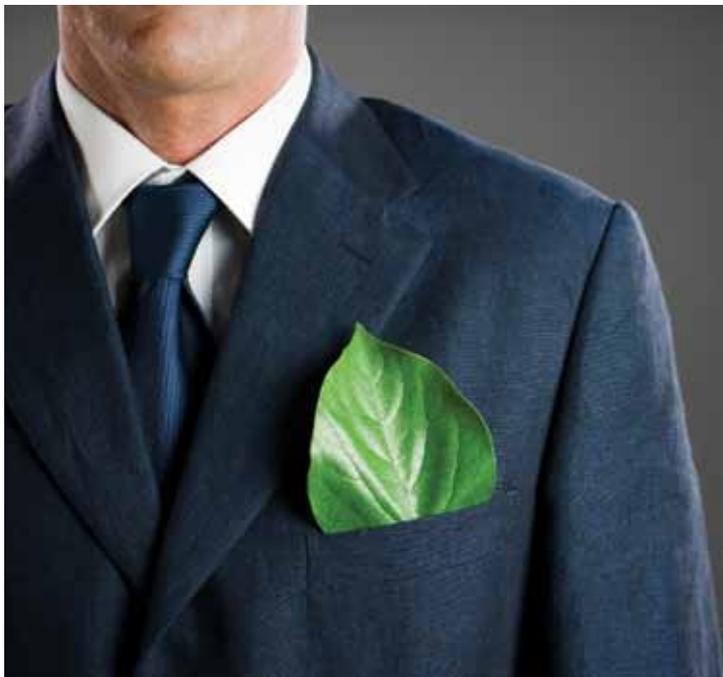
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