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SUMMER 2018 ISSUE  
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distinctive  
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# Discover Caerphilly

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ARE YOU THINKING OF RIGHTSIZING? | PROPERTIES FROM PA BLACK



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# Eternally Distinctive

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## Welcome to the place I call home, Caerphilly

Offering stunning landscapes, a 13th century castle, legends from TV and screen, a fascinating heritage, sporting heroes, iconic landmarks and a wealth of activities and events, Caerphilly continues to attract people from far and wide.

Caerphilly is the town where I spent my childhood and where I still live today. This edition of Distinctive feels a bit special, as we celebrate the place I call home.

In each edition of the magazine I ask members of my team to share a bit about themselves, and it was brought to my attention that I couldn't avoid the same fate. Therefore in these pages you will find out a bit about my life and career and the important role Caerphilly has played as the backdrop to some of my proudest moments.

We are living in ever-changing times, and we continue to see developments in how property is being transacted. Over the last few months we have invested into our online proposition, enabling you to easily book appointments 24 hours a day. As we continue to evolve, so too does the industry around us.

Since the last edition of Distinctive we have seen changes in Wales to stamp duty land tax and land transaction tax. More recently, the government has announced that it will be reviewing measures to professionalise the house buying and selling process in the UK.

Demand for good quality housing remains positive and please continues to make inroads into the local markets and communities we operate within.

We look to continue the great momentum we have built this year to further develop our proposition to benefit and heighten the experience for our clients.

We look forward to seeing you soon.

## Andrew Barry

Managing Director, pa black  
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**Delivering a distinctive service for distinctive homes: Meet the people selling your distinctive home...**

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pa black is the exclusive homes service from Peter Alan – Wales's biggest estate agency with over 50 years' experience of selling homes.

Our team of specialist property experts have unrivalled local and regional market knowledge combined with proven expertise to ensure the maximum value for your home.

We understand that moving home is one of the most important decisions you can make for you and your family. That's why we will assist, advise and support you at every stage of the selling process and promote your property as if it were our own.



## **David Lovitt**

Head of pa black

With over 36 years' experience in the South Wales property market, David Lovitt has a wealth of local property knowledge and an innate understanding of the most effective methods of marketing properties to buyers in Wales. David has headed pa black since its inception in January 2011 and his friendly professional approach towards his clients has helped to grow pa black from its modest beginnings into the strong recognised brand that it is today



## **Hassan Alkarim**

Business Development Manager

Coming from a banking background and having started his career with pa black in the Cowbridge branch during 2015, Hassan's true passion has always been for distinctive and prestige homes. He has extensive knowledge and experience of the property industry, and is dedicated to always offering customers quality sales advice and guidance in order to ensure the best results for their properties.

Hassan is truly passionate about delivering a professional, effective and first class service to all pa black customers through every step of the process, from initial meeting through to completion.



## **Paul Forse**

Business Development Manager

Paul first started with Peter Alan in the mid 1980's and he is one of the longest serving and most experienced managers in the group. He has successfully managed many of our offices across the whole of the South Wales region and brings to PA Black a wealth of knowledge relating to the property market. Paul will offer you a first class approach to the successful marketing and selling of your property.

Each manager is supported by a highly trained team of property professionals to further guarantee that when a client visits pa black they receive a service experience as distinctive as the properties we sell.

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## **Caerphilly is located in the heart of South Wales, boasting stunning countryside, culture and of course, Caerphilly Castle.**

For Peter Alan's Managing Director, Andrew Barry, the town of Caerphilly holds a special place in his heart, as it's where he started his career as a Sales Negotiator many moons ago. The branch continues to dominate property sales and lettings in the area, with many of the team topping their individual league tables. The branch itself can be found at The Twyn, which overlooks Caerphilly Castle.

Lying just north of Wales' capital city, Cardiff, the high rise buildings and busy city centre are replaced with historic landmarks and

a town filled with myths and legends. Those who are unfamiliar with the area may be forgiven for associating the large town with Caerphilly Cheese and the birthplace of Tommy Cooper, but past the 13th century castle lies a popular town centre with excellent transport links to Cardiff and Newport and so much more.

From walking to weddings, from farming to festivals, the Borough of Caerphilly has an endless list of events, activities and attractions for its residents and visitors.

# Discover Caerphilly



Dominating the limelight though is of course the 30-acre site of Caerphilly Castle, which is Wales' largest castle, dating back to 1268. Used as a backdrop to many TV programmes and films, the fortress has a starring role in everyday life for the community of Caerphilly, whether you're driving past the murky reflection of its large walls or walking alongside the moats and watery islands leading you to the town centre.

The castle itself is often used as the emblem of Caerphilly, a centre point of town and oozing with stories from history, some based on fact and others based on legend. You can read up on the documented details of the castle in the visitor centre, but for tales from within the castle walls you'll need to delve a little deeper. The castle was built by Gilbert de Clare who was married to Princess Alice of Angouleme; one day, the Prince of Brithdir, Gruffudd the Fair, visited the castle and Alice fell for the handsome Welsh Prince.

The two soon became lovers, but it wasn't long before Gilbert found out about the love affair and sent his wife back to France. After he sentenced his love rival to be hung he notified Alice of her lover's execution; upon hearing the news she died of a broken heart,

and her ghost is believed to have haunted the castle ever since. Known as The Green Lady of Caerphilly Castle, Alice wears a green woven dress to signify Gilbert's envy - see if you can spot her during your next visit.

Sitting on the boundary of Monmouthshire along the Rhymney River is the large village of Machen, with roots in the iron and coal industries. Times may have changed quite considerably but the community still get together to celebrate the local produce by way of a rural market. Similar to many popular farmers' markets, the Machen Rural Market allows local producers and craftspeople to showcase their businesses as well as giving the locals an opportunity to discuss and raise awareness about community issues.

Heading south you'll reach the village of Draethen, where records of its name date back to 1465. Once again the area was known for its mining and is now a popular attraction for experienced cavers and walkers; there are many circuits for rambles or those who enjoy picturesque countryside walks. During the late spring your walk through Draethen will take you along a path carpeted with bluebells and surrounded by the history of the Ruperra Castle and its extensive grounds.

Another rural location to the east of Caerphilly is the small community of Rudry, a quiet village surrounded by woods, which invites you to discover the Rhymney Valley via its walking trails. The local residents ensure that its beloved Parish Hall is well looked after, and it's even home to a music festival, which runs for two days and hosts a selection of music genres complemented by local ales, cider and food.

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**Our journey to discovering Caerphilly has led us beyond the castle walls to find hidden histories and surprising stories from the people and partnerships that show us the true legends of Caerphilly.**

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# It was love at first sight at the Hollybush Inn

**We chat to the new owners about why they have no regrets, and why they are so thankful to the local community.**

Have you ever felt that you needed a change, that the life you have has run its course and you want a new challenge? Although you may have had these thoughts, how many of us actually act on them? Taking the leap into the unknown is a risk that is too big for some, but for Debbie Bowen and her partner Adrian Jones, it was a risk worth taking.

In September the couple took over the picturesque Hollybush Inn in Draethen; for the teachers, who met when they were both teaching at St. Paul's Primary School in Grangetown, it was certainly a whole new world.

"I taught for 24 years, and Adrian for about 12. I, unfortunately, went through a period of illness that caused me to give up teaching for a couple of years, and it made me reevaluate what I wanted to do with my life. During this time I began tutoring the landladies son in Marshfield where I

lived, and somehow ended up helping her by doing a few shifts in the pub, I really enjoyed it.

When she went on holiday to Jamaica for a couple of weeks we looked after the pub and loved it, so much so that when we discovered the Hollybush Inn was up for grabs we didn't hesitate to go and view it. We fell in love it straight away; it's such a beautiful pub and together we decided it was now or never.

**What we enjoyed about pub life was the true sense of community and the friendships that you make.**

This was reinforced when we took over the Hollybush. It's the centre of the community and we're thankful that the locals are so supportive of everything that we do.

I'm not just talking about visiting the pub and spending money; they've helped us make curtains, decorate, sort out electrical

and plumbing issues, and everything is always offered free of charge. They're so committed to seeing the pub stay open, and continuing to thrive, they just want to help any way they can.

It has been a very steep learning curve, as you can imagine, going from teaching to this. I went on a week's course in Oxford to learn about the pub industry and picked up a great deal of advice. Our Area Manager is amazing and has answered every little question that we've had. Our friends that are in the pub trade have been so supportive too; they are always on the end of the phone. We've found everything has been a challenge because everything is so different, but it's been tiny steps.

We have an amazing chef called Roberto; he used to run his own Italian restaurant in



Canton. It is a pleasure to serve his food because the feedback is always lovely, and we can take those comments back up to the kitchen. It just makes everybody's day when you get so many positive comments about what you're doing.

We were really lucky to have Roberto apply for the position of Chef in the pub, he brought with him his expertise, and even though Adrian is a foodie, we are led by him. The menu has been designed based on feedback from our customers; one of our most popular dishes is Chicken Nerone and his Pan-fried Fillet of Seabass is also popular. We have these alongside the usual pub classics such as gammon, scampi, and steaks as they are what people expect when they come to a country pub.

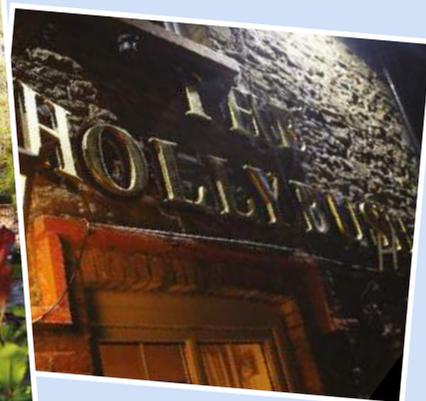
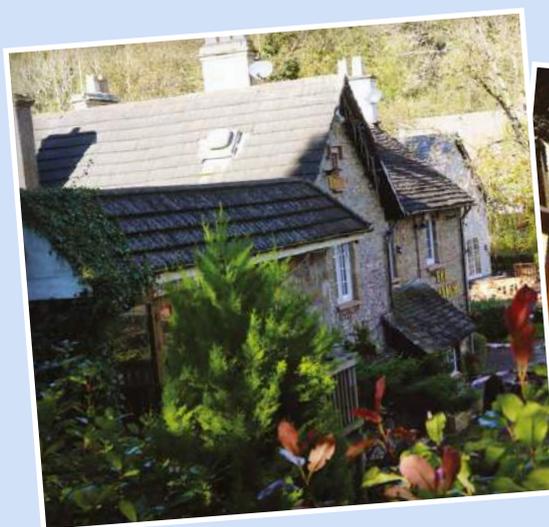
I never tire of people saying to us, "You know, I could sit here all day. It's like being in my front room." Because that's the kind of ambience we wanted to create. We've tried to make the bar as cosy as if you were at home.

We've decorated the bar downstairs and the restaurant upstairs. We're determined to make it the heart of the community, so we've introduced things like a quiz night, and an open mic night, which has brought the local community together. We've also created a meeting place for local groups to hold meetings.

Our main focus at the moment is developing the restaurant, which is suitable for small functions. Long-term we are hoping to develop the upstairs for small weddings. Not everybody wants a huge affair, and we can cater for up to 90 people.

We already have a wedding booked for this year, and another for next. The one next year is a really lovely story because the couple got engaged in front of the open fire on Valentine's night this year. A few days before the proposal he started to come in regularly, and I joked that I'd have to call him a local soon. On Valentine's Day he came in during the day and spoke to my niece about choosing a table for that evening. She took him upstairs and he chose a table in the corner out of the way.

He wanted a particular song playing while he proposed, but we could only play the



song downstairs. So I cleared the table by the fire for him and we put lots of logs on so the fire was glowing and told him to bring her down for a coffee. He gave me a nod when he was ready for the music and he proposed in front of the fire, it was really lovely. Everyone clapped and cheered. A couple of weeks later he came and asked if they could have their wedding here.

Adrian and myself both did our degrees in history, and we are in the process of finding out more about the pub. But what's lovely are the little anecdotes that you get, especially from the older customers. We've heard lots of little snippets.

One of the locals can remember coming into the pub to visit someone who he described as an eccentric member of the Tredegar family. Apparently he used to have a bath downstairs in what is now the bar, in front of the log fire. He said to me, "What do you think he did with the water when he finished having his bath?" I replied "Threw it out of the window," he said. "He couldn't be bothered. He'd just tip it on the floor and we'd just stand there, ankle deep in water."

**Another customer can remember as a five-year-old standing in front of the fire and watching men bringing in the wood from the then timber mill that used to be down the road. Apparently they carried it in and started making the bar in front of her while she was warming up in front of the fire; that bar is still in place now downstairs.**

We believe it was built about 200 years ago. According to local stories, there were five pubs on the Tredegar Estate, and this is

the only building that is still a pub out of the five. All of the rest have been converted into other things.

We simply couldn't have survived without our staff we can't thank them enough. Especially my niece, Bethan, who is in between degrees and has taken on the role of day manager to help, Cathy who often 'volunteers', and Ann our second chef in the kitchen.

It's just such a beautiful part of the world. Hollybush Inn is a bit of a hidden gem in such an idyllic surrounding because if you don't know it's here, it's quite hard to find, even though it's very accessible from Cardiff, Caerphilly, Machen, and Newport.

The area is great for exploring; we are the starting point of the Iron Bridge Walk, and it's a popular location for cycling, horse riding, and hikers. We've had many walking groups set off from the car park and enjoy a meal at the end of their walk.

I don't miss teaching, though I do miss the children. But I feel this is a new chapter in my life, and one which I'm really enjoying. We're still on our journey developing the pub, but we're determined to make it the heart of the community and a 'go to' place."

**Debbie's advice for those who are thinking of making a change in their life:**

"Definitely go for it. You can only look back on your life and regret things that you haven't tried, but you know if you have go then you'll have no regrets."

# Walking your way to happiness

## **Caerphilly Ramblers, the perfect solution for a healthy mind and body**

Over recent years there has been an upward surge in the number of people participating in outdoor activities such as rambling. A desire to live a healthier lifestyle is partly what accounts for the growth in the sector, and is attracting people of all ages; they get to explore stunning countryside whilst making new friends. If you enjoy walking as well as the magical and dramatic scenery that surrounds us, Caerphilly Ramblers could be just what you're looking for.

John Newton has been a member of Caerphilly Ramblers for 20 years and joined on his wife's recommendation. As an avid rambler, we thought John would be the best person to tell us more about the organisation, and let us in on his favourite walks.

**"I love being out in the countryside, seeing all the different landscapes and nature; it's healthy, good exercise, you get to meet lots of interesting people, and you see lots of different places.**

The Caerphilly Ramblers started 25 years ago, as a very small group of people. It's expanded and today has around 130 members. Once a month we have what we call a 'stroller walk', which is about 3 to 4 miles; this walk is targeted towards those who are more elderly, or perhaps recovering from illness or injury, or those who are just starting to walk and can't walk as far as others. It's a short, flat walk, and we try to make sure there are no stiles.

On a Sunday we have a longer walk, which is anywhere between 8 and 12 miles, sometimes a bit longer. To walk 8 miles, we would have a coffee break in the morning, a lunch break, and possibly an afternoon break. Not including the travel time, it would probably take about 4.5/5 hours, but it depends on how far we're going and the shape of the countryside. Obviously if you're up the mountains you're not going to be rushing around, you're going to be making sure you're walking safely, so it may take longer.

We share cars, so we are environmentally friendly, and the passengers share the costs. We take it in turns to lead walks, but as is common amongst lots of the rambling groups we always need more people willing to volunteer to lead a walk. As a walk leader you need to have checked the route beforehand, decided where the walk is going to go, and delegated someone as the back marker to be at the end of the walk, making sure everyone's happy.

Quite a few of the walk leaders have attended first-aid courses and will be experienced enough to make sure that

they can deal with any hazards that may arise on the walk.

Even though we are the Caerphilly Ramblers, we walk all over South Wales, into the Brecon Beacons and further afield to places such as Gloucestershire and Herefordshire. We also organise various holidays throughout the year for the group - in April we went to the Isles of Scilly.

There is often a misconception that rambling groups tend to be for the older generation, but we welcome everyone; we're always looking for more members. We have a number of members in their 80s, and they're very good walkers; obviously walking keeps you fit and healthy, and helps keep your mind alert as well."

### What equipment do you need?

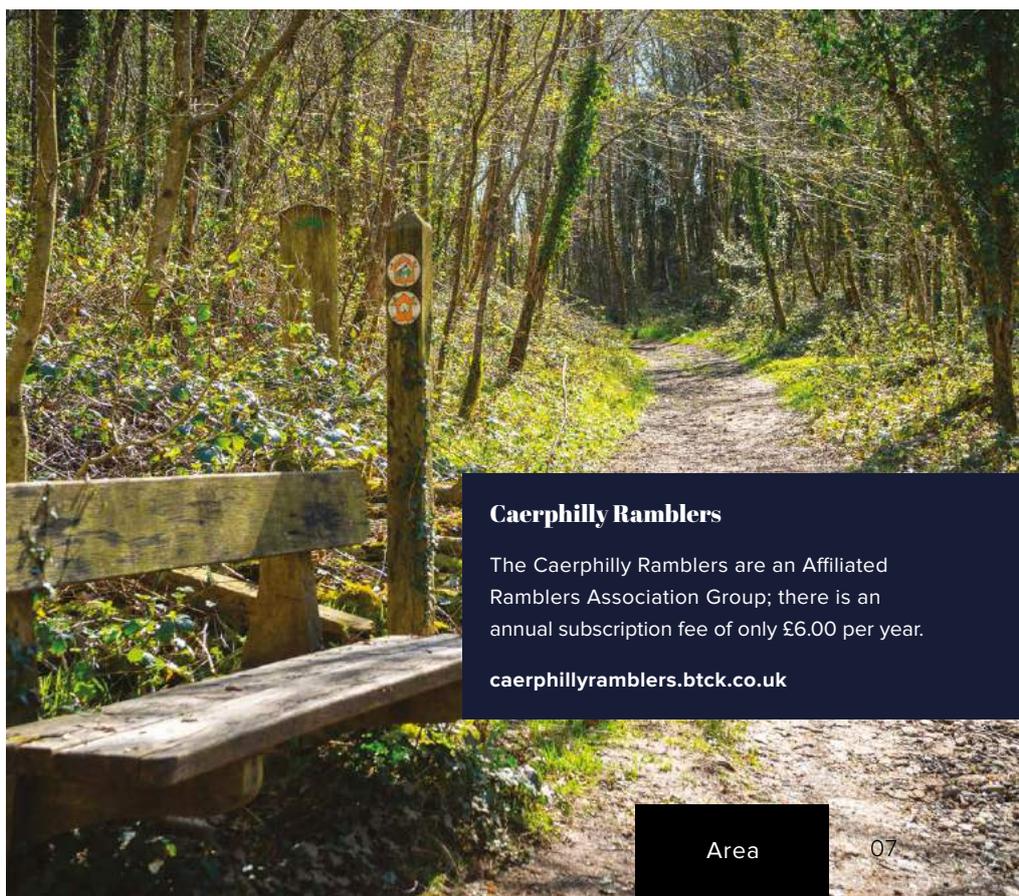
"To go rambling you need very good hiking boots and walking shoes. You'd certainly need a good waterproof anorak, and a rucksack. When it's winter it's essential to keep warm, so a hat, gloves and I'd recommend investing in a good fleece. We don't go walking in torrential rain; we always take account of the conditions to ensure it's safe.

### Interesting discoveries

The routes we choose are varied, not just in terms of terrain but also the landscape, such as Gelligaer Common and Newport Wetlands. For example, on one walk you could be enjoying nature, on the next you might be taking in fascinating industrial archaeological sites. We visit nature reserves, woodlands, mountains, hills, and forests. Rambling is really good way of getting out in the countryside, getting some fresh air, looking at nature, and keeping fit at the same time.

### Favourite walks

Around Caerphilly, my wife and I enjoy Mynydd Machen, Caerphilly Mountain, the Ridgeway, Newport Canal, and Newport Wetlands. Further afield, I would say anywhere in the Sirhowy Valley Walk, and Dymock, an 8-mile walk that is famous for its thousands upon thousands of daffodils. I've been very lucky in that I've taken my passion for walking overseas and walked in Canada, the Andes, Peru, and have just come back from Indochina. I've also been to the Himalayas; but I'd like to go further north into the Himalayas, to a place called Ladak."



### Caerphilly Ramblers

The Caerphilly Ramblers are an Affiliated Ramblers Association Group; there is an annual subscription fee of only £6.00 per year.

[caerphillyramblers.btck.co.uk](http://caerphillyramblers.btck.co.uk)

A community spread across generations and the world

# We take a look at the annual festival, Pentreffest

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In a small corner of South Wales there are events taking place that we are often not aware of. These creative and artistic celebrations are often niche, but well worth discovering. Every year, Rudry Parish Hall hosts Pentreffest, a music event that is gaining momentum internationally, but what is it?

Founder, John Mills, began by telling us about how the festival started.

"I've always had a passion for folk music, my father was a musician and a very good dancer. I think he dragged me along kicking and screaming the first time, and then it was, 'Oh, I like this,' and went from there.

We went to festivals in England, and realised that we needed to do something in Wales. The idea was to have a Welsh take and to do something more local to provide something a bit different for people living in Wales.

The first festival was originally held in West Wales, for Pentreffest, and it was, as it is now, an annual event but we moved it around various venues until we found Rudry Parish Hall and we sort of stuck there. The first Pentreffest Rudry Festival happened in the autumn of 2007, and it's happened every year since.

The first one wasn't even a full weekend; it was from Saturday lunch time, until Sunday lunch time. We've grown from that to a full weekend festival, and we now run a monthly event actually in the village hall in St Fagan's.

## What is Pentreffest?

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Pentreffest is an organisation that runs European traditional music events. It's dance-based, so we teach a lot of the traditional social dances that were danced in Northern Europe. It's a social event; people can come along, chat and dance with their friends. Unlike a barn dance where you have a caller and there's all this interruption to the evening, people know what they're doing so they just get up and dance.

We do a lot of dances from Brittany, as far away as Portugal, and all the way through France, and up into Scandinavia. Every year we have musicians and teachers of dance and music passing on their traditions and teaching us. By teaching us, we can continue to teach others at our monthly events.





It's not formal; we don't do demonstrations or anything like that. It's very much about generating an extended family.

The artists tend to be people we've met from visiting other festivals, so we attend many festivals in Brittany, France and Sweden as well as other events within the UK. In actual fact, our community within the UK is very extended, and we have people who come to the festival from Kent, East Anglia, from the north of England, and as far away as Edinburgh. We've even had people attend from California because of a particular artist they wanted to see.

### Rudry and the festival

Rudry Parish Hall is in a lovely location, set on the edge of the woodland, looking out over the valley. It's a generous sized hall with suitable accommodation, big car park, and the field where people can camp.

Some musicians who attend the festival live in the village and the surrounding hamlets. The festival helps the local economy as we use facilities in the community; the local bed and breakfast do well from the festival and in the past we've provided visiting artists to the school to do an afternoon of music and teach the children about the artists' culture.

### The event this year

Pentreffest this year is the weekend of the 19th, 20th, and 21st October, but if you want a taster of what to expect, come and experience one of our monthly events in St Fagan's.

The artists this year are a trio from Belgium who have been previously, and who we always love to see. We also have a new duo from Brittany coming, a singer and an accordionist. The singer is from a traditional background; she's learnt her songs and everything from her father, so she's part of a living tradition. We will have dance teachers from Switzerland, music from Sweden, and a whole range of workshops.

### Common misconceptions

I understand that there are common misconceptions around the genre, but we have people from all ages and walks of life, and we encourage families with children to come along. We do have young people who started attending these types of events from the ages of 3 or 4, and are now making their way out into the world as artists.

The music and the musicians are very modern. The music that we play is very much fusion music. Obviously it comes

from a traditional background, but there are a lot of modern influences in the way it's played; this is particularly true of the music that comes over from Brittany, which has a very strong jazz influence.

The festival really is a social event; anybody who comes, even all the paying visitors, help out with setting out tables for the meals, putting the chairs out and whatever else is needed. It's all very much like a large diverse family coming together. It's developing a community, a community that's spread out across a lot of other communities, because the people who come to us from further away are all doing the same sort of thing within their villages, towns, and cities; we keep growing these connections all over the world.

## Pentreffest 2018

19 – 21 October with: Cecilia, Rozenn Talec & Yannig Noguét, Josefina Paulson, Sylvan Sahli & Sonja Almeida, Pat Goodacre.

[www.pentreffest.org.uk](http://www.pentreffest.org.uk)

# The life and times of our Caerphilly team

Our 2017 branch of the year has a talented team of experienced agents who want to help you move. As Distinctive moves around the areas we cover, it's important to us that you get to know the people who you are entrusting with your biggest asset. Therefore, we are opening the door to our Caerphilly office and putting our team on the spot.



**Rob Perkins**

Senior Mortgage Services Consultant

## Ben Jones, Senior Lettings Manager

"I studied politics at university and when I finished I went travelling for a bit. When I returned, I helped my dad renovating a rental property and thought, "Right, what am I going to do?" A lot of graduates are like that; they go into their degree without thinking of the end result. I'd had odd jobs in bars and things, but it was time for a career. During that period of doing up the house with my dad it kind of dawned on me that this was something that I wouldn't mind exploring.

Learning about the industry was essential, so I emailed my CV off to every single estate agent in 2012, and was offered an interview for the position of inventory clerk with Peter Alan.

So that's how I started, and then the rest is history, as they say. From the beginning I knew that it was not the role I wanted to do forever, but I saw it as a way of getting my foot in the door with a great company, from where I could progress to the front-end side of the business, which is what I'm doing now.

After a time, the lettings division restructured and I moved into the role of lettings valuer in Bridgend. After a year of positive results, we expanded and I was offered the role of manager. In 2016 my hometown branch of Caerphilly became available, which was just ideal timing. I felt we'd done a really good job in Bridgend, but Caerphilly was an opportunity too good to turn down. It is a buoyant lettings market with some fantastic areas offering excellent rental yields.

Eighteen months later, a regional role was created and now I'm looking after six branches, one of which is Caerphilly.

Lettings is really fast-paced; you've got to instruct a property, undertake viewings and complete a move in, in most cases, within a month. On the other hand I also like the longevity of the relationship, as once you've completed the move in process that is just the start of the relationship between us, the tenant and the landlord.

Even in the two or so years that I've been here, it's staggering how Caerphilly has developed into a really buoyant rental area. I think it's the ripple effect from Cardiff city; rents are that little bit cheaper, yet the commute is quite straightforward. It's a great place for landlords to invest!

In my free time, I'm a big football fan, and support Cardiff City. My wife and I have a little girl who is two and a half, so like most parents I spend a lot of my time in kids' jungle play areas! We've also just moved home so we are doing a lot of DIY and gardening – which is not my forte.

**Kevin Dackins**

Branch Manager

**Ben Jones**

Senior Lettings Manager

# Rob Perkins, Senior Mortgage Services Consultant

"I'm a Cardiff boy. I had one or two detours to Blackwood and to Swansea very, very briefly, but primarily Cardiff born and bred. I think like a lot of people, my move into the financial industry was almost by default.

When I came out of university I didn't really know what I wanted to do. At that time, my dad said to me, "Son, get yourself a safe job", and of course a safe job to him was something like working in a bank, or the Civil Service. I didn't really fancy either of those, so I applied to join the Merchant Navy. I was offered an Officer's role in the Merchant Navy but I chickened out at the last minute and went to work in a bank, then stumbled into this job which I have been doing for about 25 years, and in September I will be celebrating my 20 year anniversary with Peter Alan.

My favourite part of being a mortgage broker is just speaking to people. You see so many different people, and invariably no two sets of circumstances are going to be the same. Once you get past the compliance and the technicalities of it, and you start talking to people about what they want, their expectations, and helping them to try and make it happen, that's what this job is all about.

At the end of the day, property is the biggest, most important asset anybody will ever buy, and it's absolutely essential that they have the correct advice. That will only come after we have carried out a detailed fact-find on the clients. We give them the initial information on products, then we talk to them about what they want, and we marry the two together to make a recommendation that is best suited to their specific requirements.

It's a great time to borrow money right now, as the rates are good, and lenders are keen to lend. It is a very competitive market. Brexit brings an air of uncertainty, so we build that into our advice, and remind clients about the impact that that may have.

In such a competitive market it is essential that you get the correct advice, we put people in a position to move quickly so that when they do see a property that they want we can put them in a position to secure the home of their dreams.

Other than our family life we love to travel. We've just come back from Paris, and we're off to Bruges next, the 'Venice of the North' and later in the year we hope to go to Sicily. Sicily is one of those places we've always wanted to go to, but we've never been.

My wife will tell you that I watch far too much sport but I keep reminding her that that was what Sky Sports was designed to do.



## Kevin Dackins, Branch Manager

It was more the architecture of properties that got me interested in estate agency rather than the sales side of it, but over the years I quickly realised I wasn't too bad at selling properties.

21 years ago I was offered jobs at both Peter Alan and the Halifax, I knew my true passion lay in property and after speaking with other estate agents this was confirmed and I chose Peter Alan. I'm very grateful for that choice.

I worked in Bridgend for eight years prior to securing my first manager's role in Neath in 2005. There are similarities between Bridgend, Neath, and Caerphilly; they're all market towns, they have a similar blend of terraced houses and detached properties, they're all on the M4 corridor, and they're very similar markets. Therefore it was quite easy to go from one branch to the other without too many complications.

The nice thing about Caerphilly is obviously you benefit from the Cardiff market, and you've also got incredible

landmarks such as the Castle. I became Sales Manager at Caerphilly in 2010, and my role is to coach, train, and get as much business out of the team as I can.

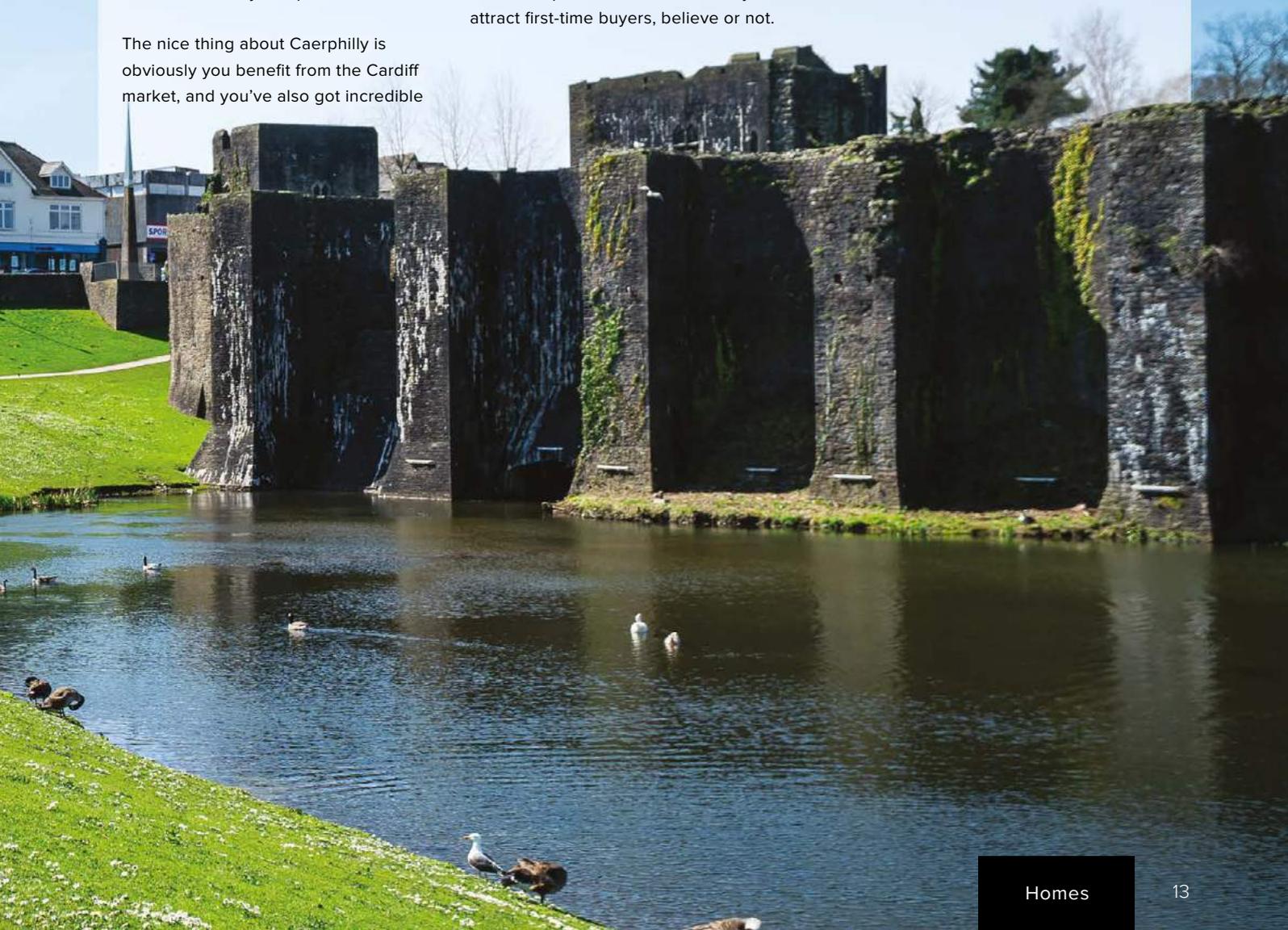
I think every branch is only as good as the team and the staff who are in there. Attitude is a huge contributing factor to the success of any branch; my team's attitude to succeed is fantastic, they're very knowledgeable. We've got a lot of experience under one roof, and we obviously benefit from our Cardiff branches providing us with buyers.

Caerphilly is quite a flexible market. If you'd asked me that a number of years ago I would have said probably second-time buyers are dominating the market. Now, we have a range of first-time buyers, second, and third and fourth. The biggest increase we've seen in houses is probably those over the £250,000 price mark, because they can attract first-time buyers, believe or not.

Outside work I'm a big rugby fan, it has to be the Ospreys for me. I've a wife and two children, aged 15 and 10, I spend as much time as I can with them, balancing work and family commitments can be a struggle. I enjoy movies; I'll watch anything, from a rom-com to a horror. My family and I enjoy visiting the Heritage Coast in particular, spending time on the beaches, it's the perfect way to unwind."

**What do you enjoy most about working in property?**

"I'd honestly say, and this may sound cheesy, but it's definitely the people. It's seeing their faces picking up the keys, making their dream home happen, that is definitely the highlight. If I ever retire, and I'm certainly a long way off that, that is one thing I would miss."



# The man at the helm, Peter Alan's Andrew Barry

As Managing Director of Peter Alan and pa black, Andrew Barry strives to make it the best estate agency possible. He has no reservations telling you about the company, but ask him to talk about himself and he is very reserved.



After a lot of persuasion, we managed to get some time out of his busy schedule to talk about his career and why the Caerphilly branch has special meaning to him.

Many estate agents say that property is in their blood, but when it comes to Andrew, it's as though he was born for estate agency. At the age of 15 he chose to work at an estate agency as part of a school work experience programme. "That was sort of the start of it for me," he says. "I went there for two weeks and found it interesting due to it being a varied role and thought, 'This is something I could probably make a career out of when I leave school'.

## Early years

"Initially I was shadowing the office, observing how the team worked with customers as well as qualifying their needs. Then spent some time with one of the staff valuing properties, and attending viewings; this was around 1985/6.

The market at that time was relatively buoyant and so the branch was very, very busy. I think this is what appealed to me; I could see that no two days would be same.

After sixth form college I decided I didn't want to go away to university, so I prepared a CV and sent it out to some local estate agents in Caerphilly. I managed to secure a job in a small estate agency as a trainee negotiator.

My parents had their own business so I often used to work for them on weekends in particular, and some evenings. As soon as I started work as a trainee negotiator I just wanted to be great at it; I was committed to putting the hours in that were needed to be successful."

## Caerphilly over the years

I grew up in Caerphilly and still live there with my family today. Caerphilly was a traditional valley town in the 1950s and 1960s; it was filled with numerous terraced properties. Then in the 1970s modern

estates built by companies such as Barratt and Wimpey started to appear, and the next phase of building was in the 1980s.

In the 1970s and 1980s semi-detached starter homes were built. Caerphilly started to change towards the end of the 1990s, I think the reason was two-fold; firstly Cardiff had started to become more expensive, which is understandable as it's the capital of Wales, and then Caerphilly started to push itself forward as a dormitory town of the city due to its close proximity.

Secondly, there was also an extensive amount of new build property being developed. Lots of national developers started seeing the opportunities here, which is why there's been a phenomenal amount of new build property in Caerphilly since the turn of the Millennium.

Towards the Millennium and then pushing over the Millennium, a lot of executive and detached style properties have been built, and that has certainly brought a wave of people from Cardiff and the surrounding areas, as well as from over the bridge.

## Caerphilly today

The attraction of Caerphilly has to be its value for money and proximity to the city. But also the fact that you're not in the city; Caerphilly is still very green, with lots of open space, and on the outskirts, particularly in places like Rudry, you can be semi-rural yet close enough to the M4.

## What are your career highlights?

I was 19 when I started as a trainee negotiator in our Peter Alan Caerphilly office. Later I went on to manage other branches, but at 28 I was asked to return to manage Caerphilly. If I'm honest I was unsure, because it was my home town, but I went back, rebuilt the team, and within 18 months it became Peter Alan's most profitable branch, and it retained that title for a number of years. That was probably my first really proud moment, and one of my career highlights.

Becoming Sales Director at 37 has to be another career highlight, and then finally it

has to be my promotion to Managing Director in 2011. Every previous Managing Director in this business had been from outside of the industry, or outside South Wales. I think I'm the first Welsh MD of Peter Alan. My four predecessors were all Irish; I learned a lot from them, coming through the ranks.

## How has estate agency changed?

I think today it's all about empowering the consumer. They want to be in total control. Back in the 1980s we didn't have the internet, everything appeared so much slower. Whereas today, I think people are very time poor, with families and other commitments. People want information immediately, hence why we've had to change our operation.

Whilst we have a market-leading high street presence in Wales, we've also got a market leading online presence. People need to be able to access information and book appointments 24 hours a day, and that's something we can now offer people.

We're also looking at ways, via applications on smart phones, to give consumers even more information when they've made an offer and they're going through the actual buying and/or selling process. I think that's the most frustrating part for customers, because this is handled by conveyancers, so they don't feel they have control.

## Your role as Managing Director

I give the Directors and people who report to me a huge amount of autonomy to deliver what they need to, but I'm very close to the business in different ways. I've got an open

door policy, which I think is the best way for people to learn and for me to be in touch with exactly what's going on out there. I suppose my role is just to help people be the best they can be, to drive the business, to grow the business, and to make sure that we're constantly looking at our proposition, to give the customers the best service that we can possibly offer.

## What makes Peter Alan different?

We've been on the high street for over 50 years. We're very close with our communities and I think people have seen that over the last decade. We want to be on the high street, and employ local people. I believe you have to have local people to sell property, because no two streets are the same in any given town or city.

Whilst we've invested hugely in our online proposition, we offer both a high street and an online proposition for one cost. I believe that's where customers get the best of both worlds when they choose Peter Alan.

## Caerphilly branch today

In 2017 Caerphilly was our branch of the year again. That was driven by selling more houses than any other branch we have in the company. Caerphilly has a talented team and they're all local. They're market leaders in the area, and we see that reflected in our market share. I think the reason they're so successful is that they're passionate. They want to exceed customer expectations, and because we've been so successful in the town for such a long time is the reason we have so much repeat and recommended business. I think that's a good sign of a quality estate agent."





# How we market Homes of Distinction

## Delivering the finest service

Exquisite homes of distinction from £350,000 and above are part of our pa black collection. Whether you're an open or discreet seller, our proven marketing strategies, together with our highly experienced, hand-selected team will ensure your home is seen by the right buyers. Selling your luxury home within Wales is an honour, and we are committed to delivering you the very finest service.

## Hand-selected for their expertise

Selling a luxury home within the ebb and flow of the property market can be a challenge. Our bespoke pa black team has been hand-selected due to their experience, expertise, and ability to deliver. Their warm and dedicated approach extends to both seller and buyer, which results in a smoother sales process and provides a welcoming experience. We don't leave things to chance, which is why we proactively search for potential buyers to ensure your home is sold as swiftly as possible.

## Never forgotten

It only takes a matter of seconds to grab a buyer's attention, and we ensure that your property is never forgotten. With consistent technological advances in the industry, we strive to be at the forefront, embracing those methods that get results and heighten the experience for you, our clients. With professional photography and HD video of your home, we aim to ensure your property will always stick in a buyer's mind.

## Widening our reach

The importance of online marketing cannot be underestimated; it can often reach those buyers who may not be actively looking to move. Your home will have the benefit of being featured on not only our pa black website, but also that of Peter Alan, which attracts 40% more visitors than the average estate agent website (\* according to the independent Homeflow benchmark tool). We also invest in premium listings on the leading property portals such as Rightmove and Zoopla, because we want your home to create an impact.



### **For Sale:**

Heol Ty Newydd, Bedwellty

For more information see page 52

## **Distinctively designed**

Although online activity is vital, so are our printed materials. There is something comforting about having a beautifully put together property brochure in your hand that you can relax and read at your leisure. Our property details are designed with the discerning buyer in mind. We're proud of the reputation the Distinctive Magazine has gained; frequently requested in our branches, each edition allows us to share our passion for the communities that we serve.

## **All avenues explored**

pa black maybe exclusive to Wales, but your buyer may not be. This is why we advertise our pa black collection within the national press as well as local publications, such as Cardiff Life and Swansea Life.

Social media plays a huge part in all our daily lives, and our social media strategy enables us to reach a following greater than other mediums can achieve today. We consistently look for opportunities to raise awareness of our brands, which, as a result, will positively impact on the future sale of your property.

## **Growing our network**

Peter Alan is part of one of the most successful estate agency companies in the UK. Formed in 1936, the Connells Group is a network of around 600 branches, strengthening our connections and increasing the opportunities open to us.

Our recent acquisitions have seen our own network increase to 29 branches across South Wales, and a growth in standalone branches specialising in pa black.

## **Providing an alternative way to view**

An open house provides an opportunity for a buyer to view your home in a more relaxed setting. They often stay longer, as many buyers are viewing your property at the same time, so they don't feel they need to rush. Potential buyers can explore your property at ease and start to see how they can make it their home. A member of our pa black team is always on hand to answer any questions, and taking those first steps into negotiation with those who want to take it further.

## **pa black is exclusive to Wales**

# Garden entertaining at its best with Leekes

When the sun is shining and the evenings are warm, we relish the chance to entertain friends and family in our gardens. Whether you decide to have a BBQ, prepare a range of tapas, or have your own cocktail hour, together with Leekes we have found some great accessories to ensure that your garden is party ready.



Let's start with the drinks. Drinks trolleys are very much on trend for use both inside and outside your home. This garden drinks trolley is practical and stylish and will make a fabulous serving table or cocktail bar. The perfect solution for holding your bottles, mixers and ice enabling you to entertain in style.

Garden Trading Drinks Trolley - £95

As the sun begins to set and the night draws in, you may be looking for ways to keep the evening chill at bay. Firepits are increasingly popular, and we think this impressive one, with a natural oxidised finish, will keep you all warmer for longer and will also wow your guests.

As we know, our British weather can often be unpredictable, which is why it is ideal to have a little bit of protection, as even on a hot day you may wish to remain in the shade. With its removable sides, this hexagonal gazebo provides a spacious and elegant space to entertain and relax all day long.



Hartman 3.5m Hexagonal Gazebo, Grey - £699



La Hacienda 1500w Hanging Halogen Heater - £109.99



La Hacienda Fasa Oxidised Firepit and Stand, Natural Rusted - £59.99

# Are you thinking of rightsizing?

Life is all about balance, and we often make decisions that we believe will improve our futures. Rightsizing is just one of the ways people are embracing in efforts to change their lifestyle, often moving to a smaller property to release equity and enhance the way they live.

It is common to consider rightsizing when you find yourself rattling around a house that now feels too big. Your children have all grown up and are making lives of their own in their own properties. You may have a desire to travel more, to go on a big adventure, or maybe even find a place in the sun, and by releasing equity you can make it happen.

The ongoing maintenance may be taking its toll, and the idea of a home that is easy to keep seems too attractive to turn down. Location can also be a deciding factor, especially if your property is in a remote location. You may want the ability walk to everything you need, whether that's popping out for a coffee, enjoying that early morning yoga session, or drinks with friends at the weekend.

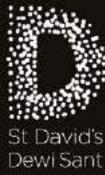
Although rightsizing is often considered to be something done by a certain generation, we are seeing a new wave of rightsizers who have their future financial freedom firmly in their sights. They tend to have a small to good amount of equity in their property and live in an executive style home, but dream of being mortgage-free. By moving their families to a smaller property, or sometimes just changing location, they potentially have the opportunity to reduce their mortgage substantially, often so much so that they could be living mortgage-free in only a handful of years.

Rightsizing is a concept we understand extremely well at pa black, and we enjoy helping our clients make the move to a financially positive future.

**We work with each rightsizing client to truly understand their wants and needs, to firstly make sure that rightsizing is the right decision for them, but also guiding them each and every step of the way, including finding the property that will help them to realise their aspirations.**

You would be wrong to think that rightsizing is simply about moving home; there is a lot more to consider. We have the expertise and experience to ask the right questions, to challenge your thinking and ascertain what is really important to you. If you're thinking of rightsizing, come and talk to our pa black team so that you make the right decisions for your family's future.





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John Lewis

# Go poolside in your garden this summer

Just because you don't live in LA and have a pool in your back garden, doesn't mean you can't embrace the latest high summer trend from John Lewis – Poolside.

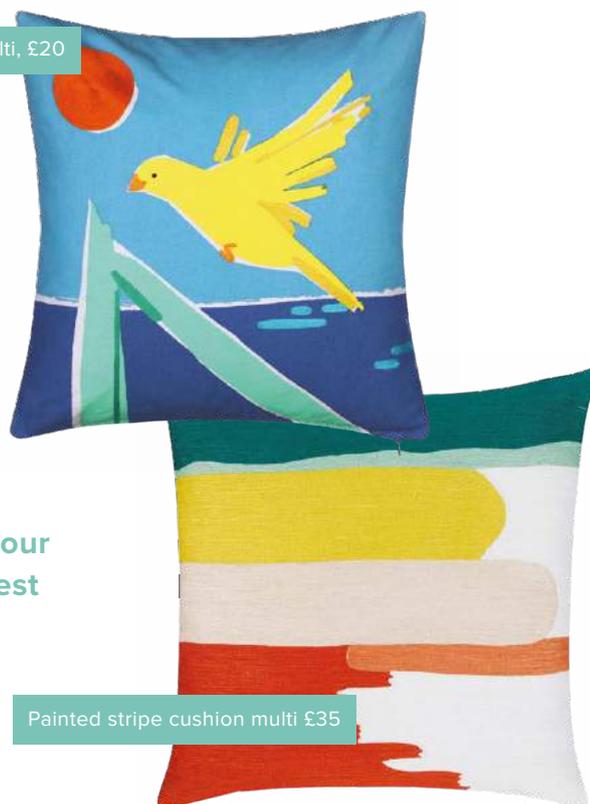
"For this collection we looked to build on the time when Hollywood stars lounged by the pools of their landlocked homes. The open plan, light and colourful architecture of the mid-century era had a big impact on Poolside's designs and illustrations," said Amie Jones, John Lewis Designer for Home.

The Poolside collection is perfect for smaller spaces and is ideal for relaxing on those warm summer evenings. It creates a laid-back aesthetic for indoor and outdoor spaces with practical and playful pieces across furniture, textiles and tableware.

Designed in-house with a nod to mid-century design, and using LA as a backdrop for inspiration, the collection combines vibrant colour palettes, statement geometric and graphic prints and playful hand-painted tableware for a bright summer look.

Poolside will bring a splash of fun to any outdoor area.

Canary cushion multi, £20



Painted stripe cushion multi £35

Flamingoes beach towel, £15



Palm beach towel, £15



Swimmers wash bag, £12



Salsa outdoor swing seat, £229



Dante sunlounger in natural, £499



# The Parish Hall the community built

Rudry, where community spirit remains proud and strong, has benefited from a Parish Hall since 1957 thanks to the continuing commitment of local people.

When the Home Guard of Rudry needed somewhere to have their practices, this, plus a desire for a place to hold events, highlighted the need for a parish hall. The land was gifted to the community and, over the following years, people gave a shilling a week, or what they could afford from their wages, as a donation. Then, when enough money had been raised, the original village hall was built and opened in 1957.

## With such an inspirational start, we wanted to find out how the hall was thriving today.

Kate Briscoe, one of the current hall managers, was pleased to bring us up to date.

“The community came together again to raise funds to have the hall re-built, which was a large project. The funding came through various schemes and part of the condition of the funds was that we had to be financially self-supporting. The renovated hall opened in 2010 with live music, dancing and celebrating and a manager was put into place to implement income generation activities, both commercial and community.

I started 18 months ago and job-share the manager role with Jeanette. Between us, we are back and forth opening and closing the building, booking events, answering the phone, showing people round and dealing with the never ending cycle of cleaning and rubbish disposal. We're passionate about seeing it succeed, like most people in the community, so there is always a helping pair of hands when needed.

Advertising is one thing we haven't really invested in, apart from our website, as the hall seems to sell by word of mouth. People attend an event, such as a party, love the atmosphere and the venue and book it for their next event; it just snowballs.”

## Apart from parties, what other events do you hold?

“The committee like to arrange some big community musical and theatrical events every year. In July we now have an established music festival with camping on the field. We host concerts, charity coffee mornings and afternoon teas, a monthly lunch club for around forty community members, WI, yoga, ballroom dancing, fitness training, hypnobirthing tuition, mother and toddlers playgroup and the offices for the parish council.

One of the highlights of the year is Bonfire Night; we always hold it on the 5th, never on

another day. We normally host around 600 people who come for the family atmosphere with mulled wine, excellent ales, good food, a huge bonfire and fabulous fireworks. The hall sits above its own natural amphitheatre for everyone to see the bonfire and fireworks below.

The surrounding woods are all for community use; the field below the hall is ideal for playing sports and outdoor events. Because of its location and surroundings it has a very peaceful feel; you can look down towards the fields and woodland, and then in the distance there's mountains. It's a relaxing place to be.”



# Timeless fun for the child inside all of us

**Fresh air-fuelled family fun, discover Mountain View Ranch**

What if you could find a place for your children to play that inspired their imagination, allowed them to climb, to crawl, to run, to hide. A place where they could run free, and just be children. If you haven't discovered it already then you need to take a trip to Mountain View Ranch.



**Owners Aaron and Klara Wagg have already proven their ability to create great spaces for children with their previous business ventures, Café Junior and Parc Play in Cardiff. Then, five years ago, they took on their biggest project to date: transforming the former Mountain View Lakes 18 hole golf courses into an outdoor family attraction where children can run free in the great outdoors.**

Marketing Manager Lucy Brereton takes us on a tour of this incredible 100-acre site. “The whole ethos of the ranch is ‘fresh air-fuelled family fun’, and it’s set in 100 acres on Caerphilly Mountain only 5 minutes from Cardiff, from junction 32 on the M4. After purchasing the site in 2013, Aaron and Klara have been gradually developing the former golf course into what it is today. Also located onsite is Castell Heights 9 hole pay and play golf course which is very popular!

We get over 150,000 visitors every year, and as it’s outdoors it’s very seasonal;

the Ranch is open every day from March through to November – weather permitting.

We’re very, very lucky to have Wales’ first and only licensed Gruffalo trail; it’s a magical book. Visitors will meet the famous willow characters along the way with a brand new 10ft willow Gruffalo just been installed. In the Fairy Forest you will find trees with wooden carvings, lovely dainty little fairy homes, wind chimes and a wishing well. It’s so enchanting; you just have to see for yourself!

Wooden treehouses built into the trees can be found all across the site, as well as den-building areas with plenty of materials - who doesn’t want to build their own den as a gang hut, a secret mission base, or a fort? And you can’t miss an opportunity to visit the Roly Poly Hill, a huge steep hill that, you’ve guessed it, people love to roll down. It’s that traditional family fun that we seem to miss out on these days in the era of technology, where kids are more likely to be found attached to a screen. We are big advocates of screen free time.

The adventure doesn’t stop there. We’ve got huge monkey bars, and where the old golf sand pits used to be we’ve created long jump zones where the kids can just run and jump and have exhilarating fun. There are lots of areas all across the Ranch where families can enjoy picnics. We’ve also got wooden sculptures including a 20ft dragon called Dilys; she’s quite a prominent feature. Then, this year, we had three baby dragons born, who are now sitting in a lovely tree above three golden eggs, which is quite a sight as well.

In addition to the activities, we’re also home to a lot of animals, such as the funny pygmy goats, who have their own living area with a grumpy looking troll that sits over a little brook. We offer Funny Goat Walks as part of our schedule of events; we let the goats out and allow them to go on a little walk around the Ranch. The children love it because the goats are very naughty, they run where they’re not supposed to, never listen and always like to show off in front of the excited children. We’ve also got a little Shetland pony called Wuzzy, guinea pigs, and rabbits.

On weekends we have a schedule of events including Campfire and Marshmallows, set underneath an old-fashioned parachute is a huge campfire, and everyone is given wooden sticks that are cut from twigs from around the Ranch to toast their marshmallows on.

At Easter we launched our new event called Ranch Stories. These are based on a selection of traditional fairy tale characters with a twist! The fairy tale characters have lost their big dragon and the children take on the role of Viking hunters, and go through the Enchanted Forest, along this magical trail encountering various characters until they find the lost dragon!

Parents tell us they appreciate the fact that everything is included in the entry price, the only thing that isn't included, and which is hugely popular, is our High Ropes course. The high ropes course is £10.00 for two goes around. You can tackle the nine elements of our challenging high ropes course including balance beams, wind chimes, wobbly logs, and a 60ft zip wire. This is great for the older children and younger teenagers to test their bravery on an adrenaline fuelled adventure! It's currently bookable online with a 25% discount. You can even book a High Ropes party for 12 kids which includes delicious stone baked pizza from our Pizza&Bean Café.

New additions to the Ranch in 2018 is the newly opened Lost Boys Hideout, which is a wooden structure that's been built over a pretty stream where children can play and channel the Peter Pan in us all. We've also got an impressive a willow maze coming, which is in the shape of our bull's head logo. We also have a beautiful unicorn joining the Enchanted Forest, as well as a magical new Fairy Queen.

For the children who enjoy summer birthdays we also offer Ranch Tentipi Hire Picnic Parties for up to 30 children where you have sole use of our stunning Nordic Tentipi and bring your own picnic.

The Ranch is also extremely popular with school trips as it's a day full of discovery, exploration and learning opportunities. Included in the day is also campfire and marshmallow toasting, the Gruffalo Trail and a Ranch Story told by one of our



[mountainviewranch.co.uk](http://mountainviewranch.co.uk)

amazing Storytellers. It's a great day for the school children!

Mountain View Ranch takes the best of the natural surroundings to make the space as wonderful as it can be for families. It's about bringing adventurous, fresh air-fuelled fun to all ages, for family and friends, where you can enjoy the outdoor, nostalgic excitement in a high quality, scenic, ranch-style environment.

As you walk around it's just wonderful, laughter fills the air. Children of all ages, from babies up to younger teenagers, are running, jumping, and having fun – even the grandparents are enthralled. Being set on 100 acres of the famous Caerphilly Mountain, you can't really get a more unique location in which to create all of these memories that the families will cherish forever."

# Dirt Jumping is thriving in Caerphilly

**We take a look at the popular Van Road Trails Gravity Goons and find out how you can get involved.**

“Van Road Trails is unique”, says Ian Clarke, the chairman of the committee, “there aren’t many official places like this around. The discipline is known as dirt jumping.

We lease the land off the Forestry Commission, and we’ve got different trails, ranging from those suitable for three or four-year-olds that are just learning to ride a bike, right up to the top end of the site, which is the pro standard. Even I’m not going to try and touch the pro trails, because you’re talking about getting on your bike and jumping over a gap of about 20 foot, so not the kind of thing that everybody wants to do.

Running down the side we’ve got a race track, which is a good discipline to get kids into bike racing. So it’s all off-road biking, not on-road biking.

## **Becoming official**

There was already an unofficial dirt jump site there, someone had just gone into the woods and basically dug this out between the trees, and for the Forestry Commission that gave them a few issues; obviously if anybody hurt themselves there or anything like that, then they would technically be liable. So they went in and they flattened the whole thing so it wasn’t going to cause any problems.

A couple of the local riders who used the site approached the Caerphilly council and Natural Resources Wales, as it is now, to see if there was any chance of getting something officially recognised, that we could cover with public liability insurance and that could be used by the whole community.

We wanted to be more public so we could start running bike training, off-road lessons, races, and make it a feature for the community.

## **Today**

At the moment we have a club night throughout the summer, every Wednesday, which runs from 6:00 until whatever time it gets dark. Once a month during those club nights we’ll hold a barbeque and we invite everybody, whether they ride or not, and we regularly get local residents come up to see what’s going on. As well as kids coaching, a couple of times a year we’ll hold a race event, which is basically for us to raise the money that we need to cover the public liability insurance for the site.

## **Van Road Trails**

[f /vanRdTrails](#) [t /vanrdtrails](#) [i /vanrdtrails](#)

You can just come along and have a go; it all depends on your confidence level, but the site is set up perfectly for people to go and start on small jumps, working their way up to the bigger jumps when they feel confident enough to do so. It was deliberately designed that way, so the ones down at the bottom you can roll over and there's nothing that you actually need to jump, and then as you progress up the site you can either roll over them or choose to jump over them, and then as you get further up you have no choice but to jump over them, because they're not the kinds of things you can roll your bike over. But the idea is that you've got this progression so that as your confidence increases you can move up to the next track and try your hands at that one.

## Kids coaching

We teach beginners' off-road bike skills, so how to handle a bike over the rough terrain, because a lot of kids aren't confident when it comes to the off-road stuff. There is a lot of mountain biking in South Wales, and this is a good introduction for people even if they don't choose jumping as their discipline. We also have start gates so they can practise how to get out the gates for racing.

It really is a community, and what we're hoping to do is try and foster a passion so that people who enjoy it can potentially make a career out of it, as a couple of the locals actually have.

## On-road versus off-road

An on-road bike is generally built for speed, and probably comfort a little bit too. So you can have a rigid bike that doesn't have any give in it, because that means you can transfer all your energy directly from the pedals into that forward motion.

With an off-road bike they tend to have suspension on them, to cope with some of the rough terrain that you'll go over. So they kind of bend in the middle, I guess is the best way to put it, so that when you're going over the rough stuff it's not trying to shake your bones out of your skin.

## Ian's 3 top tips for starting to learn off-road biking

### 1.

Join the club, because of the support that you get, not just in terms of people being able to teach you, but also the advice they can give you on what kind of bike to buy etc.

### 2.

Invest in a decent bike, because some of the cheaper bikes you can buy are a little bit dangerous for dirt jumping, cheap bikes with rear suspension are worth avoiding, spend a little extra on a good hard tail (no rear suspension) bike.

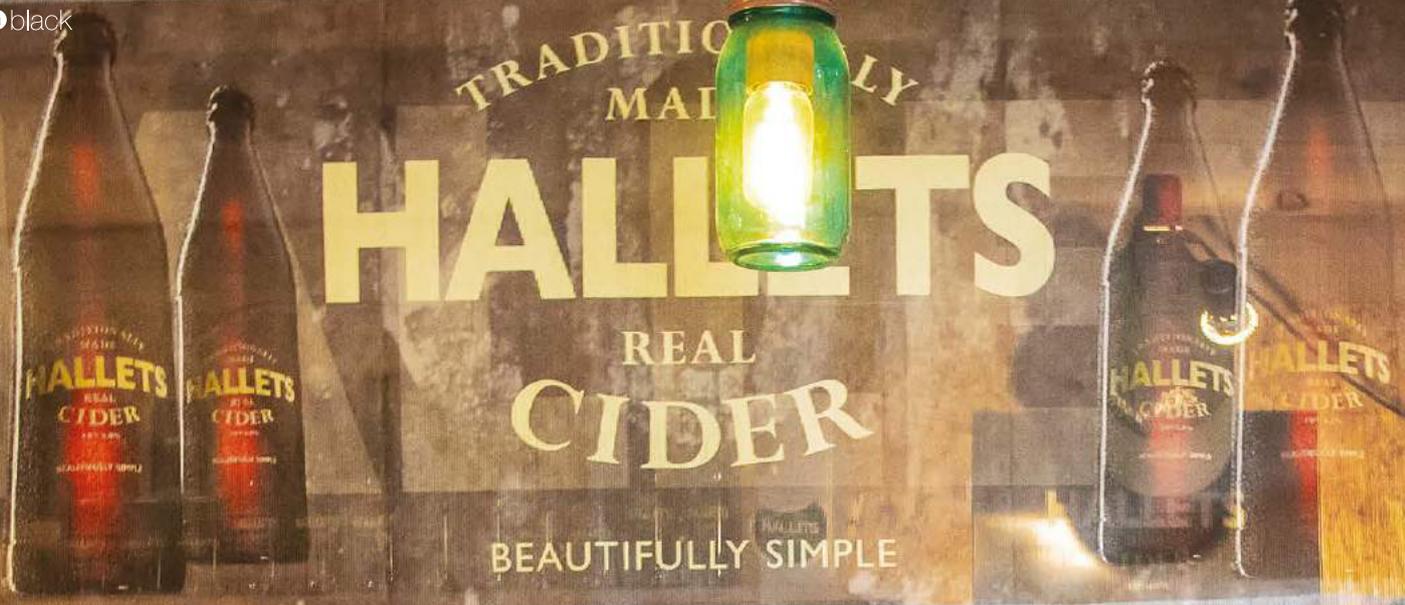
### 3.

A good helmet and good gloves, because even when you come off, if you don't bang your head, you'll quite often scuff your hands up, so gloves are a must.

Falling happens from time to time as you're learning, so it's something you do need to get used to. There is plenty of protection equipment out there, like I say, good helmets, gloves, knee pads, elbow pads. It's also always best to wear long sleeves rather than short sleeves.



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The story behind the multi award-winning local craft cider company, Halletts Real Cider.

# Deliciously fresh, traditionally made and 100% Welsh real cider

The draw of the countryside appeals to many, particularly the idea of leading a more relaxed and idyllic life surrounded by stunning and picturesque landscapes. But for Ann and Andy Hallett, buying a farm led to a delicious hobby that grew into an incredible and award-winning business. We were privileged to grab some time out of their busy schedule and chat to Ann about her company, Hallets Real Cider.

It was evident from her soft Scottish accent that Anne was not a native of South Wales. "I moved to Wales 32 years ago from Edinburgh, and mainly lived in Cardiff that whole time," said Ann. "My background is in project management and I've worked across England and Wales but formally retired just about a year ago."

Like many who start a new business, Ann combined her full-time project management career with Hallets Real Cider, working evenings and weekends to try and build the company. Now full-time on the farm, you can tell that Ann is relishing her cider life, especially as she works alongside her husband and son.

"My son and my husband make the cider and I do everything else, basically. It's a full-time job in itself. Sometimes I wonder how I managed to do another job."

## What is the story behind Hallets Real Cider?

"I met my husband Andy in Cardiff over 20 years ago. We both lived in Cardiff, and when we decided that we wanted to buy a house together, Andy was very keen to buy a house with some land. He comes from St Athan, so he was brought up in the countryside.

We spent some time trying to find a house in a location that we were both happy with, and we found Blaengawney Farm, which had a farmhouse and lots of outbuildings,

along with 25 acres of surrounding land. We had no idea at this stage what we were going to do with the land, we just knew the property was right for us.

Cider wasn't our first business venture on the land, and it took us a number of years to work out what we were going to do. We thought about shitake mushrooms as we were growing them in logs, but then discovered Sainsbury's were importing them from China and selling them really cheap.

A mate of Andy's was given a whole load of apples and said to Andy, "If I bring these up, do you fancy pressing them and seeing if we can make a bit of cider?" Andy has made small batches of homemade wine and cider for years, so he was quite happy to give that a go.

We pressed the apples and got about 200 litres of juice, fermented it, and it turned out really quite nice. So the next year we did it again, and made a bit more. Then in around 2002/2003 we joined the Welsh Perry and Cider Society so that we were mixing with other people who were making cider. The cider was quite popular, and we started selling it to local pubs.

It wasn't until 2006 that we made the decision to do this properly and make a living from what we were doing. This meant we had to upscale a lot and we invested heavily, which of course was a big risk. Andy's background in engineering proved so valuable, as he's extremely creative and was able to build most of the equipment himself, and his experience in the food industry helped in other areas such as product flow.



A successful grant application to Caerphilly Council supported our marketing as well as giving us the opportunity to purchase a much larger press so we could increase our juice production to about 30,000 litres. We've grown every year ever since, and today produce around 90,000 litres. We continue to invest and now have a state of the art cider-making facility.

We distribute our cider all round the UK, as well as exporting to a number of countries such as Canada, Russia, Holland, and Germany. We're really proud of what we have achieved as a farm-based cider company, and we will continue to produce in the same way, as we always want to remain a craft product made by hand on our farm."



## Do you grow your own apples?

"Six years ago we planted our own orchards; although we have 25 acres, not all of it is suitable for growing trees because it's a hill farm. We planted 1200 trees in the most appropriate orchards - as we're 1000 feet up it was quite challenging for the trees to grow. They are growing now and we're getting a good crop from them, but not as much as you would expect from sea level orchards after six years. It's going to take a little bit longer.

So we do use our own apples, but we don't get enough for the amount that we're making, so we also buy them in from another Welsh grower. They're all cider apples; we don't use culinary or eating apples, and we don't buy any apples outside of Wales, as it's important to us that we create a pure Welsh product."



## What is the difference between a cider apple and the other kinds of apples?

"You can't eat a cider apple as it's very sour, very dry, and very acidic. With eating apples and culinary apples, like Bramley apples, you can make cider but it's very thin and it's also very sharp. There are hundreds of different varieties of cider apples, they range from bittersweet apples through to sweeter ones. That's what makes good cider, one that's got body and tannins in it. Blending the juices that each of the different apples produce is how you create different kinds of cider."



## What ciders do you make?

“We produce a range of eight still draught ciders. Our standard blends are dry, medium and sweet. We also do some limited edition ciders which we age in rum barrels, whisky barrels, and sherry barrels - each gives the cider a slightly different flavour.

We also have a medium sparkling 6% bottled cider that’s easy to drink and really popular; it’s sold to pubs, restaurants, delicatessens, and wine shops. We also have a lighter cider in cans that’s popular in pubs and tap rooms.

Recently we’ve created a sparkling cider in a keg, which is an alternative to the still cider that the pubs currently have, and is proving to be extremely popular.

People are generally trying to get away from the mass-produced cider. It’s not pure juice cider, and has a very low percentage of apples in it. We’ve found that quite a lot of pubs are moving away from the big industrial scale ciders and replacing them with a local pure juice cider.

As well as the ciders we also do a bottled sparkling perry. Perry is made with perry pears; it’s popular with restaurants and is really refreshing.

We never stop experimenting, and our latest innovation is to use a Charmat process, which is how they make prosecco. We’re emulating that process with cider, so

hoping to produce a Prosecco-style cider maybe later in the summer; it will be at the higher end of the market and served in a champagne bottle.

You’ve always got to keep thinking of new things to interest people. The popularity of craft cider is not waning, it’s continuing to grow, so there are cider makers popping up all over the place. We’re very lucky to have started when we did, and established a reputation, because I wouldn’t like to be starting our company now.”

## What has been your highlight to date?

“Winning the BBC Food and Farming Award for the Best Drinks Producer 2016. It’s a competition that you don’t enter yourself. Our customers wrote to the BBC and nominated us for the award, so when we were called by Sheila Dillon from the Radio Four Food Programme, it was a complete shock.

As you can imagine it meant a huge amount to us, especially due to the fact that our customers felt that they wanted to nominate us. It was amazing when we won it!!!!

It’s such a coveted award in the food and drinks industry, immediately we were receiving phone calls from people asking us, “Can I buy your cider? Can I come to the farm to buy it? Can I buy it online?” Orders shot up massively.

As the news spread of our win, more and bigger customers approached us, and it also opened doors with new pubs and wholesalers. It just was a huge boost to the whole business.

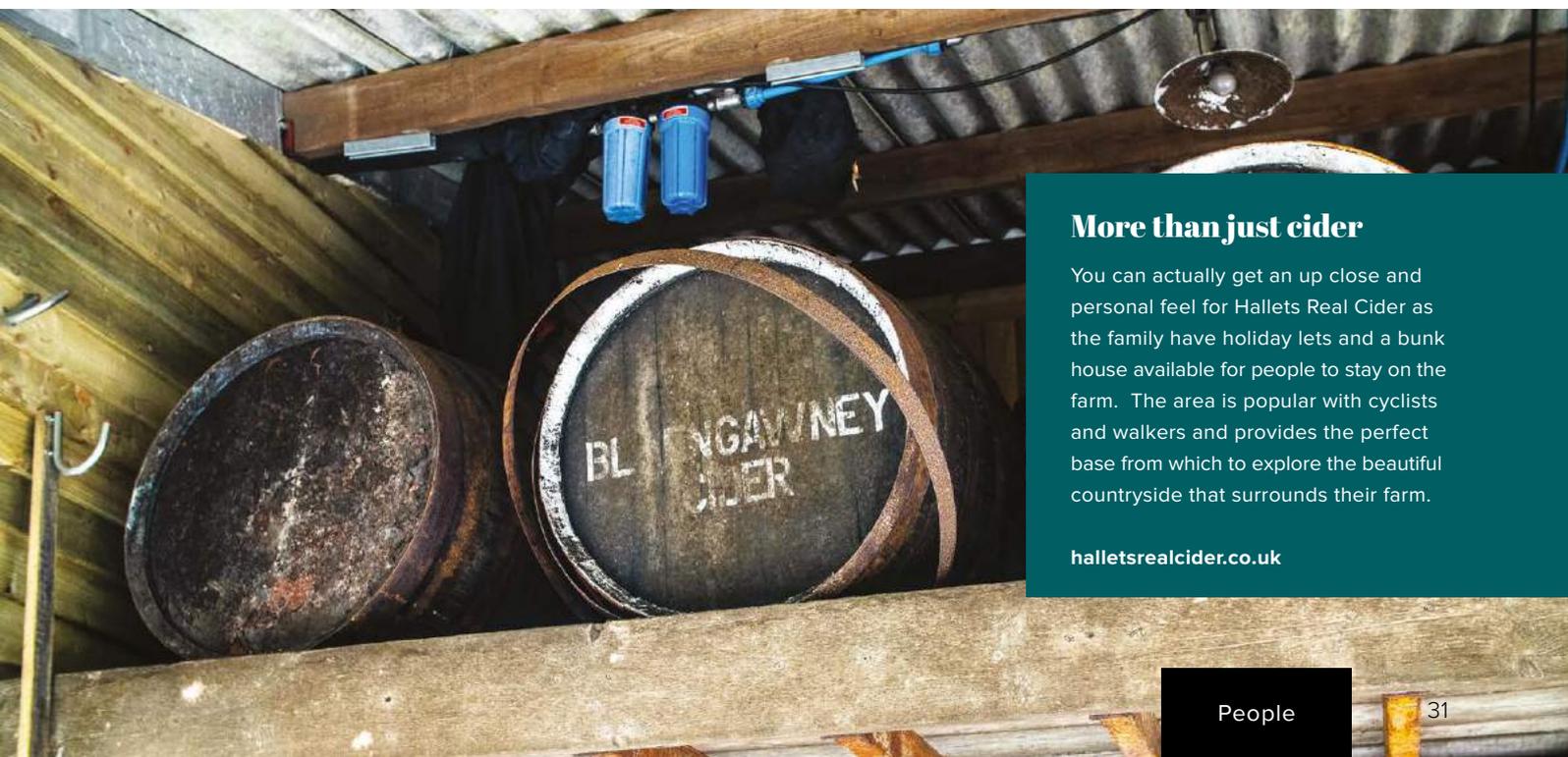
We’ve also made great friends with other businesses who have won a BBC award. We were on BBC Wales recently, on Sam and Shauna’s Big Cook Out. They run the Hang Fire restaurant in Barry and won the BBC Food and Farming Award in 2015 for Best Street Food. We met them at the 2016 awards, and they sell our cider.

The benefit of winning this award isn’t just that we increased our customers, but we developed more relationships with people in the food and drink industry.”

## What are you proud of?

“We never let anything go out that we’re not 100% happy with. When you make cider, sometimes things will go wrong, and you don’t always know why. If something doesn’t quite work you’re always investigating to find out what went wrong with a batch, what might have not been right with it. We’re completely paranoid about the quality of our cider, and never send anything out unless it’s perfect.”

[halletsrealcider.co.uk](http://halletsrealcider.co.uk)



## More than just cider

You can actually get an up close and personal feel for Hallets Real Cider as the family have holiday lets and a bunk house available for people to stay on the farm. The area is popular with cyclists and walkers and provides the perfect base from which to explore the beautiful countryside that surrounds their farm.

[halletsrealcider.co.uk](http://halletsrealcider.co.uk)



# What can you achieve when you compete against yourself?

Many of us are competitive, some of us can even be ruthless when it comes to our desire to win.

This competitive nature is often reflected in many elements of our lives, but just who are we competing against? Others, or ourselves? Lowri Morgan has achieved some incredible and allusive feats to date, but she believes her determination to succeed is driven from an internal fight with herself.

Warm and humble, chatting to Lowri was an absolute pleasure as she gave us a brief insight into her childhood, her highs and lows, and the background to her unbelievable achievements. If you haven't heard of Lowri Morgan before, then be prepared to be amazed.

"I was always interested in sport. My parents said that I went from crawling to running nearly straightaway, and seeing my son do the same I can see that he's inherited the same genetic make-up. I was always pushing boundaries, even as a child. Being brought up in the Gower, my summers were spent caravanning around Europe on adventure holidays, learning to abseil down mountains and kayaking down rivers. Adventure has been an integral part of my life from an early age.

**Running was something I actually started doing with my father; he picked up the sport later in life and we really enjoyed running around the streets of the village together.**

That's when I fell in love with running. It wasn't just about physical fitness, it was great for my mind. I even used it when I was studying for my GCSEs; I would record my notes onto a cassette tape and run around the village with my Walkman to help me revise.

My racing career started when I was around 11 years old. I ran for the school and came second against a well-known junior runner who was representing Wales at the time, and somebody said to my parents that I had a natural talent for running and would I be interested in joining Swansea Harriers, and that's what I did.

Music was also a big part of my life. Having achieved straight As in my A Levels I was lucky enough to go and study music at my university of choice, Cardiff. It was there that I got into rugby, really by accident.

The university team were desperate for a player, as someone had pulled out of the last minute. A member of the team knew I could run and they asked me to fill in for a game, and I loved it, not just the game but the camaraderie.

Running kind of took second place to my rugby then, as I found myself quickly playing for the university team and for Swansea. Then, 28 years ago, whilst I was playing in the semi-finals of the British Universities Cup against Loughborough, everything changed.

I suffered a serious injury, which shattered my knee, fibula, tibia, cartilage and ligaments. When I came out of plaster, I was told to face the fact that I probably wouldn't be able to run again because my knee was quite messed up. My leg is a bit shorter now, and I still don't have full flexibility. I thought, "Well, I am going to run again, and I might not be able to compete again with my old team mates, but I certainly can compete against myself."

I think that the patience I learned during those months and years has really made me

the person I am today. It was excruciating. I left the hospital in a wheelchair and was in a cast for months. When it came off I remember a nurse laughing at me when I asked if I could start training that day. I'll never forget the words my dad said in reply; "Well, if she thinks she can, then she will."

Anybody who has struggled with injury will know the frustration of not being able to do the things that you used to do. Lying there, the mind is thinking, "Tomorrow I'm going to go out running," but you just physically can't do it. The impatience that you feel when you're not getting better and you're not doing it as fast as you're wanting to, it taught me a lot about patience.

I got back into running in stages. I remember thinking, "Right, I'll go to the top of the..." and just went from one lamp post to another. I started off running maybe less than 400 metres, then a month later it was a little bit more, a little bit more. When my knee would swell I knew I had to rest. It was literally the story of a tortoise, just plodding on.

**I don't think I've always set out to win, but I'm really competitive, not against other people but against myself.**

I've always had to work hard, and I've always prided myself on that. I've a big race coming up in September, and that will be against some of the best runners in the world, who will be stronger and faster, but they can get lost in the mountains just as well as I can. When I was in the Arctic I was up against SAS soldiers. I knew they were more experienced, but if I could look after my kit better than anybody else, then I had a chance of surviving and even finishing the race.

I don't fear coming second. I don't want to win. What I fear is low aim. I could walk away from a race coming last and still hold my head up high if I knew that I'd given it my all.

When I was recuperating I saw the camaraderie of the London Marathon, and was totally inspired, I thought, "I'm going to do a marathon." My boss at the time said, "Right, there's a group of us going to the New York Marathon, do you want to take part?" I said, "Yes, bring it on." So I did.

**Three years after having the injury, I was running the New York Marathon.**

It's only now, looking back, that I think, "Gosh, I can't believe I did that." At the time I was so determined to do it that when I crossed the finish line it was very much like, "Okay, I've done it now, let's move on to the next challenge."

When I started work as a children's presenter, they knew that I'd run one marathon, so they asked if they could film me doing the London Marathon. I started to develop a name for myself as 'the adrenalin presenter', or 'the adventurous presenter'. I was the one who competed in an Iron Man competition, did scuba diving programmes, went down to see the Titanic, jumped out of planes, and dived with sharks.

Then I went to work for another company, and had this idea about the Jungle Marathon, but they initially said no. Four years later, different commissioning

editors saw the idea and said, "Why don't we do this?"

The Jungle Marathon is a 140-mile foot race through the Brazilian Amazon jungle. It's six stages over seven days, in 90% humidity and 40-degree heat. You have to swim across rivers full of piranhas, wade through swamps full of crocodiles and anacondas, and then you've got a jungle full of jaguars. It has something like a 40% drop-out rate, and some of the best world-class athletes have been taken to hospital, about 8 hours away by boat. It's known as one of the toughest foot races on earth.

I was scared, of course, but when you go to these places, you do your homework and you just have to have faith. You also need to know your body and learn how to survive out in hostile conditions. I'd spoken to a tribal man and he said, "Piranhas aren't that dangerous; they're healthy in these waters, so they're not going to go after you," and



you just have to trust them. With the jaguars, he said, "I've lived in the jungle for 40 years, I've only seen a jaguar once.

I had no expectations, no pressure. Well, there was pressure more from the filming point of view, because if you were going to fail you were going to fail in a very public way, so you did want to train really hard to give yourself the best chance of achieving the goal. When I crossed the finish line, it was more a feeling of relief.

Then I set my sights on the toughest, windiest, and most extreme foot race in the world, the 6633 Ultra in the Arctic. It's 350 miles, non-stop this time, over 8 days. Daily temperature is about -40, and the wind is 70mph, dropping the temperature to -72 Celsius. When I went, only five people had ever completed the challenge, and it's tough. It is really tough.

I only slept 12 hours that week. The constant walking, the cold. If you think about surviving in -72 degrees Celsius, you just cannot describe how cold it is. You can't breathe because it burns your throat and your nostrils because it's so cold. You can't sweat, because the perspiration will freeze and you'd get frostbite.

Your feet take a battering. It's a mental game against yourself, about how much you really want to finish it. I was the only one to finish, so I won. There were 100 miles left when everyone else had dropped out and I was on my own. I could have dropped out then and quite proudly held my head up high saying, "I was the last person standing, so in a way I won it," but that isn't me.

**What I feared more was not completing it. The fear of not completing it was far greater than the pain I was going through at the time. I'd shattered my feet, but was willing to put up with the pain rather than give up. At the time I was only the sixth person in the world to have completed the race.**

People think that because I have completed ultra events like these that a marathon is easy for me. It's not. They are a completely



different kind of race. I completed the London Marathon this year and I did find it tough. I'd worked really hard for it. The heat was one thing but I'd had chest infection too, and I think it did hit me more than I realised.

I think the London Marathon medal really takes pride of place because I really wanted to give up. When I got to mile four I thought, "This is tough," then I got to mile six and I thought, "This is really tough." Then I got to mile eight and I thought, "I'm not going to reach my A goal." As I continued to miss my goals I thought, "What is the point?" But I'm really proud I didn't, and I still managed to qualify for the UK Championships next year.

My focus was on the bigger picture; the marathon was only a race. My A game is needed for a race I am undertaking in

September, the Ultra Trail du Mont Blanc. It's 250 miles, a 26,000 metre ascent around Mont Blanc, and we'll be sleeping about 4/5 hours that whole week of racing. It's self-sufficient, self-navigating, quite extreme, and dangerous. You do it in groups of two or three, and there's no classification, you've either crossed the line or you haven't. That's how extreme it is.

I'm always open to a challenge and yes, there are a few things that I have said no to, due to time, other commitments, and risk. Endurance adventurers are very good with time management; you schedule training a year ahead of a race. We have to weigh the risks up, and we have to work in teams. But I've also done things that I'd never done before and ended up absolutely loving doing it."

# Lowri's top 5 tips for endurance running

- 1.** Get a proper pair of running shoes. Go to a specialist running shop where they can look at your feet, read your gait and give you the correct advice. You don't need to spend a fortune on trainers, but go to a specialist running shop.
- 2.** Have patience with your training; some days you will go out running and you'll have an absolute nightmare of a day. You could be struggling to run a mile when you're used to running six. Everybody has bad days; just let it go and the following day it might be different.
- 3.** Use whatever motivation you can muster to get out the door to go running. Some people run for charity, some people run to lose weight, some people run for mental wellbeing. When I trained for the jungle, for example, I used to put a pint of Ribena squash into the fridge; I'd be running and all I would be thinking about was that cold Ribena drink, and that was enough motivation.
- 4.** If you're going to start running endurance, start low and just build, but don't build quickly over night. The rule of thumb is normally to increase a long run by 10%, or your weekly mileage by 10% every month. I started the Amazon training running 40 miles a week, and I remember crying to my boss that I couldn't get my legs out of bed because they were so heavy. And yet, within 18 months, I was running 100 miles a week, every week. I was training and working full-time, and carrying 15 kilos of sugar bags in my rucksack. So it's all about the tortoise, slowly, slowly, just increase your mileage.
- 5.** I wish I had joined a club sooner in my running career, or just joined a group of runners. I'd done a lot of running on my own, and I still do enjoy running on my own, but I think sometimes it's good to join forces with other like-minded people, not just for a chat and advice, but also to push you.

[www.lowrimorgan.com](http://www.lowrimorgan.com)



With so many period homes and historical buildings around, you can understand the need for experienced craftsmen in bespoke plasterware. Jonathan Pugh is a decorative plasterer whose work takes him all across the country, from restoring complex cornices to designing a ceiling rose. Most recently he has joined up with his mother to open an interiors store, but why? His mother, Virginia, was kind enough to share their story.

“Jonathan undertook a plastering apprenticeship with his father to learn the trade, then around 24 years ago he made the decision to specialise in decorative plasterware, which is fibrous plastering, because he enjoyed the creativity and the design.

One of the restorations that Jonathan has worked on is the Newbridge Memorial Hall; he did all of the fibrous plasterware in the auditorium. What was existing was in a really bad state of repair, to the point of crumbling plaster. Jonathan made moulds to restore the ceiling centres, the decorative cornice, and the pattern on the ceiling so that it was identical to the original design.

It's not just commercial projects that he works on, but domestic projects too, from a lounge or dining room cornice right through to large-scale work such as restoring the front of chapels where the stonework has been crumbling.

Jonathan has always wanted to have showroom rather than just a workshop, and in January 2017 he took on this shop, which was in the old Post Office in Pontllanfraith. This building has history, which is what attracted him; the Post Office building was built in 1905, and it has been a Post Office exchange - it was a telephone exchange during the war. It's the character and the style of building that Jonathan particularly liked, with high ceilings so he could show off the plasterware.

The Post Office has been in the same family for many years; it has two rooms, one was the Post Office and the second was the exchange at one time. Jonathan has kept the character of the building, out of respect for the family, who are very well known to us. It was the building that inspired the name, Pillar Box Interiors. He's even turned the old Post Office counter into a dresser where we display our cushions, and keep the old door



that you used to put parcels through. I think everybody is overwhelmed when they walk through the door because it has quite a wow factor but it is so tiny.

We wanted to be different and showcase the plasterware in a room setting, which is where the concept of combining the showroom with an interiors store came in. We're now expanding into what was the really old Post Office. We've knocked through and we're going to showcase that room in the baroque style, where there will be more ornate plasterware. Jonathan has been very sympathetic with the restoration of the building, restoring things to how they should be.

My husband's been a plasterer for 40 odd years, and we've built and restored numerous properties ourselves. They are our homes, so obviously as we built them we'd sell them, but we have always had an interest in property and design.

I retired from one of the high street banks back in April last year; I'd wanted to come out of the financial world, and I kept thinking, "This is not for me anymore." But although I was 65, I thought I was too young to retire. I didn't want to retire and just stay at home; but this is not work, this is pure enjoyment. The customer reaction, it's just absolutely fantastic.

I enjoy everything about working here, from start to finish. I enjoy sourcing the products, the stock; I enjoy displaying, I enjoy the interaction with the customers, and what I really enjoy is that customers can buy a quality product that's not overpriced.

Customers always compliment me on the window display. I always have an idea of what I'm going to put in the window; I never know exactly what I am going to do, but I know if it looks wrong.

I'm always looking for unique styles, but they have to be a quality product. We don't put a huge mark up on our products, so a lot of them are as reasonable as they are online. I think this is why the store has been a success, and why the town has received it so well. We don't have an online store; we want to give people an experience, and that starts with coming into the shop.

Our customers say there's nothing like it around, and feedback like that is fantastic for us. I've got no experience, just my knowledge of decorating my own home. I do a lot of research to find the right products; the reps also help and guide me, as they know the store and what sells here, and we visit interiors companies to see first hand the pieces they produce.

**Jonathan also restores and paints furniture. It's not just any furniture; he sources unique pieces to restore and, when completed, we display them in the showroom. This is something he does for fun, as the main purpose of the showroom is to display his plasterware, but the interiors side complements his craft."**



# THE PILLAR BOX

## INTERIORS

DECORATIVE  
PLASTERWARE

CORNICE & CEILING  
CENTRES

RESTORATION  
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The Pillar Box Interiors store is currently open from 10:00 to 4:30 Monday to Friday, and on Saturdays from 10:00 to 2:00.

[www.thepillarboxinteriors.co.uk](http://www.thepillarboxinteriors.co.uk)

**f** ThePillarBoxInteriors

# From computers to willow

## A chance visit changed her life and started a whole new adventure

What we love about putting Distinctive together is all the fascinating people we get to meet along the way. You never truly know the full story behind their business, how they got there and what they have overcome and achieved. It's hard to imagine an IT professional ditching the corporate world to make willow baskets, but that's exactly what Sarah Hatton did and now she couldn't be happier.

### | Falling for willow

"After completing a degree in IT, I had been working in IT for a number of years. Just on the off-chance I went to the RHS show in Cardiff with my mum. There was a number of workshops you could participate in, and one of them was with willow. It was their first year there and I got to make a flower from what looked like a bundle of sticks but was actually willow rods. I'd never seen anything like it before; I was blown away and got pretty obsessed with willow really quickly.

Within the first year of me making that flower I had attended eight willow courses, and wanted to grow my own willow.

My mum and dad had always wanted to buy a piece of land, and together we bought three and a half acres of pasture land just behind Hendredenny in Caerphilly, and I planted 1200 cuttings of willow.

Horse riding has been a keen interest for my family and the main reason for buying the land was to get a horse and a pony, then we grew the willow on the side of the field. In the same year, I also bought a house in Hendredenny; this is my childhood home, so holds many precious memories for me.

The pasture land which we purchased and where I grow my willow is only a couple of minutes' walk away.

I'm very lucky to have this fantastic opportunity to grow my own willow, I know quite a few people in the basket-making community and lots of them don't have enough land to be able to grow their own.

### | The birth of Hatton Willow

After taking the willow courses, I started to fill my house with baskets. I had so many baskets in my house, my dad said, "You can't possibly use all these, so why don't you go along to the Caerphilly farmers' market and have a go at selling them?" That was in 2012, and that's exactly what I did, and that's how I started my business, Hatton Willow. It was almost by accident.

In 2013 my dad was diagnosed with cancer and I think that really gave me a kick up the bum.

If I didn't like my life and what I was doing then I needed to change it, and so in the same year I decided that I was going to make a real go of my business.

At that time I wasn't in a position to leave work, but I spent two years

working hard to grow Hatton Willow whilst still working in Cardiff Bay. Then, in 2015, I quit my job and became a full-time willow-weaver - even now when I say it, I still can't believe I actually did it.

I'd been in IT for 18 years and had no willow-weaving qualifications except that I'd attended lots of basket-weaving courses. I went to lots of craft fairs to sell my baskets and I started running my own courses in Nantgarw China Works Museum, which was going really well, and I was doing work for other people so just managed to keep myself afloat."

### | Is it easy to grow willow?

"It is really easy. You just literally take a 30 centimetre stick of willow that's been cut off the bottom of another fresh willow stick, and put it in the ground. You leave two thirds in the ground and a third sticking out of the ground, and that's it.

You plant them in winter because the roots develop as soon as the soil starts to warm, and then the leaves come out and they put all their energy into making the leaves once



you get to April/May time. Every year you coppice the willow right down to the ground and eventually, in about three years' time, you should get between 30 and 50 rods per cutting. Initially I planted 1200!

### | Learning techniques

Over the first 8 courses it was all about basket-making, which is why I had so many in my home. The initial baskets were simple and then I progressed to creations that were more difficult. You're always perfecting your skills and learning new techniques and weaves as you develop and I'm now working towards my City and Guilds level 2 in basketry.

As well as hand weaving the baskets I made some sculptures like a standing duck and a reindeer. You can also make structures with living willow; you've probably seen domes, tunnels and arches made from willow.

### | What's the most exciting project you've worked on so far?

In 2014 I was contacted by the Foreign Commonwealth Office to make gift hamper baskets for the world leaders and delegates who were attending the NATO summit.

Unfortunately, the timescale was really tight and I knew I couldn't do it on my own, so I called in reinforcements from other local basket-makers. We were invited by the Foreign Commonwealth Office to go to Celtic Manor and have a look around, and we met David Cameron. The baskets were placed in the delegates' rooms and were filled with Welsh gifts, such as Penderyn Whiskey, Dylan Thomas poetry, the Raspberry Pi computer, and Welsh slate coasters. So, yes, David Cameron and Barack Obama both got one of my baskets; it is really nice to think that my little baskets from Wales have gone all around the world.

I've been involved in so many amazing but cool projects. The basket-making community is so supportive that when one of us has a big project we all get together and help each other out. I helped to weave the willow arches for the Queen's coronation that lined the long walk to Windsor Castle. I assisted with a willow maze, which is in the Horrible Histories area

in Warwick Castle. I also helped my friend Mel Bastier when she created a quill nest for the Dr. Who spinoff series, Class, in the Llandaff studios.

The willow arches were 30-foot wide by 40-foot high, they're massive so it was wonderful to be able to work on them for a short time. I've not been brave enough to take one on myself yet.

### | What else do you create?

The lady I met on my first experience with willow at the RHS show in Cardiff is now my business partner in our business called Lily Willow Coffins. We create and sell willow coffins, mainly privately, and have seen a growth in demand in the past 6 months. We provide a more personal service; so Mel or I will take the initial call or respond to the email, we weave the entire coffin, create and sew in the lining and deliver the willow coffin, if it's in the local area. We also invite members of the family to weave the willow coffin with us and add personal mementoes to the coffin if that's something they would like to do. It's always a privilege and honour to be able to create something that is so important for a family.

I have also made garden furniture. I made an egg shaped hanging chair, gypsy willow chairs, willow hurdles and framed willow fence panels. I can usually turn my hand to anything if it's made of willow.

I also have willow items brought to me for repair as some people get attached to their baskets, especially if they have been in the family for many years. I received a willow children's pram for repair when the handle became loose. The lady had played with the pram when she was little and now wanted her granddaughter to be able to use it. I get quite nervous when I'm just about to cut apart an heirloom and repair it, so I take a lot of pictures beforehand; it is really nice to see how much people care about them."

### | Growth in heritage crafts

There is currently a real growth in heritage crafts, which is wonderful to see. Willow used to be more popular and people often tell me they used to make baskets at school that had a drilled solid base and take their

willow baskets to cookery classes with a gingham cover. Unfortunately, plastics took over and so did woven plastic baskets.

Willow is a sustainable, durable and strong material. I cut it every year, and it grows back every year. One willow cutting can go on for 30 and 50 years. We have grown into a throwaway society where you can go into a shop on the high street and pay a couple of pounds for a basket but you may throw it out within a year because it's broken.

My baskets aren't as cheap as you would find in a retail outlet but it will last you potentially 60 years, it's an investment. I'm hoping with the conversations and the increasing awareness about sustainability, plastics and the plastics in the ocean that people might go back to investing in items for the home rather than buying cheap and throwing them away.



Hatton Willow and Lily Willow Coffins  
Find out more about Sarah's creations, her demonstrations and workshops and also willow coffins at:

[hattonwillow.co.uk](http://hattonwillow.co.uk)  
[lilywillowcoffins.co.uk](http://lilywillowcoffins.co.uk)

# Best Kept Secret A profitable passion

Unless you are into the craft gin scene this Caerphilly-based company may not have been on your radar. Before meeting them, you naturally form preconceptions about the people behind this innovative and dynamic business, but the reality is completely different.



**Rob Higgins was kind enough to share the story of Eccentric Gin, and we started by asking him how the company was born.**

“We were just a group of people who were sick and tired of the mass-produced and poor quality gins available in the UK. This is compared to traditional gins from other countries, namely places like Holland, and Spain.

Fortunately, a couple of the guys were master brewers, i.e. beer brewing, and decided to turn these skills to distilling. We researched the process of making gin, and slowly started to develop Eccentric Gin. All our friends were sick and tired of us complaining, “Oh, the gin is crap, this is bad, it’s not to my taste,” so they said, “Well, instead of moaning about it, why don’t you do something about it?” So really they called our bluff, and here we are, two and a half years later, with a distillery.

There are five shareholders, and each of us brings something different to the party; we share our expertise. For example, one of the guys is very skilled at developing gin recipes, another has a brewery industry background and therefore is good at distilling, whereas I am the logistical support.

We started by doing some little trial batches; you have to be very careful to make sure you don’t blow yourself up. After that we applied for a licence with HMRC and it continued from there.

I’m no spring chicken, I’m 61 years of age, but I’ve always enjoyed gin. I’ve never been a big fan of whiskey, or vodka, even though I’ve worked in Russia, and gin was the go-to drink for most people.

In the last five or six years, because of the craft gin industry changing the way gin tastes, it’s fashionable now for a granddaughter to have a gin and tonic with their grandmother. And the boys in the rugby club, they stand around drinking a gin and tonic now instead of a pint of beer.

**Craft gin versus mass-produced gin**

Mass-produced gin is exactly what it sounds like, it’s like a factory system. Craft gins are produced in smaller batches. I suppose the comparison would be, mass-produced gins are like fast food outlets, whereas

craft gins are more like a restaurant serving good quality food. That’s the difference; it’s not mass-produced, so there’s a little bit more passion, and a little bit more care and attention is given to it.

**And the name?**

The brand was inspired after a true eccentric, a physician and freeman of Llantrisant. He has been described as one of the most unique men in Victorian Britain; he believed in democracy, legalised cremation, free love, and the emancipation of women. His ideas were radical and innovative, and we felt he summed up the Eccentric ethos.

**The first gin**

We shared on social media that we were developing a gin, then we put together a panel and asked them what they would like to see in a gin. We talked to people who worked in bars, mixologists, and people who just liked gin, and asked them what they felt was missing in the market. It was almost like a gin developed by committee. We did a lot of trials, tried a lot of recipes, and conducted many small experiments, and based on the feedback from various people we produced Cardiff Dry Gin.

We’ve also put Cardiff on the gin map of the world, because everybody knows London Dry Gin, Plymouth Gin, Edinburgh Gin, and Dublin Gin, but Cardiff wasn’t there. It is now.

Cardiff Dry Gin is a very smooth gin; this is because of the care and attention we take during the distillation process, it makes the gins we produce very, very smooth. You can almost drink them neat, or just with a little bit of ice, although I don’t suggest you do that on a regular basis. But when you’re sampling them they’re very easy to drink on their own.

With our craft gins you don’t need a lot of tonic. There is a saying in the gin industry, “A good tonic will hide a bad gin.” Some of our customers even recommend serving our gin with just sparkling mineral water, because it dilutes the gin, gives you the bubbles, but you still retain the flavour of the gin.





Our Cardiff Dry Gin makes a great Bloody Mary. Now, most people say a Bloody Mary needs to be made with vodka, but a Bloody Mary made with gin is called a Red Snapper. Licorice and aniseed are the flavoured notes of Cardiff Gin, licorice and aniseed with tomato juice sounds like a horrible combination, but people think that it's absolutely marvellous.

We also produce four other gins, including Dewi Sant, which has proven to be our most popular gin. Again it's a very smooth gin with a bit of citrus; it's crisp and clean on the palate. We suggest serving it with mint and black pepper, so it's almost like the Welsh way to drink a gin and tonic, really.

I have lots of favourite gins, including Young Tom, which we actually make from beer; it's a really complicated process. We distil the beer to take the alcohol away then store the alcohol, which has obviously got a nice malt and hoppy flavour to it, steep it in botanicals, namely juniper, and then we'll distil it a second time.

### Gin revolution

Last year, as a nation, we drank more spirits than we drank beer and lager, according to the statistics, and I think it was gin that pushed the spirit market past the cider and lager market."

### The facts

According to a report from the Wine and Spirit Association (WSTA), in the year ending September 2017 47 million bottles of gin were sold. They confirm that in the UK gin has grown more than any other spirit sold.

"I think it's becoming more popular now because of craft gins. Before, the whole range of gins available were from big producers. It's like living in a life where the only thing that's available is McDonald's, Burger King and Pizza Express, and then all of a sudden the little Italian pizzerias come on the market and people think, "Actually, I do like a pizza, as long as it's well cooked, and well made, and it's interesting."

It's the same with craft gins. The craft gin market has opened up people's eyes to what good gins really taste like.

We don't want to be a global brand, we're quite happy with the organic road we're going down with our gins. This is a profitable passion for us, as opposed to a stressful business.

### Where can you purchase Eccentric Gin?

You can purchase our gins from our own website, they are also available on Amazon and selective independent stores, such as the Elephant & Bun and the Noble Grape in Cowbridge, and Wally's Delicatessen in Cardiff."



[www.eccentricgin.com](http://www.eccentricgin.com)



# The real life Strictly Come Dancing

**Ever wanted to pop on some dancing shoes? We get an insider peek into the multi-award winning Shappelles.**

Some might say that Sean Perry was born to be a dancer; his parents were professional dancers, becoming Welsh Champions, and they also made the British National Finals in Latin American and danced on *Come Dancing*. He started dancing at nine years old, studying ballroom and Latin, and he also danced for Wales, Great Britain and followed in his parents' footsteps by dancing on *Come Dancing*.

Sean notes a particular career highlight was representing Wales and Great Britain in the under-16s, but he stopped competitive dancing at the young age of 18/19.

We managed to tango our way into a quick step, and waltzed some time away with Sean finding out more about this dynamic Caerphilly studio. We started by asking Sean why he decided to stop dancing at a competitive level so young.

"I'd been dancing for a long time, and I was struggling to find a dancing partner in the area.

I decided to take a few months off and have a little bit of a rest, and just never really got back into the competitive dancing. It was just one of those things that came to a natural end.

Stopping dancing was quite a strange time because it's one of those things in your blood, so as much as you want to have a little bit of a break from it, it can be quite difficult to get away from it entirely. When you do anything at a high level, you always end up staying involved with it one way or another.

The dancing school was very, very busy at that time, and I would stand in when my parents were on holiday and take the classes. The teaching grew and then I got married; my wife was a very high level competitive dancer as well, and it just progressed from there.

We get to work with kids and adults of all abilities; some just want a social dance, and others want to be a high-grade competitor. I think you're very lucky if you have a job that you enjoy as a hobby. I think it's difficult in life these days to have a job that you love; people have jobs they like, but if you've got a job that you love I think you're even luckier."

### How has Strictly impacted on the interest in ballroom and Latin dancing?

"What Strictly has done is it's made it a lot easier for the men to come to the classes with their wives, because obviously they're seeing these top-level sportsmen having a go at it and saying, "It's not as easy as you think, you should have a go at it," they come along now, and it's just a cooler thing to do.

We're licensed as well so couples can come along and have a drink, so it feels more like a night out now, rather than them being forced to learn to dance.

Our adult classes have always been very well attended, but I think they've grown from what they were maybe 10 or 15 years ago. There are a lot of medical papers recommending dancing as an activity for the young and the old, not just for fitness but also coordination.

So it's great from a young age, because it gives the kids confidence, it develops hand-eye coordination, and rhythm. The benefits are exactly the same as you get older, although you might not be as good as you were 30 years ago.

Personally, for the studio, it has highlighted the quality of the professionals we have produced, as Amy Dowden is from this dancing studio. There are many others who have gone through the ranks and become very successful, although Amy is the only one that has made it onto Strictly thus far."





### More than just a studio

"I came into the business about 25 years ago and one of my primary roles was not to teach but to develop the studio into a venue that could be used for weddings, dinners, and dances. Thankfully it has been very successful. We've got a wedding licence so you can get married here, and most weekends there is something happening such as a christening, birthday or our annual dinner dance, which is usually attended by well over 100 people.

We've always tried to be relaxed, in that people can come along, and sit and have a drink, and learn to dance. Then, on the weekends, we can double up as a venue; we can do pretty much everything that a hotel does, except we don't have any accommodation."

### Why did your parents start a dance studio?

"My father had seen a lot of dance clubs when he'd been dancing in Germany and wanted to start a dancing school here. This property came up for sale, and nobody wanted it because of the flood risk. He went to the auction and bought it, and we moved in. We had no central heating, but we managed to have a bit of hot water. So we spent a year trying to renovate the house, making the house habitable, and then we started to build the studio.

We literally constructed this building ourselves, from nothing. My father is an electrician by trade, and very handy, so he wired and plumbed the building and I worked with him on it. We've got some great photographs where we were putting the roof trusses on together and things like that. I don't think they'll ever let it go, to be perfectly honest, because it's part of them.

My parents still teach, they're at that stage now in their life where they can do what they want to do, but they're still very much hands-on and are pretty active in the running of the school.

### And the next generation, the reality

My son dances with a young lady from the Midlands, they've danced together for about 10 years, and been British and World Champions from juvenile - under-12s, under-16s, under-19s, and now to under-21s, so they've been incredibly successful.

My daughter now dances with a young man from the Ukraine, they're the current British Latin American Champions, and they're going up to Blackpool next week to dance in the British Open Dance Festival up there."

### Logistics wise, how does that work?

It's very difficult, but it's the reality of competing at such a high level. My son and his partner, because they danced together from a very young age, it was very reliant

on both sets of parents to always driving the children around. We've been very fortunate that Rebecca's parents have been excellent; they can see the children are talented, and are going to continue to be successful.

My daughter has just started dancing with Christopher, from the Ukraine, they've been dancing together for about 10 months. That's difficult, because obviously Christopher has to come over and stay with us, and we have to go over to the Ukraine. They see each other probably every month, but sometimes they have a two-week or a three-week gap in between seeing each other, but they're clever kids and they work really hard, so they're doing very well.

Like any sport that you do at a high level, you have to be committed and you need a team of people around you to help you with all of the training and the logistical side. We're fortunate because we're in the business, so we know what needs to be done to achieve a high level.

We've done it with other couples as well, from this school. Like I said, Amy Dowden is from this dancing school and she's now on Strictly, so we have been very, very successful. I think we've trained over 60 British National Champions, from juvenile, to formation, to amateur, to under-21s, so we are, by far, one of the most successful dancing schools in the UK, never mind Wales."



# Signature Serves

Our friends at Eccentric Gin aren't just experts in crafting the perfecting gin, they also know how to serve it at home to maximise the flavour in each glass that you pour. They have kindly shared some insider secrets to creating the perfect gin and tonic and martini signature serves.

"We'd recommend a healthy 50ml measure of any of our gins, so you can really experience the Eccentric tastes and flavours. If you're a gin enthusiast you may like to try our gin neat with lots of ice and our suggested garnishes. If you're new to gin, add the same amount of any good quality unsweetened tonic water or sparkling mineral water to release the flavours even more."

## Gin & Tonic

### Cardiff Dry

Serve over lots of ice with a rosemary sprig and lemon zest.

### Madame Geneva

Serve over lots of ice with orange zest and star anise.

### Limbeck

Serve over lots of ice with one or two fresh sage leaves, lime zest and a dash of absinthe for an extra punch.

### Young Tom

Serve over lots of ice with a couple of fresh mint leaves, orange zest, and a small grating of good quality dark chocolate.

We recommend anything above 80% cocoa, as the sweet bitterness works excellently with the malty notes of Young Tom.

## Martini

### Cardiff Dry

60ml Cardiff Dry, 10ml lemongrass syrup, stirred and garnished with 4-5 fresh basil leaves.

### Madame Geneva

50ml Madame Geneva, 15ml Lillet Blanc, stirred down and served in an absinthe rinsed glass, garnish with lemon zest.

### Limbeck

50ml Limbeck, 10ml Noilly Prat Ambre (or Rouge if possible, this will work best with the orange and ginger notes), 2 dashes orange bitters. Garnish with orange zest.

### Young Tom

This is already a naturally sweet gin. Try 60ml Young Tom, 10ml fennel syrup, garnished with orange zest.

# Try something new this summer

It has already been a year of sport with the Winter Olympics in PyeongChang and the Commonwealth Games taking place on the Gold Coast, and we have the Football World Cup, Wimbledon, and the Tour de France still to come. Inspired by 2018's sporting calendar we took a tour around Caerphilly to discover some of the usual and unusual activities that you can try out here.

## 1 Caerphilly Cycling Club

[caerphillycc.co.uk](http://caerphillycc.co.uk)

Whether you're into social riding or long distance adventures the Caerphilly Cycling Club invites you to race, train or just enjoy the outdoors with their members of all abilities.

## 2 Caerphilly Golf Club

[caerphillygolfclub.com](http://caerphillygolfclub.com)

If an afternoon of golf is more your thing, Caerphilly Golf Club is located just a short walk from the town centre and offers a challenging 18-hole golf course with stunning views of the local countryside.

## 3 Caerphilly Nordic Walks

[nordic-walking.wales](http://nordic-walking.wales)

The former valleys railway lines have been transformed into wonderful walkways via towns and villages and along the rivers. The Caerphilly Nordic Walks will lead you through this beautiful area of South Wales.

## 4 Cerddwyr Caerfilli Ramblers

[caerphillyramblers.btck.co.uk](http://caerphillyramblers.btck.co.uk)

For over 25 years the Cerddwyr Caerfilli Ramblers have been leading walks through the local hills and valleys up to the highest mountains with a group of like-minded individuals who love embracing the challenging South Wales countryside.

## 5 Clay Shooting

[clayshooting2000.co.uk](http://clayshooting2000.co.uk)

Have you been inspired by the Olympics to try out clay target shooting? South Wales 2000 caters for beginners and experienced shooters for team building, parties or tuition.

## 6 Mountain View Ranch

[mountainviewranch.co.uk](http://mountainviewranch.co.uk)

For those little adventurers The Mountain Ranch Railway has plenty going on! From Gruffalo trails to high ropes and archery. The site even has a 9-hole golf course for your mini Rory McIlroy.

## 7 Rudry Village Riding Club

[rudryvillageridingclub.org](http://rudryvillageridingclub.org)

Located in the small village of Rudry, the Riding Club welcomes new and existing members and provides access to training, competitions, and demonstrations.

## 8 Shappelles

[shappelles.com](http://shappelles.com)

The Shappelles bring Latin, salsa, ballroom and fitness classes to Caerphilly, all set in the beautiful grounds of The Bridge in Ystrad Mynach. Whether you're interested in keeping fit or socialising, there's a group for everyone.

## 9 Van Road Trails

[trailguru.co.uk/van-road-caerphilly](http://trailguru.co.uk/van-road-caerphilly)

Pack your bike and get ready to get dirty! Van Road Trails is home to the biggest and best dirt jump site in Wales and is ideal for those who are just learning, or an experienced rider.

## 10 Ynys Hywel

[ynyshywel.co.uk](http://ynyshywel.co.uk)

Celebrate the great outdoors with activities for your school, business or youth group hidden in the grounds of the beautiful Sirhowy Country Park.





# Our Caerphilly

Having the most beautiful countryside and country parks on our doorsteps for walking with friends and with Caerphilly Ramblers.

**Lynda Newton, Caerphilly Ramblers**

Caerphilly has been my home for 36 years. There's a huge selection of social clubs to be part of, an amazing castle on your doorstep and Cardiff is just 15 minutes away. You get a sense of community and belonging living here.

**Ruth Hazell, Secretary Caerphilly Runners**

Lle gwych i fagu plant, ysgolion da a llawer yn digwydd – yr wyl fwyd, marchnad Nadolig ac yn agos i parciau a llefydd i gerdded a mwynhau fel teulu.

A great place to bring up children with good schools and plenty to do, such as the food festival, and the Christmas market. It's also close to parks and places to walk and enjoy with the family.

**Claire Blackford, Resident & Head of Welsh at Blackwood Comprehensive School**

I've always loved having the castle on my doorstep, especially during the summertime. The town has an almost village feel and real sense of community wherever you go.

**Ellen Escott, Resident**

I love living in Caerphilly because it's the best of both worlds. If I turn left out of my door I have all the benefits of a small town; if I turn right I'm out in the countryside with all that offers. On top of that, it's only a quick journey over the mountain to Cardiff for a night out or shopping.

**Ian Clarke, Van Road Trails**

We love living in Caerphilly because it's rural and therefore peaceful whilst still being relatively close to a number of towns and cities. Best of both worlds!

**Ann Hallett, Halletts Real Cider**

I love that I live on the doorstep of the countryside. I can be cutting willow in the fields with buzzards, red kites and kestrels soaring overhead, and then within 10 minutes be in the centre of Caerphilly town.

**Sarah Hatton, Hatton Willow**

Surrounded by countryside with a castle, coal mining houses and proud people, it epitomises the "Welsh way". The coast, Brecon Beacons and the capital city are all within a 45-minute drive.

**Alison Cray, Resident**

I have lived in Caerphilly all of my life, I commute to Cardiff for work and enjoy coming home to views of the countryside and occasionally popping to my local on the weekends.

**Sarah Green, Resident**

Having lived in Caerphilly for most of my adult life, I truly feel it's one of the best places to live. My family feel part of a great community, including the schools our children attend, Brownies, football and especially Caerphilly Rugby Club. I love the fact we have a fantastic castle in the heart of the town, our little bit of history for the world to see, and we are only half an hour from the Brecon Beacons, the sea, or a vibrant city. What more could you want? Maybe a little bit of sun would be nice...

**Paula Kennard, Resident**





**Albany Road**  
02920 462 246

**Barry**  
01446 733 224

**Blackwood**  
01495 231 199

**Bridgend**  
01656 657 201

**Caerphilly**  
02920 867 611

**Canton**  
02920 397 171

**Chepstow**  
01291 630 876

**Cowbridge**  
01446 772 857

**Dinas Powys**  
02920 513 151

**Gorseinon**  
01792 894 422

**Heath**  
02920 231 670

**Llanishen**  
02920 618 552

**Monmouth**  
01600 714 355

**Morrison**  
01792 798 201

**Neath**  
01639 635 115

**Newport**  
01633 221 892

**Penarth**  
02920 703 799

**Pontypridd**  
01443 485600

**Porthcawl**  
01656 771 600

**Rumney**  
02920 792 888

**Swansea**  
01792 641 481

**Swansea Marina**  
01792 463 780

**Talbot Green**  
01443 222 851

**Victoria Park**  
02920 397 077

**Whitchurch**  
02920 612 328

If you would like to discuss our services further,  
or would like to arrange a free, no obligation market appraisal  
then please email [distinctive@pablack.co.uk](mailto:distinctive@pablack.co.uk) or call **0845 3402911**

[www.pablack.co.uk](http://www.pablack.co.uk)



**Heol Ty Newydd, Bedwellty**

£625,000

- Converted stone built barn in a rural location with over 3 acres of land EPC = E
- 31ft lounge with feature stone fireplace
- 4 double bedrooms - master with an en suite
- 2 further reception rooms, large farmhouse style kitchen
- Large parking area and double length garage



**Clos Y Cedr, Pwllpant**

£499,950

- 4 bedroom detached property EPC = TBC
- Designed and built by current owner
- Built to a high specification
- 3 spacious reception rooms
- Ample parking & garage
- No chain



**Ffordd Las, Abertridwr**

£399,950

- Executive self build EPC = D
- Four double bedrooms
- Three reception rooms
- Conservatory
- Stunning views of the countryside
- Driveway and garage



**Rhyd Y Gwern Lane, Draethen**

£389,950

- Detached dormer style bungalow in pretty village EPC = D
- 3/4 double bedrooms
- Lounge with views of countryside
- Large kitchen/diner
- Two driveways plus garage
- Lovely gardens



**Mountain Road, Caerphilly**

£384,950

- Four bedrooms
- Central location
- Three reception rooms
- Kitchen and utility room
- Conservatory driveway and garage
- Spectacular views

EPC = E

**Rectory Villas, Crumlin, Nr Blackwood** £370,000

- Edwardian detached family residence with accommodation over three floors
- 3 reception rooms, 6 double bedrooms, 2 bathrooms
- Large kitchen / breakfast room with centre island
- Lovely original features and fireplaces throughout
- Detached double garage, walled gardens with lawn and seating areas

EPC = D



**Tydfil Road, Bedwas**

£390,000

EPC = E

- Four double bedrooms
- Two double garages
- Large and private rear gardens
- Panoramic views of the surrounding mountains and valley
- Spacious plot
- Excellent potential to improve, no chain

**Ty Dreenon, White Hart**

£389,950

EPC = D

- Executive four bedrooms
- Spectacular kitchen/family room
- Conservatory
- Two en suites
- Cloakroom and utility room
- Large and private rear garden

**Llwyn-On Crescent, Oakdale**

£375,000

EPC = D

- Stone built detached family home
- 4 double bedrooms
- Master bedroom with en suite
- 3 reception rooms
- Kitchen/diner with built-in appliances and utility room
- Large garage with electric door
- No chain



**Ballas, Stormy Down, Pyle**

£850,000

- Beautifully restored barn conversion
- Impressive accommodation throughout
- Six bedrooms - two bathrooms - two shower rooms
- Leisure room with sauna shower room
- Extensive gardens plus four acre paddock
- Gated driveway, garage workshop

EPC = E



**South Road, Porthcawl**

£800,000

- Unique detached residence versatile accommodation
- Six bedrooms - bathroom shower room
- Spacious lounge with folding doors to the garden
- 45 Foot family games room
- Sweeping driveway, double garage
- Extensive grounds with variety of planting

EPC = D



**Sanderling Way, Rest Bay**

£720,000

- Executive detached family home
- Five spacious bedrooms, two en-suites, family bathroom
- Open plan kitchen, diner lounge
- Two formal receptions rooms
- Detached double garage driveway
- Close proximity of locks common

EPC = C



**West Drive, Porthcawl**

£640,000

- Detached sea front residence
- Views of Devon coastline, locks common
- Three receptions, family breakfast, kitchen
- Five bedrooms, three ensuite's bathroom
- Gardens to front rear first floor
- Balcony with views

EPC = D



**Tuskers Point, Ogmore-By-Sea**

£549,995

- Brand new executive detached house
- Four double bedrooms
- Bathroom, en suite, cloakroom
- Double garage
- NHBC 10 year warranty
- Sea views

EPC = TBC



**St. Mary Hill, St. Mary Hill**

£499,950

- Detached six bedroom dormer bungalow
- Rural location with stunning panoramic views of rolling countryside
- 18ft lounge, 2ft sitting room, 21ft fitted kitchen & breakfast room
- Versatile extra living room with kitchen area
- Four bathrooms
- Double garage

EPC = C



**Locks Lane, Porthcawl**

£650,000

- Unique detached home
- Five bedrooms, two en-suites
- Sought after location
- Partial views from first floor
- Family bathroom & ground floor shower room
- Conservatory overlooking rear garden

EPC = D



**Long Acre Court, Nottage, Porthcawl**

£485,000

- Sought after cul de sac location
- Lounge diner, sitting room, breakfast room, utility area
- Formal lounge, study four bedrooms
- En-suite bathroom
- Ample parking garage

EPC = D



**Whitwell House, Glynogwr, Bridgend** £460,000

**Park Street, Bridgend** £480,000

- Converted old school
- Four bedroom detached
- Beautiful countryside views
- Three reception rooms
- Viewing highly recommended

EPC = F

- Edwardian style detached
- Large garden
- Off road parking plus garage
- No chain
- Close to Bridgend train station
- Amazing condition

EPC = E



**Somerset View, Ogmores-by-Sea**

**Brook Cottage, Corntown**

**Blundell Court, Porthcawl**

£450,000

EPC = D

£400,000

EPC = C

£400,000

EPC = C

- Coastal location with sea views, minutes from the beach
- Five generously proportioned double bedrooms
- Three reception rooms plus garden room
- Double garage off road parking
- Ensuite and downstairs cloakroom

- Beautifully presented detached residence in the heart of Corntown, less than 10 minutes from two beaches
- Catchment for Cowbridge Comprehensive School, with direct bus link
- Modern fitted kitchen / breakfast room, three reception rooms
- Four bedrooms with en suite to bedroom one
- Family bathroom, garage and driveway

- Architecturally designed detached home
- Three double bedrooms
- Bathroom, ground floor wet room
- Breakfast kitchen, integral appliances
- Dining room with vaulted ceiling, galleried landing
- Gated garden, garage



**Rhodfa's Machlud, Nantymoel**

£399,000

EPC = D

- Stunning views
- Beautiful garden
- Fantastic proportions
- Five bedrooms plus loft room
- Off road parking plus garage
- Viewing highly recommended



**Nottage, Porthcawl**

£395,000

EPC = D

- Beautifully presented character home
- Nottage village location
- Three reception rooms
- Spacious breakfast kitchen, four double bedrooms
- Family bathroom, en suite shower room
- Enclosed private rear garden
- Flexible versatile accommodation



**Broad View, Tondy, Bridgend**

£330,000

EPC = E

- Substantial surrounding garden
- Three reception rooms
- Five double bedrooms
- No on going chain



**Marlpit Lane, Porthcawl**

£375,000

EPC = D

- Detached home with country views
- Five bedrooms, two bathrooms
- Open plan kitchen/diner
- Conservatory
- Two receptions
- Study, utility room
- Gated parking
- Gardens
- Balcony



**West Road, Nottage, Porthcawl**

£367,995

EPC = E

- Double fronted traditional home
- Three reception rooms
- Gated forecourt providing parking
- Adjacent to Nottage village
- Modernised with restored features
- Three bedrooms bathroom



## Pendoylan Road, Groesfaen, Pontyclun

£920,000

EPC = E

This five bedroom family home enjoys a large and lovely private garden to approx a third of an acre, with attached stable and double garage. Externally finished in stone this large and versatile property boasts four separate reception rooms, including the lounge being generous 38 Ft. x 16 ft. The ground floor living space includes a grand entrance reception hall with returning staircase that leads to an gallery landing, a shower room, utility room, study, sitting room/ bedroom five and a family room. On the first floor there are four double bedrooms, the master suite includes French doors that open onto a private balcony which overlooks the charming rear gardens and leads to a stunning roof garden with superb views. Included within the master bedroom is a bespoke free standing bath and an en suite.



**Rhiwsaeson Road, Cross Inn**

£700,000

- Large detached four bedroom barn conversion
- Stunning high quality kitchen with granite surfaces
- Large mature grounds with stream and summer house
- Feature solid oak staircase
- Large integral garage separate
- Self contained annex building

EPC = D



**St Annes Court, Talygarn**

£625,000

- Executive five bedroom detached home
- Highly desirable area of Talygarn
- Two luxury ensuite bathrooms plus family shower room
- Three separate reception rooms plus a large sun room
- Luxury bespoke kitchen/diner with granite worktop
- Driveway plus double garage

EPC = C



**Graigwen, Pontypridd**

£450,000

EPC = F

- Sitting in just under six acres of land
- Would suit horses and livestock
- Three large reception rooms
- Detached cottage style property with three double bedrooms
- Outbuilding suitable for conversion to stables
- Very large garage and parking for numerous vehicles



**Pencoed Avenue, Pontypridd**

£450,000

EPC = D

- Sympathetically extended family home providing flexible accommodation
- 3 Separate reception rooms
- 5 double bedrooms - one in a guest suite with a sitting room
- Stunning family bathroom
- Two en suite shower rooms
- Spacious kitchen / breakfast room
- Larger than average garage



**Brynna Road, Brynna**

£425,000

EPC = TBC

- Unique four bedroom bespoke detached home
- Adjacent to an 88 acre nature reserve, becoming your own back garden
- Stunning property built to uncompromising standards
- Natural materials appropriately used with exceptional finishes and detailing



**Maerdy Farm, Maerdy, Ferndale** £575,000

- Modern, four bedroom detached house
- Approx. 80 acres of land
- Large log cabin with veranda and sun deck
- Parking for numerous vehicles
- Purpose built self contained two bedroom annex
- 3000 sq ft Barn with internal stables at one end

EPC = D



**Oakmead Road, Llanharan, Pontyclun** £495,000

- Stunning detached 4 bedroom timber built home
- Set within a beautifully landscaped plot
- Stylish log/wood burners in both principal rooms
- Modern and contemporary kitchen with breakfast bar
- The master bedroom features a dressing room & en suite shower room
- Driveway parking plus a single garage

EPC = D



**Degar Road, Llanharry**

£400,000

EPC = TBC

- 0.78 acre paddock
- Detached stables, three field boxes and access to local bridle paths
- Four bedrooms
- Modern master ensuite and family bathroom
- Underfloor heating to the ground floor
- Two reception rooms



**Kingsacre, Llantwit Fardre**

£390,000

EPC = C

- Modern and stylish throughout
- Driveway parking plus double garage
- Master bedroom plus en suite
- Three reception rooms
- Utility room



**Nile Road, Trealaw**

£365,000

EPC = TBC

- Impeccable three bedroom stone built detached family home of immense character
- High quality bespoke interior (by a professional designer)
- South facing aspect with panoramic views
- Hard landscaped garden with summerhouse
- No on going chain



**Heol Dowlais, Efail Isaf**

£465,000

- Detached bungalow in private grounds
- Enviably position
- Five bedrooms with master ensuite
- South facing garden
- Detached quadruple garage
- Potential to develop

EPC = D



**Mynachdy Road, Ynysybwl, Pontypridd** £460,000

- Extended stone cottage in grounds approaching two acres
- 5 bedrooms
- 3 reception rooms
- Large 'farmhouse' style kitchen
- Various outbuildings including garage, hay loft, wood store and stable
- Planning recently lapsed for a detached 4 bedroom house in the grounds

EPC = F



**Hill Street, Gilfach Goch**

£350,000

EPC = C

- Unique stylish self build
- Four double bedrooms
- Stunning living area with feature window
- Three bathrooms
- Driveway plus double integrated garage
- Views of the surrounding countryside



**Greenfield Terrace, Cefn Pennar**

£349,950

EPC = D

- No onward chain
- Very spacious family home with over 3,000 sq ft of flexible accommodation
- 4 Double bedrooms
- 4 Reception rooms
- 29Ft kitchen/breakfast room
- 2 Double garages and parking for 10 cars
- Outbuildings and gardens with hot tub



**Dan Y Graig Heights, Talbot Green**

£350,000

EPC = D

- Beautifully presented detached family home
- Three reception rooms
- Master bedroom with ensuite
- Four good sized bedrooms
- Driveway and double detached garage
- Utility room and downstairs cloakroom
- Y Pant catchment



## Maillards Haven, Penarth

£799,950

EPC = D

Situated in a gated and walled select development, adjacent to the cliffside walks, this 5 bedroom detached family home has been extended and extensively refurbished by the present owner in order to provide a very stylish and spacious home. As well as the internal refurbishment a lot of time and thought has also gone into the landscaping of the south facing rear garden. The ground floor accommodation briefly comprises an entrance hallway, cloakroom/wc, an extended lounge with a vaulted ceiling and feature windows overlooking the garden, a separate sitting room, an amazing open plan kitchen and dining room with a vast array of fitted units as well a stainless steel range cooker and a large breakfast bar - the dining area can also easily accommodate a substantial dining table, plus a separate utility room.



**Westra, Dinas Powys**

£1,050,000

- Beautifully presented detached family home
- High stone wall and security gates
- Adjacent to the common
- Six bedrooms and four bathrooms
- Three reception rooms double
- Garage

EPC = C



**Bridgeman Road, Penarth**

£975,000

- Stunning penthouse apartment with outstanding views across the channel
- Very large private roof garden plus a 24ft balcony
- 3 double bedrooms - 2 with en suite facilities
- 24ft Lounge and separate dining room, fitted kitchen/breakfast room
- 2 Parking spaces in underground garage
- Gated and walled gardens

EPC = C



**Victoria Road, Penarth**

£695,000

EPC = D

- Victorian semi detached house
- Close to the town centre
- Currently in two flats - Ground floor flat and a 4 bedroom flat over the upper two floors
- The ground floor accommodation is in need of modernisation
- The property could be reinstated into a large family home
- Large westerly facing garden



**Port Road East, Barry**

£650,000

EPC = C

- Stunning detached dormer bungalow with a 'chalet style' extension to the rear
- Fabulous west facing garden enjoying views across the Vale
- 4 Double bedrooms and 2 bathrooms
- 3 Reception rooms and large kitchen with built-in appliances
- Sun terrace with hot tub
- Double garage with a large driveway



**Lavernock Road, Penarth**

£595,000

EPC = E

- Set back from the road, overlooking a central green
- Extended and detached family home
- Close to well regarded primary and high schools
- 4 Double bedrooms
- 2 Reception rooms
- Kitchen/diner plus utility room



**Winsford Road, Sully**

£530,000

- Impressively spacious detached family home on corner plot EPC = TBC
- Double storey extended
- 4 bedrooms, 3 receptions
- Large Conservatory
- 2 bathrooms
- Large enclosed rear garden & single garage



**Lettons Way, Dinas Powys**

£795,000

- Stunning 6 bedroom farmhouse dating back over 500 years EPC = D
- Set in gardens of around 1/3rd of an acre, close to the village centre
- Stunning lounge with vaulted ceiling
- Refitted kitchen with built-in appliances and breakfast island
- Sitting room with large stone inglenook fireplace
- Dining room and conservatory



**Clive Place, Penarth**

£550,000

EPC = D

- Close to town centre
- Beautifully presented 3 storey family home
- 5 double bedrooms
- 3 reception rooms
- 14ft bathroom with roll top bath
- Low maintenance garden



**Plas Taliesin, Penarth Marina**

£547,800

EPC = D

- Double fronted marina house
- Uninterrupted views across the bay
- Four double bedrooms / two bathrooms
- Lounge and dining room, both with outstanding views
- Good size garden with sunny aspect
- Driveway and garage with electric door



**Swanbridge Road, Sully**

£500,000

EPC = TBC

- Grade 2 Listed farmhouse set in stone walled gardens of approx. 3/4 of an acre
- Beautiful views across the Vale
- Externally refurbished by the present owner
- Internally a blank canvass but retaining many outstanding features



**Cross Common Road, Dinas Powys** £750,000

EPC = E

- Set in grounds of approximately an acre
- Detached family home with 6 bedrooms in total
- Can easily be utilised as two, three bedroom homes
- Main house has 3 reception rooms plus a very large conservatory
- Annex has an open plan lounge/kitchen
- Rural location with far reaching views towards the West Country



**Plymouth Road, Penarth** £729,950

EPC = E

- 5 Double bedroom detached family home
- Recently extended and extensively upgraded
- Two large reception rooms
- Fabulous kitchen/dining room with centre island with integrated appliances
- Family bathroom and separate shower room. Lovely gardens.



**Canon Walk, Llandough**

£500,000

EPC = B

- Distinctive detached home
- Four or five bedrooms
- Two en suite and bathroom
- Spacious kitchen / dining area
- Double garage with off road parking
- Front and rear gardens



**Penlan Road, Llandough**

£435,000

EPC = E

- Detached four bedroom home
- Ample off road parking spaces
- Farmhouse kitchen style
- Separate dining room
- Two further reception rooms
- Bathroom and shower room



**Dylan Close, Llandough**

£350,000

EPC = D

- Three bedroom detached home
- 2 Reception rooms
- Sw facing rear
- Garden elevated sunny position with panoramic views
- Kitchen and utility/pantry
- Quiet cul-de-sac location



## Hensol Castle Park, Hensol, The Vale

£415,000

EPC = C

A truly stunning two bedroom self contained ground floor apartment, located on the exclusive development of Hensol Castle Park, 10 minutes driving distance from the M4, and set within historical parkland, next to the Grade 1 Listed Hensol Castle and its adjacent world class Vale resort. This large and spacious apartment enjoys high ceilings and air conditioning, plus impressive double glazed windows, each with pleasing views. This exclusive development is located close to adjacent playing fields, a scenic lake and tree lined surrounding gardens. This particular property benefits from many additional features including a custom designed bespoke kitchen with solid Granite work surfaces and luxury integrated appliances, open plan to a capacious living area with the dining room, lounge and the conservatory with full height picture windows and sliding doors that open onto and overlook landscaped private grounds.




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## Porthkerry Road, Rhoose, Barry

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£850,000

EPC = D

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A truly magnificent and charming detached Grade 2 listed thatched cottage reputed to be built over 500 years ago, with tax records dating back to 1540, and occupying a large well defined plot of approximately 0.8 acre bordering open countryside with panoramic views across the valley and towards Porthkerry viaduct. This unique and particularly spacious five bedroom property of character has been sympathetically improved by the current owners to provide a well designed family home, approached from a country lane via a long sweeping main entrance drive enclosed by electronic fob operated double gates. The extensive surrounding gardens include a large shaped decked sun terrace with hot tub and views stretching across open countryside, a particularly large main lawn bounded by garden trees and stone boundary walls and an outdoor fully covered heated swimming pool.



**Hill Cottage, Bonvilston**

£500,000

- Detached four bedroom home
- Ample off road parking spaces
- Farmhouse kitchen style
- Sitting area and living room
- Detached garage
- Bathroom and en-suite

EPC = D



**Morfa Lane, Llantwit Major**

£999,999

- Stunning detached four bedroom barn conversion
- Three Luxury bathrooms. Capacious bespoke kitchen breakfast room
- 30ft contemporary lounge. Formal 18ft dining room
- Detached triple garage, gated entrance
- Detached leisure complex with heated indoor swimming pool
- Sauna, games room, solarium and hot tub. 3 Acres

EPC = D



**Broad Close Lane, Lllancarfan**

£875,000

- Five bedroom country residence
- Private gated in and out drive
- 16 acres of surrounding land. Detached stable block with 5 loose boxes
- Four large reception rooms, 21ft Kitchen breakfast room
- Three bathrooms, triple garage
- Close to Lllancarfan Village

EPC = E



**Broad Close Lane, Moulton**

£820,000

- A five bedroom country residence with 2.8 acres consisting of large idyllic gardens, grounds ancient woodland
- Cowbridge High School catchment
- L-shaped 22ft x 22ft kitchen/diner/family room
- Fantastic space to further extend the property if required
- Study, conservatory, lounge, three bathrooms

EPC = E



**Penmark, Barry**

£750,000

- Five bedroom 17th century stone built barn conversion EPC = E
- Large and lovely private level gardens opening onto countryside
- 3 bathrooms, double garage
- 28ft sitting room
- 35ft kitchen/diner



**Flemingston Village**

£740,000

- Exceptional five bedroom detached family home EPC = TBC
- Architect designed
- 3000sq ft of well-proportioned living space
- Uninterrupted views of the valley on two sides
- 21ft lounge with log burner, solid oak handmade kitchen
- Master bedroom,ensuite,breakfast room, dining room
- Double garage, Private landscaped gardens



**Llanmaes, Llantwit Major**

£499,950

EPC = D

- Detached four bedroom country cottage
- Surrounding gardens, countryside views
- Three living rooms, and a hand made solid ash wood kitchen breakfast room, charming stone fireplace with log burning stove
- Ground floor shower room,
- A private 4/5 car drive
- Versatile detached garage



**Picketston, St Athan**

£495,000

EPC = F

- Detached period four bedroom cottage with private entrance drive and no chain
- Four reception rooms, two log burners, period fire places
- Ground floor shower room, utility room, kitchen breakfast room
- Large garage, two thirds of an acres level plot
- Former bake house and smoke house built in original stone



**Llanmaes, Llantwit Major**

£475,000

EPC = E

- Well presented four bedroom residence
- Contemporary and spacious kitchen/dining room
- Sitting room with stone feature fireplace
- Large conservatory overlooking a landscaped rear garden
- Countryside views to the front of the property



### Llanmaes, Llantwit Major

£725,000

- Built in 2014 to a high specification dormer bungalow with flexible accommodation EPC = B
- Five/six bedrooms, two bathroom & two shower room ensuites
- Stunning 19' kitchen/diner
- Large rear garden backing onto countryside
- Double garage



### City, Cowbridge

£700,000

- Unique detached five/six bedroom residence EPC = D
- Occupying an idyllic position within the hamlet village of City
- Exceptional country views
- Double garage
- Numerous sun terraces



### Village Farm, Bonvilston

£495,000

EPC = D

- Detached double fronted four double bedroom family house
- Lovely quiet select cul de sac
- Superb living space
- Three reception rooms
- Kitchen & breakfast room,
- Downstairs cloak room, utility room
- Two bathrooms
- Double garage



### Llanquian Road, Aberthin

£460,000

EPC = D

- Detached four bedroom family house with delightful country views
- Downstairs cloak room
- 20ft fitted kitchen dining room
- 17ft family room, 18ft lounge, utility room, two bathrooms, gas heating
- Roof garden, private balcony
- Double garage. Cowbridge catchment



### Heol Cae Pwll, Colwinston

£524,995

EPC = TBC

- Five generously sized bedrooms
- Two en suite bathrooms
- Open plan kitchen/dining area
- Utility room
- Separate lounge
- Contemporary appliances and features



**Causeway Hill, Llanblethian**

£600,000

- Five bedroom detached house with flexible accommodation EPC = E
- Capacious 29ft lounge with balcony
- Formal dining room, separate playroom/study, further sitting room
- Private surrounding gardens
- Drive leading to a double garage



**Penmark, The Vale of Glamorgan**

£575,000

- Four bedroom detached stone built 17th century barn conversion EPC = C
- 22ft open plan kitchen breakfast room, utility room, down stairs cloak room, 20ft lounge, 16ft sitting room, formal dining room
- Separate snug/study, two bathrooms
- Surrounding gardens, double garage, double drive



**Llantwit Road, St. Athan**

£385,000

- No chain EPC = D
- Refurbished and extended in 2017
- 29' kitchen/dining/family room
- Four bedrooms, en suite and family bathroom
- Cloakroom, utility room
- Generous 60' rear garden



**St Brides Road, Wick**

From £353,000

- Part exchange considered EPC = TBC
- Four bedroom detached
- Garage and driveway
- Flooring included
- Close to coastline and six miles to Bridgend



**Star Lane,  
Capel Llanilltern,**

£985,000

EPC = D

A fabulous detached residence set in private, mature grounds with circular driveway and three car garage. The house briefly comprises 6 bedrooms, four bathrooms, four reception rooms, bespoke fitted kitchen/breakfast room, utility/ laundry room all located approx. 7 miles from Cardiff Centre. Star House was built in 1937 to a high quality bespoke specification for Mr Duncan Alexander, on his marriage. The original plans to the house are still available. There have been just three owners of the property to date. Star House is set centrally within its grounds, with elevated, south-facing views from the principal rooms and terrace. Mature landscaped gardens surround the property with an interesting variety of specimen trees, planted on the boundaries, which have now matured to create a lovely outlook and provide considerable privacy.



**Wood Close, Lisvane**

£1,000,000

- Truly magnificent detached five bedroom individual residence in quiet select close
- Capacious living space with three large reception rooms
- Stunning kitchen and breakfast room
- Three bathrooms, sauna, gallery landing
- Eight car drive with gated entrance, double garage

EPC = C



**Llantrisant Road, Capel Llanilltern** £895,000

- Charming detached four bedroom country house located within an overall plot of 1.95 acres
- Five reception rooms, five bathrooms, 30ft bespoke kitchen
- Inglenook fireplace, double garage, double car-port,
- Heated outdoor swimming pool, extensive lawned gardens
- Hot tub, breeze house, home office, stable, summer house/gym

EPC = D



**Crofta, Lisvane**

£850,000

- 1.25 acres of private gardens and a woodland forest
- Four bedrooms, five living rooms, three bathrooms
- Cardiff High School catchment,
- Private entrance drive, gas heating
- PVC double glazing, stunning bespoke new 2015 kitchen
- This versatile residence provides 3000 sq ft of space

EPC = D



**Church Road, Pentyrch, Cardiff**

£835,000

- Detached seven bedroom country house with truly stunning country views
- L shaped 24ft x 19ft kitchen/breakfast room
- 18ft dining room, 31ft Lounge, indoor pool
- Three bathrooms, double car port, double garage
- Single garage, extensive parking. No chain

EPC = F



**Pendwyallt Road, Whitchurch** £799,999

- Six bedroom detached spacious family residence with private gardens and deep gated entrance drive EPC = D
- Extensive living space with a large 25ft entrance reception hall
- Downstairs cloak room. 21ft kitchen, 15ft sitting room, 14ft dining room, 19ft lounge
- Two bathrooms, double garage



**Mill Road, Lisvane** £725,000

- Six bedroom detached double fronted residence EPC = D
- Private surrounding gardens, 25ft lounge sitting room
- 19ft dining room conservatory, family room, 20ft kitchen
- Breakfast room, large utility room, downstairs cloak room
- Two Villeroy Bosch bathrooms. Gas heating
- PVC double glazed windows, outer doors and french doors. No Chain!



**Old Port Road, Wenvoe** £725,000

- Distinctive detached home full of character and charm EPC = F
- Three reception rooms
- Four bedrooms, one ensuite
- Beautifully maintained large garden
- Off road parking



**Hillcot Close, Lisvane** £650,000

- Large detached four bedroom family residence in quiet select close just off Mill Road, Lisvane EPC = D
- Extensive living space. Gas Heating, PVC double glazing
- Contemporary shower wet room
- 28ft lounge, 15ft dining room, fitted kitchen, utility room
- Two bathrooms, private south facing gardens. No chain



**Millbrook Park, Lisvane**

£635,000

- Detached six bedroom family residence EPC = D
- Large surrounding sunny private gardens
- 21ft Magnet kitchen/diner, 25ft sun lounge conservatory
- 24ft lounge, 20ft sitting room, spacious gym, cloak room
- Large utility room, three bathrooms
- PVC double glazing, gas heating, lovely location. Must be seen!



**Mill Place, Lisvane**

£599,999

- Large detached five bedroom modern double-fronted family house. Large and private level gardens EPC = E
- 2/3 Car drive and 19ft garage, 19ft open plan kitchen and dining room, 19ft lounge, separate family room, sun conservatory.
- Downstairs shower room, large utility room.
- Two bathrooms, versatile living space, must be seen!



**Clos Elphan, St. Mellons**

£595,000

- Detached Meadgate built four double bedroom family residence EPC = F
- Kitchen and breakfast room
- Study, dining room, lounge
- Sun lounge/conservatory
- Four bathrooms, three ensuite, lovely position



**Began Road, Old St. Mellons**

£575,000

- Large three double bedroom bespoke detached property EPC = F
- Backing onto open fields, sunny landscaped gardens
- Wide private front drive
- Stunning high specification
- 25ft open plan kitchen dining room



**Began Road, Old St. Mellons**

£560,000

- One acre plot including paddock
- Private gardens with deep impressive drive
- Three living rooms
- 18ft kitchen
- Study, utility
- Semi-rural location

EPC = F



**Bassetts Field, Thornhill**

£549,950

- Modern detached residence set in one third of an acre
- Five double bedrooms, three bathrooms
- Downstairs cloak room
- Fitted kitchen, family room, utility room
- 23ft lounge, 16ft dining room, snug/study
- No Chain

EPC = C



**St Fagans Drive, St. Fagans**

£540,000

- Detached 4/5 bedroom double fronted family house
- Integral one bedroom annex with versatile living space
- Downstairs cloak room, fitted kitchen breakfast room, utility room
- Formal dining room, 19ft lounge, versatile sitting room
- Two bathrooms, private drive, double garage
- Gas CHR, PVC windows

EPC = D



**Tyn-Y-Pwll Road, Whitchurch**

£539,950

- New 2017 bespoke four bedroom detached house
- Private Mews location with landscaped south facing gardens
- 22ft x 22ft open plan luxury kitchen, family room & dining room
- 21ft lounge, downstairs cloak room, utility room
- Two stunning new bathrooms
- No chain

EPC = B



**Cyncoed Road, Cyncoed**

£535,000

- Magnificent five bedroom semi-detached double fronted traditional house including a self contained one bedroom versatile granny annex/teenager suite EPC = D
- PVD double glazing, gas heating
- 15ft PVC conservatory, 19ft lounge
- Separate snug/study, utility room, cloak room, two bathrooms



**Lon Stephens, Taffs Well**

£535,000

- Imposing modern four bedroom detached family house EPC = C
- Occupying a fine location fronting a select and private road
- 23ft lounge, study, formal dining room
- 16ft kitchen and breakfast room
- Two stylish bathrooms
- 20ft garage, private in and out drive



**Ridgeway, Lisvane**

£530,000

- Five bedroom detached double fronted residence EPC = D
- Large and extensive corner gardens
- Three reception rooms including a 27ft lounge, downstairs cloak room, large utility room, two bathrooms
- Double garage, double drive. PVC double glazing
- Lovely quiet residential location with room to extend further



**West Rise, Cardiff**

£530,000

- Detached four bedroom property in immaculate condition EPC = D
- Large corner plot with detached garage with two car driveway
- Front, side and rear gardens
- Two reception rooms
- Large kitchen/breakfast room
- Located on the highly sought after West Rise



**Ridgeway, Lisvane**

£569,950

- Detached five bedroom family house in select quiet close EPC = D
- 27 FT lounge, study/home office, separate versatile snug
- Stylish modern 20 FT kitchen & breakfast room
- Downstairs cloak room
- Two modern stylish bathrooms
- Double garage, private gardens



**Drope Road, St. George's-Super-Ely**

£525,000

- Four double bedroom family home EPC = E
- 20ft lounge, 19ft formal dining room
- 25ft stylish fitted kitchen breakfast room
- PVC sun lounge conservatory, four contemporary white bathrooms
- Lovely private landscaped gardens
- Double garage, private long drive, must be seen!



**Park End Lane, Cyncoed**

£480,000

- Detached three bedroom brand new home EPC = B
- Stunning open concept plan living space
- Downstairs Cloak room/Utility room
- Open plan lounge, dining room & sitting room
- Stylish fitted kitchen, two stunning new bathrooms
- Private parking



**Chandlery Way, Cardiff Bay**

£499,900

- Unique four bedroom, four storey corner house EPC = C
- Over 3000 square feet of space
- Ground floor flat/granny annexe
- Three separate sun balconies
- Private drive and large integral garage



**Foreland Road, Whitchurch**

£695,000

- Large five bedroom stunning family residence of character EPC = D
- Five bedrooms, two bathrooms
- 17ft lounge, 18ft sitting room, 16ft kitchen & breakfast room
- Study area, downstairs cloak room, utility room
- 27ft garage
- Large and lovely private gardens



**Brynteg, Rhiwbina**

£450,000

- A superior detached three bedroom bungalow EPC = D
- Three double bedrooms
- Beautiful kitchen / diner
- Extended and fully modernised to a very high standard
- This very impressive property also includes a deep private front drive together with a separate modern garage



**Millrace Close, Lisvane**

£450,000

- Well modernised four bedroom detached house in delightful select quiet close. New cloakroom suite in white EPC = D
- 21ft lounge with bay window. Formal dining room. PVC double glazed conservatory. 16ft fitted kitchen breakfast room
- Two bathrooms one ensuite, lovely private enclosed gardens
- Lovely condition



**Manor Rise, Whitchurch**

£435,000

- Detached four bed bungalow EPC = D
- Bathroom plus two en suites
- Fully modernised and extended
- Kitchen/breakfast room and utility room
- Landscaped gardens and driveway
- No chain



**Cotswold Avenue, Lisvane**

£585,000

- Detached 4/5 bedroom double fronted family house
- New Anglian double glazed windows and french doors
- New gas combi boiler
- New Mandarin Stone Porcelain tiled floors
- 22ft lounge, 18ft kitchen, 14ft sitting room, dining room
- Two bathrooms

EPC = D



**Lisvane Road, Lisvane**

£660,000

- Semi-detached residence built in 2004
- Five large bedrooms
- Three bathrooms - two ensuite, cloak room
- Dining room and lounge
- Double garage
- 80ft rear gardens, private gated entrance drive

EPC = C



**Cambrian Gardens**

£365,000

- Four double bedrooms
- Three bathrooms
- 16ft x 16ft lounge
- 16ft kitchen & breakfast room
- Double drive
- Lovely quiet location

EPC = TBC



**Bettws Y Coed Road, Cyncoed**

£525,000

- Detached three bedroom double fronted bungalow
- Full planning to build a brand new 3000 square foot detached bespoke residence
- Modern fitted kitchen
- Luxurious new family bathroom
- Extensive private parking

EPC = D



**Wentloog Close, Rumney**

£425,000

- Stunning detached double fronted four bedroom family house with two superb bathrooms and a large enclosed rear gardens EPC = D
- Luxurious 18'9 x 16'3 fitted kitchen dining room
- Cloak room, utility room, study, snug room, large lounge
- PVC double glazed windows
- Gas heating, oak panel doors, porcelain floors



**Cefn Onn Meadows, Lisvane**

£410,000

- Detached four bedroom home with double garage EPC = C
- Downstairs cloakroom, 21ft lounge, PVC double glazed conservatory, formal dining room, 17ft kitchen breakfast room
- Family bathroom, ensuite shower room
- Enclosed gardens, double glazing, gas heating, intruder alarm
- No chain



**Heol Y Delyn, Lisvane**

£495,000

- Detached double fronted four bedroom family house EPC = F
- Large and lovely gardens
- Kitchen & breakfast room
- Four separate reception rooms,
- Three / four car drive and garage
- Spacious design with room to extend



**Melville Avenue, Old St. Mellons**

£395,000

- Detached four double bedroom modern house in cul de sac road EPC = D
- PVC double glazing, gas combi heating
- 17'9ft lounge, 15ft dining room, fitted 14ft kitchen
- Two shower rooms (one ensuite) and a family bathroom
- Larger and lovely corner rear gardens



**Hastings Crescent, Old St. Mellons** £380,000

- Walking distance to St John's College
- Ideally located close to A48 M4 Corridor
- Generous Gardens
- Ample off road parking
- Four bedrooms
- Chain free

EPC = TBC



**Allensbank Road, Heath** £370,000

- Impressive semi detached extended three bedroom house
- Golden Oak PVC windows
- Downstairs cloak room
- 18ft x 18ft stylish kitchen dining room
- Lounge, sitting room, stunning shower room
- Drive, large sunny gardens

EPC = D



**Copperfield Drive, Thornhill** £360,000

- Detached property with large driveway
- Space for up to three cars
- Four double bedrooms, three reception rooms
- Large kitchen/diner
- Breath taking views across the city
- Rarely available location

EPC = E



**Park Avenue, Whitchurch** £360,000

- Detached three bedroom bungalow
- beautifully modernised with lovely enclosed level landscaped gardens
- Through lounge and dining room
- L shaped 21ft x 16ft kitchen and conservatory
- Two stunning new bathrooms
- Front garden parking, detached garage, no chain!

EPC = TBC



**Pantbach Road, Rhiwbina**

£375,000

- Five bedroom semi-detached family house
- 19ft kitchen and breakfast room
- Lounge, separate sitting room, separate PVC conservatory
- Private parking and garage
- Lovely level sunny gardens

EPC = D



**Station Road West, Wenvoe**

£375,000

- Imposing and extended detached family home
- 3 double bedrooms (one en-suite)
- Superb kitchen/breakfast room
- Lounge and dining room
- Large parking area and garage with electric door
- Garden and patio

EPC = D



**Parc Y Felin, Creigiau**

£349,950

- Semi-detached four bedroom house fronting quiet road
- 20ft kitchen breakfast room, 16ft sun lounge conservatory
- 14ft lounge, dining room
- Two stylish modern bathrooms, private gardens
- Gas heating, PVC double glazing
- Lovely condition with contemporary fittings

EPC = D



**Lomond Crescent, Lakeside**

£440,000

- Detached three bedroom corner residence
- Large private gardens
- Extensive entrance drive and garage
- Stylish fitted kitchen
- Contemporary Roca shower room

EPC = D



## Welsh Newton Common, Monmouth

£1,400,000

EPC = G

Set in grounds of over 5 acres (STM), with outstanding views from the Malvern Hills to Coleford, Newton Lodge is a large five bedroom country house with a range of outbuildings and stone barns which have been converted and provide a substantial rental income. We are led to believe that part of the main house dates back to the 17th century with later additions, during the Georgian period, making it the home it is today. The property is approached through large, stone pillared wrought iron gates and a sweeping gravelled driveway which leads to a generous parking area. Within the house there remain many fascinating original features. As you walk through the property you appreciate the windows with the original shutters that enjoy stunning views, large marble fireplaces, exposed floorboards and flagstone floors, ornate plaster work and even the old meat hooks set into the kitchen ceiling.



**Upper Redbrook, Monmouth**

£650,000

- 19th Century cottage with a two storey stone built annex EPC = E
- 5 Double bedrooms in total - all with en suites
- Large central courtyard plus gardens
- Lovely features and setting
- Situated in an area of 'Outstanding Natural Beauty'
- Just minutes from Monmouth town



**Woolpitch Wood, Chepstow**

£599,950

- Six bedroom immaculate family home EPC = D
- Garage with electric garage door off road parking
- High tech av lighting and security system
- Dual fuel log burning stove and grand fireplace
- Exclusive contemporary kitchen finished
- Landscaped rear garden with Indian limestone patio, no chain



**Ganarew, Monmouth**

£599,000

- No onward chain EPC = D
- A delightful barn conversion in rural location with beautiful features and countryside views.
- 5 Double bedrooms, large lounge with stonework fireplace and wood burner, dining room and garden room
- Spacious kitchen / breakfast room



**Cross Ash, Nr Abergavenny**

£575,000

- Period country residence sitting in grounds EPC = G
- approaching an acre in size
- Accommodation over three floors
- 5 Double bedrooms, lounge over 32' in length
- 35' Kitchen / dining room
- Superb southerly views over the open countryside



**Llanvair Discoed, Chepstow**

£560,000

- Leisure suite with indoor heated pool, sauna & shower
- Four double bedrooms set in a very popular village
- Generously sized private garden with ornamental Japanese garden
- Great links to major road networks
- Driveway, garage and off road parking
- Village amenities nearby

EPC = F



**Green Street, Redwick, Caldicot**

£539,000

- Exclusive spacious character property
- Converted barn with five bedrooms
- Driveway and turning circle plus garage
- Charming features
- Dual fuel stoves, large dining room
- Mature garden

EPC = D



**Old Dixton Road, Monmouth**

£525,000

- Spacious six bedroom house
- Two self contained flats
- Large kitchen diner
- Detached garage
- Integral garage parking for several vehicles
- Large rear garden

EPC = C



**Wellmeadow, Coleford**

£389,950

- Beautifully presented four bedroom detached home
- Two reception rooms
- Kitchen / diner
- Study
- Under floor heating
- Solar panel installation

EPC = D



**Goodrich, Ross-On-Wye**

£500,000

- Stone built stable block, converted to a two storey dwelling EPC = G
- Elevated location above the village
- Over an acre of grounds with a small paddock, stable block and open barns
- Large lounge with wood burner, plus a conservatory
- 4 Bedrooms, no onward chain



**Welsh Newton Common, Monmouth**

£500,000

- Detached bungalow in rural location EPC = D
- South westerly plot of over an acre including a paddock
- Four double bedrooms
- Spacious lounge with log burner, large kitchen/dining room
- Double garage, hay barn and kennels
- Ample parking for numerous vehicles



**Llanrothal, Monmouth**

£478,500

- Stunning barn conversion EPC = F
- Open plan dining kitchen living room with fireplace and feature arrow slit window, utility room and downstairs WC
- Office / studio separate from the property
- Garage and off road parking ,
- Front and rear gardens, Incredible views



**Main Road, Undy, Caldicot**

£470,000

- Substantially extended five bedroom home EPC = E
- Stunning kitchen diner
- Full width conservatory
- Gas combination boiler
- Large attractive gardens
- Garage and ample offroad parking



**Caerlicyn Lane, Langstone**

£460,000

- 200 Year old stone built cottage in an elevated position with a third of an acre. Stunning views across open countryside towards the channel EPC = F
- Lounge and dining room with beautiful features
- Two double bedrooms and refitted bathroom
- Oak kitchen with a range cooker, double garage and outbuildings



**Bream Road, Lydney**

£450,000

- Newly renovated throughout EPC = D
- New upvc double glazed windows and new front door
- New carpets throughout
- New wren high end kitchen
- Stunning rear garden with various features
- Log burning stoves



**Woodside Cottage Farm, Llanvaches**

£979,950

- Superb larger than average family home EPC = D
- 6 bedrooms
- 5 large reception rooms
- 4 bathrooms
- Stables, barn, outbuildings and pasture
- Luxury kitchen/family room



**Joys Green Road, Lydbrook**

£435,000

- Executive detached home on an exclusive development of just four homes EPC = TBC
- Elevated position giving stunning views across the Wye Valley
- Kitchen with large island, integrated appliances and separate utility
- Living room, dining room with doors leading on to the garden
- Master bedroom with en suite and balcony



**Church Lane, Coedkernew, Newport** £399,999

- Four bedroom detached cottage
- Off road parking and garage
- Open plan living
- Stylish fitted kitchen
- Excellent nearby links onto the M4

EPC = E



**Pandy, Abergavenny**

£375,000

- Popular village location with local primary schools, shop and pubs within walking distance
- Period property with two reception rooms, large living / dining / kitchen with central island and utility / WC
- Three double bedrooms, one single bedroom and bathroom with bath and separate shower

EPC = E



**New Inn, Pontypool**

£365,000

- Attractively presented family home
- Fitted kitchen/diner with separate utility room
- Double garage and generous parking
- Three separate reception rooms
- Four double bedrooms
- Ensuite to the master bedroom

EPC = D



**Severn Quay, Chepstow**

From £330,000

- New waterfront development on the River Wye
- Luxury riverside apartments
- Spacious townhouses
- Engaging mews houses
- Great transport connections
- Breath-taking and desirable location

EPC = TBC



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## Cwrt Ty Gwyn, Llangennech, Llanelli

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£625,000

EPC = B

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An impeccably well presented five bedroom family house, built to a very high specification with luxury fittings and a multimedia Bose sound system. The property is situated in a small gated development of five similar executive homes.

On the ground floor is a large reception entrance hall, three reception rooms, a bespoke kitchen/breakfast room, utility room, cloakroom and multimedia/cloaks cupboard.

On the first floor is a galleried landing and four double bedrooms, the principal bedroom on this floor has an en suite shower room. The luxury family bathroom has a large square bath with built in TV, twin sinks and step in shower.



**Glanmor Road, Uplands, Swansea** £600,000

- Detached family home with sea views
- Four spacious bedrooms
- Three generous reception rooms
- Neighbouring cwm donkin park
- Private drive garage
- Available with no onward chain

EPC = D



**Allt-Y-Cham Drive, Pontardawe** £545,000

- Period property and features
- Set in mature grounds
- Six bedrooms
- Basement and wine cellars
- Close to local amenities

EPC = F



**Gower Road, Upper Killay** £580,000

- Outstanding detached family home
- Located at the entrance of the The Gower Peninsula
- Four double bedrooms
- Swimming pool and spacious out building
- High quality finish throughout

EPC = F



**Forest House, Pembrey, Burry Port** £520,000

- Detached country residence
- Set in approx 7 acres - pasture woodland and garden
- 4 Bedrooms, 3 reception rooms
- Kitchen and bathroom
- Large Outbuilding 72ft x 32ft, ideal conversion to stables or cottage, nestling on the fringe of Pembrey Country Park

EPC = F



**Sawel Court, Hendy, Swansea**

£500,000

- 5 Bedroom detached
- Indoor heated swimming pool
- Large family kitchen
- Generous plot
- Triple garage and converted workshop
- Easy access to M4 and major link roads

EPC = TBC



**Pitton, Swansea**

£450,000

- Three double bedroom former farmhouse
- One bedroom self contained annex
- South Gower Peninsular with countryside views
- Generous sun filled gardens
- Gated access onto block paved drive
- Potential for B+B (subject to any consents required)

EPC = TBC



**Gower Road, Swansea**

£1,100,000

- Impressive seven bedroom detached family home
- Grand entrance hall with imposing U-shaped staircase
- Four reception rooms
- Private driveway and detached garage
- Elevated sea views
- Mature front and rear gardens

EPC = E



**Llwynderw, Three Crosses, Swansea**

£430,000

- Extended detached family home
- Five bedrooms
- Generous gardens
- Driveway, garage and car port
- Village location
- Bishopston Comprehensive School catchment

EPC = D



**Derwen Fawr Road, Sketty, Swansea** £420,000

- Ideal detached family home
- Four bedrooms, two ensuite
- Modern kitchen
- Desirable residential area
- Off road parking
- Conservatory

EPC = D



**Cwmdulais, Pontarddulais, Swansea** £400,000

- Spacious five bedroom detached country cottage
- Two large reception rooms
- Bathroom and Shower room
- Numerous outbuildings/cottage/garden room
- Quiet country location close to M4
- Viewing highly recommended

EPC = F



**Graig Road, Trebanos**

£379,995

EPC = E

- Detached three bed character property
- Local amenities nearby
- Four reception rooms
- Beautiful gardens
- Four piece bathroom suite
- Two kitchens



**Llys Gwyr, Upper Killay**

£625,000

EPC = TBC

- Four bedroom detached
- High specification throughout
- Gated driveway detached garage
- Wheelchair friendly ground floor
- Stretching views



**Bryncatwg, Cadoxton, Neath**

£375,000

EPC = D

- 5 bedroom detached house set in about 2.5 acres
- 2/3 reception rooms
- Substantial garaging
- Panoramic views to Swansea Bay
- Kitchen/breakfast room
- A private secluded woodland setting



**Cwmdonkin Terrace, Uplands**

£400,000

**Gower Road, Sketty, Swansea**

£394,995

- Five bedroom end of terrace
- Sea views
- Neighbours Cwmdonkin park
- Four reception rooms
- Family bathroom shower room
- Gated private drive
- Council tax band E

EPC = F

- Modern and contemporary development
- 4 bedroom striking property
- Open plan dining/kitchen with integrated appliances
- Separate family room & downstairs cloakroom
- Master bedroom with en-suite & walk-in wardrobes
- 10 year New Home warranty
- Other house types available at varying prices

EPC = EXEMPT



**Brombill Barns, Margam**

£369,000

EPC = D

- Immaculate barn conversion
- Four bedrooms
- Bespoke kitchen
- Two reception rooms
- Utility with shower
- Ample off road parking
- Select development

**Chapel Road, Three Crosses**

£350,000

EPC = D

- Detached four bedroom family home
- Bishopston comprehensive school catchment
- Includes attached self contained annex
- Loft room
- Large gardens
- Double garage and driveway
- Gower beaches nearby

**Rose Villas, Skewen**

£500,000

EPC = TBC

- 5 bedroom detached property
- 4 reception rooms
- Landscaped gardens with hot tub
- No chain
- Underfloor heating to the ground floor
- Integral garage with electric door
- Stunning panoramic views



**Albany Road**  
02920 462 246

**Barry**  
01446 733 224

**Blackwood**  
01495 231 199

**Bridgend**  
01656 657 201

**Caerphilly**  
02920 867 611

**Canton**  
02920 397 171

**Chepstow**  
01291 630 876

**Cowbridge**  
01446 772 857

**Dinas Powys**  
02920 513 151

**Gorseinon**  
01792 894 422

**Heath**  
02920 231 670

**Llanishen**  
02920 618 552

**Monmouth**  
01600 714 355

**Morrison**  
01792 798 201

**Neath**  
01639 635 115

**Newport**  
01633 221 892

**Penarth**  
02920 703 799

**Pontypridd**  
01443 485600

**Porthcawl**  
01656 771 600

**Rumney**  
02920 792 888

**Swansea**  
01792 641 481

**Swansea Marina**  
01792 463 780

**Talbot Green**  
01443 222 851

**Victoria Park**  
02920 397 077

**Whitchurch**  
02920 612 328

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