

# MANOR



The Region's Premium Publication  
Late Winter 2017 | Issue 16 | £4.50

SOUTH WEST

Win a trip  
to The Scillies

As I see it  
The Countess of Devon

Victoria Milligan  
Four years on

Grand design  
Tom Raffield's house

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**FOOD**  
**SPACE**  
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The  
*Wellness*  
Issue



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(Guide price) £1,600,000

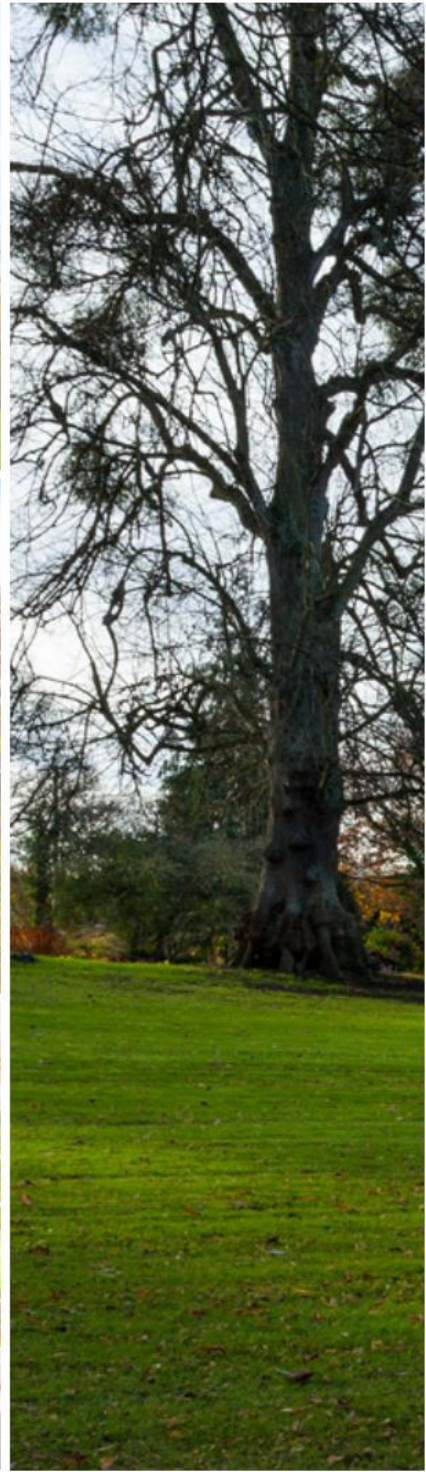


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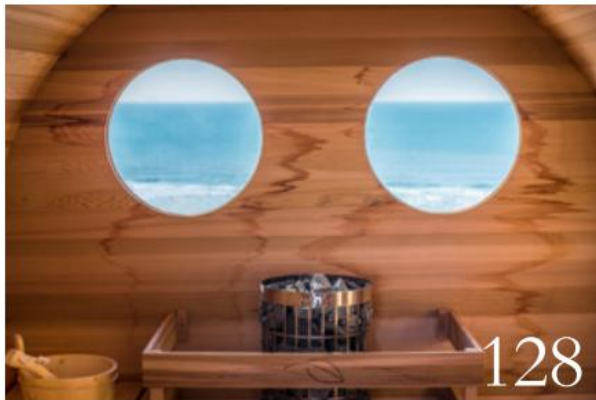
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# MANOR

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*is brought to you by*

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THE COVER

Turtleneck sweater, Zara, £19.99; corset style tube dress, Zara, £29.99

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PLEASE RECYCLE

Welcome to The Wellness Issue of MANOR – our first issue of 2017, which will take us right through to the end of February.

It's easy to wish time away – particularly through the cold, wet months of the year. It's easy also to come over as all new-age hippy when discussing 'wellness'. Get fit, absolutely, and eat better in a way that you can sustain, because you will feel physically better, which helps everything – including the grey matter (as South West schools will vouch on p. 136) – perform so much better. But wellness encompasses far more than that.

In this issue of MANOR, we touch on exercise – sportswear to help inspire that new regime – and vitality, with a style shoot that conveys a dynamism and purpose with which to stride into the new year; we discuss food with campaigner Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, and the author Bee Wilson, who hopes to engender a whole new attitude to eating in *This is not a diet book* (p. 96); we feature indoor and outdoor spas, and, as flagged on the cover, the chance for one MANOR reader to win a two-night, four-star stay on the Scilly Isles, with flights included (p. 131).

Underpinning all is a sense of wellness, which could be said to be about living life to the full. Last year's roll call of celebrity deaths has reminded us how transient life is, and how often the rug can be ripped from beneath our feet. Many reading this will have suffered their own personal turmoils and tragedies, few more publicly than Victoria Milligan, who lost her husband and daughter in a speed boat accident in Cornwall's Camel Estuary in 2013. As well as the unimaginable grief she has been through and carries, she has had to learn to walk and run again, having lost her left leg below the knee in the accident. Victoria's story of how she has channelled that grief into focusing on her children, inspiring them to cherish life, and helping others through her charity work and fundraising, demonstrates the resilience of the human spirit over adversity.

The Countess of Devon may look to many as if she's living a fairy-tale existence: successful American TV star falls in love with English Earl, and goes to live with him and raise their children in his castle in the beautiful Devon countryside (Powderham). In reality, life for AJ, as she is better known, has been far from rosy. A lifelong sufferer of fibromyalgia, she discusses how it's taken 20 years to come to terms with this debilitating and incurable condition, and how much she's learnt about herself and the human condition in the process.

It's easy to wish cold, rainy months away, book holidays to look forward to, get around to doing something tomorrow, next year, when we retire, later rather than now. Wellness is a holistic objective – eating better and exercise are the foundations that help us to get there – but attitudinally, seizing the moment, seeing small goals achieved, getting out there and embracing life, has got to be the resolution, and not just for the year.



Imogen Clements  
FOUNDER & PUBLISHING EDITOR

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# TOWN MOUSE, *COUNTRY* MOUSE

## *Darling...*



New year, new me. I have resolved to no longer eat carbs in the evening, to drink more green tea, read more books, and get and stay fit. All very achievable, don't you think? That's the trick to making new year resolutions last – make them easy. Just one cup of green tea a day is palatable; a ten-minute run and 20 ab crunches before work I can manage; and a banishing of the iPad from the bedroom, I have every intention to achieve. I shall be slim, bright-eyed and revitalized next time you see me.

I would also like to be one of those who can get up at 5am every morning, as they say early risers do better in life, but that, alas – despite it being the best time of the day, I'm told – eludes me. As loathe as I am to go to bed, I find it hard to escape the duvet come the morning, especially in winter; it sort of envelopes me like a chrysalis. If only, sweetie, I emerged a butterfly, rather than a creased, bleary-eyed tangle. That too, though, I plan to tackle: during drive time, with facial exercises – have I mentioned this to you before, sweetness? There's an 89-year-old named Eva Fraser who has the face of a 30-year-old and she puts it all down to facial workouts, strictly no surgery. So now, as I drive to work in the morning, I shall be gurning and contorting my face in every direction: raising eyebrows just at high as they'll go to keep those lids from drooping; jutting out the jaw to stave off the double chin and roaring like a lion to reduce those mouth creases. Ridiculous and disturbing it will doubtless seem to any passing motorist, but if I look like she does when I'm 89, it will all be worth it.

*Lou Laboulin X*

### WHAT'S HOT IN THE SMOKE?

**Woolf Works by The Royal Ballet** revives Wayne McGregor's hit about Virginia Woolf at the Royal Opera House, London from 21 January to 14 February. With the jaw-dropping Alessandra Ferri in the lead role.

As he prepares to turn 80 this year, **David Hockney** in full colour appears this time at Tate Britain, which will devote one of its biggest shows ever to the artist's prolific lifetime of work. From 9 February to 29 May.

## *Sweetness...*

I look forward to seeing the top-to-toe results of this new regime of yours, although goodness knows I don't want to wait until you're in your 80s. Indeed, I am sceptical of facial toning achieved by exercise alone, and I shall insist that you send me weekly time-lapse shots of your visage, to see if it is indeed holding up to the ravages of life as a result of these workouts. I'll be honest, sweetness: as much as I admire your current resolve, I can't see you keeping it up. The speed of change being too slow, you, I suspect, will desist from the contortions and opt for the six-monthly shot of Botox to the brow like so many others in your neck of the woods – instant, frozen gratification.

As for me, I shall be working from the inside. I am resolved to be happier (than usual) this year. I have collected various images from 2016 and scored them on a scale of one to ten for humour. Each time I feel I need a little pep up, I shall conjure up a high-scoring scene to override any bleakness. Ed Balls dancing to *Gangnam Style* with Katya between his legs ranks up there as one I shall seek out in extreme times of gloom.

Beyond that, music, more music, of all varieties. It will be a calming, uplifting and, when necessary, a drowning-out distraction to the interesting times that lay ahead. In homage to Bowie, I plan to master the piano instrumental to *Life on Mars*, and come December 2017, I shall play it for you, sweetie. You can twitch along to it facially. It will be like Bing and Bowie's *Little Drummer Boy/Peace on Earth* 40 years on. Indeed, I feel a duet coming on, pa rum-pa-pum-pum. You can be Bing.




*Hols Hunter xx*

### WHAT'S COOL IN THE COUNTRY?

**The Stable**, Queen Street boasts one of the best roof-top terraces in Exeter. With a small indoor bar it serves the usual exemplary ciders, pizzas and pies the eaterie is known for, and there are two cosy little retro caravans from which you can enjoy them, should you choose not to go al fresco.

**The South West Academy Exhibition** at the Thelma Hulbert Gallery in Honiton is a must, showing works from the Academy's Fine and Applied Arts members including David Brooke and Kate Aggett from 14 January to 25 February.





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# Get shirty

The white shirt is a wardrobe staple. Versatile, it's good for work, good with jeans, or under jumpers revealing just collar and tails. Lately, the white shirt has also become rather innovative in cut and style. Extra-long tails, fluted or kimono sleeves, asymmetric fastening, depending on the occasion, your white shirt can be anything but conventional.

Topshop



**Necklace,**  
Oliver Bonas,  
£32



**Poplin shirt,**  
Jigsaw,  
£98



**Jeans,**  
Zara, £29.99



**Sunglasses,**  
Jigsaw,  
£59



**Bag,**  
Jigsaw,  
£189



**Top,**  
Marks & Spencer,  
£39.50



**Bracelet,**  
Jigsaw, £35

**Trainers,**  
Zara,  
£29.99





**Earrings,**  
Jaegar,  
£35



**18ct gold vermeil bracelet,**  
Links of London, £325

MANOR *trends*



**Shirt,**  
Topshop, £36



Marks & Spencer



**Skirt,** Zara



**Trousers,**  
Marks & Spencer, £29.50

**Skirt,**  
Topshop,  
£80



**Shoes,**  
Zara,  
£55.99

# Sport to the max

There's nothing that inspires a new sport or exercise class more than the purchase of equipment. A box-fresh pair of trainers may be all it takes to start that running habit. Just imagine how far you could go if you buy the full outfit. It's worth it – your heart will thank you.

Marks & Spencer



**Top,**  
Sweaty Betty, £40



**Leggings,**  
River Island, £28



**Bralet,**  
Zara, £12.99



**Running belt,**  
Sweaty Betty, £22



**FitBit Charge,**  
£150



**Light support bra top,**  
Sweaty Betty, £40



**Swimsuit,**  
Sweaty Betty, £70



**Gym ball,**  
Tiger Stores, £6



**Trainers,**  
Sweaty Betty, £101

MANOR *trends*



**Yoga top,**  
Sweaty Betty, £55



**Padded yoga vests,**  
Sweaty Betty, £50



**Water bottle,**  
Sweaty Betty,  
£25



**Trainers,**  
Zara, £45.99



**Yoga mat,**  
Laura Ashley, £5



**Davina 4kg kettle bell,**  
Argos, £3.99



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# Get tooled up

Make-up artist *Elouise Abbott* presents her expert guide to building a well-equipped beauty kit.

**F**irst and foremost, my handy **NARS dual pencil sharpener** is great on the go, with its neat little case to collect the shavings that I can empty at my convenience. It allows me to keep all my pencils sharp and clean for every use.

**Stork scissors** are beautifully designed, super sharp and small enough for any make-up bag. Great for trimming falsies, tackling indestructible make-up packaging or trimming the odd hair.

A great pair of tweezers is essential for everything from plucking eyebrows and rogue hairs to applying individual eyelashes. I am loyal to the classic **Tweezerman**: invest in a pair of these and never again suffer the frustration of poorly aligned plucking.

Applying false eyelashes can be a tricky business. It took me a lot of practice to master the art. With their ergonomic tweezer-like design, **Eylure eyelash applicators** make false eyelash-application incredibly easy.

Never underestimate the power of the curl to open the eye and make eyelashes look longer. Curl your eyelashes **BEFORE** applying your mascara to avoid damaging those delicate hairs. **Shu Uemura eyelash curlers** give a fantastic curl, not crimp, that lasts all day.

## FACE

Brush vs sponge? Which is best for foundation application? Neither. It's a personal choice and everyone has their own preference, but my own foundation tool of choice is the **Bdellium Tools 957**. This large, flat brush is as good at applying liquid foundation as it is for applying mineral foundation. Use it also to blend cream blusher and highlighters – it is nothing if not versatile. I use round, circular motions, working from the centre of the face out to gently buff the foundation into the skin for a flawless finish.

When I do reach for a sponge, I reach for the **Beautyblender Classic**, which has a great density and shape and gives a great finish. Remember to dampen your sponge slightly before use: this will prevent it from absorbing too much of your product. You want your foundation on your skin, not in your sponge.

The secret to highlighter application is a light dusting using a fan brush like the luxurious **Nanshy Fan make-up brush**. Softly apply a sweep of light to those ethereal cheekbones.

## EYES

A great liner brush is not easy to find. I have two eyeliner brushes that I use for two different styles of application.

A fine liner like the **Louise Young ultrafine liner** is great for fine-lining the eyes with gel eyeliner. A fine brush gives a great flow and precise finish.

An angled push-up liner brush is perfect if you want to create retro winged eyeliner. I like the **Zoeva 317 wing liner brush**. By simply loading the brush with gel liner,

and pressing to the outer corner of the eye, you instantly create a neat, straight beginning to your flick. Create retro eyeliner by working from the outer flick in toward the centre of the eye.

When it comes to eyeshadow, you need to blend, blend, blend, which I do with my faithful **MAC 217**. The idea of a blender brush is to keep it clean and blend the eyeshadow colours together in soft circular motions to create a seamless soft shadow. I also like to use my 217 to apply shadow to the crease, as it gives a lovely soft dusting of colour.

## LIPS

A lip brush can make all the difference when it comes to lipstick application, but often you'll need a few – one for filling, one for precision and one for the occasional definition of, for example, a cupid's bow. **Karla Cosmetics Lip Brush Set** contains all you need for perfect lipstick application every time.

## AFTERCARE

When you've invested in decent make-up brushes, keeping them clean and soft is a priority. I recommend washing the brushes once a week with **The London Brush Company's pure goat milk solid brush shampoo**. This will remove tough make-up build-up and keep your brushes super soft, while the added tea tree works its antibacterial magic. After washing your brushes gently, brush the excess water onto a towel, carefully keeping them in shape. Lay them down flat to avoid water damage to the handles, and loosening of the glue. We don't want to lose any of those bristles.

I also use an alcohol-based sanitizer like the **Pro Hygiene Collection make-up brush cleaner**. Just spritz onto a dry tissue and then brush over until the brush is clean. This also dries very quickly, making for a great express clean.

Finally, the make-up eraser: a flannel. It will remove even waterproof make-up with just water. Keep that skin clean and happy, and your make-up will always look fantastic. **M**





Training at Blackpool Sands, Devon

## My feel-good regime

**Dr Eugene Bojé** moved from Cape Town, South Africa, to the UK in 2003. After gaining a Master's degree in cosmetic dentistry at the University of Warwick, he practiced dentistry in Lincolnshire before moving to Devon and establishing Eunique Dental in Dartmouth.

**I need at least seven hours' sleep a night.** The first thing I do after my shower is make a proper cup of coffee, the strong stuff from Kenya. Breakfast is two boiled eggs, no toast. I'm 42 now and find that I need to keep an eye on what I eat in order to have any hope of maintaining a six-pack. I avoid carbs most of the time but can't resist a granola and goats' milk yogurt mix every now and then.

**I always reserve time for a mid-morning and mid-afternoon break** at the dental surgery. I'm a fan of Rooibos tea from Devon Artisan Hampers: it is refreshing, contains no caffeine and is low in tannin so won't stain your teeth. These breaks give me a few moments to feel centred and not rushed, which is very important as our feelings affect our work. Also, if we are ever running late, the tea break acts as a buffer to absorb the time so we're not late for the patients.

**I like to go out for lunch** and will change from my dental uniform to my other 'uniform': a pair of Hiut jeans, a crisp collared shirt with a slim fit and an Ozwald Boateng jacket. Mr Boateng knows how to cut clothes for men and there's always an edge to his designs. These are clothes that make you feel good. I'll bump into a patient or two in town, so it's important that I look and feel professional. Dartmouth has some wonderful delis and cafés, and it's easy to pop into any one of these to grab a quick but healthy bite that's made fresh daily.

**Exercise is an absolute must for me after work.** It takes a lot of discipline to train regularly but I find I get more done if I feel physically strong; that, for me, translates into being mentally strong, too. I love CrossFit. I don't have to think about what to train today. Our trainer, Lisy, creates the workout of the day and I just have to try and keep up. It's such hard work but so much fun. I don't know what I'd do if I didn't have this group to work out with.

**I used to eat loads of red meat**, at least four steaks a week, but have swapped for healthier alternatives where I can. There seems to be a movement away from eating animal products and I want to slowly adopt this way of fuelling my body, by consuming more sustainable and kinder alternatives.

**I spend an hour or so reading each evening.** I am studying for an MBA at Warwick Business School, which is demanding. I'm also working towards becoming an accredited member of the BACD (British Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry).

**Mindfulness is an integral part of my daily life; it permeates everything I do.** Our minds are powerful and I have learned to be, mostly, in control of mine instead of my mind controlling me. Being 'present' is

the best way to end my day, with a few minutes of quiet meditation before picking up a Ken Follett novel and falling asleep.

**Every Saturday morning**, I do CrossFit on the beach at Blackpool Sands, and most of our group have breakfast at Venus Café afterwards(right). I love walking the Coast Path between East Portlemouth and Gara Rock, and enjoying a delicious lunch at the cliff-top restaurant, Café Ode at Gara Rock, which has a stunning view out to sea.

**February is for skiing in Val d'Isere** with friends, and I pop over to South Africa at least four times a year to see family and friends.



## LANGUISHING IN MY BATHROOM CABINET

I allow very little time in the morning to get ready, so I need superb products that are simple and cut down on the faff. **Kiehl's Sky Flyin' Foaming Multi-Gel for Shaving and Cleansing** is an all-in-one cleanser and shaving foam – easy. I never used to moisturise, but a school friend, who lives and works in Dubai for nine months of the year, gave me a jar of **Shiseido Men Moisturising Cream** three years ago and now I use it daily. I've been going grey for ages and a few people ask if I colour my hair with blonde streaks, so I'm happy with that! Some leave-in conditioner after the beach and I'm good to go.



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PHOTO: ANDY GREEN

# As I see it...

**AJ (Allison Joy) Langer** is an American TV actress known best for her role as Rayanne Graff in *My So-Called Life*. In 2005 she married Charles Peregrine Courtenay, the 19th Earl of Devon, becoming the Countess of Devon. AJ met the Earl of Devon in California where he was working as a lawyer. In January 2014 they moved to the UK to take up residence at Powderham Castle. AJ suffers from fibromyalgia, an auto-immune condition of the soft tissue. Here she reveals how she has come to terms with it, and is focused, with her husband, on making Powderham Castle a centre for creativity, health and wellbeing that the immediate and wider community can enjoy. Interview by *Imogen Clements*.

**My family was entrepreneurial – we're all very American in that regard.** My mum ran her own business as an audiologist; my father's family was in female fashion, which took us to California; my brother had his own sports package media business. It's normal where I come from.

**My parents believed in the state school system; our house was always open.** Mine was a mixed school that had kids from all walks of life, and my mum ensured we had food in the fridge and drinks for whatever team we were on.

**Growing up, sport was very important.** I loved baseball – what they called boys' baseball, as opposed to softball; both sexes play both. Baseball was my childhood, as was American football. I could throw a killer spiral; my brother would tackle me if I didn't.

**I'd always had symptoms** – high fever, cramping, and so forth – but it was when I was 14 and had a collision with the catcher and pitcher that I started going to the doctor. The pain in my hip spread and resembled sciatica across my back and down the front of my leg; I started having sore spots on my spine, with my neck getting so tight I couldn't throw the ball. Fibromyalgia was little understood. When I overheard the doctor tell my mum he thought I was faking it, I was mortified.

**In my career, I kept the fibromyalgia to myself.** If I exercised constantly, I could generally keep up, but if I stopped exercising, the pain would kick in. I would work out for three hours a day. When each season ended, I'd hide to manage the pain.

**I'm a recovering chronic overachiever.** I've always worked to the best of my ability. That's me, I don't have a choice. Sometimes I wish I wasn't so hard on myself, always trying to be the best. As you get older, you relax out of that a bit.

**My So-Called Life was my favourite of all my jobs.** At 21, during one season, I did *Circus of the Stars*, where I trained to perform a double flip on the trapeze. I achieved it but strained my back, contracted chicken pox at the same time and the fibromyalgia ran throughout my body. I couldn't move. It was a devastating – when all plans go out the window.

**You get to a point of desperation when you walk into the doctor's surgery and say "do anything".** I had health insurance, but ended up with a bill of \$30k. I've met people with fibromyalgia who've had morphine pumps inserted under their skins.

**It's vital to learn about 'victim consciousness' and do all you can to get out of it.** With any chronic illness or auto-immune problem, you withdraw into isolation, assuming that "no one knows what I'm going through". The fact is, everyone's dealing with something.

**Alternative therapy, as integrative medicine, can help considerably.** I support Western medicine but going through recovery, you need something more – be it spiritual or psychological. I've met people who've been through far worse, are in much more extreme pain, yet have an incredible sense of peace, a great smile and vitality.

**My body has a more sensitive eco-system than most – it's taken me 20 years but I've come to accept it.** I was ten years in that victim isolation phase, when I experienced every form of pain and depression. Now I listen to my body rather than fight it – there are, after all, some really nice things to having a sensitive body and nerve system.

**I was lucky that it happened when I was young** – I couldn't just say it was old age. Sadly, a lot of these things hit people when they're older and they think their life is over and give up.

**We came here really to be us, in this space.** Previous generations considered Powderham Castle their private home; that's what their life had taught them. Our life has taught us differently. Charlie and I believe this place is too amazing and that it would be wrong not to share it; the estate comes alive when people are here to enjoy it. It fulfils its potential.

**A thriving economy and healthy society start at grass roots.** Powderham Live was a community event that arose when I heard some local schoolchildren play music at a parent's house and thought it would be lovely to invite children to play in the Music Room at the castle. We ended up with 22 young musicians, 12 acts, bands, pianists, singer-songwriters, show tunes, it was like a cabaret night. Local company The Prop Factory lent us sofas and cocktail tables; Showbits brought theatrical lighting, and CandLED 'candle-lit' the place safely. The children were from local schools, invited friends and families, and it was a great success – I had adults coming up to me afterwards and saying, "I'm English, I don't cry," wiping their red eyes.

**Performing is all about tackling your own fears and transcending them.** It is relevant to so much in life. Teenage years are so raw, you experience so many realities for the first time – hearts break, people fall off pedestals...

**We're both up for adventure.** We would love the castle to be self-sustaining and piece by piece we're going to build it up. It's hard and there are challenges, but I can call my friend who runs her mum's small business and she goes through exactly the same kind of things that we do – it's all relative.

Both Bryan Adams and Olly Murs will be playing live at Powderham Castle in the summer of 2017.  
[powderham.co.uk](http://powderham.co.uk)



Olivia, Victoria, Amber and Kit on Pentire Point, Cornwall

# Life is precious

Four years after a speedboat accident in the Camel Estuary, in which her husband Nick and daughter Emily died, **Victoria Milligan** speaks to *Emma Inglis* about coping with what life throws at us, keeping busy, fundraising, and how unexpected positives arise from tragedy. Photos courtesy of Victoria Milligan.

It was the first May bank holiday in 2013, and Victoria Milligan was enjoying the perfect family day out in Cornwall with her husband Nick and their four children, Amber, then 12, Olivia, 10, Emily, 8, and Kit, 4. The morning had been spent swimming, jumping down sand dunes and rockpooling. After a lunch of fish and chips on their speedboat, they drove the boat up and down the Camel Estuary. Later, concerned that the tide was going out, Victoria – who was at the helm while her husband took a pee – suggested they return to harbour.

She started to move slowly towards the mooring, and Nick returned to her side. “Who wants to go around again?” he cried. As Victoria began to edge the boat back into the estuary, Nick reached for the wheel and throttle, but slipped. The boat went into a full turn, at full throttle. Neither Nick nor Victoria were wearing the kill cord. The family was flung into the water.

In the chaos, amid the shouts and the roar of the engine, Victoria grabbed Kit and began to swim away from the circling boat. As it came around, the hull struck her chest, and the propeller sliced her leg. Later she would see Kit’s little white trainer floating in the water. Amber was screaming that Daddy was dead. By now, three canoeists had rushed to the scene and were performing first aid. Soon after, watersports instructor Charlie Toogood jumped onto the boat from another speedboat and stopped the engine.

The family was taken in a RAF helicopter to Derriford hospital in Plymouth, where Victoria learnt that Emily had also died. That evening, her leg was amputated below the knee. Mercifully, Kit’s leg was saved. Amber and Olivia suffered minor injuries.

Four years on, with the anniversary of the accident looming, Victoria radiates hope and optimism. “I’m all

about positivity over tragedy,” she says. “I’ve been given a gift of knowing that life is precious, and even though the worst thing imaginable has happened to me, I’ve still got the gift of living on this earth. We have time that Emily and Nick don’t have and we owe it to them to make the most of our time. It’s not fair, what’s happened to us, but it’s not going to affect our entire lives. We are still going to have a good future.”

It has taken time for her grief to quieten. In the immediate aftermath of the accident, the pain was paralysing. “It seemed amazing that the clock was still ticking and life went on when my whole life had ended.” She devoured every book she could on grief: “cold, factual” books that did little to help. Then Victoria picked up a book written by a young woman who’d lost her brother in an accident. The author recounted how she’d also ‘lost’ her mother, who’d retreated into grief. In that moment, Victoria made an important decision: that her children would never lose their mother.

A network of friends and family, doctors, physios, and “a lovely, tight-knit community” in South London, where she lives, helped Victoria rebuild her world. “I was very conscious of not hiding away and becoming a hermit, so I made myself go out and see people. It makes me feel better being with other people.”

Julia Samuel, founder patron of Child Bereavement UK, is singled out for particular praise. She visited Victoria when she had been transferred from Derriford to St Mary’s Paddington, and continued to visit despite Victoria’s initial reluctance to see her. “Distilling my innermost thoughts to a stranger was quite an odd concept for me. All I wanted was for Nick and Emily to come back and she couldn’t make that happen, so I thought, why are you here? Luckily for me, she did keep on coming back.”



Amber and Olivia

“

*We have time that Emily and Nick don't have and we owe it to them to make the most of our time.*



On the Camel Trail, Padstow



The family in the Corwall Air Ambulance. A Night 4 Nick raised £250,000

Julia offered advice on how to prepare for the funeral, the memorial, and anniversaries. She counselled Victoria on how to answer questions from the children, even how to cope with going out in the evening. “She gave me brilliant advice like: if you’re not comfortable with the way a conversation is going, change it. Just say, I am having a break from talking about this tonight.”

There’s praise, too, for her prosthetist, Abdo Haidar, at the private London Prosthetic Centre. “I was very lucky in that my husband’s company, Sky, funded the treatment.

The NHS was fantastic and got me back on my feet, but obviously their budget is very limited – and I did want to get back to doing all the things I did before the accident. Unfortunately, you do need a different leg for everything you do.” Victoria has five legs now: an everyday leg, a waterproof leg, a blade, a high heel, and a ski leg.

Initially, she was embarrassed about running on her blade. “It is striking and people do stare. I’d sneak out early in the morning to run. But now I’m really proud of it. I think, how amazing that there is a bit of equipment

designed to replicate the spring and energy returns that my leg and foot would have given me.”

Part of her prescription for rebuilding her life was to get busy. As soon as she was physically able, she returned to her work as a fitness instructor and threw herself into fundraising. A ‘Night 4 Nick’ in February 2014 raised £250,000 for Cornwall Air Ambulance; the money was used to equip the fleet with night vision technology. In June 2014, a bike ride from Cornwall to London raised £500,000 for the RNLI and Child Bereavement UK. In November 2015, Victoria ran 10K and raised more money for charity.

While what has happened to her is devastating, Victoria sees positives. “I’ve discovered latent talents and attributes that I didn’t know I had: writing, live presenting, and a love of public speaking.” ‘Life is Precious’, a recent talk at TEDxTruro, has already been viewed nearly 25,000 times.

Each year has brought new challenges and horizons, which she is grateful for. She has a regular segment on ITV’s *Lorraine*, mentoring viewers who have been through challenging situations, and has been a judge on the show’s ‘Inspirational Woman of the Year’ for three years.

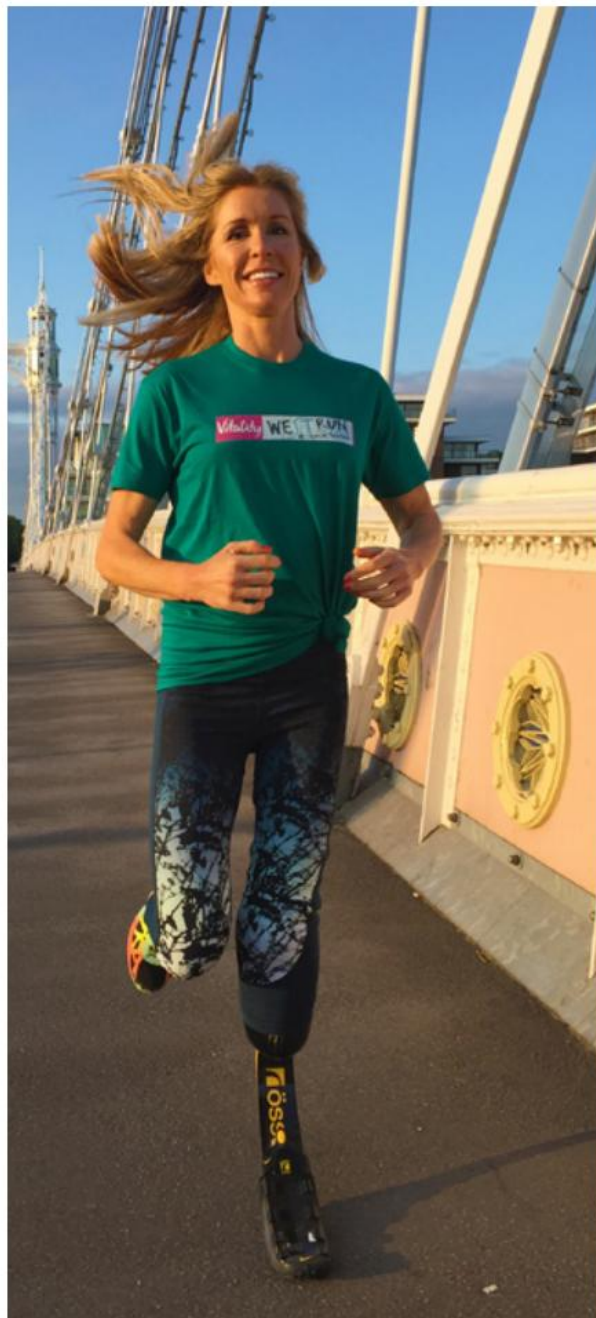
This year she is working on a book: it’s “a story about us as a family, and how we’ve survived” that will also give readers insight into how to support people going through grief. A website on which she shares what she has learnt is well-established, but she intends to do more work on her blog in 2017.

Her children remain the light of her life. “I’m constantly amazed by their adaptability.” The four of them are an extremely tight unit and very “open and honest” with each other. “Three and a half years on, they just crave some normality,” says Victoria. “Children don’t like to be sad.”

Kit needed multiple operations on his leg and wore a metal frame for nine months. In the Christmas holidays, he returned to hospital for more treatment, but Victoria concedes that it could have been so much worse. “It was such a miracle his leg was saved.”

The loss of Emily and Nick can still floor her and she doesn’t yet have the strength to open a box of letters and pictures that Emily’s school friends created in the aftermath of the accident. “I’ve not been brave enough to look at them yet, but at some point I will.”

The holiday home near Daymer Bay that the Milligans owned at the time of the accident was sold, but the family still has a property in North Cornwall. “A lot of people were amazed that we still wanted to visit, but we’ve been holidaying in Cornwall for years and I feel very accepted there. It feels like home. Who knows what’s right? All I can go on is my gut feeling, and walking on those beautiful beaches and cliff paths, and, of course, being close to Nicko and Emily, who are buried at St Enodoc church, feels like a very natural thing for us all.” **M**



Victoria running on her blade in London

“

*It is striking and people do stare. I'd sneak out early in the morning to run. But now I'm really proud of it. I think, how amazing that there is a bit of equipment designed to replicate the spring and energy returns that my leg and foot would have given me.*



# The Business

In the final part of 'The Business' series, we meet **Malcolm Dickinson, Managing Partner of Michelmores LLP**. He reveals how he has helped Michelmores grow from a small office on Exeter's Cathedral Yard into a Top 100 Law Firm with offices in Exeter, Bristol and London – and now employing almost 500 people. Portrait by *Matt Austin*.

### **Why did you decide to run 'The Business' series?**

The series has been a brilliant opportunity to showcase just a few of the many vibrant businesses and people we work with. Many, like us, have roots in the South West, but operate across the UK and internationally. The businesses we featured all have a strong entrepreneurial element, with key individuals who have driven the business forward. We love working with these types of clients, and help with their business and family needs.

### **Tell us about Michelmores.**

Michelmores is over 125 years old, and has grown beyond all recognition in what is today a very competitive market. We are keen to differentiate ourselves, and I am proud that we have organically grown one of the country's leading Private Wealth practices. We are keen to attract top talent, which in the South West can sometimes be challenging, but with the best people on board, we are able to deliver the best service to top-quality clients. We are also well known for our work in the Finance & Investment and Real Estate sectors.

### **How did you come to join Michelmores?**

I joined Michelmores in 1989. Prior to that, I trained as a Solicitor in London, and then became a legal adviser at Gillette, providing advice on a range of matters throughout Europe, Africa and the Middle East. My love of sailing was a big draw to the South West, and after 20 years with Michelmores I was appointed Managing Partner, which means I'm responsible for guiding and implementing the firm's strategy. It is an all-consuming role – I divide my time between our Exeter HQ, and Bristol and London offices, and spend at least one month a year in China, helping to develop our international practice. No two days are ever the same!

### **What has changed in the 27 years you have been with Michelmores?**

Lots! In 1989, Michelmores was a small office of less than 50 people based at Cathedral Yard, which was sadly lost to the Exeter fire in October 2016. I have many great memories of my time there. By 2005, we had grown to 200 people and it was time to move to a new purpose-built out-of-town premises. Many of our people have been with the firm for many years and experienced the journey with us. And

the journey is continuing: we are in our fifth consecutive year of growth, and as well as an appetite for continuing to grow our South West market, we also view London and the international stage as an exciting opportunity.

### **What has been your proudest moment?**

Moving into our new premises at Woodwater House, Exeter, in January 2005. The difference between the new and old buildings was immense. It was an exceptionally proud moment to see the look of amazement on everyone's faces as they entered the building for the first time. I had also underestimated the step-change that the physical move had on our business, and, in particular, our people. I think on that day we became more ambitious and more aspirational, a feeling that still resonates in the firm today.

On a personal level, some of my toughest (if not proudest) moments have been competing in two-handed offshore yacht races, including the world-famous Fastnet Race, and several attempts at the Round Britain and Ireland Race. They were real tests of endurance – both physically and mentally.

### **What is the biggest challenge in running a law firm?**

The legal space is highly competitive – we are always striving to be at the very top of our game. We are constantly innovating to provide the best possible service to our clients. Personal chemistry comes high up in the equation. We understand that clients have a choice and we may not be the only law firm a client will use. We just want to be the best law firm a client ever uses.

### **What do you look for in new recruits?**

Our aim is to attract and retain the best people that we possibly can. We see our trainees as our future Associates and Partners. It is a given that our lawyers are technically able, but we look for more than that in all our people: passion, ambition and a willingness to embrace change.

### **Do you have any advice for someone thinking of setting up their own venture?**

Be innovative and try to think outside the box. If you can, seek out somebody whose advice and wise counsel you trust.

Michelmores is a Top 100 law firm supporting individuals, businesses and institutions in the private wealth sector for over 125 years.

*"Michelmores is a powerhouse in the UK. They have invested both time and capital in the building of a strong team providing top quality private client work."* Judging panel, STEP Private Client Awards 2014

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Michelmores 



*Crab Spider* (winning image)



# Photographer of the year

A photographer recently featured in MANOR, **Neil Burnell**, has just been announced Wex Photographic Photographer of the Year.

**W**ex runs the competition through Twitter, with up to 400 photographers entering work each week on a Monday (#WexMondays). They are then judged on the Tuesday, when Wex announces a shortlist of 10 images. From that 10, the top three are awarded a number of points, and placed on a leaderboard.

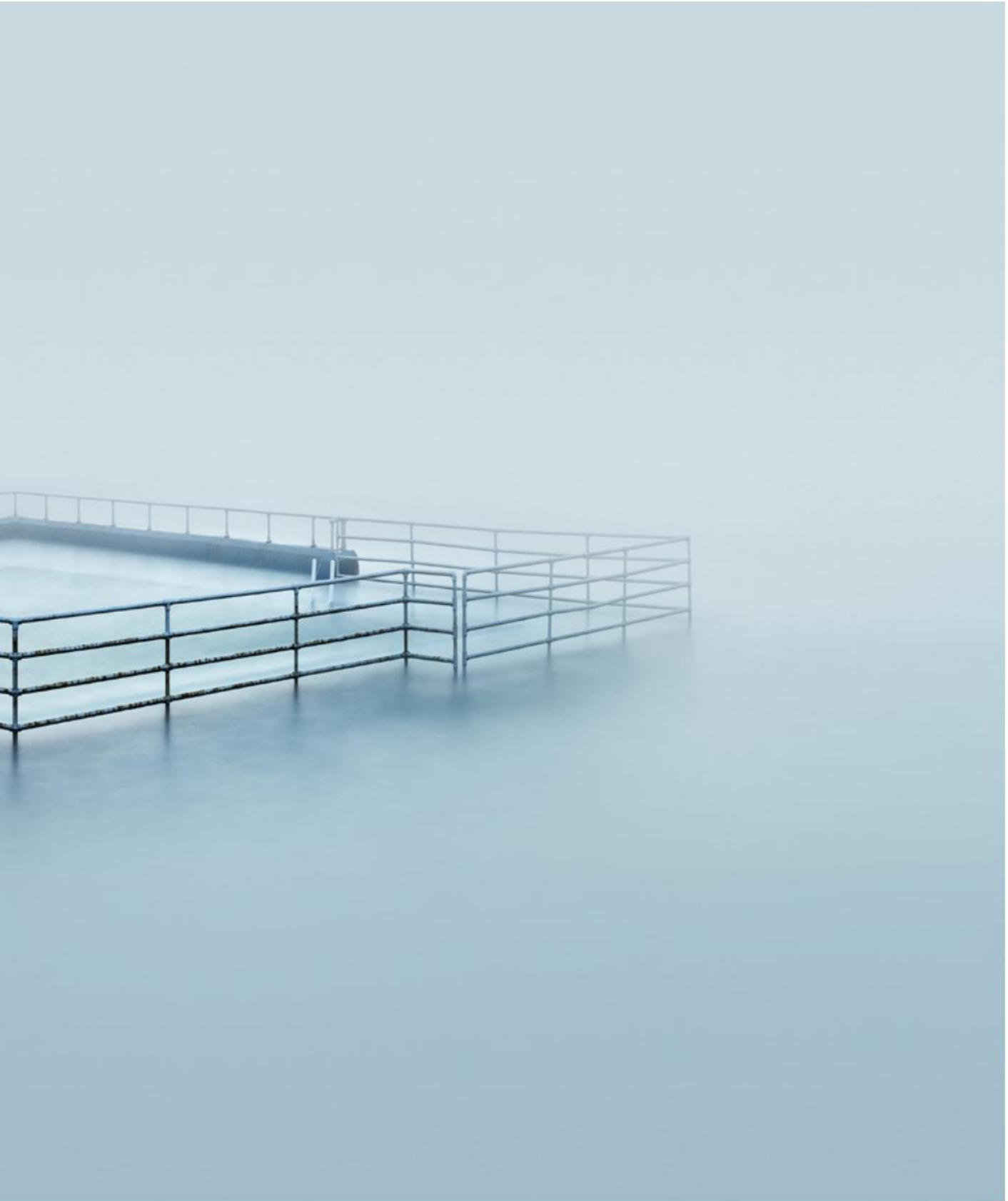
Neil Burnell racked up the greatest number of points across the year, with four winning images, several top three images, as well as other shortlisted photographs.

We showcase his four winning images along with his other shortlisted entries in this issue's photostory. They demonstrate Burnell's range in terms of both subject and skill when it comes to photography.

Burnell's winning photos along with the winner from each week will be shown at the #WexMondays Exhibition 2016 from 12-23 January 2017 at the Truman Brewery, London.



*Abyss* (winning image)





*Galactic* (winning image)



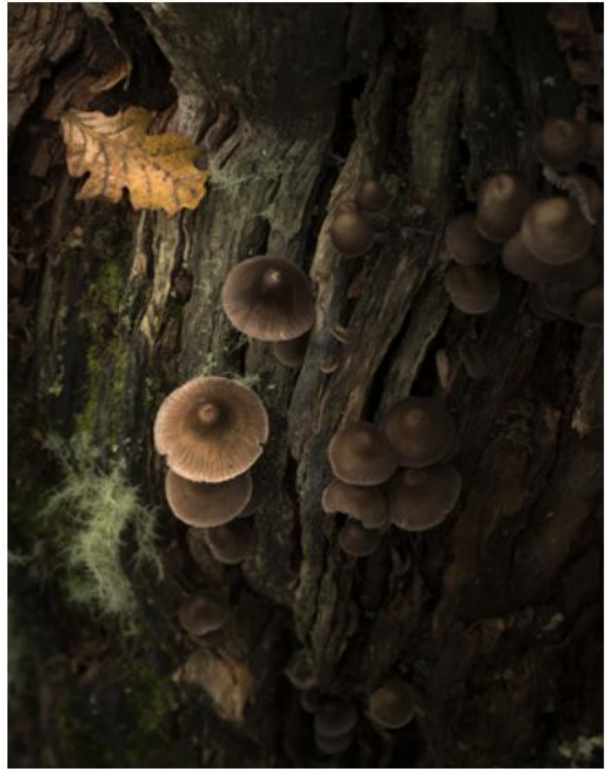
*Last Light*



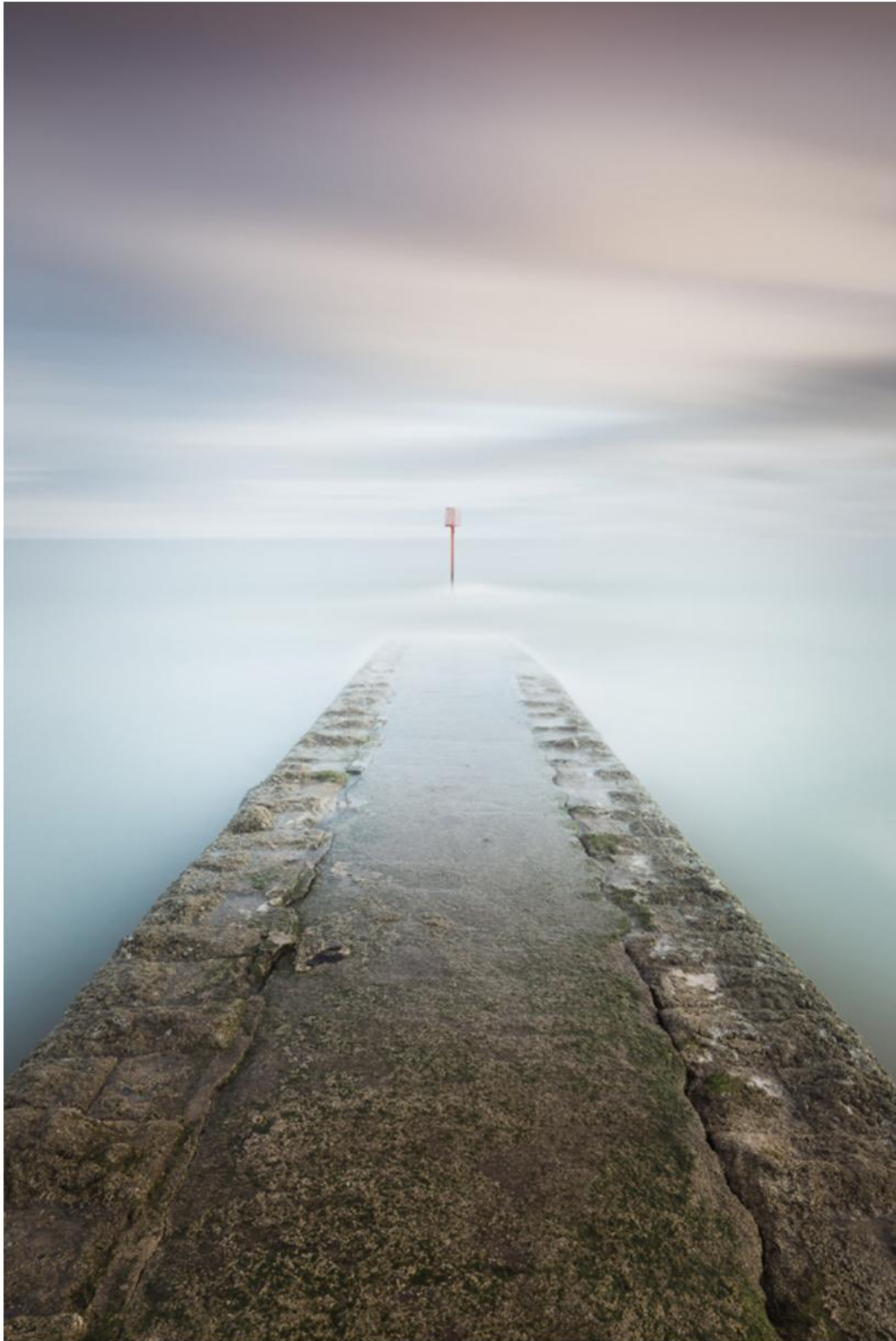
*Dragon's Tail*



*Dark Corner*



*Top Hat*



*Marker*



*End of Autumn*



*Twisted (winning image)*



*Desolate*

Burnell's photography can be viewed at [neilburnell.com](http://neilburnell.com) and high quality limited prints are available for purchase.



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# Natural foundation

With its artisan roots and commitment to ethical production, **Spiezia Organics** is a wellbeing range that goes more than skin deep. Words by *Fiona McGowan*. Photos by *Rick Davy*.

Naturopaths and herbalists have always been a part of society; they were the scientists of old, pushing the boundaries of understanding of the natural world and its benefits for the human race. Their knowledge of and connection with the flora in our environment was often seen as mysterious – a dark art that ran counter to prevailing religious conservatism. Hence the historical love-hate relationship with witches, witch doctors, and even midwives and pharmacists. Throughout history and around the world, the herbalism remains connected with spirituality and healing.

In our highly cynical 21st-century existence, with its sophisticated scientific developments and widespread disregard for our environment, it is nothing short of miraculous that the holistic, the homeopathic and the organic are still intrinsic to our lives. Most people know that food untainted with chemicals and pesticides is better for us. We are aware that chemically engineered products are potentially harmful to our skin and our internal organs. In the West, when modern medicine fails us, many of us turn automatically to alternative therapies. It is a hugely crowded, and very unmonitored, marketplace. You can call your product 'organic' even if it contains only a tiny percentage of organic ingredients. Even 'organic certification' requires just 70% organic ingredients. Add to that the disproportionate number of unqualified holistic providers, and the whole alternative world continues to be maligned almost as much as it is appreciated. Not much change from the days of witchcraft, then.

It's a tough world to be in, but Amanda Barlow of Spiezia Organics believes there is one way to mark yourself out in the crowded space: by maintaining integrity. Her 'Made for Life' brand has all the hallmarks of a high-end skincare company. She says it is wellbeing rather than straight skincare. It certainly has a strong element

of aromatherapy to it. Spiezia Organics is one of only a handful of companies in the UK producing 100% organic skincare, she says. Having re-branded to emphasise the strapline 'Made for Life', the Spiezia Organics provenance is still embedded in the business. Originally set up by renowned Italian herbalist Dr Spiezia, the company changed hands several years ago and Amanda, who worked and trained with the good doctor, quickly took the helm, injecting her own personal ethos into what was already a highly ethical business.

A visit to the heart of Spiezia Organics brings alchemy to mind. The engine room, where the products are made, is a blend of laboratory, kitchen and something you might find in the Potions class at Hogwarts. Lined up next to the window are big, foot-high glass jars, each with a tag detailing the contents, filled with oils and thick layers of petals and leaves. The liquids, explains Amanda, are blends of jojoba and olive oil – all organic, of course – and will spend a month stewing in the sun (there's a homeopathic aspect to being exposed to the rain, the sun and the cycle of the moon here, but the more rationally minded will appreciate the straightforward science of infusing the botanical content for a good few weeks). Pointing at the single hand-press, which is used to macerate the herbs and flowers, Amanda says, "This is the artisan root of it all. It will never stop."

While other skincare companies expand and mass-produce their ranges, Spiezia Organics will remain hand-blended, explains Amanda – partly to enable the obsessive data-tracking system. Being able to trace every single element of the products is key to the business, and the reason that it has won an array of 10 awards and ethical accreditation, and has been named one of the top ten ethical producers in the UK. No mean feat for a small business operating out of a few medium-sized rooms in the swanky Health & Wellbeing Innovation Centre next to Treliske Hospital in Truro. The ethics





Amanda Barlow

and environmental impact have been fastidiously thought-out, from the 100% recyclable aluminium lids to the recycled-glass containers – even the left-over plant material is allowed to dry naturally and then sent out to spas to be used for pot-pourri-type room scenters.

‘Made for Life’ may well be the strapline, but it is the driving force behind the brand. As we sit in the Health & Wellbeing Centre’s impressive atrium, with its acreage of glass whipped by sheets of rain, Amanda explains that the business goes more than skin deep. Beyond the positive effects of the lotions, oils and potions, there’s the Made for Life Foundation – a charity set up to support and nurture those who have been diagnosed with cancer.

People undergoing cancer treatment, explains Amanda, should avoid using skin products that are high in chemical additives. “When you go through chemotherapy or radiotherapy, your skin will become sensitive and sensitised. Often it’ll peel, be inflamed, dry, flaky. If you have radiotherapy, you get such intense burns, like a really bad sunburn.” So, genuinely organic products are ideal alternatives. Back in 2008, when she was still joint MD of Budock Vean Hotel in Cornwall, and working part-time for Spiezia Organics, she decided to set up a support system for cancer sufferers. The Made for Life Foundation provides a range of workshops, spa treatments, nutritional advice, mindfulness and psychotherapy for those fighting and recovering from cancer.

As the skincare and aromatherapy business grew, so did the Foundation, with profits from the product range helping to support the charity. And now there’s a new string to the Spiezia bow. A couple of years ago, Amanda discovered that cancer patients were being turned away from spas, for fear of exacerbating a tumour during a treatment. Characteristically, Amanda turned her outrage into action – her gentle, soft-spoken exterior clearly belies a soul of steel. Working with Marc Innes, founder of The School of Natural Therapies, and taking advice



*Beyond the positive effects of the lotions, oils and potions, there’s the Made for Life Foundation – a charity set up to support and nurture those who have been diagnosed with cancer.*

from Macmillan, oncology specialists, nursing staff and surgeons at Treliske Hospital, she has designed a course for spa therapists called Cancer Touch Therapy. “It’s a three-day training course,” Amanda says. “We teach the therapists how to understand the language. We teach them how to speak to people with cancer – things we have learned through the Made for Life Foundation. And we train them in protocols of how to massage in a safe and appropriate manner.” Once a spa has completed the Cancer Touch Therapy course, they are fully accredited and insured, Amanda adds, and they can open their doors to cancer patients.

While high-end organic wellness products such as these – with all that lovely packaging – are certainly not cheap, they are selling well. “The last 12 months have seen the biggest growth of the business,” enthuses Amanda. “Our sales are 50% up on last year.” They have close collaboration with Bristol-based herbal tea company Pukka Teas; their products will be available on GWR’s first-class sleeper services, and they are developing a natural and organic range for Jill & Rick Stein. Aside from the Cancer Touch Therapy training courses, Spiezia’s Made for Life products are used in spas all over the country. Locally, St Ives’s cool eco-escape, Una spa, features Spiezia Organics-trained therapists, where the aromatherapy and mindfulness elements are just as intrinsic to the treatment as the organic skincare range itself.

The success, Amanda says, all goes back to the core set of values, which are at the root of every business decision and collaboration: honesty, openness, respect, passion, innovation and support. These words may sound like idealistic clichés in most businesses, but there is little doubt that the quiet force of Amanda Barlow and her small team is 100% imbued with this philosophy. **M**

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



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South West must sees | Worth making the trip for | Staying in



*Something Set in Stone* by Martin Procter.

South West Academy Exhibition: 14 January – 25 February at Thelma Hulbert Gallery, Honiton. Free admission.

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



*The Way the Heart Weeps*, 2015. Charcoal and watercolour on paper, 94 x 94 cm

# Still life

Artist **Sarah Gillespie** produces drawings that are at once contemplative and delicate. She talks to *Belinda Dillon* about her shift from paint to carbon, the process of sketching and the 'slight obsession' we have with the unique.

In separate conversations about art and landscape with two different friends, neither of whom knows the other, both encouraged me to seek out the charcoal drawings by Sarah Gillespie. When I asked what it was that most appealed to them about her work, they paused amid the tumble of enthusiastic praise for her technical skill, her rigorous attention to detail, and tilted their heads to one side as if casting themselves into the image in their mind's eye, and said, "The stillness."

It's an apt description, but not because Sarah's work is in any way static; if anything, her drawings seem to buzz with unseen energy, as if they only pause their constant motion when your gaze alights upon them. Rather, the stillness speaks of her keen attention to the landscape and the life that teems within it; instead of capturing a view, it seems more appropriate to describe her as being engaged in a dialogue with it. Her pieces are as much about what she's receiving as what is witnessed.

"That's why I love drawing," she says, as we sit in her sunny Blackawton studio, surrounded by work framed in preparation for her upcoming London exhibition. "You have this ancient thing – a piece of carbon – and a piece of white paper and there's just mark or no mark. And in that simplicity, there's space and time for other things to presence themselves to you, and you're not totally absorbed with yourself and your own expression and your own choices."

That sense of space in the drawings is perhaps one of the reasons that they are so immersive; you can imagine yourself into them. They are at once contemplative and delicate, and yet loaded with expectation.

"For years I've been interested in Buddhism, Chinese mountain poetry and Japanese aesthetics, and there's a lot in those thought systems about not being afraid of emptiness and absence," says Sarah. "In Chinese cosmology, rather than being a void, absence is generative, out of which all the ten thousand things – the Taoist/Buddhist expression for all sentient and non-sentient beings – emerge and continuously fall back. When you spend time in nature, you can't avoid that:

things burst forth and flower and rot and come back, and that's going on continuously. And it occurred to me that it applies to drawing: those areas where there is an absence of marks are often far more present than the places I'm making marks, and it's that paradox, the play between the two, that I find endlessly fascinating."

This confidence to step out of her own way, if you will, has been hard won, not least because she has subjected her own artistic intentions and process to the same level of rigorous scrutiny that she harnesses for her work. Until seven years ago, Sarah was enjoying a successful career as an oil painter. At 17 she'd gone to Paris to study 16th and 17th century methods and materials at the Atelier Neo-Medici, followed by a degree in painting and printmaking (with history of art) at the University of Oxford's Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art. She won awards, was represented by London galleries, and her work was snapped up by Rolls-Royce, Merrill Lynch and Damien Hirst, among others. But a crisis was looming.

"Everything was going well, my work was in Cork Street, it was selling, but I was perennially unhappy," says Sarah. "I'd finish a piece and couldn't work out what the problem was. And in 2010, I just hit a wall and couldn't physically finish a painting, couldn't push myself through it."

So, she stepped back from the large landscapes and focussed on a couple of small projects, one of which was a series of quick still life paintings, in the hoping of changing gear or shifting whatever was blocking her.

"And I was standing in a private view of the still life project, which included two or three drawings, and a woman came up and told me how much she liked them, and I heard myself say, 'Oh, well, I love drawing, but I don't allow myself to do it because I should be painting.' And she looked at me, incredulous, and repeated my words back to me, and I thought, 'Ok, that's weird. What's going on there?'"

Sarah listened to her heart and stripped everything back. What remained was the purest form of drawing,

the creative activity that had given her most pleasure in childhood and which had sustained her during difficult times. And in the sense that a crisis can also be an opportunity – “I was completely stuck, so actually more open,” says Sarah – she accepted her friend, the artist Alice Leach’s, invitation to go printmaking, specialising in drypoint and mezzotint, techniques that stayed as close to drawing as possible. Immersion in both is what enabled her gradually to interrogate her process, the structures and hierarchies of her thinking.

“With a painting, you’ve got a canvas and you, the artist, covers every inch of it with your decisions, and you make multiple decisions about colour, tone, size of brush marks, type of mark, transparency, opacity, how representational that mark is or how symbolic or gestural... it’s you all over, entirely. And I’ve come to feel that there’s very little space in that process for what’s coming in from the outside. With drawing – and it’s taken me seven years to get it clear in my head – it’s much simpler; you’re not juggling these things that are all about you. And the more you open yourself up to it, the more rich it becomes, and there’s a big difference between that and the pinnacle of the European oil painting tradition, which is very much about the artist.”

And while she is in no way demonising her classical training – “it’s meant I’ve been competent enough to make a living while working out what I wanted to do, which is fantastic” – she’s only now fully understanding what to take from it. “It took me a long time to just loosen myself from that teaching and find my own voice.”

A peek into Sarah’s outdoor sketchbooks brings this home: a collection of short marks, no bigger than a thumbnail, conjure a deer with striking verisimilitude – it leaps from the page. “I’m definitely no longer interested in gesture and the drama of it,” she says. “I’m much more interested in seeing how still I can be and what comes and what happens, and slowly finding my way round it. That deer was playing; it just came out into this stubble field. Overhead, crows were doing barrel rolls, playing in the air. But you have to hang around to witness that.”

Study that deer, or a copse of trees, the powder on a moth’s wings, a swan just visible through the reeds, and your awareness awakens to the knowledge that we are all constructed from the same matter, just vibrating at different frequencies. Sarah’s deep understanding of that, her empathy for her environment, is what makes her such a good conduit. And while she uses photographs to capture tiny details, and for picking up tricks of light that can then be adapted, it’s putting carbon to paper that creates the weight. “Sketching is wonderful for absorption, as much as for the process itself – it internalises the image, adds depth to the drawing. I have a habit of picking up dead birds...” She points to the print of a blackbird. “I found that one in the road, it had just been hit and I didn’t want it to get squashed. I felt the way its head lolled, the one sticky blob of blood,



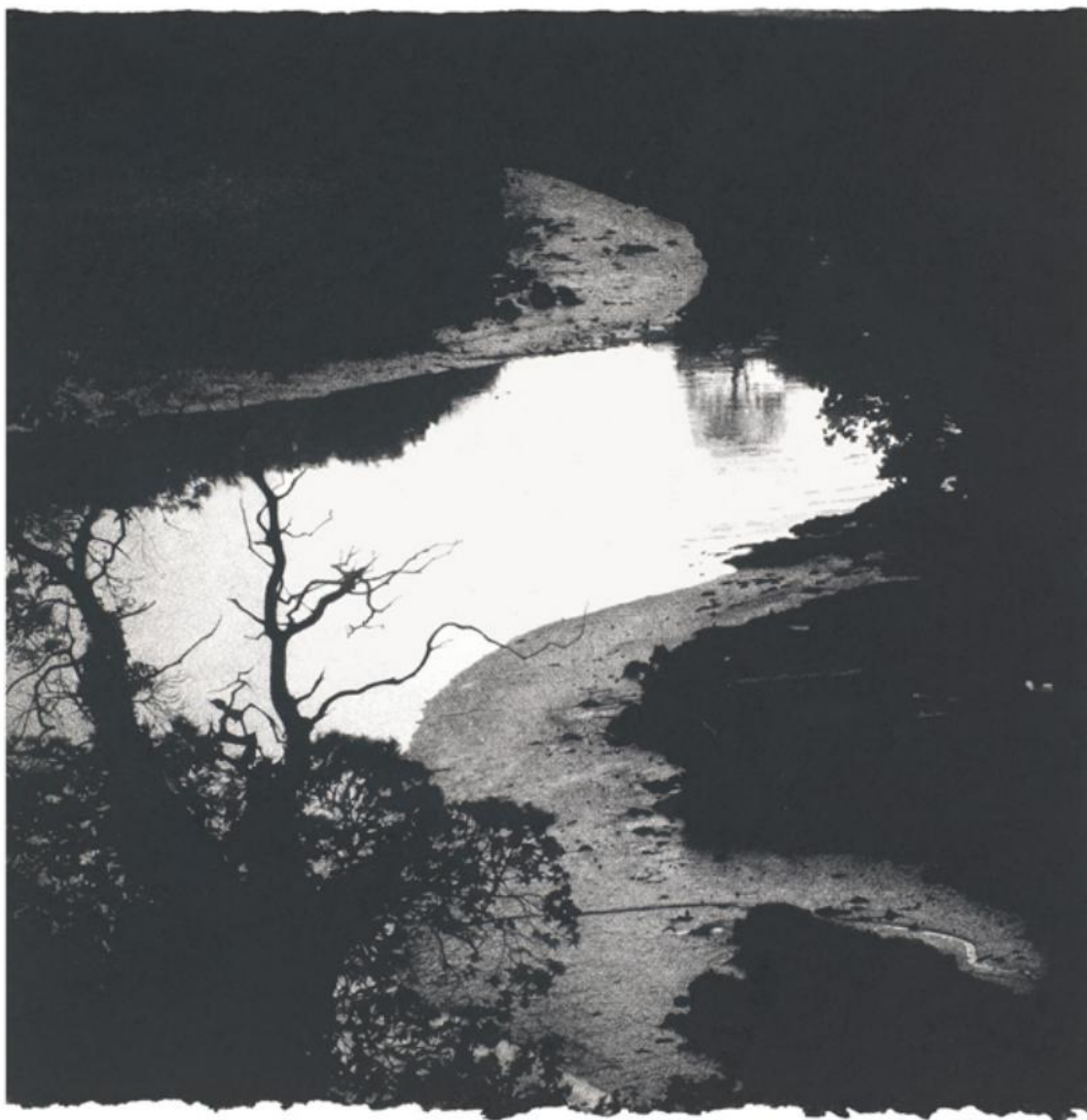
Sarah preparing a print in her studio



*Those areas where there is an absence of marks are often far more present than the places I’m making marks, and it’s that paradox, the play between the two, that I find endlessly fascinating.*



*Unsung*, 2015. Mezzotint engraving, edition of 30, 10 x 29 cm



*Tidal Reaches*, 2015. Charcoal on paper, 56 x 56 cm



*I'm much more interested in seeing how still I can be and what comes and what happens, and slowly finding my way round it.*



*Peppered Moths*, 2016. Charcoal and watercolour on prepared paper, 47 x 96 cm

its scratchy little feet... if you just looked at a photo you would know much less about it.”

It's not surprising, given her precision, that the bookshelf in her studio is stocked mostly with poetry; Yeats, John Clare, and TS Eliot are favourites. “I often come into the studio in the morning and sit and read for ten minutes, as a way of getting into the right frame of mind.” Also there is a collection of essays by art critic John Berger, whose piece ‘Professional Secret’ articulates beautifully the notion of the two-way conversation between artist and subject: *‘To draw is not only to measure and put down, it is also to receive... [That dialogue] is a burrowing in the dark, a burrowing under the apparent. The great images occur when the two tunnels meet and join perfectly. Sometimes when the dialogue is swift, almost instantaneous, it is like something thrown and caught.’* “That is what it's like, exactly,” says Sarah. “What I like about ‘thrown and caught’ is that implicit in it is the energy coming towards you.”

Sarah's studio is filled with evidence of that dialogue. She says she loves printing because it seems, somehow, more humble. “It sidesteps this slight obsession we have with the unique. The whole thing that's happened with art as a commodity – the more rare something is, the more value it has – and printmaking goes around that.”

There's humility, too, in sitting in the landscape, in nature, listening, being open to what's being offered. Sarah's work, her worldview, is an antidote to the current climate, in which dialogue is less about a two-way conversation and more about who can shout the loudest. There's much to learn from the quality of her attention. **M**

Solo exhibition, 1 February – 4 March, at Beaux Arts London, Maddox Street W1S 1AY.

[sarahgillespie.co.uk](http://sarahgillespie.co.uk)  
[beauxartslondon.uk](http://beauxartslondon.uk)



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A late afternoon walk to the Bronze Age stone circle at Scorhill

# A love letter to Dartmoor

Most days, **Jo Bradford** strides onto Dartmoor with her children and her iPhone, capturing its mercurial moods and sharing them with the world.

*Words by Alice Wright. Photos by Jo Bradford.*

From 1 January to 31 December 2015, Jo took a different picture of the moor every day, posting them on the social networking platform Instagram to create a photo-journal of the landscape's changing moods and seasons. Titled 'A Love Letter to Dartmoor', the project began as a very personal endeavour. But after catching the attention of Instagram itself, Jo was featured on its blog and her followers rocketed as people around the world became captivated by her images.

Watching clouds drift across the blue sky, and the play of light and shadow on the moorland below, Jo explains that it is light that fascinates her when she is out with her camera. She is not a landscape photographer by trade, or really a photographer at all in the traditional sense of the word. She describes her practice as "experimental cameraless photography", creating artwork that uses photographic mediums to capture light. After taking time out to have Grace, now three, Jo was itching to get back to work in her darkroom, and then along came Kade, now two.

"Having worked as a creative and not had children until my late 30s, I was very established in my routine of getting up and working for hours on my own in my darkroom and being creative," says Jo. "I was desperately craving an opportunity to get back to doing something similar."

Unable to return to her darkroom, Jo started heading out onto the moor instead, with her baby on her back, her toddler in an all-terrain buggy, and an iPhone in her pocket to take photos. As well as finding a creative outlet, she wanted to show Dartmoor in all its glory. Jo and her husband had moved from St Agnes in Cornwall to a remote, off-grid home near Okehampton Army Camp, and friends and family were bemused by their decision to swap a charmingly picturesque seaside village for what they perceived as the bleak, unwelcoming moor. "But for me, looking out of the window I'd see the most amazing light, fields of bluebells and the changing seasons," says Jo. "There's so much beauty here. That's what I wanted to share."

And so the idea for the 365-day challenge was born. Initially, Instagram followers were mainly friends and family, but over the next few months Jo built her

fan-base steadily. She always posted at 7pm, following advice from a friend to do it at the same time every day to establish a rhythm. "People said it was like a quiet moment of serenity in their crazy day." The captions were also important and Jo tried to evoke all the senses – describing the cold wind or the sound of a roaring river – to bring viewers into the moment with her.

And then, out of the blue, someone from Instagram phoned to say they would like to feature 'A Love Letter to Dartmoor' on the site's own blog. The post went live on 11 August. "I didn't realise what a big deal it was going to be," says Jo. "I was out at lunch and I looked at my phone and the screen was scrolling faster than I could read. I was picking up thousands of followers." Within ten minutes her phone had gone dead, the battery run down with all the notifications.

Jo's following leapt from around 2,000 to 10,000 following the blog post. Two weeks later, Instagram made her one of its 'suggested users' and her following surged again to 50,000. Apart from admiring her images, Instagram picked Jo out because she had a tightly curated project. "I didn't post anything that wasn't specific to that story," she says. "You're never going to get featured if you're posting pictures of your lunch or your family. It's in their interest to show their community isn't just full of people posting everyday things, it's full of creative people." They also liked the physical challenge – Jo's project took her out in snow, rain and wind, usually with two small children in tow.

Jo is delighted that not only has she demonstrated Dartmoor's beauty to thousands around the world, but she's also shown how much can be achieved with only a smartphone. "It's not about the kit, it's about being out there," she says. "I'm trying to inspire people to do something creative with their phone instead of just updating their Facebook status." She now runs workshops on mobile phone photography, so as we walk I'm keen to glean a few tips.

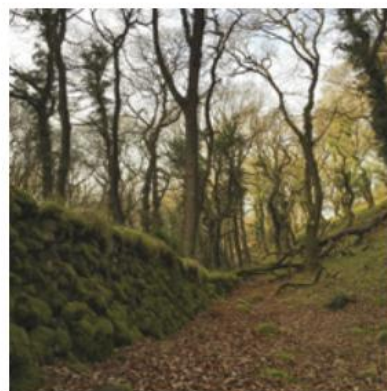
Jo advises going out early in the morning or an hour before sunset, when the contrast of light and shade will produce the most interesting photos – pointing to a rock



Rain clearing during an afternoon walk



Grace jumping in puddles



An old moss-covered stone wall



Jo Bradford



*Looking out of the window, I'd see the most amazing light, fields of bluebells and the changing seasons... That's what I want to share.*

formation, she notes how half is cast into shadow by the morning sun. Jo says she would often set out very early with a picnic breakfast for her children. As they ate and played around her, she sat and watched the changes in the light, waiting for her shot.

Back home she would choose the best photograph to post. This wasn't necessarily the most perfectly composed, but the one that best represented her experience of the day. "I see the photos as 365 emotional responses to the landscape," she says, and the project became a way of exploring and deepening her own relationship with the ancient moorland. "When I was setting off with the children strapped to me, and everything we needed for the day, I felt a connection with people who would have walked across the moor 3,000 years ago," she says. Often they trekked to one of Dartmoor's stone circles. As she took photos, Jo felt she was continuing a tradition by carrying out her own form of ritual there.

Jo is now back creating artwork in her darkroom, with recent exhibitions in Singapore, London and New York. But interest in her Instagram project has not abated. She was made an ambassador for Visit Dartmoor, and in 2016 all 365 photographs were exhibited at the Dartmoor National Park Visitor Centre. A book deal is also in the pipeline. And her thousands of loyal followers still want photos. So although she no longer posts every day, Jo is still out there on the moor with her children and her iPhone, capturing its ever-changing beauty and sharing it with the world. **M**

[greenislandstudios.co.uk](http://greenislandstudios.co.uk)  
[instagram.com/greenislandstudios](https://www.instagram.com/greenislandstudios)  
[jobradford.com](http://jobradford.com)



Rainbow on the moor, and a curious pony



Sunset on the final day of the project

## TIPS FOR IPHONE LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY

- A contrast of light and shade makes images more interesting, so head out first thing, or just before sunset.
- Remember the rule of three – the principle that images look better when the subject isn't right in the middle. Dividing the image into three, vertically and horizontally, and then placing the subject somewhere along the lines, creates more visual interest. Place the subject along the lines or on the intersection. iPhones have an option to switch on a grid on the camera to help line up shots.
- Don't zoom as the digital enhancement affects the quality of the image. Use the default setting and crop later if necessary.
- A smartphone camera will usually focus automatically on the centre of an image. To change this tap on the screen to focus on the chosen subject then scroll up or down to change the exposure.
- Finding a path in the landscape can help lead the eye into the image.
- Use figures to give perspective.
- Take several photos, and take some slightly to the left and right of the chosen shot.

## South West must sees...

## Modern life is rubbish

After four years writing and performing his TV show *Stewart Lee's Comedy Vehicle*, the comedian is back on the road with a brand new full-length show: *Content Provider*. Lee published a book of the same name last year, which annotates and responds to a series of columns he wrote for *The Observer*, *Shortlist* and *The New Statesman* between 2011 and 2016 (or, as Lee says, "every time that David Mitchell was away"). This new show is similarly concerned with the madness of contemporary life. There are few people better able to help you deal with it than Lee.

**22 February at Hall for Cornwall, Back Quay, Truro TR1 2LL.**  
**£23. Age Guidance: 16+. [hallforcornwall.co.uk](http://hallforcornwall.co.uk)**



*The Clangers*

## Last chance to catch...

On tour from the V&A Museum of Childhood, 'Clangers, Bagpuss & Co' not only features the best known of Oliver Postgate and Peter Firmin's beloved puppets, but also goes behind the scenes of some of their other creations: *Pogles' Wood*, *Noggin the Nog* and *Ivor the Engine*. Enter the world of Smallfilms to discover original puppets, sets, and filming equipment. See how characters developed, and learn how Oliver and Peter developed their stop-frame animation techniques. Then have a go yourself using 21st-century technology.

**Until 22 January at Burton Art Gallery and Museum, Kingsley Road, Bideford, Devon EX39 2QQ. Free. [burtonartgallery.co.uk](http://burtonartgallery.co.uk)**

## Devon Guild of Craftsmen

Photographs  
of the moor's  
artists, makers  
and producers  
at work



## Suzy Bennett: Artisans of Dartmoor

3 March – 3 April Riverside Gallery

The Devon Guild of Craftsmen, Riverside Mill, Bovey Tracey, Devon TQ13 9AF  
 Free Admission · 01626 832223 · [www.crafts.org.uk](http://www.crafts.org.uk)



PHOTO: TOM SHERMAN

## One night like this

Alt-rockers Elbow hit the road again this spring, bringing their special blend of down-home Northern philosophising to the regions. Get those lighters charged for the anthems, and expect to be sent swooning by the lush melodies of perfectly crafted ballads.

**9 March at Plymouth Pavilions Arena, Millbay Rd, Plymouth PL1 3LF. £38.50.**  
[plymouthpavillions.com](http://plymouthpavillions.com)



*Once and Ever*

## Elements of remembrance

Plymouth-based artist Julie Ellis's third solo exhibition, 'Earth & Air: The Episodic Memory', features a new body of work that further explores her preoccupation with notions of memory associated with place. The series of oil paintings embrace ambiguity, the open narratives inviting the viewer to bring their own autobiographies and be transported by a desire to reimagine the past. Visitors are also invited to meet the artist and watch her work, on 28 January, 4 February and 11 February, 1.30–3.30pm.

**20 January – 17 February at Ocean Studios Gallery, Factory Cooperage, Royal William Yard, Stonehouse, Plymouth PL1 3RP. Open every Wednesday to Sunday, 12noon to 5pm.** [oceanstudios.org.uk](http://oceanstudios.org.uk)



PHOTO: ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM • UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Morning Mist at Mishima 1833-34, Utagawa Hiroshige 1797 – 1858, colour woodblock print

## From the streets

'Japanese Woodblocks from the Ashmolean Museum' – an exhibition of 21 prints by Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858) – highlights artworks from his most famous series: *The Fifty-three Stations of the Tokaido Road*. Depicting views along Japan's major highway, the series was full of details of travellers' experiences and captured brilliantly the effects of place, weather and season.

**Until 16 April at Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Queen Street, Exeter EX4 3RX. Free. [rammuseum.org.uk](http://rammuseum.org.uk)**



## Northern exposure

Fusing storytelling, traditional Finnish runo-song and world-class multi-instrumentalists, Adverse Camber's *Fire in The North Sky: Epic Tales From Finland* immerses you in the world of the Kalevala. Beginning with the invitation to sip a small cup of liquorice vodka (there are sweets if you're teetotal!), the two-hour show manages to conjure the landscape, characters and emotions of Finland's national poem, which resonates with the Finns as *Beowulf* and the works of Shakespeare do for us. Utterly absorbing.

**1 February at Exeter Phoenix, Gandy Street, Exeter EX4 3LS.**

**£12 (£10). [exeterphoenix.org.uk](http://exeterphoenix.org.uk)**

## Worth making the trip for...



PHOTO: GRACE ESMAN

Lone Twin's  
*Ghost Dance*

## Play for today

Over five days in February, the Bristol International Festival will present more than 30 events across the city, from theatres and galleries to city streets, and outdoor spaces. Themed around the topic 'Stand Up, Stand Out', the festival will feature 40 artists from the disciplines of dance, theatre, live art, activism and music, portraying a version of Britain that is contemporary, open and defiantly different. The festival opens with a 12-hour performance of Lone Twin's *Ghost Dance*: two performers dressed as cowboys, blindfolded and silent, will begin to dance, perfectly matching each other's footsteps. As time goes on, members of the public are expected to step in, to support them when exhaustion starts to kick in.

**8-12 February at various venues and public spaces across Bristol. See [inbetweentime.co.uk](http://inbetweentime.co.uk) for the full programme and to book tickets**



PHOTO: EVA FLAATOU

*Relic* by Euripides Laskaridis

## No words required

This year celebrating its 40th anniversary, the London International Mime Festival delivers a diverse programme showcasing the best and newest contemporary visual theatre, embracing cutting-edge circus-theatre, mask, physical theatre, object theatre and puppetry. Over 34 days, 17 invited companies will give 120 performances of productions that are almost all UK or London premieres, at the Barbican, Southbank Centre, Central Saint Martin's Platform Theatre, Jacksons Lane, The Peacock, Soho Theatre, and, for the first time, Shoreditch Town Hall. Artists from Belgium, France, Greece, Italy, Norway, Spain, Finland and New Zealand, will be joining some of Britain's fast emerging talents, as well as established names. The festival line-up will be complemented by workshops, films and artists' talks.

**9 January – 4 February at various venues across London.**

**See [mimelondon.com](http://mimelondon.com) for listings and ticket information.**



Raffi Kalendarian, *Spirit Guides and Sunflowers*, 2008. Oil on canvas  
152.4 x 248.9 cm

## Scene leaders

In an age where painting has become one strand among many in contemporary art making, 'Painters' Painters: Artists of today who inspire artists of tomorrow' brings together a small group of distinctive figures in the field. There is no discernible style or movement these artists belong to, and as an exhibition, it examines the individualistic and nonconformist approaches explored by painters who are proving to be inspirational to a younger generation of artists emerging from the world's leading art schools. Hand-picked by Charles Saatchi, and featuring work by Richard Aldrich, David Brian Smith, Dexter Dalwood, Raffi Kalendarian, Ansel Krut, Martin Maloney, Bjarne Melgaard, Ryan Mosley and David Salle, this exhibition pays tribute to artists who have forged their own diverse paths and techniques.

**Until 28 February at Saatchi Gallery, King's Rd, Chelsea SW3 4RY. Free. [saatchigallery.com](http://saatchigallery.com)**

## Beastly thoughts

The question of how humans relate to other animals has captivated philosophers, anthropologists, ethicists and artists for centuries. 'Making Nature: how we see animals' brings together more than 100 objects from literature, film, taxidermy and photography to examine the historical origins of our ideas about other animals and the consequences of these for ourselves and our planet.

**Until 21 May at the Wellcome Collection, Euston Road, London NW1 2BE. [wellcomecollection.org](http://wellcomecollection.org)**



Budgie specimens illustrating colour variations

## Sounds of the senses

The last time I saw US psych-rockers The Flaming Lips live was at the Green Man Festival, and frontman Wayne Coyne fired lasers from the fingers of a giant hand and surfed the adoring crowd in a big plastic bubble, all the while soothing our ears and minds with glorious, multi-layered arrangements and humane lyrics. The new album, *Oczy Mlody*, is released on 13 January, and Coyne has described it as sounding like "Syd Barrett meets A\$AP Rocky and they get trapped in a fairy tale from the future". Make of that what you will.

**21 January at Brixton Academy, Stockwell Road, Brixton SW9. £43.**

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



Worth staying in for...



PHOTO © ZERIGEST FILMS

## Stranger things

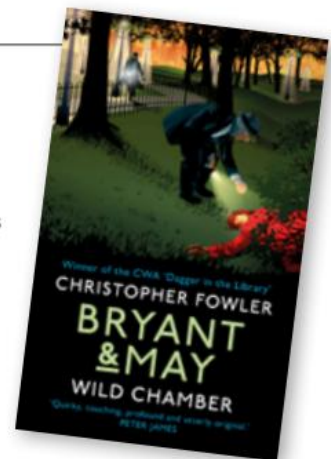
Since the late 1970s, the identical twin Quay Brothers have made a unique contribution to animation in general and the puppet film in particular. Filtering arcane visual, literary, musical, cinematic and philosophical influences through their own utterly distinctive sensibility, each Quay film rivets the attention through hypnotic control of décor, camera, lighting, music and movement, evoking half-remembered dreams, fascinating and yet deeply unsettling in turn. Just released by the BFI, *Inner Sanctums* provides an overview of the Quays' remarkable career, and includes 24 of their short films (three UK premieres and five world premieres), as well as Christopher Nolan's new documentary, *Quay* (2015), which reveals the inner workings of the brothers' studio. Also included is an extensive booklet containing Michael Brooke's 'A Quays Dictionary' (updated) and the 2013 dialogue 'On Deciphering the Pharmacist's Prescription for Lip-Reading Puppets'.

***Inner Sanctums*, two-disk Blu-Ray £24.99, Cert 15. Available from [bfi.org.uk](http://bfi.org.uk)**

## Killing me softly

Tired of crime novels that are awash in blood and guts? Then the Bryant & May series is for you. Christopher Fowler's detectives, Arthur Bryant and John May, are throwbacks to the Golden Age of crime fiction, when wit and keen intelligence ruled the day, and plots were as intricately woven as a lacy antimacassar. *Wild Chamber* is the 15th adventure for the Peculiar Crimes Unit, and in it the indomitable duo pursue a killer through the city's parks and gardens, after a woman's body is found in an exclusive London crescent, with no apparent way in or out. A missing dog, an errant husband, the whiff of national scandal, sparkling dialogue... it's the perfect accompaniment to a cosy night in beside the fire.

***Wild Chamber* is published on 23 March by Doubleday.**



# The One Memory of Flora Banks

Review by Fiona McGowan

Emily Barr's first 'Young Adult' novel directly addresses pretty much everything about the high-stim existence of a teenager. Set in Penzance, with a 17-year-old female protagonist, it is an almost archetypal tale of a search for freedom, a desperate fight to escape the constraints of controlling parents, a quest for love and adventure, and for experiences that cut through the childish memories and leave a lasting impact.

Barr's character, Flora Banks, suffers from a form of amnesia that means she has no short-term memory (her only clear memories are from before the age of 11). She is seen as a danger to herself. Flora's parents control her every move, protecting her from any risks.

Yet Flora is coming of age. She kisses her friend's boyfriend and remembers it. Some neural pathway is stimulated, giving her a glimmer of hope that her memory will return – if only she can re-ignite it. Thus follows a crazy journey to Svalbard on the remote island of Spitsbergen, where the boy has gone to work. Like an external hard drive, Flora's short-term memory is stored in her notebooks and written on her hand. It is only by following her detailed notes that she manages not only to stay alive, but to travel independently to the Arctic, where she becomes a highly unpredictable and bizarre stalker. The effects of her actions have extraordinary results; and while the start of the book is as halting and sometimes as tedious as her stop-start memories, it picks up the pace once she is in the icy terrain of Svalbard.

The characterisation is spare, but effective. The sense of place is sharp and draws you in – from the pictorial description of the verdant sub-tropical Morrab Gardens in Penzance, to the 'land of the midnight sun', with its collection of oddball adventurers and urban escapees,

puffins skimming the water and deadly polar bears stalking the outskirts of civilisation.

As Flora gets closer to her target, the drama and the pace builds. The book becomes a pager-turner, with psychological twists and turns that could easily match up to the likes of global bestsellers like *Gone Girl*. As a 'mature reader' – and clearly not the target audience – I had few expectations. I certainly did not expect to be gripped to the extent that I found myself switching off the light at 1am, only prevented from reading the next chapter by drooping eyelids and the looming school run in the morning.

This is a novel with universal appeal – for an older adult, the sketchy memories of Flora Banks are a verisimilitude of the way we remember our youth. Our past life has faded into a collection of random moments stimulated by unexpected smells or a strain of music, characterised by their extreme drama or intense feeling. The first kiss, the first love, the first pain of loss and betrayal... For teens, it cannot fail to hook into everything they deal with on a daily basis – from learning to challenge the truth of authority, to a yearning to escape the strictures of home life. Add to this the classic thriller build-up of tension and psychological drama of the 'main event', and you get a story that deserves to hit the bestseller lists. Surely a film beckons... Watch this space.

**The One Memory of Flora Banks by Emily Barr is published by Penguin, out on 17 January.**



## Obama: 101 Best Covers

On the night of 4 November 2008, author Ben Arogundade was in Times Square, New York, to witness Barack Obama's historic victory as the country's first African American president. To commemorate the event, he began collecting the following day's newspapers and magazines featuring the new leader, and by 2016 had hundreds of examples from around the world, each rendition contributing to a visual diary of Obama's eventful tenure in the White House.

The book's accompanying text discusses the design, typography, photography and political context of each cover, bringing to life this unique chronology of the 44th President of the United States as he leaves office, and making *Obama: 101 Best Covers* as fascinating as it is beautiful.

**Published by White Labels Books, £29.99. [whitelabelsbooks.com](http://whitelabelsbooks.com)**



# Vital signs

We were looking to stride purposefully into the new year and show a bit of attitude.

This style shoot is all about vitality; clothes that are more style than sport – bar the odd cricket cable and skater skirt – but nothing that will inhibit movement or break your stride. Best foot forward: start this year as you mean to go on.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY EDWIN HO  
STYLED BY MIMI STOTT





Navy cricket jumper, Next, £32; ankle wrap sandals, Next, £35







Off-the-shoulder dress, Zara, £49.99; stiletto shoes, Zara, £29.99; choker, Asos, £6





Poplin shirt, Zara, £29.99; A-line skirt, Zara, £25.99; stiletto shoes, Zara, £29.99





Heatgen thermal top, Marks & Spencer, £25; silver sateen skirt, Zara, £19.99; stiletto shoes, Zara, £29.99; choker, stylist's own



Contrast frilled blouse, Zara, £17.99; skirt, stylist's own; ankle wrap sandals, Next, £35





Red dress, Topshop Unique, £225; ankle wrap sandals, Next, £35





Turtleneck sweater, Zara, £19.99; metallic accordin pleat skirt, Zara, £49.99; ankle wrap sandals, Next, £35





Turtleneck sweater, Zara, £19.99; corset style tube dress, Zara, £29.99; stiletto shoes, Zara, £29.99



Photographer: *Edwin Ho*  
Stylist: *Mimi Stott*  
Model: *Savannah Blake* from *Select*  
Hair and make-up: *Maddie Austin*

# a natural night's sleep

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# *Food*

Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall | Bee Wilson | Porridge Café founder Nik Williamson  
Bites, the latest news and events from across the region | The Table Prowler



Sharing boards – on the menu at KuPP, Exeter  
[kupp.co](http://kupp.co)



PHOTO: MATT AUSTIN

# Power to the people

**Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall** believes we all have the potential to make positive change. *Anna Turns* finds out what inspires his passionate environmental campaigns.

Two decades ago, the River Cottage adventure began when Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall bought a smallholding in Dorset, determined to become as self-sufficient as possible, growing his own veg and killing his own chickens. River Cottage HQ has since moved to Axminster in Devon, and over the years, Hugh has written numerous cookbooks, but he's still not sure he deserves the title 'chef'. "I am a cook but the last time I cooked professionally in a kitchen was 25 years ago," he says. "Yes, I run some restaurants and occasionally get involved with my colleagues in the kitchen, but it is a long time since I have had the responsibility of delivering food from a restaurant kitchen onto someone's plate. I love cooking but most of the cooking I do is for friends and family. For me, if I have spent the whole day in front of the camera talking about food, when I get home I want to enjoy food with my family – that is a massive part of my life. I must acknowledge that I'm only a journalist who cooks a lot and cares about food."

At River Cottage, the politics of food is never too far away. In recent years, Hugh has campaigned to reduce waste in our food system, for better animal welfare, to abolish fishing quotas, and in 2016 he investigated another issue he is passionate about: the ivory trade. He may approach the heads of massive supermarket retailers or petition government but he firmly believes we, the consumer, have the biggest opportunity of all to make a stand, and make a change.

"It is really important that we don't forget just how much power – if we choose to exercise it – lies with us, the consumer, because the way we choose to shop and feed ourselves is what defines the food systems around the world and here in the UK," explains Hugh. "We often feel powerless, we often think that the choices we have are the ones we've been given, but if we shop and cook and eat in a more selective way, so that we just don't buy things that we think are not produced in an ethical way in terms of welfare or the environment, we can change things."

And Hugh has proven that change is possible. "The first overtly campaigning TV series I worked on was

*Chicken Out*, about poultry welfare. Of course, in a perfect world, I would like all livestock to be outdoors and enjoying a completely natural life, but even small incremental improvements in the system really count for something." He tells me that since those programmes, the uptake of higher-welfare chicken, including free-range, organic and RSPCA Freedom Foods, has gone from about 5% to over 15% of the market. "Now, that still leaves 85% chicken that personally I don't want to buy, but nevertheless it is real progress. People are making changes to the way they shop and they often don't backslide; they stick to those commitments and make a difference. So, I would encourage people to recognise their own influence and power to bring about change. Of course, people can help by signing up to a petition online, but most of all they can effect change by the way they live their lives."

It all comes down to taking responsibility for what we buy, what we eat and how we feed ourselves. "Even our original TV programmes were all about taking responsibility for your ingredients and, obviously, one lovely way to do that if you can is to grow them yourself or even raise a few chickens. We can all have a better understanding of where our ingredients come from and we can all connect with our ingredients in a more direct way," says Hugh, whose latest book, *River Cottage A to Z: Our Favourite Ingredients & How to Cook Them*, shows off the diversity of ingredients and encourages us to discover something new (see recipes on following pages). "This book is about provenance, and it's a celebration of the huge range of ingredients that we have at our disposal and that we enjoy cooking with at River Cottage." A compendium of over 300 ingredients, each listing includes tips on how to find your way to the very best examples of each, when they are in season and how to cook with them. "There's such an enormous diversity of textures and flavours. I hope to equip people with the opportunity to explore different ingredients and find new ways to cook familiar ingredients, but even more than that, perhaps to experiment with ingredients that they haven't completely got to grips with or that sometimes they are a little bit



PHOTO: MATT AUSTIN

Filming at River Cottage

shy about or that they haven't embraced yet. It's about giving people confidence." It's not all about Hugh, either – he catalogues recipes from his team of River Cottage experts: foodies including Gill Meller, Tim Maddams and Mark Diacono, who are all successful cookery writers in their own right. It's a big testament to the fact that River Cottage is very much a team effort.

There are notably – perhaps unsurprisingly – far more entries in the *River Cottage A to Z* from the world of fruit and veg, be they things that we grow or things that we can gather from the wild, than there are fish or meat. "That is how our diet should be; we should definitely be eating more seasonal vegetables and fruit – they should be at the very heart of any kitchen. And we should be eating meat and fish with care." Hugh is most definitely an omnivore, but will only eat meat or fish if he can guarantee it has been ethically sourced: "They are fantastic ingredients and I adore them, and of course they are very well represented in the book, but I don't think we should be putting flesh on the table for every meal, or even every day. We need to balance things out better, and my own cooking and the menus at my River Cottage Canteens are now much more about making stars out of the veg."

His approach to all aspects of food is considered, and in terms of his campaigns, Hugh is aware he's lucky to be able to have a platform for issues he is passionate about. "It's a privilege, and my sense of responsibility with that fantastic opportunity is to show the public things that they might not necessarily have known about these problems, and put the spotlight on the big corporations, and sometimes the government, and ask them: 'what are you going to do about this, because the way things are going, it's just not sustainable?'" He also feels there's a certain responsibility to follow through on that. "Many people have been working on these problems and have a far greater understanding of them than I do, so when I work on a campaign, the legacy of it is so important. I work with people like Tristram Stuart [a high-profile waste campaigner] or NGOs [in the case of the recent ivory trade documentary series, for example] so that when the show has gone out and the public has hopefully been engaged with these sometimes difficult and politically challenging subjects, organisations are able to pursue their objectives with extra vigour and more public support."

“

*It is really important that we don't forget just how much power – if we choose to exercise it – lies with us, the consumer, because the way we choose to shop and feed ourselves is what defines the food systems around the world and here in the UK.*

Where did this drive to make an impact stem from? Ever since he was a child, Hugh has been making food for people to enjoy: "When I was six, I made peppermint creams for my parents and grandparents, and I got a certain buzz from that. I have always loved cooking for people, but there's another dimension that says that through this we can make positive change and that makes it even more exciting. I genuinely believe that we are making a mess of this planet, but we can cook and eat our way out of it, and I mean that in two respects: firstly, the environmental crisis, and secondly, the health crisis." He's adamant that we can change both ourselves by deciding to eat differently. "If we care about where our ingredients come from and we strive for a real diversity of different foods, then we are already taking steps against the foods that I think are making us unhealthy, killing us and causing the planet grievous damage – these hugely subsidised crops that are versions of sugar, fat and grain, that are heavily processed. It used to be sugar cane and wheat and animal fat; now, sugar is high fructose corn syrup, for example. These industrially produced crops are very cheap and in most combinations they are not very good for us, yet the food industry deliberately continues to churn out highly addictive foods that are designed to make us eat more. They are rearrangements of the basic combinations of salt, sugar, fat and starch, recombined in ever more ingenious ways that we can't leave alone. It is not doing us any good, and it's not doing the planet any good, either. These foods also come with astonishing advertising budgets run by people who are extremely clever at manipulating the way people spend their money. We have to find ways to resist that." And I reckon Hugh might be keen to take up the challenge, so watch this space. **M**

Throughout January, kids can eat free on Sundays at River Cottage canteens in Plymouth, Axminster, Bristol and Winchester. For each adult enjoying two courses, one child can eat free. Advanced booking required, quoting 'Sunday Kids'.

*River Cottage A to Z: Our Favourite Ingredients & How to Cook Them* is published by Bloomsbury, RRP £40.

[rivercottage.net](http://rivercottage.net)

# A to Z: a compendium of ingredients

**Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall** shares some favourite River Cottage recipes from his latest book.

Photos by *Simon Wheeler*.

## Quick za'atar crispbreads

*Serves two - three*

The aromatic herb blend za'atar is often sprinkled on raw bread dough before baking. This quick, cheaty version gives you toasty, fragrant crispbreads to nibble with a cold beer, or dip into a steaming tagine or a bowl of creamy hummus.

### INGREDIENTS

- 3 pitta breads

### FOR THE DRESSING

- 3 tbsp sesame seeds
- 2 tbsp very finely chopped thyme leaves
- 2 tsp ground sumac
- ½ tsp flaky sea salt

### METHOD

Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan-assisted/gas 4.

To make the za'atar, first heat a dry frying pan over a medium heat. Add the sesame seeds and toast them

gently for just a couple of minutes, until golden. Tip them out and leave to cool, then combine with the thyme, sumac and salt and mix thoroughly. Trickle in enough olive oil to create a thick paste.

Toast the pitta breads lightly in a toaster, just enough to make them puff up a little. Then use a sharp bread knife to slit each pitta in half through its steamy centre. Cut each half into two or three pieces.

Spread the za'atar paste over the cut, fluffy sides of the pitta bread and place them on a baking sheet. Bake for 12 minutes, or until crisp and sizzling, then eat as soon as they are cool enough to handle.



## Hot mackerel, beetroot and horseradish sandwich

Serves two

This is such a good way to serve mackerel, and other fish for that matter, such as herring or red mullet. The basic technique for cooking fillets outlined here will serve you well for countless dishes (you could also use the hot flesh from whole baked or barbecued mackerel).



### INGREDIENTS

- Fillets from 1 large or 2 small mackerel
- Olive or rapeseed oil, for cooking
- A few garlic cloves, thickly sliced (optional)
- A few bay leaves, roughly torn (optional)
- 4 slices of granary bread or 2 soft, white baps or 1 ciabatta, split
- Butter, softened, for spreading
- A little freshly grated horseradish, or 1 tbsp creamed horseradish sauce from a jar
- A squeeze of lemon juice
- About 100g roasted beetroot, hot or cold, or vac-packed cooked beetroot
- Sea salt and black pepper

### METHOD

Season the mackerel fillets with salt and pepper. Heat a thin film of oil in a frying pan over a medium heat. When it is fairly hot, scatter in the garlic and/or bay leaves, if using, then lay the mackerel fillets in the pan, skin side down. Cook for two to three minutes until the fillets are almost completely opaque, then turn them over and finish cooking for just a minute.

Lift the mackerel fillets from the pan and leave them to cool slightly while you butter the bread and spread on the horseradish. (If using fresh horseradish, mix it with a few drops of lemon juice.)

Flake the hot flesh from the mackerel skin, being careful to remove the bones as you go, then pile onto the base of each sandwich. Give the fish a squeeze of lemon juice and a scattering of more salt and pepper. Slice the cooked beetroot into thin discs or wedges and lay on top of the fish. Sandwich together with the top slices of bread and serve.

## Bay-spiked pears with shallots and lemon

*Serves six as a side dish*

The sweetness and silky texture of these aromatic pears makes them a superb foil to rich meats. Try them with roast partridge, venison or pork. Alternatively, make them part of a warm salad with some bitter leaves such as chicory, crumbled blue cheese and any juices from the pan trickled over.

### INGREDIENTS

- 6 large, medium-ripe pears
- 24 bay leaves
- 4 small (or 3 large) shallots, thinly sliced
- Finely pared zest of 1 small lemon
- 1 tbsp olive or rapeseed oil
- A large knob of butter
- A pinch of dried chilli flakes (optional)
- Sea salt and black pepper

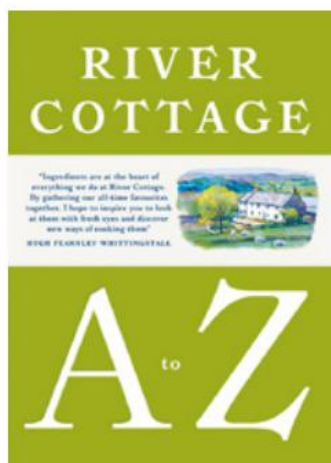
### METHOD

Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan-assisted/gas 4.

Peel the pears, then quarter them and remove the cores. Make a slit down the centre of the curved 'back' of each piece of pear and insert a bay leaf.

Place all the bay-spiked pears in a roasting tray. Scatter over the shallots and lemon zest, and trickle over the oil. Dot the butter around the pears and, if using, add a pinch of chilli flakes. Season well with salt and pepper.

Roast in the oven for 20–30 minutes or until the pears are tender, turning them once or twice with a spatula. Serve warm.



Recipes taken from *River Cottage A to Z: Our Favourite Ingredients, & How to Cook Them* by Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall and the River Cottage team (Bloomsbury, £40 Hardback).

Photography © Simon Wheeler



PHOTO: NATASHA RUNGMAN

# WARNING: this is not a diet!

**Bee Wilson** tells *Anna Turns* why she's no longer an advocate for fad diets, and sheds light on how to make your healthier eating habits last a lifetime.

New Year's resolutions often involve food, or lack of it. We may deny ourselves alcohol or sugar or fat for a few weeks but this is rarely sustainable in the long term. Food writer Bee Wilson insists that there is no need for a diet – we need to focus on the positives of healthy eating, not on sacrificing something we enjoy.

In her latest book, *This is not a diet book: A user's guide to eating well*, Bee challenges perceptions and suggests simple ways to implement behavioural change. "It isn't the impulse to change the way we eat that is a bad one – it is just that we need to think of it as a lifelong change, which is quite liberating, because if you happen to eat a chocolate brownie then it doesn't matter because life is long and it's fine to enjoy the chocolate brownie. It isn't a failure."

Our relationship with what we eat becomes complex because food is so tied up with our emotions, whether that be joy, fear, competitiveness, authority, anxiety or all of the above: "It is celebration, family, memory, and also guilt and shame and worry," says Bee. "It is all of

these things bound up together, and potentially it should be the greatest and most universal joy in human life. It is one thing we enjoy throughout our whole lifespan, so it is such a waste when it goes so badly wrong that we can't really enjoy eating anymore." Whether you are trying to lose weight, want to feed your children better or wish you had a less destructive relationship with food, it is possible to rethink your eating habits, and Bee's book offers a practical approach without having to go on another diet. "So many people, regardless of their actual weight, have all these angry voices going on in their heads the whole time, judging the meals that they choose, and it is partly about how you switch those voices off," she explains.

Our unique experiences, cultural preferences, family relationships and lifestyle all shape how we eat and how we feel about food. Our relationships with food throughout our lives are so complex; the ways we perceive food, taste it and even behave with it can be ingrained in us from such an early age. Just before I weaned my son onto solid foods, I read Bee's previous

book, *First Bite: How we learn to eat*, and it couldn't have been more timely. It gave me the confidence to follow my (gut) instinct and ignore the purées and growth charts, and instead focus on teaching my baby to enjoy the process of sharing a meal together. It made me see the bigger picture – the most important thing was to instil in him a healthy relationship with food, rather than worry about getting the next spoonful into him.

Rather than prescribing food laws, Bee embraces the fact that we all have the capacity to change our perspective, no matter what our early experiences might be, and Bee's personal story is a case in point. She tells me that as a teenager and into her early 20s, she was really unhappy about food. "I would describe myself as a compulsive eater, but I then went on endless short-lived diets," she says. "These stupid diets never worked but I remember that feeling of hope at the beginning of the week when I started a new diet on a Monday morning. It feels wonderful putting your faith in this system and I thought if I just follow these rules then my body is going to change and everything is going to change." But by halfway through the week, Bee, like many of us, would feel exhausted and ultimately hungry. "I distinctly remember always feeling hungry on these diets because it is a state of mind. Just telling yourself you're on a diet can make a meal taste horrible, and that feeling of good intention wanes and then you start craving something that you aren't meant to be eating because you have denied yourself. Then, of course, you break and feel awful because you think you're a failure."

So, what is the key to making good intentions last? "The biggest trick," explains Bee, "is that before you change what to eat, you change how to eat. Diets focus on specific food groups that are good or bad; even 'clean eating' is a diet under another name, as it does the same thing. Bread and pasta are bad, protein is good; all of that may or may not be true, but I don't agree with cutting out whole food groups because I think that's dangerous, unless you have a particular food intolerance."

What really matters is how you eat, how you structure your day: "No single diet food is as powerful as reclaiming breakfast, lunch and dinner. Many people don't eat structured meals, so I would focus for several weeks on just getting the rhythm of meals back, and if three meals aren't quite enough, plan for your snacks so you aren't constantly caught by surprise by them."

Once this rhythm has been firmly established, Bee explains that it is possible to change what you eat by changing your tastes. "Instead of endlessly forcing yourself to eat expensive goji berries or green juice that you don't necessarily like, change your palate. Lots of people start by deciding they are going to give up sugar in their tea, and at first it tastes awful, but after a few weeks human palates do change. Scientific studies prove that we are very malleable in terms of our tastes. After a couple of weeks, the sweetened tea starts to taste

wrong. So, if you don't enjoy vegetables because of bad associations with school dinners, for example, slowly try to notice how the broccoli tastes to you and try to cook it in a way that you might enjoy."

She describes the tiny taste theory, which is based on introducing new foods in pieces the size of a pea. By making the amount less intimidating, the pressure is somewhat reduced, and it works. "Children especially appreciate the feeling that by making a food that small, you are acknowledging how scared they are of putting it in their mouth, so they feel you are both on the same side, whereas so often mealtimes can feel like a battle."

Most importantly, it is never about just one food – Bee's biggest message is variety and moderation: "Tim Spector, professor of genetics and author of *The Diet Myth*, concludes that it's best to eat as little sugar as possible, with a wide repertoire of ingredients and a few fermented foods that you like, including cheese, sourdough bread and even red wine!"

If you feel stuck in a rut with your eating, Bee suggests giving up sandwiches for a month. She tells me that in Britain, ham sandwiches are the default lunch for a quarter of people every day, and another quarter eat a cheese sandwich every day. "Overwhelming numbers of people eat sandwiches for lunch, which is fine if it is made with good bread and good fillings, but actually most sandwiches are made with Chorleywood processed bread and too much mayo, so it's slightly depressing." A great alternative is soup, and Bee says she'd much rather rustle up a simple lentil soup first thing in the morning to feed the family for lunch than make five different sandwiches. "If you have never learnt how to make a pot of soup, you don't realise it's just putting a few things in a pan and leaving it to do its thing. It doesn't feel like diet food; it feels like comfort food."

One of her favourite recipes from the book is called 'win-win almond waffles', which may sound a world away from diet food. "When my kids eat these for breakfast rather than a bowl of cereal, I know that they seem much less hungry after school. It has loads of ground almonds, butter, a bit of flour, a little sugar, vanilla. To me that is excellent food – the smell of it when the mixture hits the waffle iron is so homely and delicious, and we eat it with berries. It is a good meal; no one feels deprived eating it, but at the same time it is quite nutrient-dense."

Now, that's my kind of diet! **M**

*This is not a diet book: A user's guide to eating well*, by Bee Wilson. £6.99. Published by Harper Collins.

Follow @KitchenBee on Twitter





# Go with the grain

Recipes from **Nik Williamson**, founder of the **Porridge Café** in Shoreditch, elevate the humble bowl of porridge to quite another level.

“**W**hen I set up the Porridge Café, I began to do lots of recipe-testing after the café closed. This served to strengthen my interest in grains, cereals and seeds. There was so much potential for grain dishes, given the sheer number of different textures and flavours, I wanted to explore further.

“After geeking out on grains for some time, I decided to encourage others to be creative and adventurous when cooking with them, so I wrote *The Grain Bowl*. The recent popularity of bowl food probably has a lot to do with convenience in the fast pace of city life. It means you can regulate your food intake, since the portion size stays the same. A bowl of cooked grains, or what many call ‘porridge’, is therefore comforting, convenient but also full of exciting possibilities. It can be hot or cold, sweet or savoury, indulgent or healthy.

“The recent resurgence of porridge is in part due to scientists heralding it as an important part of a healthy, balanced diet, as well as chefs increasing the range of grains and toppings used to make it.

“Rolled oats have marginally less protein than a chicken breast. Other grains, such as quinoa, have a high protein content and contain iron and calcium; and buckwheat contains protein, fibre, magnesium, phosphorus, copper, manganese, and vitamins B2 and B3. By including a mix of grains in each recipe, there is a broad spectrum of vitamins and minerals to be obtained from each dish.

“Most importantly, porridge is delicious. If it is cooked properly and flavoured with the right ingredients, you will never tire of it. Porridge is essentially a blank canvas, so there’s endless fun to be had in continually trying different flavours to keep it fresh.” **M**

*The Grain Bowl* by Nik Williamson is published by Phaidon, £19.95.



## Quinoa and oats with yogurt, raspberries and hazelnuts (pictured opposite)

Serves two

"I like to use quinoa in porridge for the extra protein and the texture it gives. The raspberries are a wonderful balance of sharp and sweet, which is complemented by the yogurt and the hazelnuts for crunch. It's a great balanced porridge for a boost at any time of the day."

PREPARATION: 2 minutes

COOKING TIME: 22 minutes

### INGREDIENTS

- 65g quinoa
- 250ml almond or hazelnut milk
- 250ml water
- 50g rolled oats
- 100g raspberries
- 4 tbsp honey
- 120g full-fat yogurt
- 4 tbsp chopped hazelnuts

### METHOD

Put the quinoa into a medium pan, pour in the almond milk and the water and place over a high heat. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to low and simmer, covered, for 15 minutes.

Add the oats and increase the heat to medium. Cook, stirring, for five minutes, or until the porridge reaches the desired consistency. You may need to add up to 120ml more water if the quinoa absorbs too much liquid. Remove from the heat.

Meanwhile, put the raspberries into a small pan, drizzle with two tablespoons of the honey, and gently toss with a spoon to coat. Place over a low heat and cook lightly for three minutes. Remove from the heat.

Divide the porridge between two bowls. Top with the yogurt and raspberries and sprinkle with the chopped hazelnuts. Drizzle with the remaining honey and serve.



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## Buckwheat with crispy bacon, avocado and roasted tomato

Serves two

"Buckwheat has a wonderful earthy taste that combines with some bite in its texture, and this is a great base for a recipe that works well during the colder months of the year. The crispy bacon adds crunch, the tomatoes bring some acidity and sweetness, and the avocado rounds it all off really well."

PREPARATION: 10 minutes

COOKING TIME: 1¼ hours

### INGREDIENTS

- 4 slices (rashers) pancetta or lean (streaky) bacon
- 450g cherry tomatoes
- 4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tsp dried oregano
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 175g buckwheat
- 60ml red wine
- 2 tsp grated Parmesan
- ½ avocado, sliced
- Salt and black pepper

### METHOD

Place a frying pan over a medium heat. Add the pancetta or bacon and allow to crisp, then turn over to crisp on

the other side. Remove from the heat, set aside on a plate lined with paper towels, then snip into small pieces.

Preheat the oven to 350°F/180°C/gas mark 4.

Put the tomatoes into a baking dish, add the extra virgin olive oil, and turn to coat them. Sprinkle with the oregano and some salt and pepper. Bake in the oven for 45 minutes, or until just black at the edges. Remove from the oven. Reserve a few tomatoes for the garnish and put the rest into a blender and blend to a purée.

Place a medium pan over a medium heat. Add one tablespoon of the olive oil, the onion and garlic, and cook for 2–3 minutes, or until translucent. Add the buckwheat and pour in the red wine. Allow the wine to be absorbed by the buckwheat, then add the tomato purée. Cook for 20 minutes, or until the purée has almost all been absorbed. Remove from the heat.

Stir in the Parmesan and divide the buckwheat between two plates. Top with the avocado, pancetta or bacon, and reserved tomatoes. Sprinkle with a little salt and pepper to serve.



## Millet with kale, mushrooms and pecorino

Serves two

"One of my favourite things about the colder months of the year is mushroom season. Classic risottos combine mushrooms and cheese, so I love bringing millet into the mix as it has a wonderful taste and texture that is so different to rice. Kale rounds off this dish so that it combines healthy eating with indulgence."

PREPARATION: 18 minutes

COOKING TIME: 18–27 minutes

### INGREDIENTS

- 6 tbsp unsalted butter
- 250g wild or chestnut mushrooms, coarsely cut into similar-size pieces
- 1 shallot, finely chopped
- 1 garlic clove, finely chopped
- 200g millet
- 60ml white wine
- 660ml vegetable stock
- 50g chopped kale leaves
- 2 tbsp pecorino shavings
- Drizzle of truffle oil
- Salt and black pepper

### METHOD

Place a heavy pan over a medium heat and add four tablespoons of the butter. When it starts to foam, add the mushrooms. Move them as little as possible to give them colour. Season to taste with salt and pepper and cook for 3–4 minutes. Remove from the pan and set aside.

Add the remaining butter to the pan, then add the shallot and garlic. Allow to cook for 1–2 minutes, then add the millet. After 2–3 more minutes, add the white wine. Once the wine has been absorbed by the millet, add the stock and cook for 10–15 minutes, stirring occasionally as the liquid is absorbed. Season to taste.

When almost all the stock has been absorbed, add the kale and half the mushrooms and cook for 2–3 minutes.

Once the millet is cooked, divide between two bowls. Top with the remaining mushrooms and the pecorino shavings and drizzle with the truffle oil. Season with salt and pepper to serve.



## Barley and rye with papaya, apple and chia seeds

Serves two

"I love chia seeds – they bring so many positives: high in omega 3, fibre, protein, vitamins and minerals. I wanted to combine two grain textures and bring a balance of fruits in the papaya and apple. I think it makes this bowl delicious and healthy."

PREPARATION: 5 minutes

COOKING TIME: 10 minutes

### INGREDIENTS

- 50g barley flakes
- 50g rye flakes
- ½ tbsp chia seeds, plus 2 tsp for sprinkling
- 350ml coconut milk beverage
- 350ml water
- 1 apple, cored and thinly sliced
- ½ ripe papaya, peeled and finely diced
- 2 tbsp honey

### METHOD

Put the barley flakes, rye flakes, and ½ tablespoon of chia seeds into a medium pan, pour in the coconut milk beverage and the water and place over a high heat. Bring to a boil.

Once the liquid has begun to reduce, stir quickly to prevent the porridge from sticking. Cook for 7–8 minutes over a medium-high heat, or until the porridge reaches the desired consistency, then remove from the heat.

Divide the porridge between two bowls. Top with the apple and papaya, drizzle with the honey and sprinkle with the remaining chia seeds.

# Bites



PHOTO: AIMEE TWIGGER

Cookie dough chocolate cake

## Perfect bakes

Torquay-based blogger and cake baker extraordinaire Aimee Twigger has published her second book (*Aimee's Perfect Bakes*, published by Murdoch Books, £16.99), featuring more than 50 sweet and savoury recipes, each with beautifully shot step-by-step photo guides. Aimee is also teaming up with Carole Poirot and Kimberley Espinel to run a food styling and cookery weekend.

**Creative Gatherings food styling retreat: 24-27 March. Amberstone Manor, North Devon. Limited availability. From £995 for a shared room including all meals and workshops. Visit [twiggstudios.com](http://twiggstudios.com) for more details.**



Aimee Twigger



## New chef for New Yard

Jeffrey Robinson, the new head chef at New Yard Restaurant on the Trelowarren Estate, has created a menu celebrating the produce of the woodlands, fields, rivers and seas of West Cornwall. Jeff previously ran The Loft in St Ives after working in London for a number of years and he is passionate about ethical sourcing of ingredients and animal welfare.

His new menu includes homemade sourdough bread with hand-whipped, flavoured butters, Cornish oysters served with crisp seaweed, mackerel and other catches of the day brought over by fisherman John Tonkin from neighbouring Cadgwith. Cornish beef fillet and home-grown pumpkin risotto are garnished with herbs, leaves and flowers foraged from the estate, beetroot is smoked over lavender stalks, and oranges barbecued over the New Yard's open fires.

"Wherever possible, we're using the best small local suppliers in the area to show off just how good the local produce is," says Jeff. "It's a great thing to go home to my family in Lelant each day feeling really proud of the things we're achieving at Trelowarren."

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

## Best in show

Woodbury Salterton-based microbrewery Powderkeg Brewery has won Best Lager at The Beer Awards for its pilsner, Cut Loose. The Beer Awards are run by the world-renowned IWSC (International Wine & Spirit Competition), with the beers judged in a blind tasting by leading figures from the international beer industry. Winning Best in Show in its category, Cut Loose was described as “one of the 16 best beers in the world”.

Powderkeg is run by husband and wife team John and Jess Magill. John, who makes the beer, is overjoyed: “Our intention has always been to make the best beer we can and it’s fantastic that has been recognised. But it does make me chuckle that a little Devon micro can be a world-beater when you simplify things down to just what is in the glass.” Jess adds: “We’re delighted to have put Devon beer on the international map. Our intention has always been to move Devon beer forwards – to shake things up, improve the quality and introduce new styles and flavours. We don’t have the budget, history or influence of other breweries, so we just let the beer do the talking – and people are clearly listening.”

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



John Magill

## The Millbrook Inn



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**28 January. 10am-4pm. £150. Philleigh Way, near Truro.**

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

## CELEBRATE THE WHOLE BIRD

Food writer Catherine Phipps demonstrates how to make the most out of cooking with a chicken (right).

**17 February. 9.45am-5pm. £190. Otter Farm, Honiton.**

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

## WOOD-FIRED COOKERY

Master the art of cooking with a wood-fired oven with David Jones (right).

**26 February. 10am-4.30pm. £175**

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

## FORAGE, COOK AND FEAST DAY

Learn about wild food and foraging with Caroline Davey.

**26 February. 9.30am-4pm. £95. The Wild Cookery School, Penzance.**

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



Forage with Fat Hen



## Cuisine of the south

Featuring inspiring breakfast, lunch and dinner recipes from South Hams chefs such as Mitch Tonks and Jane Baxter, this new cookbook showcases many of the region's finest ingredients, including seafood and organic vegetables, as well as producers such as Sharpham Wine and Cheese, Riverford Organic Farmers and the South Devon Chilli Farm. Published by Coast & Country Cottages, the book is free to download at [coastandcountry.co.uk](http://coastandcountry.co.uk)

## The Academy of Cheese

Whether you are a cheesemaker, cheesemonger, chef, distributor or just an individual with a personal interest in cheese, you can now learn more and attain a qualification with recognition. Initiated by Mary Quicke (right) from Devon-based cheesemakers Quicke's, a team of cheese industry professionals have established a professional accreditation programme for the cheese sector. The Academy of Cheese has been created to ensure a strong future for cheese, safeguard the work of traditional makers and create opportunities for innovation, with level one and two launching this spring. By 2018, the Master of Cheese accreditation will be established.

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



— JAMIE OLIVER'S —  
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## KuPP

KuPP, the Scandinavian-inspired casual dining concept – Food Drink Coffee & Store – has opened its first site outside London in Exeter's Queen Street Dining complex. With social eating at its heart, sharing boards feature big on the menu, alongside delicious pickled, smoked and cured foods, and the living wall of moss (left).

[kupp.co](http://kupp.co)

## Burns Night

Scarlet Wines, a wine bar, bottle shop and café in Lelant, hosts its annual Burns Night celebration on 21 January. Owner Jon Keast explains: "Our annual celebration of Scottish literary hero Robbie Burns is a chance to hunker down for a night of haggis, neeps and tatties, warmed from within by samples from an extensive whisky selection, and from without by the flames of the roaring wood burner." [scarlet-wines.co.uk](http://scarlet-wines.co.uk)



# Food Pioneers

## Sally and Neil Grigg

BEEF FARMERS

**Both Neil and I have farming backgrounds.** I grew up on my parents' beef farm in Newton Abbot, and Neil's family ran an arable farm near Wadebridge. We met while studying for our degrees at Seale Hayne agricultural college and I worked as a rural chartered surveyor while Neil became a rural chartered accountant, working in Hampshire.

**In 2007, we returned to our roots in the West Country** and took over the tenancy for Burrow Farm, a 350-acre arable farm let by the National Trust's Killerton Estate. We wanted to keep a slow-growing, native breed of livestock so we started with four pedigree traditional Red Ruby cattle and their calves. Now we farm 60 cows.

**We encourage consumers to always ask where meat has come from.** Always check that the butcher can name the farm it's from. We know the ear tag number and we have total traceability, plus we are RSPCA-monitored so we work to high animal welfare standards. We've noticed a distinct turn in people asking more about where meat comes from and how it is produced since the horsemeat scandal. More people are now choosing to eat meat fewer times in a week, enabling them to buy better-quality meat.

**Our ethos fits in well with that of the National Trust.** Our cows are grass-fed and outdoor-reared, plus we dry-age the meat on the bone for 21 days, which gives a great depth of flavour. Red Ruby cows lay down fat throughout the winter months, creating the marbling that adds to the taste. We supply Killerton with a lot of our beef and homemade sausages, and they are always proud to write on their menus where their produce has come from. When we do the monthly farmers' market at Killerton, customers ask where the meat is from and we can tell them that our farm is literally down the road. There's a good camaraderie between the producers – we do a lot of swapping, so we get to try so many different lovely local products.

**We are part of an Environmental Stewardship scheme,** so we are working hard to promote biodiversity while farming commercially. We have re-established 3km of hedgerows and grassed out all the fields adjoining the River Clyst, which flows through our farm, to try and prevent soil erosion, plus we have planted wildlife buffer strips to provide more habitat for birds and invertebrates



that live in the hedges, and these insects in turn are a food source for a thriving bat population in Ashclyst forest, next to the farm.

**Since 2014, we have run Courtney's Butchers shop in St Thomas in Exeter,** selling everything from traditional, homemade hog's puddings, steak pasties and Scotch eggs. We try to make everything that we sell in the shop ourselves. We supply the Exeter Chiefs with meat boxes once a week – they do get through a lot of meat!

**Our food hero is Michael Caines.** He champions regional producers and helps to put Devon and Cornwall on the food map. He also does a brilliant job promoting local food within the South West through the Exeter Food Festival.

Sally and Neil Grigg run Burrow Farm at Broadclyst on the Killerton Estate. Visit Burrow Farm at Courtney's Butchers on 30 Cowick Street, St Thomas, Exeter EX4 1AL or go online at [burrowfarm.com](http://burrowfarm.com).



## Signature dish

Seafood chef and restaurateur Mitch Tonks believes England's coast offers the best seafood in the world. With more than 40 different species landed here, he's spoilt for choice, and one of his favourites is cuttlefish. "If you like squid then you will be sure to like cuttlefish, so give it a try," says Mitch. "There are literally tons of it landed here in Devon and nearly all of it goes off to Italy and Spain, where they love it, and rightly so. In strips, it can be fried crisp like squid, except you will find it a richer and finer flavour, but my favourite way of all is to braise it slowly with red or white wine, plenty of garlic and a little orange; after an hour of slow cooking, the texture renders to that of soft pork fat with a distinct rich and deep flavour of the sea. With a spoonful of its valuable ink stirred in during cooking, the contrast of the dish piled up on wet creamy polenta is an absolute joy, and this Venetian dish is truly wonderful." [mitchtonks.co.uk](http://mitchtonks.co.uk)

### Cuttlefish in ink sauce with polenta

Serves two

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- ½ tsp ground fennel seeds
- ½ tsp ground coriander seeds
- 1 orange
- 1 tbsp tomato purée
- 8 ripe tomatoes, roughly chopped
- 1 glass (200ml) red wine
- 1kg cuttlefish, cleaned and cut into strips
- 4 sachets cuttlefish/squid ink
- 100g polenta (instant polenta can be used)
- 50g butter
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

#### FOR THE ORANGE GREMOLATA

- ½ tsp orange zest
- ½ tsp chopped garlic
- ½ tsp chopped parsley

#### METHOD

Heat the olive oil in a large lidded saucepan over a medium heat. Add the garlic, fennel seeds, coriander, a pinch of salt and two strips of orange zest from the orange and cook for one minute without colouring. Add the tomato purée and cook for another minute, then add the tomatoes, orange juice and red wine. Bring to the boil and boil for two minutes to cook off the alcohol.

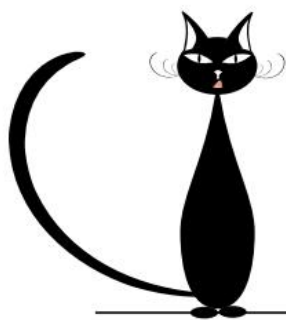
Next, add the cuttlefish and the ink, stir well and bring to a very gentle simmer. Add a little water if the pan is too dry, although the cuttlefish will release a little liquid as it cooks. Cover with a lid and cook gently for 45 minutes, or until the cuttlefish is tender. You should have a nice thick sauce. If it's a little watery, ladle it into another pan and boil to reduce it by as much as you need, then add it back to the stew.

Mix all the ingredients for the gremolata together in a small bowl. Cook the polenta according to the packet instructions, then stir in the butter and season well with

salt and pepper. Serve a good spoonful of the polenta alongside the cuttlefish and then sprinkle the gremolata over the top of the cuttlefish and serve.

Recipe taken from *The Seahorse: the restaurant and its recipes*, published by Absolute Press, £25.





## The Table Prowler

### Comptoir Libanais, Exeter

Part of the chain eateries-fest that is Exeter's new Queen Street Dining 'experience', Comptoir Libanais certainly looks the part: the tables, chairs and walls are a riot of colourful patterns and images, and high shelves and hooks are festooned with bags, teapots, and tunics (all for sale); the small shop in the corner offers cookbooks, Turkish Delight, sauces and spices. It's bright and breezy – exactly what you'd expect from a canteen-style restaurant – with the open kitchen giving the whole place a street-food pop-up feel.

We started with a mezze platter for two (£15.95), which was a good size and looked great – pomegranate seeds in the baba ghanuj, vibrant pickles – but overall was disappointing on the taste front. The hummus could have done with more tahini, the lentil salad lacked oomph but had a bitter aftertaste; the falafels were dry and unprepossessing. The large central portion of tabbouleh was gloriously green, but the dressing was too heavy-handed on the lemon.

The mixed grill (£13.25), however, was delicious. The chicken shish taouk was succulent and tender, the lamb kofta perfectly seasoned, and the accompanying vermicelli rice (you can have salad as an alternative) beautifully fluffy and creamy. The only misstep was the chicken kofta, which was dry and chewy. We each had a glass of wine (I went for their own-label red from the Bekka Valley, which was pleasantly jammy and well-priced at £4.50/£18.95).

We dined on a busy Tuesday before Christmas, but decided that this would be a great place for a quick, casual lunch while out shopping rather than somewhere to tarry in comfort over a leisurely meal. The service was polite and functional, although not attentive – which is absolutely fine for the canteen aesthetic that is Comptoir Libanais's selling point.

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

**Food 7 | Service 7 | Ambience 7 | Location 7**

### River Cottage Canteen and Deli, Plymouth

When Captain James Cook departed from Plymouth in 1768 to circumnavigate the globe and make observations of a transit of Venus from Tahiti, he took sextants, an on-board astronomer and copies of the nautical Almanac for navigation. In 1968, when Francis Chichester set sail from Plymouth Sound to become the first yachtsman to sail single-handed round the world via the clipper route, he was kitted up with a short-range electronic radio direction finder, a sextant and a Rolex Oyster perpetual watch. For me it's an on-the-blink GPS that delivers faltering directions to Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's Plymouth outpost in Royal William Yard.

The Yard is a bit out on a limb from the city centre, but when I arrive I absolutely see why the 'champion of waste' chose a warehouse in this former Royal Navy victualing depot as a site for the River Cottage Canteen, which sits beside the river Tamar and has views spreading across to Mount Edgecumbe and on to Cornwall. It's a clear day with a blasting blue sky and twinkling water. We are here for a pre-Christmas work 'do'. There are five of us and we have ordered from the three-course festive menu some time back, so we arrive without much memory of what those choices were.

Thankfully place name cards with our courses written on them are placed at a no-nonsense table that is functionally laid (no candles, no crackers). Baubles the size of grapefruit are slung on the branches of a fulsome floor-

to-ceiling spruce, foraged greenery sprouts from stoneware urns and vast origami stars hang from the rafters of the industrial space.

In a narrow strip of a kitchen (which is in full view), two chefs dance around one another as they prep starters. There's a slight hitch with our pre-ordered wine, but this is soon smoothed out by a helpful waitress. I kick off with an earthy potted game paté with spiced plum pickle and walnut bread. Hard on the heels of this comes roast and confit organic chicken with creamy celeriac, smoked bacon and chestnut – beautifully cooked and perfectly seasoned. Dishes piled with crunchy, fluffy roast potatoes and squeaky fresh kale and carrots (from Riverford and Tamar Fruit and Veg) are shared between us – the provenance of meat, fish and veg are all chalked on a blackboard.

With little room for pudding (vanilla, honey and bay panna cotta with stewed apple and boozy prunes), I stroll onto the waterside terrace past hipsters sipping craft ales and watch the ferry ply across the Tamar. Over coffee we lounge on sofas beside a roaring fire (not really – it's downloaded onto a screen). It is hard to leave; River Cottage Canteen really is conducive to a lingering lunch in winter, and for £29.50 for three courses it is terrific value.

[rivercottage.net/canteens/plymouth](http://rivercottage.net/canteens/plymouth)

**Food 9 | Service 8 | Ambience 10 | Location 8**

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# Space

Tom Raffield's *Grand Designs* house | The Esse stove  
Shopping for space



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



# Full steam ahead

It's been a busy year for furniture-maker **Tom Raffield**, what with building a house, appearing on *Grand Designs*, and welcoming a new baby into the family, as well as continuing to grow his interiors business. Words by *Fiona McGowan*. Photos by *Tom Raffield*.

Tom Raffield is standing in his kitchen, making a lampshade. Like a wild head of hair, the lampshade is a crazy, complex, chaos of curls. And like a hairdresser, Tom uses clips to hold the loops in place while he bends each strip of oak into place. There is no planned symmetry, yet the thing grows into a spherical shape under his hands,

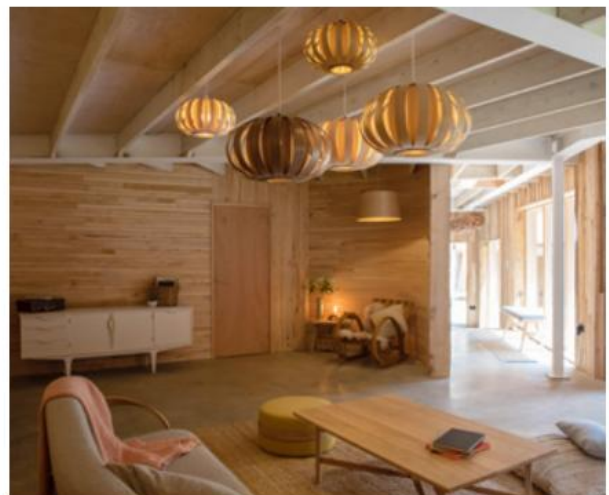
somehow returning to its plant-like DNA before my eyes. "There's no pattern," he explains. "There are only two other people who know how to make it. And they're too busy right now..."

Despite a huge burgeoning of the bespoke lighting and furniture business since its inception in 2008, Tom's artisanal roots are still clearly visible. In the past year,



his life has changed dramatically, culminating in the combined whammy of appearing on Channel 4's *Grand Designs* and having a third child. Oh, and building a house almost single-handedly. While the home-furnishing products are booming – sold in Heal's and John Lewis, and bought by interior designers and the odd celebrity (Brad Pitt) – it is the house that has garnered massive interest recently. And not surprisingly: an eye-catching testament to mid-century Danish design, its curvy, treacle-coloured wooden form sits between a quaint flint and stone cottage and acres of mature woodland. It manages to be contemporary, vintage and yet rooted in nature. Clever.

The house is a collective effort. Tom's wife, Danie – who also has a design background – came up with the concept and design; architectural technician Chris



“

*The house is the perfect showcase for the Tom Raffield brand.*



Tom Raffield



“

*It's about being honest and true to what's here, not covering things up with plasterboard.*

Strike refined and developed it. “And I finished it off with all the steam bending and made this angular thing into curves and forms,” says Tom. “It was a perfect collaboration. We all had our skills and used them in the best way.” Danie was perhaps more instrumental in this project than Tom. Well, that was the plan, anyway. Tom was working in the workshop, while Danie was managing the house-build. When she became pregnant, she says, she didn’t expect anything to change – the previous two pregnancies were a breeze and she carried on “like some Amazonian woman”. But the third one made her sick and sapped her energy. With *Grand Designs* hovering in the background with a deadline for filming, it was up to Tom to move the project along.

It was full-on – the outside of the house is clad in steam-bent oak, almost entirely sourced from Tom and Danie’s woodland near Helston in South Cornwall. He set up big steamers in the yard outside the house, and put the long, 15mm-thick strips of wood through the machine. Steaming wood to create the optimum plasticity for manipulation is a time-sensitive business. “We had a jig,” Tom explains, “which I used to bend wood around with a strap. I’d bend it round and clamp it for about 30 seconds, and then did another one and another. By the time I had done the third one, I could go back to the first one, take it off and quickly put it onto the house – so the house was acting as the drying former.”

Tom’s been steam-bending wood since well before he set up the business in 2008, so he could pretty much do it in his sleep. And, in fact, he almost did have to do it in his sleep. Danie, cradling their two-week old baby, remembers it distinctly: “I’d be lying in bed and hear ‘dju-dju, dju-dju’ with the nail gun. I’d be looking at my clock and it would be 10.30, 11.30, 12.30...” Tom chimes in: “But we had to get it done, didn’t we?”

If the exterior of the house feels very Scandinavian, the interior is even more so. It puts you in mind of a high-end ski chalet or a (temperate) sauna. The walls are entirely clad in vertical strips of wood, while the chunky Jenga-like blocky stairs are offcuts of wood that has been used for other purposes, either in the house, or in the interiors products. The rooms – despite their expanses

of open-plan space, walls of glass doors and polished concrete floors – have a perfect ambient temperature. In keeping with his environmental philosophies, Tom is proud of the ground-source heating in his home. “It definitely is the best thing about the build,” he enthuses. “You have it at whatever temperature you want – with no heaters, no noise. It’s just 500m of piping snaking around the woodland; it’s picking up that gradual heat difference between when the water goes into the pipes to when it comes out. For every 1kw you put in, you get 4kw back. It’s really amazing. I can’t think why everybody’s not doing it.” The manual labour behind the wall cladding must have been immense, but he tackled it a metre-wide section at a time. The stairs, he said, were easy – just like stacking logs in a woodpile, then using sanding equipment that he borrowed from the workshop after-hours to finish them to a smooth effect.

The concrete floor has a pleasantly smooth finish, too, showing the flaws and imperfections in an echo of the natural flaws in the wooden floors and ceilings. You couldn’t have a better showcase for the Tom Raffield brand. The open-plan kitchen – designed by local company Kettle Kitchens – is all rounded edges, leather handles and a concrete worktop made of the same ‘eco-crete’ that was used on the floors. A pair of satisfyingly smooth-running sliding doors cleverly hide the utilitarian side of the kitchen, while the giant island is used for everything – rather like the big Victorian kitchens of old, says Tom; with a sink and a hob, and a huge space for food prep, serving up and eating, it’s very much the hub of the space. A big industrial-chic chandelier – a simple ring of wood with dangling lightbulbs – hangs above it, creating a focal point.

The showcase doesn’t end there: the latest furniture and lighting collection was designed specifically for this space. The elegant dining table, with characteristic twist in the cross-support, and the matching benches are contemporary, yet with that mid-century Danish feel about them. Even the original cottage has been called into play. Accessed through a glass corridor abutted with Cornish larch surrounds, the cosy lounge is subtly painted in sage green and is aglow with warmth and colour from a WAM woodburner. It is here that the workshop staff come for meetings or to have lunch. It is also a showroom – the latest collection of lamps, an outsized pill-shaped pouffe encircled with steam-bent wood, a zoetrope screen of strips of twisted oak, and a mirror that hangs from a bent piece of wood that evokes a strip of leather. Tom and Danie like to return to this snug room in the evenings, stepping from the modern open-plan space to the roaring woodburner and small proportions of their original home.

The old and the new sit surprisingly well together, and it is testament to Tom and Danie’s vision that they have maintained most of the features of the small stone barn that sits between the cottage and the new-build.

“We left all the beams and scarfed new wood onto it,” says Tom. “It’s a really cheap way of doing a barn up.” Looking around at various original features and imperfections in the walls, he adds: “It’s about being honest and true to what’s here, not covering things up with plasterboard.” This honest ethos comes to bear outside, too. The decking and external cladding will age quickly, he says, soon becoming grey. He’s probably going to leave it unoiled, allowing the strips of wood to find their own distinct hues. It should last about 40 years, he reckons, before it will need to be replaced. “That’s why I had boys,” he chuckles. “I’ll be an old man by then – so they can do it.” I’m sure the baby, Lamorna, will have something to say about that, if she turns out anything like her mum.

Just above the contemporary chic of the new-build is a collection of wooden workshops. A year ago, there was only one log cabin with a bustling but small team of apprentices, experienced woodworkers and admin staff. Now, the team has grown exponentially, with a business manager and an upswing in temporary staff when needs demand. Tom sees the business growing, but is adamant that they will never outsource the work, nor move away from hand-crafting the products. It does make sense to find a larger, more practical workshop locally, he says, but to keep the creative engine on the property, with the design department, the marketing and sales team on-hand in this woody dell. The business is not just organic in its sourcing of local timber and regeneration of woodland, but in the growth of the company itself. People who started off as teenage apprentices years ago are now managing teams. He continues to employ locals for the work, and is always impressed by the number of talented people that, excuse the pun, come out of the woodwork to offer their skills and enthusiasm. “It’s not OK for us to be another furniture-maker,” says Tom, emphatically. “You have to try and do innovative stuff, partly because we can develop an international market, but the main thing about a business that has an appetite for growth is that it offers so much opportunity to the local community.”

Appearing on a TV show clearly created a lot of pressure on the couple – “It nearly killed me,” Tom has said – but it has also benefitted the business no end. Tom has been approached to build other homes; to lecture on his style of steam-bending; and even to present TV shows himself. He looks a bit conflicted – “I want to do it all...” – but in the end he has decided to stay true to his principles. “Part of the reason I want to build the business up is so I can then take a step back and work constantly on designing and innovating. It’s going to be less about creating a product and more about blowing people’s minds with products that have their roots in sustainability and handmade things.” **M**

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



# Future comforts

*Imogen Clements* discovers the perfect blend of nostalgia, form and function in the **Esse stove**.

There is an advertising guru by the name of Jeremy Bullmore who once observed how we human beings like to look both ways: to train our eyes on the future and widen them in wonder at the ever-advancing technology; then, disoriented, look back to the past to the safety and comfort of what's familiar. In other words, we need to temper our hyper-modern existence with nostalgia, hence the popularity of all things retro, vintage and reclaimed.

It's nostalgia that I suspect has a lot to do with the rise and rise of the cast iron range in modern kitchens – those same kitchens that enjoy every variety of mod con. A cast iron stove looks good. It adds personality to an otherwise functional room. Solid, warm and reliable, with a small oven and a couple of hotplates under heavy round lids that all emit a constant toasty welcome. Stoves like this warm the heart as well as the vicinity, and given their regularity on estate agent details, offer fiscal as well as emotional returns, going as far as to raise the value of your property by their sheer presence.

I decided we needed one, out of a yearning for warmth – heart and soul (always), but also physiological (like most women, I feel the cold) – and an underlying feeling that if one lives in the country, as we do, we should get with the uniform. A country house is not complete without a traditional cast iron range.

I was drawn to Esse by its Ironheart (above). The Ironheart is a stove that is wood-fuelled, with a built-in woodburner that therefore looks wonderfully cosy in a winter kitchen. "All very well," said practical husband, "but I, for one, will not wish to light it for the purposes of cooking, and after the novelty's worn off, neither will you." I was overruled on the Ironheart, but by now hooked on the Esse – an attractive, compact but sturdy little stove that has models to fit whichever fuel source you use, and is as pretty but more affordable than an Aga. Where we live, there is no gas mains and we have no oil tank; the house is powered entirely by electricity, which has always been another barrier to a stove – the assumption that it needed to be oil-fuelled as electricity wouldn't work as well and prove too costly.

Aha, I noted, as I read the brochure, there is an Esse that's fully electricity-powered and runs off two 13-amp plugs. What's more it proves to be rather efficient – keeping it on a constant residual warmth costs just a pound a day and means that it is quick and efficient to heat up when you need to cook from it. The residual heat is warm enough to dry tea towels, but not so warm that the kitchen feels like a sauna all year round.

The Esse comes in a wide variety of vibrant enamels, but unable to decide on a colour, we went for matt black, the one non-enamel version available.

It has, needless to say, become a friend of the family, with all the components you need to look forward to, as well as back. Thoroughly high-tech, one of the 'hot plates' is halogen and therefore very hot, in a very short space of time. The other is the standard stove hot plate. Personally, I love it for its aesthetic and its high nostalgia factor. Particularly gratifying, though, is that husband, the chef of the family and the perpetually forward-focused one, loves it for its cooking. Our previous oven was fan-assisted and would tend to blow all the moisture and much of the taste from anything baked within it. We are noticing a much-improved bake from the Esse, which is down to the heat surround engineering (with no hot spots) developed by the company as long as 162 years ago (yes, Esse has been around a long time, longer, I'm assured, than its rival Aga). There is also a clever little vent to the oven that when closed seals in the moisture of whatever bird or joint you're cooking; when open, it crisps up those roast or baked potatoes a treat.

To add to the nostalgia, function and form that this little stove delivers in abundance, it has also prompted the redesign of our kitchen, something I – after six years' lobbying – am particularly grateful to it for. So, a warm new family member with which everyone's delighted. Now all we need is a cat. **M**

The Esse EL 13 costs from £6,500 (inclusive of VAT); the wood-fuelled Ironheart costs from £3,910 (inclusive of VAT). The full Esse range is available from Hearth & Cook, Exeter. [hearthandcook.com](http://hearthandcook.com)



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# Light and shade

Days are getting longer – that’s one of the good things about the start of the calendar year – but the optimum palette of your room will to some extent depend on how much light it receives. Fortunately, deep, vibrant colours are as abundant and rich in variety in décor and furnishings as the perennial favourite neutrals.



**Broadwick sofa,**  
Sofa Workshop, £2,299



**Light,**  
Amara, £276



**Circus pouf,**  
Amara, £340



**Sheepskin rug,**  
Amara, £137.50



**Table,**  
Amara, £130



**Elephant candle,**  
House of Fraser, £21



**Cushion,**  
Secret Linen Store, £10



**Metal Lantern,**  
House of Fraser, £80



**Bloomingville Bench,**  
Amara, £379



**Light,**  
Next, £80



**Cushion,**  
Marks & Spencer,  
£25



**Cushion,**  
Furniture Village,  
£55



**Cushion,**  
House of Fraser,  
£32



**Lexington sofa,**  
Sofa Workshop, £2,199



**Bowl,**  
Next,  
£10



**Lamp,**  
Marks & Spencer,  
£89



**Mirror,**  
Marks & Spencer,  
£129



**Coffee table,**  
cuckooland.com,  
£160



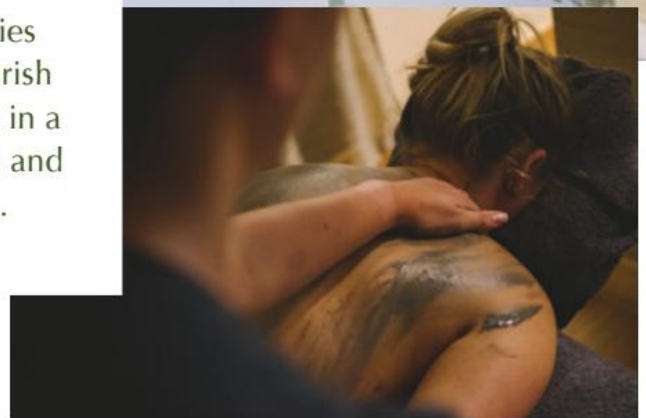
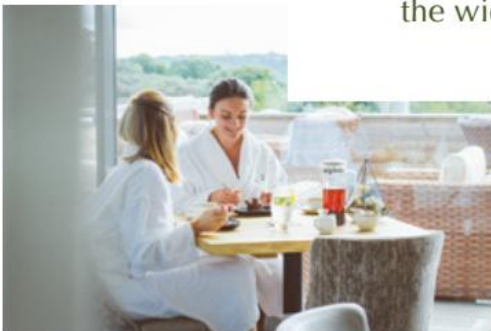
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# *Escape*

Weekend break to the Algarve | The Alverton Hotel, Truro  
Experiencing the spas at Gaia and Bedruthan Hotel

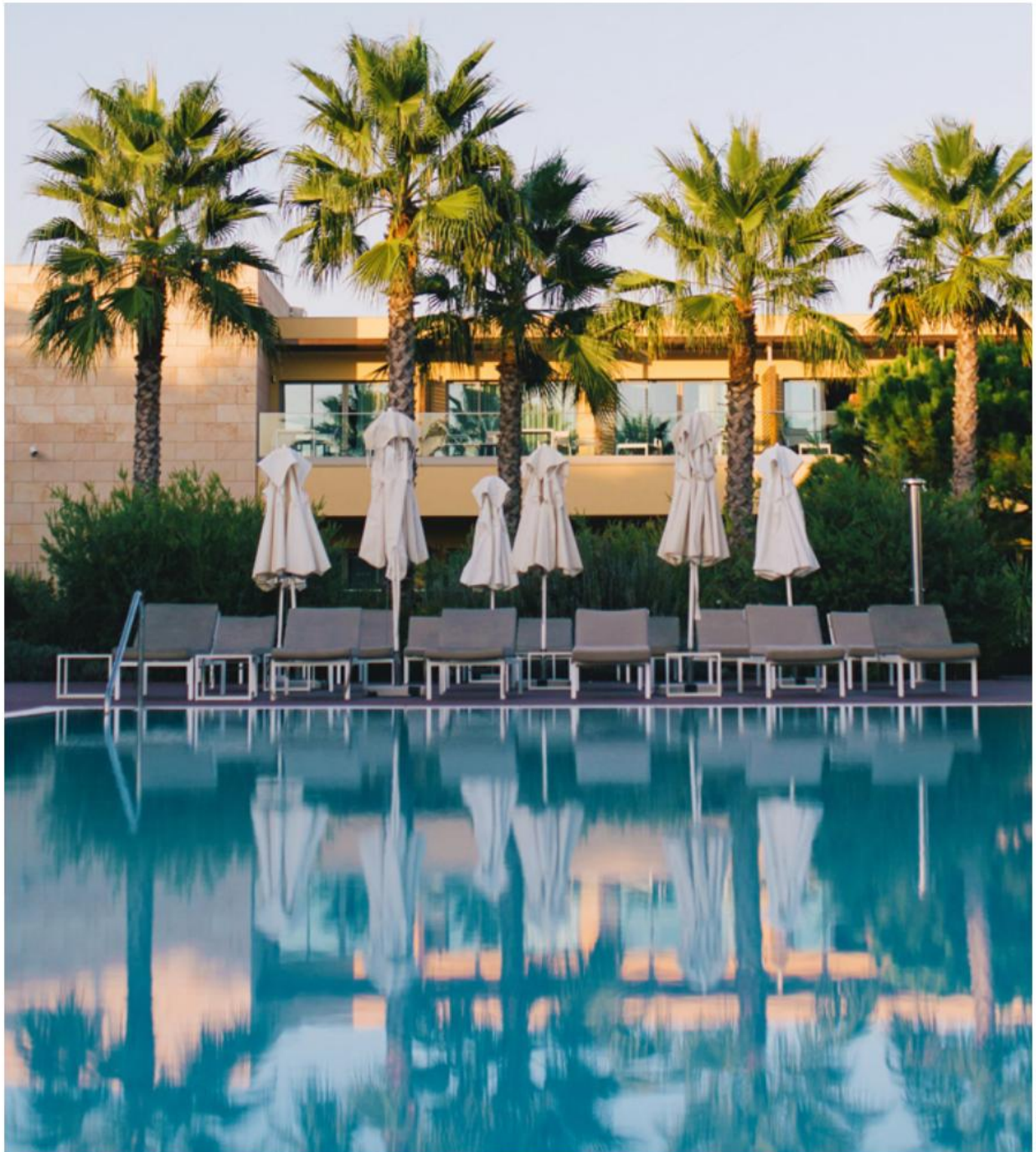


PHOTO: AJO BROWN

The pool at Epic Sana, Algarve, Portugal



# Portuguese perfection

**Lucy Jenner-Brown** and photographer husband **Adj Brown** head to the Algarve for a luxury, child-free break. All photos by *Adj Brown*.

With the promise of some out-of-season sun paired with the chance of much-needed relaxation and good food, a luxury escape to the Algarve was a very exciting prospect. A holiday without our daughter – so just a short break – presented the chance to relinquish responsibilities and escape for a few days, and was most definitely welcome.

There are many reasons to visit Portugal: golden beaches, historic villages, the mountains, stunningly simple food, great wine, culture, nature, surf and golf... Then there is the less tangible: the glorious light,

dramatic sunsets, friendly welcomes and a laid-back vibe.

With the excitement of travelling as a couple for the first time in a long while, as well as it being our first visit to Portugal, we chose style and comfort over our usual adventurous holidays, and managed to pick the perfect setting for our indulgent, child-free trip: the Epic Sana resort on the Algarve coast, situated between Albufeira and Vilamoura. After just a two-hour flight from Bristol to Faro, then a 30-minute transfer to the resort, we had truly arrived.

With a modernist feel, the low-rise, five-star complex looks over the palm tree-fringed pools and leafy gardens



*With long, hot summers and a reasonable flight time, Portugal is an ideal destination for short-haul sunshine.*



Praia da Falesia



Silves

leading onto pine woodland reaching out to the beach – an impressive location. The immaculately outfitted staff – very Ralph Lauren-esque – gave us a genuine welcome, and this warm and attentive service set the tone for the resort and our stay: high end but comfortable. Our room certainly didn't disappoint: open plan and spacious, with a balcony overlooking the sea, it was fitted with the latest technology, a giant bed and a freestanding bathtub – we were both more than happy.

Opened in 2013 and part of the growing Sana chain of hotels, Epic Sana is set in acres of garden and pine forest at the edge of Praia da Falesia, one of the region's most spectacular beaches, revealing pure white sand framed by dramatic orange-hued dune cliffs.

With a four-day break, our focus was on relaxation and enjoying time away together without the constraints of work and day-to-day home life, so a big part of our holiday was giving into being looked after, enjoying the luxury and simply laying by the pool, catching some rays.

We hired a car to explore a little and a day trip to Silves is highly recommended. Full of character, with its imposing castle walls dominating this enchanting town, Silves was the old Moorish capital of the Algarve. With its crooked rooftops circling the hill below the castle, you can get a 360-degree view of this attractive town from the ramparts. We enjoyed a lazy lunch at the restaurant in the grounds of the castle, with a delicious meal of figs, cheese, cured meat and honey, accompanied by local wine and surrounded by the historic and ancient walls. We also visited the cathedral and wandered through the cobbled streets; and with the river running through Silves offering boat trips to Portimao, the town is well worth an afternoon's exploration.

We ventured out of the luxury cocoon of the hotel for a couple of evenings and enjoyed a harbour-side dinner and wander around Vilamoura, the golfing mecca of the Algarve and the region's largest marina. We also spent an afternoon meandering around the popular family resort of Carvoeiro, which has a great beach, a good selection of bars and restaurants, and boutiques selling local souvenirs such as ceramics, copper pots and accessories made of cork.

As an extra treat, I booked myself in for a very indulgent signature facial at the Sayanna Spa at the hotel, a 90-minute blissful combination involving scrubs, masks, head and facial massages plus a cold stone massage with natural oils as the grand finale. Following this, I spent more me-time hanging out in the relaxation room



*Epic Sana is set in acres of garden and pine forest at the edge of Praia da Falesia, one of the region's most spectacular beaches.*



View from hotel room



Al Quimia Fine Dining Restaurant terrace

with a cup of herbal tea, the indoor spa pool, steam room and sauna. As well as the most glamorous changing rooms, there is also a VIP pavilion for couples' massages and the offer of mesotherapy treatments. If you are looking for activity, then Epic Sana runs two different classes daily, such as pilates, yoga, cycling and jogging, which are free to all guests. There is also another indoor pool and a gym that's open round the clock; you can also book specific boot camp programme holidays, if that's your bag.

We quickly established an evening routine, with a walk to the beach at sunset, which is a pure delight in itself, reached via a wooden walkway from the hotel through the scented pine trees. The sunsets over Praia da Falesia, with its terracotta-coloured cliffs, were stunning. This was followed by a pre-dinner cocktail at the resort's Bluum Bar, and we can certainly vouch for the Mai Tais and Margaritas.

A breakfast buffet always seems a decadent treat, so we thoroughly enjoyed the daily selection at the resort's Abyad Restaurant, with stylish indoor and outdoor seating; it also offers an evening buffet with a different theme each night. We ventured out of the resort for dining, too, and enjoyed simple and tasty Portuguese dishes, fresh seafood, great wine and delicious pastries – this is a region where good food is easy to find.

For our last night, we decided to treat ourselves to

dinner at Epic Sana's highly rated fine-dining restaurant, Al Quimia, which is headed up by chef Luis Mourano. A truly special experience, the menu is modern and creative, and is designed seasonally from the finest and freshest ingredients from different regions of Portugal.

We opted for the tasting menu, which comprises nine courses, each one imaginatively and lovingly crafted, resulting in an evening that can only be described as a creative and innovative culinary experience. The service was impeccable, with the highly knowledgeable sommelier an integral part of the evening's success.

With long, hot summers and a reasonable flight time, Portugal is an ideal destination for short-haul sunshine. Our prescription break was about taking time out, and it gave us the chance to feel free and pampered in stylish and luxurious surroundings. On a longer trip we would have explored further, with the aim of experiencing the more traditional side of Portugal, which just means we will need to return. **M**

Flights to Faro operate from Bristol, Exeter and Newquay (from March 2017). Rooms start at £145 per night. Lucy and Adj stayed in one of the Double Deluxe Rooms with sea view, which start at £180 per night.

[algarve.epic.sanahotels.com](http://algarve.epic.sanahotels.com)



Silves Castle



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# Grand central

Fiona McGowan enjoys a spot of old-world charm at **The Alverton Hotel, Truro.**

“No-one’s ever seen any ghosts here,” says Lindsey Skinner of The Alverton, “perhaps because it was full of nuns, who were all at peace with themselves.” It’s surprising, because this seems exactly the sort of place where you’d be likely to catch a drift of souls from the other side. From the extraordinary vaulted ceiling of the cathedral-like chapel to the ‘nuns’ cells’ in the lower part of the main building, the sandstone and flint buildings ooze historical vibes.

The original structure of Alverton Manor was built by wealthy industrialist William Tweedy as a family home in 1830. Perhaps wishing to show off his position in society – or merely as an altruistic offering – he had the gardens landscaped and opened them to the public. A few decades later, the house changed hands and was sold to an order of nuns, whose wealthy families contributed to the massive expansion of the property. The chapel – which puts many churches to shame in its glorious architecture – was designed by Truro Cathedral’s architect John Loughborough Pearson. A separate enclave behind the main building incorporated another – more monastic – chapel, stable block, dairy, and washing room surrounding a cobbled courtyard. Gothic arched windows with stained glass pepper the structures. A school building was erected, and the whole place became a genuinely philanthropic venture, offering salve, support and living quarters to the poor and maligned. ‘Fallen

women’ whose children were born out of wedlock, or whose reputation had been stained, were offered lodging and work in the dairy and wash-houses...

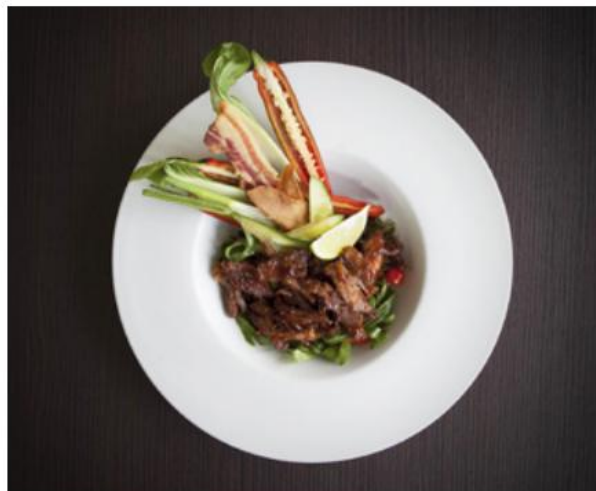
Today, The Alverton is the grandest of Truro’s hotels. Raised above one of the main arteries into town and just seven minutes’ walk from the Cathedral and thrum of busy streets, it is surprisingly peaceful. The rooms in the sprawl of buildings are replete with tasteful décor and traditional fittings – think four-poster beds, subtle hues and Gothic arched windows. While the utilities are sophisticated – from slick bathrooms and hi-tech connectivity – the idea is clearly to promote the traditional. The corridors are winding and confusing (expect to get lost if you’ve overindulged in the fine tipples down at the bar), but the rooms are spacious and feel definitively non-uniform. Strolling around the ground floor, there are a number elegant seating areas and sweeping, thick-carpeted stairways. They are used as ‘breakout spaces’, says Lindsey, “and we often find empty wine glasses scattered around in the mornings...” Presumably, the generous seating and occasional tables are a good pit-stop en route back to the rooms, or perhaps used by wedding guests as ‘breakout spaces’ who want a quiet spot to chat and schmooze away from the celebrations in the great hall.

Although it was originally converted from a nunnery into a hotel in 1984, it was bought by an independent

hotel group in 2012, who transformed and revamped it. Four years later, the newly opened courtyard area is something of a *pièce de résistance*. With interior design by Matt Hulme of Dynargh Design, it provides independent accommodation, complete with a flagstone-floored lounge area arranged with leather club chairs and naturally lit by a wall of glass windows. "We provide umbrellas for the guests," says Lindsey, "in case it's a bit mizzly." This may be an understatement – we all know that Cornish storms can throw down with the best of them – but on a glorious blue-sky frosty day, it's hard to imagine that the short walk around to Reception could be a challenge... The rooms themselves are idiosyncratic, with exposed stone walls and original features including arched doors and stained-glass windows. Matt Hulme has added subtle touches: sage-green and grey palettes, with ultra-modern slate-grey, chrome-and-glass bathrooms. The Chapel Suite is the top-end room, with its high, beamed ceilings and copper bathtub sitting on a raised pedestal in the large bedroom. The 15 rooms in the new courtyard development enable the management to incorporate both private guests in secluded residence, while simultaneously catering to larger events.

Back in the main hotel, the long bar and gallery-like restaurant overlook a wide terrace; in summer, the huge patio doors swing open to a sunny aspect overlooking the grassy slopes. It's one of the selling points of The Alverton that, although it's smack-dab in town, it feels like a genteel country house hotel, complete with rolling, private grounds. In the winter months, the restaurant is warmed by the sun, and by great crackling fires on – er – mizzly days. The food is justifiably AA double rosette starred. With impeccable service overseen by the charming and efficient restaurant supervisor Tony Wong, each dish is a delight. The lunch menu comprises modern-European fare, and it delivers on taste and presentation. From the smoked salmon package (melt-in-the-mouth salmon pâté, wrapped in subtly smoked layers of salmon, served on tangy, dressed leaves), to the just-the-right-side-of-pink duck breast, roasted to perfection, doused in gravy and layered on sweetcorn jus, roasted cashews and little patties of mashed sweet potato. Desserts – if you have room for them – are unfussy in description, but a taste sensation. The crème brûlée and the Cornish cheeseboard with homemade chutney and a Pantone-range of crackers are perennial favourites.

This is certainly 'the place to go' for locals – mid-week, the restaurant is busy with ladies-who-lunch, besuited business diners and couples on a special date. Guests from out of town are drawn here by the central location: from Truro, the whole of Cornwall is accessible, whether it's exploring the Fal estuary and the Roseland peninsula, heading north to the coastal resorts of Newquay or Padstow, south-west to the Lizard or way out west to Land's End. With such quality catering, spacious facilities and the grandeur of the rooms, it's also



doing very well with the wedding and corporate-event market. Ghost-hunters, however, should look elsewhere – this is clearly a place of peace and tranquillity, haunted only by rather satisfied-looking guests and smiling staff.

Room rates start at £99 for a Classic Double Room with breakfast included.

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



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# Spas inside out

Whether you prefer your spa treatment within glorious interiors or out in the elements, the South West has the place to suit your needs. Words by *Imogen Clements*.

## INDOOR

### **Gaia Spa, Plymouth**

There are spas and treatment rooms that come as an added-value adjunct to any good hotel's offering, and then there are destination spas like Gaia. The Gaia Spa is aligned to a hotel, and a very good one at that: the sumptuous Boringdon Hall – the only five-star hotel in Plymouth.

But even with that accolade, it is difficult to decide whether you go for the spa, then get the added benefit of a luxury hotel, or vice versa.

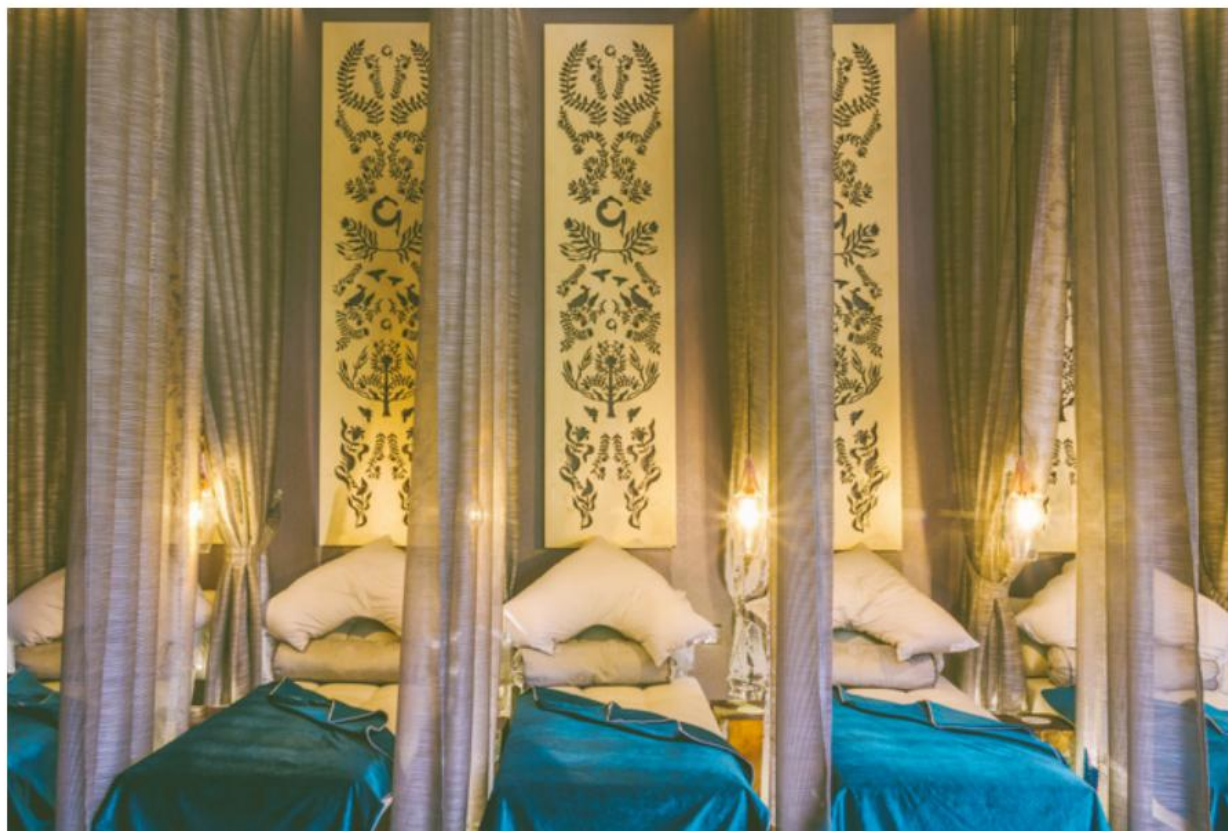
Gaia, open since September 2016, is fast becoming the destination spa of Devon. Enormous, it stretches over two floors, has 14 treatment rooms, a veritable temple of a relaxation room, with a towering ceiling from which trail chiffon curtains to separate each zen lounge. The pool area boasts a pool of decent exercise length, a sizeable relaxation pool with a spa area in one corner,

where you can lie on underwater loungers amongst the bubbles, before swimming through glass doors to the outdoor Jacuzzi. There is a variety of saunas, steam rooms and a salt crystal room to glide blissfully between, intercepted occasionally by multi-directional showers.

The spa is beautifully designed throughout to complement the calm ambience, but for any spa, it's the treatments that set the standard. Gaia has 30 therapists trained to treat whatever state of wellness you may be in; and unlike many spas, they are all trained in treating those currently undergoing cancer treatment, who, arguably, are particularly in need of relaxation, and most often turned away from those spas that consider themselves not sufficiently qualified.

To test Gaia from top to toe, two of us went: I was to have a jade facial, and my companion went for the full-body hot-stone massage.

On entering the treatment room, I was given a foot bath – always lovely – and the opportunity to choose my



preferred aromatic oil, after which the facial proceedings commenced. I have come to the conclusion that you are either born with therapeutic hands or you're not. My therapist Jasmine was gifted in this regard. The experience was a seamless blend of textures and pressures, applying foaming cleanser then cool balm massage then exfoliator with deft fingers that exerted, at each stage, just the right amount of pressure and motion required for each purpose.

And this was before the real facial had started. Jade has healing properties, I'm told, that work on the heart chakra to promote love and happiness. Sceptical you may be of this, but I can vouch that 'jade crystal wands' make the perfect accessory to any masseuse's tool kit in that they are cool, and Jasmine, with a magician's sleight of hand, moved from massaging with the tips of her fingers to rolling the cool, green rods across my face like they were sixth digits.

She applied the mask, and while that did its work, massaged my head, neck and shoulders. I have a favourite move when it comes to neck and shoulder massage, which involves the masseuse, while I'm lying face up, massaging my shoulders from underneath and pulling up through my neck to the base of my skull, as if the weight of my head, literally and metaphorically, has been lifted from my body. Again, Jasmine did not disappoint.

With facials and massages this good, halfway in you worry that you're getting too close to the end. When

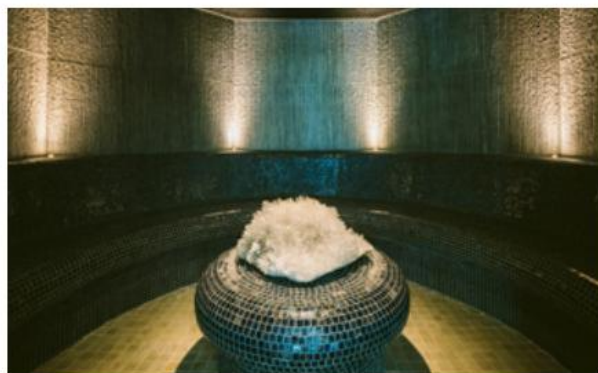
it did end, I was fully de-stressed and, with a glowing complexion, led through to the relaxation room where I met my companion and we compared treatments.

Her first word, uttered also in a deep state of relaxation, was "amazing". A novice when it comes to massages, she found the hot-stone sensation "crazy", bordering on almost too intense, particularly on the back, but in a good way. Her summing up was that it was a revelation: a good full-body massage applied by another expert therapist, Vio, who was as knowledgeable as she was adept.

After we'd tried every sauna, steam room and the various pools, we lunched in the Spatisserie. The food was surprisingly good. I say surprisingly, because when a spa is this impressive you expect that something's got to give, and that something is usually the food. Not so at Gaia. We had seared tuna, grilled sea bass, poached eggs on crushed avocado on toasted rosemary bread, along with a fruit salad of grapefruit and melon. We were given a Gaia Elixir to start, which was as I would assume nectar would taste – a delicious mixture of guava, mandarin, lemongrass, and other 'secret ingredients'.

The entire menu was perfect spa fodder – healthy, tasty and light, not stodgy. We both left Gaia refuelled, recharged and lighter of foot.

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



## OUTDOOR

### Bedruthan Hotel Sensory Spa Garden, Mawgan Porth

There was a time, back in Victorian days, when the best remedy for consumption, a cold or anything, really, was to get outdoors and 'take the air', particularly the brusque, coastal variety. There are many that would still agree. The Sensory Spa Garden at Bedruthan Steps is a novel extension to this Cornish hotel's already enviable spa offering, in that it is entirely outdoors, set on the cliff that looks out over Mawgan Porth.

What makes this spa interesting is that it is do-it-

yourself: there are no therapists, merely a seven-stage trail that you follow from one port to the next to make the most of this al fresco, all-body experience.

For me, the trail was a welcome novelty. We need guidance, but don't necessarily want someone hovering over us. Many a time I've aimlessly potted from sauna to steam room to shower to spa pool and back to steam room without knowing whether I was getting the full benefit of any of them.

The Sensory Spa Garden leads you through a litany of 'experiences' that are devised to give you the tactile skin treatment, starting with a self-applied dry scrub (then rinsed off) to exfoliate, invigorate and prepare the

skin; then to the warmth of the sauna to open those pores and relax while viewing the ocean through little portholes; then to the cold shock of a bucket of icy water over the head; straight to the comforting warm bathe of the hot tub. From there, you're back to the shower armed with a pot of oil, seaweed and salt scrub for the final wet scrub, before donning your robe and ending the Sensory Spa Garden experience by sitting around a flaming fire pit, feet immersed in a warm copper footbath, while you sup herbal tea.

The Spa Garden experience takes about an hour, can be enjoyed individually, as a couple or group, and will leave you feeling refreshed and relaxed, with clean skin and lungs washed in Atlantic sea air.

The garden is open all year round, and likely to be even more invigorating on cool days as you move from hot/cold/warm treatments. In winter months, when days are shorter, the experience can be candlelit as dusk draws in, the sound of the waves crashing on rocks below further adding to the sensory experience.

The Bedruthan Hotel offers a spa menu of vegetarian tapas and salads, along with a range of puddings. It's quite a spread (refer to Table Prowler, Issue 14, for a full review: [manormagazine.co.uk/issue-archive](http://manormagazine.co.uk/issue-archive)), so don't have a big breakfast.

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





# Win two nights with Skybus flights to the Isles of Scilly

Isles of Scilly Travel has teamed up with Star Castle to offer one lucky MANOR reader a two-night stay for two at this famous hotel on the island of St Mary's, with return Skybus flights from either Exeter, Newquay or Land's End Airport.

The winner and their companion will enjoy breathtaking views of this unique archipelago as they soar over the Cornish coast on their Skybus flight, which takes less than an hour to reach Scilly from Exeter, half an hour from Newquay or just 15 minutes from Land's End.

They will stay at the four-star historic Star Castle Hotel (above), and enjoy two nights' bed and breakfast at the hotel.

The Star Castle boasts pristine positioning, facilities including an indoor heated pool and unlimited complimentary golf and tennis, and is renowned across the islands for its fine cuisine. There are two award-winning restaurants specialising in local produce including fresh lobster collected daily from the hotel's fishing boat. The Star Castle also has its own vineyard on St Mary's offering wine tastings Monday to Friday.

To summarize, the prize includes:

- Return flights for two people from the mainland to St Mary's, Isles of Scilly, departing from either Exeter, Newquay or Land's End Airport;
- Two nights' bed and breakfast accommodation at the Star Castle Hotel, St Mary's.

## HOW TO ENTER

Simply go to [manormagazine.co.uk/competitions](http://manormagazine.co.uk/competitions) or [surveymonkey.co.uk/r/MANORScillies](http://surveymonkey.co.uk/r/MANORScillies)

Competition closes on 31 March 2017 and the winner will be informed in the week commencing 3 April 2017. The trip must be taken during April, May, September or October 2017. For full terms and conditions go to [manormagazine.co.uk/competitions](http://manormagazine.co.uk/competitions)



[islesofscilly-travel.co.uk](http://islesofscilly-travel.co.uk)

 Isles of Scilly  
Travel

# MANOR *school*

For teachers and parents of children studying in the South West

## Start as you mean to go on



**Professor Ruth Merttens** suggests the ways in which New Year's resolutions could help to improve life, at least as far as school and learning are concerned.

With the coming of a new year, we all make good resolutions. Sadly, in my experience, all too often these are dead in the water by the end of January. However, January is a good time to review your child's learning, and to consider if any 'sad-or-bad' habits have crept in which we could change or eradicate. Are there any things that you know are important but which you just don't seem to get around to? Is there a recurring argument or issue, concerned with their education, about which you and your child just seem unable to reach agreement? Are there things that are bothering either of you that you've both been trying to ignore?

### READING

No matter what your child's age, reading is central to their educational wellbeing. If they're just starting out, that regular reading slot in the evenings makes the difference between success and failure. If they can read, but not yet fluently, then it is even more important that you continue to read both with and to them. And even once the child is off and running as an independent reader, most children still love to be read to, and also need to discuss and share the books they read with an interested adult. Remember that reading to your child is as important as reading with

them – even in the early decoding stages – and that being read to is one of the most effective ways of helping a child to develop a continuing love of reading.

It is also true that overwhelming evidence indicates that the children of people who read books, who discuss and enjoy them, have a massive advantage in education. Parents' reading habits are hugely influential. If children see their mum reading, wanting to read, sharing books with her friends, talking about a book she liked, and so on, they will grow into that love of reading themselves. Then, even during the early teenage years – a notoriously fallow time in relation to reading – children will continue to see books as important, and read and discuss these on an occasional basis. The habit will then increase again as they move into their later teens. Reading is such an important predictor of educational success, that our own habits in relation to it inevitably come into the mix.

### Resolutions

- **Plan it in!** Be realistic about this but plan in the times when you will read to your child. If it can't be every night, make a chart of when it can be, then **STICK TO IT!**
- **Have a book review chart on the fridge.** Write the books you, your partner, your children, your mum... all the family are reading. Provide stars or

stickers. As each person finishes their book, they award stars according to how much they liked it!

- **PRAISE, PRAISE, PRAISE...** Whenever your young child is reading, remember to find several things to praise. Learning to read is so hard – all children need lots of encouragement. With older children, the most prized reward is your attention. Give lots of it to their reading!

## NUMERACY

We have previously reminded ourselves how children at primary school are developing a solid foundation of functional numeracy. This means that we want them to be comfy with numbers, not to get a pain in their tummy when we throw a sum at them. Developing a confident attitude to arithmetic entails that children understand the relations between numbers: how close or far apart a pair of numbers are, how certain types of numbers appear between a pair of numbers ( $1\frac{1}{2}$  is between 1 and 2, 4.5 is between 4 and 5), the equivalence between different types of number (4.6 is the same as  $\frac{46}{10}$ ). We also need children to develop a fluency in calculation, especially mental calculation, so that they have a variety of ways of adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing that are appropriate to the context. You don't work out the change from £50 if you spend £39.99 the same way that you might find what is left if 365 is subtracted from 888.

Children develop this all-important confidence with numbers if numeracy is part of their daily lives in a good way. I like to think that they can be surrounded from the age of two or three by friendly numbers, and encouraged to talk about and play with these numbers. Driving along, we can spot numbers and read them. Who spots the largest? We can add to numbers to make ten. I see a '6' and say '4'. Or make the next ten, seeing '26' and saying '4 more to 30'. We can encourage children to deal in real money, and always to estimate a total or their change. This is more a drip-drip-drip than a serious maths lesson once a month! The parent's attitude to numbers predisposes the child's. As with other things, in relation to numeracy and arithmetic, they do as we do, not as we say.

## Resolutions

- **Make numbers part of life.** Share money conversations, discuss times and how long events last, notice numbers around you and compare these. Ignoring numbers because they don't interest you or you're afraid of them is no way to create enthusiasm in the next generation!
- **Cooking and cleaning** – domestic tasks involve a lot of practical numeracy. Cooking with your child may be messy but it means that they relate numbers to quantities, they deal with weights, capacities and times plus they achieve a great result. It's a win-win situation so a good resolution is to build it in!
- **Technically competent.** Technology can help

children with both literacy and numeracy, but too often the latter is ignored. Resolve to be conscious of the opportunities provided. Look at dates and times together, play with the calculator on your phone (see below) and download games that develop specific number skills.

## BEHAVIOUR

Sometimes parents as well as children get into bad habits. Do we find ourselves doing an awful lot of nagging to little effect? Do we feel as if, whatever we say, we are only making matters worse? When I started teaching, an older, very good teacher told me, "Remember that, whatever you pay attention to, you will get more of. What you ignore, will wither away." I have never forgotten this advice in my teaching, and it comes in even more useful as a parent. If you find that your child is persistently doing something annoying, if it is humanly possible to ignore it, this is the quickest way to get rid of it. Sometimes, of course, this is not possible, and then it is all about offering choices. Ninety percent of bad behaviour is about a tussle between parent and child over power and control. So, if we can get to the bottom of the need for them to assert control in a particular area of dispute, then we can often find a way forward.

It follows that starting a new year gives us a great excuse to sit down and hammer out some new choices – stressing that these resolutions will be for both of us, child and parent! So, if bedtimes are a big issue, agree a timetable and limitations on both sets of behaviour. They have to be in their rooms from 8pm but they have an hour before 'lights out', and a bedtime story comes within the hour. Similarly, with the "It's my bedroom, not yours" arguments: Scott's room must be tidy on Sunday, when Mum is allowed to 'inspect', but in between the Sundays she is not allowed to complain. Also agree consequences if either of you slips up!

## Resolutions

- **No nagging!** You and your child each make a list of the two or three things (no more) that are really annoying. Discuss and agree how to prevent these being constant niggles. Then promise yourself you won't nag!
- **One positive thing.** Think of one positive thing that you can do each day/week that will give your child a real chunk of positive attention. Maybe it's going to the (boring) skate park and shivering there, making noises of admiration as appropriate. But make a time and try to stick to it – as the benefits are very real.
- **Resist the temptation** to make things you enjoy doing together a bribe or to use their withdrawal as a threat. "If you don't eat your dinner, we won't go to the film" is either an empty threat (and the child knows it) or it ruins the positive relationship that the shared treat created. Think of consequences specific to each situation: "If you don't eat your dinner, you'll get no crisps in your lunchbox tomorrow."



## **HOMEWORK**

This is often a vexed subject in many of the best-run households. And the new year provides a perfect opportunity to sit back and review how things have gone in relation to this over the first term. Are there too many arguments? Are they doing their homework at a time when they're tired or keen to do something else? Now is the time to sit down together and to work out a good homework timetable. If homework has caused a fair few arguments and quite a bit of friction over the last term, then it is very helpful to involve a third party in your discussion. Invite Nana or Granddad to join you – or perhaps a favourite uncle or aunt. The presence of the third party – importantly, someone who is liked and trusted by the child – will mean that you are much more likely to emerge with a solution that will actually work.

One of the main difficulties with homework is that parents and children have totally different agendas. As far as the child is concerned, the perfect solution would be that if the homework is hard or boring, then you do it for them! As far as the parent is concerned, in an ideal world, the child would disappear and then come back half an hour later with their homework all done perfectly. So, these wholly contrary aspirations must be recognised and knocked on the head. Neither is going to happen. Timing is of the essence here. People lead busy lives, and homework is annoying as it has to fit into 'home' time. Once again, it's important to acknowledge this. If you don't all get home until six, when is a good time to do the homework? If the child is tired after school, they need a period to relax. They also need to eat. It can be far better to do homework

at seven, after their tea and a good flop in front of the television, than to insist on it being done before they're allowed to turn the TV on. Making them do their homework straight away is a sure-fire guarantee that they will rush it, trying to get it done as quickly as possible to get on to the thing they want to be doing.

## **Resolutions**

- Build it in – agree a good time when homework can be done, at a time when you can give help. It's not only the child who needs to put aside time and attention to do their homework, but the parent too. While you may not do it for them, your encouragement and support is essential. Just reading a question with and to another person can make the difference between understanding it and being able to do it, and total mystification!
- Put a time limit – it is not reasonable that young children do hours of homework each night. Look at the chart and agree a reasonable time limit. If the child knows that they have half an hour's work to do, they are more likely to do it efficiently and well.
- Involve the teacher – remember that it is the school's job to ensure that your child has the skills and knowledge necessary to enable them to complete the homework successfully. If the child cannot do the homework, the teacher needs to know. If more than a little help is required, then it is important that you alert the teacher. Also, if the homework takes an age, or is too hard, then school needs to be informed. You are the one responsible for your child's interests, so don't be afraid to say if the homework is not working out well for your child.

## FOUR FUN ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEW YEAR

### New year pledge

Each person in the family has to think of a pledge that will help make everyone's life at home better. (Remind children that a 'pledge' is a solemn promise that you intend to keep.)

#### To play

- Ask each person in the family what their pledge is to be. Discuss this. Make suggestions but also listen to their responses! If your family is small, you may want to include the cat or the dog in this.
- Write each pledge clearly. Keep it short and sweet. Just say the bare essentials.
- Write your own pledge – having discussed this with other people.
- Illustrate each pledge to make it attractive.
- Stick all pledges in a list on the fridge.

#### STICK TO THEM!

### Dream, believe, achieve

Think about the year ahead. What do you hope to achieve? What changes would you like to make in your life over this next year? What things do you most hope will (or won't!) happen?

- Write a list of your dreams. Leave plenty of space between each one.
- Have some that are very likely to be achieved, some that are not likely, and some that are nearly impossible – but just might be!
- Below each dream, write 2 or 3 things that you have to do to make it happen.
- Below each dream, write 2 or 3 things that other people have to do to make it happen.
- Pin your list of dreams on your bedroom door.

#### BELIEVE IN YOUR DREAMS... ACHIEVE YOUR DREAMS!

### Age guessing trick

#### To play

- Ask someone to think of a number between 10 and 100. They don't tell you the number but they write it down.
- They then write the digits the other way round.
- They subtract the smaller from the larger number. They still don't show you their answer!
- They then think of a brother, sister or friend and tell you their name and who they are.
- They add that person's age to the answer they got in step 3.
- Now they tell you their answer.
- Now you add the digits of their answer. If this number looks about the right age, you say it. If it looks too young, you add 9. Does this look about right? If so, say it. If not add 9 again...

#### AMAZE YOUR FRIENDS

Can someone work out why it works?

### Corresponding months

Find a calendar for 2017.

#### Facts

- February, March and November are Corresponding Months.
- April and July are Corresponding Months as well.

#### Can you work out what this means?

- Which other two pairs of months are Corresponding Months?
- Which months have no Corresponding Month to match them?

These Corresponding Months are the same in every year that is not a leap year.

#### True or false?

1. In a non-leap year, there is never a day on which no month starts.
2. In a non-leap year, there is always at least one Friday 13th.
3. There is no day of the week that does not have a month ending on it.





## ST. PETER'S SCHOOL

LYMPSTONE







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# THE YEARBOOK

## HEADS OF SPORT

The importance of physical education and sport in schools is well documented. Physically fit children learn better and tend to cope better emotionally. In terms of facilities and teaching, the South West's independent schools invest considerably in their sports offering, often producing county champions, even Olympians, from their alumni. In this, The Wellness Issue of MANOR, we profile the all-important Heads of Sport of these schools and discover in each case the philosophy around sport that drives them to deliver the very best for their pupils.



**Gareth James**  
DIRECTOR OF SPORT,  
MOUNT KELLY SCHOOL,  
TAVISTOCK, DEVON

### Career to date

At Ilford County High School I taught PE & Games, and was MiC of Cricket. Then at New Hall School I was a Housemaster, Head of Cricket, and Teacher of PE & Games.

### Speciality and sporting credentials

From 2003-07, I played for Essex County Cricket Club; during the same time, while a student, I played for Cambridge MCCU. In 2009-10, I was the Technical Coach for the Emerging Players Programme Academy at Essex County Cricket Club, for the 2nd XI and 1st XI U10s, then for the U13s (2011), and Head Coach for the U17s (2012-2016). In 2015 I was the Assistant Coach for ECB London & South East U17 team.

### School achievements

We have had an exciting start to the new school year, competing in county netball and hockey as well as still being in the NatWest rugby cup with our 1st XV, so we're anticipating plenty of success to come. Names to watch out for: Devon cricketer Abraham Koppambil, Devon hockey player Alice Lamb and Exeter Chiefs rugby player Josh Davies.

### Educational philosophy

I believe that you have to ensure that every session is fun, with a key learning objective and outcome. This means that pupils want to stay engaged and keep coming back for more whilst creating a culture in which they are proud to represent their school. Sport is a key part of life across the Foundation and plays a huge role in the development of our pupils as we prepare them for life beyond school. I have found that success in no matter what team or sport

can give pupils confidence in and around school, and lead to achieving great things both in and outside of the classroom.

### What do you do in your spare time?

I've always loved travelling and have been very fortunate that cricket has taken me all over the world. Having just moved to Dartmoor, I am exploring the beautiful surrounding area in which our school resides, and my cocker spaniel Rufus is loving the great outdoors.

### School facts

We have a fantastic pool of talent across a wide range of sports and some outstanding facilities to match. It is my job to get everyone working together to ensure that we can offer our bright young athletes the foundations on which they can achieve beyond their expectations. We have great role models in our elite swimmers, who are thoroughly enjoying training in our new 50m, eight-lane pool. Total number of pupils across the Foundation: 575.





## Mark Halse

HEAD OF BOYS' PE AND GAMES, STOVER SCHOOL,  
NEWTON ABBOT, DEVON

### Career to date

I gained a BA Hons degree from Exeter University, followed by a PGCE in Secondary Physical Education. My first PE teaching post was at a Catholic school in London, where I spent three years. I enjoyed my time there but always wanted to return to Devon to continue my career. An opportunity arose at Stover School, where I covered a sickness absence in the PE Department, and a year later was fortunate enough to be appointed as Head of Boys' Sport.

### Speciality and sporting credentials

From a young age I was mad about sport, especially cricket and football, but also badminton, table tennis and volleyball. In my early 20s, I spent three seasons in Melbourne, Australia, playing cricket and coaching the youngsters at a local club. I enjoyed it so much it inspired me to pursue a career in teaching PE.

### School achievements

With rugby teams at all age groups, we have just enjoyed one of our best seasons on the field. We also have good table tennis facilities with specialist coaches; one of our sixth-form pupils is currently amongst the top players in the South West. We play golf on our own course, with tuition provided by the Stover Golf Club professional. Our fencing team scooped several honours at Junior County level and we have an up-and-coming Tennis Academy. The school recently started competing in clay pigeon shooting, which we coach on our own grounds. Our competitive Equestrian Team recently achieved second place nationally in the NSEA Championship Plate, and our Cross Country team was first in the regional championships.

### Educational philosophy

Our curriculum is designed to provide opportunities for our pupils, and success breeds success; sport is no exception. We want pupils to develop an enjoyment of and a continuing involvement in physical activity, as part of a healthy, active lifestyle. We realise everyone has differing strengths, hence the breadth of sports in which our pupils are successful. My personal aim is always to provide a strong role model for my students, demonstrating respect for others, honesty and positive motivation. I promote a sincere appreciation for sport and the benefits it brings.

### What do you do in your spare time?

In summer, I play cricket for a team in Exeter, and am also their Head Coach. In the winter, I play football for a local team and compete in a local table tennis league. I enjoy spending time with family and friends, and the occasional Chiefs game. Travel is also a passion, when I can fit it in.

### School facts

Stover School is a leading independent co-educational day and boarding school for pupils aged 3-18 years. It is set in 64 acres of beautiful and historical grounds in the heart of Devon's countryside.



## Jane Gardner

HEAD OF PHYSICAL  
EDUCATION, ST JOSEPH'S  
SCHOOL, LAUNCESTON,  
CORNWALL

### Career to date

I started my teaching career at Leeds Girls' High School in 1994. My husband and I moved to Cornwall in 2002, when I became the only member of PE staff at St Joseph's. The school was small and friendly, with an excellent academic tradition, something it prides itself on to this day.

### School achievements

There have been many highlights in my career, ranging from seeing the young junior students finish their first cross-country race or participate in their first competitive match, to seeing pupils under my care become ISA national champions, something which has happened on three occasions in the last five years. Seeing pupils, both boys and girls, participate in county hockey, netball, tennis, cross-country and football events, and students working hard to be selected for regional squads and national representation makes me incredibly proud.

### Educational philosophy

My objective is that all pupils who leave St Joseph's can participate in sport in a safe and skilful way, maximizing the potential of every child no matter what their ability level, and so they develop a life-long love of fitness and physical activity.

### What do you do in your spare time?

I played competitive hockey until three years ago, when my three children would no longer stay still on the sideline. Since then I've completed a half marathon, Rock Solid race and the Eden and Dartmoor Classics (medio) cycle events.

### School facts

St Joseph's School has gone through many changes over the last 13 years. When I arrived, we had a small hall, a tennis court and one small field. We now have a state-of-the-art floodlit astro-turf pitch with equipment to play football, hockey, basketball, tennis and netball. A bridge has been built to allow us to access a second playing area used for athletics, rugby and striking and fielding games. We also have recently completed an extension which will house a new gym conditioning suite – all a world away from the school I joined in terms of facilities. The department has also grown from those humble beginnings. We appointed our first male member of PE staff in the senior school during the summer of 2010, when St Joseph's began to take boys in Year 7, and we now have five full-time members of PE staff, along with a specialist LTA tennis coach and lead swimming coach.



## Emma White

DIRECTOR OF SPORT, ST PETER'S PREP SCHOOL,  
LYMPSTONE, DEVON

### Career to date

I came into teaching after working in brain injury rehabilitation and support work after university. I worked at St Margaret's School in Exeter, teaching Year 1 through to A level, followed by Exmouth Community College, teaching Year 7 through to GCSE, A level and BTEC. I came to St Peter's as Head of Girls' Games and, after a term, was promoted to Director of Sport. I am in my third year here.

### Speciality and sporting credentials

I've been playing hockey for as long as I can walk, and played at county level through all the age groups at school; I captained my university side, as well as playing club hockey for Exe Hockey Club, where I also help coach the juniors from age four through to 16. I also coach the 4th and 5th ladies' teams in the club. This year I've been involved with the county to set up coaching at the JDC sessions in Exeter for hockey. Three years ago, I was proud to be part of coaching the U12 girls' team that made it through to the national finals.

### School achievements

From Year 2, the faculty offers an extensive and varied fixture list. In addition, our activity programme allows pupils to explore more specialist and diverse areas of sport and outdoor education, and up to three afternoons a week are given over to sport in senior years. We have a number of pupils representing the county in sports such as rugby, cricket and hockey. In athletics, we took a coach-load of pupils to the National Prep School finals in Birmingham, where Kitty Dart was first in the long jump finals. The girls made it through to the Devon hockey finals of the U14 competition (a year above themselves). The boys have seen continued success in rugby, and the U11s were Devon hockey champions last season. We have also had success in the IAPS sailing and golf competitions.

### Educational philosophy

Sport for life, sport for all – I think this sums up teaching games for me. It's a great way to bring people together: you could go anywhere in the world and join a sports club to make friends and feel part of a community.

### What do you do in your spare time?

I am currently playing for the first hockey team in the National League. I've run 13 marathons and have qualified for a 'good for age' time for the London marathon next year. I love local races, especially off-road ones and half-marathons. In addition, I represent Exmouth Harriers, where I am ladies' captain. In the summer, I enjoy triathlon training. Last year I was lucky enough to compete in a half-ironman distance triathlon, which was so much fun. I also play netball in a local Exmouth league every other week.

### School facts

We have 282 pupils on roll and our site includes a swimming pool, astro court, cricket field, basketball court, squash court, and numerous rugby and football pitches. Children at St Peter's have the option to partake in American football, athletics, basketball, circuit training, climbing, cricket, dance, football, futsal, hockey, horse riding, martial arts, netball, PE, rugby, sailing, squash, tennis, tri-golf, and yoga.



## Simon Copeland

DIRECTOR OF SPORT,  
QUEEN'S COLLEGE,  
TAUNTON, SOMERSET

### Career to date

I was previously Director of Rugby at The Royal Grammar School in High Wycombe.

### Speciality and sporting credentials

My own brief competitive sporting career was cut short due to the demands of teaching! However, coaching successes include winning the national schools' rugby cup at Twickenham and the Rosslyn Park national schools' rugby 7s twice, as well as helping to develop 15+ schoolboy rugby internationals, including current Wasps and England winger Christian Wade and Italy fly-half Tommaso Allan.

### School achievements

Queen's College was ranked 16th best independent sports school in the country last year and the second best in the South West by *School Sport Magazine*. Queen's has also been named among the

Top 100 Schools for cricket by *The Cricketer* magazine. Our hockey teams have reached the national finals or quarter-finals on nine occasions in the last five years, and we have had four full England hockey internationals in 2016 alone. Our success is not just limited to hockey, with other international performers in swimming, cross country, polo, triathlon, canoe polo and even bobsleigh this year. In addition, cricket, rugby, athletics, fencing, biathlon, equestrian and tennis are all represented at regional or national academy levels by our current students.

### Educational philosophy

We aim to engage and challenge all pupils to be their best through a breadth and depth of sports and physical activities. Sport and physical activity is highly valued at Queen's – a recent review of literature by Loughborough University concluded that physical activity boosts academic performance by 10-20% at GCSE level, as well as having a beneficial effect on self-esteem, anxiety, depression and wellbeing. Finally, in a world of instant gratification through technology, I would like to think that sport and physical activity play an increasingly vital role in developing perseverance and resilience.

### What do you do in your spare time?

I don't have a lot of spare time, however spending it with my wife and two young daughters on holidays and on dog walks is most definitely rejuvenating.



## Cathy Gabbitas

DIRECTOR OF SPORT, THE MAYNARD SCHOOL,  
EXETER

### Career to date

I gained a BSc Hons at Loughborough University, then became a PE teacher at Patchway Community College in Bristol. After that I was Head of Girls' Games at St Bernadette School, also in Bristol.

### Speciality and sporting credentials

I am a former England basketball player and I enjoy coaching the school teams, many of which have made it to the national finals over the years. I also love netball and used to be mentor to ex-GB player Jo Bins.

### School achievements

The Maynard is full of brilliant young sports stars, and they choose the school not just for its academic prowess, but also because we encourage them in achieving their goals – we offer a bespoke school timetable to suit each elite athlete's training and competition programme.

It's difficult to name all our outstanding individuals, but from European silver and bronze medallists in jiu-jitsu, to a team GB junior squad sailor, the U17 Devon squash champion, the top Level 2 gymnast in Devon right through to incredible stars of the future in athletics, netball, basketball and hockey, it is fair to say we have bountiful top athletes in our midst! Our equestrian team are the reigning national champions for the NSEA Eventer's Challenge; the U14 squad are the Devon netball and hockey champions, and the tennis team are the current reigning Devon champions. This year, we will have both the U14 and U19 age groups representing the county at the Regional Netball Finals.

### Educational philosophy

Sport provides a grounding for so many important aspects of life; it teaches teamwork, resilience, communication, loyalty and, importantly, good grace in defeat. The key is to provide a range of opportunities, from shin-bashing competitive hockey to fun-running, so that everyone can get involved, release those endorphins and gain vital life skills. Essentially, active girls are happy girls who can learn better in the classroom, and we endorse this ethos in everything that we do.

### What do you do in your spare time?

I like keeping fit and going to exercise classes led by someone else (to make a change from me barking orders!). Most weekends are spent watching my children play sport and, on a rare quiet moment, I enjoy reading and watching crime dramas.

### School facts

From the age of three, our girls will receive specialist teaching from a friendly and encouraging team of teachers and professional coaches. We offer over 20 different sports (with access to the best facilities) and we also run over 60 lunchtime and after-school clubs, many of which will involve exercise of some description. Our extra-curricular programme includes swimming, ballet dancing and even yoga in the Pre-Prep, to kickboxing, pilates, fencing, football, squash and golf further up the school. It's hellish to timetable, and seems always to be expanding, but it's worth it!



## Philip Mutlow

DIRECTOR OF SPORT,  
PLYMOUTH COLLEGE,  
DEVON

### Career to date

I was previously a PE & Games teacher at Plymouth College; before that, I was Graduate Sports Assistant at Wellington School, Somerset.

### Speciality and sports credentials

I played for Durham University Hockey Club at Regional Premiership and National League levels. I'm the current 1st XI Captain at Regional Premiership-level club Plymouth Marjon Hockey Club, and the Captain of County Durham Senior Men's Hockey squad. I play various other sports recreationally and competitively, including football and cricket.

### School achievements

A range of national and international titles and representative honours – including Olympic medals – in modern pentathlon, diving,

swimming, fencing and other activities as well as a competitive team games model involved in the local independent school circuit.

### Educational philosophy

Sport is a key part of a holistic education, which allows all pupils to be well-rounded young people. Sport challenges students in ways that other subject areas often cannot, and motivates some students who would otherwise be disengaged in school and education. Sport and academic study are both important, and at Plymouth College behaviour off the field is as important as behaviour on the field for our athletes. We try to do what we can to ensure that sport supports the wider education and vice versa.

### What do you do in your spare time?

I'm usually playing hockey or other sports, or in the pub with friends or colleagues!

### School facts

Plymouth College is a school of just under 500 pupils with a thriving major games schedule as well as high-performance programmes in diving, modern pentathlon/fencing and swimming.



**Geoff Turner**  
DIRECTOR OF SPORT,  
WEST BUCKLAND SCHOOL,  
BARNSTAPLE, DEVON

## Career to date

I worked as a gap student at St Paul's Collegiate School in Hamilton, New Zealand. After completing a PGCE, my first full teaching post was at Langley Grammar School, a state-run, co-ed secondary school, near Slough. Prior to West Buckland, I spent eight years at Reading Blue Coat School, where I was Head of House, Year and Curricular PE, Master in charge of 1st XI Cricket and Hockey, and Sub-Lieutenant in the Navy section of the school's Combined Cadet Force.

## Speciality and sporting credentials

Head Coach of various Berkshire County Hockey squads; four seasons of working with a National Age Group Coach at Sonning Hockey Club; and am working towards England Hockey Level 3 Coaching certification. I enjoyed county representation in a number of sports.

## School achievements

The school's main sports are rugby, hockey, netball, cricket and tennis, for which we run an all-year-round Academy Performance Programme. However, to provide versatility and participation,

we have a highly successful Outdoor Education department, which encourages participation in the Ten Tors challenge, Duke of Edinburgh award scheme – where we recently entered a record 31 pupils on their Silver and Gold awards – climbing (we have produced five members of the GB climbing team), kayaking and surf lifesaving. Famous sporting alumni include: triple jump world record holder Jonathan Edwards; Middlesbrough FC footballer George Friend; former England rugby players Victor Obogu and Steve Ojomoh; National Hunt jockey Lizzie Kelly; and current Somerset and England Lions cricketers, twins Craig and Jamie Overton.

## Educational philosophy

It is my belief that a successful school sports programme can encourage all pupils to aspire to the highest levels of personal achievement. What an individual can gain through sport is very personal. Our role is to provide an environment of opportunity, so that each pupil experiences a suitably challenging pathway to recognising and realising their own aspirations.

## What do you do in your spare time?

Any spare time I have is spent with my wife Kimberley and our daughter Ineke, who is fast approaching her first birthday. It is true to say that since moving to this beautiful part of the world I have secretly held some grand ideas of becoming a hardened surfer; however, having recently experienced the late November sea temperatures, this is still very much a work in progress, so maybe in the summer!

## School facts

There are 589 pupils across the Senior and Prep schools.



**Sheridan Crouch**  
SUBJECT LEADER OF  
PHYSICAL EDUCATION,  
TRINITY SCHOOL,  
TEIGNMOUTH, DEVON

## Career to date

I joined Hereford Cathedral School in 1998 as Assistant Director of PE and Games, I then moved to Bromsgrove School for a year before returning to the South West, where I grew up, and I joined Trinity in 2002. Whilst at Trinity I have been the Director of Sport and Head of PE; with a change of structure I am now Subject Leader of PE and part of the International and Performance Studies faculty.

## Speciality and sporting credentials

My whole life has been about sport. As a young girl I played national-level tennis, county-level hockey and judo. While at the University of Exeter for my BEd, I played for the England Universities Women's Cricket Team, and was also part of the team who were runners up in the BUSA tennis finals, having partnered Sam Smith, who went on to make a number of Wimbledon appearances. I am currently playing cricket for the Devon Disability Team. Past pupils of mine have played for the England rugby team (Ben Foden/Matt Mullan), and England hockey (Lucille Wright).

## School achievements

Trinity sporting achievements include: ISA U18 netball finalists, national ISA U16 rugby 7s finalists, national ISA champions in cross country, athletics and swimming, national ISA U16 hockey champions. 100% achieved by five pupils in GCSE PE theory papers, and also

100% achieved by one pupil in an A2 Synoptic Paper for A level Physical Education. We currently have some great tennis players: Beth Cooper, Emily Syms, Daniel Mountford, and Victoria Syms, who are all playing national level tournaments. Jacob Evans is an up-and-coming footballer who trains each week with Plymouth Argyle.

## Educational philosophy

Through teaching I hope to introduce pupils to a variety of sports, challenging them to learn new skills. One of my favourite activities is teaching orienteering in Haldon Forest to the Year 10 GCSE PE pupils and watching them gain the confidence to go off exploring on their own. We had several U16 rugby players who were doing amazing feats on the pitch and it started to rub off on them in the classroom – their success on the field gave them a determination to work a little harder for their exams. Although my levels of adrenaline have dwindled over the years, I always enjoy the achievements of pupils challenging themselves beyond their comfort zone.

## What do you do in your spare time?

Outside of school, my time is taken up watching my two boys and husband playing sport, so my weekends feel like an extension of the day job. Having been diagnosed with MS ten years ago, I was aware that I had let my fitness levels drop and was not doing everything possible to keep my body as healthy as possible to try to combat this illness. I started using an exercise bike at home, and once I felt strong enough, started to go running; I can now comfortably run 10k. I love to run along the seawall in the early morning; it gives me a fantastic boost for the day. The next challenge is a cricket tour of Barbados, where I will be playing alongside my husband and sons, a colleague from Trinity and other friends from our cricket club.

## School facts

Swimming, athletics, cross country, rugby, netball. 400 pupils from three months to 19 years.



**Nick Gresswell**  
DIRECTOR OF SPORT,  
KING'S COLLEGE,  
TAUNTON, SOMERSET

### Career to date

As well as Director of Sport, I'm also Head of Rugby, Housemaster and 1st XV rugby coach. Before joining King's College, I was Director of Sports Academies at East Durham & Houghall Community College, and Director of Rugby.

### Speciality and sporting credentials

I've been a RFU youth-development officer, Community Programme Manager for the Newcastle Falcons, a RFU Level 3 coach, have held various county coaching positions, and been a RFUW and TASS mentor. I was a reasonable rugby player who enjoyed playing in London, the North East of England, Canada and New Zealand, and a county level U18 hockey goalkeeper, and a very social cricketer, badminton and squash player. I've been fortunate to coach a number of current Olympians, Rugby World Cup winners, Premiership and International rugby players at the very beginning of their journey.

### School achievements

I can speak with great pride of King's College sport in the higher echelons of sporting attainment. International sportsmen and women such as Jos Buttler, Maddie Hinch, Craig Meschede and

Oliver Fox, national recognition for teams such as our girls' U18 national football and boys' U15 national cricket champions... they rightly have their place in the history and legend of any school. We also have a number of rising stars, including Tom Banton (cricket), Ellie Carrow (athletics), Alec Sprague (hockey), and Beth Beale (football), among many others.

### Educational philosophy

Taking part in sport assists in the development of well-rounded, fully articulate, confident and happy young people from any background, and provides the balance needed to enhance academic success. Prior to King's College I have worked within some of the most deprived areas of London and the North East of England for a National Governing Body and a professional sports club. At the heart of all remains an unequivocal determination to extend the same chance and to extol the same virtues to everyone through the medium of sport and games.

### What do you do in your spare time?

My two children keep me fit, and I volunteer at the local rugby club. I got into running after I stopped playing rugby, and have taken part in the Great North Run and a local trail run called the Herepath Half. I've enjoyed learning to surf, and we walk as a family in the South West and Northumberland. We have a DAD's (Devious and Dangerous) touch rugby session once a week at school for parents of pupils who still feel able to pull out the odd side step, and this is enormous fun.

### School facts

460 pupils.

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**Kat Barbery-Redd**  
DIRECTOR OF SPORT,  
TRURO HIGH SCHOOL,  
CORNWALL

## Career to date

I have taught PE in Redruth School, Poltair, Looe Community College and Fowey before starting my role here seven years ago.

## Speciality and sporting credentials

I have played hockey since school and currently play for Newquay 1st XI in the South West Premier league. I also coach both Newquay teams and Falmouth Juniors. I have coached with Cornwall Hockey Association at U14 and U16 level. Growing up, I threw the javelin for Sussex, and Brighton and Hove AC, coached by Tessa Sanderson. I have rekindled this throughout my time at the High School and have held the Cornwall title for seven years running, and been second at the South West regionals twice. I have also played football to a high standard in Australia for the Western Redbacks.

## School achievements

We are the current U11 and U14 county hockey champions, and also U16 indoor champions. We have many county players, and

Amy Shaw in Year 11 is at Tier 1 in the hockey pyramid. We hold several county athletics titles – for a school with a small number of girls, we do well across the sporting spectrum.

## Educational philosophy

We have a high standard of teaching within our curriculum, but we aim to make everything as fun as possible. My view is that there is a sport for everyone; with that in mind, we try to vary our curriculum activities to ensure that we meet the needs of all our girls throughout the year. Our extracurricular clubs are often bursting at the seams, which gives me the confidence that we're doing something right; the girls come up to the clubs because they want to be there. They are involved in music, art, drama, public speaking, STEM and dance activities in addition to sports clubs and their academic work. It amazes me how dedicated and organised our girls are, and it fills me with pride to see them running up to the clubs or getting on the bus for fixtures.

## What do you do in your spare time?

I go to the gym, and play and coach hockey (I'd play every day if I could). I also play guitar and enjoy cooking – I worked as a chef in Australia and have cooked a few celebrity dinners, including for Leyton Hewitt, John Cleese and recently Declan Donnelly!

## School facts

We are well known for sport around the county but the school has been working very hard in the STEM areas and has a successful Green Power racing team.



**Ed Saunders**  
DEPUTY  
HEAD (CO-  
CURRICULAR),  
BLUNDELL'S  
SCHOOL,  
TIVERTON,  
DEVON

## Career to date

I was previously Director of Sport at Edinburgh Academy.

## Speciality and sporting credentials

I am a rugby player through and through. I've played for Tynedale, Edinburgh Academicals, Richmond Rugby Club, England Classics and Scottish Legends. Amongst the many pupils I've coached at rugby, seven boys have gone on to become full international rugby players, including one British Lion (Mike Blair). Two recently coached Blundellians are now playing professionally: U19 England player Jack Maunder, who also recently captained Exeter Chiefs, and Will Carrick-Smith, formally of Exeter Chiefs. It's great to see their success and watch the progression of their playing careers on the pitch.

## School achievements

There are so many to mention that I can't list them all; however, a few of the highlights are pupils being selected in squads at national level for polo, U18 girls' rugby, U16 girls' rugby, U18 girls' hockey. The Blundell's 1st XV rugby team have reached the semi and quarter finals of the RFU U18 Schools Champions Trophy in 2015 and 2016, respectively, and we've won numerous rugby sevens tournaments. A number of boys are part of The Exeter Chiefs Rugby Academy. Our U14 girls' hockey team are Devon champions and the U16s came fourth in the National Championships. We also have athletes competing at national level in English schools' championships in javelin and long jump, and we have national schools' champions in kayak sprint and marathon. Our equestrian team have won the NSEA Jumping with Style national championships for three years. We had five ex-cricket captains playing for Devon County in the minor county championship, and Dom Bess, who left school two years ago, starring for Somerset CCC.

## Educational philosophy

"Be the best you can be, be an ambassador for your sport and your school, and most importantly, enjoy it!" We uphold sporting standards; our older pupils not only help to coach younger ones but also become excellent role models on and off the pitch.

## What do you do in your spare time?

I enjoy the Devon life with my wife, son and two dogs, watching sport, supporting Exeter Chiefs when I can, fly-fishing, gardening and occasionally surfing at our great beaches.

## School facts

The school is particularly strong in rugby, hockey and cricket, but we also have many pupils enjoying and achieving fantastic results in fives, athletics, swimming, riding, canoeing, BMX biking and many other sports. If it's something they're pursuing outside school, we'll support them as best we can. Senior School numbers: 600.



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## **SLAPTON, South Devon ■ Guide Price £1,600,000**

An exceptional, charming Grade II listed Devon farmhouse superbly presented with plenty of character being sold with a spacious barn conversion with planning permission to develop. Further stone outbuildings and 7 acres of landscaped gardens.  
No EPC required. Web Ref KIN160283

Arboretum with huge variety of plants | panoramic sea views from land | potential to create additional units

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# *Property*

The Bulletin | Property of note: Roskrow Manor, Cornwall  
Snapshot comparative



Roskrow Manor, Cornwall

On the market with Savills, Truro. Guide price: £1,650,000. See page 148  
[savills.com](http://savills.com)



## DARTMOUTH, South Devon ■ Guide Price £1,395,000

An impeccably refurbished Edwardian townhouse with magnificent estuary views, spacious accommodation over three floors, a level garden and ample parking situated in a sought after area of Dartmouth.  
EPC Rating D. Web Ref DAR160208

Magnificent views | walking distance to town | retaining character features

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# The Bulletin

**Sarah-Jane Bingham-Chick** has worked for Savills for four years, setting up the highly successful South Hams office in 2013. She has recently been appointed as Head of Residential Sales in Devon, and is based at the company's Exeter office. Here we have her reflect on her career and how she feels 2017 will turn out for property in the region.



**I'm a morning person.** I'm usually in the office before 8am. It's the time that you can get organized, get through your emails without interruption. It's peaceful. If I'm not in the office, I start with an early appointment.

**I became an estate agent in 1988 because I needed a car.** I couldn't afford one at the time and a friend told me about the job, which came with a company car, so I went for it. That was when I lived in the Home Counties, working in Beckensfield and High Wycombe. I've been in the industry ever since.

**A weekend holiday on a whim brought me to the West Country and I've never left.** My daughter was 15 months old and we could have gone anywhere but we ended up in Slapton, Devon. I fell in love with the place, decided that this was where I wanted to live, and my daughter to grow up. We moved six months later – lock, stock and barrel. It was so spontaneous.

**It's challenging when you're at a party and people ask you what you do.** I tell them I work for Savills and try not to mention the term 'estate agent'. Estate agents have a bad name because of the minority. It's no different to any other walk of life when a small group generate all the publicity for what they've done badly. Almost all the agents that I've met or worked with have been fabulous and highly professional. It boils down to honesty and trust.

**You have to be a certain type of individual to knowingly treat people badly.** I was brought up to treat people how you'd like to be treated yourself, which is why I'm always surprised to come across the contrary. Fortunately, the vast majority of people in this business are good.

**This is a great job.** Most estate agents have been agents forever; very few leave to do anything else, and if they do, they generally still come back to the agency world.

**It can be incredibly emotional** – you're dealing with people's lives on a daily basis and this is the biggest thing that they're doing in any given year. What's more, you may have 10 or 12 transactions on the go at any one time. It can be as highly rewarding as it is disappointing; as satisfying as it is frustrating.

**The reward of the job is the emotional gratitude.** You've held someone's hand through what can be a troublesome process. You're the buffer; if buyers and sellers went through

what was going on behind the scenes, many transactions wouldn't proceed to exchange of contract. You're very gentle in how you impart information to lead them through.

**The South Hams has always been my focus.** I started the South Hams office in January 2013 and it is now a very successful division for the company, but I run it alongside Savills Exeter as Head of Residential Sales for the office, which clearly broadens my remit.

**Savills is a brand that grows in strength year on year.** It's highly respected, with 700 offices globally, and is a FTSE 250 company. As a public limited company, everything we do is scrutinised: the training is excellent, the teamwork and camaraderie great. It goes back to what I said – people that work for Savills tend to stay.

**Last year could have been a rocky time for property,** particularly in Devon, but the market's proved resilient. We've had the challenges of Brexit and the rise in stamp duty, with an extra 3% tax on additional (second) homes, which certainly made people stop and think. The last quarter of 2016, however, has been superb, which I'd like to think is an indication of buyers adjusting.

**People will always need to buy and sell houses, regardless of what is going on in the world.** Next year could be interesting, if and when they invoke Article 50, but I can remember when interest rates were 15.4% and we thought that that was the end of the property market. I'd not been long in the industry and thought I wouldn't be around for long. As a result, I'm quite open-minded: with everything that is thrown at us, ultimately people still buy and sell houses – they have to live somewhere.

**Most of our buyers come from London, the Midlands and Bristol.** Devon from the Midlands is straight down the M5 and a large number have boats moored in the South Hams and have been coming down for years.

**This job can never be described as boring and dull.** It's very fulfilling and you're always out and about, meeting new people. If I didn't enjoy doing what I do, I wouldn't do it, because it demands sacrifices. I spend so many hours doing this that other things unfortunately get second place. I do it because I love it.



# Room to manoeuvre

An Edwardian country manor with panoramic views of sea and countryside, **Roskrow Manor** offers comfort, space and history galore. Words by *Imogen Clements*.



There are houses that offer a certain comfort by their elevated position, particularly when the view is a pristine panorama of sea and countryside. Roskrow Manor sits perched on a hill between Truro and Falmouth, and looks out towards the Carrick Roads, the lighthouse and the Roseland Peninsular beyond. The approach is down its own tree-lined drive, with neighbouring houses within walking distance as the drive commences, meaning it is private and uniquely positioned, but not isolated. “That’s what I’ll miss the most when we sell,” says Steve, the owner. “You drive home through the gates, and feel like you’re on top of the world here. The views are magnificent.”

The enviable position of this house was doubtless what inspired its creation – the original manor at Roskrow dates back to the Domesday Book. Since then, the house has been reconfigured several times; today’s incarnation was built in 1910, but the site is steeped in history.

“The grounds and walled garden go right back in time – I’ve found ancient granite in the garden. The original manor burnt down in the 1880s and the site lay dormant until 1910.” Steve moved to the property with his family in 2008 and has restored it extensively.

“The beauty of the house wasn’t just its setting but the number of original Edwardian features it retained – the oak staircase, the fireplaces, the Great Hall. I’m a chartered surveyor and experienced in the renovation of listed buildings. So often you find houses that have had many of the original features stripped out, but not here.”

The potential noted, the family bought the house and promptly re-roofed it, replacing unsightly concrete tiles with natural slate. After that, there was plenty to tackle. Roskrow Manor is a seven-bedroom house with a 34ft Great Hall and an adjoining three-bedroom cottage. “The cottage was originally part of the main house, but we separated it, re-wired and re-plumbed the building throughout, renovated all the bathrooms – there are six in the main house and another in the cottage – and installed them all with underfloor heating. The cottage has its own private access, so has proved to be a popular holiday home, giving guests total privacy and bringing in a good income.” Given that it adjoins the house, future owners could choose to make it part of the manor again, subject to the necessary constraints.

But the Great Hall is the heart of the main house. “It dates back to 1915, when the Edwardian owner who’d built the house five years previously decided he’d like somewhere for the local hunt to meet for breakfast,” explains Steve. The room has wood-panelled walls, extraordinarily high cross-beamed ceilings, such that at one end the current owners have built a minstrels’ gallery-style library, where you can peruse the bookshelves or turn around and look down on the Hall. “The Great Hall is the perfect party venue – we had 80 people in here the other evening – and the gallery is the



perfect little hideaway to take a quiet drink and watch proceedings from.”

From the gallery, there is a further flight of stairs that leads to the guest suite in the house. Set apart from the other bedrooms, it's a large room with vaulted ceilings and views that look out over the countryside to the sea. It also has its own bathroom. The seven bedrooms in the main house are spread over two floors. On the first floor, each has its own bathroom, and on the second floor three further bedrooms share a shower room.

This is a house that almost defies its historic origins by its brightness. Along one side of the Great Hall there is a conservatory accessible through tall French windows; windows also frame the fireplace at the far end. There is a further 22ft living room on the ground floor, and a snug. The dining room is partially open plan, with French windows leading out onto the terrace, and the kitchen boasts a large Aga and access to a wine cellar through a secret hatch in the kitchen's island. The hatch opens up to steps that lead to a two-room basement. So discreet is the door to this cellar that you can happily store your Chateau Mouton Rothschild, or any other treasures you may possess, safe in the knowledge that no-one will find them, unless, of course, they're reading this... It's an ingenious, fun, and useful access point.

With a home this size, you'd be forgiven for thinking, "I bet it's a whopper to heat." The house is oil central-heated but has a large solar installation that is so productive that you pay nothing for electricity – in fact, the National Grid pays you.

It is clear that Steve is in the surveying trade and loves his job, because, not content with renovating the main house, the cottage, and sorting out the three acres of land comprising sizeable lawns, beds, a hard tennis court and an apple orchard, he has built a further pitch pine-clad

annexe with four bedrooms, two bathrooms and 34ft open living area. Overflow accommodation, should you need it, or a teenage hangout. "We did this first, as a place to live while we worked on the main house."

The scope of Roskrow Manor is endless: as a family home that can comfortably house the grandparents in the cottage; as a sizeable guest house/B&B, where the hosts could have the cottage as their home; or as an immense home with everything a family could wish for – woods, tennis, gardens to lose yourself in, plenty of room for nannies or relatives, and easy access to the sea (Pendennis is just five minutes' drive away). However you use it, Roskrow Manor can still provide a tidy income from holiday lets.

The interior of the house gives away the current owner's love of the sea – there are ships' helms and yacht steering wheels lining the walls – as does the approach: a huge anchor decorates the front drive. "I bought it from a dealer. It has '1953 US Navy' stamped on it. We think it came off a US Navy frigate. It's the centrepiece of what is a wide-enough drive to negotiate a large car and rib easily."

With the elder of the children now leaving home, Steve has a yearning to be more on the water; as such, he and his wife are looking to downsize and travel to further destinations. For eight years, Roskrow Manor has been their inspiration, their haven, and, like all good homes, their anchor; but now it's time to set sail again and move on to the next project. **M**

Roskrow Manor is on the market with Savills, Truro, 01872 243260. Guide price: £1,650,000. [savills.com](http://savills.com)

## Snapshot comparative

A selection of properties with sports facilities from around the South West and one in the capital.

*Exeter*



### **The Grange, Stoke Hill**

Guide price: £1,000,000

Set within large formal gardens, less than two miles from Exeter city centre, The Grange benefits from an array of sporting facilities including an outdoor swimming pool, stables and paddock and access to the countryside close-by, all within easy reach of the city. The accommodation includes five bedrooms, three reception rooms, kitchen/breakfast room and a detached office.

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

*Cornwall*



### **4 Porthgidden, Feock**

Guide price: £510,000

With views of the Roseland Peninsular in the distance, this apartment benefits from direct water access via a slipway, waterfront beach, extensive gardens and grounds and use of the private squash court. Set over two floors, the accommodation comprises two bedrooms, kitchen, sitting/dining room, sitting room/third bedroom, shower room and bathroom as well as a garage, parking and space for a boat trailer.

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

*South Devon*



### **High House, Salcombe**

Guide price: £2,100,000

An exciting modern four-bedroom family home with far-reaching views, High House offers spacious accommodation and high-tech facilities including gym, Jacuzzi, games room and built-in sound, lighting and blind systems. Located on the Salcombe Estuary, it has easy access to sandy beaches, dinghy sailing, water sports, boating and long walks along the beautiful coastline.

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

*London*



### **Ingram Avenue, Hampstead, London NW11**

Price on application

This newly built London home offers luxurious living spaces and state of the art facilities, which include swimming pool, gym, sauna, steam room, dedicated treatment and spa room. Located in a leafy street in Hampstead Garden Suburb, the property backs onto Turner's Wood Bird Sanctuary and comprises six bedroom suites, four reception rooms, seven bathrooms, staff accommodation and landscaped gardens.

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A rare opportunity to purchase a beautiful and historic property set in 2.6 acres of private grounds with stunning views

3 Reception rooms | 4 Bedrooms | 3 Family bathrooms | Self contained apartment | Large landscaped gardens | Garage | Additional parking for up to 4 cars | 3763 Sq ft | EPC: E

Set in approximately 2.6 acres

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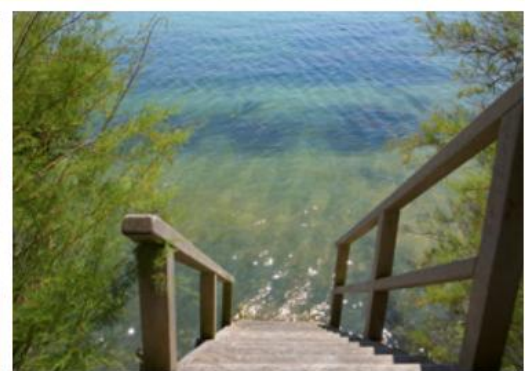
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**Guide £2.75 million Freehold**



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**Guide £2.75 million Freehold**

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## NEAR KINGSBRIDGE, South Devon ■ Guide Price £950,000

An ideal equestrian property, full of character and in excellent order, with flexible accommodation including 6 bedrooms and a 1 bedroom annexe, stabling and approximately 7 acres on the edge of the popular village of East Allington. EPC Rating D. Web Ref PWC160054

Barn suitable for conversion with outline planning permission | lovely countryside setting | walled garden

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on 01548 855590 or Kingsbridge 01548 857588*



## **SOUTH MILTON, South Devon** ■ Guide Price £1,350,000

A beautifully presented light and airy home with much character, re-built about eight years ago to a very high standard, on the edge of this popular village only a short distance from the sea.  
EPC Rating C. Web Ref KIN160329

Level landscaped gardens | individual design and layout | main rooms facing south/south west

*For further details please contact our Prime Waterfront & Country House Department  
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## 2017 - New Year Resolutions

- 1) Laugh more!
- 2) Exercise
- 3) Drink less wine & more water
- 4) Quit smoking
- 5) Move house!! \*
- 6) Phone Mum and Dad
- 7) Phone Wilkinson Grant & Co
- 8) Volunteer
- 9) Plan a fab holiday
- 10) Take care of friendships

Everyone knows that New Year resolutions are often broken pretty quickly but having said that, this is a great time of year to reflect on what you really want to achieve in the coming year.

A great place to start is laughing! As the January blues set in and the new year bills begin to drop through the letterbox, it may not seem that you have much to laugh about but just see how good it makes you feel!

As for exercising, can you remember those days when you sprang out of bed as bright as a button, full of energy and ready to take on the world? Why not make 2017 the year you work on your fitness?

When it comes to moving house, 2017 could well be a year of two halves, with the early months of the year likely to be a strong seller's market followed by a period of fewer transactions, as we all adjust to the effects of the Trump administration.

So, ring Mum and Dad, tell them your plans (they might even offer some help, if they can!) and then give Wilkinson Grant and Co a call. We will be happy to advise you on how to achieve the best price and even help you find your next home - all free of charge.

While we work hard to help you, hopefully you will have time to help others. There are lots of great local charities who would value your help, including those who are part of our In Our Community initiative, which you can see on the WG In Our Community webpage: [www.wilkinsongrant.co.uk](http://www.wilkinsongrant.co.uk).

On that note, it's time to sell your house! Get in touch with our team today and we can advise you right from the beginning, just call 01392 427500.

*"...2017 looks set to be a year of two halves, and anyone thinking of moving would be well advised to get into the market early in the year."*

**ROGER WILKINSON**



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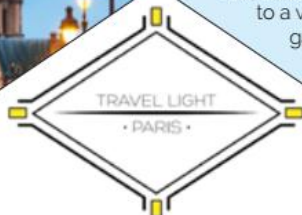
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# back page BLACK BOOK

When **Sacha Macey** returned to the South West, she almost made it to Cornwall (where her family live) but stopped off in the South Hams, where she runs a yurt-making, maintenance and hire company, Yurts for Life. Previously her varied career included five years as an engineering officer in the Army fixing heavy tanks, a stint in Antarctica working with polar explorer Robert Swan, and a few years building 'upside-down' houses in Bulgaria.



I'm not a massive shopper. I'm not a consumer of goods. I'm a place and people person. **Chapel Porth in St Agnes** is my default place to go to meet friends. I take my cocker spaniel Otis and Mum and Dad's cocker spaniel Tom. The tin mining shafts and old engine houses are right on the cliff and there's the brilliant **Chapel Porth Beach Café** in the National Trust car park below. They serve these desserts called 'the hedgehog' and 'the fox' made from Cornish clotted cream ice cream and smeared with a layer of clotted cream and rolled in either roasted nuts (that's 'the hedgehog') or in flapjack (that's 'the fox').

**The walks in Feock's Trelissick Woods** are beautiful. Walking down to the beach, with Trelissick house behind you, a massive view of the Carrick Roads opens up. Again, it's a dog walk, and it's mates and a barbecue on the beach. Or it's jump in a boat to a beach on the opposite side of the river (that you can't reach on foot). We try to catch fish, but we normally fail, so we'll take sausages to cook or something easy. It's beautiful in the winter when there's no one around. It's like you own the place.

**Back in the South Hams** to the **Staverton Bridge Nursery**, where I sit on the deck. It's right by the River Dart, there's the noise of the river and the poot-poot of the steam train. It's very relaxing and the food is tasty. The chef, Jon, uses ingredients that you would never normally buy or put together. Their pop-up suppers are very special. They can only fit 20 people on the deck and you feel like a VIP.

I go to the **Almond Thief bakery in Dartington** for their cheesy gougère. I literally go there for a cheese puff! One time I got chatting so by the time I got to the

counter all the gougères had gone. I was devastated! So Dan (who runs the bakery) made me a huge sourdough bap with an aubergine and tomato spicy filling (he had cooked it for the staff lunch). He is so kind and he runs it really well. It's the people element; that's why you want to go there.

Tennis is a hobby and I play when I can with friends in Totnes. Every May I go to the French Open in **Paris** with three tennis buddies. We travel on the Eurostar and stay in a quaint little hotel (**Hotel du Nord – Le Pari Vélo**).

It's got loads of plants growing over the balconies and there's little bicycles lined up outside so you can cycle around the city. We watch tennis all day, have steak frites and lots of red wine in the evening and leave the next day – two work in London, one in Switzerland and I get the train back to Devon. I love train journeys – it's time to chill out, if I need to work I can, or I can just look out of the window.

I listen to Radio 4 a lot. I'm a massive fan of *PM*; Eddie Mair makes me laugh – he's so dry. It's a weird hangover from being in the Army, because when you go for your selection, you have to know about current affairs. With Radio 4 on, the information just goes in by osmosis.

## I must have fleecy boots and Bridgedale socks.

Feet are very important to me – it's another hangover from the Army. If I've got cold feet I'm stuffed. Can't function. Oh, and a cashmere jumper. That's my treat.

Books – I love anything to do with journeys and exploration. At the moment, I'm reading *On the Trail of Genghis Khan* by Tim Cope.

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