



ABERGAVENNY FOOD FESTIVAL GŴYL FWYD Y FENNI

Friends Food Future

In conversation with
Cyrus Todiwala OBE

#AFF2021

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Welcome Croeso

Welcome to the 2021 Abergavenny Food Festival magazine, serving up a taste of our much-loved annual celebration. We hope that you've come through the pandemic challenges you faced, and we know it's been tough for our friends and colleagues in food and hospitality but the following pages will show how the people behind these businesses are fired up to debate, recreate and have fun again.

Inside you'll find stories of producers who innovated to cope with lockdown and, moving forward, the Langtons near Crickhowell write about the courage and determination needed to make a good living from sustainable small-scale food production. Clearly, it's essential to have a good team and the festival is blessed in that regard as you'll see from our crew's quotes in this publication.

Every year, many share their invaluable expertise to bring together our convivial weekend. People such as Franco (Life Patron) and Ann Taruschio, the latter who writes about her involvement in the early days, and Martin Orbach, Programming Director and co-founder of AFF (in 1999) who recounts the history of his family's business, Shepherds Ice Cream, and how they scooped their way to become festival favourites from Glastonbury to Aber.

One thing he and all producers have appreciated while navigating the pandemic is customer loyalty, and we understand that very well. All of us at AFF are deeply grateful to the sponsors, producers, stallholders, chefs, food writers and publishers as well as Aber businesses and residents who continue to show us enthusiastic generosity. As a not-for-profit organisation we would not be here without them and their



support for what we do. And of course, everyone who attends the festival. If you have friends and relatives who can't come to the festival in September, then do tell them this magazine will be available to view online. That way they won't miss out on articles and recipes from great food writers and chefs like Val Warner, Cyrus Todiwala, Pete Brown, Claire Thomson, and Kathy Slack.

So, let's all continue to support our local producers – it really is a case of use them or lose them – and raise a glass to everyone in food production and hospitality as we gently return to celebrating good food and those who make it.

Thank you

Christine Smallwood and Martha Roberts
Festival Co-Chairs

Cover image: photograph of Cyrus Todiwala OBE from his book *Simple Spice Vegetarian* published in 2020 by Mitchell Beazley, an imprint of Octopus Publishing Group Ltd. Photographer: Matt Russell

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Enjoy reading our guest contributor articles, testing the recipes and getting a flavour of this year's event. Details about the weekend of 18th & 19th September (site map, stallholder listings by venue, guest performer schedule and book-signings) will be on a flyer to download or pick up at any of the venues on the day.

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All tickets for #AFF2021 are being sold in advance from our website: abergavennyfoodfestival.com Limited numbers. No walk-up on the day. Buy now.

Talent Toasted, Young Chefs Roasted

by Ann Taruschio
Behind the scenes at Abergavenny
Food Festival.

“ When Franco and I got involved with the Festival in the early days, we had no idea it would grow into a national event with over 30,000 visitors. Along with many others, we are so glad to have been part of the story. ”



Starting from scratch

It all began with two local farmers, Martin Orbach and Chris Wardle, chatting over a pint of beer. They knew public confidence in food production, following the BSE crisis, was at rock bottom. Farmers were suffering from depression. What could be done about it? They came up with the idea of holding a festival to celebrate the best of locally produced food. Previous experience? None. But they weren't going to be deterred.

At that time Franco and I were still running the Walnut Tree Inn restaurant just outside Abergavenny. Martin and Chris popped by one evening. Did we know anyone who might do a demo, give a talk, chair a debate etc? Phone calls were made and people gently told there was no money in the pot to pay the kind of fees they were used to, but lodging would be provided and a meal at the Walnut Tree. Everyone said yes.



A small committee got together and tossed ideas around in the Mayor's parlour. Abergavenny Town Council agreed to the Victorian market hall being used as a venue. One member got donations in. Local businessmen provided a room as headquarters and office furniture was begged or borrowed. The unpaid board of directors was ready for action and a date set for 23 October 1999. Publishers were contacted. Did they have new cookery books by up and coming young chefs eager to promote themselves?

Panic in the parlour

In the immediate run-up there was last minute panic over a forgotten alcohol licence. In desperation, Martin asked if we could apply through our licence. We presented ourselves at Cwmbran Court. The magistrate was bemused. A food festival? We carefully explained the concept. After an age of discussion, they gave it to us. What a relief! To top that, our solicitor waived her fee, happy to have helped the cause.

The day of the festival dawned. We were nervous, but in our hearts knew it would be fine. People began to arrive and a happy atmosphere built up. Rain later in the day didn't dampen spirits. That first year, thirty-nine food and drink producers sold their wares in the Market Hall and we had three thousand visitors.

Antony Worrall Thompson and Shaun Hill were two of the chefs who came and Martyn Lewis the BBC newsreader chaired a debate on GM foods. Franco and I participated in a talk with Marguerite Patten, one of the first celebrity cooks, who made her name during the Second World War on BBC radio with her rationing recipes. We also had our first community supper.

High spirits flip

And that was the start of it all. We have so many memories – like the occasion Giorgio Locatelli came to Abergavenny to cook with Franco at the Hill College – a function held during the festival. We had a handful of young chefs staying with us of different nationalities and from various London restaurants, all eager to cook with Giorgio, who was then 'flavour of the month'. They were to be the commis chefs.

We had all gathered round our kitchen table on the Friday evening eating, drinking and chatting. The boys were excited to be off the leash, out of London and visiting Wales. At about 11.00 pm, being full of spirits of both kinds, they decided it was the perfect time to go climb the Sugar Loaf mountain. We oldies went to bed to be awakened at about 6.00 am by their noisy return.

As I was leaving the house to go to the market hall, one of the boys mumbled something about a problem with their car on the return trip, and that was why they were so late getting back. He looked decidedly shiftily but I didn't have time to question him.

When queuing to enter the market, I heard my name and, turning around, saw two policemen. I anxiously asked if there was a problem, a million thoughts racing through my mind. "Have you got some young chefs staying with you?" I replied in the affirmative. "Well, we found their car upturned on the road down from the Sugar Loaf and we would like to speak to them."

So that was the so-called problem! I knew the offenders were in one piece. But more importantly, I also knew they were walking to work at the Hill College where Georgio and Franco would have them on a tight leash. In a split second I envisaged the spectacle of two policemen arriving and trying to cart off their work-force in the middle of food preparation. It's a known fact that top chefs are passionate people and woe betide anyone who gets in their way in the kitchen.



I quickly collected myself. “Could you leave interviewing them until tomorrow? Right now they’re already being punished by Franco and Giorgio for turning up tired and hungover. That should suffice. Otherwise, meat cleavers might fly and you might get caught in the crossfire...”

I promised, on condition they didn’t upset the apple cart, to get the miscreants to turn up the following morning at the police station. Fortunately the men agreed to this arrangement. The end of the story is not mine to tell.

Dressing down and up

Then there was the time a very glamorous Miss Wales came to the Festival. Franco had proposed she open the event, with the local brass band playing in a procession through the main street. The morning of the opening day I caught him rushing out of the front door, too casually dressed in jeans.

“Don’t you think something a bit more appropriate should be worn if you’re going to introduce Miss Wales?” He looked somewhat sad. “It won’t be me. It will be Martin or Chris.” Come what may, I didn’t want him letting the side down. “Put a suit on, just in case.” As you’ll see from the photo on the previous page, it’s a jolly good thing he did because there he is with Miss Wales wearing a dress by our famous local dress designer Patricia Lester, and the creation on her head is by Alison Todd, our famous local milliner.

Feeling the love

On another occasion, Franco and Raymond Blanc were about to judge the youngsters’ cookery competition. A photographer asked them if he could take photos for a magazine. They were fooling around a bit, then they both looked towards the audience. Grandparents, parents and friends of the competitors were anxiously awaiting the outcome. Would it be their loved one? The judges both felt this love and sense of expectation strongly, and turned their attention to the job in hand. It was almost too close to call and they remarked on the exceptional talent – chefs of the future for sure. There were smiles all round and relatives almost burst with pride. A special moment.

We too are proud to have played our part. Franco remains the Festival’s only Life Patron. Having spent a lifetime in the hospitality business, we have been saddened by how much that sector has suffered during the pandemic. We are now beginning to see some light for the future – like AFF returning after last year’s cancellation. Although it will be a smaller affair for 2021, we’ll still be celebrating the joy of food. We live in hope of better things to come. Let’s ensure Martin and Chris’ dream lives on.



The Walnut Tree was credited by many as putting Wales on the culinary map in the 1960s under the ownership of Franco and Ann Taruschio. People flocked to sample Franco’s Italian cooking, which was seasonal and local long before the words became fashionable. They ran the restaurant with rooms close to the Skirrid mountains for more than 35 years and made it a household name. Franco was awarded an honorary OBE for his services to the culinary industry and to the community in Monmouthshire. The Walnut Tree is now co-owned by chef Shaun Hill and Abergavenny hotelier William Griffiths.

www.thewalnuttreeinn.com



Café Spice Namasté ~ Loved, Lost, Reborn

in conversation with Cyrus Todiwala



Cyrus Todiwala OBE, DL was born in Bombay and rose to become Executive Chef of the Taj Group of hotels in India. Looking for a new challenge, he moved to Britain, where he has lived for thirty years. As well as running three successful London restaurants with his wife, Pervin, (including the award-winning Café Spice Namasté), he has written a number of cookery books and in 2013 co-presented The Incredible Spice Men on BBC TV. He has also made frequent appearances on BBC Saturday Kitchen.

Cyrus, Pervin and team have been a mainstay of the Festival from the early days and will be returning in September. Visitors can enjoy their hot food at the Castle, buy pickles and chutneys, and watch Cyrus cooking outdoors with fire.

Like many in the hospitality sector, the couple have survived difficult times. Here they share some recent experiences.

What happened to you during lockdown?

It's more like what did not happen to us in lockdown. The business fell off the precipice, but we were dealing with a disaster prior to that. Our new landlord did not wish to renew our lease, so we were being forced out of our lair of twenty-five years. We had to cave in and accept. But of course we had not banked on the total loss of business from the pandemic, thinking we would have time to save, to earn money for the move. So, this sword was hanging over our heads. We started to plan on how to save ourselves. Ideas emerged, but no way could we expect to do even a tenth of our normal turnover. And through it all was the advent of moving and finding the cash to make it happen.

How did you manage that?

Help came from a completely unexpected quarter. Our wonderful customers – two in particular who truly believe in us – got together and raised a sizeable amount of money. It was called 'The Friends Of Café Spice Hell Fund' and gave us a much-needed boost to secure storage. We also had to look for a new home for Café Spice Namasté. (This has also been accomplished. Our new home is at Royal Albert Wharf). But more cash will be needed for a complete fit-out and we are seriously considering crowd-funding. So, the process is ongoing, but hopefully we shall succeed and re-establish ourselves.

How did this affect your staff ~ many of whom have been with you for years?

As lockdown began we were all in a daze and couldn't understand what could be done, what was to be done, or what should be done. We had no clue as to how long this would take. The Government had not made any decisions yet, and the fear was everyone would lose out. Naturally, our staff were scared too. But we gradually started to put some plans of survival together. It has been extremely difficult to keep on top of expenses and pay additional fixed dues. All our staff are still with us and hopefully will remain so. They have faced difficult situations with reductions in their salaries, but most are cheerful and still hopeful. Their support is invaluable to us.



Were you able to diversify in any way?

In the twenty-five year history of the restaurant, we never had the need to diversify. Suddenly, take-aways seemed to be the only option. We tried very hard, but failed miserably as the business had never been set up that way. Nor were all our customers local, so we went a step further and developed an overnight chilled food delivery service across the UK Mainland. This proved to be quite successful and kept us going. We are hoping this will grow further. Our 'Mr Todiwala's at Home' boxes can be bought at mrtodiwalas.com. This is still work in progress. We have a makeshift kitchen at the moment, until the new project is ready to roll and we have greater efficiencies in place. Our reach has also become greater through another new venture – doing cooking videos from home and the new academy kitchen. These have become very popular, though admittedly I have less time these days, but that will change.

Within the wider food community, did you find new ways of collaborating?

Not really, no. But we found a lot more cooperation from our suppliers. Knowing that they were as destitute as we were, it was still possible to work out a payment plan, although this involved more loans. It would have been easy to not pay anyone and go bust as many did. But our suppliers have been our backbone through drops in our business lives and we could never let them down. Yes, we have borrowed again, which we could do without, but in good time this will also be behind us!



Has any of this changed or enhanced what you value most?

Our people, our customers and our suppliers we have always valued. Most of them came and stood by us in our hour of need. How could that feeling not be enhanced further? If only we could repay that in-kind now. Time will tell.

We've heard that you intend to train young people to be chefs of the future. Tell us a bit about that.

Training young people has always been on my agenda at all times! However, students in the hospitality sector were fraught with anxiety and worried about their futures. How to motivate? How to keep them interested? Tutors have done an amazing job, way above expectations. We were involved with many colleges thanks to connections via our student culinary competition 'Zest Quest Asia' and I was lucky to take part in Zoom chats and demos. At our new place in Royal Albert Wharf we are going to rekindle our passion for training young people right here, and also local residents who wish to come for classes. We will also be working with a couple of training agencies. There is a plan for a prep kitchen upstairs and we will be taking another unit, so there is more space for training.

Amidst all this, you have still found time to contribute to another recipe book. What's it all about?

There's only one life you know! We've recently launched a magnificent new book called *Cooking With Heroes: The Royal British Legion Centenary Cookbook*. 100 years, 100 decorated veterans, 100 recipes. Regional food by a regional chef for a regional hero. Each recipe tells a story, from every part of Britain and the Commonwealth. My recipe represents India. We need to sell as many copies as possible. Profits made will go to the Royal British Legion which supports all the armed forces. (See page 64.)

At AFF in September you're cooking with fire at the castle, so what can we expect?

I think I will be cooking some good Welsh lamb – cannon, or what is also called the backstrap. We're going to marinate it gently and cook it straight onto the pit. And I'm also going to do a seasonal fish which I'll get from the Welsh Seafood Marketing Association. It too will be marinated and wrapped in banana leaves, which insulates the fish from burning. In Gujarat it is buried in the sand, with hot embers on the top.

Let's end on a light note. What do you cook for a TV Dinner - when watching rugby or football for instance?

Sometimes when we're watching football, I have a massive bowl of popcorn. Something simple. I also love my eggs. There's nothing like eating eggs any time of day as far as a Parsee is concerned! A nice big helping of scrambled egg, with good cream and lots of butter in it. And nice toast. So you are giving your heart a lot of content while watching something you love.

And lastly, the Desert Island question. What five luxury spices would you take with you?

I will choose five things with which you can cook a hundred different things. Turmeric, chilli, cumin, coriander and cinnamon. Maybe on the island I will find something else to cook with too. And of course I won't need salt as there will be plenty of fresh seawater.



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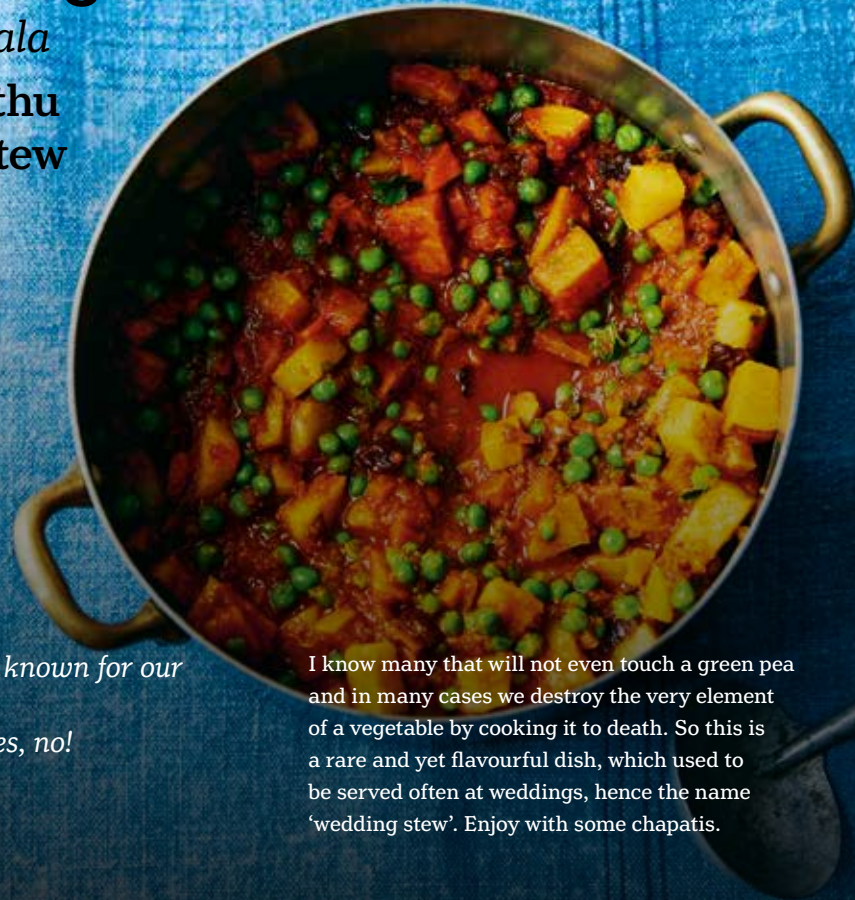


Parsee-style Wedding Stew

Cyrus Todiwala
Khattu mitthu
Lagan nu Stew

We Parsees are not known for our vegetarian dishes. Eggs, yes. Vegetables, no!

I know many that will not even touch a green pea and in many cases we destroy the very element of a vegetable by cooking it to death. So this is a rare and yet flavourful dish, which used to be served often at weddings, hence the name 'wedding stew'. Enjoy with some chapatis.



Ingredients

Serves 4

- Jaggery or raw cane sugar 100g (3 ½ oz) (or dark brown sugar 50g / 2oz)
- Cider or cane vinegar 150ml (5fl oz)
- Sultanas 2 heaped tablespoons
- Seedless dates 8–10, chopped
- Oil 150–200ml (5–7fl oz)
- Carrots 2–3, peeled and cubed
- Sweet potatoes 2, peeled and cubed
- Potatoes 3, peeled and cubed
- Yam 1 small, peeled and cubed (or turnip, swede or tapioca)
- Tomatoes 4–5, roughly chopped
- Onions 3–4, roughly chopped
- Ginger & garlic paste (see below), 1 tablespoon
- Ground turmeric 1 heaped teaspoon
- Ground cardamom ¼ teaspoon
- Red chilli powder 1 heaped tablespoon
- Curry leaves 15–20, preferably fresh, shredded; if using dried, soak in water for 10–12 minutes, and dry thoroughly before shredding
- Grated nutmeg ¼ teaspoon
- Green peas 200g (7oz), fresh or frozen, blanched if fresh
- White pepper 2 teaspoons
- Chopped fresh coriander 2 heaped tablespoons
- Salt

Method

Soak the jaggery or sugar in the vinegar along with the sultanas and dates.

Heat the majority of the oil in a frying pan over a medium heat. One vegetable at a time, fry the carrot, the sweet potato, the potato and the yam until nicely browned, then transfer to a tray lined with kitchen paper to let drain.

Frying will stop the vegetables from becoming too mushy and soft. Place the tomato and onion in a blender and blitz to a purée, or chop as finely as possible. Add the remaining oil to a casserole dish placed over a medium heat.

Put the ginger & garlic paste in a small bowl, add the turmeric, cardamom and chilli powders and a few tablespoons of water and mix to form a paste. When the oil in the pan is reasonably hot, add this paste with the curry leaves and sauté until the paste dries out and starts to release more oil. As soon as that happens, add the onion and tomato pulp and continue cooking for 8–10 minutes, until the pulp becomes thick and sticky.

Use a flat spatula to stir regularly and scrape the bottom of the pan. When little bubbles of oil appear, add the sultana and date mixture along with the nutmeg and cook for 3–4 minutes.

Add a little water, if needed, to keep the mixture from drying out completely. Stir in the fried vegetables and the peas and add the pepper and some salt. If the vegetables are not quite cooked through, cover the pan to create some steam in order to cook further. Cook until the vegetables are done and still have some crunch. Fold in the coriander and serve.

Ginger and garlic paste Adoo lasan

This is a very useful paste, as garlic and ginger are so often used in Indian recipes. The important thing is to work with equal weights of ginger and garlic, whatever amount you want to make. Those listed below are just examples. The larger your blender, the more you will need in order for the blades to process it efficiently.

Ingredients

- Garlic 115g (4oz) cloves, roughly chopped
- Fresh ginger 115g (4oz), peeled and roughly chopped
- Oil (any except olive oil) about 2 tablespoons, plus extra for preserving

Method

Put the garlic and ginger into a blender, add the oil and a dash of water and blitz to a purée. If too thick, add more water and a little more oil until smooth in consistency.

Transfer to a sterilized jar, cover with a layer of oil to preserve, seal tightly and store in the fridge for up to 3 months. Use as needed, always using a dry spoon and keeping the rim of the container clean. If the paste begins to dry out, pour some more oil over the top before resealing.



Simple Spice Vegetarian

Indian Food offers a huge choice of naturally vegetarian and vegan dishes. In this new collection, Cyrus Todiwala serves up easy, full-flavoured recipes from breakfast and brunch to simple suppers, from warming soups to veg-packed curries and daals.

'Cyrus has distilled years of experience in the kitchen and at the table to guide even the most spice shy.'

Independent



Blasau a gofiwch am gyfnod hir, gydag enwau yr ydych yn annhebyg o'u anghofio

Sir Fynwy yw prifddinas fwyd Cymru ac mae'n gartref i Wyl Fwyd y Fenni. Oes, mae llawer o leoedd gwych yma i fwyta, gan gynnwys dau fwyty â sêr Michelin, ond mae llawer mwy.

Darganfyddwch gynnyrch ein tir – sut rydym yn gwneud, ffurfio a mwynhau ein bwyd a'n diod â chariad. Gwelwch y grawnwin ar y winwydden. Blaswch ar ein diodydd sydd ag enwau diddorol. Casglwch eich Ffrwythau Eich Hun. Dysgwch sut i gadw gwenyn, fforio, pobi bara a chipio naws y gwrych mewn jar o jam blasus.

CROESO I SIR FYNWY AC I WYL FWYD Y FENNI!

Tastes you'll remember for a long time, with names you're unlikely to forget

Monmouthshire is the food capital of Wales and home of the Abergavenny Food Festival. Yes, there are many super places to eat, including two Michelin-starred restaurants, but there's much, much more.

Discover the produce of our land – how we lovingly make, shape and enjoy our food and drink. See the grapes on the vine. Taste our interestingly-named tipples. Pick-Your-Own fruit. Learn how to keep bees, forage, bake bread and capture the hedgerow in a jar of delicious jam.

WELCOME TO MONMOUTHSHIRE & THE ABERGAVENNY FOOD FESTIVAL!



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[visitmonmouthshire.com/FoodandDrink](https://www.visitmonmouthshire.com/FoodandDrink)

The Creation

Bettina Reeves takes you behind the scenes to show how the Festival's much-loved annual decorations come alive.





Lots of local talent

“My enthusiastic team has gained in confidence and creative skills over the years,” says Bettina. “They have sculpted with willow, wire, cardboard and paper, and many have used their sewing skills – by machine and hand – to great effect. Working with willow has been a particular joy; a lovely organic and pliable material for celebrating creatures who move so beautifully in the natural environment.”

She knows the project is eagerly anticipated.

“New friendships are formed. There is great a sense of camaraderie, creativity and pride in the finished product.”

“Long hours, hard work and tenacity go into the making, but it’s also great fun – the pleasure of a unique shared experience.”

The eye of the beholder

People come from miles around to view and photograph the installation, which is also a regular feature of the Festival weekend and very much at the heart of the event.

Bettina hopes her thought-provoking creations will encourage a love of nature in all its glory. “I want to breathe life into them, to give a sense of movement through the right choice of materials. And I also like to give individual sculptures a distinct personality. People really respond to expressions on faces.”

She is already thinking about next year. “Perhaps an organic veg theme because we have so many local growers... or maybe a tea party...”

Bettina and Festival organisers would like to thank Abergavenny Town Council for funding the project, and also the invaluable contribution of many volunteers over the years.

Choosing a theme

‘Wildlife of the River Usk’ was the theme decided upon by designer and workshop leader, Bettina Reeves, for this year’s huge Food Festival 3D installation, unveiled in May in Abergavenny’s Victorian Market Hall. Her background in theatre design, textiles and puppetry has informed the project.

She explains the choice. “With topical concerns about pollution, the need for protection of our wonderful river, and the connection with the production of farmed food, this felt like an apt subject. So we have otters, kingfishers, herons, perch, leaping salmon, a swoop of sand martins, spotted trout, a soaring red kite, oh and a hairy wolf spider in honour of my nine-year-old friend Oscar, who spotted one on shingle by the River Usk and sent me a photo.”

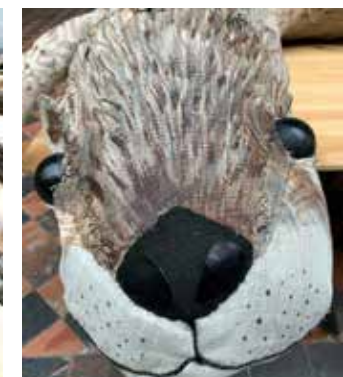
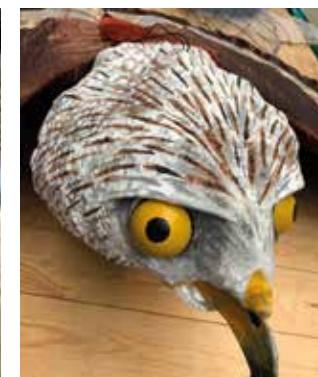
Careful research and preparation

The Food Festival has commissioned Bettina to decorate the Market Hall since its inception in 1999. Previous themes have included: angelic angels, food on plates, utensils, a herd of sheep, bees and butterflies, garden produce, fish, flowers, and barn owls.

Researching and painting her subjects is followed by three weeks of intense design and making (approximately 1500 hours), working with volunteers of all ages to realise her vision of the domestic and wild – especially Wales’ rich flora and fauna.

Pandemic restrictions were an extra challenge to contend with this year. Abergavenny Community Centre was the workspace, but with the number of makers reduced, and some work completed outside.

“Cause you’ve got personality...”





Larger than life

“When viewed from below, it’s hard to get a feel for the true size of the sculptures. We really have to scale-up for impact. Pigs, sheep, goats and hares are about twice life-size. The chickens and barn owls, which were very popular, are ten times that. This year’s otter is twice the height of a man.”

The personal touch

“We once made angelic chefs, but didn’t want to cause offence by naming them. It happened anyway. ‘Nigella’, for instance, was an obvious look-alike! We had trouble sourcing footwear large enough, but finally found great drag queen red stilettos in a size 13, which did the trick.”

Sheepish tales

“When you spend ages making a creature, it’s like having a pet. Take the sheep. One had three legs, and was named Tripod after a member of festival-founder Chris Wardle’s flock. Tripod’s stint in the limelight was followed by an ignominious retirement, hung from barn rafters. Another she-sheep of superior demeanour wore a pearl necklace in honour of her owner.”

Secret lives

“We often give the creatures names and back-stories. The female flying kingfisher has caught a fish... the male is perched on a branch waiting for his missus to bring him tea ... the giant grasshopper staged a getaway and shimmied up a pillar...”

Glitter ‘n’ grunge

“Cheap sequin fabrics give sparkle, used wildly or judiciously, and layered with net or organza (as you’ll see with the fish and kingfishers this year).”

“The otters were sculpted in willow and covered in linen scrim. Dyed calico and hand-painted cotton jersey are mainstays (as used for crabs and pigs) and we do lots of appliqué – brown stripes on the red kites’ wings for example. The spots on the trout alone took days to stitch.”

“The hairiness of the wolf spider was evoked with old jute bailer twine. Butterfly wings are painted silk pollinator banners.”

Much travelled

“The Barn Owls ended up in the atrium of the new Life Sciences building at Bristol University where the graduation ceremonies are held, and have become well known in this new context. And a sheep called Mavis was personally chauffeured to its new owner in London by AFF Chief Exec, Kim Waters, causing consternation on the motorway as the passenger was in the front seat.”

Tales of The Making ➡➡



About Bettina Reeves

Bettina Reeves studied textiles at Camberwell, then theatre design at The Slade, and has spent most of her working life as a theatre designer, with a focus on costume. She moved to Wales in the late seventies and has three grown-up children and two grandchildren. Having retired as Senior Lecturer in Design for Performance at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in 2017, she continues to work to commission on projects that feed her love of textiles. As well as the annual Food Festival installation (running since 1999), recent projects have included hand-sewn Christmas decorations for The National Trust at Dinefwr and The Angel Hotel, Abergavenny, plus banner design and making for Peak Cymru’s community project on the Suffragettes. She also sells fine art giclée prints of her illustrations on archive paper.

www.bettinareeves-designer.co.uk



Tales of the Making

Mayumi Takahagi

"Tina put me onto fish – a John Dory – in 2018. I enjoyed creating the pattern with layers of fabric and loved stitching them to the body by hand. I'm a real stitch addict. I got so attached to this fish that I named it 'Dom Alexander Joly' and secretly put the initial DAJ on the body. Why? Because I always mix up 'John Dory' with the comedian 'Dom Joly', and the process of making this fish made me feel like 'Alexander McQueen' so I used 'Alexander' as a middle name!"

Oliver Barton

"I've always enjoyed model making and DIY, and the Food Festival decorations allow me to indulge myself. Not to mention the glorious food we get to eat. Funnily, my most treasured memory is making a garden spade."

Cath Barton

"In the year of the sheep, we became experts in rag-rugging and crochet. This year I think we all perfected herringbone stitch. First time round, I quilted lemons to go on plates of fish. They looked so impressive and I was so proud of what

I'd done. That's it actually – the camaraderie and feeling of pride about what we achieve in that big group, always in a ridiculously short time. And Tina bringing it all together. It's a miracle."


Judith Skeels

"Creating with others is a highlight of my year. Tina has such creative vision and knows exactly how to achieve it. Hard work, but the results are amazing! Covering the willow frame of the second otter was a huge task and took at least three people working together to make all the pieces fit. It was wonderful seeing it gradually come to life. And all the joins were in herringbone stitch, which I really enjoyed."

Caroline Fairclough


"I have volunteered at Tina's workshops for several years now, and always really enjoy them. My skills are very mediocre but I learn something new every time, and wonder at the abilities of the truly skilled as they turn willow and fabric into almost living creatures. The pride at seeing the whole ensemble in the Market Hall is immense!"

Abergavenny Food Festival 2021



Ceramic Makers Market

Meet the makers and their beautifully crafted tableware – all for sale.



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The story of Gower Cottage

When we first started out selling brownies we would attend local farmers markets on a Saturday morning and supply a few small local outlets, thinking that the little bit of extra money would come in handy.

As we progressed and got bigger we started to look at how we could take our brownies to a bigger audience. Our primary outlet has always been our website, but the big question for us was always how do we get people to visit it.

We eventually decided to try out a few of the bigger food festivals, although initially we were a little bit nervous about the pitch fees. Over the years we have now attended events the length and breadth of the UK. Some have been great, whilst others have been a bit of a washout. But there is one sacred slot in our calendar, and that is the Abergavenny Food Festival weekend.

We have to admit to not knowing a great deal about Abergavenny when we first got involved (many, many years ago) but then we were pretty new to the festival scene. We very quickly realised what we'd been

missing out on. As an event, the weekend is superbly well organised – both for exhibitors and visitors – and draws in the most enthusiastic people from all over the UK. It also has a great reputation amongst exhibitors at other events around the country who would dearly love to attend, but have been unable to get in.

Abergavenny is the ultimate foodie destination, bringing together the best of the best, and offers the chance for fellow producers to catch up, talk shop, exchange ideas and advice, whilst still enjoying the whole experience alongside the visitors. The amazingly talented guest line-up always inspires as well as educating in all areas and there's no holding back when it comes to talks, debates, or even rants about hot topics within the food chain.

Genuinely, Abergavenny Food Festival is the most important event in our calendar and has been absolutely critical to our success – which is why we are so proud to now become a sponsor. It is so important to both visitors and producers alike to support these events as they are not only wildly entertaining, but also

allow small and brand new producers the opportunity to break through into the wider market place, to develop and create a name for themselves. The importance of such a presence within AFF cannot be underestimated and our success is testament to this. Bring on September! Looking forward to seeing you all there once more...

The ultimate chocolate gift treat for every occasion

We are hugely proud to be winners of the prestigious Observer Food Monthly Award for the Best Welsh Independent Retailer three years running, and pride ourselves on the quality of our product and our customer service.

A delivery of Gower Cottage Brownies helps mark those special occasions, or make an ordinary day extraordinary. If you order by 10am, we send out that very same day for next day delivery at no extra cost to you. Alternatively, you can choose your own date. So surprise and delight the special people in your life.

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www.gowerchocolatebrownies.co.uk

"The best brownies we have ever tasted"

BBC Good Food Magazine

"Brownies should not send grown ups into a frenzy, but this is what happened when we received our delivery"

The Guardian

**Gower
Cottage
Brownies**
— Made in Wales —



Recipe:

Bara Brith Bread & Butter Pudding – Gower Cottage Style!

Ingredients:

- 8 Slices of Bara Brith, preferably homemade
- 3 free range eggs
- 300ml single cream
- 75ml milk
- 1 tbsp demerara sugar
- 2 tbsp Penderyn Whisky
- 75g Welsh Butter

Method:

Butter your slices of Bara Brith and cut each slice in half, arranging them in your chosen pie dish in circular pattern.

Beat your eggs and add the cream and milk. Pour over the pudding and then drizzle the whisky over the top.

Finally sprinkle over the demerara sugar to give a lovely golden crispy crunch on top.

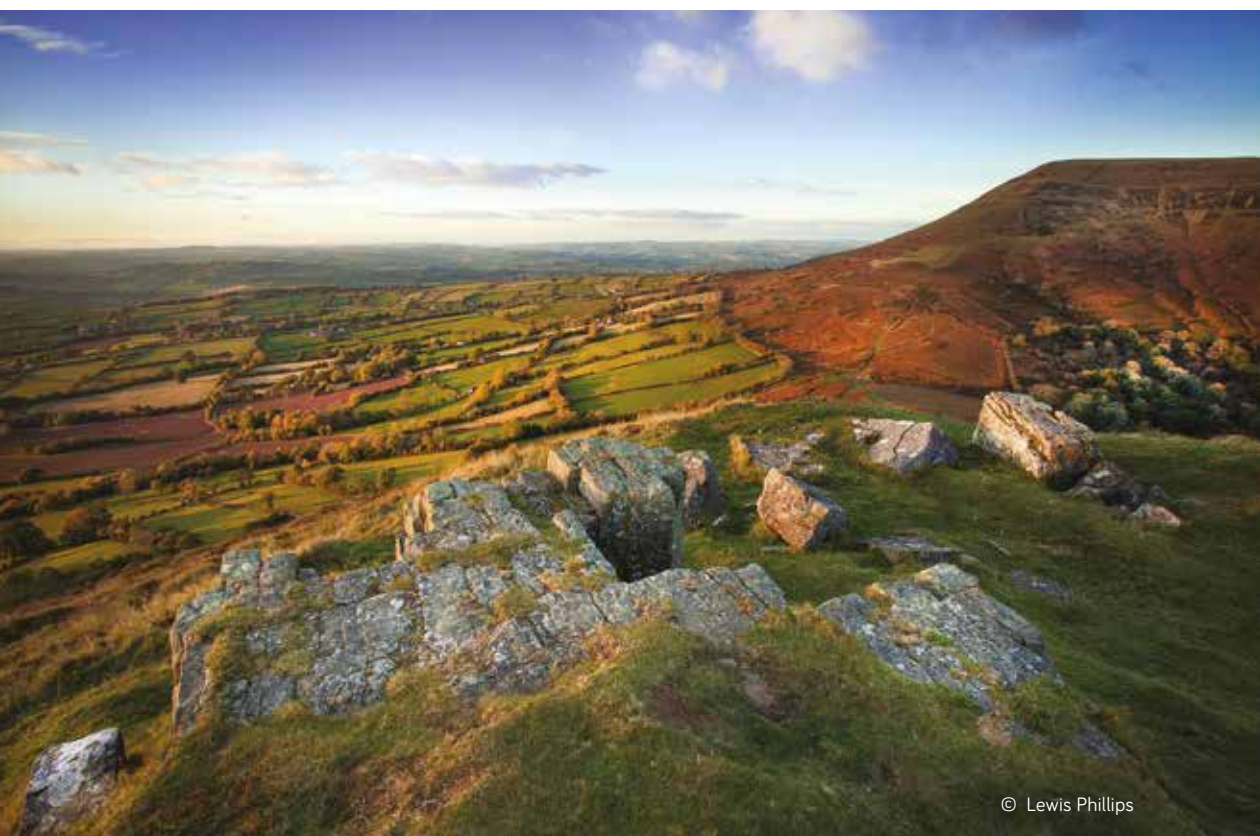
Place in a pre-heated oven at 180C for approximately 35-40 minutes until the pudding is beautifully golden brown in appearance.

Serve hot with some locally bought vanilla ice cream.

Enjoy!

A Taste of the Brecon Beacons

Welcome to the Brecon Beacons National Park, one of three National Parks in Wales designated for their outstanding natural beauty.



© Lewis Phillips

Stretching along the Welsh border north from Abergavenny to Hay-on-Wye, across to Llandovery in the west, south to Llandeilo and back west across the fringes of the Welsh Valleys, the Park covers some 520sq miles of green countryside. A destination for adventure, heritage, culture, internationally recognised dark skies, food, and drink.

Our National Park has a rich network of local food and drink producers, passionate about this corner of Wales. We've got all the right ingredients here, clear air on open hillsides, fertile valleys, and an abundance of fresh water. Take a taste of the Brecon Beacons and try Pwll Mawr cheddar matured 300ft below ground at the bottom of the mine shaft, whisky distilled using Welsh water, beef, lamb and venison grazed on the greenest grass.



It's well worth shopping local when you visit the Brecon Beacons. The towns of Abergavenny, Brecon, Hay, Talgarth, Llandeilo and Llandovery hold food markets and events where you can meet the makers, sample their wares and fill your shopping bags full of local goodies. Make a visit to a deli, farm shop or bakery; there's plenty to choose from in this National Park.

Don't fancy cooking? Eat locally in one of our many restaurants, pubs, cafes and tea shops; From gourmet restaurants with their own cottage gardens to cosy pubs serving local Welsh lamb for Sunday lunch, we have plenty of fine eating places to tempt you.



After all that delicious food you may want to get outside and connect with nature in one of our wide-open spaces, go for a walk, cycle or horse ride, we have adventures suitable for everyone here. Explore our heritage with a visit to a castle or hillfort, the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal or one of our many cultural attractions.

When visiting the Park you may come across one of our Brecon Beacons National Park Ambassadors; a group of around 300 people who have all attended a three-day training programme which helps them to discover and understand what makes a visit to our Brecon Beacons special. They all share a passion about the Park, where they live and work, taking time out of their businesses to make sure they offer outstanding information and service when you visit. Look out for the Ambassador badge or logo and say hello.

Plan your visit at www.breconbeacons.org



The Smoken Word

by Valentine Warner

If I were to cook but one way, it would be over wood. If I were to open a new restaurant, it would be made of wood, and set in a wood, with all the cooking done over wood, and with no doubt an insurance premium that matched my propensity for setting tea towels alight.



Valentine Warner – chef, food writer, broadcaster and illustrator – is known for his deep love of nature and travel. Describing his cooking style as 'International Grandmother', he has a lifelong interest in provincial food and is widely recognised for his understanding of ingredients, both wild and cultivated and his ability to make something delicious with apparently little. He would generally prefer to be found in a field rather than an office and is most likely to be fishing or melting butter. Here he shares an extract from his latest book, 'The Consolation of Food' and a recipe for Plank Fish.

Let us dispense with the outdoor gas grill. It is a pointless contraption, akin to wheeling your gas cooker into the garden. Black griddle lines on your rib eye do not equal deliciousness. They simply mean black lines. You might as well draw them on with a Sharpie.

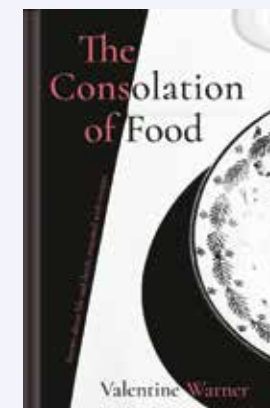
To cook over wood is to use smoke as an ingredient. And the wood matters. The incense notes of juniper are completely different from the gentler ones of silver birch, different from old vine wood or oak. It creates a cosy and strong sense of environment – in more rural quarters, ingredients will likely be cooked over the very branches they lived beneath or grew nearby.

A wood grill demands the simplicity I look for, a decluttering of ingredients and method, a requirement to understand what's available from my surrounding location and community. It requires me to impose on the food as little as possible.

Cooking with fire is a far cry from drunken Saturday blokes with a set of tongs and an aluminium Bar-Be-Quick pack. Concentration is essential. The fire needs tending and adjusting, as do the ingredients if they're going to go over such direct and raw heat.

Cooking on wood warms me with a sense of self-sufficiency, often in scenery no restaurant can match. Whether I've yomped a côte de boeuf into the middle of nowhere, or driven to an echoey tiled and panelled family-run restaurant in the Pyrenees, it's the wood grill itself that affords me a state of true relaxation. The fire is an uncomplication, and the cooking is not hectic. In fact, the combination of setting and smell and circumstance makes each occasion all the more memorable.

I recall that Arctic char I pulled from a hole in the ice, with its spotty olive back and apricot-sunset belly. In temperatures pushing -40°C (-40°F), we built a fire on the shore as the snow floated down through the forest by the frozen lake. Justin used his knife to shave and raise curls along the edges of the wood, leaving them attached to it, good catch-points for the flame. With an



Ultimately, this is a story book with food in it. A collection of personal stories, seasoned with recipes, to read and make in both happy and troubled times; a book of 'comfort' food in the truest sense of the word. Published by Pavilion, it can be bought at valentinewarner.com/books.

encouragement of lichen and moss, our freeze-dried pyre was soon a dancing rush of heat and sparks. We unzipped, splayed and cured those fish with pine needles mixed in salt, pinned them to a board propped near the heat and smoke. And, when they were done, while drinking coffee and aquavit, we ate them with greasy fingers and bread.

Africa has seen me cooking guinea fowl and gourds in hot ash as a giraffe wandered past my field kitchen. In the Indian jungle, I have reincarnated chickens into curries, bubbling in a dented pan over a campfire. In the Mediterranean, I've cooked goat on a boat. In Britain, I've cooked grayling, eating it with young cobnuts and watercress; cooked a strip loin of roe deer with chanterelles over which perhaps it had walked; grilled mackerel over driftwood on Chesil Beach, watching the sun go to bed as I eat. And at Hepple, my roasted Northumbrian lamb over twisted lengths of dead juniper, with the distillery in view, has become a staple meal.

These memories are not just reserved for the meals I've cooked myself. I have waited expectantly for yakitori gizzards and crispy chicken skin wood- cooked in Tokyo; sat with my father watching our veal chops spitting on a grate over the fire in a restaurant on the very edge of Rome.

Cooking over wood represents to me the complete opposite of the precious, worried, regulated, nannying and squeamish way we have come to cook in the West. While cleanliness and care are essential to anyone who loves food and cooking, there is something deeply tactile about cooking with bare hands and open fire, hair volumized with greasy smoke. That pulse and glimmer of white ash and orange ember, that smell of charcoal-sooted fingers. Food and fire are people gatherers. Stood with soot on my jeans, knife in my hand, as sparks fly up the flue or into the night sky, I think the more complicated world can go to hell in a self-basting foil bag.

Recipe:

Plank Fish

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp dark muscovado sugar
- 2 tbsp sea salt
- Finely grated zest of half an orange (optional)
- 6 juniper berries, ground
- 1 tsp coriander seeds, coarsely ground
- 1 tsp fennel seeds
- ground white pepper
- 1 tbsp Douglas fir leaves, finely chopped (optional)
- 1 kg/2 lb 4 oz trout, filleted but with the skin on
- 12 x 4-cm/11/2-in nails
- A hammer
- A 75 x 30 cm/28 x 12 in wooden board of untreated oak, birch, beech, pine or apple

Method

Mix all the ingredients, but the fish, in a bowl. Take the board and, with 6 nails per fillet, attach the fish skin side down to the wood, pinned at the outer reaches of its flesh. The nails need be only deep enough to be secure.

Distribute the cure over the fillets, remembering that the thin end needs less than the shoulder end. Leave to cure for 1 hour.

Lift the board to a standing position so any excess cure falls off. Leave the rest on the fish. Prop near the fire where it will pick up a lesser heat and, if the smoke is drifting, directly in its path. If using a barbecue, shove the coals to one side and prop the board opposite them.

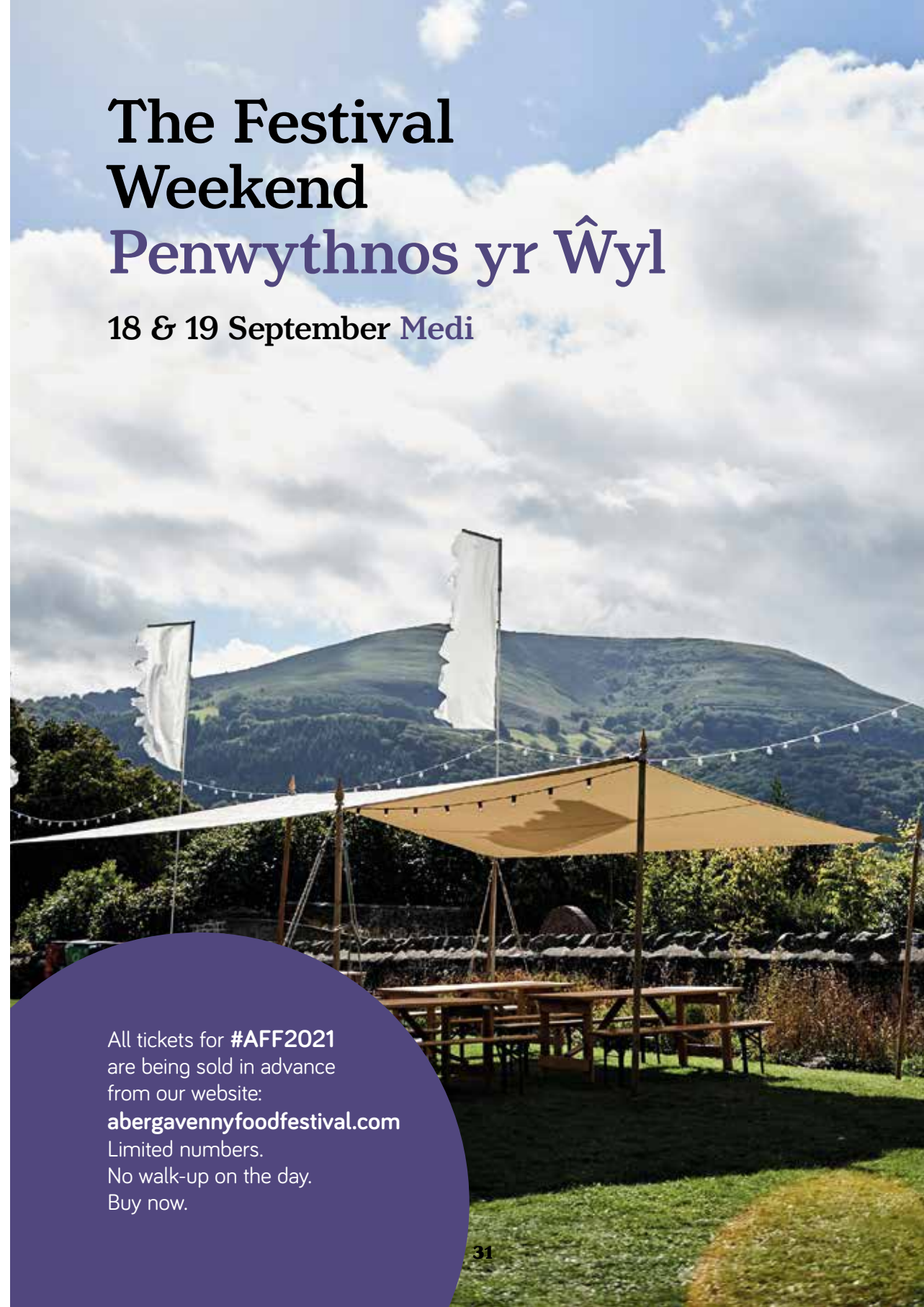
Cook until done to preference. This is a touchy feely experience – pick out little bits of flesh to decide when and if it's done. Remember that the nails will be hot.

Eat with aquavit and bread.

Extract taken from *The Consolation of Food* by Valentine Warner, published by Pavilion Books.

The Festival Weekend Penwythnos yr Ŵyl

18 & 19 September Medi



All tickets for #AFF2021 are being sold in advance from our website: abergavennyfoodfestival.com Limited numbers. No walk-up on the day. Buy now.

Our Crew Ein Criw

The friendly face of the Festival



When you come into the Festival, it's highly likely that your first point of contact will be one of the many (mostly) young people we employ over the weekend. You can't miss them because they all wear AFF branded t-shirts and are there to help you in any way they can. For many, it's a first chance to get some real work experience. Some come back over several years, gradually taking on more responsibility and then handing the baton on to younger siblings. Life skills learned are as important as the carrying out of a specific task. There's no environment quite like it...

Litter picker dreams big

"Working as part of the AFF crew when I was a teenager taught me a lot – resilience, patience, and teamwork for starters. As the son of the CEO, my 14-year-old self truly thought good old-fashioned cronyism would guarantee me

a star role. It didn't happen (thanks Dad...). My first job was a litter picker – the bottom of the team food chain – but lessons learnt were monumental. Understanding how a big operation maintains a level of serenity and cleanliness was essential to my future career working in the luxury hotel sector. Second time round I was a crowd controller (a way more exciting title), though attempts to raise my voice over rowdy food fanatics often fell on deaf ears. Anyone wanting to get a taste for public speaking should give this a go! I also discovered that people often don't read signs – however expensive and clearly displayed – walking past like they simply don't exist. My AFF crew experience was honestly a great one. But I'll be enjoying things from a visitor perspective this time round, having paid my dues."

Sam Sparrenius-Waters

Doggy day-care

"I remember doing lots of different things. My first job was waiting for ages in the cold of early morning for a couple of vans to turn up. Then there was the hotdog competition, a boisterous and crowded event verging on anarchy. I helped count the number of hotdogs consumed. Some people take these things very seriously. I spent hours telling small people not to climb the castle ruins, stopped a lady from sneaking a dog in under her coat, and did doggy day-care for two petrified staff bull terriers. I also manned the entrance, shouting 'show your wristbands' until hoarse and words lost all meaning. But at the end of it all there were great rewards – like the delight of seeing a left-over beer keg marked up for the crew party; or the fantastically hot and flavoursome Café Spice curry I was given. Eating it was a memorable mix of pleasure and pain. Working for AFF you learn how to communicate the basics, to be polite and cheerful under pressure, and to think on your feet. Skills now utilised in my career in the tech consultancy sector."

James Green

Learning logistics

"My time spent at the Abergavenny Food Festival from a young age opened the door to the wondrous world of food and events, as well as the chance to be part of a great team behind the scenes. Working in events since, and having recently settled into a logistical role at Oddbox, I realise that AFF has undoubtedly played a huge part; not only with regard to my interest in the food industry, but also as key experience moving forward in my career. I am very grateful for it."

Martha Jones



Goodie bags to go

"I have many good memories. Like working with my sisters packing loads of goodie bags for all the speakers as a thank-you for coming along. Generous stallholders made a contribution to these, and it was always a pleasure to meet them. Staff parties were a big highlight, especially as a 16 year old. It was wonderful to all come together and celebrate a job well done. But that aside, my absolute #1 highlight/memory is the Festival's two hospitality drivers, Jeff and Ricky, who ferried our guest performers around. They are legends and deserve a mention."

Lotti Jones





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Guest Performers Perfformwyr Gwadd

This year's line-up is a treat for anyone with a Stroller Ticket.
Our brilliant guests will be performing on public stages and at
outdoor venues for all to see.



Calum Franklin and Nokx Majozi, The Pie Room at Holborn Dining Room © John Carey



Chef Demonstrations

The Robert Price Kitchens Stage in the Market Hall will showcase: Raymond Blanc's protégé, Chris Harrod (awarded a Michelin Star for The Whitebrook, Monmouthshire) cooking with wild and foraged produce; top food writer Tim Hayward sharing delicious and decadent things you can do with a slice or two of bread; Chetna Makan (Great British Bakeoff) nailing flavours with her *Thirty Minute Indian*; and millennials' answer to Delia Smith and TikTok sensation, Poppy O'Toole, whipping up *The Food you Need*.

If a top-notch pie is the way to your heart, check out pastry obsessives Calum Franklin and Nokx Majozi (founders of The Pie Room, Holborn). And there's a surprise dem from Matt Tebbutt and Olly Smith, hotfooting it from BBC Saturday Kitchen Studio – maybe something from Matt's new book *Weekend: Eating at Home* and paired with a delicious concoction from Olly's *Home Cocktail Bible*.

Italophiles Jane Baxter (Wild Artichokes, Kingsbridge) and Christine Smallwood, expert on Italian cuisine, present dishes from Christine's book *Italy* (the latest from the *World Vegetarian* series); Hywel Griffith (Michelin-starred, The Beachhouse, Oxwich Bay) highlights harvests of the sea; Vanessa Kimbell aka 'Queen of Sourdough' shares tips from her latest book, and Jenny Chandler, author of *Green Kids Cook*, has easy recipes to get youngsters up and running.

Poppy O'Toole



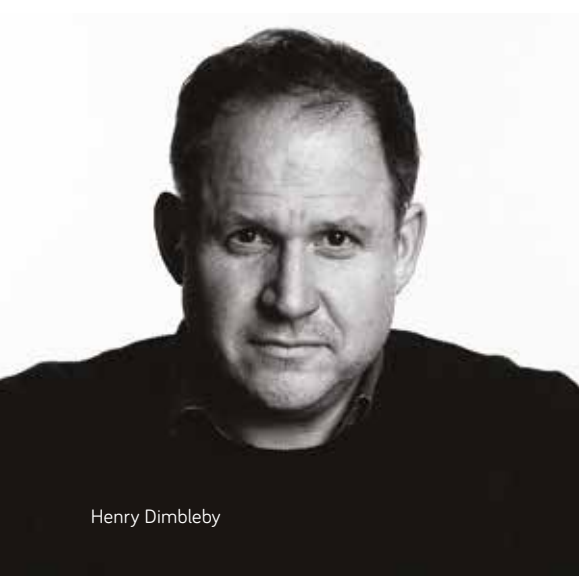
Sam Evans of Hangfire

Cooking with Fire

There's nothing quite like the immediacy of cooking with fire – sizzle and spark and scintillating smells... That's how it will be at the Castle when: Hang Fire Girls, Sam Evans and Shauna Guinn (back by popular demand) rustle up American-style BBQ; James Strawbridge cooks from his *The Complete Vegetable Cookbook: A Seasonal, Zero-waste Guide to Cooking*; AFF legend and all-round hospitality industry hero, Cyrus Todiwala OBE, showcases sea trout and Welsh Lamb; forager Yun Hider combines the fruits of his wanderings; Ollie Hunter (Wheatsheaf, Chilton Foliat – Sustainable Restaurant of the Year) goes green for revolution with veg from local growers, Langtons Farm; while Kathy Slack makes 'hero' helda beans the star of the show.



Rob Penn



Henry Dimbleby



Claudia Roden

Talks and Debate

The programme of events in the Dome at the Castle continues the Festival's drive to deliver informative talks and hard-hitting debate, as well as a good measure of entertainment.

The debate strand kicks off on the Saturday with 'Route to 2030: taking action now to solve the health, nature and climate crises.' Speakers to date are Henry Dimbleby (Independent Lead, England National Food Strategy), Sue Pritchard (Chief Executive of the Food, Farming and Countryside Commission – FFCC), Sophie Howe (Future Generations Commissioner for Wales), and Simon Wright (writer, broadcaster and campaigner for sustainable and regenerative farming). The event will be chaired by Jane Davidson (Chair of the Food, Farming and Countryside Commission's Wales Inquiry).

The pros and cons of a divisive staple will be discussed in 'Bread - Friend or Foe?', chaired by Tim Hayward. Participants include Vanessa Kimbell (founder of The Sourdough School) and Rob Penn who's learned every aspect of the making process as documented in his recent book *Slow Rise: a Breadmaking Adventure*.

Sunday's first debate looks at 'A Different way to Feed Ourselves: how we can adapt our food systems to meet the challenge of climate change.' Panellists confirmed so far: Dr Angelina Sanderson Bellamy (Associate Professor of Food Systems at UWE Bristol), Chris Smaje (author of *Small Farm Future*) and Phil Haughton (founder of the Better Food Co and author of *Food for Thought: Celebrating the joy of eating well and living better*).

Hamstrung by staff shortages and loaded with debt, the hospitality sector is struggling to recover from the pandemic. But was this all foreseeable and what can be done? Industry professionals bring their experiences to the table in 'The Crisis in Hospitality – a victim of the pandemic or an accident waiting to happen?'. Calum Franklin (Executive Head Chef, Holborn

Dining Room), Nokx Majozi (who heads up The Pie Room there), and Ollie Hunter (former Masterchef semi-finalist and author of *Join the Greener Revolution*) are all taking part.

On the talks front, fans of legendary food writer, Claudia Roden, can watch her live-streamed with Telegraph columnist Xanthe Clay as they discuss her new book *Med*. Gilly Smith, presenter of podcast 'Cooking the Books' has a session with

Tim Hayward to get the lowdown on his book *Loaf Story: A Love Letter to Bread*; and food writer and restaurant critic Matthew Fort talks to two legendary people who've played key roles in the transformation of Britain's dining culture: Shaun Hill, who at seventy-four still 'rattles the pans' as chef-patron at the Michelin-starred Walnut Tree Inn, and Rowley Leigh (retired from front-line cooking) who writes for the *Financial Times* and advises chefs and restaurateurs.



Children's Workshops

There will also be hands-on workshops for children on both days. Cook School founders Amanda Grant and Kristian Dean are passionate about teaching children to cook healthy, delicious meals from scratch. They've also developed a range of home-delivered recipe boxes. A chance to get younger family members fully engaged before having fun at the weekend? Do check out @cookschoollclub.

See our website for more detailed information on guest performer slots, including timings. A flyer with site map, exhibitor listings, schedules for demonstrations, talks and book-signings, can be viewed online and will be available to pick up on the day.

Feeding future growth

How sound financial advice could help business recovery.

The last year has been life-changing. But with the easing of restrictions, life is getting back to some semblance of normality. We need to find new and smart ways of collaborating - building better partnerships, looking out for each other. After all, it's been a tough time for many of us financially.

Here at Schroders Personal Wealth (SPW) we're putting out new shoots by teaming up with the award-winning **Abergavenny Food Festival**. A first for us.



Kim Waters, Chief Executive Officer of Abergavenny Food Festival, chats to **Nigel Clarke**, South Wales Regional Director for Schroders Personal Wealth.

“Financial advice isn't just for the wealthy”

Why is a wealth management company sponsoring a food festival?

Schroders Personal Wealth is a national business with a local approach to client service. The Festival has a national profile, but its roots remain in the local community. We also understand the importance of being there on the ground through a network of regional hubs. Above all, we have shared values.

Aren't you just about big business interests?

Not at all. Financial advice isn't just for the wealthy. It's about helping people live the life they want to live, for example; helping people choose when they want to retire or feeling confident enough in their own personal finances to help their grandchildren set up in life. It's been a particularly challenging time for anyone working in the food world - farmers, chefs, hospitality providers, producers etc. But really most people have been impacted. Like the Festival, we want to get lives back on track, to instill confidence and a sense of well-being through sound financial advice. So, as a part of our sponsorship we will also be reaching out specifically to all the small and medium-sized businesses involved with

the festival to offer our support in helping them potentially grow and aim to achieve their personal goals and ambitions through good financial planning.

So do you want people to dream big again?

Yes of course we do. But we are also realists. Pre-pandemic goals and dreams may need reviewing. Our dedicated and experienced advisers run a personal financial health-check, and develop tailored plans with the aim of achieving these aspirations. As restrictions lift, having a local hub in Wales (based in Cardiff) and advisers based across South Wales and the Borders, allows us to meet with clients face-to-face where appropriate.

What can SPW learn from the Abergavenny Food Festival?

The fact that the Festival is going ahead this year, albeit it on a slightly smaller scale, is testament to the organisers' drive to bring people back together in one big celebration of all things food. We're proud to have a key supporting role and delighted to actually be part of the event over the weekend.

You can book your free initial consultation with an experienced adviser at spw.com/aff



... and in the longer term?

The Festival can teach us a lot about the importance of sustainability and what this means from a wealth management perspective. We're hard at work developing a suite of environmental, social and governance (ESG) investments. Aligning with the Festival helps us stay tuned to our clients' values and aspirations. And our parent company, Schroders, is also leading the way with their 'Beyond Profit' campaign. We know that profit isn't enough. People want to see social value too.

If Festival visitors fancy an informal chat on the day, where will they find you?

We're setting up in the Market Hall. We know people will be busy shopping and having fun, but they may want to drop by, say hello, and perhaps arrange an appointment. We'd love to see you there, but if you're keen to talk sooner, then do please get in touch for a no obligation conversation. There are no hidden fees or charges, and you'll only start to pay if you choose to go ahead with our recommendations from your financial plan.

Cheat's 'Sourdough'

You will 'knead':

- 500g strong plain flour
- 400g cool water
- 2 tsp salt
- ¼ tsp yeast



Instructions:

- Mix all the ingredients in a bowl and cover with a shower cap. Leave in cool place overnight.
- Shape into ball and cover with a tea towel and leave to rise for 1 hour.
- Pre-heat the oven at 220°C and warm a casserole dish.
- Transfer the dough to the pre-heated casserole dish.
- Bake at 220°C with the lid on for 25 minutes, and a further 20 minutes with the lid off.

- Cool on a rack for 1 hour.
- Eat and enjoy!



QR code for Jim Lahey's 'No Knead' recipe, thanks to Abergavenny Baker & Physician's Kitchen.

Five ways with Maple Syrup

PURE CANADIAN MAPLE SYRUP IS A VERSATILE, HIGH-QUALITY INGREDIENT WHICH ENHANCES THE FLAVOUR OF BOTH SWEET AND SAVOURY RECIPES.

Made simply from boiling down the sap of maple trees, maple syrup from Canada is 100% natural, vegan and gluten-free. Maple is classified in four different grades based on its colour which changes subtly throughout the spring harvest. Each grade of syrup has its own characteristics and flavour profile: Golden, with a delicate taste, Amber, the most common syrup in the UK, has a rich taste, Dark with a robust taste and Very Dark with a strong taste. The range of flavours means that pure Canadian maple syrup is perfect for all of your favourite dishes.

Whether you're budding baker, a home cook or a BBQ master, a little bottle of maple syrup goes a long way. Here are a few ways that you can experiment with Canada's secret ingredient:

BBQING

Looking for the perfect sticky marinade? Maple syrup adds flavour, sweetness and a gloriously smooth texture to marinades. When added to a hot grill, the maple syrup will start to caramelize and create a rich, smoky taste. Try using it to glaze ribs or drizzle it over veggie skewers and you'll be BBQing all-year-round.



BAKING

From breads and pastries, to cakes and biscuits, maple syrup can be used to replace caster or other liquid sugars in all kinds of baking. Just slightly reduce the liquid ingredients in your recipe and replace the sugar with two thirds of the amount of maple syrup. This will provide all of the sweetness with an added boost of flavour.

ROASTING

Slow-roasting meat is all about keeping it flavoursome and juicy. Maple syrup is a magical roasting ingredient that can help with both. Use it to glaze your roasts and baste a few times while cooking for succulent meat with a deep golden, glossy exterior.

STIR-FRYING

A splash of maple syrup will add a real impact to your stir-fry. It helps to balance spices and evenly coats the vegetables, fish or meat with extra flavour. Combine with equal parts soy sauce for an easy sweet and sour sauce.

COCKTAIL-MAKING

Maple syrup is a great way to add sweetness into your favourite cocktail. It goes well with fresh fruity flavours and can either be shaken or stirred into your drink of choice.



SPICY JERK CHICKEN BURGER WITH MAPLE SLAW

SERVES: 4
READY IN: 25 MINS

8 chicken thighs, skin on, bone in • 50ml pure maple syrup (preferably dark syrup for its robust taste)
• 4 large rolls or brioche buns • Little Gem lettuce • 1 beef tomato • 1 mango, stoned, peeled and sliced • 2 tbsp jerk seasoning • 4 tbsp coconut cream • 2 spring onions, finely chopped • 1 green chilli, deseeded and chopped
• 2 garlic cloves, crushed • 1 tbsp grated fresh ginger
• Zest and juice of lime

To make the burger:

1. In a food processor, make the jerk marinade by blending jerk seasoning, coconut cream, chilli, spring onions, garlic and ginger
2. Add the lime zest and juice and season to taste
3. Cut the thighs down to the bone and smear with jerk marinade, then top with maple syrup
4. Roast in oven 200/180°C fan for 30 minutes until cooked through, basting with maple
5. Remove the bone from chicken and build each burger with lettuce, mango and tomato

Maple Slaw Ingredients:

1/2 red cabbage, quartered, cored and shredded
• 1 Braeburn apple, cored and grated • 2 carrots, peeled and grated • 1/2 red onion, finely sliced • 100ml pure maple syrup (preferably golden syrup for its delicate taste)
• 100g thick natural yoghurt • Juice of 1/2 lemon
• 2 tsp English mustard • 2 tsp maple vinegar

To make the maple slaw:

1. Mix cabbage, apple, carrots and onion in a large bowl
2. In a separate bowl, mix maple syrup, natural yoghurt, lemon juice, maple vinegar and mustard
3. Season and mix in the cabbage mixture
4. Chill, and serve on the side of your burger



HALLOUMI KEBABS WITH SWEET PEPPER AND MAPLE RELISH

SERVES: 4
READY IN: 40 MINS

For the sweet pepper and maple relish:

1 green chilli • 1 red pepper • 1 red onion • 4 large tomatoes, skinned and roughly chopped • 2 tbsp pure Canadian maple syrup (preferably dark for its robust taste) • 25g chopped parsley • 4tbsp lime juice

1. Finely chop the chilli, pepper, onion and parsley
2. Add all to a food processor with the lime juice, tomatoes and maple syrup
3. Blend evenly until it reaches the desired consistency

For the halloumi kebabs:

150g halloumi (cut into 2cm cubes) • 200g chestnut mushrooms (cut into quarters) • 1 courgette (sliced into ribbons) • 25g fresh mint • Olive oil, for grilling
• 2 tbsp pure Canadian maple syrup (preferably dark for its robust taste)

1. Add the courgette, mushrooms and halloumi onto the skewers and brush with olive oil
2. Grill for 2-3 minutes each side
3. Drizzle over maple and garnish with torn mint
4. Serve with the relish

Our Venues Ein Lleoliadau



This year we are working in close collaboration with various organisations to ensure the layout of the venues allows plenty of space for getting around safely and comfortably. With restricted visitor numbers (all tickets sold in advance), we know that you will be able to relax and enjoy your time at the Festival.

Market Hall

Abergavenny's striking Victorian Market Hall is at the heart of the Festival. The Robert Price Kitchen Stage will host some amazing guest chefs on both days (see website for names and timings), as well as a wonderful range of producer stalls. Look up and you'll see Bettina Reeves' amazing wildlife installations.

Brewery Yard

Adjacent to the Market Hall, this space will have lots of producers, plus a range of street food.

The Castle

The ancient grounds are a magical setting for family fun and entertainment. A programme of fire-stage cooking, food quizzes and topical debate in The Dome (see website for names and timings) and hands-on children's workshops with Cookschool. Plus a good choice of food and drink, including the Bloreng Bar and the Naked Wine Bar.

Cheese & Wine

Chadwicks Place and Tiverton Producers' Market is all about seafood, cheese and prosecco. Check out the Naked Prosecco Bar.

The Priory

The medieval courtyards will be showcasing 'Made in Monmouthshire'. Members of the group include artists, crafts-people, food producers and ceramicists.

www.madeinmonmouthshire.co.uk



Founded by award-winning children's cookbook author Amanda Grant, and her partner Kristian Dean, Cook School is passionate about teaching children across the UK how to cook healthy, delicious meals from scratch. So far, over 50,000 children have chopped, grated and baked with us, whipping up treats from samosas to veggie lasagne, and learning about healthy eating along the way. We're giving them the cooking skills and a love of veg that will help them make healthier choices in future. And now, we're back at the Abergavenny Food Festival, where you can join us as we teach children how to cook!



**Come and
cook with us
over the weekend
at #AFF21
Book online!**

A word from our biggest (and smallest) fans...

Since launching in 2018, Cook School has inspired thousands of children to cook at home using our simple, step-by-step recipe cards. Supported by our chef ambassadors, including Claire Ptak, Zoe Adjonyoh and Kimberley Wilson, we're giving children a passion for healthy eating they can share with their families. And they're loving it!

“I would absolutely recommend Cook School recipe boxes!”

**Cassie, Food Director at
BBC Good Food Magazine**

“I make them all by myself. I showed my mum and dad how to make samosas.”

Marcie, aged 7

Our recipe boxes bring Cook School home to you



We've created home-delivered recipe boxes that encourage children to cook a healthy, veggie meal to share with the family once a fortnight. Each box contains all the ingredients they need, a step-by-step recipe card, how-to cooking tips, and a fun facts booklet about the food included in the box. You can even watch our how-to video for more tips! Cook School is not for profit, so every box you buy helps more children learn how to cook.

BUY our boxes at <https://shop.cookschool.club>

“Cook School is the coolest project to teach our children how to cook for themselves.”

Claire Ptak, Violet Bakery, Hackney, London
(our Ambassador)



@cookschoolclub





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Monmouthshire's best kept secret for quality kitchens and outstanding service.

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Choose a beautiful, top quality kitchen, from a trusted local supplier.

Design and planning included free of charge.

Please call or email ahead to make a showroom appointment.

Showrooms at: Merthyr & Monmouth Designers at: Merthyr & Abergavenny

www.robert-price.co.uk showroom@robert-price.co.uk

A-Z Stallholder Listings A-Y Stondinwyr

This listing is correct at the time of going to press. Please go to our website to see stallholder listings by venue. This information will also be on a flyer which can be picked up at any of the venues on the day. Large-format maps will also be displayed for easy reference.



Alex Gooch Artisan Baker

Delicious vegan organic bread and pastries.
www.alexgoochbaker.com

Angel Hotel, The

www.angelabergavenny.com

Anglesey Sea Salt Company / Halen Mon

Salt made from 100% pure Anglesey seawater.
www.halenmon.com

Baker's Pig, The

Welsh charcuterie specialising in award-winning salumi.
www.thebakerspig.com

Bath Soft Cheese Co, The

Organic and artisan cheese makers.
<https://parkfarm.co.uk>

Bearded Taco, The

Fresh fusion tacos on hand rolled corn tortillas.
www.thebeardedtaco.co.uk



Beefy Boys, The

100% Herefordshire beef burgers cooked to order.
www.thebeefyboys.com

Bee Welsh Honey

Many flavours of nature's 'liquid gold'.

Black Mountains Smokery

Oak-smoked fish, meats, cheeses and accompaniments.
www.smoked-foods.co.uk

Blaenafon Cheddar Company, The

Some of Wales' most awarded hand-made cheeses.
www.chunkofcheese.co.uk

Breckland Orchard

Artisan soft drinks, like ginger beer with chilli.
www.brecklandorchard.co.uk

Brecon Chocolates

Handmade truffles and hot chocolate flakes.
www.breconchocolates.co.uk

British Cassis

Liqueurs served straight, or magical cocktails.
www.whiteherondrinks.co.uk

Café Spice Namasté

Indian food by celebrity chef Cyrus Todiwala.
www.cafespice.co.uk

Castle Dairies

Incredibly creamy, delicious Welsh butters.
www.castledairies.co.uk

STALLHOLDER LISTINGS

Caws Cenarth Cheese

Quality Soft Blue, Caerphilly, sheep & organic cheeses.
www.cawscenarth.co.uk

Caws Teifi Cheese

Award-winning artisan cheese made from local raw milk.
www.teificheese.co.uk

Chase Distillery

Cocktail Bar at the Castle
www.chasedistillery.co.uk

Chilli Rogues

Forty varieties of chilli to blow your tastebuds.
www.chillirogues.com

Chock Shop

Hand baked brownies and homemade ice cream.
www.chockshop.co.uk

Clam's Handmade Cakes

Award-winning handmade cakes delivered to your door.
www.clamscakes.co.uk

Coedcanlas

Honey producers, plus preserves and condiments.
www.coedcanlas.cymru

Cottage Sweets

Homemade marshmallow with bold, honest flavours.
www.cottagesweets.co.uk

Cradoc's Savoury Biscuits

A variety of innovative interesting flavours.
www.cradocssavourybiscuits.co.uk

CRWST

Breads and sweet treats including crunchy granola clusters.
www.crwst.cymru

Cwm Deri Vineyard

Welsh wines, liqueurs, meads and non-alcoholic drinks.
www.cwm-deri.co.uk

Dà Mhile Organic Distillery

Producer of high quality award-winning organic spirits.
www.damhile.co.uk

Dugan's Patisserie

Individual French-style sweet tarts and bakes.
www.dugans.co.uk

Dusty Knuckle Pizza

Traditional and unique wood-fired pizzas and pastries.
www.facebook.com/dustyknucklepizzacompany

Dylan's Restaurant

Street food showcasing seafood, Welsh meats and cheeses.
www.dylansrestaurant.co.uk

STALLHOLDER LISTINGS

Festival Bookstall

Run by Book-ish, Crickhowell. Including guest author signings.
www.book-ish.co.uk

Firepits UK

Firepits, Indian fire bowls, pizza ovens, outdoor kitchens.
www.firepitsuk.co.uk

Flint and Flame

Luxury kitchen knives, chopping boards and blocks.
www.flintandflame.co.uk

Flowerhorn Brewery

Craft speciality beers.
www.flowerhorn.co.uk

Franchi Seeds of Italy

The oldest seed company in the world.
www.seedsofitaly.com

Fritter Shack, The

Quality vegan food - Indian meets Mediterranean.
www.thefrittershack.co.uk

Frome Valley Vineyard

Award-winning English wine producer introduces new ciders.
www.fromevalleyvineyard.co.uk

Fudgepots

Indulgent, gourmet handmade fudge.
www.fudgepots.co.uk

Furnace Projects

Still and sparkling wines and oak-aged brandy.
www.furnaceprojects.com



Garlic Farm, The

Garlic: fresh, smoked and black, plus chutneys and dressings.
www.thegarlicfarm.co.uk

Good For You Ferments

Colourful sauerkrauts and Celtic kymchi.
www.goodforyouferments.com

Gourmet Meat Centre (Seasons)

Hand-crafted British game, rare breed and exotic meats.
www.sizzlersprimemeats.co.uk

Gower Cottage Brownies

Artisan brownies and a new range of brownie butters.
www.gowercottagebrownies.co.uk

Hay Distillery (Little Knapp Distillery)

Creators of Wild Knapp and Dr Beaky's gins.
www.littleknappdistillery.com

Hobbs House Bakery

Artisan bakery with a range of heritage and classic breads.
www.hobbshousebakery.co.uk

Hodmedod

Pulse and grain pioneers working directly with UK farmers.
www.hodmedods.co.uk

Hybu Cig Cymru - Meat Promotion Wales

Promoting Welsh lamb, beef and pork.
www.meatpromotion.wales

Isabel's Bakehouse

Delicious range of sweet and savoury crepes.
www.isabelsbakehouse.com

Makasih

Family run Malaysian fusion street food.
www.instagram.com/makasihstreetfood





naked^{wines}

Discover a better way to enjoy great wine...

Raise a glass with Naked Wines and Abergavenny Food Festival

Naked Wines and the Abergavenny Food Festival have a joint passion for supporting and celebrating the best independent talents so that their best produce can be enjoyed and shared by people just like you.

Here at Naked Wines we're on a mission to change the way the wine industry works for the better, by connecting everyday wine drinkers, like you, with the world's best independent winemakers.

We'll be sharing our passion at the festival and look forward to raising a top-notch glass (or two) of some of our favourite bottles with you. Cheers!

We do things differently

We believe that people flourish when they're free to do their best work so we go all over the world to find the most talented, dedicated, hard working winemakers, who simply want to make the best wines they can without having to dance to the major retailers' tunes.

The result? Amazing quality wines you won't find anywhere else, brought directly to your door. Our customers drink easy in the knowledge that every single bottle was made with a whole lot of heart by real people who are dedicated to every last drop.

Paying fair prices

We fund talented winemakers up front so they get to focus on what they're passionate about, and make it all about what you can actually taste, like great grapes and gifted winemaking. By keeping things simple and focusing on what's in the bottle, our winemakers are paid fairly and you only pay the fairest prices – typically 33% less than the high street – so it's a win win.



Sam Plunkett

Naked Wines Winemaker

Back the world's best winemakers

With a growing community of over 300,000 UK wine drinkers – we call them Angels – we're a big wine-loving community. There's a personal connection between customers and winemakers where they talk to each other, rate, review and discover new favourites together.

Winemakers read every Angel review and it's this feedback that helps to nurture better wine. A special connection that really sets Naked apart.

We are bringing this community to the Abergavenny Food Festival. There we'll be waiting to share a glass with you. But if you can't wait until September, then grab a case and get ahead of the game by starting your journey with Naked Wines today.

We make great wine happen



Mamgu Welshcakes

Twenty different Welshcakes, including rhubarb and custard.
www.mamguwelshcakes.com

Market Bakery, Abergavenny

Bread, rolls, cakes and small bakes.
www.marketbakeryabergavenny.co.uk

Mayhawk Chocolate

Innovative hand-crafted bean-to-bar chocolate.
www.mayhawkchocolate.com

Meat and Greek

Authentic souvlaki, fresh from the skewer.
www.meatandgreek.co.uk

Monnow Valley Cider

Whole juice artisan cider and perry from hand-harvested fruit.
www.facebook.com/monnowvalleycider

Murray May's Food

Charcoal grilled kebabs cooked on a Turkish mangal grill.
www.murraymays.co.uk

Patchwork Food Co, The

Award-winning delicious and unusual pâtés and condiments.
www.patchworkfoods.com

Mr Todiwalas

Flavoursome cooking sauces, chutneys and pickles.
www.mrtodiwalas.com

Naked Wines - Festival sponsor

Wine and Prosecco bars
www.nakedwines.com

Netherton Foundry Shropshire

Traditional cookware products with provenance.
www.netherton-foundry.co.uk

Nutcessity Nut Butter

Delicious organic 'treenut' (no peanut) butters.
www.nutcessity.co.uk

Old Coach House Distillery Ltd

Alcohol free 100% distilled botanical drinks.
www.stillersdrinks.com

Olive Press, The

The finest range of olives, olive oils and antipasti.
www.theolivepress.co.uk

OysterMeister

Oyster and caviar bar, smoked salmon and sardinillas.
www.oystermeister.com

Parsnipship Ltd, The

Vegetarian produce & nut-based cheese alternatives.
www.theparsnipship.co.uk

Parva Spices

Hot sauces, sambals, spice blends and condiments.
www.parva-spices.co.uk

Pembrokeshire Chilli Farm

Artisan chilli sauces and jams.
www.pembrokeshirechillifarm.com

Popty Cara

Artisan bakery selling Bara Brith and Ralph's cider cake.
www.poptycara.co.uk

STALLHOLDER LISTINGS

Preservation Society, The

Small-batch syrups, jams and chutneys.
www.thepreservationsociety.co.uk

Queen Pepiada, The

Venezuelan arepas and appetizers.
www.tqpepiada.com

Radnor Preserves

Nature's best, including smoky bourbon marmalade.
www.radnorpreserves.com

Riverford Organic Farmers

Organic produce and box schemes
www.riverford.co.uk

Rowlestone Farmhouse Ice Cream

Farm-made luxury dairy ice cream and sorbets.
www.rowlestoneicecream.co.uk

Rupert Blamire Ceramics

High-fired kitchen earthenware and new range of decanters.
www.rupertblamire.com

Sapling Spirits

Climate-positive vodka and newly launched Sapling gin.
www.saplingspirits.com

Schroders Personal Wealth

Financial planning advice.
www.schroders.com

Shepherds Ice Cream

Sheep's milk ice cream - light, low in fat, rich in flavour.
www.shepherdsicecream.co.uk

Sibling Distillery

Seasonal gins with whole fruit and herbs.
www.siblingdistillery.com

Silver Circle Distillery

Craft spirits from Monmouthshire and Bloody Mary kits.
www.silvercircledistillery.com

Skyborry Perry & Cider

Small-batch cider and perry plus new blends.
www.skyborrycider.co.uk

Sorai

Borneo-inspired savoury ethnic/ fusion sauces.
www.sorai.co.uk

SundayGirl Company, The

Retro kitsch inspired aprons and kitchen textiles.
www.thesundaygirlcompany.co.uk

Tracklements Company, The

Artisan condiments dedicated to British Fair Trade.
www.tracklements.co.uk

Trealy Farm Charcuterie

Award-winning range of cooked and cured meats.
www.trealyfarmcharcuterie.co.uk

Tudor Brewery

Handcrafted real ales, Black Mountain porter and stout.
www.tudorbrewery.co.uk

Two Belly Ltd

A cheese and beer odyssey that starts in Bristol.
www.twobelly.co.uk

Two Dogs Coffee Roasting Company

Small batch and hand-roasted speciality coffee.
www.twodogscoffeecompany.com

Two Farmers

Hand-cooked crisps in plastic-free packaging.
www.twofarmers.co.uk

Ty Gwyn Cider

Artisan ciders and perry.
www.tygwyncider.co.uk

Welsh Coffee Co

Speciality coffee including award-winning Bendigedig.
www.welshcoffee.com

Welsh Sisters

Dry gin, distilled and infused in West Wales
www.welshsisters.co.uk

Whey More

Specialists in British and continental raw-milk cheese.
<http://facebook.com/@WheyMore>

Wye Valley Brewery

Producer of beautiful cask, keg and bottle beers.
www.wyevalleybrewery.co.uk

Wye Valley Meadery

Innovative sparkling lower alcohol mead and honey beers.
www.wyevalleymeadery.co.uk





KINGS ARMS HOTEL ABERGAVENNY



For further details check our website:
www.kingsarmsabergavenny.co.uk
 E: kingsarmsabergavenny@gmail.com
 T: 01873 855074



29 Nevill Street
 Abergavenny
 NP7 5AA



Festival picks Pigion Yr Ŵyl

Our pick of some must try
 and buy products at this year's
 Festival - enjoy!



Welsh charcuterie company, The Baker's Pig, specialise in a range of exquisite, award-winning salumi. Their latest offering is Welsh Hot-smoked Mwgî's, based on the Austro-Italian Jagerwurst (Hunters) sausage which was featured in the BBC Farmers Country Showdown in January. All their products are free-from Gluten, Wheat, Dairy, Eggs and Nuts.

www.thebakerspig.com

Blaenafon Cheddar Company has been sitting on a secret for a whole year. But now they're chuffed to say that Jacobs Biscuits have chosen their Dragon's Breath flavoured cheddar to represent Wales in a new range of three nations mini-cheddars. 'Bach' is hot and spicy with a good slosh of Brains SA ale (skull attack). The cult cheese of choice for rugby followers, apparently.

www.chunkofcheese.co.uk

Dylan's is a family of three award-winning waterside restaurants in North Wales. They've recently launched a successful range of their most loved restaurant meals, but all packaged up and ready for you to eat at home. Created by their chefs on Anglesey, Ynys Môn, with no additives or preservatives.

www.dylansrestaurant.co.uk





KIA GRAVELLS ABERGAVENNY

PROUD SUPPORTERS OF THE
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GRAVELLS
ABERGAVERNNY



Fancy trying naturally fermented, unpasteurised sauerkraut? Swansea-based Good For You Ferments offer a range of vibrant flavours to suit all palates. Keep your gut healthy with their live products. Their tastebud tingling Celtic Kymchi is a Great Taste Award winner.

www.goodforyouferments.co.uk

Husband and wife team Jonny & Natalie of Hay Distillery have produced their second expression 'Dr Beaky's Gin'. Inspiration came from an unusual source: stories of seventeenth century plague doctors and the botanicals said to be used in their iconic beak masks. Warming citrus tones and a heady herbal hit are finished with juniper wood smoke.

www.littleknappdistillery.com



Fancy changing the way you present a favourite tippie at dinner parties? This new range of whisky, gin and spirit decanters in subtle and luscious glazes from Rupert Blamire Ceramics could be just the thing. All high-fired earthenware which is both durable and tactile - as well as aesthetically appealing.

www.rupertblamire.com





Silver Circle Distillery and Parva Spices joined forces to create The Ultimate Bloody Mary Kit which features two specially crafted products designed for mixing with tomato juice: Black Garlic Vodka distilled with lapsang souchong and toast adds sweet and smoky notes, plus 11am Hot Sauce for added spice and seasoning.

www.silvercircledistillery.com

www.parva-spices.co.uk

Bring the flavours of Borneo to your kitchen with Sorai's recently launched Baruk Range of cooking pastes. Plant-based and suitable for vegans and vegetarians, these unique 'all-in-one' flavourings are simple and convenient.

www.sorai.co.uk

Pembrokeshire Chilli Farm use their very own Welsh-grown chillies in a new product called Southern Gold, a honey and mustard-based BBQ sauce with a mild heat and a nice smoky aftertaste. An absolute must with posh hot dogs.

www.pembrokeshirechillifarm.com



Wye Valley Meadery

A story of Lockdown

by Kit and Matt Newell



News and Brews

It's been an exciting year for us at Wye Valley Meadery. At the beginning of 2021 we relocated from Chepstow to Caldicot, The mail-order side of things had taken off during lockdown and we'd already outgrown our old space. We wanted to open a taproom and had dreams of hosting music and comedy nights and larger beekeeping and mead-making courses.

We bit the bullet and found a great unit close to Caldicot Castle. This building used to house Monmouthshire's museum artefacts and needed sprucing up. The most daunting job was to create a drainage channel which involved excavating pipes encased in reinforced concrete.

We pulled every favour (and muscle), had a new drain installed, a fancy brewery floor poured, and were ready to move in and set up the brewing equipment.

We've now been in our new spot for 7 months, and are almost ready to open the doors to the taproom and bee-r garden. We look forward to showing you around and sharing a few honey beers!

Hive Mind

We have been developing new flavours and recipes since last at the Abergavenny Food Festival in 2019. Our recently launched honey-beer range, called 'Hive Mind', blurs the lines between mead and beer (creating a historic drink called a 'Braggot'). You can choose from Honey Citra IPA, Smoked Honey Porter, and Golden Honey Ale.

Druids' Drink

Every so often, people will ask us if we make a stronger mead, "like what the Druids drink when dancing under the Solstice moon". So we've now introduced a traditional mead at a respectable 14.5% ABV. Made with spring honey from Chepstow, summer honey from Tintern, and aromatic honey from August heather high on the Brecon Beacons, this is landscape in a bottle.

Our Bees (#beechat)

The honey seasons have been a challenge for the bees, and for us. We usually get a decent crop at the end of May and July. 2019 was great, but a cold 2020 July put paid to a bumper season. Spring 2021 has been bleak too. Changeable weather and unpredictable temperatures are keeping both ourselves and the bees guessing! Let's see what the summer sun does...

www.wyevalleymeadery.co.uk

Wye Valley Producers

A story of Lockdown

by Angharad Underwood



Driving through change

As the first lockdown hit in March 2020 everything changed overnight and we lost seventy percent of our business. We lost events and festivals, local markets, and our hotel and restaurant trade. But a random call from Kit of Wye Valley Meadery lit a spark. He suggested we put on a Click & Collect Drive-Through for a few weeks so we could get artisan produce to our customers safely. Kitchen Zoom calls followed and within three weeks we had fifteen producers, a location, a website, high-vis vests and Countryfile coming to film us! Kate Humble and Ludo filmed our first ever Click & Collect chaos, sharing our collaboration nationwide.

Our Click & Collects have been brilliantly supported by locals on a weekly basis, plus we post our Hamper Bag in a Box all over the UK too. Sharing knowledge, support, frustrations, concerns and a laugh has been brilliant. A sort of 'producers therapy'. We're so much stronger together and thanks to Rachel of Forest Kombucha, we'll soon have a 'producers yoga class' too!

Collaboration works wonders

Naturally Green Micros (naturallygreenmicros.co.uk) is a new business to look out for. Richard set things up during lockdown, and now grows incredibly nutritious microgreens in his dining room. The epitome of a brilliant collaborator, he's always challenging his business by asking questions, finding solutions and working with all of us. Lately, he has teamed up with Zero to 5 at Cardiff Met to produce a safe way of preserving the microgreens whilst retaining high nutritional levels.

We sell online, via our Click & Collect and postal offerings, plus we have a network of 'Wye Valley Producers Stocked Here' outlets, collaborating on ordering and delivery to minimise food miles and maximise our time. You'll soon be seeing our marvellous posters throughout the Wye Valley.

We're really looking forward to the world opening up safely and sharing courses and social events. And watch this space... a permanent home for Wye Valley Producers will be coming soon.



About Wye Valley Producers

Wye Valley Producers is a collaboration of the finest artisan food and drink producers in the heart of the Wye Valley, selling a huge variety of produce including jam and gin, spices and sauces, ice cream, cheese, cakes, coffee, marshmallows, mead, microgreens, kombucha and kimchi.

Producers include The Preservation Society, Parva Spices, Brookes Dairy, Kontext Coffee, Wye Valley Meadery, Naturally Green Micros, Cottage Sweets, Silvercircle Distillery, Humble by Nature, Untapped Brewing, Kingstone Brewery, Orchard's Cider, Cinderhill, Forest Kombucha, O'r Galon Chocolates, Isabel's Bakehouse, Gorsely Growers, Monty's Garden, Netherend Farm Butter. Trelleck Grange Eggs.

www.wyevalleyproducers.co.uk

FudgePots

A story of Lockdown

by Catrin Thomas-Price



About Fudgepots

Rita is of Bengali heritage and Catrin all-Welsh. Creative collaboration resulted in a 'world-first' rich and buttery curried fudge (using Catrin's mother's recipe as a starting point) flavoured with cardamom, cumin, and Bengali spices. More traditional offerings include vanilla, chocolate orange and salted pistachio.

Rita has also developed a line of vegan fudges using coconut instead of dairy. The vegan chocolate coconut has proved the more popular variant at festivals for both vegans and non-vegans.

www.fudgepots.co.uk

End of Fudgepots?

We got off to a promising start (myself and co-founder Rita Som), selling products at farmers markets and food festivals. Lockdown seemed to spell doom. April and May 2020 were terrible months, with scheduled events postponed and cancelled. It looked like Covid-19 would be the end of our fledgling micro-business specialising in spiced and unusual fudges. But restrictions brought unexpected opportunities.

Silver Lining

People began to shop online, either going directly to the Fudgepots website or through artisan food websites like GoodSixty.co.uk. It became clear people weren't buying for their children, but for after-dinner personal treats and special gifts. This led to new ideas.

With no food festivals to attend, I had time to take advantage of Cywain, a support scheme for start-ups in Wales, which offered workshops, training, and even help with our new packaging design – a glamorous hint of peacock feathers (the national bird of India).

Christmas Miracle

The plush, luxury fudge gift boxes we launched just in time for Christmas 2020 proved a roaring success, along with bright gold 'treasure chests' and mini-Christmas crackers. To top that, a corporate customer ordered a bespoke hand-delivered Christmas hamper which pretty much used up our remaining stock.

We are now planning to supply premium and exclusive shops, but still want to see customers in person, so look forward to trading at a few festivals again. We love seeing reactions to our unusual flavours. There's no substitute for this, and no better feedback than joy on customers' faces.

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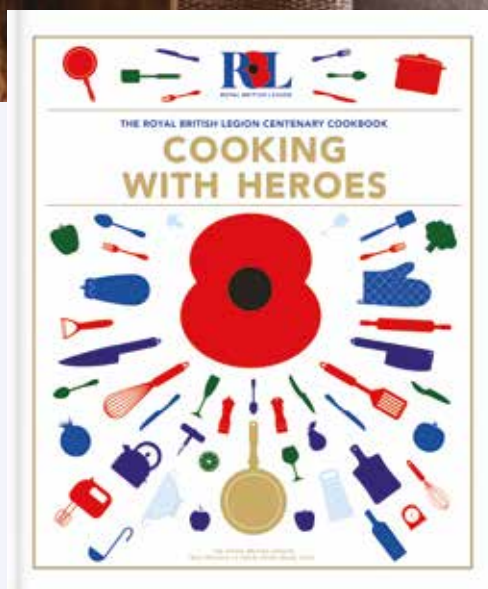
Cooking with Heroes

Cyrus Todiwala OBE, TV chef and proprietor of Café Spice Namasté



As a part of its 100th anniversary, The Royal British Legion (with St James' House) has launched a fund-raising cookbook: *Cooking With Heroes*. 100 authentic recipes, 100 regions, 100 profiled heroes. Written by serving and veteran military personnel, it includes contributions from military chefs alongside celebrity chefs.

Cyrus Todiwala has donated a recipe from India and shares it here as a taster. Jon Pullen, author (ex RAF) will be selling the book at the Festival. Get curry at the castle, and buy a Cyrus-signed copy while you're at it. www.poppyshop.org.uk/products/legion-100-cookbook



Recipe:

Cholay Channa Daal Do Pyazza

This is not a commonly found recipe and one that not many would make either, I suppose. But the combination of both split yellow peas and whole white chickpeas works well. It is very simple and easy to make and will delight most palates. You can use either canned chickpeas or soak raw dried chickpeas and boil or pressure-cook them for best results. This is not a recipe with very limited spices but veering more on the classical and, therefore, I have added all that would normally be put in this dish; do feel free to cook it without the whole spices if you like.

Vegetarian

Preparation Time: 15 minutes plus soaking time for the peas

Cooking Time: 50 minutes

Ingredients:

Serves 4

- 150g chick peas, uncooked
- 150g split yellow peas, uncooked
- 1 piece of cinnamon or cassia bark, approximately 5cm-7cm
- 4-5 whole cloves
- 2 bay leaves
- 5-6 cracked black peppercorns
- 1 tbsp (heaped) cumin seeds
- 1 piece of ginger, approximately 5cm-7cm
- 4-5 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
- 2-3 finger type chillies, cut into 4 lengthways
- 2 small onions, very finely chopped
- ½ tsp ground turmeric
- 1 tbsp ground coriander
- 1 tsp chilli powder
- 2 medium tomatoes, chopped
- ½ tsp garam masala powder
- 2 tbsp (heaped) fresh coriander, chopped
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 tbsp butter
- Salt

Method

Soak chickpeas in warm water for 2-3 hours or overnight, which is better. Boil well until soft with a little salt. If in a hurry, add bicarbonate of soda and the chickpeas will cook faster.

Soak the split yellow peas separately for a few hours but don't cook yet. Once chickpeas have cooked, drain the water over the split yellow peas and boil them, just until soft enough. Drain once cooked, but keep the water to finish the dish.

Heat oil in a deep casserole roughly 23cm in diameter until it forms a haze and add the whole spices (cinnamon or cassia bark, cloves, bay-leaves, cracked pepper corns). After 10-15 seconds add cumin seeds and turn heat down a little.

As soon as the cumin changes colour, add chopped ginger, garlic, sliced green chillies and butter; sauté until the garlic colours slightly. Add chopped onions, Stir well and sauté over a medium heat.

Meanwhile, put turmeric, chilli and coriander powders in a cup or glass and add enough water to make a thin paste. Rest until onions turn pale brown, then add the paste and stir well. Cook until the liquid dries up and you see tiny beads of oil at the bottom of the pan. This shows the powders have now cooked.

Add the two peas with the reserved water and chopped tomato then simmer until sauce is thick and cooked peas well coated.

Add garam masala powder, stir in well and finally stir in the fresh coriander. Taste to ensure you are happy with the salt content and turn off.

Serve with hot flat breads such as chapattis, parathas, Turkish flat bread or khaboos, naan, etc. or as part of a meal with steamed rice and some fresh red onion and mint salad.



The Road to Glastonbury - Shepherds Ice Cream

by Martin Orbach

The Abergavenny Food Festival was once dubbed 'The Glastonbury of Food Festivals' by Observer Food Monthly. Coincidentally, Martin Orbach, co-founder and Programming Director of AFF, has sold his sheep's milk ice cream at Glastonbury for years. Here he reflects on the idea, the making, the trading, and the music. Rock on.

We had been milking sheep on our small Hereford farm for seven years. To begin with we sold all the milk to a cheesemaker in West Wales, but soon concluded we'd be better off using it to make a product ourselves.

One day, when mucking out a shed – a job done on auto-pilot – my mind wandered over the different things we could do with sheep's milk. In truth we knew very little about product-making and even less about selling.

We could make cheese, of course. I love cheese and I knew sheep's milk made lovely cheeses, including the famous Roquefort. But the actual process seemed daunting and mysterious.

Then there was yoghurt. The Greeks made wonderful yoghurt with sheep's milk. But where to sell it? I knew it wouldn't keep, and in those days the demographic of rural South Herefordshire didn't look like they'd be eating a lot of it. We would have to go to Birmingham. Every week. The prospect filled me with horror.

Ice Cream from Sheep's Milk. Really?

When idly thinking what else... ice cream came to mind. Not too hard, surely. Keeps for a long time. In a freezer. But ice cream from sheep's milk? Nobody did it. There must be a reason.

At this point my wife Juliet took over and, hey presto, discovered a short ice cream making course in the Dairy Manufacturing section at Reading University.

The man running it said there was no reason why you couldn't make ice cream out of sheep's milk; all to do with the balance between milk fats and MSNF (milk-solids-not-fats) and at this point my eyes glazed over. And so they remained for the next thirty-odd years.

Fortunately Juliet's eyes did not glaze over and thus she became ice cream maker-in-chief and I became the bloke who tries to sell it.

Our first attempts to sell ice cream were spectacularly unsuccessful. We developed six flavours. Vanilla, Chocolate, Carob, Ginger and Strawberry. Carob was so far ahead of the curve we were in danger of bumping into it from behind. It's still unfashionable, three decades on.

Buried in the freezer

We took our offerings to various wholesalers who would taste it and take a small amount.. We would ring them a few weeks later and ask if they wanted more and they'd say it's alright thanks. The nadir was reached when we discovered one wholesaler was trying to flog stock a full year later.

We had to accept this wasn't the way forward. At least not for sheep's milk ice cream.

Then we had a lucky break – a call from the organisers of a new kind of agricultural show in Malvern. Forget family day out and tea with the bank manager. This was specialised. Targeted. For working farmers who wanted to stay bang-up-to-date.

It was part of a new sub-genre of agricultural shows. Instead of being geographically titled like The Highland Show or The East of England, these were named after their sectors. Cereals, Dairy, Beef, and in this case Sheep. Sheep 88.

The 80s was also the decade of surplus – butter mountains, wine lakes and set-aside. The most pressing problem facing the agricultural industry in Europe appeared to be how to stop it producing so much food.

Stepping up and scooping out

As ever, weeding out 'inefficient' (ie small) farms was name of the game for policy wonks. But it was only fair to offer them another route. 'Diversification'. Small farmers were encouraged to go into anything – B&Bs, camping, paintball, weddings whatever – so long as it didn't involve producing food.



Shepherds Ice Cream can be purchased online for home delivery nationwide. www.shepherdsicecream.co.uk

Ironically, this drive to take small farms out of commodity production for the mass-market helped kick start a renaissance in speciality food production. Farmers like us, realising they couldn't compete with big agri-business players, started looking at other things to do with their farmland or produce.

For Michael Eavis, this same impetus may have led him into the idea of staging a festival. For us, we made ice cream. And Sheep 88 – up with cutting edge trends in sheep farming – knew that for the huge numbers of small farms producing sheep, diversification was the coming thing.

So they rang us. We hear you make ice cream with sheep's milk. Would you like to sell it at our event? Much to our amazement they decided Shepherds would be the only ice cream there.

We needed to mobilise quickly, not having actual ice cream vans or trailers or anything to scoop out of. We had a friend who sold burgers out of a caravan. He put in a chest freezer and served it out of his window. We asked a local whippy man too. Whoa, he said, that's heavy, as we loaded in the tubs. He was used to selling ice cream with a lot more air in it. And then we brought in one of our freezers full of little tubs.

We came home with sackfuls of pound coins. Couldn't believe how much we'd taken. And thus a new way of selling was born. No longer would we spend time browbeating shopkeepers into stocking our product in tiny freezers, chock full of other brands.

Rainbow neighbours and good vibrations

No, for us it was to be the open-air. Cornets pressed into the hands of smiling customers. We started to do local shows, agricultural shows, garden shows. Anywhere a crowd might gather.

We bought a Morris Marina ice cream van and an old catering trailer and soon found our way into local music festivals. At the Forest Fair in the Forest of Dean, we met Sid Rawle, (now deceased) 'king of the hippies', from the tepee valley in Carmarthenshire, and his able assistant Nadine.

Sid and Nadine organised the Rainbow Field at Glastonbury. No stage. Just a ramshackle assortment of hippies, bohemians and performers they'd come across in their travels.

The traders weren't organised into markets, but simply pointed to a patch of field and told to go set up. The stalls didn't join up with each other. As people poured in we soon had neighbours camping all around us. Very friendly if not particularly secure.

I loved it. That first year, 1992, was scorching hot. We just sold and sold ice cream while our neighbouring stall pumped out live Grateful Dead all afternoon, and techno as evening turned to night.

The Rainbow Field soon disappeared and became the Jazz Stage, then the World Music Stage, and then Wents Meadow. We got bumped up the road into what is now M Market and the Greenpeace Field.

Like everyone who trades at Glastonbury we have had many adventures along the way. And we still love coming back. There really isn't anything quite like it.

www.shepherdsicecream.co.uk

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Leading the Veg Revolution

Since 1986

No & Low

by Pete Brown

If you're anything like I was until recently, if someone offered you a low alcohol beer, your likely reaction would be "Why?" With no intoxicating properties, and a flavour that resembles stewed vegetables more than 'proper' beer, there's absolutely no point.



That's what I believed from my last, foul sip of Kaliber several decades ago, until a drinks magazine editor asked me to "take a fresh look at the sector" in 2017. I really didn't want to. But I needed the commission.

Four years later, my beer fridge (it's a professional necessity, OK?) is full of quality lagers, pale ales, IPAs and bitters. About two-thirds of these are within the normal strength range for that particular style. The rest are 0.5% ABV or below. Some of these are so good, they've actually beaten their full-strength counterparts in beer competitions.

So what happened?

Partly, it's a technology thing, and partly a reflection of the extraordinary changes taking place in our beer drinking tastes.

Regarding the science bit, traditionally there are two basic ways of producing alcohol-free beer. The first is that you don't ferment it properly in the first place, so there's never any alcohol there. The problem with this is that fermentation doesn't just produce alcohol; it also creates many of the flavour compounds we know and love. Unfermented beer isn't beer and it doesn't taste like beer – it tastes of grain, mainly – "worty" in industry parlance.

The other method is to brew it properly and then take the alcohol out. Alcohol has a lower boiling point than water, so the traditional way to do this was basically to "cook" the beer. This process stews the ingredients and produces the boiled cabbage character that possibly still haunts your dreams.

Pete has curated the Festival's individually ticketed Drinks Theatre events. See details online.



In recent years, these processes have greatly improved, and have been joined by new alternatives, such as different yeasts that cause fermentation without producing much alcohol, or reverse osmosis filtration that manages to filter out alcohol without changing anything else. When these methods are used, sometimes in combination, they can produce beers that taste almost identical to the real thing, distinguishable only by a lighter mouthfeel without the perception of weight that alcohol gives.

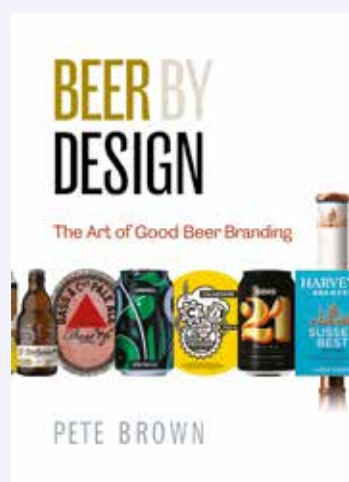
This new wave of "no- and low-alcohol" beers has come along at just the right time for many drinkers. Some commentators link the trend to the growing number of teetotallers, but this isn't quite right: something that tastes just like beer is the last thing a recovering alcoholic needs. And if someone has decided they're not interested in the taste of beer to start with, why would they be interested in this?

Low alcohol beers are like some plant-based foods. Someone morally offended by eating meat isn't going to want a burger than looks, tastes and even "bleeds" like meat, whereas someone who loves meat but wants to eat less of it might. Similarly, low-alcohol beers are drunk by people who love beer. Whether it's an alternative to endless, dreary pints of lime and soda in Dry January, a night in a pub when you have an early meeting the next day, or the first beer in what you suspect might turn into a long session, low alcohol beers have a place in an increasing number of drinkers' repertoires.

The rise of craft beer has also helped. If you were going for the most difficult beer-style to make a decent alcohol-free version of, it would be lager: its delicate character means there's nowhere for those unpleasant off-flavours to hide. Hoppy IPAs and deep, rich stouts have bags of character that can mask any side-effects of de-alcoholisation. That's why brewers such as Big Drop, who only brew no- and low-alcohol beers, are beating full-strength competitors with their stouts and pale ales at events such as the World Beer Awards.

One frustrating aspect of negotiating these beers is confusion over labelling. 0.5% alcohol is, in effect, no different from 0% alcohol. It's a naturally occurring level that is too low to have any intoxicating effect: fresh orange juice, bananas and ginger beer all contain up to 0.5% alcohol without any evil drinks industry villains having put it there to try to get you hooked. That's why most countries classify anything up to 0.5% as "alcohol-free". The UK government simply doesn't understand this, and insists that anything between 0.05% and 0.5% be classed as "low alcohol."

You can now get a decent range of low and no-alcohol beers in most supermarkets and bottle shops. The next stage, which is trickier, is to get them on draught in pubs. As soon as we can order a pint of beer just like everybody else, except ours has no alcohol in it, designated drivers and people on health kicks will finally be able to say goodbye to sugary drinks for kids and the feeling of being left out of the fun.



About Pete Brown

Pete Brown is a British author, journalist, broadcaster and consultant specialising in food and drink, especially the fun parts like beer, pubs, cider, bacon rolls and fish and chips. An Abergavenny regular, this year he is helping curate events in the Drinks Theatre.

Before becoming a writer, he worked in advertising. His recent book: *Beer by Design - The Art of Good Beer Branding* (published by Camra Books) traces the history of beer label design in the UK. He explores conventions, tricks and secrets of great design in a compelling and highly readable narrative.

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Getting on Board – The Seafood Industry in Wales

In Wales we are blessed. Not only do we have a beautiful coastline, but on our doorstep is an abundance of some of the finest quality seafood.

Helping raise awareness and encouraging people to seek out and celebrate Welsh produce is the focus for two Menter a Busnes projects; Port to Plate and Wales Seafood Cluster.

One seafood enterprise which has benefitted from the small business support offered by these projects is Atlantic Edge Oysters.

After years working with fishermen and shellfish farmers around Wales and the UK, marine biologist Dr Andy Woolmer took the plunge and established an oyster farm in Angle Bay, Pembrokeshire.

Still only in their first commercial harvest, Atlantic Edge Oysters are being snapped up by local chefs, keen to serve top quality and sustainable seafood to their customers.

But thanks to the power of social media, Atlantic Edge Oysters are appearing on restaurant menus across the county and beyond. They are also available from smaller local fish suppliers.

Andy said, “Provenance is everything with the

quality and flavour of an oyster. Known as their “merroir” oysters take on the essence of the marine environment in which they grow”.

This “merroir” reflecting the pristine marine environment around Pembrokeshire chimes with a lot of the chefs I’m working with as they value quality, provenance and local produce above all else.

“You could eat our oysters straight from the beach, so pure is the Atlantic waters around here. The water is gin clear and has an ‘A’ grade shellfish classification from the Food Standards Agency. Still, we have built a new purification unit - which adds another level of quality to our oysters and helps us maintain consistency of supply.”



Atlantic Edge Oysters are farmed in Angle Bay, Pembrokeshire.
© Dai Williams Photography.

Not only has Andy created a growing and sustainable local seafood business, but he is



helping to maintain the sensitive ecology of the Milford Haven Waterway.

Atlantic Edge’s oysters are grown among seagrass beds in a Marine Protected Area. So Andy has developed ways of growing them that leave the smallest of footprints.

“My objective is finding the balance between fishing, aquaculture and conservation. We have to develop sustainable approaches to fisheries and shellfish farming in Wales because the sea is not a museum or aquarium; it has to be a working sea.”

A crucial part of the business is supporting native oyster restoration, and Andy is working to bring the slow-growing native oyster (*Ostrea edulis*) back to prominence in the area.

Andy said, “Restorative aquaculture is at the heart of what we do. We grow native oysters for restoration projects and have recently put 40,000 oysters into Milford Haven.

“Rather than take from the sea, oyster farming can have a restorative effect on the surrounding

waters. It helps remove excess nutrients and provide habitat to create a healthier ecosystem for other marine life.”

Further information:
www.atlanticedgeoysters.co.uk

The Port to Plate project was formed to support the development of Wales’ seafood industry across the supply chain. The project carves out a distinct identity for seafood products from Wales and supports primary producers to improve the marketing of their product.

Led by Cywain, a Menter a Busnes project, the Wales Seafood Cluster encourages and facilitates collaborative working among companies and individuals in the seafood industry.

For further information please contact seafoodclusterwales@menterabusnes.co.uk

Discover producers in your area through an interactive #WelshSeafood map: menterabusnes.cymru/pip/our-producers



Shop Local, Cook Italian



Christine Smallwood is a food and travel writer and author of a series of books on the food and its producers in three Italian regions: *An Appetite for Umbria* then *Puglia* (for which she was awarded the Crest of Puglia by the President of the region) and *Lombardy*. She has worked as a consultant for the Culinary Institute of America and designs and leads tours for Martin Randall Travel. She is a member of the Guild of Food Writers, Co-Chair of the Abergavenny Food Festival and her latest book, *Italy - The World Vegetarian*, was published by Absolute-Bloomsbury in October 2020, and is available from local bookshops and Amazon.

An Italian restaurateur once said to me, “Why are our mothers great cooks? Because they know how to shop well, and recognising good, fresh produce is the basis of everything.” Clearly, it’s easier to shop well at places such as the Abergavenny Food Festival where so many superb producers gather. As of course it is in Italy, where they take their seasonality and vegetables seriously, meaning that from the Alpine climate in the north to the Arab, Moorish and Greek influences in the south, the variety in vegetable and vegetarian dishes is as marked as in other Italian food.

That these differences persist is helped by the fact that so many Italians grow vegetables, even if only on a modest garden patch. Homegrown is rarely enough to feed a family year-round, but it is enough to keep those families in touch with which crops are thriving and which are not. It is difficult to sideline vegetables when you appreciate the challenges of cultivating them.

“ *Good fresh produce is the basis of everything* ”

It’s understandable that in a country where keeping time to the seasonal rhythm of fresh produce is the norm, that locally grown veg are the purchasing default. For example, this recipe uses red onions from Tropea, a very sweet variety, adored by the Calabrians. This does not mean that it won’t be delicious when made with another type, but it won’t be the same as when eaten in situ.

So, should we stop recreating dishes without traditional Italian ingredients? Far from it. Chef Franco Taruschio caused a stir in the 1960s when he arrived in Wales from Le Marche and cooked Italian dishes using the best produce that was local to his new home. Because that’s the Italian way: get to know and learn from your food community and no matter the region, buy local.

Recipe:

Insalata di Patate, Cipolle Rosse e Uova - Potato, Red Onion and Egg Salad



Ingredients

Serves 4

- 800g waxy white potatoes, peeled and cut into 2-3cm chunks
- 400g sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 2-3 cm chunks
- 2 red onions (ideally Tropea), quartered and thinly sliced
- 6 hard-boiled eggs, peeled and roughly chopped
- 50g vegetarian Italian hard cheese, grated
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- Red or white wine vinegar
- Salt

Method

Cook both types of potatoes in separate pans of boiling salted water until tender enough that when pierced with a knife they fall off easily (approximately 10 – 12 minutes for the white potatoes and 12 – 15 minutes for the sweet potatoes). Once cooked, drain and set aside to cool.

Meanwhile, place the slices of onion in a bowl of cold water to soften.

When ready to serve, drain the onions and put them in a bowl with the potatoes and chopped eggs, and mix to combine. Season with salt, dress with olive oil and vinegar to taste and then sprinkle over the cheese.

Filippo Cogliandro, a chef in the region of Calabria, recalls this dish from his childhood. His mother would use potatoes and onions from the garden, occasionally adding chopped tomatoes when there was a glut. Sweet potatoes aren’t often thought of as a southern Italian vegetable, but Filippo explains that they are important in Calabria. ‘They were easy to grow for people who needed energy for their physically demanding jobs.’

Tropea is up the coast from Reggio-Calabria. Its eponymous red onions are very sweet, but use others if you can’t find a supply of the Calabrians’ favourite.



Rydym ni'n falch iawn o fod yn yr Ŵyl eleni, felly dewch i ymweld â'n trelar i flasau ambell damaid bach am ddim!

We are delighted to be at the Festival this year, so come and visit our trailer for some free tasters!

UNIGRYW I GYMRU. BLAS O'N GWLAD.

Mae Cig Oen Cymru yn flasus, yn faethlon ac yn gweddu i wahanol ddulliau o goginio. Gall serenau mewn cyrïau a phrydau tro-ffrio ac mae'n berffaith gyda saws mintys traddodiadol. Felly beth yw'r gyfrinach y tu ôl i'r ffaith ei fod mor unigryw? Wel, mae'r cyfan yn deillio o ble mae'n pori ac ar beth mae'n pori, a sut mae'n derbyn gofal.

Mae mwyafrif llethol o dir Cymru yn anaddas ar gyfer tyfu bwydydd a chnydau fel ffrwythau, llysiau a grawn. Mae ffermwyr da byw, a'u cyndeidiau o'u blaenau, felly wedi bod yn gweithio gyda'r hyn mae natur wedi'i roi iddyn nhw - ac fel mae'n digwydd mae Cig Oen Cymru, yn ogystal â Chig Eidion Cymru, yn ffynnu ar ddŵr ffynnon clir a'r glaswellt gorau.

Gyda chanrifoedd o brofiad ffermio, arbenigedd ac ymroddiad, ynghyd â'r dirwedd a'r hinsawdd, nid yw'r syndod bod gan Gymru'r holl gynhwysion i gael ei hystyried yn un o leoedd mwyaf cynaliadwy'r byd i gynhyrchu cig coch.

Rhowch gynnig ar y cig naturiol maethlon hwn yn ein ffolennau bach Cig Oen Cymru harissa wedi eu pobi mewn hambwrdd popty.

UNIQUELY WELSH. IT'S IN THE TASTE.

Delicious, nutritious and versatile, Welsh Lamb has a lot going for it. It can carry its own in curries and stir-fries and is perfect served with a traditional mint sauce. So what is the secret behind its uniqueness? Well, it is all down to where and what it grazes on and how it is cared for.

The vast majority of Wales' land is unsuitable for growing foods and crops such as fruit, vegetables and grains. So livestock farmers, and their ancestors before them, have been working with what nature has given them - and it just so happens that Welsh Lamb, as well as Welsh Beef, thrive on clear spring water and the finest grass.

With centuries of farming experience, expertise and dedication, coupled with the landscape and climate, it is no surprise that Wales has all the ingredients to be regarded as one of the world's most sustainable places to produce red meat.

Try this naturally nutritious meat in our delicious Welsh Lamb mini rumps harissa tray bake.

Ffolennau bach Cig Oen Cymru harissa wedi eu pobi mewn hambwrdd popty

Amser paratoi 20 munud

Amser coginio 50 munud

Ar gyfer 5+



Welsh Lamb mini rumps harissa tray bake

Prep time 20 minutes

Cook time 50 minutes

Serves 5+

Cynhwysion

- 4 – 5 darn ffolen Cig Oen Cymru PGI unigol (tua 180g yr un)
- 4 llwy fwrdd (jar bychan) past harissa
- 1 llwy fwrdd olew
- 6 ewin garleg, wedi eu plicio a'u haneru
- 2 lemnw, wedi eu torri'n dalpiâu
- 350g tatws bychain, wedi eu haneru os ydyn nhw'n fawr
- 1 winwsyn coch, wedi ei blicio a'i dorri'n dalpiâu
- 1 winwsyn, wedi ei blicio a'i dorri'n dalpiâu
- 1 pupur coch, wedi ei dorri'n giwbiau mawr
- 1 pecyn o frocoli tenau
- 300g tomatos bychain ar y winwydden

Dull

- Cynheswch y ffwrn i 190°C / 170°C ffan / Nwy 5.
- Gan ddefnyddio cyllell finio, crafwch batrwm siâp diemwnt ar y braster ar ben y ffolennau. Rhwbiwch y past harissa i mewn i'r braster a dros y cig i gyd.
- Mewn powlen fawr, cymysgwch y garleg, y lemnw, y tatws a'r pupur. Ychwanegwch yr olew a chymysgu i orchuddio'r holl llysiau.
- Rhowch y llysiau mewn hambwrdd popty dwfn, rhowch y darnau o gig oen ar eu pennau a rhoi'r cyfan yn y ffwrn am 30 munud. Os ydych chi'n hoffi eich cig oen yn binc, tynnwch allan o'r ffwrn ar ôl 30 munud a'i gadw'n gynnes, ac os am ei goginio'n dda, gadewch yn y ffwrn gyda'r llysiau.
- Ar ôl 30 munud, ychwanegwch y brocoli a'r tomatos a'u brwsio gyda'r suddion o'r hambwrdd. Gwasgwch y talpiâu o lemnw dros y llysiau a rhoi'r cyfan yn ôl yn y ffwrn am 20 munud.
- Gorffwyswch y cig am 5 munud cyn ei sleisio.
- Gweinwch gyda bara â hadau i amsugno'r suddion blasus.

Ingredients

- 4 – 5 individual PGI Welsh Lamb rump joints (approx. 180g each)
- 4 tbsp (small jar) harissa paste
- 1 tbsp oil
- 6 garlic cloves, peeled and halved
- 2 lemons, cut into wedges
- 350g small potatoes, halved if large
- 1 red onion, peeled and cut into wedges
- 1 onion, peeled and cut into wedges
- 1 red pepper, cut into large cubes
- 1 pack of tenderstem broccoli
- 300g cherry tomatoes on the vine

Method

- Heat the oven to 190°C / 170°C fan / Gas 5.
- Using a sharp knife, score a diamond pattern onto the fat on top of the rumps. Rub the harissa paste into the fat and all over the meat.
- In a large bowl, toss together the garlic, lemon, potatoes, onions and pepper. Add the oil and stir to coat all the vegetables.
- Place the vegetables in a deep oven tray, season, top with the lamb pieces and place in the oven for 30 minutes. If you like your lamb pink, remove the lamb from the oven after 30 minutes and keep it warm, for well done leave in with the vegetables.
- After 30 minutes, add the broccoli and tomatoes and brush with the juices in the tray. Squeeze the lemon wedges over the vegetables and return to the oven for 20 minutes.
- Rest the meat for 5 minutes before slicing.
- Serve with seeded bread to mop up the delicious juices.

From the Veg Patch



Kathy Slack is a cook and writer. As well as developing recipes, she hosts supper clubs and cookery classes, and gives demonstrations. She has a column in Borough Market's award-winning magazine, *Market Life*, and a regular slot on BBC Radio Oxford. She won a Young British Foodies award in 2019 and in the same year her blog, Gluts and Gluttony, won a Soil Association award.

Her latest book, *From the Veg Patch*, is a celebration of growing and eating vegetables across the seasons. 'I have chosen ten of my favourite, most beloved vegetables and fruits and created, for each of them, ten recipes that make the plant the star of the show.' *From the Veg Patch* is published by Ebury and is available from the Festival bookstore. Kathy will be cooking with fire at the Festival on the Sunday.

Recipe:

Griddled Helda Beans with Goat's Cheese, Herbs and Flowers



Ingredients

Serves 4. Cooking time: 15 minutes

- 700g Helda beans, or other flat beans, such as young runner beans if you can't find Helda, topped and tailed
- 6 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1/2 tsp runny honey
- 1 tsp cider vinegar
- 2 spring onions, finely chopped
- a small bunch of mixed green herbs (parsley, mint, dill, sorrel, chives, basil...)
- 125g soft, creamy goat's cheese edible flowers (chives, nasturtiums, pot marigolds...) to finish (optional)

Method

Set a griddle pan over a high heat and leave it to get really hot, or prepare your barbecue grill.

Toss the beans in 2 tablespoons of the olive oil. Place them in the hot griddle pan or on the barbecue grill and cook for 2–3 minutes, then turn them over and cook for the same amount of time on the other side, so they become branded with dark char lines on both sides. Depending on the size of your griddle or barbecue, you may need to do this in batches to achieve uniform charring. Once cooked, transfer to a heat-proof mixing bowl.

In a bowl, whisk together the remaining olive oil and the honey, vinegar and spring onions, along with a pinch of salt. Tear the herbs and add them too. Mix, then check the balance of flavours and adjust as needed.

Pour the dressing over the warm beans and muddle everything together gently. Arrange the dressed beans on a serving platter. Daub pieces of goat's cheese on top, shower over a confetti of petals to finish, if using, and serve.

Helda beans are like runner beans 2.0. They are flat and long like runners, but smooth-skinned and stringless – a runner bean after a facelift. They grow prolifically, reliably and untroubled by pests, but if you don't grow your own, they are easy to get hold of in shops, often sold as flat beans or stringless beans.

The griddling of the beans can be done, excellently, on the grill of a barbecue over a medium-high direct heat or in a griddle pan.

I almost always serve this dish at barbecues, scattering generous handfuls of herbs (and edible flowers if I can find them) on top with crusty bread alongside. It's a blousy, relaxed dish that has lazy summer lunch written all over it.

Fish and Fowl ~ joining the dots to save our rivers

by Kim Waters

“ Pollution is the physical expression of corruption ”

George Monbiot



Kim Waters with his son Max

The fabulous AFF 2021 market hall decorations (showcased on page 15), designed by the brilliant Bettina Reeves and made by the good folk of Abergavenny, tell a deeper story than just celebrating the extraordinary fauna of the Usk Valley.

For me, they connect food, farming, economics and our natural environment. The species highlighted in the installation struggle to exist in a threatened world. A toxic soup of conflicting interests (economics, productivity, farming practices and human behaviours) beggars belief.

Food isn't optional. And our existing system of food production has serious issues to address. We must all understand that our own survival, including health and wellbeing, depends on getting this ecosystem back on a sustainable footing.

One thing the pandemic has taught us is the interconnectivity of all things. Our failures boomerang back and bite big. 'I'm all right Jack' complacency won't wash any more. We need to break through that. We mustn't say, 'we did nothing, but our children will do better'. That's an abdication of responsibility. I want my grandchildren to know that Grandad really had a go. As my Twitter account says, 'I am from Newport and not going down without a fight...'

The statistics are pretty stark, with declines in some river species since the 1970s of up to 90%. Salmon, eels, shad, trout, and otters are the obvious stars of the River Usk. But no less important are the microscopic organisms and invertebrates enabling the whole ecosystem's symbiotic dance.

My motivation in being involved in the food sector is to learn and grow my knowledge of a sustainable food system, and if I can contribute to positive change along the way, then all the better.

Tuning in

My first job, at the age of fourteen, was working as a butcher's boy in Newport. I started to learn about meat – the best cuts, what to look for as a sign of quality etc – and with left-overs coming my way on a Friday, the Waters family feasted royally at the weekend. My knowledge started at the point the carcass came into the shop, and ended when our Mum turned my little bonus into a delicious meal.

Aside from biology, I wasn't much into schoolwork, being more interested in spending time outdoors. I fished a lot. People who don't know about fishing think it's pretty boring – just

sitting on a bank until that eureka moment when the line goes taut. But there's so much more to it. Even at a young age I was tuning into the wider environment. I learned to 'read' the river in order to land my catch, whilst enjoying its beauty. But I knew nothing of how the fish had come to be there, the delicate complexities of that ecosystem, or the consequences of human intervention, by design or default.

My career took me from Newport into a bigger multi-cultural world where I enjoyed the culinary delights of Hong Kong, India, Sweden, Turkey and Africa. And gradually I came to make those connections – how food, culture and nature all dovetail. Becoming a parent was also a wake-up call. I could see so much of what I took for granted as a child just slipping away.

Current thinking

My continued love of fishing has led me to concentrate on the welfare of the UK's river system, particularly in Wales. Until recently I was a trustee of the Wye and Usk Foundation – part of the Rivers Trust movement. I've now left and started the Welsh Rivers Union. We want to represent rivers pure and simple, and not be mediated by any other agenda.

It's sad to say that Governments (past and present), institutions, NGOs and a plethora of charities have individually and collectively failed to reverse negative trends. Too many competing agendas. And we know that water companies aren't being held accountable (a recent report shows they've all failed to meet environmental targets).

At the Welsh Rivers Union we want to make local communities aware of the state of their rivers and streams, and to give them the tools and legal processes to implement change. We're delighted that Feargal Sharkey (singer turned environmental campaigner and trustee of River Action UK) has now also come on board with us.

Killer bird shit

But let's move on from the general to the specific – one pollutant that's part of our food chain and illustrates the enormity of the task ahead. The Usk and Wye Rivers are two of the worst phosphate-polluted waterways in Wales and that's saying something. Yes, banks of willows sweep the surface. It is indeed a picture-postcard sight in places. But deep waters tell a darker tale. George Monbiot, (writer, journalist, political and environmental activist) exposes the culprits.

"The Monnow (a tributary of the River Wye) itself is dying at astonishing, heartbreaking speed. When I canoed it 10 years ago, the stones were clean. Now they are so slimy that you can scarcely stand up. In hot weather, the entire river stinks of chicken shit, from the 10 million birds being reared in the catchment. The free-range farms are the worst: the birds carpet the fields with their highly reactive dung, which is then washed into the catchment by rain. Several times a year, algal blooms now turn the clear river cloudy. The fish gasp for breath. Aquatic insects suffocate." (The Guardian)

What route will the Welsh Rivers Union take? We already have some crucial tools to hand – the Water Framework Directive and the Habitats Directive – both European Law Directives now written into UK law. We will use these to pressurise the Welsh Government and, more importantly, the Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales, to fulfil their statutory duties. If necessary, we will resort to legal action for failure to manage Special Areas of Conservation and Sites of Special Scientific Interest. We've already had pushback from parties with vested interests in maintaining the status quo, but that's only to be expected.

Call to action

What you can do. Get the facts. Get the context. Start by watching rivercivie.tv – a first documentary presented by George Monbiot on 14 July with a clear five-point action plan for both the Government and individuals. It calls on the Government to find the polluters, fund the enforcers, monitor the mess, buffer the banks, let us test. As an individual you can write to your MP, sign the petition at riveractionuk.com, join or start a friends group, campaign for bathing water status, and lastly, respect your river.

Meanwhile, Abergavenny Food Festival 2021 will continue to give voice to the debate around food, production, sustainability, economic models and great produce that can sustain both a thriving human economy and a biodiverse natural world.

In our Dome venue (in the castle grounds) we will be having a discussion centred on finding a different way to feed ourselves – how we can adapt our food systems to meet the challenge of climate change. Chaired by Dr Angelina Sanderson Bellamy (Associate Professor of Food Systems at UWE Bristol), participants will include Chris Smaje, who swapped an academic career as a social scientist for a small farm in Somerset, and is author of a ground-breaking debut book 'Small Farm Future'; and Phil Haughton, owner of the Better Food Co (an organic retail business) and author of 'Food for Thought: Celebrating the joy of eating well and living better'.

At times it all seems we are deluged by bad news, but I am more than encouraged by the quality of dialogue, understanding and, most importantly, action in this space. Organisations like Nature-Friendly Farmers (@NFFNUK), The Food and Farming Commission (@FFC_Commission), The Soil Association (@SoilAssociation), Friends of the Upper Wye (@FriendsUpperWye) and local food producers like the Langtons in Crickhowell (@langtonsfarm) and Organic Black Welsh Lamb (www.blackwelshlamb.com) are, for me, already starting to join the dots.



Simple Pleasures

Cooking over fire – a routine part of our ancestors' daily life. But with the advent of electric ovens, and even gas barbecues, it's an art we had largely forgotten. That's now changed. Why? An unexpected outcome of 2020/21 has been a revival of the love of cooking over flames. We've been hungry for new adventures at home. As a tactile experience there's nothing quite like it. And there's so much enjoyment to be had from the process – slow-paced, elemental, and above all, convivial.

This trend has led to one local company, FirepitsUK, seeing a huge increase in demand. Designed specifically with cooking in mind, their range of 40 fire pits and outdoor kitchens are compatible with a variety of cooking accessories. This includes the ingenious BBQ Swing Arm Grill, which allows for precision cooking and can be removed so as to enjoy the radiance of the flames long into the night.

What's more, these particular fire pits are a sustainable choice. Forged by hand just 5 miles from Abergavenny, FirepitsUK's products are made from mild steel from Port Talbot. Construction methods ensure a long life, providing food, warmth and fun. Built to withstand the whims of British weather, they can be utilised all year round.

FirepitsUK are official sponsors of the 2021 Abergavenny Food Festival and you will be able to see some headline guest performers cooking on their fire pits at the Castle. And for those of you who've got Party at The Castle tickets, the fire pits have the added benefit of keeping you cosy well into the night. In the meantime, check out the full range at

www.firepitsuk.co.uk



Monmouthshire's Newest Best Kept Secret

DISCOVER CALON RHAGLAN AT RAGLAN COUNTRY ESTATE

Nestled just outside of the village of Raglan, Raglan Country Estate has taken over what was previously the Raglan Parc Golf Club, with a vision of connecting people to nature and creating unforgettable memories with every visit.

Our aptly named restaurant 'Calon Rhaglan', meaning The Heart of Raglan is at the centre of this vision with a seasonal menu that steps up to the plate when it comes to sustainability and sensational flavours. Led by our talented team including head chef Adam Whittle and Sous Chef Robert Maw who are creating both elegant and comforting dishes with elevated flavours and textures in a modern British style. All of which, created from fresh local produce, hand-selected cuts of meat and a selection of vegan and vegetarian dishes.

Our menu has been designed to satisfy every need - from our small plates, thoughtful children's menu and even a toddler's menu to come; all of which change with the seasons to give you more to discover throughout the year.



We want you to know exactly where your food comes from, which is why we are developing our own gardens to produce vegetables, herbs and soon to come chickens. We also work directly with welsh businesses and local farms to support the local community to give you delicious food that is healthier for you, the local area and the planet.

Our value of sustainability expands beyond the walls of the restaurant and garden extending across the whole estate. From our adventure playground, our parkland and our 9-hole golf course and much more to come... we focus on developing projects that help the natural environment of our countryside so that you can enjoy the beauty of our estate knowing that each activity you engage in is supporting positive change.

We have lots of new and exciting leisure activities to get involved with, coming to the estate soon. You can sign up to receive our updates and special offers here: www.raglancountry.estate



Seasonal, Sustainable and Luxurious. Enjoy A taste of Calon Rhaglan in your own home.



CLEMENTINE, CRANBERRY, WHITE CHOCOLATE AND TARRAGON DESSERT. SERVES 4

1 WHITE CHOCOLATE & TARRAGON ICE CREAM

- 284g semi skimmed milk
- 142g double cream
- 4 egg yolks
- 60g caster sugar
- 1/2 tbsp liquid glucose
- 100g white chocolate
- 20g tarragon

This will need to be made ideally the day before required. Firstly combine the milk and cream and scald. Meanwhile whisk together the egg yolks, sugar & glucose. Pour milk & cream over egg mix while whisking. Return to pan and add tarragon. Place back onto heat and cook till thickened (custard consistency). Take off heat, add white chocolate and mix until melted. Pass custard through a fine sieve and cool in a bowl over ice. Once cooled churn and store in freezer until needed.

2 CRANBERRY & TARRAGON JELLY

- 500g cranberry juice
- Caster sugar to taste
- Chopped tarragon to taste
- 4 gelatine leaves

Soak gelatine leaves in cold water. Gently warm the cranberry juice and sugar. Once warm add the gelatine and chopped tarragon. Set onto your serving plate or into a container and store in fridge for a few hours.

3 HONEYCOMB

- 188g caster sugar
- 25g honey
- 60g liquid glucose
- 30g water
- 8g bicarbonate soda

Put sugar, honey, glucose and water into a pan and place on a medium heat. Cook until a medium caramel colour is achieved. Take off heat and mix in bicarbonate soda straight away. Pour into a grease proof paper lined container and leave to cool and set. Break into Pieces to serve.

4 TARRAGON SPONGE

- 100g cater sugar
- 50g unsalted butter
- 1 1/2 eggs
- 100g plain flour
- 5g baking powder
- 2g bicarbonate soda
- 60g semi skimmed milk
- Chopped tarragon

Cream together the sugar and butter till pale in colour then slowly add eggs. Gradually then add the sieved flour, baking powder and bicarbonate soda until combined. Finally, gradually add the milk and finish the sponge batter with chopped tarragon. Pour into a non-stick or grease proof lined tin and bake at 160oc for 35 mins. Alternatively cook in small individual moulds and reduce the cooking time. Once cooked cool on a wire rack.

To garnish add clementine segments and tarragon leaves.



Abergavenny to Glasgow and back

Tracing the pathways to action

SUE PRITCHARD, CHIEF EXECUTIVE
THE FOOD, FARMING AND COUNTRYSIDE COMMISSION

**After last year's absence, it is lovely
to look forward to the buzz of
Abergavenny Food Festival again.**

It was just one of many missed events. 2020 was supposed to be the 'super year', when the global community came together to kickstart a decade of serious action on the climate and nature crises. It was due to culminate at the climate summit, COP26, in Glasgow, but Covid-19 interrupted those plans too. Now, countries are making 2021 the super year, building up again to Glasgow. And citizens around the world are looking to global leaders to commit to actions that will reverse the climate and nature crises and invest in a fair and green recovery from the pandemic.

As well as celebrating food and food cultures, Abergavenny Food Festival has always taken the politics of food seriously, with a lively programme of debates on what we mean by a sustainable, safe, fair, resilient and – yes – joyous food system.

Global food systems are huge contributors to climate change and biodiversity loss. Deforestation and changing land use for agriculture, and the overuse of synthetic fertilisers, pesticides, herbicides and antibiotics, has led to massive loss of wildlife, air and water pollution, and growing antibiotic resistance. This is not only about the

devastating impacts on distant ecosystems like the Amazon and Indonesian rainforests; it is also much closer to home, on rivers like the Usk and the Wye. Due in part to pollution from intensive farming and poultry production (upstream) in Powys, Shropshire and Herefordshire, these precious river ecosystems are threatened.

So, whilst global food systems feed more people safely than at any time in human history, it's clear that this has come at a very high price, both to the planet and to our health. Diet-related illnesses like Type 2 diabetes, heart disease and obesity are spiralling, with massive costs to our health services and to our wellbeing. The most likely culprits are the heavily-promoted, unhealthy, ultra-processed junk foods. And if food waste were a country, it would be the third highest emitter of greenhouse gases, just below China and the US. More people than ever are struggling to buy healthy food or having to rely on food banks, yet at the same time nearly £20billion worth of food is wasted in the UK.

**This is an exciting time
for Wales to show leadership,
in this critical year of
global collaboration.**

So what can we do? At the Food, Farming and Countryside Commission we know that what we grow, and how we grow it, what we eat, and how we eat it, is at the heart of meaningful responses to the climate, nature and health crises. Building on the latest research, we say that it is both possible to act on these and to feed a growing UK population healthy and sustainably produced food from viable farm businesses – if we put the right conditions in place. And that means a complete reset – of farming, manufacturing, processing and packaging, as well as our diets and food waste.

Leading this reset is the global movement of farmers, growers, businesses, green and citizen groups behind agroecology, who are working together towards a sustainable and just future for people and planet. Building on the latest environmental science and regenerative farming practices, it is about farming in harmony with

nature and going with the grain of place; protecting soils, rivers and peatlands, increasing hedgerows and trees to improve biodiversity, integrating livestock for natural fertilisation and ecosystem health, using breeds that thrive on pasture. It is also about supporting locally-led food systems, where communities can work together to decide how best to respond to the climate and nature crises, for a green recovery with community wellbeing at its heart – including moving away from food charity (as important as this is to many people right now) to more dignified, long-term responses to food insecurity.

Wales already has some important building blocks in place. The Well-being of Future Generations Act, and the Environment Act, to name two, provide some of the levers needed for bold, radical and practical actions. FFCC's Wales report encourages Welsh government to build on these strong foundations, to take action across the whole food system, placing healthy food for everyone at the heart of local plans. This means investing in good green jobs; enabling new and existing farming businesses to grow more healthy food sustainably, while restoring nature; using the power of public procurement to back Welsh producers, and getting healthy local food in every school, hospital and canteen; ensuring that it's easy and affordable to buy fresh, local fruit and veg in every town and high street; and that our town centres and villages become places where people can meet together again over delicious, nourishing food. This is an exciting time for Wales to show leadership, in this critical year of global collaboration.

To learn more about all of this work, sign up to our newsletter at ffcc.co.uk and, for information about the upcoming COP26, have a look at ffcc.co.uk/land-unlocked where you'll find podcasts, articles, videos and conversations with some of those who are best placed to influence this critical global event.

We're looking forward to seeing you at Abergavenny Food Festival where we'll be hosting a conversation on what we can all do to play our part.

FIND OUT MORE
[FFCC.CO.UK/LAND-UNLOCKED](https://ffcc.co.uk/land-unlocked)

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Little Farm, Big Ideas

By Dianne Spencer

Local Heroes start quiet revolution.

A group of South Wales farmers, growers and entrepreneurs have ambitious plans to rebuild the local food economy – starting, quite literally, from the ground up.

Katherine and David Langton started their farming careers four years ago, setting up two beehives in a tiny concrete yard before branching out into growing microgreens in a 9ft x 9ft boxroom. So it's no surprise to discover that for them, small is beautiful.

"We've been sold the idea that to farm properly, you need vast acres of land, big tractors, and a lot of investment, but small spaces can be highly productive, as well as economically, environmentally and socially sound," says Katherine.

She and David currently lease a sloping south-facing field on the outskirts of Crickhowell in the Brecon Beacons, growing organic-certified salad and vegetables in two large polytunnels and a precisely plotted patchwork of some 200 narrow outdoor beds totalling around 1.5 acres in all.

The first thing that strikes you is the sheer abundance of produce packed into this small space – masses of feathery-topped carrots, vibrant green and red lettuces, blossom-laden broad beans humming with bees... And in the almost tropical atmosphere of the polytunnels, serried rows of tomatoes and cucumbers scramble skyward up strings, flanked by salad onions and basil.

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From field to farm

But perhaps the most remarkable thing is that they've achieved all this in less than 18 months, using mostly hand tools and human labour. "We signed the lease on an empty grass field at the start of March 2020," says Katherine, who studied Environment and Sustainability at Staffordshire University. "Then lockdown happened and overnight we lost all our microgreens customers because we sold direct to hotels and restaurants and they all had to close."

It also meant radically revising their business plan. "We originally intended to grow salad and veg for our wholesale customers," explains David, a data analyst. "But with food shortages at the start of lockdown and everyone desperate for home deliveries, we quickly realised veg boxes were the way to go."

The couple delivered the first of their weekly boxes in early August 2020. "Ten people had already signed up," says Katherine. "So I just posted on Facebook that we had 20 more medium-sized boxes for £15 each, and we sold them all straightaway."

Over the following weeks they doubled their customer base through word of mouth, and continued offering veg throughout the winter, scaling back to small £10 boxes to reflect reduced production. Now, with summer in full swing, they're harvesting enough each week to supply up to 100 households, although this will drop down again over winter.

Building soil health

Part of the reason the Langtons were so quick to establish their market garden is that they're following the highly efficient and productive methods developed by pioneering small-scale farms such as Ridgedale in Sweden (ridgedalepermaculture.com), Les Jardins de la Grelinette in Canada (themarketgardener.com), and Neversink in the US (neversinkfarm.com).

"These people share all their knowledge online," says Katherine, "so I basically spent three years watching their YouTube videos."

The focus for these "bio-intensive micro farms" is regenerative farming, which means building soil health and fertility by layering on organic matter, and – crucially – not damaging fragile soil structure with deep digging or mechanical tilling.

"We simply kill off the grass and weeds by covering the ground with black tarpaulins for a few weeks, then create the beds with a mulch of well-rotted compost," Katherine explains. "It feeds the soil, saves huge amounts of time and effort, and we can plant or sow into the beds straightaway."



They also grow their crops much more densely than convention dictates, so the plant canopies touch. This blocks out light and prevents weeds from germinating. "Plus shaded soil loses a lot less moisture, so we don't need to water as often: important as we're on a water meter."

Healthier, more fertile soil means healthier plants, faster growth and more abundant harvests: And because this kind of farming avoids harmful chemical pesticides and herbicides, it helps boost biodiversity too. But there are other less obvious benefits. Enriching the soil with organic matter locks carbon away, actively reducing the amount of CO2 in the atmosphere. Carbon-rich soil also holds massively more water; great in times of drought, but also key in helping to prevent the kind of destructive flooding we're increasingly seeing with climate change.

Facing up to challenges

Setting up the farm hasn't all been plain sailing. "Just finding the land took us 18 months," says Katherine. "There's no way we could afford to buy land here, so renting was the only option."

She acknowledges that for conventional landowners, the kind of farming they're doing is a bit of a leap: "It's not like renting out a field for grazing. We've needed to put up structures, and bring in water and electricity." They've also added livestock, including some 200 laying hens (known collectively as the Suzis) and three friendly Tamworth pigs. "On top of that, market gardening is considered a change of use, so our farmer landlord has lost his subsidy for the area under cultivation, and our rent reflects that."

Funding for small-scale farms is also an issue: current government subsidies and capital grants rule out anything smaller than 12.4 acres, so while the Langtons have poured the profits from their fledgling microgreens business into their new venture, they've also had to find additional cash to cover their start-up costs.



Rebuilding a local food economy

Step forward Our Food (our-food.org), a local project established under the aegis of the Conservation Farming Trust, a small not-for-profit company set up to advance agroecological farming in the UK.

"Currently," says project manager Duncan Fisher, "the vast majority of food grown in this region is exported straight out, and the vast majority of what we eat is imported in. Our aim is to find ways to rebuild a vibrant food economy across Monmouthshire and the Brecon Beacons, one that puts responsible regenerative farming at the heart of the food chain, delivering good jobs and decent wages, along with healthy and nutritious local food for local people at a fair price."

New farming enterprises like the Langtons are key to this plan. "So providing a loan towards their start-up costs seemed a very good-value way of getting things off the ground," says Duncan. "International models* show us that this kind of small-scale regenerative farming really works, and it's exciting to see these techniques being tested here in Wales. On rented land, the start-up costs are relatively low – around £20,000-30,000. It's highly productive, with an acre providing vegetables for up to 100 people during the growing season. And it's quick to generate revenue – up to £20,000 per acre within a year. Better still it creates more employment than conventional farming – around one full-time job per acre. And then there are the additional benefits of carbon capture, low road miles, biodiversity and food security."

Duncan also sees small-scale market gardens as key drivers for change, “because once you’re selling direct to local customers, there are opportunities for other producers to come on board. The Langtons are already demonstrating this in a small way, selling their farmer landlord’s organic apple juice alongside their veg boxes.”

To that end, the project has launched an ambitious plan to find 1200 acres – and the people to farm them – across Monmouthshire and the Brecon Beacons. Why 1200? “Based on the productivity levels of well-established small-scale regenerative farms, that’s the amount of land we’d need to produce high-quality weekly veg boxes for all 56,400 households in our area. In turn, this would stimulate a whole new local food economy supplying households, restaurants and public facilities, as well as markets in nearby cities.”

Pioneering a new system

It may sound like a pipe dream, but it’s already happening, with at least seven other regenerative growers within a 15-mile radius of Langtons Farm. One of these is Orchard Acre Market Garden, in Llanfapley, east of Abergavenny. Growers Alice Sidwell and her partner Jonny Watler are into their third month of supplying veg boxes to local customers. “We already grew our own vegetables here, giving away the surplus to family, neighbours and friends,” says Alice. “But lockdown got us thinking that maybe we could turn it into a profitable, sustainable business.”

The couple currently cultivate around a third of an acre, and have chosen a community-supported agriculture (CSA) model, whereby customers sign up for a whole season of veg, paying upfront or in instalments.



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“ *Access to good food is a fundamental human right* ”

“Having that commitment definitely helps us with planning,” says Alice. “But it’s also about food justice. Access to good food is a fundamental human right, so we asked our customers how much they were prepared to pay for good fresh local food, with the aim of developing what we called a ‘solidarity fund’.”

The result is that they now have 19 paid-up members, some of whom pay a little more, some a little less, according to their means. But crucially, after balancing the payments, there’s enough left over to fund the equivalent of eight small veg boxes per week for the Abergavenny Food Bank.

A few miles away in Gilwern, Rob and Zoe Proctor have just set up a CSA scheme, with plans to supply weekly boxes for some 40 local households. It’s part of the couple’s wider plan to

achieve One Planet Development status for their land, which, if successful, would provide a way for them to live and work sustainably on site.

So how do the Langtons feel about so many other growers following in their footsteps?

“It’s a positive thing,” says David. “The more people see and hear about farms like us, the more it becomes the norm. Plus it gives us an opportunity to share ideas with other growers and bulk buy equipment together, which helps keep everyone’s costs down.” Katherine agrees. “There’s no way we can meet local demand, so there’s only one solution: we need more small farms.”

*Figures based on JM Fortier, The Market Gardener, 2014, and reduced for the different context of Wales. (www.themarketgardener.com)

• To follow the work of Our Food and the 1200 Project, and to receive invitations to discussions and events, please email hello@our-food.org. Our Food is funded by the Welsh Government (delivered by the National Lottery Heritage Fund), the Rural Development Programme and the Brecon Beacons National Park Sustainable Development Fund.



Camper van cooking

Chefs Claire Thomson and Matt Williamson believe that life on wheels doesn't have to mean eating out of cans and packets.

They're into the romance of fireside cooking and making camper van feasts special. Their new book offers seventy recipes and meal solutions to make road trips a breeze. Find out how to enjoy life on the wild side with easy lunches, greedy brunches and leisurely picnics.

Claire and Matt are hoping to come to the Festival in 2022, but in the meantime here's a recipe to try out. *Camper Van Cooking* is published by Quadrille and available from the Festival bookstore.

Claire Thomson is a chef and food writer, contributing to *The Guardian*, *Telegraph*, *BBC Good Food* and *Countryfile Magazine*. She has appeared with the BBC on *Saturday Kitchen* and *Woman's Hour*. Previous books include *Home Cookery Year*, *Art of the Larder*, and *New Kitchen Basics*.

Recipe:

Sausage Hotdogs with Fried Sauerkraut and Gherkin Ketchup Mayonnaise

This is quite possibly the best version you will ever eat, camping or not. By all means adjust and use vegetarian sausages if you like. It's the combination of grilled hot dog jammed in a bun with melted cheese, fried sauerkraut and a punchy, piquant sauce of chopped gherkins, ketchup, horseradish and mayonnaise that makes this recipe. Sauerkraut delivers instant flavour and is a perfect ingredient to take camping. When fried briefly so as to caramelise a little, it's incalculably good.

Ingredients

Serves 4

- 4 large sausages, high meat content with little or no rusk
- 200g sauerkraut, (approx. 1 cup drained weight)
- 100g sliced or grated cheese (approx. 4 slices)
- 4 hotdog buns, split down the middle

For the dressing:

- 2 pickled gherkins, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp ketchup
- 60g or 4 tbsp mayonnaise
- ½ small onion or 1 shallot, very finely chopped
- 2 tbsp horseradish sauce
- 1 tbsp mustard
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste



Method

Over a moderate grill, cook the sausages, turning often, until cooked through, about 10 or so minutes.

Mix all of the dressing ingredients together in a bowl and season to taste with salt and pepper. In a small pan, or directly on the grill plate, fry the sauerkraut until brown in places. 3 or 4 minutes should do over a moderate heat.

Place the hotdog buns filled with the cheese wrapped in tinfoil on the grill and warm just enough to begin melting the cheese. Remove the buns from the tinfoil, insert the sausages on top of the melted cheese, top with the sauerkraut and the dressing to serve.





Sauce It is proud to be associated with Abergavenny Food Festival as the trusted distributors of chef-collated hampers, exceptional produce and artisan ingredients from stall holders and farmers at this year's festival, and onwards as your 'go to' source for your favourite foods.

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- Matt Tebbutt

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Thanks to our top tech team, headed by one of our directors, Jerry Kew, you will receive clear orders from our system with single click replies to keep both us and you up to date. No logins and no extra admin, just a clear and concise revenue stream.



Suppliers get in contact with us:
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Meet the Team

Cwrdd â'r Tîm

A big thank you to our year-round core team and Board members, and to our additional staff and volunteers who work over the weekend to ensure everything runs as smoothly as possible.

Festival Team

Chief Executive **Kim Waters**
Communications **Cathy Green**
Drinks Theatre **Julia Scully**
Finance **Eleanor Hunter**
Fire Cooking Stage **Spencer Rouse**
Market Hall Venue **Roo Hasan**
Markets **Ceri Elms**
Operations **Ben Robbins**
Operations **Liesel Townley**
Programmer **Martin Orbach**
Programmer, Drinks Theatre **Pete Brown**
Social Media **Laura Stagg**
Sponsorship **Scott Grant Crichton**
Systems **Caius Shaw**
The Castle Venue **Alison Parry**
Website & Design **Doc & Tee**

The Board

Christine Smallwood (Co-Chair),
Martha Roberts (Co-Chair) **Jonathan Child**,
Sarah Dickens, **William Griffiths**, **Ruth Tudor**

Patrons

Alun Griffiths, **Franco Taruschio**

#AFF2022 will take place on
17th and 18th September 2022.

Sign up to our news bulletins via the website and
keep your eye on @afoodfestival for latest news.



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