

[Sense of Place, Sense of Monmouthshire](#)

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Sense of Place, Sense of Monmouthshire

Visitors come to Monmouthshire to experience its fascinating heritage and culture, its spectacular landscapes, its people, its food, its language – all the things that make it distinctive. Monmouthshire is the epitome of rurality – small market towns (Abergavenny, Monmouth, Caldicot and Chepstow) and a rich tapestry of agricultural land dotted with villages. Monmouthshire has a reputation for producing wonderful local food and arts and craft. Indeed, Monmouthshire is the only county in Wales to have been given the title of Top Food Tourism Destination at the 'Wales The True Taste Awards'.

Your visitors have probably driven past supermarkets and retail parks, motorway service stations, motels and fast food outlets to get to you. They are looking for a Sense of Place not placelessness. You must meet and exceed your visitors' expectations. Remember, you never have a second chance to make a first impression!

A Sense of Monmouthshire should embrace everything that is unique about the area - special and memorable qualities that resonate with local people and visitors. Local communities and businesses often forget that their everyday qualities are often part of a holiday experience for visitors and can add value and enrich that experience for visitors.

This resource is designed to help you to identify ways in which you can enhance your understanding of what Monmouthshire is all about. It is a very practical and should spark ideas of how you can enhance your business. By exploring the resource, and Monmouthshire itself, you should find ways in which you can develop a strong Sense of Monmouthshire in your business and provide your visitors with a unique experience that will make them want to return.

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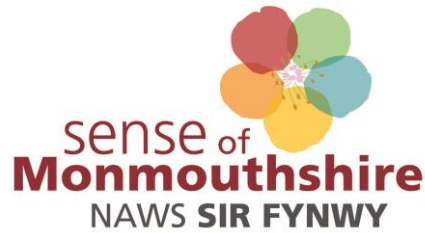


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Creating a Sense of Monmouthshire

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- Does your business have a Sense of Place or could it be just anywhere – placeless and lacking in authenticity? Is it just like everywhere else – effectively nowhere or is it somewhere special?
- If someone landed in your business would they find something that gives your business a special relationship to its location?
- Are you proud of your location and its richness and is that pride reflected in how your business presents itself - drawing on that richness to give your business a sense of identity – roots – that make it distinctive?
- What are the distinctive sights, sounds and experiences that make Monmouthshire special, the unique and memorable qualities that resonate with local people and visitors alike?

If you are reading this then you are probably running a tourism or tourism-related business in Monmouthshire. Maybe you run a hotel, guest house or bed and breakfast. Maybe you specialise in serving food and drink to your visitors - a tea shop, a restaurant, a pub, a shop, an art gallery, tourist attraction or an activity centre.

This guide aims to do three things. Firstly, to help you understand who visits Monmouthshire. Secondly, to learn more about Monmouthshire. Thirdly, to guide you through the practical steps you can take to exploit Monmouthshire's rich culture and heritage and enhance your business by creating a stronger Sense of Place.

There are six sections covering the main aspects of Sense of Monmouthshire:

- Monmouthshire people
- Monmouthshire and the Welsh language
- Monmouthshire's buildings
- Monmouthshire food and drink
- Monmouthshire arts and creativity
- Monmouthshire's outdoors

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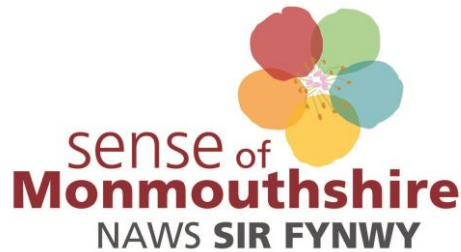


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Understanding your audience – who visits Monmouthshire....?

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Monmouthshire has a range of traditional historical attractions, food, arts and crafts events, festivals and a beautiful landscape to encourage visits. Monmouthshire is a leading food destination in Wales, which serves to attract a large proportion of visitors.

The natural environment is one of Monmouthshire's primary assets, from its highest point at Chwarel y Fan to the extensive coastal lowlands on the Caldicot Levels. There are approximately 5198 foot paths covering 2196.5km which encourage walkers, cyclists and horse-riders.

According to Monmouthshire STEAM (Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor) 2015, 2.95m people visited Monmouthshire in 2015, contributing £186.65 million to the local economy and providing 10.1% of local jobs. Events such as the Abergavenny Food Festival attract significant visitors to the county. Monmouthshire has two internationally recognised Areas of Natural Beauty, including parts of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Brecon Beacons National Park.

It is estimated that Monmouthshire has at least 26 surviving castle sites and the number of castles built in the region is reputed to be the greatest of any region in Britain, with more castles per square mile than anywhere else.

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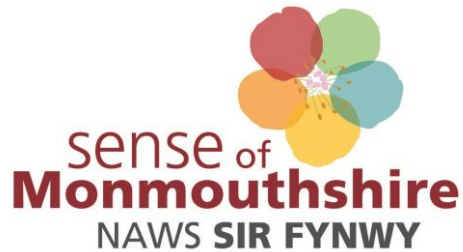
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Action Points for Getting Started on your Sense of Monmouthshire

Different sections will appeal to different people so it is important for you to customise our Sense of Monmouthshire in a way that complements you and your tourism business to develop a unique selling proposition (USP) and a memorable, enjoyable and authentic experience for your visitors.

Use the [Visit Wales self audit](#) to reflect on how effective your business currently is at promoting a Sense of Monmouthshire and highlight the sections (People, the Welsh Language, Buildings, Food and Drink, creativity and the arts, the outdoors) that you could develop to significantly enhance your visitors' experiences.

STOP! Look around at your surroundings:

- Could the Sense of Monmouthshire be enhanced by improving your existing interpretation?
- Are connections, e.g. Norman, royal, literary, emphasised sufficiently? If you were a visitor how would you be aware and learn more about these connections?
- Do you provide enough 'signposting' to places of interest?
- Are you and the rest of our community making the most of what you've got?

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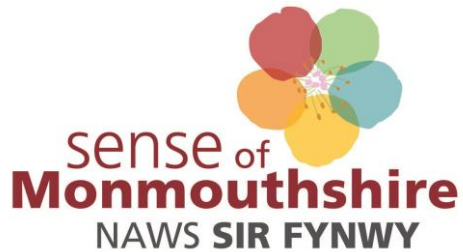


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Developing your own set of resources

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Collect information and things that resonate with you about Monmouthshire and your local town or village. Keep up to date with local events, festivals and community projects that your visitors might be interested in. Use email to keep in touch and tell them what's happening in your locale. If they had a good time they are likely to want to return and join in.

REMEMBER! Make sure your visitor information focuses on attractions, events and festivals in Monmouthshire in the first instance.

It is useful to develop an information book to leave in bedrooms or reception areas to help your visitors get the most out of their stay. Your information book could include:

- Maps of the local area.
- The location of the nearest tourist information centre.
- Details of places to go in cold or wet weather, including opening times, contact details and how to get there (e.g. libraries, museums, craft centres).
- Local pubs with information such as whether children are welcome, whether they offer food or a quiz night, the contact details and directions on how to get there
- Local restaurants with information on relative cost, contact details, how to get there, opening times and dress code (if any), plus special features, such as: good vegetarian options and locally-sourced food.
- Details of local retail, arts and crafts outlets.
- Details of historic buildings, places of interest and interesting Monmouthshire people.
- Bus and other public transport timetables/information.
- Nearest places of worship and contact details.
- Details of local farmers and other markets, local food producers, farm shops.
- Calendar of local events and festivals.
- Nearest cinemas and theatres, contact details and how to get there.
- Nearest leisure centres, sports facilities, swimming pools.
- Details of local excursions, e.g. walking tours, with contact details.

REMEMBER! Art is an excellent way of delivering messages to your visitors and enabling

communities to express what they value about themselves and Monmouthshire. Use art to convey your message to your visitors. Draw on local creativity and talent in staging displays, exhibitions, festival, events or demonstrations.

RESEARCH & WORKING TOGETHER

Do some research to find out if there is a market for your event or festival and work in partnership with other groups to create an attractive and co-ordinated crowd-puller that benefits your business, the community and your visitors.

USEFUL LINKS

Photograph gallery for [Monmouthshire](#) and [Abergavenny](#)

[MonGenes](#) for Monmouthshire Family History Research

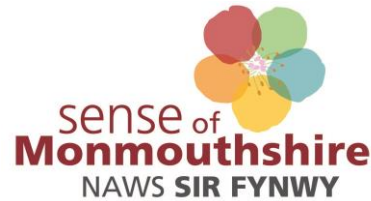
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Interpreting a Sense of Monmouthshire in your business

There are a number of aspects that you need to consider:

Decide on your objectives

- What aspects of a Sense of Monmouthshire do you want to interpret for your visitors?
- What changes (if any) do you need to make to improve your visitors Monmouthshire experience?
- What are you trying to achieve by doing this?
- What reaction are you trying to draw from your visitors?
- What else is being interpreted locally and how does your interpretation relate to this?

Write for your visitors

- Who are your visitors? Young or old? Male or female? Families, couples or mixed groups? What are they looking for from their visit to Monmouthshire?
- How can you best communicate your Sense of Monmouthshire to them? This will influence the content and style of media that you use – especially if you have a range of different visitor types.

Think in themes

- What themes are you going to interpret for your Sense of Monmouthshire and your visitors? Decide what is special that you want your visitors to know about.
- What are the main things you would like your visitors to remember at the end of their visit?
- Are there any festivals or events that you could link to your themes to extend visitor stays or encourage repeat visits?



Make sure it's accessible

The way you express and display your ideas is important – so take time to get it right. Choose your type of media carefully and relate it to your visitors. Consider language; content and design.

USEFUL LINKS

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[MonGenes](#) for Monmouthshire Family History Research

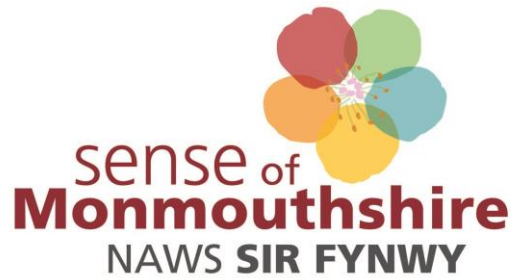
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The 6 Es

Engage

With your surroundings and connect your own experiences to a Sense of Monmouthshire

Explore

What makes Monmouthshire special to you?

Explain

Gather background information on your Sense of Monmouthshire and incorporate your experiences

Elaborate

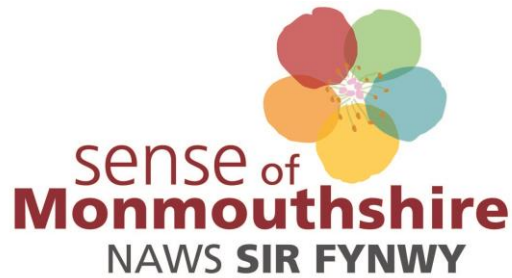
Apply and interpret your Sense of Monmouthshire for your visitors

Extend

Integrate your Sense of Monmouthshire into your business

Enjoy

Make your Sense of Monmouthshire enjoyable for you and your visitors.



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Monmouthshire People

Monmouthshire's heritage is a source of great local pride and enthusiasm. Each community has its own special features that create a Sense of Monmouthshire. For example, many local people have special skills or interests, such as painting or storytelling.

Visitors often want to interact with local people, to understand the local story and feel the passion of the place. Research, interpretation and celebration of local history and characters can generate a number of activities involving local communities and businesses and help to create a Sense of Monmouthshire through festivals; exhibitions and heritage trails.

This section will help you:

- Appreciate how you can add value to your visitor's experiences of Monmouthshire by drawing on Monmouthshire people from the past and present
- Consider how you might engage your visitors, whether through historical re-enactments, stories, working with the community and other tourism providers
- Find information on local history, civic groups, festivals and events

Benefits of using Monmouthshire people

Monmouthshire's rich social and industrial heritage has created a county richly-endowed with material that appeals to a range of different visitors.

Across Monmouthshire, archaeological evidence exists of human settlements on the River Wye dating back 20,000 years and the Romans are believed to have built timber forts at Abergavenny, Monmouth and Usk between 43AD and 55AD.

More [recent evidence](#) suggests that Monmouthshire was victim to a *tsunami* on 20th January 1607, when Monmouthshire, Gwent and Somerset were hit by the largest and most destructive flood in UK history, leaving 2,000 people dead and destroying the local agricultural economy.



The Wye Valley's popularity as a tourist destination from the 18th century was preceded by its metalworking history. Wireworks were founded at [Tintern](#) in the 1560s, with records showing that in 1698-1699, 22-24 tonnes of pig iron a week was produced by the [Abbey Tintern Furnace](#).

I always make sure that we have a good selection of books of local interest for people in our accommodation. Most people want to know about local history when they come here, so I make sure that is well covered in our books. I've only ever had one book stolen (Capel Pentwyn, Penallt).

The Wye Valley is reputed to be the birthplace of British tourism and became one of the most important places for the Picturesque movement. In his famous journey down the River Wye in 1770, the Reverend William Gilpin identified what was and what was not Picturesque by looking at the different aspects of the Wye Valley (woods; river; cliffs; architecture and landscape). The [Wye Tour](#) was a boat trip from Ross-on-Wye to Chepstow, including an overnight stop at Monmouth.

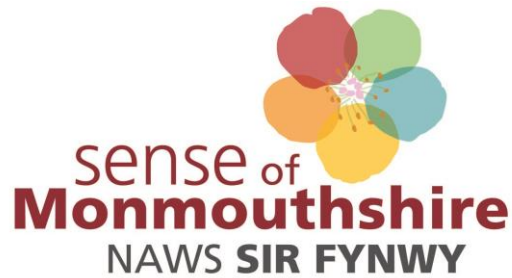
I let people know that this is the oldest continuously trading hotel in Wales; this gives them some idea of Chepstow's long history, which goes back to the Celts, Romans and Normans (Beaufort Hotel, Chepstow)





As well as JMW Turner, another famous tourist to the [Wye Valley](#) was William Wordsworth. The advent of the railway in 1876 made the valley accessible to a wider range of visitors.

Monmouthshire has a long history in cider production and in the late 19th century travelling cidemakers were a familiar sight. Cider was the staple drink of the agricultural workforce, but few farmers could afford dedicated cidemills. For more information on cidemaking in Wales, contact The Welsh Perry and Cider Society (Cymdeithas Perai a Seidr Cymru) click [here](#).



Act now: Monmouthshire People

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Creating new markets

- Visitors to attractions and destinations in Monmouthshire are seeking a unique experience. On-site living history can provide this for visitors (and the local community) through occasional one-off events (e.g.: jousting days) or fully immersive experience (e.g.: on-site actors). For example, the *Chepstowe Garrison* re-enact historic scenes from Chepstow's past, creating a popular attraction for locals and visitors. The [43rd Monmouthshire Light Infantry](#) also stage Napoleonic re-enactments.
- Find out about myths and legends in your specific area and work with other tourism providers to ensure that you create something distinctive for visitors and locals alike! The [Village Alive Trust](#) is an excellent example of how rural communities can work together on oral history and conservation projects. Many people today still believe in psychic powers. Local myths say that the [pwca](#) – a mischievous sprite would often help out on farms in return for a bowl of milk, but if he wasn't rewarded, mischief set in for the householder. The [Skirrid Mountain Inn](#) in Llanfihangel Crucorney, is listed as one of [Britain's Most Haunted Pubs](#), having been a courtroom and place of execution.
- [Mari Lwyd](#), also known as the Grey Mare (as in nightmare) is associated with Christmas, when it was traditional to mount a bleached horse's skull on a wooden pole, decorated with bright ribbons, rosettes and bells. Some communities are trying to revive this [custom](#). [Ghost stories](#) are also plentiful in Monmouthshire

I make sure that there are always books about local history and legends in the rooms because I know when people stop at an establishment like ours, it usually isn't just for somewhere to stay- they can go to an hotel chain for that – so we try to make their stay as special as possible. We want to see them as happy as possible (Tintern Old Rectory, Tintern).

- Many visitors are now looking to trace their family histories, their interest fuelled by the popularity of genealogy programmes. [The Genuki website](#) has a wealth of social and industrial history on Monmouthshire. Whilst the [Monmouthshire Family History website](#) hosts a range of records and genealogy links, as does [MonGenes](#), who are aiming to become the first port of call for Monmouthshire family history.

Visitors want to know about the culture and history, it seems to be important to a lot of them anyway
(Capel Pentwyn, Penallt).

- Interest in natural remedies amongst visitors is potentially a growth area and there are many superstitions and traditional remedies that Monmouthshire people used before the advent of modern medicine. Many of the wild flowers and plants in the Wye Valley are said to have medicinal properties, such as: sphagnum moss for wounds and dwarf elder for swelling and bruises. At the time of the Mabinogi, a legendary sow was said to have deposited three grains of wheat and three bees by the Trogy Brook. Since then, it has been claimed that the best wheat and honey come from the area. The Lower Wye Valley continues to produce excellent honey because of the dearth of wild flowers, such as the soft set honey produced by [Wye Valley Apiaries](#) in Upper Redbrook, who were bronze-medal winners in the True Taste Awards 2009.

Communicating with your customers

- Living history interpretation can focus on all aspects of history and the way in which lifestyles and lives have changed over time. For example, different foods, habits, culture, industry and social interactions are all key elements of history which have shaped Monmouthshire's modern society.
- Find out about historic events in your specific area and work with other tourism providers to ensure that you create something unique for visitors and locals alike! One way to enhance your visitor's experiences and create a Sense of Monmouthshire is to use costumed interpreters. Costumes are often used as a way of conveying a Sense of Place through spectacle and excitement, so costumed interpreters can play a very important role in enhancing the atmosphere and visual impact for visitors.
- Ensure you have a list of the diverse range of [events](#) taking place in the surrounding area.
- Provide some local or Welsh-based fiction for visitors to read during their stay. There is a range that might appeal to all different ages! For example:

[The Folklore of \(Old\) Monmouthshire;](#)

[Celtic Folklore: Welsh and Manx;](#)

[The Mabinogion,](#)

[Welsh Tales for Children,](#)

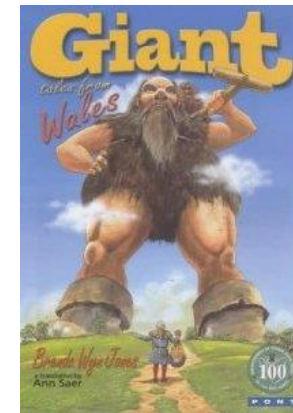
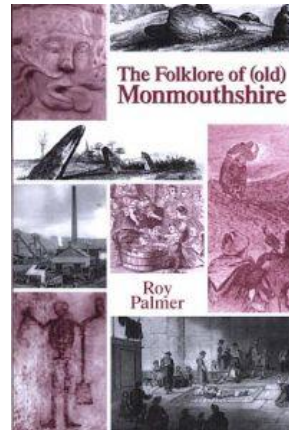
[Seven Welsh Folk Tales,](#)

[Stories From Wales: Oxford Children's Myths and Legends,](#)

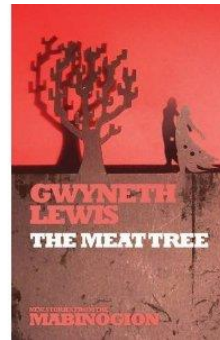
[The Welsh Fairy Book;](#)

[Giant Tales from Wales,](#)

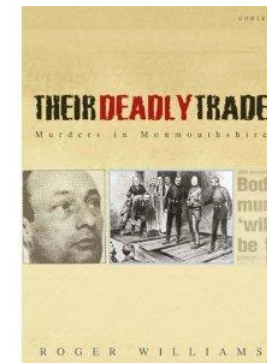
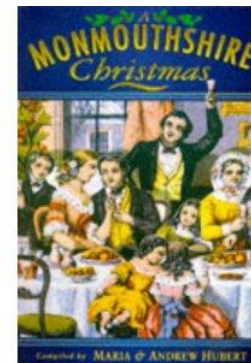
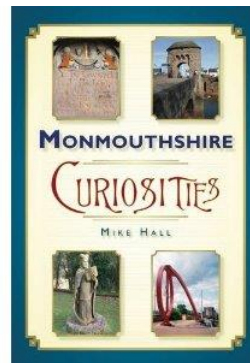
[Welsh Folk Tales.](#)



- There are also contemporary retellings of stories from the medieval story cycle *The Mabinogion*, including, [The Meat Tree](#) and [White Ravens](#) – which is written by Abergavenny-born Owen Sheers.



- Visitors might appreciate fact-based books on Wales and Monmouthshire, such as, [The Journey through Wales and Description of Wales](#), [Wales – Horrible Histories](#), [I never knew that about Wales](#), [A History of Wales](#), [Monmouthshire Curiosities](#), [A Monmouthshire Christmas](#) and - not for the faint-hearted – [Their Deadly Trade: Murders in Monmouthshire](#),



- Monmouthshire has a long list of (in)famous historical people, such as:
[Geoffrey of Monmouth](#);
[Gerald of Wales](#);
[Henry, 1st Duke and 4th Earl of Lancaster](#);
[Henry V](#);
[Henry Marten](#);
[Saint David Lewis](#);
[Admiral Sir Henry Morgan](#);

[Admiral Lord Nelson;](#)

[John Renie](#)

[Lord Llanover;](#)

[Lady Llanover;](#)

[Dr Alfred Russel Wallace;](#)

[Bertrand Russell;](#)

[Charles Rolls.](#)



- Monmouthshire has a range of historical and civic societies, for example:
[Abergavenny Local History Society;](#)
[Caldicot and District Historical and Archaeological Society;](#)
[Monmouth County Historical Association;](#)
[Monmouthshire Antiquarian Association;](#)
[The Chepstow Society;](#)

[Chepstow Archaeological Society;](#)

[Raglan Local History Group;](#)

[Usk Civic Society.](#)

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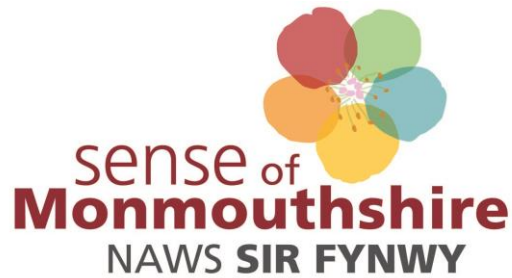
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[Act now for the Welsh Language](#)

[The Welsh Language](#)

[Some Welsh Phrases](#)

[Monmouthshire's Welsh Place Names](#)

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Monmouthshire and the Welsh Language

There is a complex story attached to Monmouthshire's Welsh identity, as reflected in Idris Davies' poem:

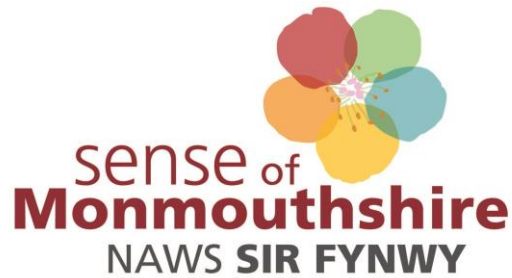
*In Parliament they ponder
On Monmouth's pedigree;
Or is she Welsh or English
In the page of history?
But those who know her people
Among the smoking vales
Proclaim with pride that they were born
In Monmouthshire, Wales.*

The ambiguity arose from the second Act of Union between England and Wales in 1536, when twelve of the thirteen Welsh counties were apportioned to four Welsh circuits, but Monmouthshire was placed in the Oxford circuit. On this weak basis, it was usual to find reference to 'South Wales and Monmouthshire'. The ongoing debate about Monmouthshire's Welsh status continued until 1974 when local government reorganisation incorporated Monmouthshire, as part of Gwent, into Wales.

Today's Monmouthshire is much smaller than the original county and was created in 1996 by local government reorganisation and is a subset of the county of Gwent (1974–1996) and almost exactly matched the original Monmouthshire. Today, Monmouthshire's principal towns are Abergavenny, Caldicot, Chepstow, Monmouth and Usk.

This section will help you:

- Appreciate how you can add value to your visitor's experiences of Monmouthshire through the Welsh Language
- Understand Welsh words and phrases and the meaning of local place names
- Find information on the Welsh Language Board and the assistance they offer tourism businesses, particularly with menu translations



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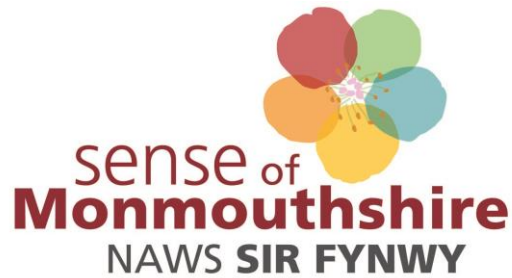
Benefits of using the Welsh Language in your business

According to figures from the [Welsh Government](#), 19% of the total population in Wales are able to speak Welsh. In Monmouthshire, the number of Welsh speakers in the population is around 10% (based on figures from the 2011 Census).

Monmouthshire is a border county at the entrance to Wales. The Welsh language, perhaps most obvious to visitors through Welsh place names, is one of the key things which distinguishes the west and east banks of the Wye.

Even if you do not speak Welsh, using Welsh appropriately in your business can help you distinguish your business from the crowd and make your product more interesting and authentic as well as enhancing your customer's experience.

When we bought the church, it was called St. Mary's and we felt that it didn't really convey anything as such with a name like that. The area of Penallt that it is located in is also called Pentwyn and we felt that Capel Pentwyn conveyed the idea that it obviously had been a chapel or church and that it is located in Wales, albeit just over the border; and our feedback from guests is that this is just how people perceive it
([Capel Pentwyn, Penallt](#)).



Act now for the Welsh Language

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Communicating with your customers

- Use Welsh-labelled products – water (e.g. *Brecon Carreg Water* or *Ty Nant*) or Tea and Coffee (Te a Choffi Dwyfor).
- Design bi-lingual stationery and signage for your business and/or redesign your website so that it is bi-lingual.
- Use some [Welsh phrases](#).

Promoting the Welsh language

- Encourage your staff to learn or improve their [Welsh](#).
- Visitors may also be interested in learning a few words or phrases during their stay, so it might be a good idea to have a few Welsh Language books available, such as, [Welsh for Beginners](#), [Street Welsh Phrasebook](#), or for younger visitors – [Snap in Welsh](#).

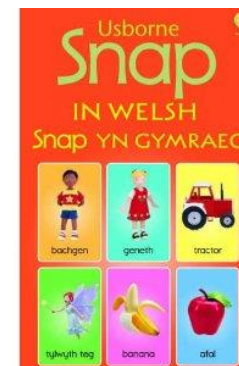
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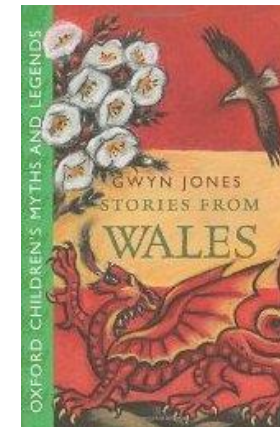
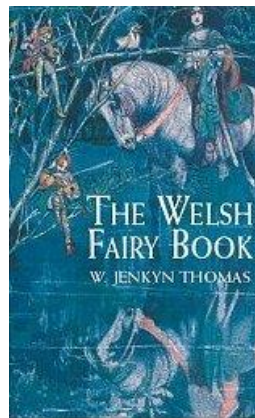


- Find out what is happening near you in relation to the Welsh language – attractions, events, food, courses, shopping.

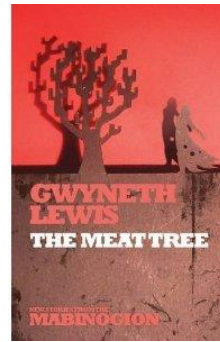
Accommodation and food and drink settings

- Try putting bi-lingual labels on items in bedrooms or self-catering accommodation (or provide a printed list if you don't want visible sticky labels!). Visitors may find it interesting to discover the Welsh translations.
- Have Welsh names for the dishes on your menu (with English translations so they can be readily understood by everyone).
- Have some local and Welsh-based fiction available for visitors to read during their stay. There is a range that might appeal to all different ages! For example, [*The Folklore of \(Old\) Monmouthshire*](#); [*The Mabinogion*](#), [*Welsh Tales for Children*](#), [*Seven Welsh Folk Tales*](#), [*Stories From Wales: Oxford Children's Myths and Legends*](#), [*The Welsh Fairy Book*](#), [*Giant Tales from Wales*](#), [*Welsh Folk Tales*](#),

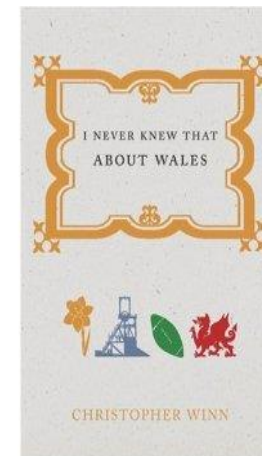
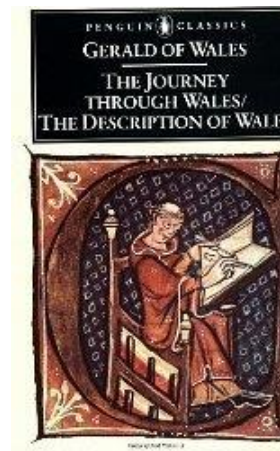
I have made some of the things bilingual, like the inn sign and the notice board. I don't speak Welsh but I think it is part of our USP and guests seem to like it, especially the foreign ones ([The Inn at Penallt](#)).

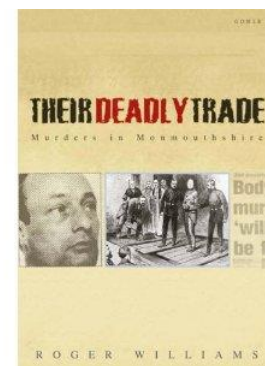
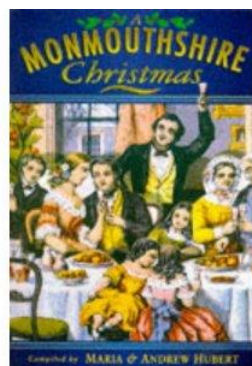
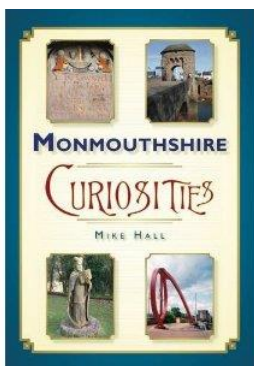


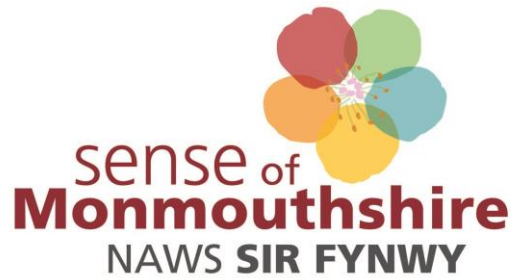
- There are also contemporary retellings of stories from the medieval story cycle *The Mabinogion*, including, [*The Meat Tree*](#) and [*White Ravens*](#) – which is written by Abergavenny-born Owen Sheers.



- Visitors might also appreciate more fact-based books on Wales and Monmouthshire, such as, [The Journey through Wales and Description of Wales](#), [Wales – Horrible Histories](#), [I never knew that about Wales](#), [A History of Wales](#), [Monmouthshire Curiosities](#), [A Monmouthshire Christmas](#) and - not for the faint-hearted – [Their Deadly Trade: Murders in Monmouthshire](#).







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The Welsh Language

The Welsh alphabet is different to the English one. Instead of the 26 letters of the English alphabet the Welsh alphabet misses K, Q, V, X and Z but gains Ch, Dd, Ff, Ll, Ng, Ph, Rh and Th to have 29 letters:

Welsh	English
A	A
B	B
C	C
Ch	-
D	D
Dd	-
E	E
F	F
Ff	-
G	G
Ng	-
H	H
I	I
J	J
-	K
L	L
Ll	-
M	M
N	N
O	O
P	P
Ph	-
-	Q
R	R
Rh	-
S	S

T	T
Th	
U	U
-	V
W	W
-	X
Y	Y
-	Z

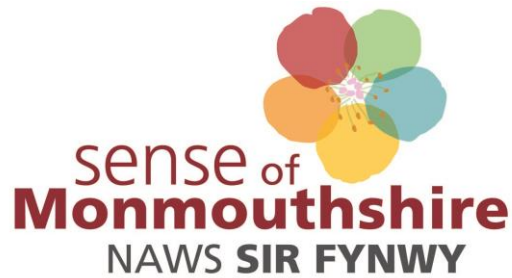
Just to add to the complexity, [Welsh letters mutate to make them easier to pronounce!](#) This is called initial consonant mutation and is common to all Celtic languages. There are three mutations – the soft mutation, the nasal mutation and the aspirant mutation:

Letter	Soft mutation	Nasal mutation	Aspirant mutation
B	F	M	-
C	G	Ngh	Ch
D	Dd	N	-
G	O	Ng	-
Ll	L	-	-
M	F	-	-
P	B	Mh	Ph
Rh	R	-	-
T	D	Nh	Th

Welcome in Welsh is *Croeso* and Wales is *Cymru*. If you want to say *Welcome to Wales* you might think you would say *Croeso i Cymru* but the C softens to G and so it becomes *Croeso i Gymru!*

from Wales	o Gymru (soft mutation)
in Wales	yng Nghymru (nasal mutation)
and Wales	a Chymru (aspirate mutation)

So if you go to Cwmyoy (*i Gymyoy*) and when you are there you will be in Cwmyoy (*yng Nghwmyoy*).



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Some Welsh Phrases

Bore da

Pryn hawn da

Nos da

Hwyl

Diolch

Iechyd da!

Croeso

Good morning

Good afternoon

Good night

Goodbye

Thanks

Cheers!

Welcome

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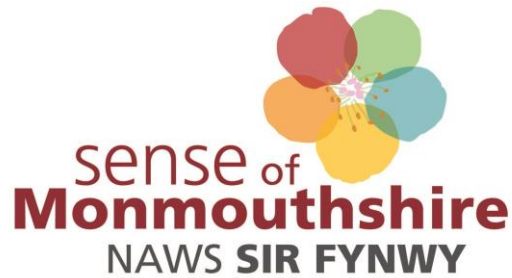


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Monmouthshire's Welsh Place Names

Many non-Welsh speakers struggle to say Welsh place names and some find them well nigh impossible.

However, the Welsh language is phonetic so it is pronounced as it looks which at least in theory makes it easier to pronounce than English which has much more complicated rules.

Most Welsh place names are descriptive and so understanding how the names are built up helps to understand them better.

This is illustrated by probably the most famous Welsh place name, albeit not in Monmouthshire! It is certainly the longest.

Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogoch

Llan	Originally meant an <i>enclosure</i> , now <i>church</i> and is usually followed by the name of a saint.
Fair	Mary
Pwll	Hollow
Gwyn	White
Gyll	Comes from the word ' <i>collen</i> ' which means hazel
Ger	Near
Chwyrn	Rapid
Drobwyll	From <i>trobwyll</i> meaning whirlpool
Llantysilio	The church of St. Tysilio
Ogo	From the word ' <i>ogof</i> ' meaning cave
Goch	From ' <i>coch</i> ' meaning red

So the whole name means:

Saint Mary's Church in the hollow of the white hazel near a rapid whirlpool and the Church of St. Tysilio of the red cave

The same process can be applied to some Monmouthshire place names:

Word	Meaning	Monmouthshire place name
Bryn	mountain	Bryn gwyn (White mountain)
Betws	chapel of ease, oratory	Betws Newydd (Newydd = new)
Caer	fortified settlement	Caer leon, Gaer llwyd (grey fort)
Coed	wood	King coed
Clyd	sheltered	Clyd dach
Cwm	valley head	Cwm yoy, Cwm carvan
Gallt	slope	Pen allt
Garth	hill, height, enclosure	Llan arth
Glas	green, blue	Glas coed
Gwern	place where alders grow, swamp	Gwern esey
Llan	Church or enclosure	Llan gattock-Vibion-Avel, Llan elly, Llan ellen, Llan over, Llan foist, Llan llowell, Llan trisant (the church of the three saints), Llan gwm, Llan cayo, Llan fair Kilgeddin Llangattock Ling oed (llyn anglicised to lin)
Llyn	lake	Mynydd bach
Mynydd	mountain	Nant -y-derry
Nant	Stream, brook	Pen -yr-heol, Pen perlleni
Pen	peak/top	Bont
Pont	bridge	Pwll meyrick
Pwll	pool	Pen rhos
Rhos	moor	Ton
Ton	grassland, lea	Y Fenni the Welsh name for Abergavenny
Y	The	

Saint's names are reflected in lots of Monmouthshire place names after the word *llan* which means enclosure or church:

Cybi	Llan gybi
Dewi	Llan dewi Rhydderch
Mair	Llan fair Kilgeddin
Michael/Mihangel	Llan fi hangel /St Michael's Church as in Llan fi hangel Gobion, Llan fi hangel Crucorney, Llan fi hangel Ystern- Llewern and numerous other villages across

Cadoc/Catwg

Monmouthshire
Llangattock Lingoed and Llangattock Vibion Avel

The Welsh National Anthem

The Welsh National anthem - Hen wlad fy nhadau (translated in English as 'Land of my Fathers') was written in 1856 by Evan James and his son, James James, from Pontypridd. You can listen to a Welsh male voice choir singing the National Anthem by clicking [here](#).

Lyrics

Mae hen wlad fy nhadau yn annwyl i mi,
Gwlad beirdd a chantorion, enwogion o fri;
Ei gwrol ryfelwyr, gwladgarwyr tra môd,
Tros ryddid gollasant eu gwaed.
Gwlad, Gwlad, pleidiol wyf i'm gwlad.
Tra môr yn fur i'r bur hoff bau,
O bydded i'r hen iaith barhau.

Phonetically

My hen oo-lad vurr n'had-die un ann-wil ee mee
goo-lard bay-rdd* a ch**ann-tor-eon
enn wog eon o vree
ane goo-rol ruvv-el-weir
goo-lard gar-weir tra mard
dross rudd*-id cor-ll***ar-sant ay goo-eyed.
Goo-lard, goo-lard
played-ee-yol weave eem goo-lard
tra more un beer, ear beer horff bye
O budd*-ed eer hen ee-eye-th bar hi.

*There are two "th" sounds in Welsh."Th" in Welsh is pronounced as in "think" or "fourth".

"Dd" is pronounced as in "this" or "that".

** "ch" is pronounced as in "loch" or "Bach".

*** "ll" is a cross between an "l" and an "s".

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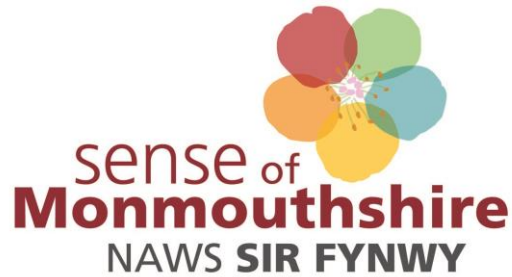


English Translation - Land of My Fathers

The ancient land of my fathers is dear to me,
A land of poets and minstrels, famed men,
Her brave warriors, patriot much blessed,
It was for freedom that they lost their blood

Chorus

Homeland! I am devoted to my country;
So long as the sea is a wall to this fair beautiful land
May the ancient language remain.



Monmouthshire's buildings

Monmouthshire is reputed to have more castles per square mile than any other part of the United Kingdom. On top of that – Monmouthshire allegedly has more dry stone walls than any other protected area in the United Kingdom (including the Cotswolds)! Much of Monmouthshire's architecture has been shaped by the County's invasions and its industrial and agricultural heritage.

More recently, a growing interest in religion and religious travel has meant that places of worship are increasingly becoming attractions for visitors.

This section will help you:

- Appreciate how you can use Monmouthshire's buildings to add value to your visitor's experiences of Monmouthshire
- Find out about Monmouthshire's historic buildings and churches
- Explore the history of your property
- Consider bringing Monmouthshire into your building through interior design.

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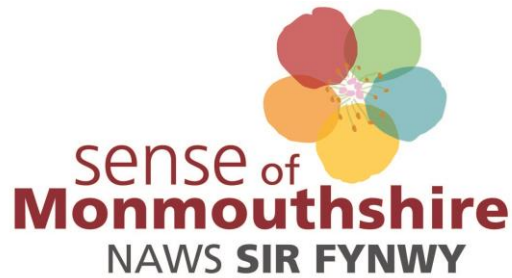
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The European Agricultural Fund for
Rural Development: Europe Investing in
Rural Areas





Benefits of using Monmouthshire's buildings in your business

Visitors are seeking something a little different and want to have a true experience. The physical and man-made resources are a fundamentally important aspect of creating a Sense of Monmouthshire, providing your visitors with a distinctive experience and introducing your visitors to local buildings and heritage.

Using local products within your building can also benefit the wider community:

We think that the decor is very important and because we are adding bedrooms and refurbishing the building, we have ensured that we use oak, flagstones and slate wherever we can. The accommodation building is not totally traditional but we are still using the elements of stone and oak. We think that this is all part of the sense of place. Especially when visitors look out of the window on one side and see the Bloreng Mountain and then on the other they see the Sugarloaf Mountain. There's not much doubt of where you are ([The Hardwick](#), Abergavenny).

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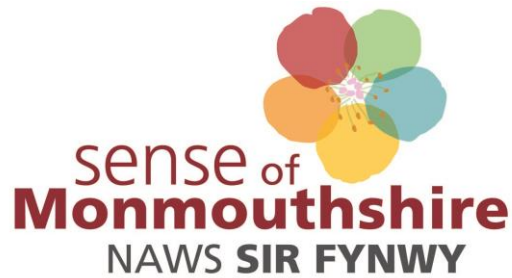
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Act now: Monmouthshire's Buildings

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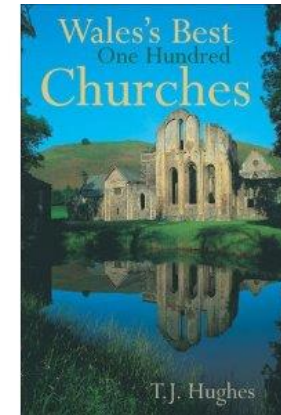
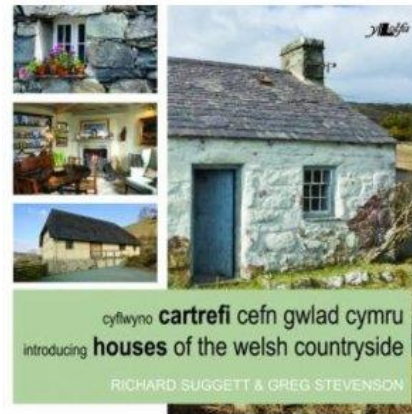
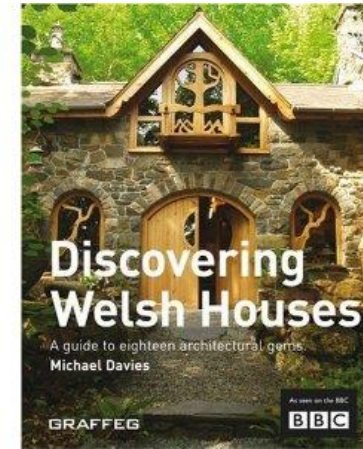
There are many different ways that you can incorporate Monmouthshire's buildings into your Sense of Monmouthshire.

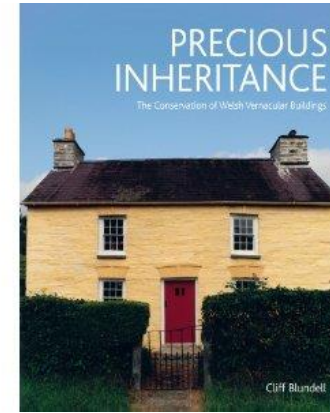
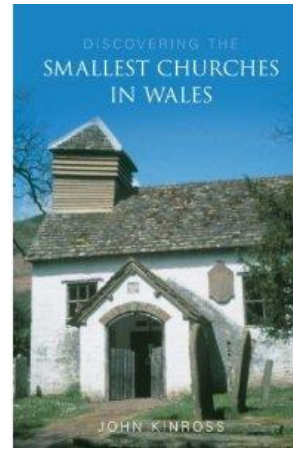
Communicating with your customers

- Many of the very early buildings in Monmouthshire had a practical design because of the need for defence during the troubled medieval period. In the 18th and 19th centuries the design of buildings changed, reflecting the relative calm and stability. Castles declined in favour of ostentatious houses. Large estates that dominated the rural economy became major employers and signified wealth and power.
- Monmouthshire has a vast array of castles. To view a Google map detailing the castles of Monmouthshire click [here](#).
- Markets were also influential, for example, in Abergavenny – the eaves of the former Cow Inn in Nevill Street were decorated with cattle heads, reflecting the fact that the street was used to trade cattle until 1863.
- The unique dry stone walls in the Lower Wye Valley are one of the best-guarded secrets of the area. It is estimated that they are at least 200 years old and it is rumoured that Napoleonic prisoners of war built many of the walls, as well as farm labourers and gangs of Irish 'wallers', on what was common land – so the walls signified ownership.
- Find out about the history associated with the buildings in your part of Monmouthshire – are there any interesting facts or stories? Consider how you might interpret these stories for your visitors – could you host a storytelling event or even create a festival?
- To view more detail on some interesting churches in Monmouthshire click [here](#).
- Information on accessible churches is also available on the *Sanctaidd*, formerly [Churches Tourism](#)

[Network, Wales](#) website. The [Friends of Friendless Churches](#) work to preserve redundant places of worship, some in Monmouthshire.

- Provide books on Welsh and Monmouthshire architecture for visitors to browse during their stay. Click on the cover to find more information.





Research the history of your property

- Does your property have an interesting or unusual 'past'? Did it function as something else in a former life?
- Researching the history of your property is something of a detective story which may take some time. Tracing the property's history, and learning about the people who have lived in it can be fascinating. It can uncover interesting details which give value to the lives of ordinary people. The property does not have to be large or significant - the history of small cottages can sometimes be traced through old maps and written records.
- It is important to start with the known facts about your property and to work backwards in time, step-by-step.
- Don't expect to find out exactly when your property was built - you are more likely to find out who the owners or occupiers were, which will help you establish what the property was used for. Precise addresses are a modern development and even the names of buildings sometimes change.
- Property conversions often make it more difficult to imagine what the original property looked like. Many old properties have been re-fronted or extended, so the interior may provide more clues than the outside appearance.
- The deeds to your property are a very important source of information, they may include documents from the time that the land was first purchased, and they will give you the names of

successive owners.

- Census returns will show who was living in your property at the time of each census, with their ages, occupations and places of birth. Early electoral registers are alphabetical lists of property-owning residents, and may not give full addresses.
- Maps are an important source of evidence. Tithe maps and tithe awards mostly date from 1837 to 1850 and are a prime source of history. If your property appears on the tithe map, the award will show you who owned it and who lived in it at the time of the award. For properties built after the mid-19th century refer to the large-scale Ordnance Survey maps.
- For further information on researching your property, there are a number of useful websites, such as:

The Directgov website: [Research your local, family or house history](#)

The National Archive website: [Looking for a place](#)

Accessibility

- Consider how accessible churches and other historic buildings in your local area are for visitors. For example, if buildings are kept locked, are opening times or keyholder contact details clearly displayed?
- Can your visitors easily learn about the buildings and things of specific interest to them? Ensure there are brochures available for visitors which are current and accurate
- Consider working with other people in the local community (or local history groups) to ensure that there are people available to speak to visitors at churches and other historic buildings – particularly at peak visitor times.

Creating new markets

- Why not grow your own herb and/or vegetable garden and use these in your menus? This would definitely provide traceability and a talking point for visitors.
- Do you have hobbies or interests that can be incorporated into the interior design of your premises? If so, you might be able to tap into special interest groups.

- Are there any local community projects which have unearthed interesting treasures? For example, the [Village Alive Trust](#) is helping the rural economy by restoring and preserving vernacular buildings, which would otherwise be lost along with their history. This type of project creates benefits for visitors and local communities alike.

I think that the building, decor and furnishings and, of course, the welcome are also important, especially for people who have never been to the area before... All the rooms are so traditional that people have no doubt that that they are in a country pub and it's up to me with the pictures on the walls and the information that I give visitors to make sure they know exactly where they are

([Hunter's Moon](#), Llangattock Lingoed)

Interior design

- Ensure new buildings are unobtrusive and 'fit' into the existing environment, whilst renovated buildings are sympathetically restored and decorated.
- Try and use local materials as much as possible, particularly those produced by local artists and makers. This could include: ceramics, wood, textiles, stained glass, wire or wrought iron.

The decor and furnishings are important and we use the Art Shop in Cross Street to help us make it feel right and I think that it works very well and links in well with what was originally a Georgian coaching inn. We try to have local artists displayed if they are good and we have a really good exhibition of a local artist here at the moment. Art, food, welcome and furnishing, it's all part of the overall experience

([The Angel Hotel](#), Abergavenny.)

- In older buildings, you can achieve a sympathetic Sense of Monmouthshire by using muted colours that complement exposed stone or natural floors and enhancing period features, such as exposed beams and fireplaces.
- Go from tone to tone - a blend of colours opens up the space. Light colours make a room feel airy,

but in a small room rich colours can make it a lot cosier. Green is a very relaxing colour, red is passionate - think about where you are using colours - strong and vibrant downstairs, relaxing and calm upstairs. Create a colourful, welcoming atmosphere using existing architecture.

- Fresh flowers are a nice touch, especially fresh flowers from your garden. Using contrasting colours, such as yellow and purple, can also be a real eye catcher.
- Choose nice-smelling flowers for your garden - lavender is a good choice to create a pleasant, relaxing atmosphere. You could pick lavender from your garden to put into lavender bags for your guest's bedrooms – giving a very personal touch!

In the house I have tried to use a lot of local furnishings. I use a lot of local flowers as well; people tell me that the flowers give them a big lift. Of course, just looking out of the window to see the River Wye and the Abbey gives visitors a tremendous sense of place
([Tintern Old Rectory](#), Tintern).

- Create the right ambience – a real fire can create a very welcoming, rustic and homely environment – particularly during the winter months.

I bought church pews for the seating in the bar and most people seem to like it and say that it is very atmospheric, which I suppose is what a sense of place is all about - especially as they can sit in the bar and look out over the Wye Valley to the Forest of Dean, which isn't a bad view.....So we create a sense of place as soon as the guest has sat down – at least that's the intention and it seems to work
([The Inn at Penallt](#))

- Try using local music in the background to create more of a sense of Monmouthshire.
- Photographs of the local area and original art work can complement each other or why not be even more creative with wall decorations and display quotations from poems or books by local writers?



USEFUL LINKS

Photograph gallery for [Monmouthshire](#) and [Abergavenny](#)

[MonGenes](#) for Monmouthshire Family History Research

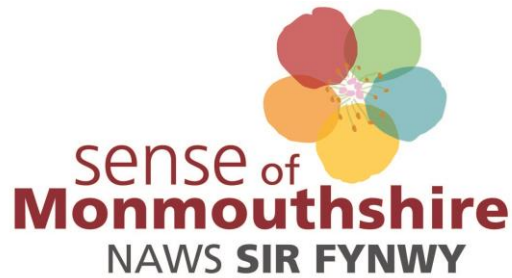
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Monmouthshire's food and drink

[Sense of Place, Sense of Monmouthshire](#)
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[Act now: Food and Drink](#)

[Local Food and Drink Producers](#)

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Adding value to local products

Ychwanegu gwerth at gynnyrch lleol

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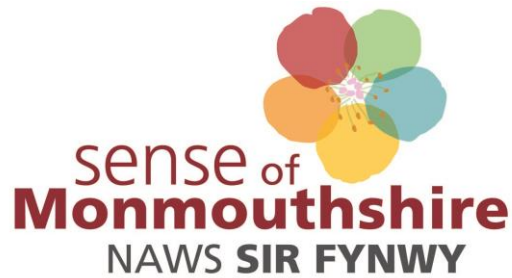
Monmouthshire's rich agricultural heritage and farming traditions have created a county richly-endowed with high-quality food and drink producers and fantastic chefs. **So good is Monmouthshire's food offer that it is the only county in Wales to be given the title of Top Food Tourism Destination at the 'Wales The True Taste Awards'.**

Whether traditional or contemporary, Monmouthshire's eating and drinking experiences are about high-quality, locally-sourced ingredients which, when combined, create a truly lasting impression.

This section will help you to:

- Appreciate how you can add value to your visitor's experiences of Monmouthshire through local food and drink
- Use and promote local produce in your menus
- Recreate local or traditional recipes
- Find information on local Food Festivals, Farmers' Markets, local producers and suppliers

I feel that by teaching my guests about local food and traditional Welsh recipes, I have given them something that stays with them for the rest of their lives. If you like, there's a part of Wales that always stays with them
([Culinary Cottage](#), Abergavenny).



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Benefits of using local food and drink

Visitors to Wales believe that it is important to have the opportunity to sample local food and drink ([Welsh Government](#)). Visitors are seeking something a little different and want to have a true taste experience.

The taste of newly lifted local potatoes with local pork that is cooked and presented properly is hard to beat, isn't it? I really only provide traditional menus – just good, honest cooking with good local food. But there are not many people doing that these days, are there?

([Woodlands Tavern](#), Llanfair Discoed).

Welsh Food Festivals generate an estimated annual turnover of £3 million and the success of organic food, premium meat and other specialist products has revived an interest in smaller-scale production – such as that available in Monmouthshire.

Local food and drink is a fundamentally important aspect of creating a Sense of Monmouthshire and providing your visitors with a distinctive experience.

I'm a firm believer in buying locally whenever possible and our clients are prepared to pay a premium because food is local. We have approximately 70 suppliers to the kitchen. 85% of these come from within 20 miles. We have got a fair amount of land, so we can produce a lot of our own vegetables, which makes what we do very seasonal

([Llansantffraed Court Hotel](#), Clytha Llanvihangel Gobion).

There are lots of benefits for you, your visitors and the local community from using local food and drink:

Local produce, recipes and wines are also effective ways of introducing your visitors to local

agriculture, fishing and Monmouthshire's rural economy.

You

- There is demand for local food and drink – turn this into a strength. Also, if it's good and customers come back - you'll get repeat business!
- Consumers claim they would be willing to pay a little bit more for local food ([Welsh Government](#)), so it makes commercial sense for you to create something that is unique and distinctive which customers will pay slightly more for - adding to your profit margins!
- Using local produce in your own individual style will differentiate you from your competitors and give you a Unique Selling Proposition (USP) – which will definitely help when it comes to word-of-mouth recommendations!
- You can demonstrate the importance of local food and drink to your tourism product.

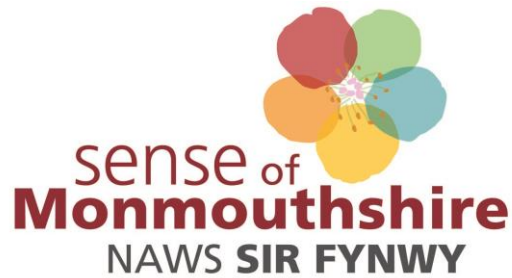
Your visitors

- It's fresher and often better quality. Your visitors will appreciate this – and they will often pay more for it!
- It's linked to the locality and the land, so visitors will get a better sense of the surrounding environment in Monmouthshire.
- It's got traceability – visitors like finding out about this, especially your links with local producers.
- Enhanced visitor experiences – which might encourage repeat visits.

Local community

- It is estimated that every £10 spent on local food is worth £26 to the local area (compared to £14 at a supermarket) – so supporting local producers will support the local economy ([Welsh Government](#)).
- Profiling local food producers will help them consider themselves to be part of the tourism industry.
- Promoting the use of locally-produced food and drink to visitors will enhance positive perceptions of food and drink in Monmouthshire.
- Supporting local producers helps to build rapport within the local community and will help to preserve local landscapes.

For more details on using local produce, look at the [Wales Food Tourism Action Plan 2015](#) and the [Wales Food and Drink Action Plan](#) produced by the Welsh Government.



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Act now: Food and Drink

There are many different ways that you can use food and drink to incorporate your Sense of Monmouthshire.

Local food and drink

- Localise food and drink when describing your menu – give the origin of the ingredients. ‘Sell’ the fact that it is local produce. Tell your visitors where their bacon and eggs came from – they may want to buy some to take home!
- Visitors will get a sense that the food and drink are true to their roots and will see that the menu has been inspired by your location and surroundings.
- Using local produce and distinctive recipes, as well as promoting local produce through farmers’ markets, food trails, food festivals and farm shops is a very effective way of interpreting a Sense of Monmouthshire.

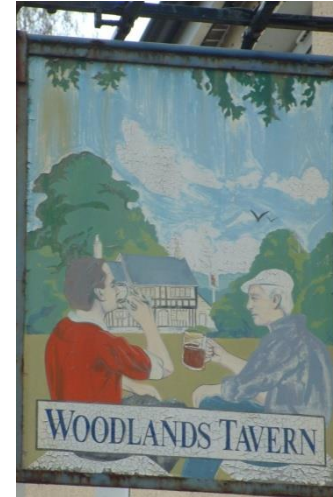
I get all my vegetables locally, if I can - again, it's the taste and freshness. Some of the people who come on my courses have never seen vegetables with earth on them before; so that's actually something they never forget, the first time they saw and felt earth on a carrot or potato. I suppose that that is a real sense of place, smelling the soil ([Culinary Cottage](#), Abergavenny).

Food miles

- Think about the number of food miles on your menu. The fewer the miles on your menu, the more local the food and drink. Could you offer a 30-mile, 20-mile, 10-mile or even a 5-mile menu?

The [Woodlands Tavern](#) in Llanvair Discoed, offer visitors a homely environment and fresh local produce in a rural setting. Their produce is definitely traceable:

A lot of what I use is from within two miles from here. I get the pork, the eggs, the vegetables, the honey and the poultry from almost within walking distance. This has the benefit of local people supporting me and they like it when I put where it comes from on the menu board.



- Take a look at your existing supplier list – how do your food miles add up? Could you find a more local supplier?

At [The Inn at Penallt](#), a lot of food and drink supplies come from within a five mile radius, although they concede that they *'could probably do most of it within two miles'*.



Try to adapt the following table – which includes just a few examples of local award-winning suppliers in and around Monmouthshire:

Produce	Existing supplier	Number of miles from you?	Locally sourced supplier	Number of miles from you?
Meat and fish:				
Sausages			Trealy fennel sausage (Trealy Farm Charcuterie. Gold-medal winner True Taste Awards 2008)	
Game & Poultry			Free-range oven ready turkey (Usk Vale Poultry Ltd, Pontypool. Silver-medal winner True Taste Awards 2009) Smoked Gressingham duck breast (Black Mountains Smokery Ltd, Crickhowell. Gold-medal winner True Taste Awards 2008)	
Fish			Oak roast salmon fishcakes (Sugarloaf Catering, Abergavenny. Bronze-medal winner True Taste Awards 2008)	

			Awards 2009)	
Lamb				
Beef				
Dairy:				
Cheese				
Eggs				
Drink:				
Mineral water				
Cider				
Juice			Ty Bryn apple juice (Ty Bryn Cider, Grosmont. Silver-medal winner True Taste Awards 2009)	
Fruit:				
Vegetables:				
Bakery:				
Bread				
Cakes			Whisky Fruit Cake (Clam's Handmade Cakes, Crickhowell and Abergavenny. Winner True Taste Awards 2007)	
Larder:				
Honey			Soft set honey (Wye Valley Apiaries, Upper Redbrook. Bronze-medal winner True Taste Awards 2009)	

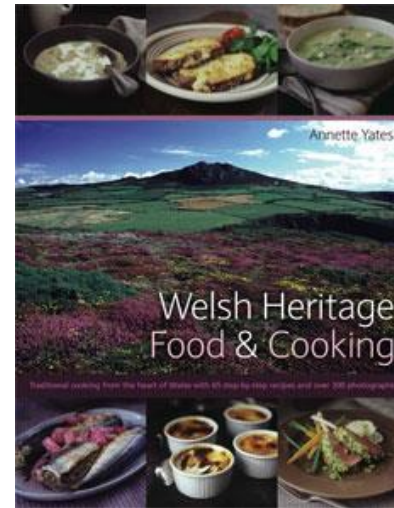
Seasonality

- Use seasonal food and drink as a way of emphasising the diverse range of foods and drink available in and around Monmouthshire – create your own unique seasonal menus rather than adapting to the 'expected'.
- Hand-written or blackboard menus also give the impression of flexibility and freshness - maximising the advantages of seasonality.

Medallions of Welsh fillet Steak w, tomato and mushrooms 17.95
Whole cornish plaice w lemon, herb butter. 16.25. (beauties).
Deep fried whiting in a crisp beer batter, mushy peas, handcut chips. 12.25.
Dressed Devon Crab and Prawn salad, new potatoes or handcut chips 14.50
Chicken curry w rice, chips, mango chutney, puppodum. 10.95.
The woodlands smoked chicken caesar salad w chips. 13.95.
Steak and Kidney pie w short crust pastry lid. 10.95.
Lasagne, salad, handcut chips 10.95
Seared fillets of river Severn Grey Mullet w, roast cherry tomatoes, hollandaise sauce 13.25

Traditional recipes

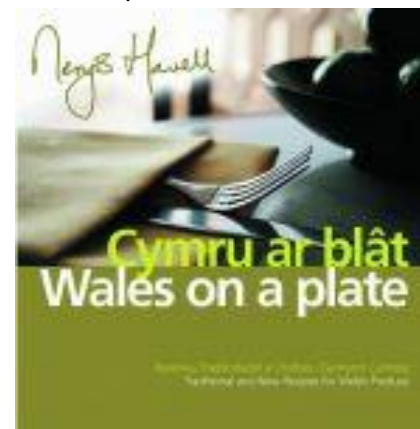
- You may want to re-create traditional Welsh or Monmouthshire recipes, such as [Monmouth Pudding](#), [Lady Llanover's Salt Duck](#), [Cawl](#) or a range of [other Welsh recipes](#).
- [Welsh Heritage Food & Cooking](#), by local food writer, Annette Yates, presents over 65 traditional Welsh recipes, such as Welsh Rarebit, Potato Cakes, Cawl Cennin and Cawl Mamgu .



We do a range of traditional menus. For instance we do cawl during autumn and winter, a lot of lamb, pork and beef dishes and we say where it comes from on the menu ([The Angel Hotel](#), Abergavenny).

Traditional recipes with a twist

- Try using local produce to adapt traditional recipes for more modern-day tastes, such as [teisen lap with lavender honey-baked figs](#).
- [Wales on a Plate](#) by Nerys Howell won the 'Best Local Cookbook Award' at the 2010 Gourmand World Cookbook Awards and provides traditional and new recipes for Welsh produce.





We do traditional recipes with a twist and we make our own faggots and sausages when we can. We promote this to our customers on the Internet and on our menus and, of course, we tell the guests where the food comes from – I suppose that it's all part of the welcome ([The Inn at Penallt](#)).

Local food and drink suppliers

- Local producers offer a very high standard of food and drink so getting to know local farmers and other producers is crucial. It means you can quickly source the necessary products, guaranteeing yourself high-quality products and better prices. Visit the [Producers](#) section on the **Made in Monmouthshire website** and the [Outlets](#) section.
- You could include a local area map on the back of your menus which shows the location of all your local food and drink producers **OR** list your suppliers on a blackboard **OR** simply have some business cards from your suppliers on display – this will give your visitors a guide to finding local producers and help stimulate that all-important multiplier effect! **REMEMBER** – it's not just about where visitors can eat and drink, but also where they can buy Monmouthshire produce to take home.



The Tudor Brewery in Abergavenny also supplies us with beers which they have named after mountains like The Skirrid and The Blorenge – that all gives a sense of place in itself ([The Hardwick](#), Abergavenny).

Communicating with your customers

- Ensure homemade stickers are placed on homemade jams and marmalades to emphasise that they are homemade, as well as what flavour they are.
- Have the confidence to shout about the origin of your food and drink. Many local restaurants and hotels publically list their suppliers, so their customers understand traceability.

We promote the fact that we use local suppliers and local food on our menus. On the website and word of mouth is one of the best forms of recommendation. I even put the names of our suppliers in a frame for clients to read in the gents! We sell local produce like honey and apple juice at reception and it seems to move very quickly

once people have tasted it as part of their meal ([Llansantffraed Court Hotel](#), Clytha Llanvihangel Gobion).

[The Hardwick](#) list suppliers on their website.

We get excellent lamb from Pen-y-Wyrlod Farm, which is in Llanvetherine and not far from here. They specialise in black Welsh mountain lamb and goats' meat. Even our postman keeps great pigs, so he often supplies us with meat. Things can be that local! ([The Hardwick](#), Abergavenny).

- Visitors rely on word-of-mouth recommendations for food and drink experiences, so building an impressive local reputation is important, especially in the age of social media where customers can post reviews on a variety of [sites](#). Where would you recommend visitors eat and drink to get a real Sense of Monmouthshire and a true taste experience?
- Do you know any interesting stories about eating and drinking places in Monmouthshire? For example, the Goose and Cuckoo Inn in Upper Llanover (CAMRA Country Pub of the Year 2009), was the only pub to escape the attentions of Lady Llanover, who turned all the other pubs on her estate into coffee houses! It is a traditional country pub with real ale, a large collection of malt whiskeys and home-cooked food – plus stunning views for your visitors! Or what about the infamous ghost stories of the [Skirrid Mountain Inn](#)? Will they intrigue your visitors?

The food seems to taste better the more history and anecdotes people have with it. I let people know that this is the oldest continuously trading hotel in Wales, this gives them some idea of Chepstow's long history, which goes back to the Celts, Romans and Normans ([Beaufort Hotel](#), Chepstow).

Creating new markets

- Have some of the many wines produced in Monmouthshire available for your visitors to try (and maybe buy). Visitors may not ask for Monmouthshire wines, but they may not know that they exist – why not help to create more of a market for local wines? You could even work with your local vineyards to offer wine tasting sessions or vineyard tours for your visitors – create a relationship which benefits both of you!

I make a point of using as much local produce in the breakfast menu and saying where it comes from on the menu. We also produce packed lunches using local food. I get a lot of food from Meadow Farm, which is also around the corner. For instance, we get

our bread from Meadow Farm and they bake things especially for us, like a loaf that is one half seeded and one half nutty. Visitors love that and we also get out jam and marmalade from them ([Tintern Old Rectory](#), Tintern).

Food trails

- Why not produce your own food trails of good places to eat and drink, as well as outlets to buy local produce? You just need a list of your favourite places, plus some directions for visitors and maybe things to see and do along the way!

It really helps if you can tell them what is happening and what places to see and, of course, food is a part of that. For instance, they visit Parva vineyard and Kingstone micro-brewery which are literally around the corner from here, so that gives them a feeling of seeing something special right here in the heart of the Wye Valley. It gives visitors an immense feeling of being somewhere special ([Tintern Old Rectory](#), Tintern).

Food and drink settings

- Eating and drinking places also need to reflect a localised approach and traditional materials can be used in contemporary settings. Why not have photographs or paintings of local Monmouthshire scenes or other locally-produced arts and crafts around your establishment?

I bought church pews for the seating in the bar and most people seem to like it and say that it is very atmospheric, which I suppose is what a sense of place is all about - especially as they can sit in the bar and look out over the Wye Valley to the Forest of Dean, which isn't a bad view. They say that Tolkien got his inspiration for the Lord of the Rings there. So we create a sense of place as soon as the guest has sat down – at least that's the intention and it normally seems to work ([The Inn at Penallt](#)).



I think that the building, decor and furnishings and, of course, the welcome are also important, especially for people who have never been to the area before. If you look at links to my website you can see how much people who have stayed here appreciate all this. All the rooms are so traditional that people have no doubt that that they are in a country pub and it's up to me with the pictures on the walls and the information that I give visitors to make sure they know exactly where they are ([Hunter's Moon](#), Llangattock Lingoed).



As regards decor in the Beaufort Hotel, we try to make it look as authentic as possible. Because we are near to Chepstow Racecourse we have a lot of racing memorabilia from Chepstow Racecourse on the walls together with a mixture of local scenes and artists that I like myself ([Beaufort Hotel](#), Chepstow).

Slow Food

- This is an international movement that promotes local food and wine cultures, protects cultural and traditional food identities and opposes the standardisation of taste.



- [Abergavenny Transition Town](#) is a community-based initiative to look at how food and other needs can be developed in the face of challenges from changes to the climate, as well as physical and financial resources.

USEFUL LINKS

Photograph gallery for [Monmouthshire](#) and [Abergavenny](#)

[MonGenes](#) for Monmouthshire Family History Research

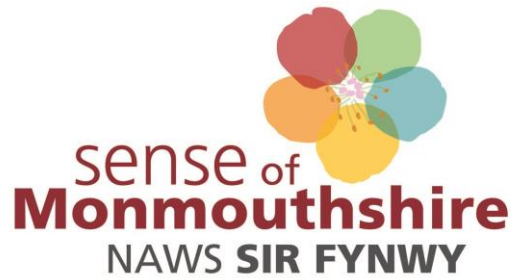
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Local Food and Drink Producers

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Bringing producers and customers together enables an uncommon degree of connectedness and provides traceability of the produce. A huge variety of food and drink can be sourced in and around Monmouthshire.

Check out the [Producers](#) and the [Outlets](#) sections of the **Made in Monmouthshire** website.

The [True Taste](#) website is another useful resource and also provides information on food and drink suppliers in Wales, including **True Taste Award** winners.

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Adding value to local products

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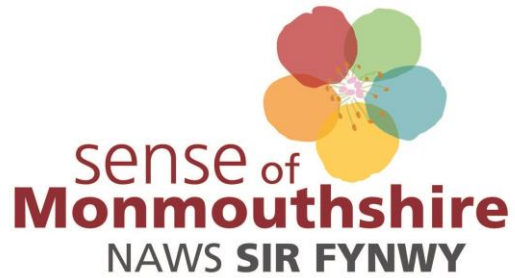
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Farmers' Markets (and other local markets)

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For up-to-date information on local Farmers' Markets, visit the [Farmers' Markets in Wales](#) website.

The [Made in Monmouthshire](#) website contains details of local produce markets.

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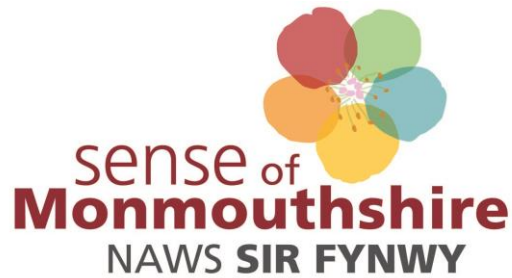
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Food and Drink Festivals

[Abergavenny Food Festival](#)

The Abergavenny Food Festival aims to offer visitors a wide range of the highest quality local and regional products, showcasing fantastic local, regional and Welsh produce. The Abergavenny Food Festival also has a Fringe, which offers an exciting range of activities and exhibitions.

ABERGAVENNY FOOD FESTIVAL

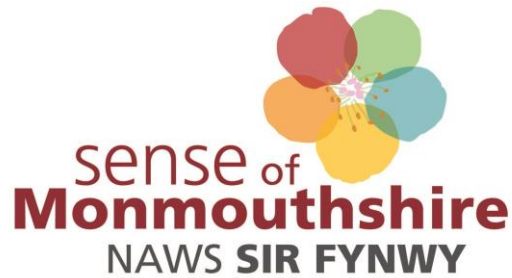


[Welsh Perry and Cider Festival](#)

The Welsh Perry and Cider Society (Cymdeithas Perai a Seidr Cymru) is an independent body of cider producers and enthusiasts, whose mission is to promote cider and cidermaking throughout Wales. The Society organises a range of activities and educational events throughout the year, including the Welsh Perry and Cider Festival & Welsh Perry and Cider Championships. The Society's website also lists perry and cider producers and outlets in Monmouthshire.



For other food and drink festivals in Monmouthshire, click [here](#).



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Monmouthshire's arts and creativity

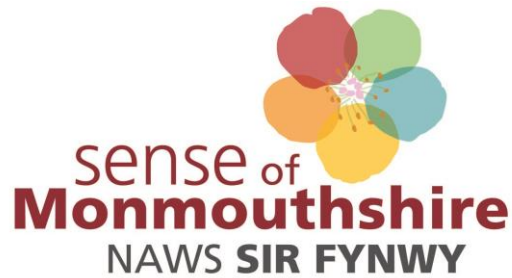
Monmouthshire's cultural heritage is a source of great local pride and enthusiasm. Monmouthshire's rich resources provide inspiration for many of the artists and crafts people based in the County.

Interpretation and celebration of local art and creativity can generate a number of activities involving local communities and businesses and help to create a Sense of Monmouthshire through festivals; exhibitions and cultural trails.

We try to have local artists displayed if they are good and we have a really good exhibition of a local artist here at the moment. Art, food, welcome and furnishing – they are all part of the overall experience ([The Angel Hotel](#), Abergavenny).

This section will help you:

- Appreciate how can you add value to your visitor's experiences of Monmouthshire by drawing on Monmouthshire art and creativity
- Consider showcasing local talent and products that visitors may want to take away with them
- Find out more about local music, artists and creative people in Monmouthshire and outlets for creativity
- Find information on local art and craft events and festivals.



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[Act now: Monmouthshire art and creativity](#)

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Adding value to local products

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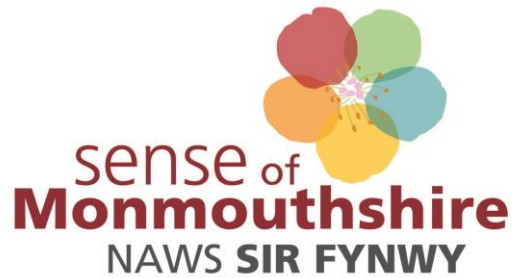


Benefits of using Monmouthshire art and creativity

Visitors enjoy seeing art and craft work of a high standard. Art and creativity incorporates a range of activities, such as: art/craft galleries, craft workshops, performing arts, literature, textiles, carnivals, festivals and events. Click [here](#) and/or [here](#) for more information.

By interpreting the arts and crafts tradition of Monmouthshire through products that visitors may want to buy, arts and crafts can provide a 'gateway' to interpreting Monmouthshire for visitors. Local artists and craftspeople often create pieces that are related to the local area – portraying idyllic and tranquil environments, keeping in touch with the natural world and recording history - for example, the [Abergavenny Tapestry](#).





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Act now: Monmouthshire art and creativity

There are many different ways that you can use art and creativity to incorporate your Sense of Monmouthshire.

Local art and craft

- Using local art and craft within your business, promoting local talent through arts and crafts markets, trails and festivals is a very effective way of interpreting a Sense of Monmouthshire. Eating and drinking places also need to reflect a localised approach and traditional materials can be used in contemporary settings.

As regards decor in the Beaufort Hotel, we try to make it look as authentic as possible. Because we are near to Chepstow Racecourse we have a lot of racing memorabilia from Chepstow Racecourse on the walls together with a mixture of local scenes and artists that I like myself ([Beaufort Hotel](#), Chepstow).

- 'Sell' the fact that the items are locally made. Tell your visitors about the work and who made it - they may want to buy something to take home!
- Visit the [Arts Council of Wales website](#) for information on [Collectorplan](#) – a scheme to help you buy contemporary art and craft in Wales.

Use wall space in your place

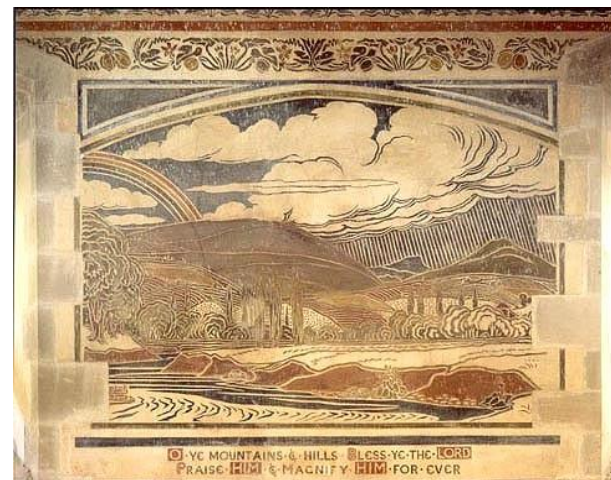
- Use wall space in your place to showcase local art and craft. You could arrange with artists and craft makers to display and sell their work on a commission basis. Why not have photographs or paintings of local Monmouthshire scenes or other locally-produced arts and crafts around your establishment?
- There are a number of Monmouthshire-based artists and artists who draw on Monmouthshire and the Wye Valley for their inspiration, such as [Made in Monmouthshire](#), [Court Cupboard Craft](#)

[Gallery](#), [Abergavenny Artists](#), [Craft Renaissance](#).

- If you find local art, craft or textile products are too expensive to buy for your establishment, try negotiating discounts direct with the artist or maker – you may find that they are more willing to agree a preferential rate if you are prepared to promote their work (and contact details) through your tourism establishment.

Communicating with your customers

- Monmouthshire has long been a hotbed of art and craft talent and has a well-established cultural history. Abergavenny hosted a series of ten Eisteddfodau between 1835 and 1853 - organised by Lord and Lady Llanover, which attracted European Celtic scholars and were significant in safeguarding elements in Welsh culture.
- Consider using Welsh music in your premises. The musical tradition of Monmouthshire includes classic choirs, [Male Voice choirs](#), brass bands, churches and chapels. There are also music societies, such as, the [Monmouth Choral Society](#), the [Abergavenny Symphony Orchestra](#). Some music societies hold workshops and open their practice sessions up to visitors.
- How much do you know about Monmouthshire's treasures – including those that might not be too well-known? One example might be the sgraffito in St Mary the Virgin Church in Llanfair Kilgeddin - one of the very few remaining coloured versions in Europe.



- Ensure you have a list of the diverse range of events taking place in the surrounding area, for

example: [The Chepstow Show](#); [Monmouth Carnival](#); [Monmouthshire Show](#); [Monmouth Festival and Carnival](#); [Caldicot Castle](#) stages a range of events throughout the year; the [Usk Show](#). The [Monmouthshire, Brecon and Abergavenny Canal Trust](#) also organise an annual programme of events.

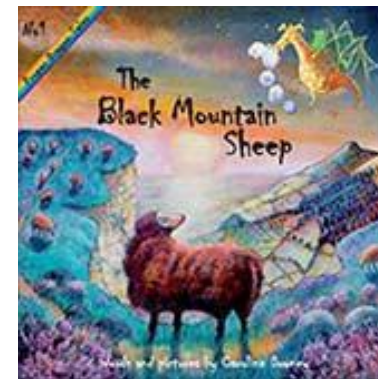
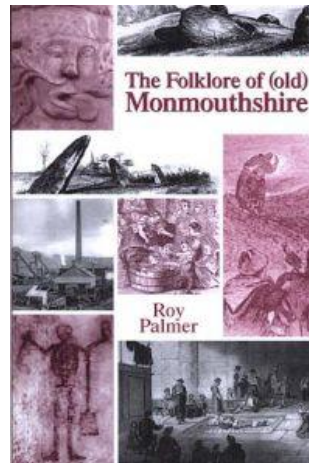
- The [Visit Monmouthshire website](#) lists a range of festivals and events throughout the County.
- Provide books written by local authors and/or written about the local area for visitors to read during their stay. For example:

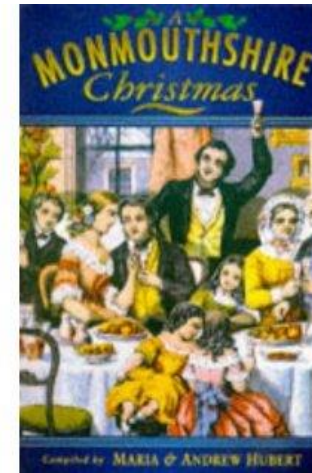
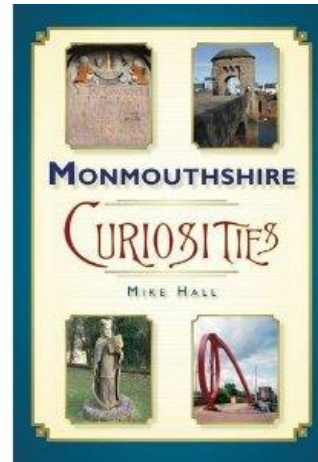
[*The Folklore of \(Old\) Monmouthshire*](#);

The [*Proper Dragon's Tales*](#) series, such as the *Black Mountain Sheep*;

[*Monmouthshire Curiosities*](#);

[*A Monmouthshire Christmas*](#).





- [The Circle of Legends](#) at the Old Station in Tintern depicts historical and mystical characters in a very different way to traditional books.



- [White Ravens](#) is a contemporary retelling of stories from *The Mabinogion* and is written by Abergavenny-born Owen Sheers.



- Other local authors include: John Barnie - a poet, fiction writer and essayist; Catherine Merrimar - novelist and short story writer; Anna Pavord - one of the gardening world's most celebrated writers; Ethel Lina White - fiction writer; Julie MCGowan – playwright and novelist.
- Check the [Made in Monmouthshire website](#) for up-to-date lists of local artists and makers.
- Artists in Wales are listed [here](#), whilst other local artists and crafts people include:

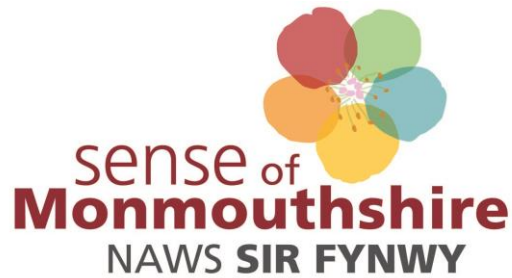
[Charles and Patricia Lester](#) – textiles and couture fashion;

Alison Tod – milliner.

Creating new markets

- Consider how your interpretation of a Sense of Monmouthshire contributes to the promotion of arts and crafts in Monmouthshire. You might want to think about developing your own arts and crafts trail or cultural trail around your local area.

You could develop special interest packages by working with local artists and crafts people, as well as other tourism providers and local societies. Such packages might include: storytelling, art master classes, textile tours and talks, craft workshops.



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Adding value to local products

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Local Artists and Makers

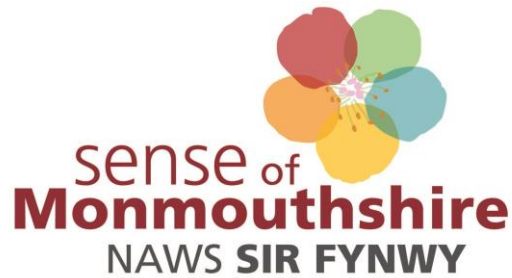
Bringing producers and customers together enables an uncommon degree of connectedness and provides traceability. A huge variety of arts and crafts can be sourced in and around Monmouthshire.

Check out the [Artists and Makers](#) section on the **Made in Monmouthshire** website, as well as the [Outlets](#) section.

You can also watch Stuart Neale of Sioni Rhys Handweavers explaining the **Made in Monmouthshire** concept on [You Tube](#).

Visit the [Arts Council of Wales website](#) for information on [Collectorplan](#) – a scheme to help you buy contemporary art and craft in Wales.

The [Arts Wales UK website](#) provides a directory of artists and art resources for Wales and Welsh Borders



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Art and Craft Markets

The **Made in Monmouthshire** website contains details of [art galleries and artists in the Abergavenny area](#).

Creative Cultivators: Art, Craft and Local Producers Market brings together Artists, Craftspeople and Local Food Producers in Chepstow.

USEFUL LINKS

Photograph gallery for [Monmouthshire](#) and [Abergavenny](#)

[MonGenes](#) for Monmouthshire Family History Research

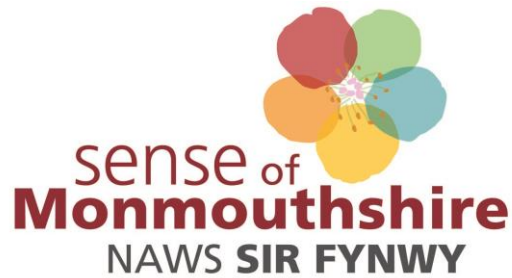
[Visit Monmouthshire website](#)

Monmouthshire, It's even more than....[video](#)

[Trip Advisor: Things to Do in Monmouthshire](#)

[Links to additional stories & resources about your area](#)

[Wye Valley & the Vale of Usk](#)



Monmouthshire's outdoors

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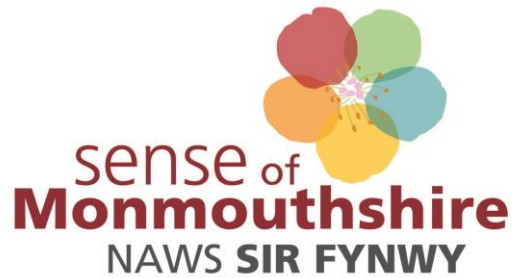
Monmouthshire's rich landscape has been shaped by invasions and its industrial and agricultural heritage. The diversity of the area means that Monmouthshire has a huge range of outdoor activities to offer visitors.

The Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a protected area with unique landscapes, ideal for: walking, fishing, canal-cruising, golf, cycling, canoeing and gliding. Monmouthshire also has one of the highest designations of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), reflecting the excellent landscapes and habitats, with woodlands, grasslands and wildlife being key sites.

Whilst Monmouthshire offers visitors a range of activities, it also has a rich sporting history. Team games have always been popular in Monmouthshire's villages – in the late 19th century some major cricket fixtures - starring W.G. Grace – were held at Piercefield Park! Riding pursuits have also been influential, as whilst there is a tradition of show-jumping, horseracing has been significant, with the development of Chepstow Racecourse.

This section will help you:

- Appreciate how you can add value to your visitor's outdoor experiences of Monmouthshire;
- Find information on towns and villages in Monmouthshire;
- Find information on different activities in Monmouthshire.



Benefits of using Monmouthshire Outdoors

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Evaluation

Visitors are seeking something a little different and want to have a true experience. The outdoors and natural resources are a fundamentally important aspect of creating a Sense of Monmouthshire, providing your visitors with a distinctive experience and introducing your visitors to local agriculture, fishing and Monmouthshire's rural economy.

We have created a few things in the village to reinforce sense of place. For example, we created a map of Tintern with sites of importance, which the parish council and Cadw then took on board. We also helped create the Michaelmas Festival ([Tintern Old Rectory](#), Tintern).

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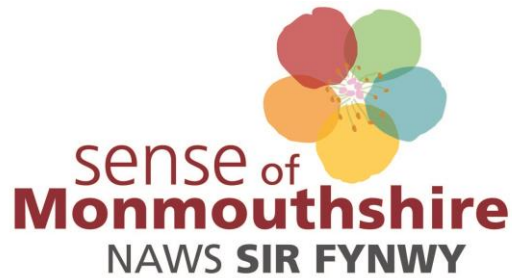


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Act now: Monmouthshire Outdoors

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There are many different ways that you can incorporate the outdoors into your Sense of Monmouthshire.



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Communicating with your customers

- There is so much for your visitors to explore in the different towns and villages of Monmouthshire. How much do you know about the towns and villages that surround you? Click [here](#) to find out more about the different towns and communities in Monmouthshire.

It really helps people a lot if you can tell them what is happening and what places to see and, of course, food is a part of that. For instance, they visit the Parva vineyard and Kingston micro-brewery which are literally around the corner from here, so that gives them a feeling of seeing something special right here in the heart of the Wye Valley. I explain that England is right across the river and that Offa's Dyke is just there as well. It gives visitors an immense feeling of being somewhere special ([Tintern Old Rectory](#), Tintern).

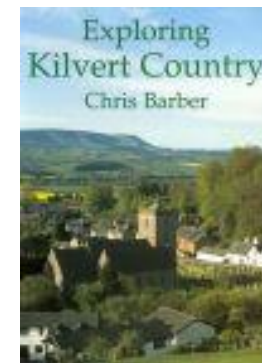
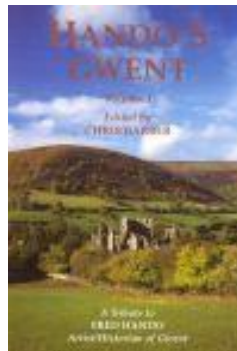
- The [Wye Valley AONB](#) is regarded as one of the finest lowland landscapes in Britain, the area is of

great importance for wildlife and the River Wye has been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

- For details on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and National Nature Reserves (NNRs) in Monmouthshire, click [here](#).
- There are a number of local wildlife sites across Monmouthshire, which have been identified by Monmouthshire County Council working with the [Gwent Wildlife Trust](#). The Trust produces a nature reserves booklet, which contains visitor information on their nature reserves and they organise a range of events.

I believe that knowing the area is important and to keep abreast of what is going on ([Capel Pentwyn](#), Penallt).

- Provide some reading material for your visitors to enjoy during their stay which focuses on Monmouthshire's outdoor environment. Fred J Hando (1888-1970), often referred to as the artist/historian of Gwent, wrote extensively on Monmouthshire – documenting his journeys in and around the County. However, copies of his books (e.g.: *Rambles in Gwent*, *The Pleasant Land of Gwent*, *Journeys in Gwent*, *Monmouthshire Sketch Book*, *Out and About in Monmouthshire*) may be difficult to acquire. There are many books produced by local writer [Chris Barber](#), such as:

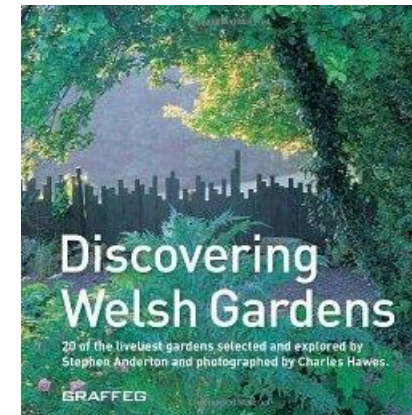
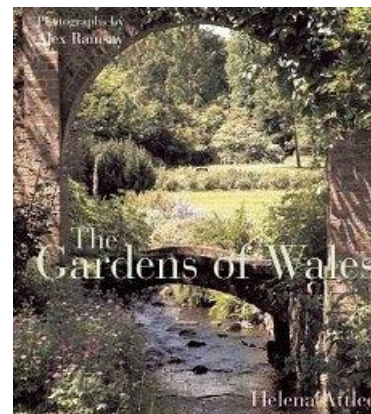


Promoting special interests: Gardens

- Interesting gardens are plentiful in Monmouthshire, including [Veddw House](#), [The Nurtons](#), [Penpergwm Lodge](#) and the [hidden gardens and grottoes of Dewstow](#).



- [Parks and Gardens UK](#) contain listings of gardens in Monmouthshire.
- The National Gardens Scheme organises a number of [Open Garden Days in Monmouthshire](#).
- The [Monmouthshire Meadows Group](#) aims to conserve and restore flower-rich grasslands in Monmouthshire.
- You could make some garden books available for visitors to look at during their stay, such as: *The Gardens of Wales* and *Discovering Welsh Gardens* (click on the book covers for more information).

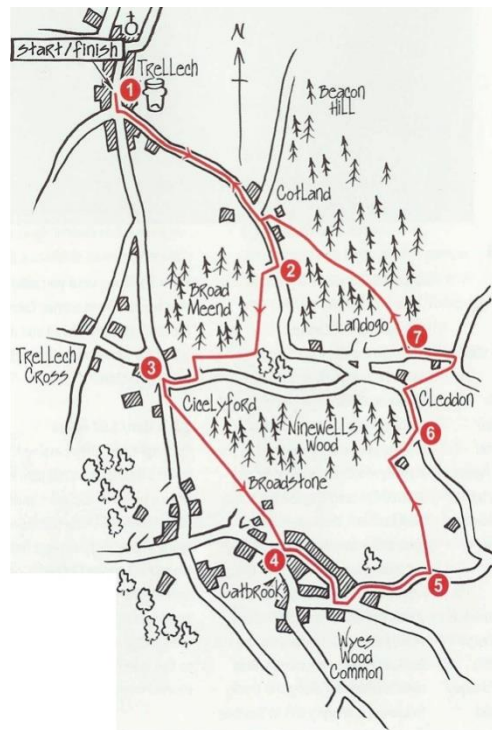


Promoting special interests: Walking

- The area is a walkers' paradise, from short circular walks to long distance footpaths - all helping

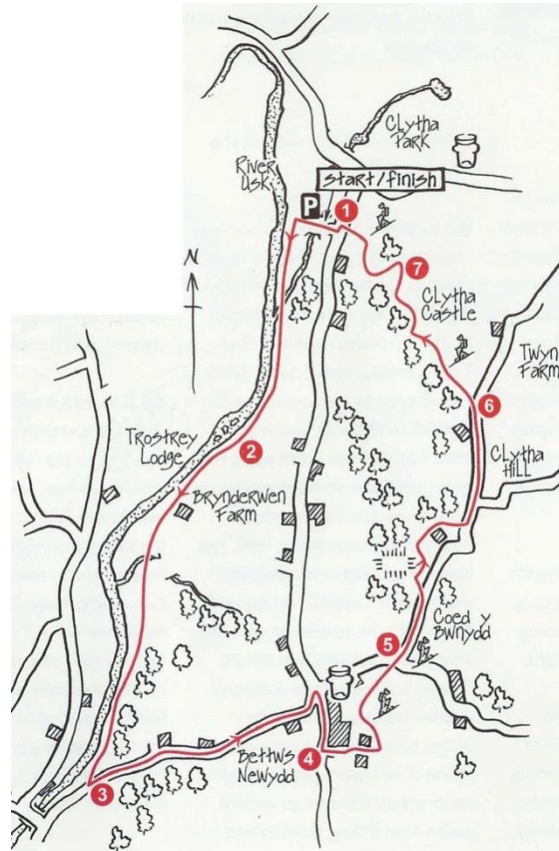
your visitors explore Monmouthshire's countryside.

- [Walking Britain](#) provides a list of suggested walking routes in Monmouthshire.
- Waterscape – the British Waterways leisure [website](#) - lists a number of different walks in Monmouthshire which incorporate the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal. The Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal also featured in the BBC Wales series, [Weatherman Walking](#).
- There is a programme of guided walks and activities for Monmouthshire listed on the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty [website](#).
- The [Visit Monmouthshire website](#) also lists walking events and festivals. The [Village Alive Trust](#) has produced information on different walks in their area.
- Alternatively, you could design your own walking trails or your visitors which incorporate your favourite places of interest, pubs and restaurants. Visitors might appreciate a hand-drawn walking route.....



An easy to moderate 5½ mile walk, starting and finishing at Trellech, using quiet roads, forest tracks, field paths and woodland.

Along the route, walkers will pass, amongst other things: the Virtuous Well at Trellech; Catbrook village with its ancient spring; and Cleddon Hall – birthplace of the philosopher Bertrand Russell.



A moderate 5½ mile walking trail along riverside field paths, quiet roads and a slight hill, starting and finishing at the car park at Clytha Park.

Along the way, walkers will pass: Brynderwen House; Bettws Newydd village; Coed-y-Bwnydd – an iron age fort with a bluebell wood in April/May; Castle Wood and Clytha Castle.

Promoting special interests: Equine Activities

- There are a number of trekking and riding centres operating in Monmouthshire, with Llanthony Valley and the Black Mountains being popular areas for visitors. The [Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty](#) website provides a link to British Horse Society approved stables.
- [Chepstow Racecourse](#), developed in the grounds of historic Piercefield Park, is a big attraction for horseracing enthusiasts. It offers both Flat and National Hunt racing, with the highlight of the season being the prestigious Welsh Grand National.
- The [David Broome Event Centre](#) is a nationally-important equestrian centre which hosts a wide

range of show-jumping events.

- [The Grange Trekking Centre](#) offers days, half days, weekends or a week's horse riding in the hills. [Llanthony Riding & Trekking](#) offers quiet rides for beginners and experienced riders. [Severnvale Equestrian Centre](#) organises fun days, summer camps, shows and events. [Triley Fields Equestrian Centre](#) offers riding lessons, show-jumping, one day events and clear round jumping.

Promoting special interests: Cycling

- As part of the National Cycle Network runs alongside the River Usk, Waterscape – the British Waterways leisure website - lists a number of different cycle routes which incorporate the River Usk. They also provide [cycle routes](#) along the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal.
- [Sustrans Cymru](#) is very active with a range of cycle trails across Wales.
- The [4 Castles Cycle Route](#) is a 32-mile cycle route incorporating the castles of: Abergavenny, White Castle, Skenfrith Castle and Grosmont Castle.
- [Cycle routes](#) are available a number of websites including the UK's [National Cyclist Organisation](#) (membership organisation).

Promoting special interests: Water-based Activities

- The River Wye is one of the most popular rivers in the UK for canoeing, whilst the River Usk is widely renowned as one of the best salmon rivers in Wales.
- There are a range of water-based festivals and events in Monmouthshire. For example, the [Monmouthshire, Brecon and Abergavenny Canal Trust](#) organise an annual programme of events and the 75-mile [River Wye Raft Race](#).
- Monmouthshire is home to the [Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal](#) and the River Usk, which have a range of boating and fishing activities to offer visitors.
- [Monmouth Canoe and Activity Centre](#) offer a range of water-based activities on the River Wye
- The [Monmouth and District Angling Society](#) provides details on fishing in different locations in Monmouthshire.

Promoting special interests: Golf

Monmouthshire has nine golf clubs scattered across the county ([see map](#)).

- Abergavenny has golf courses which offer a wide variety of challenges and activities:
[Wernddu Golf Club](#) 18 holes, 9 hole pitch-and-putt, driving range.
[Monmouthshire Golf Club](#) 18 holes, putting green and driving nets.
- Monmouth is home to [Monmouth Golf Club](#) and [The Rolls of Monmouth Golf Club](#) (previously the home of Charles Rolls). The Clubhouse at the Rolls of Monmouth Golf Club was the former workshop where the first Rolls-Royce engines were built.
- Other golf courses in Monmouthshire include: [Dewstow Golf Club](#) in Caerwent, [Raglan Parc Golf Club](#), [Woodlake Park](#) near Usk and the [Marriott St Pierre Golf Club](#) in Chepstow.
- The [Greens of Southern Wales](#) provides details on all the golf clubs in Southern Wales. There is also a comprehensive list of golf clubs in Monmouthshire on the [Golf Today website](#) - however, it also list golf clubs outside the unitary authority of Monmouthshire. Similarly, the [Welsh Golf Courses website](#) provides a list of all the golf courses in South Wales.

Creating new markets

- Monmouthshire County Council manages a number of [parks and play areas](#) throughout the County – many of these are suitable for families and have picnic areas.

USEFUL LINKS

Photograph gallery for [Monmouthshire](#) and [Abergavenny](#)

[MonGenes](#) for Monmouthshire Family History Research

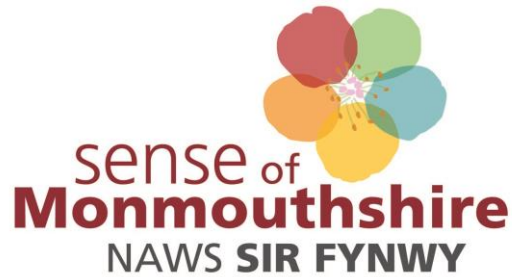
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Wye Valley & the Vale of Usk



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[Evaluation](#)

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It received financial support from:



Evaluation

Now that you have had time to think about creating your own Sense of Monmouthshire and have (hopefully) put some of your ideas into practice, why not revisit, in more detail, your [Visit Wales self-audit](#) to gauge how effective you have been in promoting a Sense of Monmouthshire in your business. Maybe you will identify sections that you can further develop to enhance your customer's experience?

Different aspects of a Sense of Monmouthshire will appeal to different people, so it is important for you to customise your Sense of Monmouthshire in a way that complements you and your business, in order to develop a unique selling proposition and a memorable, enjoyable and authentic experience for your visitors.

REMEMBER – the process of creating your Sense of Monmouthshire needs to be enjoyable – for you and your visitors - **ENJOY!**