

Blackwood Penmaen Newbridge  
 Pontllanfraith Gelligaer Mar  
 Cwmfelinfach Wattsville Fo  
 Waterloo Rudry Rhymney  
 Brithdir Caerphilly Machen  
 Tir-y-Berth Pengam Cefn Fforest  
 Hengoed Penybryn Deri Wylie  
 Abercarn Senghenydd Crumlin Yn  
 Abertridwr Trethomas Machen R  
 Fochriw Abertysswg Tirphill Tr

# Natter that Matters

**OVER 50**  
**CAERPHILLY**

NATTER THAT MATTERS

**Spring  
 2019**

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Berth Pengam Cefn Fforest  
 Gelligaer Hengoed Argoed  
 Senghenydd Llanbradach Machen  
 Trethomas Ynysddu Risca  
 New Tredegar Tirphill Deri  
 Gakdale Crosskeys Crumlin  
 Newbridge Nelson Gelligaer  
 Mynach Maesycwmm  
 Wattsville Crosskeys Bedwas  
 Rhymney Pontlloftyn  
 Hengoed Markham Bargoed  
 Cefn Fforest Blackwood  
 Pontllanfraith Cefn Hengoed  
 Ynysddu Wattsville Llanbradach  
 Waterloo Caerphilly Rudry  
 New Tredegar Newbridge  
 Markham  
 Cefn Fforest  
 Argoed  
 Machen  
 Risca  
 Deri  
 Crumlin  
 Gelligaer  
 Cwmm  
 Bedwas  
 Pontlloftyn  
 Bargoed  
 Blackwood  
 Hengoed  
 Llanbradach  
 Caerphilly Rudry  
 Newbridge



[www.caerphillyover50.co.uk/](http://www.caerphillyover50.co.uk/)



Caerphilly Over 50



# A note from our Chairman

**The start of 2019 has seen a significant milestone in the history of our Forum. At the end of February, our CCBC Coordinator, Mandy Keenan (formerly Sprague) took early retirement from the Council's employment.**



Mandy has been the lynchpin of the Forum since the inception in 2004. Across Wales, most 50+ Forums have found it difficult to survive although they are still operating, albeit in difficult circumstances. Of course, Caerphilly Borough 50+ Forum has had its ups and downs but Mandy has been a constant source of determination, steadfast support and boundless optimism and enthusiasm. She has done much over the years to promote the activities of the Caerphilly Forum with her colleagues across Wales and with Welsh Government and has enthusiastically shared our good practice with others.

Mandy was instrumental in developing our POVA (Protection of Vulnerable Adults) programme. Ultimately, it led to the production

of a DVD of which we produced 22,000 copies, a thousand for each of the 22 Welsh Boroughs. Mandy has masterminded our Facebook page now for many years combining serious, informative items with some of a humorous bent. 50+ Positive Action was also one of Mandy's responsibilities. She allied this with her role with the Forum to produce such valuable communications as the "Simon Says" safety bulletins.

Therefore, the Forum now has to step up to the plate. We have been aware for some time that we could not rely on Mandy forever and we believe that we have the ability to keep the Forum moving forward.

While we no longer have a Coordinator in the Council, Mandy has not left the Forum itself and is still a member of the Committee. Mandy will continue to maintain our Facebook page.

In January, the Forum, along with invited guests, had the pleasure of meeting with the Commissioner for Older People, Helena Herklots. **See the item in this Newsletter.**

We have continued to progress our business plan. The association with other groups has continued and developed. For example, we have now started a programme with the Blackwood Stroke group of mentoring individuals in expanding their digital skills. We recognise that digital inclusion is increasingly important. Any group is welcome to contact us to seek a presentation about the Forum and to discuss the possibility of us providing digital training.

Enhancements of the Website have continued. Sections about "Money Matters", which deals with such topics as benefits that may be available to residents in Caerphilly Borough, and "Online Safety", have been added.



# Caerphilly Miners

**Community Centres play a vital role in supporting older people to stay independent and one of the 38 in Caerphilly we would like to highlight is Caerphilly Miners Community Centre.**

Caerphilly Miners is a charity situated in the impressive restored remaining building of the former Caerphilly Miners hospital. It has made great progress in a short period and has been praised by Welsh Government Ministers and HRH Prince Charles following visits made in the last few years. It follows the miners' ethos (who paid for it to become a hospital 100 years ago) - of mutuality and collaboration, community enterprise and self help. The facility is used for a wide variety of purposes and provides a place to socialise, learn and develop skills, access information, and participate in community activities.



## Activities at the centre include:

- **Language classes**
- **Yoga**
- **Pilates**
- **Tai Chi**
- **50+ dance**
- **Chair exercises**
- **Elderberries Social afternoons . . .**  
and cinema club, play, craft and learning activities for early years and primary children, Crafts and Chat, art, and choirs.

There is also a café on site. The centre has secured over £900,000 in grants to restore the upper floors of the building and create a car park.

If you would like to use any of the centre's services or volunteer to support its community activities please contact Katherine Hughes on Telephone: **029 2167 4242** or visit the website at **[www.caerphillyminerscentre.org.uk](http://www.caerphillyminerscentre.org.uk)**

# Older People's Commissioner for Wales: Visit to Caerphilly Borough 50+ Forum



It was a pleasure to visit the Caerphilly 50+ Forum in January, to meet and speak with members about my priorities as Commissioner and the development of my work programme, and to hear from them about how we can make Wales the best place in the world to grow older.

The discussions I had during the meeting were very helpful and it is clear that members are committed to using their wealth of knowledge and experience to not only ensure that older people have a strong voice, but also to influence policy and practice, both locally and nationally, to improve older people's lives.

Since I took up post last year, I have travelled the length and breadth of Wales, meeting with older people, groups, forums and stakeholders to hear about their experiences of growing older, the issues that affect their lives and the changes and improvements they want to see.

This engagement helped me to identify three key long-term priorities for Wales, against which I will deliver a wide range of work during the next three years.

- 1. Ensuring that everyone can age well.**
- 2. Ending ageism and discrimination based on age.**
- 3. Stopping the abuse of older people in Wales.**

The full text of the Commissioner's letter can be read in "News" on our website



**Comisiynydd Pobl Hŷn Cymru**  
**Older People's Commissioner for Wales**



**[www.caerphillyover50.co.uk/](http://www.caerphillyover50.co.uk/)**



**Caerphilly Over 50**



# Isolation and loneliness in Wales

**There is a wealth of evidence that demonstrates that loneliness and social isolation are significant issues affecting our older population. Over 50,000 older people in Wales are lonely. Projections show that there will be a 50% increase in the number of people over 50 experiencing loneliness. Loneliness can be twice as unhealthy as obesity.**

**The Caerphilly 50+ Forum response to this Welsh Government consultation made the following points about how to tackle this problem:**

- Support and funding could be provided for inter-generational activities between old and young in an organised and structured programme.



- The impact of isolation and loneliness for older men living alone and its consequences for pressures on social services, housing etc. should not be ignored. See the article on "Chatty Café".
- Transport is essential to many older people who cannot or no longer drive a car and an effective integrated transport system will help reduce loneliness.
- Over 40% of people over 75 do not have or use a computer. Inclusion of Older People through IT learning and support and access to services and help "face to face" not just "on line" will help combat loneliness. We are now offering help with IT training, currently working with Blackwood Stroke Group.



- We want to see the creation of Age Friendly Communities across Wales that recognise and celebrate diversity, bring people together to challenge ageism and ensure that all ages can fully participate in community life. Two of our Committee are making great improvements in their community in Lansbury Park. **See "News" on our website.**

- A robust funding framework to support implementation of this Strategy is essential.
- Tackling isolation and loneliness must include help through GPs and community health services.



This is a priority issue for Caerphilly 50+ Forum in 2019 and we will do all we can to increase awareness and support local solutions.



# Chatty Café

## The Coffee Lounge at the Visitor Centre

Upstairs is a very pleasant cafe with a dramatic view out over Caerphilly Castle. The coffee Lounge is not just a place for the visitor to Caerphilly; it is very popular with the local residents. This is not surprising with the friendly and welcoming staff, marvellous views, great décor and a happy, chatty clientele.



Early this year, members of Caerphilly 50 plus Forum met with the Centre manager, Martin Cook, who has been responsible for transforming the Centre into the vibrant and profitable entity that it now is. We wanted to introduce Martin to the concept of the "Chatty Café". The Visitor Centre has all the right attributes to make Chatty Café a success. Martin was most enthusiastic about the concept and plans were put in place to introduce it in late March.



### What is a Chatter & Natter table?

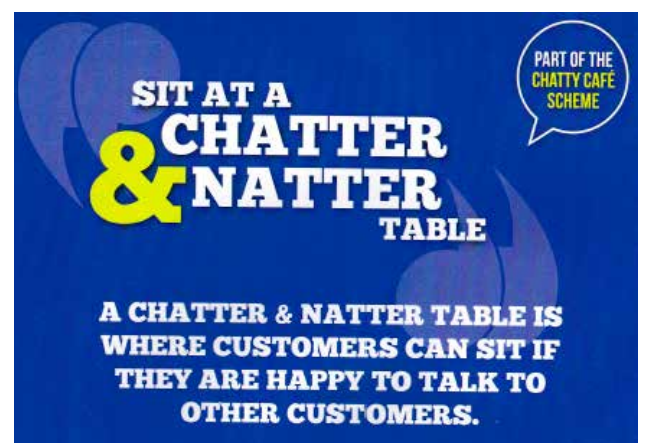
Just somewhere that you know anybody sitting there is prepared to interact and have a chat; just a good old human interaction. We thought the Visitor Centre Coffee lounge was an ideal venue to introduce this.

### Do you know of a café that would welcome becoming part of 'Chatty Café'?

For more information, you can contact:

**Rhian Meaden** email: [meader1@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:meader1@caerphilly.gov.uk)

Tel: **01443 864228** Mob: **07818036940**



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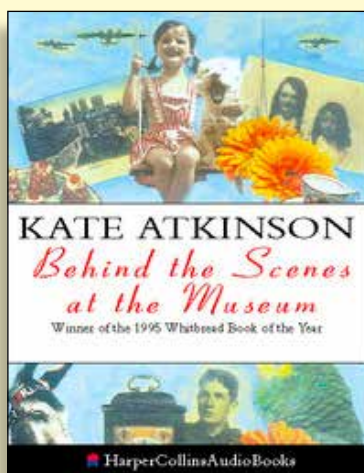
# Book Review

## Behind the scenes at the museum

by Kate Atkinson

Available as hardback, paperback, e-book, and audio book. Borrow from your library in the format of your choice.

This was Kate Atkinson's first novel, it won the then 1995 Whitbread (now Costa) Book of the Year Prize. You may be aware of some of her other books particularly those featuring her private



detective Jackson Brodie that have been televised on the BBC starring Jason Isaacs, but this was her debut novel – and what a debut it is. Defying an easy description it could be called a family saga – but certainly don't expect a standard tale of historical hardship and adversity overcome through hard work, grit and determination.

The book tells the story of six generations of the family and it weaves back and forward in time linking past and present and chronicling the life of the main protagonist Ruby Lennox. It is a story that is in turn sad then funny, I couldn't put it down. You do have to concentrate a bit because of the narrative structure, going back and forth, and dealing with a cast of characters does mean that it demands your complete attention. But it repays you in dividends with an engrossing story with twists and turns; a wonderful array of characters; and a dazzling writing style.

Worth five stars without question – Ruby and her family will live with you a long time.

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

## Warm Spring Vegetable Salad



### Ingredients Serves Six

- ☐ **2 large Courgettes**  
Sliced into ribbons.
- ☐ **Juice of 1 lemon.**
- ☐ **200g Asparagus spears**  
Washed and trimmed.
- ☐ **100g frozen peas.**
- ☐ **100g frozen broad beans.**
- ☐ **1 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil.**
- ☐ **Small pack parsley**  
Roughly chopped.

- Put the courgette ribbons into a large bowl with the juice of the lemon. Bring a large saucepan of water to the boil and cook the asparagus for 2 minutes, adding the frozen peas and broad beans for the final minute. Drain well.
- Peel off the outer husks of the broad beans and toss together with the courgette ribbons. Drizzle over the olive oil, sprinkle on parsley and season to taste.
- Ideal to accompany any suitable meat, fish or poultry. Use it topped with tuna and the flavours really begin to come out.
- Avocados go well, fresh strong watercress too.



# WHAT ARE DIGITAL FRIDAYS?

**Have you ever got stuck using your lap-top or tablet, with the words "Easy when you know how" ringing round your head?**

**ONLY YOU DO NOT KNOW HOW . . .**

Well, help is at hand. Thanks to a dedicated band of volunteers you can take the laptop or tablet you were about to throw out of the window and go to a "digital Friday" session instead.

These are held at libraries up and down Caerphilly borough on Friday mornings from 10.00 to 1.00 and the friendly volunteers will show you how to solve those frustrating problems. They can also help with mobile phones, on-line shopping, social media and on-line communications.

No need to book – just turn up at libraries in Bargoed, New Tredegar, Caerphilly, Blackwood, Newbridge or Risca on Friday mornings (10 - 1) or Ystrad Mynach on Tuesdays (10 - 12) and go home with a spring in your step and a new-found confidence that maybe computers are not so confusing after all.



**DIGITAL FRIDAYS**  
**Free advice and support every week!**

Tablets Mobile Phones Job seeking Online Applications Internet & Email Facebook, Twitter	<b>Tuesday</b> 10am – 12pm Ystrad Mynach Library
	<b>Friday</b> 10am – 1pm Bargoed Library Blackwood Library Caerphilly Library New Tredegar Library Rhymney Library Risca Library

**Cymunedau am Waith  
Communities for Work**

**Cwmni Gymdeithasol Ewrop  
European Social Fund**

Communities for Work - Working in Partnership with Communities and Jobcentre Plus

## Future Learn

**A couple of years ago I realised I was stagnating and not exercising the largest muscle in my body, the brain. (Others have said I should exercise other muscles but that is another story).**

After looking around the internet, I found Future Learn that has online courses from top universities and specialist organisations from around the world. The Open University started future Learn in 2012.

As of last year, 2018, there were 143 UK and international partners around the world including the United Nations. Moreover, the best thing is they are FREE. Delve into the courses and you will be astonished at what they cover, from A-Z. Courses run from 2-6

weeks and will take up approximately 3-5 hours a week. Students are from around the world.

The courses have mentors from the universities/organisations who are there to help and guide you as well as monitor the discussion group to which you and others may contribute.

Learning with Future Learn can be addictive. At the last count I have taken 60 courses covering many eclectic areas of study. I have studied courses supplied by universities/organisations from France, Australia, UK as well as other countries: truly international.

**These are online courses, so you do need access to the internet. Start your search here:**  
**[www.my-mooc.com/en/](http://www.my-mooc.com/en/)**



**[www.caerphillyover50.co.uk/](http://www.caerphillyover50.co.uk/)**



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# WHY ESME?

Read her story at:  
[www.charlesbonnetsyndrome.uk/why-esme/](http://www.charlesbonnetsyndrome.uk/why-esme/)

Charles Bonnet described the syndrome named after him in 1760. The condition produces vivid, complex visual hallucinations that occur in psychologically normal people.

## This is Joy's story

"I have been seeing things for years. There has been a rather nice black cat that creeps into the lounge and sits by my chair. When I go to stroke her, she disappears. This was tolerable but when I started seeing zig zag flashing lights, blue flowers on non-flowering shrubs and owls perching on the picture frames, I thought I should get help.

My ophthalmic consultant said all this was par for the course for people with eye conditions, particularly for those with Wet and Dry Age-related Macular degeneration. I wish he had warned me when I was first diagnosed! I am actually relatively

lucky. Some people see really scary things like snakes coming out of the teapot. Others see demonic faces coming towards them.

My worst experience was getting off a bus and being unable to move because I was surrounded by traffic cones and I couldn't see the traffic. The only thing to do was to close my eyes and wait until the hallucination had passed."

**The Macular Support Group meets in Caerphilly Library on 3rd Tuesday of every Month 10.30-12.30**



## Newsletter Contributions

The numbers of authors that currently contribute to our newsletter needs a wider base. We would like to find contributions from those of all ages across the Borough. Anything that interests you; about a group you belong to or, perhaps, a community project in which you are involved; a poem; local history; something with an inter-generational angle.

**Please send your articles to: [50plusforum@mail.com](mailto:50plusforum@mail.com). For each article we publish in our newsletter, we will make a contribution to a charity of £25 ... up to a limit per newsletter of £100.**

It is increasingly the case that services are moving rapidly to digital formats. Digital Champions training courses are aimed at helping those that are already digitally aware to train others to use digital devices and understand how to use the internet. We have been working with individuals in Blackwood Stroke group to help them gain confidence with a variety of digital issues. If you think we could help you, call 01443 864 277 where you can leave a contact number and the best time/day to call you back



**If you would like to advertise to thousands of over 50s in Caerphilly County Borough you can do so by sponsoring the next edition of this Newsletter or any of the forum's events. Please contact us via the website 'get in touch' section or email: [50plusforum@mail.com](mailto:50plusforum@mail.com)**