

Gosh, the last newsletter was all about the floods around the Wye Valley, that seems so long ago. Now it is all about Covid-19.

We and everybody else in the area are doing our very best to make sure you feel welcome and safe on your visits. Rock Lodge is graded *Good to Go* (the English and Welsh Tourist Boards' Covid-secure checks) and *Covid-19 Confident* by the AA.

A big plus for us is that our accommodation is totally self-contained, purpose-built and easy clean. And, of course, we have all this fabulous countryside to enjoy and space and almost everything has reopened.

Keep safe, keep healthy and keep enjoying yourselves!

Exciting News!

Rock Lodge is starring in the new Toggi advertising campaign, so look out for us on social media. Here are a few images to whet your appetite!



Events:

- Gaia installation, Gloucester Cathedral. Constructed using NASA images, a 7m 3-D Earth will hang in the nave. 13 Oct – 1 Nov.
- Chasing the Light. The opportunity to join a small and select group photographing around Puzzlewood with Forest of Dean School of Photography. 18 Oct.
- Steep and Natural. Mountain bike coaching and guiding with Wye MTB. 24 Oct (other dates and courses available).
- The Fiddle Fair, Coleford. Music, food, arts and crafts stalls under the Christmas lights. 28 Nov.
- Christmas Flower Arranging, Tudor Farmhouse, Clearwell. 28 Nov – 5 Dec.
- Forest of Dean Half Marathon. 21 March.



Activities News:

Looking for Christmas present ideas? There are lots of gift voucher suggestions on the wyedeantourism website, such as working a Shire horse team at Coldcroft Farm (or a stay at Symonds Yat Rock Lodge). Also, there are some Wye Valley artisan food and drink boxes you can order <https://www.wyevallyproducers.co.uk/collections/wye-valley-producers-hampers>

You can purchase (or just browse) Wye Valley arts and crafts IRL or virtually at:

- Made in Ross, a great shop in the lovely red sandstone Market House, Ross-on-Wye
- Taurus Crafts has individual makers and shops, plus its renowned café
- At Creates in Monmouth you can dine in an art gallery (and lovely jewellery also on sale)
- Mary Rose Young's bright and immediately recognisable pottery, loved by pop stars!
- Wobage Makers' Gallery
- On Instagram is WyeweCreate (which recently featured my sister at Madeatthehut, her cyclist in the Forest print is below) and links to makers
- The annual Forest & Rivers Open Studios' website runs all year and is great for locating artists

Katie at Hot Pot Pottery now offers new One Day Throwing Workshops, plus you can order in her pottery painting kits to do overnight.



Nature:

The Forest Waters Project is working to restore and improve our many waterways. One focus is to slow the water flow and remove barriers to encourage eels and lampreys. European Eels are critically endangered and have an amazing life cycle. The Severn is famous for their young glass eels.

Food and Drink News:

Not only are places re-opened, but some have made very imaginative adaptations, such as the family-run La Piccolo Italia in Monmouth who have converted their roof into an outdoor cocktail bar, so after your authentic Italian meal you can relax under the stars.

I have been doing some serious jamming this Autumn, now for sale in the honesty basket in the Laundry. A favourite is Hedgerow jam of hips, haws, sloes, blackberries and crab apples, all picked from the ancient greenway below Holly Barn. We also have Crab apple and rosemary jelly to go with cheeses and meats, and spiced pear chutney.

Filming News:

War of the Worlds' second series has been closing roads in the Forest as they did more filming this Autumn.

Sex Education, which uses the Forest of Dean as its main location, halted filming of Season 3 in April due to Covid-19 but has just restarted and Mad Dog Productions have been looking for local extras.

A Day Out (tested by us):

This year is the 250th anniversary of the first ever tourist guidebook - William Gillpin's *Observations on the River Wye*. Originally you took a 2 day boat tour, but now there is a wide variety of ways to do parts of the tour, including canoeing, taking it leisurely on Kingfisher Cruises (which is the closest to the original tour, although you won't get all the pomp of Nelson's stop off at Monmouth!) or the Wye Valley Walk. The total walk is 136 miles and takes around 12 days – we have only done parts but have big plans!



NB: Whilst Biblins Bridge has been repaired after the floods and is now open, the handferry is not running yet.

Please post any photos or experiences on our [facebook](#) site, and do put us on [Tripadvisor](#) if you enjoyed your stay with us.

We are now on Instagram.