

We are opening! 12th April is the date, and all is looking very positive – so get booking your safe staycation.



BOOKING GUARANTEE! – Full refund if you cannot legally travel (or rebook for a later date).

As you know, we are already registered 'Covid Confident' with Visit Britain and meet the AA's covid-secure standards; we now also have our international standards mark, which is approved by the World Health Organisation – you don't get much better than that! And our accommodation is totally self-contained, with keybox entry.

Attractions and places to eat and drink are gearing up for 12th April as well. Most pubs will be doing food in their lovely gardens plus takeaway options. You can canoe, visit castles, explore Puzzlewood, Go Ape!, Lasertag, tour vineyards...

Events:

- Evening Steam Train Fish & Chip Supper, Dean Heritage Railway. Dates from 3 April.
- Shinrin Yoku – the 800 year old Japanese practise of forest bathing: relaxation and walking around Hill Farm, Tintern. 8 April and 11 July
- Walk the Wye, the annual fundraising walk for breast cancer research is going ahead in a socially-distanced format. Four different routes will start from the Monmouth Show Ground. 16 May.
- Forage and Feast with the Cotswold Forager and Yvette from Harts Barn Cookery School. Various dates.
- Ghost hunting at one of the most haunted locations: The Savoy Theatre, Monmouth. 22 May.
- Potter's Wheel one day courses, Eastnor Pottery.
- Sourdough cookery with 'Professor Pastry', at Harts Barn. 5 June.



- Hellens Garden Festival, Much Marcle (one of my favourites). 12-13 June.
- Beer on the Wye, Hereford. 9-11 July.
- Coleford Music Festival. 10-11 July.
- Beauty and the Beast, outdoor theatre at Hillside Brewery, Longhope. 6 August.
- Art in Penallt; local and international artists and makers. 27-29 August.

Activities News:

- There are now lots of details on cycling in and around our area on the tourism website:

<https://www.visitdeanwye.co.uk/things-to-do/cycling>



herboldphotography.com

- Our area is great for star-gazing and has little light pollution. One of the favourite spots for watchers and photographers is Symonds Yat Rock with its full panorama. On a clear night the Milky Way is stunning. Stargazer and story-teller Jim Bell is offering Stargazing Safaris at Clearwell.

I have got into textile and card printing during lockdown for my sister's new local business, so look out for pieces arriving in the apartments from made@thehut. Workshops are coming later in the year.



Alec and I set up a website for English Bicknor Local History Group (of which I am Chair) during lockdown. Rock Lodge and Symonds Yat Rock are both in the parish – so do have a look if you are interested in the history of the area (any suggestions for additions/improvements very welcome). www.englishbicknorlhg.co.uk

Nature:

The wild garlic is up, soon the forest will be filled with its white stars, and we will be making risottos and wild garlic pesto. Do forage!

The bluebells are poking through in a green carpet, not long now until bluebell time.

Food and Drink News:

Vegans: most venues have vegan options; highly recommended is trying out The Forge Hammer & River Spice, which has a micro-brewery with vegan beers and great vegetarian Indian food.

There is also the Gourmet Burger Van parked there over summer for you meat lovers (a great stop off when canoeing).

Wye Valley Meadery use the honey from their hives scattered throughout the Wye Valley. They now make a range of sparkling meads, which can be compared to craft beers. Their *Honey & Hops* won a Great Taste Award.

The take-away offer has massively improved with lockdown. How about a Michelin Star dinner from The Crown or a picnic from Forest Deli in Coleford?

The jam basket now also contains my homemade chutneys (honesty box in the Laundry).

Filming News:

We hosted a fashion shoot for Toggi (who clothe the British equestrian team). <https://www.toggi.com/>
Rock Lodge is in three photos on the front page – can you spot them? (Answers at the end).

The Pact is due out in May. BBC Wales were filming the finding of the body in Monmouth last year. This six-part new crime drama stars *Breaking Bad* star Laura Fraser, Julie Hesmondhalgh and Eddie Marsan.

A Day Out (tested by us):

A lovely long walk with two pubs. Following our Walk 1 down to The Saracen's Head, then across the Biblins Bridge and along the River Wye to Monmouth. Then keep on going to The Boat at Redbrook. You can then retrace your tracks, take the long route back over the Kymin, or take a taxi!



Please post any photos or experiences on our [Facebook](#) site and do leave reviews if you enjoyed your stay with us.
We are now on [Instagram](#)

Answer for Toggi website: Rock Lodge is in the images of the model on the wall with one of our mugs; the model tying her boots whilst sitting on the bench outside No. 6 and the boots are lined up in No. 6.