

The Root and Branch

Wholesome living in the northeast of Scotland

30 pages of articles and services including:

WHO NURTURES MUM?

A special service for new Mums who need TLC

MUSIC THERAPY

Relieving the stresses of working people

SHIATSU

Massage that works with the body's energy

MINDFUL ART

How making patterns soothes the mind

Nov/Dec
2020

Photo: Laura Donaldson Photography

Welcome to

The Root and Branch

Wholesome living in the northeast of Scotland



Managing Editor:
Anita Bell



Content Editor:
Rachel Beckett

Hello wonderful people, welcome to the second issue of *The Root and Branch* magazine.

As we leave behind the longer, warmer days, looking after our mental and physical health has never been so important. Quiet walks to admire the autumn colours, and days snuggled up at home, can be a time to reflect on what has been, including those moments of enlightenment during this year's difficulties when we have perhaps gained clarity about who and what matters most to us. As we travel through winter, our wish for each other must be happier times and better new beginnings in 2021.

We hope that you find connection and support from our health and wellbeing services and insightful articles.

Supporting local businesses and helping our communities tap into the many amazing wholesome living services based in the northeast of Scotland and further afield is a real privilege. We thank all of our amazing advertisers, guest writers, subscribers and social media followers for your continued support. See you in 2021.

Much love

Anita, Rachel and Jan



Social Media:
Jan Leatham

We welcome Jan, our new Social Media Editor

Jan lives in Banchory, Aberdeenshire where she works part time at a community hub, Number One. In her spare time, she hosts a radio show with her husband on online local radio station River Dee Radio, and enjoys photography, walking, cycling and gardening.

If you have any thoughts or suggestions please get in touch.



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In this issue

Healthy changes: a holistic approach 4

Health is a state of body,
wellness a state of being.

Mantra meditation 5

We find out how words can
help with meditation.

A new baby, but who nurtures mum? 6

A journey through postnatal
depression and anxiety.

Music for management 8

Music therapy to ease
stress for working people.

Be kind to yourself 19

After this difficult year we
owe it to ourselves to attend
to our personal wellbeing.

Homeopathy for children 10

The benefits of this holistic
therapy which parents can
administer.

Reflexology lymphatic drainage 11

How reflexology benefits
our vital lymphatic system.

My essential oils! 13

The wonderful world of
essential oils, and three
you might like to try.

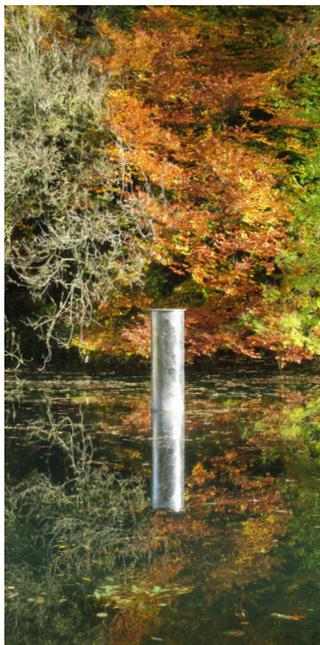


Photo: Rachel Beckett

Aromatherapy Thyme 15

Our Managing Editor
Anita reviews a local
aromatherapy service.

The benefits of shiatsu 16

Massage that works with
the body's energy flows.

Unlock your potential 19

As the pandemic continues,
it's time to invest in YOU!

Under a cloud 20

How to recognise and
address depression in
children and teens.

Karate and Asperger's 21

A young person with
Asperger's talks about how
karate has helped him.

Celiac gourmet 22

How to dine well with a
wheat intolerance.

Autumn forage 25

Nature's edible abundance.

Animal healing and reiki 26

Animals have similar health
problems to us, and reiki
can help.

Writing that book – or seven 27

A local author's quest to
self-publish her books on
herbalism.

Quality time 26

How we can take pressure
off ourselves and relax with
our families.

Embrace the cold this winter 27

Ways we can enjoy winter
and make it fulfilling.

Mindfulness through creativity 28

A personal journey to
mindfulness through art.

Healthy changes: a holistic approach

Health is a state of body; wellness is a state of being, as Lisa Sugden explains.

Reiki is a natural healing treatment that is beneficial for mental, emotional and physical wellbeing. Embarking on my reiki journey was the best decision I made.

When I first started practising reiki healing professionally, the feedback I was receiving was incredible;

the positive changes people were experiencing were mindblowing. We all know that diet and exercise are key components for a healthy lifestyle, but many of us perhaps forget just how important our mental and emotional health is. The current pandemic and lengthy lockdown have really brought this to light.

It is so vitally important to give ourselves some much needed self-care so we can rejuvenate our bodies and bring ourselves back to a place of balance and calm. More people than ever are making the conscious decision to explore natural remedies and holistic



therapies to help with their mental health challenges.

Reiki is one of many treatments that can benefit you and balance mind, body and soul.

Reiki:

- ☆ dissolves energy block and promotes natural healing
- ☆ creates deep relaxation and helps the body release stress and tension
- ☆ assists the body in cleaning itself of toxins
- ☆ supports and boosts the immune system
- ☆ clears the mind and improves focus
- ☆ aids better sleep
- ☆ relieves pain and helps reduce inflammation

☆ helps reduce anxiety and feelings of depression

☆ induces feelings of calm, inner peace and centredness.

It can be the smallest of changes that have the most impact on our lives, and it is never too late to start. Exploring holistic therapies is definitely a great path to research.

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Mantra meditation

Debbie Bolton provides insights into different styles of meditation. In this edition, the focus is on **mantra meditation**.

Mantra meditation, also known as Japa meditation, focuses on a **mantra** – a repeated word or phrase that can be spoken out loud or within your mind.

Mantra meditation is typically used in yoga, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism, mainly within religious settings, for spiritual growth or for relaxation.

It is believed that repeating a mantra creates positive patterns within the brain as well as helping to increase concentration and focus. Focusing on a word or phrase causes your awareness to stay with the words. This type of meditation is ideal for people whose minds tend to wander a lot.

People who practise mantra meditation believe that the vibrations of certain words help you meditate more deeply and help to release energetic blocks. The word 'Om' is believed to be the vibration of the universe. You can choose

a word that reminds you of why you meditate such as 'peace' or 'relax', or a word that fills you with joy such as 'awesome'.

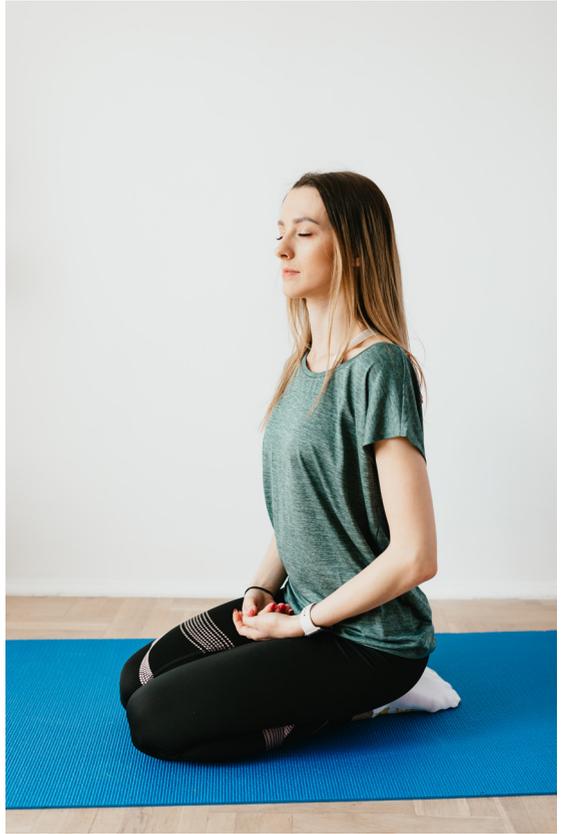
Some people choose a phrase that is also an affirmation, such as 'I am enough'. Using a phrase that mirrors your vision can manifest into reality. Choose a mantra that is personal to you and your circumstances. Creating your own mantra means that you can change it when your focus in life changes.

When you have decided on a mantra you can now

use it to meditate. Get comfortable in whichever meditating position you use – hand positions (*mudras*) are not essential – and set a time for practising, which should be three to 30 minutes.

Take a few relaxing breaths and use the mantra. Your breathing and mantra will settle. If your mind wanders, acknowledge the thoughts and let them go. At the end of the meditation, reflect on how relaxed you feel.

Photo: Karolina Grabowska / Pexels





I was told it was just hormones. I was told it was tiredness. I was told it would pass. For me, it didn't; it was an overwhelming feeling of not being prepared for the responsibility of parenthood, a constant desire to do things correctly and perfectly and a state of continually blaming myself when things didn't go as expected.

As someone who has always had to be aware of their mental health and 'keep tabs' on it, I was consumed by motherhood. It took over every part of my being and drove me to the brink. I obsessed over every tiny thing and had intrusive thoughts that I was doing things wrong or I was a bad mum and that my family would be better off without me. The anxiety was endless, and the pressure I put on myself eventually pushed me to breaking point. Moreover, because I was ashamed of my thoughts and feelings,

A new baby – but who nurtures Mum?

Louise Dredge shares her experience of postnatal depression and anxiety



outwardly people would not have been able to guess how much turmoil I was in.

My incessant desire to follow the 'rules' and meet unrealistic expectations meant that I missed out on enjoying the start of motherhood.

With support and encouragement from family and friends, I reached out to Pandas Foundation and my GP for help. I eventually

accepted that there was no shame and that these thoughts and feelings were not my fault.

If you take anything from my story, please let it be that there is no right or wrong, no rules and there is certainly no such thing as perfect. All we can do is to try our best, play to our strengths and work on our weaknesses.

Please do not feel ashamed if you are struggling with motherhood or fatherhood. There is support out there for you. It is okay to hold your hand out and ask for help.

Louise is The Mummy Nanny! Find out how she can help.

THE MUMMY NANNY



FOR BUMP, BIRTH & BEYOND

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MARY PAGE
MUSIC

Music for Management

Online Music Therapy Sessions for Directors,
Managers, and Their Workplace

Mary Raunika Page is a registered music therapist and concert harpist based in Aberdeenshire. She has launched her Music for Management campaign out of a passion for improving the mental health and wellbeing of working age adults.

Music for Management sessions are currently being offered online through Zoom and Patreon with a free sample session provided through Eventbrite once a month.

For further information on Music for Management, visit
www.marypagemusic.co.uk/music-for-management

For a free consultation, contact
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www.hcpc-uk.org

Music for management



Mary Page explains the benefits of music therapy for business leaders.

Leaders, directors, and managers of the workplace. Why I am talking to you? Some of you are involved in corporations, so let's think about what that means. The word 'corporate' is a variation on the Latin for 'body', and the leadership sector of any body of working people can be compared with the central nervous system (CNS). What happens when the CNS is not fully functional? The rest of the body just won't work very well.

The same idea applies in reverse when the CNS is fully functional and at its healthiest possible state. The rest of the body will reflect that.

This one reason why your mental health and wellbeing are so crucial.

Therapy is a valuable form of self-care; but let's address all those hoops we have to jump through to even consider it. Most folks feel they have to be in a pretty serious crisis to address their mental health with their general practitioner. Some don't even recognise they're in a situation to warrant it. Then there is a likelihood of being stuck on a waiting list for months.

So really, we can't blame ourselves for putting our wellbeing and preventative care on the backburner. There just don't seem to be enough resources for us all. This is where Music for Management can make a difference.

Music for Management is a form of arts therapy

registered under the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). Music therapists are trained to facilitate music as a goal-orientated medium in the form of countless activities.

For the working-age population, this can include music-assisted relaxation, playlist projects, listening analysis, song parodies and a bit of improvising. All of these can currently be facilitated online for everyone's safety.

Many therapies have benefits for the mental health of the working age population, so why music therapy?

Music (or any form of art for that matter) is purely and distinctly human. There is archaeological evidence of music being practised before recorded history. In a world that is increasingly fast-paced and robotic, we reclaim a sense of our humanity by learning how to use music to improve and maintain workplace wellbeing. We also reclaim our sense of self.



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Be kind to yourself

Wellbeing coach, holistic healing practitioner and author **Amy Murray** believes we owe it to ourselves – after all we've been through – to attend to our personal wellbeing, and keep taking steps to shape a life we love living.

2020 challenged each of us in ways we never anticipated. When we set out on 1st January with our intentions, hopes and dreams for how 2020 would unfold, this wasn't what we had in mind, was it? Many of us have spent most of this year simply getting through each day. But a global pandemic does not mean we give up on our heart's desires or a future we love. We still have the closing weeks of the year to do things differently.



Photo: Simon Berger / Unsplash

Wellbeing coaching is an effective technique to help you feel balanced, energised and empowered as you embark on a new journey of self-discovery to achieve your goals and be the best version of you. It empowers you to reduce your stress, raise your energy levels, restore your health, create balance, achieve goals and be the

best you.

If you want to channel your energy differently in the remainder of this year and beyond, and start really making changes in your life that will enhance your wellbeing and fulfilment in life, I would love to work with you as your coach. For anyone who has lost their job and is at a crossroads trying to choose the best

way forward, I also have a specialised coaching programme to support them in this life transition, expanding on the 12-Step Programme outlined in my book *The Ejector Seat Empowerment Guide*.

To learn more about how Amy can support your wellbeing, visit www.ladylaldy.com or email amy@ladylaldy.com.



Homeopathy for children

Sue Townsend RSHom explains how the holistic approach taken by homeopathy is beneficial to children, with parents also able to prescribe suitable treatments.

Do you ever wonder why so many children these days have chronic conditions like eczema, asthma, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), allergies or even more severe problems? As a homeopath I have been working with children for nearly twenty years. Having three children of my own in the 1990s inspired me to look at additional ways to keep them healthy. This led me to train as a homeopath, to empower parents to do the same for their children.

There are many factors that affect the health of our children: genetic predisposition; their time in the womb and birth, the food they are given; suppression of acute illness; medications and vaccinations; toxins in the environment; stresses and/or trauma; and so many

more. There is usually no one trigger for ill health so it is important to take into account the whole child. This is where homeopathy comes in as it is a medical system that looks at the child in his/her entirety.

When you bring a child for homeopathy the appointment can be as long as two hours so that the



Photo: Kathrin / Pexels

practitioner can develop a well-rounded picture of that child's life and physical symptoms, in addition to observing how the child is in the consulting room.

Homeopathic medicines are prescribed based on the whole picture, in order to help the body heal itself and come back into a balanced state. Parents can learn

how to prescribe for simple acute conditions, allowing the body to react to an illness without suppressing the expression of disease. Samuel Hahnemann, the 'father of homeopathy' used Paracelsus' theories of disease when he was developing homeopathy over 200 years ago. One of the main guiding principles is that suppression can drive disease further in. This might explain how chronic illness manifests.

You as a parent can feel empowered to help your child when they are ill, using something as simple as arnica or calendula for healing wounds. This can ease their suffering without suppressing the symptoms.

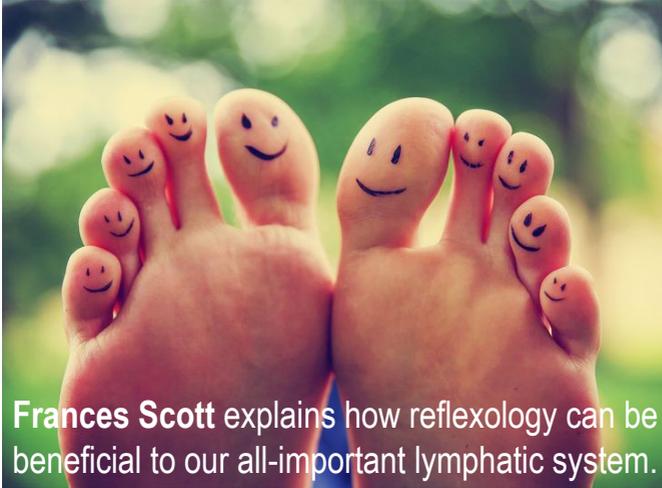
To find out more about where you can learn simple prescribing, do an internet search for 'Homeopathy Plus Newsletter', a free weekly e-zine with tips for various conditions. They are currently offering an acute prescribing course for November so you can sign up now to learn more.



www.townsendhom.com

Reflexology lymphatic drainage

We welcome back Frances Scott who supported our earlier magazine, *The Wishing Tree*.



Reflexology is a complementary therapy based on the theory that the parts of the body can be mapped on the feet and hands. Through working on these reflexes, a reflexologist aims to promote relaxation, a sense of wellbeing and better general health.

I became a reflexologist in 2004 and have completed additional specialist training in maternity reflexology. I am delighted to have also recently added a specialism in reflexology lymphatic drainage (RLD).

Developed by Sally Kay, a reflexologist working in cancer care, this technique aims to address the

swelling of tissue when the lymphatic system is not functioning effectively, due either to lymph nodes being removed or to blockages.

The lymphatic system runs throughout the body and the lymph fluid needs to be able to flow around it without restriction. It is important for maintaining body fluid levels and cleansing tissue fluid, and is part of our immune system.

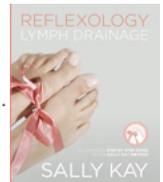
Through the mapping of the lymphatic system on

the foot, Sally Kay (2019) developed a unique system to promote this movement of lymph around the body, so relieving lymphoedema, a common side effect of breast and other cancer treatment. This swelling can be disfiguring and reduce the ability to use a hand, arm or leg. Treatment can be laborious and time consuming if it exists at all.

What is wonderful about Sally's work is the research she has done to show how effective this treatment is. Thermal imaging has confirmed the movement of lymph in the arm as the appropriate reflexology techniques are applied to the foot. Volume measurements of affected arms show significant reduction which, for most, was maintained – and quality of life was improved.

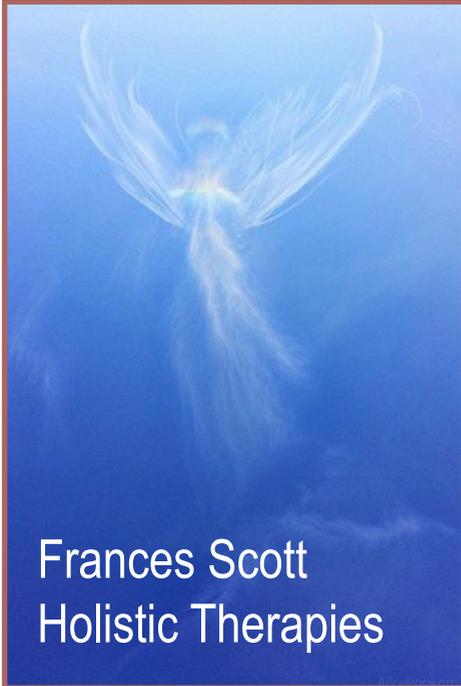
RLD is can be considered for treating lipoedema, arthritis, asthma, post-viral issues, sinus problems, fibromyalgia and migraines.

Reference:
See *image*.



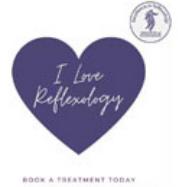
Frances Scott Holistic Therapies

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I offer a range of balancing, nurturing and healing therapies to support you with mental, physical and spiritual well-being: ✨ Reflexology, including maternity and lymphatic drainage ✨ Aromatherapy ✨ Angel Guidance Therapy ✨ Reiki ✨ Emotional Freedom Technique ✨ Australian Bush Flower Remedies.



Please contact me if you would like to know more or book an appointment.

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My essential oils!

TASH KENWORTHY

Wellness Seeker | Foodie | Mum of Boys

Tash Kenworthy shares her three go-to essential oils from doTERRA.



One unexpected aspect of tinkering with essential oils is the surprising versatility that they offer.

I bought my very first kit of doTERRA oils when I was five months pregnant and looking to enhance my massage therapy business and support my home birth plan. DoTERRA oils are exceptional, in part because of the way they are sourced (no middle man) and extracted (zero chemicals), but also – and possibly my favourite reason – because of how they are ruffling the feathers of those sceptical about holistic approaches to healthcare. That simply made me love them all the more! Ha!

Many a sceptic is now an oil convert, thanks to doTERRA. I'd like to share three of my favourite oils.

First up, **Frankincense**. Ahhhh... the King of oils. It supported my recovery

postpartum in 2017:

I simply poured a mixture of 1 litre water and 1 drop frankincense shaken up over my wounds several times a day. Recovery was swift. It eases any kind of discomfort and blends well with Deep Blue (one of doTERRA's own blends). Emotionally I believe it connects us to the divine, supporting deep thinking and sustained focus – a very useful oil in your toolkit.

Second, **Green Mandarin**. Childish fun lives inside this bottle. I find that any citrus, but particularly Green Mandarin, helps me let go of my 'to do' list and enter the playful imagination of my boys (nine and three). It is also a great choice for a cold mist diffuser as it smells incredible. I love to blend this with Balance (another doTERRA blend) for either a DIY perfume or a home diffuser blend –

I love this combo so much I've used it to make my own hand soap and toilet cleaner!

Vetiver is my secret love. This bottle lives on my bedside table and I apply one gloopy drop to my toes and thumbs to help me drift off to sleep. I've battled with insomnia, so this has been a wonderful addition to my daily wellness routine. DoTERRA allow their vetiver plant to reach full maturity of eighteen months (rather than the industry average of six) to provide the very best the plant can offer.

Wellness is not an accident! If you would like a free sample of doTERRA oils with full support and guidance, you can find out how on my website.

Instagram: [@tash_kenworthy](https://www.instagram.com/tash_kenworthy)
Web: www.tashkenworthy.co.uk



TASH KENWORTHY

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of wellness

Tash Kenworthy can guide you through the doTERRA range to find your 'go-to' essential oils for personal wellness.

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Aromatherapy Thyme

Anita Bell reflects on some very special 'me time' having a treatment at local business Aromatherapy Thyme.



Having received a lovely welcome upon arrival at Aromatherapy Thyme I instantly felt relaxed. The ambience of the treatment room put me at ease – a neutral décor with a clean fresh feel to it. Philippa Lordan the proprietor was eager to ensure that we covered all the appropriate measures to make my visit safe and within the current Covid working guidelines.

Great care was taken in talking me through the benefits of receiving a full body aromatherapy massage using the renowned Eve Taylor

products from www.eve-taylor.com. I also bought a couple of gorgeous scented candles, one of which you can use as a body butter. Bliss!

My massage took around an hour, with firm pressure targeting all those naughty little knots. It's not until you get a massage that you realise just how much you need it. I guess all the stresses and strains of this year had taken their toll. Once my massage was over, I felt relaxed and uplifted, ready for the day ahead.

Massage is said to bring many benefits to our overall health, such as relaxation,

relief from depression and anxiety, and decrease in muscle tension too.

With over twenty years' experience, and being registered with the British Complementary Medicine Association, Philippa is not only extremely knowledgeable in her field but also a true professional in every sense of the word.

I thoroughly enjoyed my experience at Aromatherapy Thyme and fully recommend Philippa to those who are looking for a seriously good massage.

Facebook: [@aromatherapythyme](https://www.facebook.com/aromatherapythyme)
Phone: 07575 170100

Opening times
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Friday 10am–3pm
5pm–8pm
Saturday 9am–2pm
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The benefits of shiatsu

Gaëlle Conjaud MrSS, qualified shiatsu practitioner and member of the Shiatsu Society UK, shares with us the wellness benefits of her art.

I came to shiatsu ten years ago, when I was practised on by a student of the Aberdeen School of Shiatsu. I knew from the first treatment that I had to learn it. Shiatsu has now become a way of life, making me feel at one with the universal energy and imparting a new reverence for life.

What is shiatsu?

Shiatsu is a powerful, energetic Japanese body therapy (*shiatsu* means 'finger pressure'), strongly rooted in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). It mainly uses pressure of the hands. In eastern thought, shiatsu embraces the philosophy of Yin and Yang, of the energy meridians and the five elements, and the concept of vital energy (*qi*).

It addresses the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual aspects of the human.

The practitioner uses various forms of pressure on precise points on the body (as in acupuncture) and applies gentle manipulations and stretches. He or she aims to promote the flow of vital energy, *qi*, and facilitate healing.



How does shiatsu benefit your health and wellbeing? According to TCM, blockages in the flow of *qi* can contribute to a wide range of illnesses such as muscle/tendon injuries, 'frozen shoulder', back pain, sciatica, fibromyalgia, headaches and anxiety.

What can you expect? The experience lasts about an hour. The practitioner starts with an assessment. Medical history is reviewed. Tone of voice and body shape are clues that can help.

After a diagnostic palpitation of the *hara* (belly), the practitioner stimulates *qi* within the meridians that run all over the body, activating the parasympathetic nervous system and the body's regenerative function and immune system.

The treatment is done on a futon on the floor, through comfortable clothing. It can be vigorous or softer and is extremely relaxing, yet energising. In shiatsu, touch is the language the practitioner speaks.

Aftercare recommendations are always provided, including stretches, *qigong* (based on posture, breathing and meditation) and an emphasis on nutritional guidance ('Let food be medicine and medicine be thy food' HIPPOCRATES).

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GaWell holistic therapies

Shiatsu with Gaëlle

of GaWell Holistic Therapies



GaWell holistic therapies

If 2020 has taught us anything, it is that touch is crucial for our mental and overall wellbeing. Humans thrive on touch. We are wired for it. Touch is the language your Shiatsu practitioner speaks. Get in touch. *Gaëlle*

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Gaëlle Conjaud
MrSS

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ANDBREATHE...



*Health is a state of
mind. Wellness is a
state of being.*

Looking for ways to cope with the stresses and strains of the 2020 ultramarathon that you didn't even sign up for?! Gillian shares tools to alleviate stress, anxiety, grief and tension, leaving us resilient and better equipped to meet the challenges of our 'new normal'. Her tools include Mindfulness, emotional freedom technique (EFT), Reiki, Building Inner Strength with 16 Guidelines, and a brand new course called 'Unlocking Your Potential', using the outdoors whenever possible.

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Gillian works online or outdoors, with individuals, families, schools, businesses and other organisations. Throughout November, Gillian is slowly beginning to reintroduce face-to-face appointments at her studio in Inch and the Urban Wellness Hub, Bridge of Don. Feel free to get in touch for a chat first, to find out more before you book.



Unlock your potential

As we head into the winter months and the continuing pandemic, **Gillian Watt** believes it's time to invest in YOU.

We very rarely take time to look after ourselves. We spend even less time really getting to know and understand ourselves and why we react or respond the way we do to certain people or situations.

My life has been turned upside down and inside out a few times. Growing up, I was referred to as being 'mature' for my age and able to cope with anything, but the reality was quite different. I *had* to grow up quickly. The impact of those years took time to come to the surface. However, over a number of years I have slowly but surely worked my way through many of the 'survival strategies' that have got me through, leaving me a much more genuinely resilient person.

We are all 'works in progress', but the good

news is that we have the ability to change. We don't have to be stuck. We don't have to let the past dictate our future.

I have gradually trained and developed the tools that have helped me get to this point. I now share what I have learned so that others can benefit.

I am trained in emotional freedom technique (EFT), where anxiety, stress, grief or pain are dissolved by tapping on acupressure points while focusing on negative emotions, and in mindfulness. I facilitate two mindfulness-based courses that have the potential not only to change the way you approach future challenges but also to help you to find peace with your past. These courses are called 'Unlocking Your Potential' and 'Building Inner



*Health is a state of mind.
Wellness is a state of being.*

Strength: 16 Guidelines for Life'. Either or both would be an excellent way to spend a few winter evenings.

To find out more about any of the above, please get in touch with Gillian using the details below.

Email: andbreathe123@gmail.com
Phone: **07394 290630**
Web: www.andbreathe123.com or www.linkedin.com/company/andbreathe

ANDBREATHE...



Depression is much more common in the young than most of us realise, affecting up to one in ten children and teenagers.

Symptoms of depression in the young may be misinterpreted as teenage moodiness or may be overlooked because young people find it hard to talk about their feelings. Symptoms tend to be different from those of adults (see table). Difficult moods associated with depression are likely to be profound and prolonged, typically lasting longer than than two weeks.

Try gently talking with your child. Be open-ended not analytical and avoid suggesting a 'quick fix'. Probe gently, encouraging them to talk and reflect. Don't nag about behaviours that may not be helping (poor diet, lack of exercise, social withdrawal). Your child's confidence will be low, so the warmth of your



Photo: Keenan Constance / Pexels

love and support is much more helpful than criticism. Quietly help them to change – make it easy and not a big deal. Most importantly, acknowledge the validity of their feelings.

You should also take your child to their GP. Treatment may be in the form of talking therapy such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), which helps the patient deconstruct their anxious thinking and develop a more empowering outlook.

If depression is diagnosed, don't look for reasons to blame yourself, just focus on what you

can do to help. Your child may just be feeling overwhelmed. Continue to look after yourself, your child, and the rest of the family. Practical attention towards everyone's wellbeing will help your child push through this and rediscover the pleasures of being young.

www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/c/children-and-young-people
www.mind.org.uk/information-support/for-children-and-young-people

Symptoms of depression in children and teens			
Absentmindedness	Irritability	Changes in: eating habits family relationships friendships school attendance school behaviour school performance sleeping habits	Fears and worries about, or talking about: appearance/body shape being worthless death/suicide doing something bad feeling hopeless having to be perfect
Aggression	Lethargy		
Alcohol abuse	Listlessness		
Boredom	Monotonous speech		
Confusion	Passive TV watching		
Drug abuse	Risk-taking		
Forgetfulness	Sadness		
Indecisiveness	Self-harm		
Introversion	Tearfulness		

Rachel Beckett interviews seventeen-year-old James, who has Asperger's, about how karate has helped his wellbeing.

Karate and Asperger's

R: How old were you when you took up karate?

J: I was seven.

R: Were there benefits to starting so young?

J: It helped me to learn more quickly. Also, your body evolves to be good with karate.

R: And it's shotokan karate you do? Can you tell me about that?

J: It's very traditional Japanese karate, a formal version with long stances.

R: Do you think it has benefits for fitness?

J: It's good for cardiovascular fitness and stamina. It helps your muscles, stretching keeps them supple and flexible. It also helps your joints.

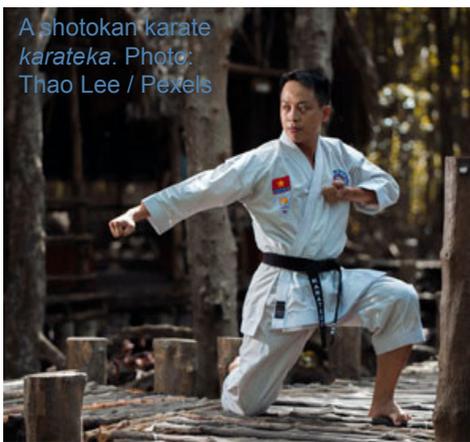
R: I know you're not keen to be labelled with Aspergers, but has it caused you any difficulties growing up?

J: When I was young, definitely. You can have Aspergers in many different ways. Mine was temper-orientated; I didn't have

it on the social side like others can do.

R: So did karate help?

J: The discipline really helped me – I like routines and patterns; it's consistent. You always do the warm-up, the stretches and so on in the same order. We do line work, then *katas*, then sparring.



A shotokan karate karateka. Photo: Thao Lee / Pexels

There's also variation though so it doesn't get boring.

R: *Katas* being formal sequences of moves?

J: Yes. It helps having something to think about. You have to focus and think about the next move. Also self-control is really important. Some people think they can let it out any time – their anger or frustration – but karate gives you a structure.

R: And there's the kiai, the shout, which is a focused release of tension.

J: That's right.

So would you say karate could have mental health benefits more broadly?

J: Yes because you are meant to clear your mind. I would be often worrying about school work, maybe I couldn't focus because I had a play the next week. But if everything is familiar it helps; you can find that peace of mind. You are doing something with the body but also thinking, memorising how to do things.

R: Who would you recommend karate for?

J: I'd recommend it for anyone who feels in any way threatened. It's confidence boosting. You feel safer when you know karate. You aren't afraid of bullies or being harassed. You have the self-control and the discipline, something to focus on. It can take your mind off stressful things.

To find out more, contact the Karate Union of Great Britain (KUGB) in Scotland:
<http://wskakarate.org/scotland>
www.facebook.com/kugbscotland



Photo: Polina Kovaleva / Pexels

Coeliac gourmet

If you, or a member of your family, are one of the estimated 125,000 people in the UK with coeliac disease or wheat intolerance, chances are you are familiar with the crumbly, tasteless, gluten-free goods on offer in some supermarkets.

Stephanie Holland shares the secrets of eating gluten-free, gourmet style.

Having considered myself somewhat of a cake connoisseur, I was gutted (pun intended) to be diagnosed with a wheat intolerance. However, all is not lost. Learning to ask the right questions, go to the right places, and talk to the right people are key to living a deliciously gluten-free life.

Coeliac disease is caused by an auto-immune reaction to the protein gluten, which is found in wheat, rye and barley. Eating just a small amount of gluten can damage the lining of the small intestine, greatly reducing the gut's ability to absorb nutrients. To avoid this and the many resulting health complications, those with coeliac disease must avoid all traces of gluten.

Eating a gluten-free diet at home is one thing: many supermarkets now stock gluten-free goods, ingredient labelling is fairly clear in the UK and there's a wealth of recipe books and online resources available.

Eating on the go is a whole different challenge. Asking the right questions is key. Explain that you are coeliac, ask how they deal with issues of cross contamination, and check with the waiter or waitress when your meal arrives that it is gluten free. Aberdeenshire has many wonderful places to eat, and there's no reason why coeliacs or those with a gluten or wheat sensitivity should be missing out.

I'll admit I immediately assumed that all Italian food, sandwiches and cakes were off the menu when eating out, but this is not so. Gluten-free options are available from many independent cafes, sandwich bars and bakeries, Italian restaurants, and large chains.

Many chefs are willing to create a gluten-free dish if they don't already have one on the menu. If you're booking ahead, mention your requirements, to ensure that there will be some extra delicious options available.

If you communicate your needs, 99% of the time you'll be pleasantly surprised at how willingly they are met.

The Root and Branch

Wholesome living in the northeast of Scotland

Coming in 2021: Join our team

If you are looking for a new project, have an interest in healthy living and want to support local wholesome living businesses, you could be the person to help us expand our mission to new areas of Scotland and the UK.

Skills required: you will need to be a good networker and team member with a genuine interest in health and wellbeing, excellent communication and computer skills, proficiency in Adobe Creative Suite (5), a knowledge of social media and a passion to make our magazine successful in your area.

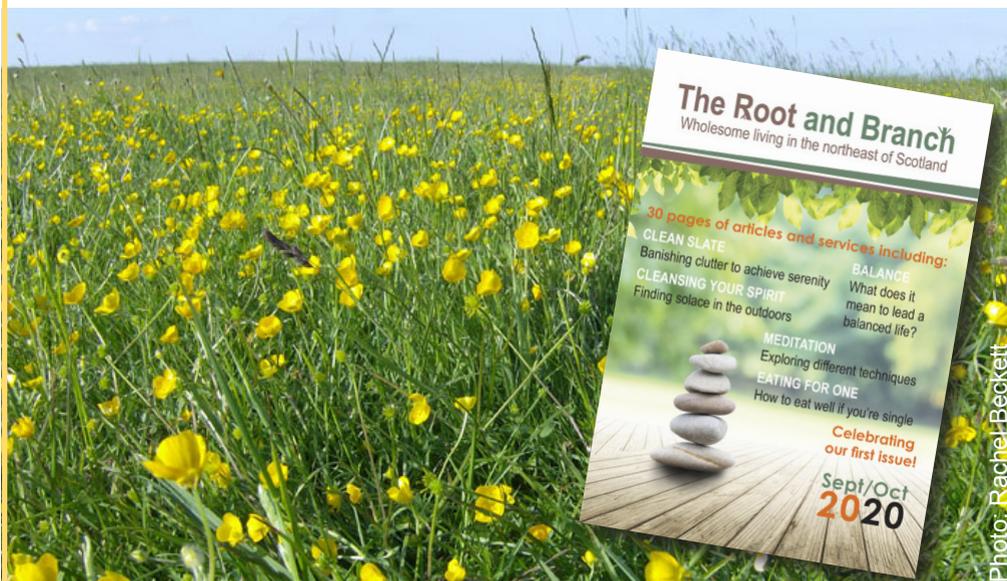


Photo: Rachel Beckett

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Your local online radio station

River Dee Radio is a local radio station based in Banchory, Aberdeenshire.

Broadcasting from the Legion Scotland building in Banchory, the online station has a variety of live and recorded programmes delivered by local DJs, from chat, ceilidh and word association, to country, house and classic. The station is online only and broadcasts 24 hours a day, staffed solely by volunteers.

Anyone can listen. Download the River Dee Radio app to your smartphone. Go to tunein.com and search for River Dee Radio. Or you can listen anytime to the shows as podcasts on mixcloud.com. The full list of programmes and presenters can be found at riverdeeradiorocks.wordpress.com.

‘Green’ Christmas cards by post

Self-isolating or avoiding shops? Keeping in touch this Christmas still matters! You can order sustainable cards by post from our small start-up business.

These nine designs are inspired by tessellations discovered by the 2020 Nobel prizewinner Roger Penrose. They are limited editions: only 20 of each design in this print run.

The cards are printed in the UK on sustainable card and, where possible, packed in recycled packaging. You are encouraged to re-use them – instructions on the back explain how. 148 mm square with envelopes.

Choose any 5 designs for £11.50, any 6 for £13.50 or all 9 for £20, including first class P&P. To order, email rahbeckett@gmail.com or text/call Rachel on 07979 543222.





Autumn forage

Chloe Caustin shares her seasonal finds.

Photo: Pixabay / Pexels

In the midst of autumn the hedgerows parade nature's colourful creations. This time of year truly displays the beauty of what abounds in the environment.

Matching the stunning red and orange falling leaves, berries and nuts wait to be foraged for a delicious autumnal dish.

My favourite seasonal forage is the abundant rosehip. These berries are so easy to find in place of the pretty roses that bloom during summer. Jam was my first thought – or rosehip syrup (this was made during World War II for its vitamin C content).

However I spotted an amazing recipe on the local Wild Food Stories Facebook page. This fantastic recipe was for rosehip harissa, a

flavour explosion.

Foraging is all about swapping shop-bought ingredients for the wonders of what the environment has to offer. Making a substitute for a traditional North African spicy paste using a harvest of rosehips is new, exciting and reminds me that you really can have many culinary adventures as a forager.

Another typical foraging find for this time of year, related to the rosehip, is hawthorn. This widespread shrub has red berries with creamy white flesh that can be used for jellies, jam and even as a ketchup substitute.

Autumn is the start of a period similar to hibernation. As the weather begins to change, we light

the fires and stay cosy inside. This time in our homes is perfect for baking and cooking wholesome meals that incorporate the joy of foraging into everyday life. My advice would be, whatever the weather, to head out for a walk and a breath of fresh air, forage for autumnal goodies and head home to cook or bake with your harvest. (Do remember that some autumn berries are poisonous, so make sure you are totally confident about identification, and use a recipe.)

Then sit back and relax by the fire with your well-earned foraged culinary delight. Everything feels so much more enjoyable when you have put in that extra bit of effort.

Animal healing and reiki

Mia Middleton explains how animals can experience similar health problems to ours – and how reiki helps.

Photo: Hamid Tajik / Pexels



Cardiologist Barbara Natterson-Horowitz (2012) found that a number of wild and domestic animals suffer from similar physical and mental health issues to those that affect humans. Chimpanzees can suffer from depression and breast cancer. Parrots pick out their feathers when stressed. Amphibians suffer from skin disorders; Koalas catch Chlamydia. Many animals experience emotions just like us, and although they cannot express them linguistically they do so through behaviours comparable to ours.

Kate Murphy (2018) found that when humans interact with their pets, both parties release the chemical oxytocin. This bonding, the 'affection connection', just makes us feel happy and trusting. Why? Because our pets don't judge us. There are no assumptions, pretences, double meanings or hidden agendas. Our connections with our pets are unconditional. This untainted behaviour is one of the reasons why animals appear to be so in tune with the natural processes of the universe and its power to heal.

Our pets instinctively understand and respond to the natural flow of reiki, an ancient form of healing that originated in Japan. *rei* means soul or spirit and *ki* means vital energy.

The International Centre for Reiki Healing in Michigan found that animals sense how this vital energy flow can rebalance and bring peace and calm to their body and mind. In my reiki work with horses, I found that they tend to lean into my hands during a session. Dogs and cats have moved my hands with their body to the area they want the reiki directed to. Some animals look sleepy and sway gently from side or side during a distant reiki session.

Penelope Quest (2012) explains that distant emotional/mental healing symbols can be used to 'beam' reiki to an animal, and it is thought this can work even at a great distance. How great to know we can give back to our fur-babies something as wonderful as they give to us.



Writing that book – or seven

Fairley Taylor recalls the long journey from dream to reality as, with great determination, she wrote and self-published seven books on herbalism.

Last February I achieved my long-standing goal of writing a series of seven books on the history and medicinal uses of plants. It has taken me twelve years, and now I can be content that all the knowledge about plants that I was taught as a child will not be lost.

My first book, *Tree Superstitions*, tells of old

tackle the seven volumes I intended to write but I eventually succeeded.

The day finally arrives when you see your work in print. I cannot describe the feeling of pride and achievement. Much to my surprise, I won the Green Butterfly Award from the Aberdeenshire Environmental Forum.

The following year I wrote the book that I consider to be my greatest achievement, *Wild Flowers Histories*. This took me back to my childhood, reliving memories of foraging with my elders.

I then wrote *Culinary Herbs*, which was followed in February 2020 by *Culinary Spices*, taking



Photo: Yash Lucid / Pexels

stories and rituals about our native trees.

With the book written, my goal was to find a publisher. After many rejections, rather than give up with my hopes dashed, I decided to publish the book myself.

My next challenge was to find a printer. It was hard to find one who would

A year later I had finished *Garden Flower Histories*; then followed *Herbal Vegetables* – resulting from a query about eating aubergines when on medication – and *Herbal Fruits*, explaining how fruit in the diet are beneficial in enhancing the effects of medications.

me to exotic places in the depths of a dark winter.

Just never give up on your dreams, as they will eventually become a reality. There is a book in everyone, so make the effort and save your story before it gets lost.

Fairley Taylor



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Quality time **Nick Leighton** the ‘Dad of Design’ considers how we might take the pressure off ourselves and our families – and relax.

The pressures of life can often get a little overwhelming. It can feel as though we have the weight of the world on our shoulders. School runs, work, house chores and much, much more.

The same could also be said for our children. Although perhaps not going through the same struggles, they experience stresses that are no less important. School life can be hard, other kids can be mean and exams can be tough, and that’s without the challenges of Covid-19.

We can often become distracted with our own struggles, but setting aside time for our children can make a dramatic difference. I often feel guilty when making them do homework or chores, knowing that they’ve been at school all day. I feel the value of time as a family at the weekend,

even though after a week at work sometimes all I want to do is slob on the sofa. I guess it’s about trying to find a balance between fitting time in with the kids, but also fitting in time for ourselves.



Finding ways that we can relax as a family is beneficial: taking a break from our busy schedules and escaping the everyday dramas; distracting them from the things that are causing stress. I try and find activities that I know we’ll all enjoy. If we’re in the house, it’ll often be arts and crafts, colouring in or

computer games. When we are outdoors, I sometimes create little activities for us to complete.

Parenting is difficult, and life is tough. This time next year, the things you are worrying about now will all just be a distant memory. Find those little pockets of relaxation, fun and calmness. Slow down a little, take a breather, live in the moment and spend some quality time with the people you love. You deserve it.

www.thedadofdesign.com
Twitter: [@thedadofdesign](https://twitter.com/thedadofdesign).



Embrace the cold this winter

Rachael Hunter of Slow Living Events discusses ways that we can enjoy winter and make it fulfilling.

Winter is well and truly on its way. The sun is rarely out, it's cold, the days are short, and spring seems like a lifetime away. While this may fill many of us with dread, there are lots of things to love about winter and plenty of ways to help you feel more like yourself throughout the colder months.

The cold weather may not be everyone's cup of tea, but nature uses the time wisely and takes the opportunity to rest and rejuvenate. As we know, many animals hibernate during the winter months and the trees and plants allow themselves the time to move from one phase into another, preparing to blossom again in spring.

As in nature, winter is a perfect time for us to slow down, reflect on the year just past and make plans for the coming new year.

The key is to use your



time wisely. Spend time with loved ones keeping cosy indoors and enjoying much needed time together. Make progress with those projects you've been meaning to tackle all year. Read that book. Bake from your favourite cookbook.

Or for something more outgoing you can wrap up warm, go outside and take in some of the crisp, fresh air. Volunteer to help the needy; feed the homeless; donate blankets to your local dog shelter.

Back indoors, write a gratitude list. Do crafts or

colouring. Keep a journal. Enjoy herbal teas, breakfast teas, hot chocolate, warm cider. Enjoy a long, hot soak (and make sure to moisturise afterwards as your skin needs care in winter too). Take time out for yourself, whatever it is.

There will be days when you feel less motivated, and uninspired, especially this year, but that is okay. Allow yourself to feel these emotions and just make sure you take the time to nurture your soul and be kind to yourself.

More ideas and activities:
www.slowlivingevents.com
hello@slowlivingevents.com
07871 816332
I: [slowlivingevents](https://www.instagram.com/slowlivingevents)
F: [@slowlivingevents](https://www.facebook.com/slowlivingevents)
Blog: linktr.ee/slowlivingeventsscotland



Mindfulness through creativity

Karen Beeton

helps her clients find mindfulness through the experience of art. She shares some insights about her personal journey.

Hi, I'm Karen, founder of Dots & Blocks and a mental health warrior – lovely to meet you! Having discovered the mental health benefits of mindfulness through creativity, I am now passionate about sharing it with others.

I have personal experience of severe stress – how it alters your perception and puts you in constant 'fight or flight' mode. I have suffered with anxiety and panic attacks, and deep depression – I was in a very dark place. That's when a specialist told me about the power of mindfulness and guided meditation – but I was so

One of Karen's kits



very broken on the inside that the more I tried to quiet my mind the louder it got. I really felt hopeless.

That is when I discovered Dot Mandalas (examples shown in the photos above). They engage the brain in a way that is like nothing I have ever done before. You completely lose yourself in the process, and you naturally attain an inner peace. You are meditating but without trying.

Then I discovered wooden printing blocks. I fell in love with this beautiful craft and the slow methodical process that you get absorbed in. For me, mindfulness through creativity gives my brain the space it needs.

I now devote my life to teaching both of these

mindful techniques – hence the name 'Dots & Blocks'. I have a website, with several creativity kits. All of them feature both written instructions and video tutorials. You get all the benefits of one of my five-star rated workshops, but in the safety and comfort of your own home. Visit the website to see what you could be creating.

See next page for full details of Karen's service.

Exclusive reader discount: 10% off your order with code **ROOT10**; valid until 31/12/20



Get creative, be mindful

with Dots & Blocks

Have you tried to meditate but struggled to turn off your inner voice? I have been there... the sad thing is that when we are truly broken it is incredibly hard to access the mental health benefits of meditation. But there is another way.

Focusing your mind on a deeply absorbing creative hobby has been shown to help with some of the more common mental health conditions such as anxiety, stress and depression.

Here at Dots & Blocks we specialise in sharing the use of Dot Mandalas and Block Printing to help you attain inner peace.

Our Dot Mandala kits are focused on mindfulness and explore several ideas to help your mental health. You will learn how to create beautiful Dot Mandalas, and fully immerse yourself in the present moment. Their circular shape and symmetry is very pleasing to the eye, and you attain a calm meditative state without actually trying.

Our Block Printing Kits contain hand-carved wooden printing blocks from India, where they have been used for printing fabrics for centuries. Hand printing is a slow and methodical process that is deeply absorbing and quiets the mind. All our blocks are ethically sourced, fair trade and sustainable.

All our kits are suitable for absolute beginners. They have written instructions and video tutorials, allowing you to access the mental health benefits of taking up a creative hobby, in the comfort and safety of your own home. They're perfect as a gift to yourself or a loved one - which new hobby will you choose?

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