

SPRING 2013

# cwtdh

AT HOME IN CARDIFF

## CARDIFF BLUES

Supporting our  
local rugby club

PAGE 7

## I LOVES THE DIFF

Cult brand creator  
Christian Amodeo shares  
his secrets of the city

PAGE 11

## A PENYLAN FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

Why it's one of the city's most  
desirable places to live

PAGES 4-5

**"I fell in love with  
the view of the park  
from the bedroom  
window it instantly  
felt like home."**

Kate, Penylan resident

Official publication of





# home made

In each edition we'll be looking at how to make the most of your home's unique features and improve saleability.

Making the most of your home's attributes will allow buyers to see and love your home at its best and ultimately help achieve that top asking price. Some elements, however, can prove more than a little difficult to showcase than others.

On hand with interiors advice this edition is Becky from the John Lewis Home Design Team.

This Duplex Penthouse in Century Wharf, Cardiff Bay, has stunning views across the Bay but its sheer height and the unusual shape of these floor-to-ceiling windows make presenting this feature tricky.

## STEP 1: LAYOUT

Clearly defined areas help buyers visualise exactly how the property will work for them as a home and ensure the beautiful view remains the focus. Separating the adjacent dining and living areas with a sofa defines the space whilst keeping the open plan feel.

## STEP 2: COLOUR SCHEME

The current muted palette of cream is light and airy, but with such a large window it could carry more colour. Grey can be a good modern alternative. Purple adds sophistication, whilst a

pop of teal would add life and echo the river's blue tone.

A feature wall using statement wallpaper is popular with buyers and tenants alike. It is important to consider the property's intended market. A city centre apartment needs broad appeal, and here perhaps geometric patterns would be better received; whereas a family home in Penylan might be more suited to the floral and damask prints of Harlequin and Sanderson.

By placing the wallpaper on the small wall next to the window, the whole room will feel its impact, without it being too overwhelming.

## STEP 3: THE FEATURE WINDOW

The window's oddly-shaped glass panes and height makes them a daunting feature to tackle. Luxaflex Plisse shades offer a solution. Individually-fitted blinds are made for any shape and stack tightly to the window edge so as not to impinge views. Their array of control options and transparencies means any privacy or height demands are met. A sheer option allowing light but preventing glare is perfect for our penthouse. For more information, please ask in store at John Lewis.



## STEP 4: FURNITURE AND ACCESSORIES

Becky suggests dark grey sofas to introduce different shades and tones of colours which will create depth and interest. Using a mix of patterned and striped cushions will inject colour, however be careful not to smother your furniture; grouping two or three different cushions in one corner of a sofa will make it look larger.

## THE LAST WORD

If you also have a beautiful view to display, picking colour tones from the landscape can help to highlight the framed scene and make the most of your home's asset.

Our thanks to Becky and the John Lewis Home Design Team. For more advice on selling or renting your home, contact our Cardiff Bay Branch on **02920 480490** or visit [cpshomes.co.uk](http://cpshomes.co.uk)

Get the look...



Wallpaper to make a real statement



All furniture and accessories shown are available to purchase from John Lewis.





### It's a fabric affair

Locally-based Jane and Sean at Homezone – specialists in made-to-measure curtains – are very excited about a new range of fabrics from Barker and Barker. Stocked by the prestigious Liberty of London, Homezone are one of only two Welsh stockists. "Our customers will love the bold, unique designs which are making this young family design team popular" they said. For more details and pricing please contact Homezone.

Luxury  
on our  
doorstep!

# treat your home this February

### Two's company

Becky from John Lewis' Home Design Team recommends 'The Snuggler' for a romantic evening. Sized larger than a standard armchair, it's perfect for two! Add a little spice with bright red cushions or, for any colour-phobes out there, this gorgeous, neutral 'U&ME' cushion will provide a break from the traditional pinks and reds and give a timeless finishing touch to any living room or bedroom.



Snuggle  
up!

With love in the air, what better time to show your home a little affection? Whatever your budget, we look at some of the best Cardiff has to offer. Homeowners and tenants alike, here's how to give your a home a special treat.



### Sweets for my sweet

We've all been inspired by *The Great British Bake Off*, so to help create your very own 'Showstopper' look no further than Kitchens Cardiff on High Street. Our wish list includes a Kitchen Aid Artisan Stand Mixer in vibrant empire red sat on a granite worktop. However, if like us your pockets don't stretch that far, Ann at Kitchens Cardiff informs us of their wide selection of heart-shaped goodies, all available on their website. Their selection of cutters, tins and dishes make it easy to create the perfect romantic meal.



Create your  
show stopper!



### Think pink... purple and teal

Bring a touch of colour to your home with vibrant fabrics. One of our favourite collections is 'Folia Fabrics' by Harlequin, which includes the stunning Orisna; large but delicate pompom flower heads with dainty stems in rich jewel colours of pink, purple and teal. For a less floral statement their Irma print, featuring a broad stripe with a small diamond motif, will add warmth and vibrancy to any room.

## the best of the rest...

**Milkwood Gallery on Lochaber St, Roath**, hosts a market of contemporary and vintage collectables. Handmade items and original artwork make it an interesting and often inspiring place to find a new item for your home. [Milkwoodgallery.com](http://Milkwoodgallery.com)

**Rossiters in The Royal Arcade, City Centre**, is a family-run business providing everything from home furniture to kitchen and dining items. [Rossitersofbath.com](http://Rossitersofbath.com)

**Ushi's on Wellfield Rd, Roath**, stocks a beautifully eclectic range of home accessories and gifts. [Ushis.co.uk](http://Ushis.co.uk)

**Beti Biggs in Romilly Crescent, Pontanna**, stocks a large range of home furnishings with a vintage or upcycled twist. [Betibiggs.com](http://Betibiggs.com)

Homezone: 15 Wellfield Road CF24 3NZ [homezonedesign.com](http://homezonedesign.com) 02920 463 286  
John Lewis: The Hayes CF10 1EG [johnlewis.com](http://johnlewis.com) 02920 536 000  
Kitchens Cardiff: 14 High St CF10 1AX [kitchenscookshop.co.uk](http://kitchenscookshop.co.uk) 02920 227 899  
Harlequin : [harlequin.co.uk](http://harlequin.co.uk) Stocked by Homezone & John Lewis as above



Waterloo Teahouse,  
Waterloo Gardens

# A Penylan for your thoughts

**Taking a stroll around Penylan, even on a slate-grey Cardiff day, it's easy to see why it remains one of the city's most desirable places to live.**

Mixing with Roath to the south and merging into Cyncoed and Llanedeyrn at the top of the hill, Penylan manages to retain a sense of identity. And while its leafy avenues can be wonderfully quiet, giving it a sense of being set apart from the hustle and bustle, its location means that the city is just at the end of the street.

Penylan hill affords fantastic views over the city centre, the Bay, and the Channel. From apartments beside Cyncoed Gardens atop Penylan hill, where once stood the Cardiff Observatory. Looking east you can even see the Severn bridges.

At the foot of the hill, Penylan enjoys a narrow continuation of parkland beyond Roath Park's 'rec', which follows the course of Roath Brook between Sandringham and Westville roads, known as Mill Gardens. Along with pretty, triangular Waterloo Gardens, this treasured tract of greenery was created from land donated by Lord Tredegar at the end of the 19th century.

At Waterloo Gardens there is a pleasing sense of space, with the row of shops (comprising convenience store, Post Office, Waterloo Teahouse and Sands hair salon) set at a seemingly haphazard angle and well back from



Lighthouse, Roath Park Lake



the main road. There may be more cars than yesteryear – as well as an unfortunate tribe of bollards littering the scene – but the village-like street remains a Cardiff gem. It's hard to believe that a few yards away lies Newport Road with its multiple lanes of traffic and retail warehouses.

## Your cup of tea?

Waterloo Gardens Teahouse, which Visit Cardiff declares was "the biggest thing to hit Cardiff in 2009", has taken popping out for a cuppa – and Penylan's prestige – to a new level. Winner of





Roath Park



Waterloo Teahouse, Waterloo Gardens

a Best Coffee Shop In The UK award, Penylan resident Kas Ali's teashop and gallery space has quickly become a Cardiff institution.

**"When we found our house in Penylan, I fell in love with the view of the park from the bedroom window – it instantly felt like home."**

Cardiff-born Kas chose Penylan when he and his partner Aisha decided to settle down in the city eight years ago.

"Penylan had everything we were looking for – a strong community, good housing, and amenities within walking distance," he says. "We are both from inner cities originally so the closeness to Roath and Cathays was also a factor – it adds a dynamism. We didn't want to live out in the 'sticks'."

Historically of course, Penylan was the sticks. The initial homes built amid the woodland and farmland between Roath and Cyncoed village were grand houses of wealthy Victorians, few of which survive today. Bronwydd, for example, was a large villa built for Penylan native Alfred Thomas, 1st baron of Pontypridd, which was demolished to make way for Eastern Avenue.

### **Pontcanna of the east?**

Penylan boasts some of Cardiff's best examples of Victorian residential architecture, which came about as Cardiff rapidly expanded. Today, the housing quality makes it a highly sought-after place to nest.

But Pontcanna, this ain't. Local residents include author and poet Peter Finch and Gavin and Stacey star Ruth Jones. Actor and playwright Boyd Clack is always in Coffee Number 1 on Wellfield Road too, it's true, but it's not like the 'who's who' list is very long.

"Penylan seems to attract fewer media types," says working mum Kate, who moved to Penylan

with her husband in spring 2011. "It seems a little greener, certainly less trendy than Pontcanna, and also more bohemian."

Kate, who grew up close to Roath Park, initially looked for properties in either area. "Both Penylan and Pontcanna have the parks

and community, which were missing from our rented flat in the city centre. And yet neither are suburbia – even in our late thirties we didn't feel ready for that."

Eventually Penylan won out. "When we found our house in Penylan, I fell in love with the view of the park from the bedroom window – it instantly felt like home."

These sentiments are echoed by Waterloo Teahouse's Kes Ali. "Penylan is understated, historic, convenient, and neighbourly," he says. "Basically, it's home."

## **that's fascinating!**

The Roath Branch railway once ran through Penylan, running parallel to Roath rec' where the newer homes of Boleyn Walknow now are, crossing Penylan Road (at the zebra crossing), and along Melrose Ave. After crossing Waterloo Road it curved southward so that the end of every terraced street running east off Waterloo Road from Amesbury Road down met it before it crossed Newport Road.

Between 1906 and 1979, the public city telescope stood atop Penylan Hill in Cyncoed Gardens ('Observatory' can still be found on some maps), having been donated by medical doctor and amateur astronomer Franklen George Evans. The hill stands 200 feet above sea level, at a latitude 51° 30' N, longitude 3° 10' W, and local time is 12 minutes and 24 seconds behind that of Greenwich.



## **We're opening our doors to residential sales in Penylan.**

Following a fantastic response to our 'new-look' office in Woodville Road, we are soon to be transforming our branch at 66 Albany Road, which will herald the introduction of residential sales to our services.

At the demand of our Clients we started investment sales a few years ago. Once again our customers have had their say and so soon we will offer the residential sales service they are requesting.

Key to our success is the fact that we are a local company with an intimate and long standing knowledge of Cardiff. Many of us live in Penylan and Roath so we understand the properties, the streets and the parks, making us perfect for showcasing your home.

For the more information please feel free to give us a call, or you can register for an information pack, updates and special offers online.



**02920 454 555**  
[cpshomes.co.uk/lovepenylan](http://cpshomes.co.uk/lovepenylan)

If you are looking to buy, rent or sell in Penylan, register online at [cpshomes.co.uk/lovepenylan](http://cpshomes.co.uk/lovepenylan)

# A helping



**Total raised: £29,363.32! Thanks to everyone who took part!**



## CPS Homes do Sleep Out Cardiff

**When you think of a night out in Cardiff, a few things immediately spring to mind. For us lucky ones, sleeping bags and discomfort aren't usually among them...**

The night of 8 November has to be one of the more unusual ways we've spent a Thursday evening – or any other evening for that matter. After all, we can't recall the last time we danced at a silent disco in the middle of a car park, took on the police in a tug-o-war, and slept rough.

### **SLEEPING OUT FOR LLAMAU**

Llamau is the Cardiff-based charity that works tirelessly to help young homeless people across South Wales by providing safe, secure and supported housing. As official sponsors of the charity's first Sleep Out event, we sent enthusiastic support on the night in the form of a merry band of intrepid staff members led by none other than director Barrie James.

"I'd never intended to get involved beyond our donation to the event, but it looks like Llamau are better sales people than me!" Barrie said. "By the end of the call I'd signed up and, by the end of the day, one had turned into eight."

Indeed, fully 'thermalled up' on the night were also Nikki, Marvinia, Becky, Matt Humphreys, Gareth, Matt Butler (and his girlfriend Emmy), all intent on raising awareness for a good cause, having fun – and keeping warm.

### **IN GOOD COMPANY FOR A GREAT CAUSE**

In all, around 65 people took part in what was an excellently-run and hugely fun Sleep Out, one of eight similar events taking place around the UK.

While the Sleep Out brought 'sleepers' a step closer to the reality of homelessness, the event felt more like a mini festival, with a friendly atmosphere, bands and musicians, a few craft stalls, a silent disco (complete with awful singing and young DJs with 30-second attention spans), and local up-and-coming comedian Matt Rees. ("I don't know why people in Wales put up with spending 5p on plastic bags when you can buy a shopping trolley for a quid.")

The event, at Cardiff Athletics Stadium, also featured free Dominos pizzas, party bags, a TV crew running around, and tug-o-war. (Have these things ever been listed together before? We think not.)

The less said about the tug-o-war the better, really, though in our defence our opponents did enlist South Wales Constabulary into their ranks. We fared considerably better in the impromptu

game of mixed football on the flood-lit astro-turf, we're proud to say.

### **MONEY EARNED AND LESSONS LEARNED**

In total, £29,363.32 was raised, far in excess of Llamau's hoped-for £10,000.

"Before the Sleep Out, we hoped to raise £10,000," said a clearly-chuffed Sue. "During the event, we thought we might reach £15,000. So to raise almost £30,000 is amazing."

For most of the CPS crew, it was a late finish. If you know this part of West Cardiff then you'll be aware that just over the road from the Athletics Stadium, is a certain fast food franchise, a visit to which seemed sensible. After all, the illuminated golden arches sign had glowed temptingly at us throughout the long night.

Not a lot of people know this but you're not allowed to walk through the Drive Thru. Fortunately, Glenn from Barry didn't mind us car-jacking him and depositing his sister Joanne on the pavement while we stocked up on lovely warm junk food. If you're reading this, thank you Glenn and Joanne.

By 5.30am the traffic was noisily streaming into the city, making sleeping almost impossible. With stiff and chilled limbs, we hobbled away from our cardboard beds no longer having any illusions as to the grim reality that is a night out under November stars.

"Next year I'm changing out of my suit trousers before going to sleep," concluded Barrie philosophically.

Who'd have thought trying to get some shut-eye would be such an eye-opener?



# hand

As a local company, we believe it's important to invest in our community. After all, we're all in it together...



## We've got the Blues, and we're loving it!

We're delighted to announce that we've agreed a deal to become official sponsors of Cardiff Blues from the beginning of the 2013/2014 season.

In what we believe is a big step to introducing our new-look brand to the city masses, the arrangement will see our name displayed prominently on the right sleeve of all replica and retail jerseys for the next three years.

Commenting on the partnership, Emma James, a CPS Homes Director, said, "I don't think there was a single 'no' in the office when the idea of sponsoring the Blues was put forward. Many of our staff are already season ticket holders and we're genuinely excited to be supporting the team we all so often cheer for. Fingers crossed the new shirts will bring them some good luck!"

In addition to the shirt sponsorship, you'll also see us on several advertising boards around the Cardiff Arms Park pitch, as well as on match tickets and every match-day programme.

Matt Church, Cardiff Blues' Sponsorship Manager, said, "I used to work with Emma and Barrie at CPS Homes, so as a local, family business I thought they would be interested in supporting their local club. It's fantastic to secure their support for the next three seasons. We are delighted that they have decided to get involved at such a high level, particularly given the current economic climate. It is real testament to the hard work CPS Homes put in and their positive outlook. We look forward to working with the entire team and building on our current relationship."

A selection of the Blues' star players, such as Welsh internationals Sam Warburton and Leigh Halfpenny, will be joining us to help launch the partnership as the season nears its start.

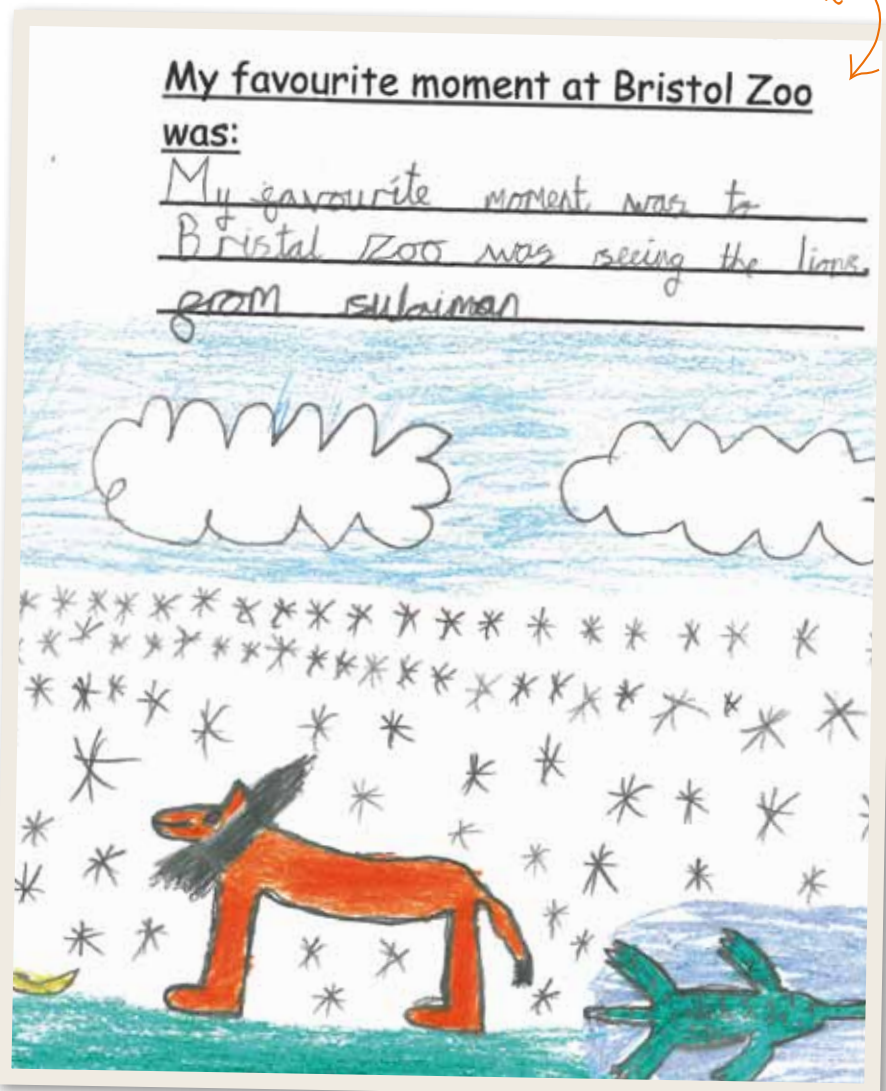
## A lion's share

We recently donated a sum of money towards Stacey Road Primary School's trip to Bristol Zoo.

The Year 2 pupils from the Adamsdown school enjoyed seeing their favourite animals and drew us a few pictures to show how much of a good time they had...



To see more of these lovely drawings and messages, visit our website [cps homes.co.uk](http://cps homes.co.uk)



# United response to rising charges



**We've been approached by several disgruntled property owners in recent months, all unhappy with the increased service charges they're being made to pay on their Cardiff Bay apartments.**

Service charges cover the upkeep of communal hallways, car parks and any garden areas, amongst other things. Costs at developments such as Century Wharf, Prospect Place and Victoria Wharf have all been on the rise of late and the owners we've spoken to tell us they've seen nothing to justify the increased charges.

One option available to leaseholders is to go down the 'Right to Manage' path. The scheme is a way for leaseholders to force the transfer of the landlord's management and to take responsibility for the management of their block. The process is relatively simple and the landlord's consent is not required, nor is any order of court. However, there are important issues to consider and a substantial amount of work to be done in order for a takeover of management to be successful.

.....  
Following our recent article flagging up escalating service charges, we received a great deal of response from disgruntled property owners. It clearly touched a nerve!

On the surface of it, the management of blocks of flats is a simple matter, but leasehold residential property management is actually very complex. Due to the number of properties that are bought to let, a thorough knowledge of landlord and tenant legislation is required, as well as an understanding of the structure and meaning of leases. An adherence to Health & Safety criteria and compliance with recognised Codes of Practice is also needed, and then there's the proactive day-to-day maintenance work that should be undertaken to keep the development in good working order. All in all, it's a lot of different areas that need simultaneous attention.

So whilst you may wish to jump ship from your current Managing Agent, take care. You need to approach a well-established ARMA member, which means they accept and undertake to comply with the RICS' Code of Practice – "The Service Charge Residential Management Code". Ideally they'll be locally based in South Wales and dedicated to this remit alone. We know of only one such firm that meets these specifics; Western Permanent Property, [www.wppmc.com](http://www.wppmc.com).

In effect, managing a block of flats or a housing development is like managing a business. It requires specific skills and time...and lots of it, we're told!

We mentioned in our original article that some leaseholders have exercised their Right to Manage (RTM) to facilitate such a change in management. In short, this procedure results in leaseholders taking control of their block, yet, managing the same within the covenants of the lease. The end result is twofold – there are savings to be made and those paying the service charges develop a greater understanding of what is necessary to deliver the required service.

Western Permanent Property has considerable experience in this field, having operated in this specific sector since the mid-1970s. Should you or somebody you know be interested in undertaking the Right to Manage, we suggest that you contact **Neil Gregory** ([neil@wppmc.com](mailto:neil@wppmc.com)) in order to discuss the position in much further detail.

Some developments already have an autonomous Residential Management Company (RMC) in place. If this is the position in your block, the process of altering agents is that much easier as leaseholders are also shareholders of the RMC with voting rights.

Leaseholders are entitled to a communicative, cost effective and transparent Managing Agent that follows instructions, as opposed to one that works for the Ground Landlord. If you're not currently receiving this service, it may well be an idea to look into the RTM process.



# Newly-instructed properties let within 6 days!

We've calculated that over the past year we've let the majority of newly-instructed properties within six days of being asked to market them – a hugely impressive average turnaround time.

In the last quarter alone we let more than 330 properties, which works out as over as five units per day – not bad for a period which included a two-week closure for Christmas and New Year.

Our Cardiff Lettings Manager, Rhys Owen, said: "We enjoyed a hugely successful 2012, and 2013 has started in very much the same vein."

"We've got a large number of pre-vetted tenants just waiting for the right property to come onto the market. They're ready to move in – it's just a case of finding them the right place," Rhys explained.



The speed at which we let properties has meant disappointment for many prospective tenants, with pre-booked appointments having to be re-arranged due to others already reserving the houses or flats they intended to view.

"Quite often people aren't able to take time off work during the week, so they book in for the weekend. But by the time it comes around, the place they wanted to look at has been taken by somebody else," Rhys said.

"We never just remove an applicant's details from our database. Just because we haven't got anything to show them at that time, who's to say we won't take on something suitable the following day? By keeping in touch with everybody on our books, we know exactly who's still looking and the sort of thing they're after, so it's a simple case of calling them when we have a property that matches their criteria and arranging a viewing."

If you're a landlord with a house or flat falling empty sooner rather than later, we urge you to get in touch as soon as possible with a view to arranging a free, no-obligation lettings valuation. We're confident that we'll fill it within a week of being instructed.

Love  
Home

02920 66 85 85  
cpshomes.co.uk



have you  
seen us  
lately?





# The project

Having had over 12 years at the sharp end of Cardiff lettings, we share our 'Buy-to-let' experience with you through a series of local case studies. If you're looking for inspiration or are embarking on a new development project, here's food for thought.



## The figures

Bought in September 2012 for £120,000

**Total spend: £59,000**

Loft conversion and dormer: £15,000

Dropping the floor levels: £9,000

General building: £7,000

Electrics: £6,000

Plumbing: £6,500

Bathrooms: £3,500

Kitchen: £6,000

Furniture: £3,000

Replacing door and necessary windows: £1,000

Decoration/accessories: £2,000

**Rental Income before:**

£550pcm/£6,600pa

**Rental Income after:**

£2,170pcm/£23,870pa

(11 months due to academic rota)

**Current sales value: £298,000**

(February 2013)

The value is based on a purchaser receiving an 8% rental return on their investment

Spending on the right things can really pay off!

## The property

A traditional 'two-up, two-down' mid-terraced house on Daniel St, Cathays close to Cardiff University - a popular area with students. Bought in September 2012 for £120,000

## The plan

With only two reception rooms on the ground floor, the property also had a large kitchen, utility room and adjoining outside toilet to the rear - all of which could be reorganised to suit more modern living. A quick survey of the street showed other houses had previously been granted permission for loft conversions, which in this case would be able to house two bedrooms and a bathroom. Once completed, the property would comprise of seven bedrooms, two bathrooms and a ground floor cloakroom. Being a House of Multiple Occupation (HMO), it would be suitable for renting to a group of students or individuals.

## The project

The ground floor reception rooms were changed to bedrooms and a small cloakroom was created from a borrowed corner of the front room. The kitchen remained in the same location but its layout and finish was modernised; leading onto an open-plan living room.

On the first floor, the large bathroom to the rear of the house was altered to a bedroom, and a smaller bathroom containing a shower was formed between the two front bedrooms, borrowing space from the very large front room.

The new attic floor houses two bedrooms and a small bathroom. In order to make the most of this space, the floors throughout the house were dropped, making the head height in the attic much more acceptable. New gas central heating, modern furniture and decoration finished the project.

The property is currently rented and has already been let for the next academic year; 2013/2014.

## We can help...

Our investment side of the business has been expanding, meaning we can offer services beyond that of a standard agent. Over the last two or three years we've found properties for clients in a position to buy, organised architects and plans, forecast rental income and supervised main building contractors. This is all in addition to the usual services of finding tenants and signing tenancy agreements, as well as looking after the rent, maintenance and day-to-day running of the property.

If Building & Council Regulations put you off making that step into property investment, our in-house development and House of Multiple Occupancy (HMO) specialists are on-hand to help you, whatever the query.

**For more information or advice, please call 02920 668585 or email [barrie@cpshomes.co.uk](mailto:barrie@cpshomes.co.uk) - we'll be happy to help!**



CPS Homes sat down with creator of local cult brand I Loves The 'Diff to find out what Cardiff means to him.

# Cardiff over COFFEE



## Shhh....

**TELL US SOMETHING FEW PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT YOU.**

Dallas' Sue Ellen saved my Stetson hat from almost certain doom.

**TELL US A CARDIFF SECRET.**

Jimi Hendrix woke up dazed and confused on a Roath Park Lake islet the morning after one of his Cardiff gigs, having gone on a legendary bender in town. Not sure who told me this now but I really want it to be true.

*Christian's  
'Diff highlights*

## Places to eat...

**Thé Pot** on Crwys Road, Cathays  
thepotcafe.co.uk 029 2025 1246

**Bankok Cafe** in Canton  
bangkokcafe.co.uk 029 2034 0455

**Garlands** in Duke Street Arcade, City Centre  
029 2066 6914

**Fresh** in The Royal Arcade – the best panini and baguettes in Wales! Check their specials @freshbaguette1

## To shop...

**The Pumping Station**, Penarth Rd  
029 2022 1085

And our I Loves The 'Diff stockists of course!

## IS THERE ANYWHERE IN CARDIFF YOU FEEL ESPECIALLY 'AT HOME'?

I suppose I'm more at home on the east side of the city; although a couple of years of I Loves The 'Diff deliveries has improved my Cardiff geography. Living in your hometown means there are memories attached to lots of places; where you have your first kiss; or on Queen Street where friends and I ended up rolling on the ground with Ieuan Evans in a mock ruck!

## WHERE ARE YOUR FAVOURITE LOCAL PLACES?

Roath Park Lake is high up on the list. Our cabriolet stadium on match day – nowhere like it. I was taken to the Arms Park as a kid by my dad, so it's a cherished tradition with a lot of great memories. In fact, you can't beat Cardiff generally on international day, can you? For getting away from the bustle, the ridgeway path overlooking the city offers amazing views, and a bit further over the Wenallt was a place my Grandad took me a lot as a kid so I'm very fond of that.

I love the independent shops and eateries around Cardiff that offer a unique taste of the city. Some shops make you happy to be in them because they're real rather than a kitsch contrivance. The cobblers behind Meek's, off Albany Road, was great because it felt like it was from another time. Sadly it's been torn down now. I was hoping to salvage the sign from the skip but alas someone else beat me to it. I'm rather partial to vintage finds, or "junk" as my family calls them. I like the idea that mass-produced items attain character and uniqueness through age and wear and tear.

## WHAT WAS THE TRIGGER FOR I LOVES THE 'DIFF?

You make it sound like a nuclear threat. I guess it has kind of got a bit out of control, but there's

no danger to the public, I can assure you. There was no trigger – it just kind of evolved naturally from a doodle on a beer mat. It's just a fun logo and an expression of genuine love for Cardiff. Perhaps the trigger was returning to Cardiff after having lived away. I loved being back here. It has allowed me to meet so many interesting people from all sorts of backgrounds, and every week we get emails from people excited by what we do. It makes life more fun.

## THE CARDIFF BUS SONG HAS HAD MORE THAN 100,000 YOUTUBE VIEWS. DID YOU THINK IT WOULD BE SO POPULAR?

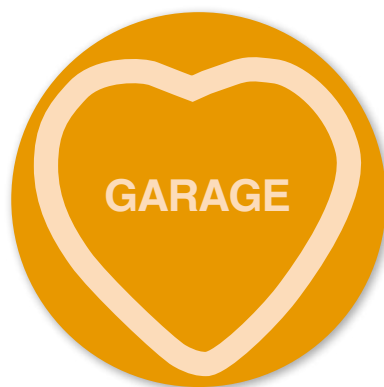
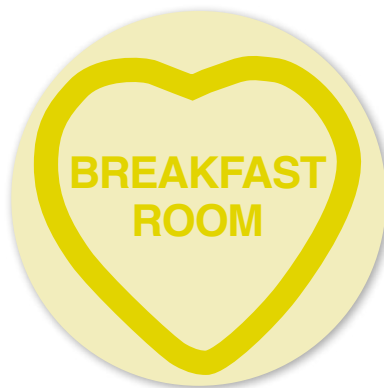
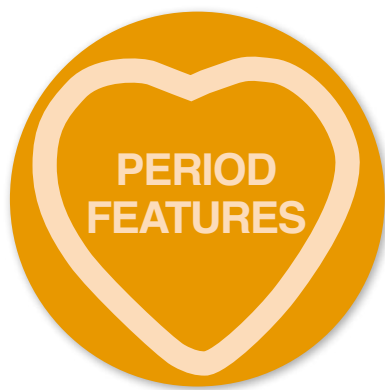
Of course not! I'd have been happy with 600. Although, as soon as we made up the "Maindy, Tremorfa, Pontcanna, Adamsdown" line in place of "Maybe tomorrow I'll wanna settle down," I thought it would catch people's imagination. It's nice to do fun things and for people to respond so positively to them. It's fun releasing things like that or the Cardiff Underground map and getting cool feedback.

## HOW DID THE TAFFYWOOD TITLES COME ABOUT?

Creating "Welshified" film titles was something my brother and I started thinking up one night after a few too many beers, a few years ago. A Tom Cruise lookalike inspired it originally. "He's here filming *Risca Business*," one of us said. That was the start. In the months and years that followed, a few of us came up with loads of other ones, like Dial 'M' For Merthyr, The Llandaff Time Forgot, Some Like It Splott, until I set up taffywood.com and people we didn't know started contributing. It can become quite addictive. Later I came up with the cards and mugs, which have proven quite popular.

Our thanks to Christian. You can find more details on I Loves The 'Diff and their products at [ilovesthediff.com](http://ilovesthediff.com) We especially love the 'Cwtch Me If You Can' mug.





**Home is where the heart is...**