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*Developing new talent in writing.*

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## PRESS INFORMATION

**For release: Immediate**

### **Blaenavon's Literary Star: Julie McGowan**

**Usk, Wales, September 2007:** Julie McGowan, child of Blaenavon, is primed to light up her place in the annals of Welsh literature.

And an astonishingly well-earned place it is.

Apart from her years of work for the community, this prolific writer has had over 40 short stories and features published both nationally and internationally, and is an ardent playwright for the Welsh theatre. She has won numerous writing competitions over the years, as well as penning various features, a newspaper column, and a local annual town guide. Well known in her home town of Usk, Monmouthshire, Julie runs a young people's drama workshop as well as a full theatrical group, performing variety shows and witty pantomimes to sell-out crowds every year. She also co-runs "Is It?", a theatre company which tours secondary schools in Wales with productions covering health and social issues.

Born in Blaenavon, Julie left Wales for Kent at the age of 12. She trained as a nurse at Guy's Hospital, London, and then as a Health Visitor in Durham, living there for 4 years after her marriage to husband Peter. The couple now have four adult children, and have lived in Surrey, Lincolnshire and Hertfordshire before returning to Wales 15 years ago. Julie has had a wide variety of jobs, including teaching piano, and serving as Town Clerk in Usk.

Julie's debut novel "The Mountains Between" hits the shelves on 27th November, just in time for Christmas. Her second book, "Just One More Summer", had originally been planned for publication first, but a strategic decision was made to instead bring out "The Mountains Between" in time to coincide with the BBC Wales "Coal House" reality TV series, which takes families back in time to live in 1920's Blaenavon.

*Blaenavon and Abergavenny surge to life in this vibrant, haunting, joyful masterpiece, a celebration of the Welsh people in the 1920s and '30s: a saga of two families and their communities - the farmers and the miners, the villagers and the warriors, the singers and the mourners, the noble and the ignoble, the cowardly and the brave, in a smorgasbord that keeps the pages in perpetual motion.*

*This is the story of a little girl growing up on a farm, fighting to keep her balance in the face of an unbalanced mother and the deepest heart-blows a child can bear. It's a story of strength and courage; of a girl-woman with a huge heart who took what life threw at her and kept on loving - the story of a survivor.*

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*It's the story of a Big Pit mining family who suffered an unspeakable tragedy; it nearly killed them, but they got up and got on because that's what those amazing people did. And it's a story about two young people who could have and should have found each other much sooner, but their valleys were separated by the mountains and never the twain, in those days, would meet.*

*It's a war story; a love story; a hate story. But more than all this, it's the story of a chunk of Wales's lifetime slashed like a scar on a mountainside - about the people of Wales, the people of the mountains and the valleys who formed the beating heart of that country; the people who enable the current Welsh to stand proud and hold the Red Dragon high, because of what their forefathers did.*

*This is the story of their essence.*

**- "Intensely moving."**

**- "Funny, tender, utterly fascinating."**

**- "Wales gleams brilliantly through the dust of farmland and coalfield, mountain and valley, heartache and delight. You can almost taste it!"**

"The Mountains Between", produced by Sunpenny Publishing, is to be followed up by Julie's second novel, "Just One More Summer". Julie is currently working on her third book, with a fourth in the pipeline. She is available for talks, book signings, interviews, and public appearances. For full details, contact Sunpenny or visit [www.sunpenny.com](http://www.sunpenny.com), or email Julie directly at [julie@juliemcgowan.co.uk](mailto:julie@juliemcgowan.co.uk), or telephone her on 01291 672701.



**For high resolution photographs and cover images, or for more information about "The Mountains Between", "Just One More Summer", Julie McGowan herself, and/or Sunpenny Publishing, please email [info@sunpenny.com](mailto:info@sunpenny.com) or visit [www.sunpenny.com](http://www.sunpenny.com)**

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