



Dave Young

POLE POSITIONS APPROVED

5G Masts Getting the Nod From Council Planners

HUGH SULLIVAN

Seven separate planning applications have been approved by Hastings Borough Council (HBC) over the past 13 months for the erection of 5G masts at locations across the borough. Each will be between 15 and 20 metres high. Two more, both at 15-metre height, are awaiting consideration as the mobile phone industry seeks to equip the roll-out of its latest technology.

However, permissions to site free-standing BT 'street hubs', incorporating ultrafast Wi-Fi and small cell 4G/5G capabilities with illuminated advertising screens on each side, were refused earlier this year at three central locations – Robertson Street, Wellington Place and Queens Road.

Proponents of 5G claim that the technology will provide game-changing benefits: exponentially faster download speeds,

reduced congestion and lower latency (the delay in transfer of data following an instruction). It will also be possible to have many more devices working reliably, securely and uninterrupted in the same area. Consumers will gain enhanced capacity for mobile streaming and virtual reality gaming; it will enable large-scale factory automation, video surveillance, driverless cars, and more.

Opponents argue that 5G is un-

necessary, and allege that it threatens significant health risks from overexposure to electromagnetic fields, including for the large proportion of people who have metal in their bodies – from surgical plates to cervical coils, and from dental implants to body piercings. The guidelines on limiting exposure issued by the International Commission on

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NEWS

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A NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

Perhaps the Review in literature of Asa Winstanley's Book, *Weaponising Anti-Semitism*, sets the tone for this issue, focussing as it does on how lobby groups are controlling more and more of the narrative at the expense of the common people.

We have an article relating to the housing crisis, (p6 *Walking Home*) and what one local group is doing about it; Features (p16) examines the switch from landlines to digital which apparently takes no account of the elderly and their needs; in the Education section (p9), a teacher writes about marginalisation of those who 'don't fit the system' in our schools; News has an article about a recent visit by Travellers to the bathing pool site in Bulverhythe and the tensions between this marginalised group and residents living nearby. We even have an opinion piece on how space for dissent can so easily be magicked away using labels such as 'conspiracy theory'.

On the sunny side we talk about the healing power of dance in Health, p10, and preview the yearly interfaith festival, *A Garden Full of Cultural Delights* (p8), which does so much to bring harmony to our small town. Food gets upbeat by highlighting Moroccan cuisine and a restaurant in Norman Road that provides the authentic taste of North Africa.

If you would like something different, join the debate in Opinion (see advert *Write for Us*) or continue the debate on what music means to you us (p19). Or get in touch with articles/letters or support us as a Friend.



Twin Demos Over Northeye: Same Goal, Contrary Rhetoric

A group of around 40 local residents gathered on the small park outside Bexhill Town Hall last Saturday afternoon to stage their latest demonstration under the slogan No to Northeye. As previously reported in HIP 228, they oppose the Home Office's proposal to use the former prison site at Northeye, which lies off the A259 road a mile beyond Little Common, as residential accommodation for up to 1,200 male adult asylum seekers.

The park was shared, however, by a counter-demonstration, organised for the same time in the same space and also attracting around 40 people, representing Stand up to Racism groups from Bexhill and Hastings. They are also opposed to the housing of refugees at Northeye, but regard the No to Northeye lobby as motivated by racist and anti-immigrant prejudices, which they had come to challenge.

Sussex Police kept a low-key presence on the fringe of both groups and in the marginal space between them. Were they expecting any trouble? "This is Bexhill," a policewoman answered with a smile.

Gathered in a tight knot at the eastern end of the park, the Stand Up to Racism supporters heard several speeches from trade union leaders and a punchy address from Hastings Borough Council deputy leader Maya Evans who said that all refugees were welcome. She accepted that there was a housing crisis both nationally and locally – in Hastings over 1,000 people are now homeless, costing the council up to £4m a year – but maintained that this was the fault of the Tory Government, which had underfunded local councils across the country by around £3bn since they had come to power.

"They are playing 'divide and

rule'," she said. "But there are enough resources for us and for the refugees," insisting that the money poured into the pandemic response showed that to be the case – and there would be more now if it wasn't Tory policy to protect billionaires and landlords.

Meanwhile, a few yards west across the park, No to Northeye's chief organiser, Bexhill town councillor Nigel Jacklin, collected signatures for a petition urging the Government "to consider alternative solutions that would address the needs of asylum seekers without placing undue burdens on our community".

The wording of the petition expresses sympathetic sentiments towards the cause of refugees in general – "We recognise the importance of supporting those fleeing violence and persecution... [and] the Government's duty to help those in need," it states. However, it complains about "the strain that the proposed housing plan would place on local services" and at "the potential impact on the market value of nearby properties".

Amongst the No to Northeye contingent, banners wielded at previous rallies proclaiming "Deport Illegal Migrants" and similar slogans were not in evidence, though a large Union Jack flag was held aloft. Could the two groups perhaps find common cause? Mark Legg, Trade Union Liaison Officer at the centre of the Stand up to Racism group, was adamant that they could not. "They [No to Northeye] wouldn't want 1,200 people coming in, no matter what housing was available. We're saying we would. That's the difference."

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HASTINGS TIDES

DATE	HIGH AND LOW TIDES				SUNRISE	SUNSET	MOON
FRI 28 JULY	L1:16am	H6:57am	L1:48pm	H7:30pm	5:17	8:49	
SAT 29 JULY	L2:31am	H8:13am	L3:13pm	H8:45pm	5:19	8:48	
SUN 30 JULY	L3:53am	H9:28am	L4:34pm	H9:54pm	5:20	8:46	
MON 31 JULY	L5:04am	H10:33am	L5:37pm	H10:54pm	5:21	8:45	
TUES 1 AUG	L6:04am	H11:29am	L6:31pm	H11:49pm	5:23	8:43	FULL
WEDS 2 AUG	L6:58am	H12:18pm	L7:23pm		5:24	8:42	
THURS 3 AUG	H0:41am	L7:51am	H1:07pm	L8:13pm	5:26	8:40	
FRI 4 AUG	H1:13am	L8:39am	H1:54pm	L9:01pm	5:27	8:38	
SAT 5 AUG	H2:24am	L9:22am	H2:39pm	L9:45pm	5:29	8:37	
SUN 6 AUG	H3:09am	L10:02am	H3:21pm	L10:26pm	5:30	8:35	
MON 7 AUG	H3:50am	L10:39am	H4:02pm	L11:07pm	5:32	8:33	
TUES 8 AUG	H4:32am	L11:18am	H4:47pm	L11:50pm	5:33	8:31	3rd Qtr
WEDS 9 AUG	H5:21am	L12:04pm	H5:41pm		5:35	8:30	
THURS 10 AUG	L0:43am	H6:24am	L1:03pm	H6:50pm	5:36	8:28	

* L= LOW TIDE H= HIGHTIDE For beach safety advice visit: nli.org/safety/beach-safety

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United Stay Put

Clear majority of full council rejects football stadium move

The projected move of Hastings United football club from Pilot Field to Tilekiln playing fields in Hollington is dead. It was given last rites at a meeting of the full Hastings Borough Council (HBC) last Wednesday. The council owns the freehold of both sites, and a report prepared by its Chief Executive Jane Hartnell, which was presented to cabinet on 5 June, had declared the move as “unviable”. Councillors from all sides of the political spectrum approved this conclusion.

The rejection was not universal. Conservative leader Cllr Andy Patmore argued that the borough's need for housing was paramount and that Pilot Field was “probably a good place to put it”. In 2018 the then majority Labour council had

voted in principle to allow house development there when the club's proposal was to move to a new stadium at Bulverhythe.

But both Baird ward councillors, Rob Cooke (Conservative) and Mike Turner (Labour) argued that Pilot Field was not a suitable place to build houses on. Cllr Cooke complained that the club had not entered into any consultation with the residents of “the most deprived area in the town”. Cllr Mike Turner accused the club's directors, who have a professional background in housing development, of “trying to get a prime site...[so as] to make as much money as they can”.

Cllr Lucien Fernando (UK Reform) questioned the sense of building a replacement stadium at Tilekiln with a capacity of only 1,950, less than half that of Pilot Field. He also claimed that the Pilot Field had originally been gifted to the council in 1922 for “recreational purposes” before being leased to the club. It should now be required to put the stadium there back in good repair in accordance with its lease obligations.

Labour cabinet member Cllr Andy Batsford admitted that the cabinet had originally expressed support for a new stadium at Tilekiln, but said that no sustainable business plan had been produced by the club.

Conservative councillor Matthew Beaver said that he was the only one of nine members of the council's planning committee who had voted against granting outline planning for the development of Pilot Field in June last year, and was concerned that the club might still use this permission to pursue development interests.

Cllr Simon Willis, summing up for Labour, suggested that wasn't a serious issue while the council retained its freehold interest. It had set the club four core terms in order to take its proposal forward: community consultation; a “sustainable and believable business case”; agreement of heads of terms; and the payment of a financial bond to safeguard the interests of the council and the people of Hastings – “Not one of those four was met”, he declared.

APPLICATION FOR A PREMISES LICENCE

This notice is to advise that on 19th day of July 2023

an application was made to HASTINGS BOROUGH COUNCIL for the premises known as

**More Choice
2a Cambridge Road
Hastings, TN34 1DJ**

Was made by:
Maheswari Annadurai

For the following licensable activities:
**Sale of Alcohol by Retail
(off the premises)**

**09:00 to 23:00
Monday to Sunday**

Any person wishing to make representations about this application should write to Hastings Borough Council, Head of Environment & Place, Muriel Matters House, Breeds Place, Hastings, TN34 3UY, or email Licensing@hastings.gov.uk within twenty eight consecutive days from the date of the application shown above.

The application can be viewed by pre-arranged appointment at our offices, during office hours. It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application & a person is liable to a fine of up to a maximum of £5,000 on summary conviction for the offence.

Dated this 19th day of July 2023

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Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) don't, they say, take this factor into account.

Paragraph 115 of The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that councils should aim to keep the number of telecommunications installations to a minimum consistent with the efficient operation of the network and that existing masts, buildings and other structures should be used unless the need for a new site has been justified.

However, paragraph 114 of the NPPF advises that planning decisions “should support the expansion of electronic communications networks”, and paragraph 118 states that local planning authorities must determine applications on planning grounds only. “They should not seek to prevent competition between different operators, question the need of an electronic communications system, or set out health safeguards different from the International Commission guidelines for public exposure.” All that an applicant has to do is to submit a pack of supporting information which includes a declaration of conformity with these guidelines.

Thus the planners are in effect limited to assessing the siting and appearance of proposed installations on the character and appearance of the area and on the use of an open space, then weighing any adverse effects against what it describes universally as “the social and economic benefits” provided by improved coverage and capacity for the local community.

Where a mast, even one much shorter in height and less obtrusive, has been in place for some years, applications have generally been granted. At Crowhurst Road, for instance, a 9-metre mast and cabinets had been in place for about 20 years on the grass verge outside Latch Cottages between the high-

way and the pavement. An 18-metre replacement was duly approved.

By contrast, the proposed installation of a freestanding BT Street Hub at Wellington Place was rejected by HBC Planning Service Manager Eleanor Evans as being “incongruous with the surroundings and harmful to the visual amenity of the surrounding streetscape”. It would also “harm the historic setting of Hastings Town Centre Conservation Area”.

Under current consideration are applications for 15-metre poles at Warrior Square Gardens (near the Queen Victoria statue) and on Battle Road (outside Wychnor Cottage).

Permission for an 18-metre pole in a similar position at Warrior Square was turned down last year, and it's difficult to see why the reduction of three metres should persuade HBC to reverse its view. A formal objection lodged by local resident Liz Bygrave, who has been attempting to co-ordinate opposition to the 5G roll-out across multiple locations, points out that the Hastings Planning Strategy EN1 document places “a presumption in favour of the conservation of heritage assets and their settings”.

The mast sought for Battle Road seems more likely to be approved, though there is already approval for another only 200 metres away on the roundabout outside Banatynes.

HBC planners have expressed a belief that the local population will gradually absorb the scenic changes. As they comment in relation to another application: “By their very nature, to be effective, masts are required to be taller than the surrounding structures (buildings and trees). Telecom masts are essential infrastructure within the street scene and have become established features in the UK built environment, much in the same way as pylons and wind turbines have become established landscape features.”



Pavilion at Horntye: what place in sports strategy?

Playing Pitch Strategy Document Still Awaited

Speaking in the Hastings Borough Council (HBC) debate concerning the future of Hastings United football club, Green party councillor Claire Carr called for a “proper new town-wide sports strategy”. It should, she said, include not only the issues of the football club, “particularly in relation to community and youth teams”, but also “arising from the possible changes at Horntye that impact cricket and hockey”.

That was a reference to the proposal of the Hastings and Rother Sports Trust to sell the cricket and hockey grounds at Horntye Park for housing development so as to finance prospective moves of both Hastings & St Leonards Priory Cricket Club and South Saxons

Hockey Club to enhanced facilities at Claremont School.

Conditional planning permission for this enhancement has been granted by Rother District Council, within whose territory the school is located. But an initial planning application to HBC for permission to turn the Horntye pitches into housing has been withdrawn because of challenges over the boundaries of the land at issue. The Sports Trust was then advised not to submit a fresh application until a new Playing Pitch Strategy document has been agreed between HBC and Rother as part of a new Local Plan policy affecting both councils' future planning decisions.

SPORT ENGLAND GUIDANCE

According to a spokesperson for HBC, the strategy has been put together “by a consultant team who followed specific Sport England guidance”. She referred to an “action plan” within it that “will inform priorities for leisure services”. A spokesperson for Rother confirmed at the beginning of this month that the document “has been approved by Sport England and the governing body [presumably the relevant cricket and hockey authorities]. It will be published on the Local Plan review pages of the council's website as soon as it has been approved by both councils”.

But when and how those approvals will be forthcoming from each is far from clear.

HBC told HIP back in April that progress was held up by the Rother local elections in May. The Rother spokesperson said at the end of June that “we expect [both approvals] in the next few weeks”. A further month on, it seems that Rother cabinet approval is still awaited, after which “public consultation” is intended.

At the HBC end, a spokesperson said that the document would not be going to either cabinet or full council. It has been circulated to “senior management at the council, Cllrs Barnett, Batsford and Evans”, but no date has been given for release.



NEWS

HASTINGS INDEPENDENT IS YOUR PAPER – USE YOUR VOICE...  HASTINGSINDEPENDENTPRESS

Travellers at Bay

HUGH SULLIVAN

Between 27 June and 10 July a group of Travellers camped for nearly two weeks at the Old Bathing Pool site in West St Leonards in 12 or 13 caravans. Their behaviour has upset local residents, who have called into question the responses of police and council authorities.

Bryan Fisher of West St Leonards Neighbourhood Forum says that a number of criminal and anti-social activities were reported to Sussex Police during the fortnight of the encampment. These included multiple incidents of shoplifting from the local supermarket, Premier Stores in Bexhill Road, indiscriminate driving of cars and racing of a trail bike on the promenade and path by the beach huts, as well as dumping used gas canisters and accumulating other rubbish.

'Vel' Gnanadivel, owner of Premier Stores, confirmed that groups of children were stealing from the shop quite openly. He says he reported several incidents to the police, having CCTV footage from which the identity of the offenders could be checked quite readily. "They didn't take any interest," he said.

"ALL VISITORS WELCOME"

The freehold of the Old Bathing Pool site is owned by Hastings Borough Council (HBC) but leased to prospective developers County Gate. It is not clear whose legal

responsibility it is currently to maintain or secure it. However, a spokesperson for the council said: "As a town, Hastings prides itself on welcoming all visitors. A substantial part of our income relies on visitors coming to our town. We treat Travellers in the same way we treat all our visitors."

Although no permission, either formal or informal, was given to the Travellers to set up camp on the site, according to the spokesperson, the site "was reviewed and checked daily". There were also "welfare checks" carried out by officers of East Sussex County Council (ESCC) which were shared with HBC.

"Travelling communities have protected rights as a minority group under the Equality Act and Human Rights Act," the HBC spokesperson added. "When considering enforcement action there needs to be significant damage, disruption or distress to the local area before the police can serve a section 61 notice."

LACK OF ALTERNATIVE SITES

A spokesperson for ESCC commented that the decision whether police powers are used to redirect or instruct Travellers to leave an unauthorised encampment "rests with the police". But a redirection could only have been to the council's transit site at Bridies Tan in Lewes, which it maintains "for temporary stopping". Only 7-8 spaces were available for caravans there at the time. The council has four permanent residential sites, but the spokesperson admitted that they "do not come available very often. The last one to become available was in May this year and

has now been allocated."

The police were no doubt aware of the lack of alternative provision in taking no enforcement action.

When the Travellers left on 10 July, moving on to another unauthorised site on the lower tier at Bulverhythe Recreation Ground, a five-person crew of HBC's street cleaners took several hours to clear the site. Asked what the cost of this was, the spokesperson said: "In the same way there is no mechanism for recovering costs incurred by visitors who leave rubbish on the beach, there is no mechanism in place for recovering the cost involved with clearing the rubbish left behind on the Old Bathing Pool. We are currently working on improving rubbish bin provision."

NATIONAL ISSUE

Bryan Fisher accepts that the problem is countrywide. "I believe a discussion is required at national level to prevent illegal encampments where a travellers camp exists within a local authority. It should not allow 'days of grace' but rather a quick-action eviction to deter the travellers from these illegal and unsocial occupations. I also feel, somehow, the Traveller community needs to realise their collective behaviour is to a large degree behind their dislike. If they co-existed better with others, and perhaps were even more aligned to sustainability and the environment, I am sure there would be less opposition to them."

As to the local issue, he has written to HBC leader Paul Barnett asking for an urgent meeting "to try and establish ways to protect the [Old Bathing Pool] site better...It is really sad that com-



Dave Young

munities need to prepare as if for a siege to protect their assets from abuse, and equally sad that Travellers make no attempt to co-exist with locals/visitors but rather intimidate them with their vehicles as they pass by. If the Travellers kept their site tidy, were quiet and well-behaved, I think local communities would be far more tolerant. As it is, they see a section of society using claims of being an oppressed minority to indulge in criminal and anti-social behaviour with impunity."

Coincidentally, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Sussex, Katy Bourne, issued a press release on 7 July promoting "ASB Awareness Week". The stated theme, *Know your Rights* is "about informing people of the help that is available from police and local authorities and to encourage victims of anti-social behaviour to report incidents...Sussex has been chosen as one of ten trailblazer sites for Immediate Justice which will see perpetrators swiftly repairing the damage and harm

The Government's Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, issued in 2015, defines Travellers as: "Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such."

Sections 61 and 62 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 empower the police to remove trespassers and their vehicles from any land without a court order. Return to the particular location within three months carries criminal sanctions.

Sections 77 and 78 of the same Act empower a local council to direct trespassers to leave land they are encamped upon, irrespective of ownership. However, the council needs to obtain a court order to enforce the direction if the trespassers don't leave voluntarily.

they have caused."

HIP talked to a spokesperson from the Traveller movement at travellermovement.org.uk who responded to the complaints from local residents by emphasising that while troublemakers exist in any group, they should not be seen as representative of the whole community. "It's important not to make sweeping generalisations and to look at incidents on an individual basis."

Icklesham Celebrates New Affordable Housing

On 14 July the community of Icklesham celebrated the completion of 15 new-built affordable homes on the edge of the village - 12 for social rent, three for shared ownership. All have been prioritised for people with a local connection to the parish, such as those working in the village, those with close

family in the area, or those who have previously lived there but were forced to move out because of a lack of affordable housing.

The land had been agricultural and was sold by local residents Eric and Wendy Hysted to Icklesham Parish Community Land Trust, then leased to Hastoe Housing Association to develop and manage the homes on its behalf. Hastoe has invested over £2.13 million in the development, named Orchard Close. There were further grants of £1.068 million from Homes England and £297,000 from Rother District Council. All homes have been built to a high standard of energy efficiency.

Works began on site in June 2021; the first house was completed in August 2022, and they are all now occupied.

Speaking at the celebration event, Geoff Foot, Chairman of the Land Trust, said: "For many years Icklesham Parish Council has been concerned at the dearth of local affordable housing due to rising local house prices. Younger families were having to leave the villages, or were having to live in unsuitable accommodation. We received over 500 bids for the houses, and a number of deserving applicants had to be turned down."

Orchard Close tenant, Libby Gibbons, said: "Where I lived before there were seven of us in a small three-bedroom house, and we were living on top of each other. Then me and my partner moved here, and our son was born a few weeks later. It's made a massive difference to our lives, having our own home, having lots of space and a garden. I love it."



Ribbon cutting at Orchard Close

Icklesham Parish CLT



“Crazy” Ticket Office Cut

PAUL MCLAUGHLIN

The Rail, Maritime and Transport Union (RMT) has launched a national campaign to fight plans by the train operating companies and the Government to close ticket offices across the rail network. The union warns that the plans would see the closure of over 1,000 ticket offices across the country and the loss of thousands of jobs.

At a lively demonstration organised by the local Green Party outside of Hastings Station last Tuesday (18 July), a large crowd gathered to protest and to make their views known on just how important it is to keep ticket offices open.

Jill White from St Leonards said the decision to close ticket offices would be disastrous for passengers, especially for those with disabilities

and the elderly who would be left particularly vulnerable.

VITAL

This view was echoed by Marisa McGreevy-Rose from West St Leonards. She believes ticket office staff are a vital part of the passenger experience as they ensure our railways are safe, secure and accessible. She said the loss of key station staff would be particularly difficult for blind people who rely on their help and support; without them, they just would not be able to travel.

Mike Turner from West Hill, a frequent train user, says it is virtually impossible to buy the cheapest ticket online and added that he has forgotten how many times ticket office staff have helped him buy the most appropriate and cheapest ticket for his journey.

Adele Bates of Warrior Square said the plans were further proof that profit was more important than people. She said the replacement of staffed ticket offices with ticket machines, “which invariably do not work properly”, was short-sighted and would leave train stations deserted and passengers extremely frustrated.

A second demonstration, this time organised by the Hastings and District Trades Union Council, took place outside Hastings Station last Saturday morning (22 July), addressed by Hastings Borough Council leader Paul Barnett. He told another enthusiastic crowd that “we all need to stand up and be counted if we want to save our vital public services.”

RESISTANCE IN RYE

The closure plans are also being resisted in neighbouring Rye. Kevin Boorman, the chair of the Marshlink community rail partnership, said the proposals to cut the staffing levels at Rye Station were “ludicrous”. He added “Rye is a busy tourist town, with large numbers of visitors arriving at weekends, both day trippers and staying visitors for Rye and Camber. To close early during the week is bad enough, but to have no staff in the station from Saturday afternoon until Monday morning was crazy”.

Helena Dollimore, the Labour Party candidate for the Hastings and Rye constituency, said there were “many people across Hastings and Rye who are very worried



Paul McLaughlin

about these proposals to close our ticket offices. Basic questions as to the impact on disabled passengers, on the elderly, on staff and on the roll-out of technology in stations have been left unanswered. And, to make matters worse, people have been given just 21 days to have their say. Railroading the plans through without consideration for disabled passengers, the elderly and others only risks exacerbating the managed decline of our rail network.”

Govia Thameslink Railway, which runs the Southern train operating company, carried out

what has been widely criticised as a cursory, limited three-week public consultation on its plans, which ended on 26 July.

Across the country, too, there has been strong criticism of the whole consultation process. Andy Burnham, the Mayor of Greater Manchester, along with his counterparts in other northern cities, has vowed to take legal action against all the train companies “if the consultation to close the majority of rail ticket offices is not halted”.

Unlike the trains, this story is likely to run and run.

Paul McLaughlin



Councillors and others outside Pumpouse

Sewage Leak: Pump Up the Volume

PAUL MCLAUGHLIN

The Pumpouse in Alexandra Park was packed last week (14 July) for a meeting to discuss the recent sewage pollution of the Old Roar Gill. There was a strong turn-out too from Hastings Borough councillors: six from Labour and three Greens were in attendance.

Myriam Lengliné from the local activist group, Sewage Contami-

nation in Alexandra Park & Old Roar Gill, spoke with passion about the sewage leaks which, she said, had turned the stream that flows into the Buckshole Reservoir into a “giant open sewer”. She claimed that the most recent leaks, which date back to mid-May, had “poisoned wildlife and left pet dogs suffering bouts of vomiting, diarrhoea and seizures.”

There was palpable anger from many of those in attendance at the lack of communication from both Southern Water, who are responsible for the sewage network within the park, and from the council, which owns the park. Both faced stinging criticism for their failure to act in an open and transparent manner in the face of what a number of people described as an “environmental and ecological disaster” with serious health and safety risks to children and animals. There were complaints that there were still no warning signs around the park and woods to warn visitors of the dangers.

Council leader Paul Barnett acknowledged the scale of the sewage leaks. He proposed setting up an on-going group to protect the Gill and called on local residents to join in and help the council to gather detailed information which could then be properly assessed to “discover who did what, when, and how this has impacted local ecology since May.”

Pointing to the number of local councillors present, he said the protection of the Gill was a major priority for the council and added that he and his colleagues “were all determined to hold Southern Water and the Environment Agency to account.”

DAMNING RESULTS

As if right on cue, Becca Horn from the Hastings and St Leonards Clean Water Action Group read out damning results of water samples taken from the Old Roar Gill which appear to contradict information presented by Sue Cobb, Southern Water’s head of Stakeholder Engagement.

In an email dated 11 July, Sue Cobb stated: “Following a report of a possible pollution in the Buckshole Reservoir area, a team attended on site last night. We tested in three different places including two surface water outfalls. A sample was also collected from the downstream watercourse and there were no issues found in any of the samples”.

However, water quality samples taken by the Clean Water Action Group on 12 July and tested at the Envirochem Analytical Laboratories Ltd in Fareham and paid for by local people, found “extremely high levels of E-Coli.” There were 8,800 cfu/100 ml (colony-forming units per 100 ml of water) against a bathing water standard set by the Environment Agency of up to 500 cfu/100 ml.

The Group believes the quantity levels of bacteria were the result of sewage pollution and they have urged the Environment Agency to “undertake a full, independent

investigation to determine the source.”

The Environment Agency publish a water quality data archive. The sampling figures for the “East Confluence by Tennis Courts” in the park taken on 29 June 2023 show extremely high levels for E-Coli and intestinal enterococci. There were 6,900 cfu/100 ml against a bathing water standard up to 185 cfu/100 ml. This suggests that there has been a serious discharge or, more likely, an on-going misconnection into the water course which joins through the culvert running under St Helens Road between the junctions at Ashford Road and at Dordrecht Way.

In the wake of these new figures, Cllr Heather Bishop has called for signage to be put up by the council to warn people to keep their dogs away from the water. She has also called on Southern Water to investigate another misconnection in the park.

It will be of interest to Paul Barnett and local residents to know that the detailed water quality information he wants help in gathering is freely available through the DEFRA data services platform on the Environment Agency Water Quality Archive.

To date, Southern Water have still not released any detailed water sampling data.



COMMUNITY

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Walking Home

Hastings Rental Health report on their latest fundraising effort

In the last issue of HIP, Hastings Rental Health Housing Co-op member Jess Luby wrote of our appeal for support before we launched our crowdfunder and loan requests to help us buy Gensing Manor and bring it into community ownership.

Our crowdfunder will be officially launched with an action by Sarah Gomes Harris, who is once again donning her purple Rental Health house to do a fundraising event. There will also be the opportunity to meet with lots of other co-operatives, discussing different approaches to setting them up. The advice will be invaluable. Sarah explains:

"The plan is to walk from one housing co-op to another every day for one month, which will take me around the UK, or as far as I can manage in one month!

"What's needed are lots of small donations rather than fewer big ones, so that we don't have to hoop-jump or engage in excessive tick-boxing or compromise to make up obscene returns. We have to make these homes affordable homes. And they have to be affordable for everyone.

"Fundraising for a property this size and cost is a big undertaking, so we need to match the scale of need with a much greater level of awareness-raising. You might think we should aim lower, or cheaper, but at this point it really makes no difference. All property and land is expensive and hard to come by in this climate, so we may as well aim for something that fits our needs as a community of organisers, a place that will allow us to offer more to those in need, as well as space to work, hire out and grow food."

Sarah will begin her walk by heading west. Her first co-operative stop will be the St Leonards-based Walden Pond, then off to Lewes, Brighton, Southsea, Southampton, Salisbury, Frome, Bath, Bristol, Newport, Stroud and up to Birmingham, with a short stop off at the Radical Routes gathering in the Peak District, where co-ops meet every few months to network, skill share and run workshops.

"Hopefully there will still be enough public footpaths," she says. "Inevitably, walking between these co-ops dressed as a house won't just be about the fundraising. I imagine some routes will be treacherous and

much of the land privately owned and inaccessible. It will highlight just how much land has been taken from the citizens of this country due to inheritance or arbitrary land-grabbing centuries ago; land that could be used for people struggling to find somewhere affordable to live and at the mercy of opportunistic landlords and so-called 'developers'."

She will then head a bit further north before coming back down the east side of the UK. This will set a target of walking between 6-10 hours per day, depending on the distance between co-ops. It's definitely ambitious, and will require a lot of stamina and cooperation from her smart phone sat nav.

Taking this time off unpaid is not an option for Sarah – like many of us, she needs to cover her rent, bills and food, so she will be storryboarding in the evenings for an animation she is producing in collaboration with a PhD student. Their project is about democratising access to academia – the type of work that is key to help create a functioning and fair society with the space and time for inquisition, curiosity and creativity. The type of work she is only able to do while her rent is affordable.

"Imagine if everyone could afford their accommodation. We would all be contributing in satisfying and useful ways to our soci-



Sarah Gomes Harris, who previously ran a half-marathon in the purple Rental Health house.

ety and really cultivating the type of world we want to live in.

"We need to get away from this treadmill mentality. This is the only thing that trickles down from the top. Aspiration to highly-paid jobs, working mad hours, buying a home you can barely afford, exhausting yourself to keep on top of that, buying another home to rent out so you can cut yourself

some slack and retire early while living off the profit of another person's grind and sweat, putting someone else on that treadmill to pay for your relaxation. It's an unsustainable system. Let's all live affordably and comfortably. This is possible with organisation and collective investment."

As she can do her work anywhere, Sarah was the best person to take on the fundraiser (plus she is already familiar with her mobile house!). The rest of the co-op will be busy behind their screens working on a business plan, connecting with potential collaborators and supporters, and HBC, who are looking into the viability of supporting us.

If you'd like to sign up to support the crowdfunder so that you can help us get off to a good start the moment it goes live, you can do so here. We need to hit the ground running, so there is enough momentum to hit the target we need. Just use the following link (the last print issue had an error, this is the correct link!) bit.ly/HRHCCrowdfund

■ Look out for Hastings Rental Health Co-op's purple house as they set off from Gensing Manor at 9am Monday 7 August, and on their return 3 September for a little gathering and perhaps a little nap in Gensing Gardens.

Samaritans at 60

Hastings and Rother Samaritans reflect on their work 60 years on

It's 1963. The Beatles are no.1 in the charts, the first episode of *Dr Who* has just been screened, the Great Train Robbery has hit the headlines, Ford Anglia is on the production lines, and beer costs 10p a pint. After the longest, snowiest winter in decades, in a small wind-rocked caravan parked in Glyne Gap, sits a Samaritans volunteer. The black Bakelite phone rings and she picks up the receiver and says, "Samaritans. Can I help you?"

Fast forward 60 years. There is no Top 40, *Dr Who* is a woman, Ford produce electric cars and beer is £4.39 a pint. The caravan is gone but in a converted terraced house in Hastings sits a Samaritans volunteer. The telephone-line rings, she presses a button, speaks into the microphone of her headset and says, "Samaritans. Can I help you?"

In those 60 years since the humble beginnings of Hastings and

Rother Samaritans, the world has changed, but the commitment of Samaritans volunteers has not. The need for people in distress to talk to someone has not. The service Samaritans offer has not. They believe that empathic listening in confidence, without pressing judgement, opinion or advice, is of great significance and can truly help people find their own solutions and move forward.

This year, the local branch is celebrating its 60 birthday since those days in the chilly caravan at Glyne Gap. The present branch in St Andrews Square is now paperless, high tech and digital, and has some 65 active volunteers who give freely of at least four hours of their time each week, in both day and night shifts, so they can be part of the 24/7, 365 days a year service that the national charity offers to those going through tough times.

Why do they do it? One of the longest serving branch volunteers (nearly 40 years!) said, "I hope I've made a difference. We may not



have solved anything, but we can be there when someone is at their lowest, when they feel they have no one they can turn to who will listen. Then after talking, there's a chink of light, and they can see a way forwards".

60 years of the amazing commitment and dedication of the Hastings and Rother Samaritans is truly worth celebrating – look out for the giant birthday cake in Hastings Carnival!

Bonfire Society Auction

Hastings Borough Bonfire will be holding their now annual Auction on Thursday 3 August 2023 at the Hastings & St Leonards Angling Association on Marine Parade (by the Miniature Railway Station). All money raised on the night will go towards this year's grand event on the 14 October.

Hastings Borough Bonfire Society members work hard to raise money throughout the year in order to put on this big event for the town; however, it would not be possible without the support of local companies and individuals who help us with valuable products and services.

The Society would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who has donated to the auction, with almost 60 fantastic lots available. Lots include:

- Revive Exterior Cleaning (previously GWC cleaning) – a £500 cleaning package
- R. Hawes Tree Care, who generously offered two hours of their time with a three-man team of Arborists
- £100 flooring voucher from Kiley's Karpets
- a rare opportunity for two people (18+) to learn how to make horseshoes with Mark the Farrier from the BBC 2 TV series *Love in the Countryside*
- And many more, including vouchers for local shops and businesses, an overnight B&B stay, pieces of Hastings Bonfire history, beautifully handcrafted homewares, and local paintings.

Special thanks also goes out to the Hastings & St Leonards Angling Association for hosting this event.

■ Reserve bids may be made on any item, if you are unable to attend on the night. Bids must reach the fundraising team at fundraising-captain@hbbs.info before the start of the auction. Please visit hbbs.info for more details.

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COMMUNITY



Hiroshima Day Commemoration

JOHN ENFER previews this year's Hiroshima Day Commemoration for Hastings Against War

Sunday 6 August will see the annual Hiroshima Day commemoration in Hastings. The event has been held each year by Hastings Against War (HAW) since 2007.

Nuclear weapons have become a hot topic since Russia invaded Ukraine in February last year, prompting fears that the conflict could spiral into a nuclear conflagration between east and west. Recently Russia's president Putin announced that 'tactical' nuclear weapons had been sent to Belarus, a country bordering Ukraine, and militarily allied with Russia.

Meanwhile the US has its own 'tactical' nuclear weapons sited at bases in five NATO member countries – Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey.

The atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 remain the only occasions when nuclear weapons have been used in war. An estimated 185,000 people died as a consequence of the bombs dropped by the US air force (USAF) on the Japanese cities. The victims included Koreans who had been forced to come to Japan as labourers, and American prisoners of war.

The official justification for the bombings has always been that they were essential to defeat Japan and bring about the end of World

War Two. As early as September 1945 Major-General Curtiss E LeMay of the USAF said, "the atomic bomb had nothing to do with the end of the war at all." Britain's wartime leader Winston Churchill, though he didn't oppose the use of the bombs, wrote: "It would be a mistake to suppose that the fate of Japan was settled by the atomic bomb. Her defeat was certain before the first bomb fell."

Each year those killed in 1945 are remembered in ceremonies around the world as people affirm such nuclear attacks should never be repeated.

In past years the ceremony in Hastings has involved launching traditional Japanese floating lanterns on the main lake in Alexandra Park, but increased restrictions since the pandemic have meant that over the last three years the lanterns have been placed round the edge of the water, becoming more conspicuous after sunset.

This year, once again HAW is encouraging people to bring their own lanterns. Instructions on how to make them are available on the HAW website (hastingsagainstawar.org). For those who don't bring lanterns, there will be spares available on the night.

■ *The event will begin at 8.30pm on Sunday August 6 (with people gathering from 8.15pm) at the lake nearest the war memorial, at the south end of Alexandra Park. All are welcome.*

Hastings Puts Out Welcome Mat

Hastings' branch of Amnesty International celebrates the town's attitude to refugees

A huge welcome mat was placed at the Hastings Museum and Gallery and the Hastings Borough Council Offices to show support for people seeking asylum.

The 5ft by 3ft mat inscribed "Refugees Welcome" was placed on Friday 14 July 2023 to show support to people fleeing conflict and persecution. Hastings Community of Sanctuary (HCoS) and local Amnesty International UK (Amnesty) supporters gathered with several councillors including leader Paul Barnett and deputy leader Maya Evans.

The UK government's latest immigration bill aims to shut down the UK's asylum system and is damaging to refugee rights globally. Following the UK Court of Appeal's recent and vital ruling that the government's plan to send people seeking asylum on a one-way trip to Rwanda is unlawful, Amnesty is calling for the government to scrap the current immigration bill speeding through Parliament.

Amnesty and Community of Sanctuary activists highlight the numerous unjust issues in the asylum system that need to be abandoned – from the draconian immigration bill to the chronic backlog of cases that need to be processed, and the use of former military barracks and de-commissioned cruise ships that the government plans to use for people fleeing violence and persecution.

Despite the government's divisive policies and rhetoric, local Amnesty members and Hastings Community of Sanctuary made it clear that Hastings welcomes people fleeing conflict and persecution.

The negative comments and headlines from ministers are being used to distract from the urgent need to decide people's asylum claims fairly and efficiently, which the UK government is still failing to do.

The impact and harms of the latest immigration bill will fundamentally undermine the UK's asylum system, damage refugee rights globally and is a blatant breach of the 1951 UN Refugee Convention which the UK played an important part in creating.

Amnesty International Hastings & Rye joins Hastings Community of Sanctuary in calling "for a just and fair asylum system based on human rights, the UK's international obligations and treating asylum-seekers as human beings, respecting their humanity and dignity. We believe that detention camps are not the answer. We believe in *Communities, Not Camps*."



Salvation Army Hosts Employability Fair

The Salvation Army in Hastings joined forces with a range of organisations at a special event to help jobseekers find work recently.

The Hastings Citadel branch of the church and charity held a community fair at St Andrew's Square in the town to mark Employability

Day, an event designed to raise awareness of the issues confronting job seekers and help them break down the barriers that can lead to meaningful employment. Organisations that set up stalls included East Sussex College, Southern Housing, the town

branch of the Job Centre Plus.

Lieutenant Debbie-Anne Hogarth, Hastings Citadel leader, said: "We have had such positive feedback from people and would like to do the same again next year. Partnership working is incredibly important in order to serve our community the best way we can."

Jack Cox is project coordinator for i-Rock, a support service for 14-to-25-year-olds. He added: "We were warmly welcomed and made to feel at home [...] Essentially, the young person I attended with arrived nervous and unsure, and an hour later he left happy, hopeful and with a new sense of purpose for the future."

The Salvation Army believes that better access to employment support is the key to tackling poverty and in the past 12 months has helped 35,000 people across the UK and Ireland with job support. 10,000 of those have received more substantial support towards employment, with 42.9% of that group gaining employment.

HASTINGS' PARKS RETAIN GREEN FLAG AWARDS

Hastings Borough Council is delighted that Alexandra Park, Hastings Country Park, and St Leonards Gardens have retained Green Flag status for another year.

The Green Flag Award scheme is managed by environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy under licence from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The award recognises and rewards well-managed parks and green spaces and sets the benchmark standard for the management of green spaces across the United Kingdom and around the world.

Cllr Ali Roark, lead for Environment at Hastings Borough Council, said, "I want to say a huge thank you to everyone involved [...] from the council's

Parks team to local volunteers and park users who take their litter home and report issues to us. This fantastic achievement is a testament to all your hard work and dedication."

Keep Britain Tidy's Green Flag Award Scheme Manager Paul Todd MBE, added, "Alexandra Park, Hastings Country Park, and St Leonards Gardens are vital green spaces for the community in Hastings, bringing people together and providing opportunities to lead healthy lifestyles. The staff and volunteers do so much to ensure that it maintains the high standards of the Green Flag Award and everyone involved should feel extremely proud of their achievement."

■ *A full list of Green Flag Award-winning parks and green spaces is available at keepbritaintidy.org.*



COMMUNITY

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A Garden Full of Cultural Delights

JOHN ENFER

It will be all-change with this year's *Garden Full of Cultural Delights* with the popular event moving to a new venue for the first time. Since 2010 it has always taken place in St Leonards Gardens, but with Hastings Council in the process of selling the Lodge (the building that stands at the entrance to St Leonards Gardens and which has always provided the power for the event) it was decided to switch to a new location this year. The new venue will be Concordia Hall & Garden in Church Road, St Leonards.

If the setting will be different, the spirit of the event will be familiar to the many hundreds of people who have enjoyed it over the past 13 years. It has an international flavour in both music and food and brings together performers from

across a range of different styles. This year's performers include the Amber Leaf Band which, in their own words specialise in "world music with original twists". *Polanco* will play for the first time at the event, a band which draws on *Klezmer* music, a lively folk style from Eastern Europe and beyond. Hastings' own Hayley Savage will play songs of a very different kind: the alt country and folk artist has an album and a couple of EPs under her belt and packs a real punch with her vocal range.

The Boathouse Theatre Group will also make their debut at the event. The group provides an opportunity for local people with learning difficulties to shine through song, dance and drama. Marcela, a Romanian singer, will be yet another new face at the event, though stalwarts of the Garden of Delights – *Gizmo* – will

Tim Miller



Picture features Acromax from a previous 'Garden of Delights'

be on hand again: the kids' choir have sung at every event since 2010. Bringing a touch of Ceilidh

to the afternoon will be Celtic Swing who have set many feet a-dancing over the years and

brought the Garden of Delights to a stirring climax last year.

Special mention must go to the Bexhill Ukrainians, who will be performing while their country is engulfed in conflict, and will bring a taste of their culture to St Leonards. Their performance will come on the back of a rapturously received appearance at the De La Warr Pavilion during Refugee Week.

In addition to the entertainment there will be refreshments and children's activities available, as well as community stalls and a raffle.

The Garden Full of Cultural Delights is organised by the Hastings and Rother Interfaith Forum. They wish to acknowledge the support of the Magdalen and Lasher Charity, East Sussex Police and the Isabel Blackman Foundation, all of which have contributed funds to the event.

■ The Garden will take place on Sunday 6 August from 1-5pm in Concordia Hall and garden, Church Rd, St Leonards TN37 6HB. The event is free to enter.

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Ann-Marie after a flight with Aerobility

Disabled Woman Earns Flying Scholarship

A 35-year-old woman from Hastings has learnt the basics of flying after being awarded a scholarship by the disabled flying charity Aerobility. Ann-Marie 'Az' Baldwin, who is diagnosed with ADHD and autism, said: "I applied for a schol-

arship because I love aircraft and I am always looking up when planes go over. I didn't know that it would ever be an option to fly."

Aerobility is a UK charity which changes lives by providing anyone, with any disability, access to the

magic and wonder of flight. Az explained that the experience has given her a great deal of newfound confidence, "I didn't think my application would go anywhere because my whole life things haven't always gone the way I wanted. I seem to fail at a lot of things. But I just thought – I have nothing to lose."

"I have now started learning to drive (after a 10-year break) just so I can get to Aerobility to fly easier. It has also given me more drive and ambition. I've stopped writing myself off all the time. My motto used to be, 'If you don't try, you can't fail' but I don't think that anymore. I feel like I've got to try."

Ann-Marie is also joined by 'Pluffy', her soft toy penguin, on every flight she takes. She says, "I've realised I'm happiest when I'm flying. You can't beat that feeling."

Mike Miller-Smith, CEO at Aerobility says: "We offer scholarships to ensure anyone can fly with Aerobility, we know how participating in aviation changes lives and we want as many people as possible to experience that. We can only do this because of the generosity of our donors and supporters, such as Boeing, so we thank them very much indeed for making this possible for Ann-Marie."

■ To find out more about flying charity Aerobility, please visit aerobility.com



School Refusers

A Hastings-based teacher reflects on academy chain schools

People are very sensitive about labels these days. Take to social media any day, and you'll find people arguing about the language you should or should not use around sex, class, race, disability – any category humans can fall into, really.

When I was a kid, there were 'special' school students who were called 'maladjusted'. I don't know if that term is still in use but I suspect it would make sense to academy companies' system designers. A lot of what those companies do revolves around something that looks horribly like behaviourism to me – the notion of adjusting the people to fit the system you've created, rather than designing for humans in all their variety. You certainly hear the phrase 'behaviour management' a lot, and most teachers will tell you they have detailed instructions on how to deal with 'inappropriate behaviour' – to the extent that there's very little leeway for your average teacher to make intelligent, per-

sonalised responses to trouble in the classroom.

CONSEQUENCES

A popular system in academies is the 'consequences' table. You'll hear teachers punctuating lesson delivery with cries of "C1, Darren!", "C3, Penelope!" It's a version of the USA criminal justice system's 'three strikes and you're out'. C1 and C2 are generally just warning shots, 3 and 4 will be things like detention, isolation or exclusion. To me, there are two huge problems with this. The first is a headache for the teacher, and for any of the kids who like a quiet life. It's an insurance system for mischief-makers. There are 30 kids in a class, and each has two opportunities to disrupt the lesson before serious consequences kick in. In total, that gives leeway for 60 disruptions per hour. One a minute.

The second is what can happen to troubled students. Consequences generally escalate from "See me after the lesson" through detention and isolation to exclusion. Exclusion can come in the form of a week's suspension from school,

a 'school to school' (which has had some of the rowdier kids on a tour of the town's academies) to permanent expulsion. It's one thing having a system of sanctions available to teachers, it's another to create a sort of escalator of consequences, that leads a kid who's out of sorts – perhaps due to troubles at home, or relationship problems – to step on the escalator of sanctions. That in itself is unsettling and in turn can exacerbate the very reasons they have ended up being punished.

CARROTS AND STICKS

The purpose of profit-based companies is to make money. Academy companies make profit by delivering what the government has asked for – bums on seats and good GCSE results. The problem with delivering services like education via a profit system is that the motivation of the company is not human. A local authority school would be staffed and managed by people whose goal was happy, successful teachers and students. Some might have been more successful than others, but that was their goal. Although academy companies enthuse about happy successful staff and students, what

Daniel Kebede
 1m · 🌐

Today's news:
 - 700,000 pupils in schools at risk of collapse. Death/Injury likely.
 - Nurses report children so hungry they're being hospitalised.
 Children aren't suffering because there are teacher strikes. There are teacher strikes because children are suffering.

Social media post, 28.06.2023 Daniel Kebede is the general Secretary of the National Education Union

they spend their energy on is those quantifiable results – high attendance figures, high percentage of GCSE results – and all too often, those results can be attained by ushering 'difficult' (maladjusted?) kids out of the school, or dissuading 'high risk' students from trying for too many GCSEs. If they are not entered for many exams then there is less risk of their low grades affecting the whole school's examination success.

If I were to pick out one thing that turned me off academy companies above all else, it's their attempts at attendance 'carrots'. Most schools have 'pride' or some other virtue-points system that works like supermarket loyalty cards, except that there is what kids perceive as a deeply unfair league of application. A child who does 'wrong' things that mess up the school's stats will be awarded points daily for succeeding in turning up for a lesson or two. A kid who's no trouble would have to produce a degree-level piece of homework to get one, because no-one's too concerned about them.

And then there's the excruciating Powerpoints – in assembly, or in the morning 'tutor group', there will be excited little videos that look like game shows or holiday camp jingles which attempt to ramp up suspense and excitement over things like which class, or which student, achieved 100% attendance last week. It's not really the Powerpoints themselves that are unendurable. It's the expression of long-term endurance on the faces of both staff and pupils while the videos go through their entirely unconvincing rain-bow-flash, fanfare-filled ritual.

SO WHO ARE THE 'SCHOOL REFUSERS'?

Maybe they have a low exasperation threshold but most often, the 'refusers' seem to be the kids who were the target of bullies' 'C1 and C2' disruption opportunities, or kids whose toleration is low due to problems at home, or personal challenges such as ASD or ADHD, but there are two other kinds of school refusers that we should also urgently be thinking about.

FOUR ACES IS BAD

School staff training is full of information and procedural advice about Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). The category includes serious illness, being a victim of bullies, of sexual abuse or domestic violence, family break-ups, hunger and homelessness. The official advice is that four ACEs is enough to permanently derail a person's education and career path, so the aim of schools (institutions that are largely expected to stand in for our much-depleted social services these days) is to ensure that no child suffers four ACEs. The problem of course, especially for a child from a chaotic household, is that those C4s (exclusions, school-to-schools, expulsions) tend to create an upheaval at home and at school that is close to being an ACE in itself, or if it isn't, could easily lead to one.

THE PATIENCE OF SAINTS

The other category of school refusers we should be considering are teachers. Is anybody applying their attention to why 'teachers are getting younger'? This isn't the long sought-after miracle of reversing entropy. This is teachers getting out of the profession as soon as ever they can. A recent report stated that 1 in 11 teachers left the profession last year.

Most education professionals these days see their stint in front of a class of thirty rather like young men used to see national service. It's an experience, it's great on your CV but heck, you wouldn't want to make a life out of it. Perhaps the group of school-refusers that is causing most of the trouble in school consists of teachers. Perhaps we need more patience, more wisdom – more maturity – in the classroom, and perhaps academy systems just don't lend to that kind of behaviour, and therefore we don't have many teachers over 30.

If society has now decided that 'maladjusted' is not a category of child but a slur, perhaps we should consider making the same decision about 'school refusers'. They aren't a type of person. They are a logical consequence of a school system that isn't a good fit for most humans – students or teachers.



HEALTH

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Lucas Immesi



Rod Morris



From Grieving to Healing

How 5Rhythms Dance saved my life

EMMA LEECH

I was a young woman in my early twenties in love with a musician, a guitarist called Ray Jeffery. Like so many young rock'n'roll free spirits, he had a dark addiction to drugs: heroin. The twisted path like a vine weed wrapped itself deep into our heart and minds, taking over our life.

Sadly Ray didn't overcome his struggle with the drug, and he died from an overdose, a day before going into rehab. It was 1990. My life

turned on its axis never to be the same again, the trauma and grief spiralling me out of control, alcohol and rock music drowning out and numbing the pain of losing my soul mate, best friend and first love.

As a lost soul seeking to heal, I ended up in the US, where I hitchhiked my way from New Orleans to Texas, California and Las Vegas. Following my love of blues guitar, and rock'n'roll, it was a road trip that would test my survival instincts to the core, meeting street musicians, escaping drug dens,

hitching rides from alcoholic truck drivers into Texan deserts: feeling like I was in a Tarantino movie.

On my return three months later, I walked into a shop in Teddington High Street where I got into conversation with the owner, a wonderful woman, called Angela. Her shop was an oasis of calm and spirit, selling everything from djembe drums to healing crystals. The rainbow clothes on display contrasted with mine – I always dressed in black. We talked openly; I told her of my grief, and she asked me if I'd heard of a dance healer called Gabrielle Roth.

"No," I replied.

But her name stuck with me... and I was to meet her a year later when she came to London from

NYC to teach a class in 5Rhythms - of which she was the founder.

I'd always danced, danced freely; it was a place I felt the most relaxed. I was never confident with the social banter; the dance floor was where I felt at home. But this dance was different, I walked in to over 200 people in Battersea Arts where Gabrielle Roth was guiding us into deep expression. Her Jamaican drummer providing us with the tribal beats that rocked us deep into our bones.

That's when I felt safe, held by the drums, seen, free to be real, to be myself fully in all my heartache. Suddenly all the pain held inside had a place to pour itself, into the big wide-open compassionate arms of the great mystery, the dance itself. It took a while to overcome my self-consciousness, but once I started moving, and with the masterful guidance of Gabrielle Roth, I was soon being danced by something so much bigger, and 'being danced' was deeply healing.

From that moment in 1991, I followed Gabrielle Roth for twenty years, studying with her to overcome my grief, before becoming a teacher of her 5Rhythms practice myself. I've now been dancing and teaching for over 30 years. It has become my life path to bring movement to humanity to offer space to explore what it is to be a human being. A healing art.

There is much written about 5Rhythms, from the organisation website it is described as: "A dynamic movement practice – a practice of being in your body – that ignites creativity, connection, and community." *5rhythms.com*. It goes on: "While a seemingly simple process, the 5Rhythms practice

facilitates deep and unending explorations, moving the dancer beyond self-imposed limitations and isolation into new depths of creativity and connection."

Each of the Rhythms offers a different quality of energy that opens up a dance that is fluid, fiery, edgy, wild, jazzy and zen. In name, the five rhythms are: Flowing, Staccato, Chaos, Lyrical and Stillness.

No steps to learn, improvised, spontaneous dances are unveiled. The self-consciousness is overcome by giving our fascination over to our body's movement language. Every dance is unique, we dive into the unknown mystery that reveals us to ourselves in our diversity, there is nothing that can't be danced, a safe place to study what it is to 'be' a human being.

Learning to live with grief is one thing, moving on is another. As part of that journey I am making a film documentary with Rod Morris, an award-winning local film maker, exploring grief, loss and hope: the aspect of hope is Ray's guitar (handmade by Tony Zemaitis, who made guitars for the likes of Keith Richards and David Gilmour) which had until now been shut away in its case like a coffin. The guitar is now being played again for the first time since his passing, and I dance to the music it plays. That music is supplied by fellow guitarists who tune in to the instrument and play from their hearts.

■ *The production costs are being crowdfunding to enable the film to be completed. If you resonate with the story and would like to donate, please follow the link indiegogo.com/projects/let-it-play.*

Can't get through to your GP & need a prescription?
Minor injury & dread going to the Emergency Department?

Evening & weekend appointments available

62 George Street, Hastings
01424 319976

sayhello@satinhealthcare.co.uk
www.satinhealthcare.co.uk

 **Satin**
Healthcare

Minor surgery - cyst, wart, mole &
seborrhoeic keratosis removal
Steroid joint injections
Intravenous vitamin injections
Aesthetics

Ear wax removal
Minor illness & injury
Prescriptions
Home visits
****New** Blood tests**



The HIP List

Your Pull
Out Guide
To What's
Happening
In Hastings

Want your event listed?
Contact us now
Ian Greensmith (music),
Nadine Hayward (art,
cinema, theatre &
performance), Hugh
Sullivan (sport) and Rod
Webb (events, classes)
on listings@yourhip.co.uk

MUSIC

Friday 28 July

William the Conqueror

De La Warr Pavilion,
Bexhill, 4.00pm

McNiff's Folk Sundowner

The Jenny Lind,
High St, 7.00pm

Why Patterns + Rustorm

+ Lazarus Lake plus DJs

The Pig, White Rock, 8.00pm

Rebeca Ortega

Flamenco Company

Kino-Teatr, Norman Rd, 7.30pm

Bliss Music Open Mic

Anchor Inn, George St, 8.00pm

Jez Hellard and The

Djukella Orchestra

The Jenny Lind,
High St, 8.30pm

Saturday 29 July

You Win Again: The

Magic of the Bee Gees

White Rock Theatre, 7.30pm

Hastings Reggae Festival:

UB40 featuring Ali Cook

+ Reggae Roast featuring

Natty Campbell + General

Levy + The Marley Revival

The Oval, 12noon

Seafront Session: DJ

Allan Funki Francis

The Albion, George St, 3.00pm

Back in the Garage –

A Night Celebrating Joe

Strummer and The Clash

with The Lone Groover +

Comrade X + DJ Ray Gange

1200 Postcards, Queens

Rd, 7.00pm

Laundry Day Club Night

The Piper, Norman Rd, 9.00pm

Vexed

The Carlisle, Pelham St, 9.00pm

Silent Disco

The Brass, Havelock St 10.00pm

Sunday 30 July

The Rebel Gentlemen

The Stag, All Saints St, 5.00pm

Heathen Apostles

+ Frank From Blue Velvet

The Pig, White Rock, 6.30pm

Vinyl Night

The Jenny Lind, High St, 7.00pm

Vernon Jane

The Piper, Norman Rd, 8.00pm

Tuesday 1 August

Irish Night

The Albion, George St, 8.30pm

Traditional Folk Session

The Stag, All Saints St, 8.30pm

Wednesday 2 August

Open Mic

The Carlisle, Pelham St, 7.00pm

Open Mic with James

& Jules

Tin Tins, Robertson St, 8.00pm

Jam Night

Pissarro's, South Terrace, 8.00pm

Americana Session

The Stag, All Saints St, 8.00pm

Pram Race After Party

The Brass, Havelock St, 11.00pm

Thursday August

Live Jazz: The Jazz

Organisation plus Special

Guest Stuart Jackaman

(Guitar)

The NUR, Robertson St, 8.00pm

Open Mic with James & Jules

The Pig, White Rock, 8.00pm

Lord Jasper The Reluctant

Hippy Presents the

Blues + Guests

The Royal Standard, East

Beach St, 8.00pm

Shanty Night with

Completely Scuppered

The Jenny Lind, High St, 8.30pm

Friday 4 August

McNiff's Folk Sundowner

The Jenny Lind, High St, 7.00pm

Big Blue

Pissarro's, South Terrace, 8.30pm

Saturday 5 August

Factory

The Piper, Norman Rd, 8.00pm

Sunday 6 August

Soul Jazz Sunday Hosted

by DJ Lee with Guest

Selector Mike Delpeache

1200 Postcards, Queens

Rd, 3.30pm

Vinyl Night

The Jenny Lind, High St, 7.00pm

Tuesday 8 August

Albion Skiffle Company

The Albion, George St, 8.30pm

Traditional Folk Session

The Stag, All Saints St, 8.30pm

Wednesday 9 August

Open Mic with James & Jules

Tin Tins, Robertson St, 8.00pm

Jam Night

Pissarro's, South Terrace, 8.00pm

Thursday 10 August

Berth of the Cool - Jazz

DJs: Jo Wallace, Ashley

Beedle, Ben Thompson

& Herbie Greensmith

White Rock Hotel, White

Rock, 7.00pm

Live Jazz: The Jazz

Organisation plus Special

Guest Daniel McConkey (Sax)

The NUR, Robertson St, 8.00pm

Open Mic with James & Jules

The Pig, White Rock, 8.00pm

Lord Jasper The Reluctant

Hippy Presents the

Blues + Guests

The Royal Standard, East

Beach St, 8.00pm

Shanty Night with

Completely Scuppered

The Jenny Lind, High St, 8.30pm

CINEMA

Friday 28 July

Psychomania

Electric Palace, High St, 7.30pm

Saturday 29 July

Under the Volcano

Electric Palace, High St, 7.30pm

Sunday 30 July

Local Hero

Electric Palace, High St, 11.00am

Tuesday 1 August

Cinema on the Pier: Jaws

Hastings Pier, 6.00pm

Wednesday 2 August

Cinema on the Pier:

Frozen (sing-a-long)

Hastings Pier, 6.00pm

Thursday 3 August

Grandad and the Pier

(+short film The Artist

and the Machine)

Electric Palace, High St,

11.00am, 7.30pm

Cinema on the Pier: Mamma Mia

Hastings Pier, 6.00pm

Friday 4 August

Sculptural Rituals

(experimental short films

+ performance by musical

artist Aylin Leclaire)

Electric Palace, High St, 7.30pm

Indiana Jones and the

Dial of Destiny

Kino-Teatr, Norman Rd,

3.00pm, 7.30pm

Saturday 5 August

Barbie

Kino-Teatr, Norman Rd,

3.00pm, 7.30pm

Sunday 6 August

Orlando

Electric Palace, High St

Barbie

Kino-Teatr, Norman Rd, 5.00pm

Tuesday 8 August

Cinema on the Pier:

The Lost Boys

Hastings Pier, 6.00pm

Wednesday 9 August

Cinema on the Pier: Toy Story 2

Hastings Pier, 6.00pm

Barbie

Kino-Teatr, Norman Rd,

3.00pm, 7.30pm

Thursday 10 August

Full Time

Electric Palace, High St,

11.00am, 7.30pm

Cinema on the Pier: Grease

Hastings Pier, 6.00pm

Oppenheimer

3.00pm

Barbie

7.30pm

Kino-Teatr, Norman Rd

Sussex Exchange

Queensway – for film listings go to:

cinema.thesussexexchange.co.uk

Odeon Hastings

Queens Rd - for film listings go to:

odeon.co.uk/cinemas/hastings

PERFORMANCE

Friday 28 July

Rebeca Ortega

Flamenco Company

Kino-Teatr, Norman Rd, 7.30pm

Blue Blood or How to

Kill Your Way to the Top

(Hastings Fringe)

Stables Theatre, The Bourne, 7.30pm

Saturday 29 July

David Dale

Forbidden Fruit, Grand

Parade, 9.30pm

Havisham (Hastings Fringe)

Stables Theatre, The Bourne, 7.30pm

Sunday 30 July

Hastings Philharmonic

Orchestra + Choir (+Visiting

Choirs from Freiburg)

De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill, 7pm

Bowler Crab Theatre Company:

The Two Gentlemen of Verona

Manor Barn, Bexhill, 3.00pm

Monday 31 July

The ParkinSongsters

St John's Church, Upper Church

Rd, Hollington, 3.00pm

Thursday 3 August

School of Rock

De La Warr Pavilion,

Bexhill, 1.30pm, 7.00pm

Friday 4 August

School of Rock

De La Warr Pavilion,

Bexhill, 1.30pm, 7.00pm

Saturday 5 August

School of Rock

De La Warr Pavilion,

Bexhill, 1.30pm, 7.00pm

Bowler Crab Theatre Company:

The Two Gentlemen of Verona

Half House Farm, Butchers

Lane, Three Oaks, 7.30pm

Sunday 6 August

School of Rock

De La Warr Pavilion,

Bexhill, 1.30pm

Bowler Crab Theatre Company:

The Two Gentlemen of Verona

Half House Farm, Butchers

Lane, Three Oaks, 7.30pm

Tuesday 8 August

The House of Kaleidoscopes

Continued on page 12>



LISTINGS

HASTINGS INDEPENDENT IS YOUR PAPER – USE YOUR VOICE... HASTINGSINDEPENDENTPRESS

< Continued from page 11

Archer Lodge, Charles Rd, 8.00pm

Wednesday 9 August**The House of Kaleidoscopes**

Archer Lodge, Charles Rd, 8.00pm

Thursday 10 August**The House of Kaleidoscopes**

Archer Lodge, Charles Rd, 8.00pm

Alice's Adventures in Aerialand

South Terrace, De La Warr

Pavilion, 2.00pm

The Wizard of Oz**(presented by White Rock Summer Youth Project)**

White Rock Theatre, 7.30pm

ART

A Moment in Time

31 July until 30 September 2023

Stables Theatre Gallery, The Bourne

Agata Read – Frames**on the Distaff Side**

Until 5 August 2023

Project 78 Gallery, Norman Rd

Body of Work – Caroline Macey

Until 29 July 2023

Stables Theatre Art

Gallery, The Bourne

Brian Aris – Two Worlds

Until 12 August 2023

Lucy Bell Gallery, Norman Rd

Djuna O'Neill: The ground**is kind, black butter**

Until 6 August 2023

Flatlands Project, Unit 7

Beeching Rd Studios, Bexhill

Edges and Elements: Wendy**Smith and Steve Betts**

8 August until 20 August 2023

Hastings Arts Forum

Jack in the Green 40

Until 6 October 2023

Hastings Museum and Art

Gallery, Bohemia Rd

Jamie Atherton: Fruit

Until 5 August 2023 25 London Rd

Katie Cuddon – Night Portraits

Until 3 September 2023

De La Warr pavilion, Bexhill

Mohammed Sami: The Point 0

Until 28 August 2023

De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill

Mythomania

Until 3 September 2023

Hastings Museum and Art

Gallery, Bohemia Rd

Photopia Summer Exhibition:**The More We See**

Until 28 July 2023

Stade Hall, The Stade

Portraits of the Dove Café

Until 17 September 2023

Hastings Museum and Art

Gallery, Bohemia Rd

Rafe Eddington – Joie de Vivre

Until 6 August 2023

Rogue Gallery, Norman Rd

Re-Imagined

Until 26 August 2023

North Staircase, De La

Warr Pavilion, Bexhill
Resilience and Collaboration**– Giles Duley (curated group show for Legacy of War Foundation)**

Until 30 July 2023

Stella Dore Gallery, Norman Rd

Richard Best: The Space**Between the Shadows**

Until 3 August 2023

Hastings Art School,

Priory Meadow

Rip It Up (Group Show)

Until 30 August 2023

St Andrews Mews

Soco Artists: Drawing**– Unframed**

Until 6 August 2023

Hastings Arts Forum,

Marine Court

Soutine/Kossoff

Until 24 September 2023

Hastings Contemporary, The Stade

Starwalls – Lilly Cooper

Until 31 July 2023

The Nest, High St

Thrive – Catherine Hull Sinclair

Until 29 July 2023

Caroline Morris Millinery

& Art, Kings Rd

Transcending (Montague**Armstrong)**

An exhibition to fundraise

for the first Hastings Trans

Pride, showcasing works

of art, design and crafts.

Until 31 July 2023

The snug @ The Crown

pub, Crown Lane

Tschabalala Self: Seated

Until 29 October 2023

De La Warr Pavilion Lawn, Bexhill

Yun Hyong-Keun

Until 1 October 2023

Hastings Contemporary, The Stade

SPORT

Every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday**Outdoor Rounders**

Women: Tuesdays & Thursdays,

Alexandra Park, 6.30pm-8.00pm.

All genders: Wednesdays, The

Downs in Bexhill, 7.00p-8.00pm.

All welcome; no experience

necessary.

eequ.org/s?q=rounders and[Facebook @Hastings Rounders](https://www.facebook.com/HastingsRounders)**Saturday 29 July****Cricket: Crowhurst Park v****Hastings & St Leonards Priory****– Sussex Cricket League Div 2**

Crowhurst Park 12.30pm

Local rivals have had two

encounters already this season,

a T20 contest and the reverse

league fixture, both won by

Priory. But recent form suggests

this could be a close call.

Tennis: Coaching sessions**(free) provided by Break****Point Tennis at renovated****courts – see sports page**

Alexandra Park 10.00am-3.00pm

Sunday 30 July**Tennis: Amherst Men v David****Lloyd Eastbourne – TDS Tennis****Sussex Summer Doubles M4**

Amherst courts 10.30am

Saturday 5 August**Cricket: Hastings & St****Leonards Priory v Buxted Park****– Sussex Cricket League Div 2**

Claremont School 12.30pm

Monday 7 August**BMX/Skateboarding:****Summer master classes****begin – see sports page**

The Source Park, Hastings seafront

EVENTS

Every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday**Health Walks**

Gentle, hour-long walks to

boost physical and mental

health. Free, no booking

required, Times and venues

vary, see website for details.

tcv.org.uk/southeast/[volunteer-south-east/east-](http://volunteer-south-east/east-sussex-healthy-walks)sussex-healthy-walks**Every Monday****Al-Anon**

7.30pm-8.30pm

Clifton Community Church

Centre, 1-2 Stainsby

St, St Leonards

Worried about someone's

drinking? Come to Al-Anon

family groups 12-step weekly

meeting. All welcome.

al-anonuk.org.uk/groups/hastings-monday**Karaoke Night with John C Live**

Havelock Pub, Robertson

St, 7.00pm

[Facebook](https://www.facebook.com)[#generalhavelockhastings](https://www.facebook.com/#generalhavelockhastings)**The Seadog Quiz**

32, Station Rd, Hastings, 8.00pm

1st place - £50 bar tab

[@TheSeaDogHastings](https://www.facebook.com/TheSeaDogHastings)**Every Tuesday****OHPS Original Old****Town Guided Walks**

Fishermen's Museum, Rock-

a-Nore Rd, Hastings

2.30pm (until 26 Sept)

£6. Prebook online or at

Fishermen's Museum

ohps.org.uk/walks**5Rhythms**

10.00am-11.30am

The Crown House,

Marina, St Leonards

5Rhythms is a dynamic

movement practice that

ignites creativity, connection

and community. Come and

dance with Emma Leech.

emmadance.co.uk**Every Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday****The Hastings Library of Things**

Tuesday 12.00pm-2.00pm, Friday

and Saturday 12.00pm-4.00pm

The Common Room, 27-

29 Cambridge Rd

A library of things to be

borrowed, used and returned.

Tools, kitchen items, jigsaw

puzzles and lots more.

hastingslibraryofthings.co.uk**Every Wednesday****Let's Do Lunch**

12.30pm-2.00pm

Isabel Blackman Centre,

Winding St, Hastings

Make new friends and

reconnect with old ones over

a lovely and affordable 2

course lunch for under £10.

Every Friday**Nature Babies, Wellbeing Walks,****Talks, Classes and lots more**

Rye Harbour Nature Reserve

Dates and times vary – see

website for details.

Explore and learn in the natural

environment at Rye Harbour

Nature reserve. Fantastic

tours, events and classes on

offer for adults and children.

[rye.sussexwildlifetrust.org.](http://rye.sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/discovery-centre/events)uk/discovery-centre/events**Fixing Friday**

12.00pm-4.00pm

The Common Room, 27-29

Cambridge Rd

Bring your small items for repair.

If in doubt, bring it along!

[makeandmendbexhillandbeyond.](https://www.facebook.com/makeandmendbexhillandbeyond)[org.uk](https://www.facebook.com/makeandmendbexhillandbeyond)**Every Sunday****Kids Art Club**

10am-12pm, £5, Drop-in

or stay full 2 hours

Outside the Smokeshack,

At Andrew's Mews,

Waldegrave Rd, Hastings

c.hwatts.art@gmail.com[Instagram @charlottechw_art](https://www.instagram.com/charlottechw_art)**Saturday 29 July/12 August****And every other Saturday****Flight Feathers Poetry Slam**

7.00pm-10.00pm

The Nest, High St, Hastings

Join us as we bring together

experienced poets and budding

talents to help develop their

creative wings. Hosted by

the amazing local performer

Lucas The Peaceful Poet.

eventbrite.co.uk**Saturday 29 July****Station Open Day**

HM Coastguard, The

Stade, Hastings

Meet your local Coastguard

Rescue Team. Learn

about they do.

Fun Dog Show

Pett Village Hall, Pett

Village, 2.00pm

(Part of Pett Flower

Show and Fayre)

southcoastdt@gmail.com**The Feldenkrais****Method Workshop**

2.30-4.30pm, £3

Arthur Easton Centre, St Michael's

Hospice, Maze Hill TN38 0LB

07817 144812:

bodymoveshastings.com**Saturday to Monday 29-31 July****Stade Fishing Quarter Walks**

Fishermen's Museum, Rock-

a-Nore Rd, Hastings

11.00am from museum

£4. Prebook online or at

Fishermen's Museum

ohps.org.uk/walks**Sunday July 30****Bottomless Drag Brunch**

PG Productions & Cumbia Kitchen

44, Marina, St Leonards

Doors open 10.30am

Enjoy incredible brunch

menu & fantastic cocktails

with Paris Grande

£3

**Crossword Solution No 231:****Across:** 1. One-off 3. ArcTic 4. Deters (anagram) **Down:** 1. (w)On war d(ue) 2. Forces

HASTINGSINDEPENDENTPRESS

LISTINGS

Darragh Dance5.30pm-7.00pm, £10,
£5 concessionsAfri-Co-Lab, 3 Marine
Court, St LeonardsGet your joy on with movement
director and choreographer
Darragh O'Leary.*afri-co-lab.org***Silver Swans Beginners****Ballet Class**

11.15am-12.15pm

Isabel Blackman Centre

*Annie 07704 711772***Silver Swans Ballet Class**4.00pm-5.30pm and
6.30pm-8.00pm

Ore Community Centre, Studio 2

*Annie 07704 711772***Art Class for Adults**

10am-12.15pm & 12.45-3.00pm

Ore Community Centre

All levels, £10.50 per session
*sjflack.art***Choir Practice!**

11.00am

The Chapel of Christ
Stillness, Moon Cottage,
Guestling, TN35 4HJNew singers of all ages welcome.
*thechapelofchristsstillness.co.uk***Feel better with****Therapeutic Movements**

2.00pm-3.00pm

Salvation Army Hall, St
Andrew's Square, Hastings
Suitable for all ages.*qigongsigrid@gmail.com*

6.00pm-7.00pm

Candlelit YogaHastings Old Town
*oldtownyoga.co.uk***Absolute Beginners****Argentine Tango**

7.00pm-8.30pm

Upstairs at the Piper,

1 Norman Rd

£40pp or £70 couple

*pennythepoetess@yahoo.co.uk***Argentine Tango Improvers****Drop-In Class**

8.30pm-9.30pm, £6

Upstairs at the Piper,

1 Norman Rd

*pennythepoetess@yahoo.co.uk***Beginners Vinyasa Flow**

9.30am and 6.30pm

Hot Yoga Hastings,

21 St Peter's Rd, Hastings
*hotyogahastings.co.uk***Slow Flow Yoga (Open Level)**

9.30am-10.30am

Azur Marina Pavilion

*karen@yoga-by-the-sea.co.uk***Silver Swans Ballet Class**

4.00pm-5.30pm

Ore Community Centre, Studio 2

*Annie 07704 711772***Beginners Pointe Class**

5.30pm-6.30pm

Ore Community Centre, Studio 2

*Annie 07704 711772***Alexander Technique****Taster Sessions**

1.30pm-5.00pm

Braybrooke Rd

*livingtenderly@yahoo.co.uk***Kundalini Yoga & Meditation with Yeli**

7.30pm-9.00pm

Wellington Centre, Hastings

*yeli@happinessholistichealth.uk***Ballet Barre**

7.15pm-8.00pm.

Hastings Old Town

*oldtownyoga.co.uk***Yoga Over 60 – maintaining movement**

11am-12.30pm

St Leonards Studio @

Azur Marina Pavilion

*zowie@stleonards.studio***Hastings Punk Choir**

7.00pm-8.30pm

Electric Palace, 39A

High St, Hastings

(And generally a drink or two
in the Jenny Lind afterwards.)**Tuesdays****Slow and Easy Fitness**

9.45-10.45am, £3

Ore Community Centre, 455

Old London Rd TN35 5BH

Exercise for older adults

*07817 144812:**bodymoveshastings.com***The Crown Knitters**

10.30am

The Crown, 64-66 All

Saints St, Hastings

Fortnightly first and

second week of month

A weekly knitting group who
knit lovely things to sell to raise
money for local charities.*thecrownhastings.co.uk/events***Sew Social with Karen Arthur**

7.00pm-9.00pm, £10,

£5 concessions

Afri-Co-Lab, 3 Marine

Court, St Leonards

A monthly gathering on first

Tuesday of the month for

Global Majority crafters.

*afri-co-lab.org***Baby & Toddler Social Meet Up**

12.00pm-3.00pm

The Common Room, Eagle House,

27-29 Cambridge Rd, Hastings

A welcome space for people

with small people to meet.

*umbrellasussex.org.uk/news***Needle Felt**

11.00am-12.00pm and

1.00pm-2.00pm

Isabel Blackman Centre

One of several classes

covering all topics.
*isabelblackmancentre.co.uk***Online Chair Yoga**

Zoom, 2.00pm-3.00pm

*sueyoga1066@gmail.com***Creative Writing at The Crown**

10.00am-11.30am

The Crown, Hastings, £8

£15 – lots more classes

available for all levels

*Nicky 07938 734871***Life Drawing**

10.00am-12.00pm

Art in the Park, Alexandra Park.

£15 (concessions available)

*info@artsonprescription.org***Classical Guitar Tuition**

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays

Bexhill, from £15, free

taster sessions

*bexhillclassicalguitar.co.uk***Pilates with Lucy Paffard**

St Leonards, 9.30am

*lucypaffard@gmail.com***Painting Workshop**

1.00pm-3.00pm

Art in the Park, Alexandra Park

£12 (concessions available)

Materials provided.

*Info@artsonprescription.org***Photography Workshop**

6.00pm-8.00pm

Art in the Park, Alexandra Park

£12 (concessions available)

Own camera required.

*Info@artsonprescription.org***Country Dancing**

7.45pm-9.45pm

St Matthew's Church,

London Rd, St Leonards

*hastingscountrydanceclub.org.uk***Vinyasa Flow (Levels 1-2)**

6.00pm-7.00pm

Horntye Sports Centre, Hastings

*karen@yoga-by-the-sea.co.uk***Knitting Yarns:**

5.00pm-6.30pm

Sugar Pie Honey Buns

235 London Rd, St Leonards

*Rachel: 07397794879***Yin Yoga & Relaxation**

7.30pm-8.30pm, £7

Azur Marina

*karen@yoga-by-the-sea.co.uk***Daoist Qi Gong**

9.00am-10.00am

The Azur Pavilion, St Leonards

*andreacorsoQG@yahoo.com***Pilates: with a roller**

with Sally Paffard

9.00am-9.30am, Zoom

*sallypaffard@gmail.com***Pilates with Sally Paffard**

5.30pm-6.30pm

Small class

Westhill Community Centre

*Sally: 07973 530911***Hot Yoga Hastings**

21 St Peter's Rd, Hastings

hotyogahastings.co.uk

11.00am-12.00pm

Yoga at the White Rock

White Rock Hotel, Hastings

Healing Breath, Yoga Nidra

& Tibetan Bowls, £10.

*myranicol@gmail.com***Silver Swans Ballet Class**

6.30pm-8.00pm

Ore Community Centre, Studio 2

*Annie 07704 711772***Gary Marriott's Tune****up Tuesdays**

5.15pm-6.30pm

Fun Acapella Choir

Hastings Town Centre, £3

*Text 07986911083 for more info***Ashtanga Yoga - Assisted Self Practice**

07.30am-09.30am, £15

Wellington Health &

Wellbeing Centre

*ashtangayogahastings@gmail.com***Salsa Tuesdays with****Phyre Dance**

The Piper, Norman

Rd, St Leonards

Times vary see Facebook page.

From beginners to social

dancing and practice.

*@facebook.com/**events/576448847887517***Wednesdays****Hatha Yoga for You**

2.00pm-3.00pm

Sunroom, Azur, Marina Pavilion,

44-37 Marina, St Leonards

*Louise@stleonards.studio***Mystical Yoga at The****Bale House**

5.45-7.00pm, £10

Hastings Country Park, Lower

Coastguard Lane, Fairlight,

Hastings, TN354AD

*enchantedmalas@gmail.com***Elemental Yoga with Catherine**

10.30am. Class Cost: £7

The Azur Pavilion

*catherineburnett12@gmail.com***Laughter Yoga with Bev**

6.30pm-7.30pm

Upstairs, Jenny Lind

*bevjones@laughyourself**tohealth.com***Wellbeing Wednesday**

11.00am-2.00pm

Art in the Park, Alexandra Park

*info@artsonprescription.org***Buddhist Meditation and****Dharma Teaching**

7.00pm-9.00pm

In person and via Zoom.

*hastingsbuddhistgroup.co.uk***Yoga on the Harbour Arm**

(outdoors) 5.30pm-6.30pm

*oldtownyoga.co.uk***Kundalini Yoga and****Meditation Class**

7.30pm-8.45pm

The Ballroom, Bank Hotel &

Bistro, St Leonards, £10.

*soulpowerkundaliniyoga.co.uk***Relaxation: Zoom class with****Pilates teacher Sally Paffard**

8.00pm-9.00pm, £4

*sallypaffard@gmail.com***Spanish – Adult Beginners**

10.00am-12.00pm

First Floor, 7 Cambridge

Rd, Hastings

£15 – lots more classes

available for all levels

*Espanoles en Hastings FB page**spanishonseaschool@gmail.com***Argentine Tango Social Dance**

8.00pm-11.00pm

White Rock Hotel,

Downstairs Bar

A friendly social tango for those
already dancing tango with
music from tango's golden age.

£5 dancers, £2 non-dancers

*pennythepoetess@yahoo.co.uk***Qigong with Sigrid**

5.30-6.30pm

Community Hall of Greek

Orthodox Church, St Leonards

Suitable for all ages.

*Sigrid: qigongsigrid@gmail.com***Adult Tap Class for Beginners**

6.15pm-7.00pm

7 Mercatoria, St Leonards

*kimhaviand@gmail.com***Therapeutic Yoga**

12.30pm-1.30pm

Hastings Centre, The Ridge,

Hastings TN34 2SA

£7 – All abilities welcome

*ninayoga.co.uk***Legs Bums & Tums**



LISTINGS

HASTINGS INDEPENDENT IS YOUR PAPER – USE YOUR VOICE... HASTINGSINDEPENDENTPRESS

< Continued from page 13

Teens Art Club

4.00pm-6.00pm
Art in the Park, Alexandra Park
info@artsonprescription.org
Hastings Town Singers
7.00pm-9.00pm
Castledown School, Priory Rd
A friendly non-auditioning
community choir.
Free taster sessions.
hastingsownsingers.co.uk

Adult Art Club

1.00pm-3.00pm
Art in the Park, Alexandra Park,
£12 (concessions available).
info@artsonprescription.org

Yoga at Hastings

Contemporary

9.50am-10.50am

oldtownyoga.co.uk

Move It or Lose It!

10.00am-11.00am

The Hastings Centre

Friendly, low impact exercise for
older adults. Improves strength
and balance. Seated or standing.
£6 per class. First class free.

lucyjenner@moveitorloseit.co.uk

Yoga on the Harbour Arm

5.15pm-6.15pm

(outdoors)

oldtownyoga.co.uk

Online Vinyasa Flow

with Elena Voce

12.45pm-1.30pm

Classes for all levels.

Pay-what-you-can

yogawithelenavoce.co.uk

Vinyasa Flow

9.30am-10.30am

Azur Marina Pavilion

karen@yoga-by-the-sea.co.uk

Kundalini Yoga &

Meditation with Yeli

6.00pm-7.30pm

Wellington Centre, Hastings

yeli@happinessholistichealth.uk

Mandala Vinyasa

Flow (Advanced)

Hot Yoga Hastings,

21 St Peter's Rd, Hastings, 6.30pm

hotyogahastings.co.uk

Iyengar Yoga

for Beginners

8.00pm-9.00pm

Arthur Easton Centre,

St Leonards

Mats, blocks, ropes and barre

work. Pay as you are able.

myranicol@gmail.com

Novice Line Dance Class

2.00pm-3.00pm

Church of St John the

Evangelist, Pevensey Rd

patdayinuk@gmail.com

Pilates (beginners)

3.00pm-4.00pm

Isabel Blackman Centre,

Winding St.

One of several classes

covering all topics.

isabelblackmancentre.co.uk

Ashtanga Yoga –

Assisted Self Practice

07.15am-09.15am, £15

Wellington Health &

Wellbeing Centre

ashtangayogahastings@gmail.com

HESNHS Walking Group

Walk 4-6 miles with this friendly

natural history walking group.

Picnic or pub lunch options.

hastingsnaturalhistory.org

Andrew: ajw.hesnhs@btinternet.com, 07597 003407

Fridays

Funky Friday 5 Rhythms

7.30pm

Christ Church, St Leonards

Feel better with Therapeutic

Movements

9.30-10.30am

Salvation Army Hall, St

Andrew's Square, Hastings

Suitable for all ages.

[Sigrid: qigongsigrid@gmail.com](mailto:Sigrid.qigongsigrid@gmail.com)

Elements Yoga, Wash

Away The Week

5.30-6.30pm, £6.50

Arthur Easton Centre at

St Michael's Hospice

hello.elementsyoga@gmail.com

Breathe + Stretch with

Karen Arthur

7.30am-8.20am, £10,

£5 concessions

Afri-Co-Lab, 3 Marine

Court, St Leonards

Greet the day and start

the weekend energised

and refreshed.

afri-co-lab.org

Traditional Yoga

Hornbye Club Room,

Hornbye Sports Centre

9.30am-10.40am, £10

For the yoga enthusiast

Yin Yoga

11.30pm-12.30pm, £7

All abilities.

ninayoga.co.uk

Yoga on the Harbour Arm

(outdoors), 9.00am-10.00am

oldtownyoga.co.uk

Pilates: mixed ability

with Sally Paffard

Zoom, 9.00am-10.00am

sallypaffard@gmail.com

Beginners Creative

Writing Group

6.15pm-7.15pm

The Clifton Centre (previously

Southwater Community Centre)

Mindful Yoga – An

introspective practice

10.30am-12.30pm

Chair Yoga – A

supported approach

2.30pm-3.30pm

St Leonards Studio @

Azur Marina Pavilion

zowie@stleonards.studio

Gong Bath sessions

11am

Unitarian Church, 7a

South Terrace

Text Karen Hayler: 07986 911083

Senior Strength

3.00pm-4.00pm

Isabel Blackman Centre,

Winding St.

One of several classes

covering all topics.

isabelblackmancentre.co.uk

Saturdays

Chess Club

2.00pm-4.00pm

The Common Room, Eagle House,

27-29 Cambridge Rd, Hastings

An amateur club for

amateur players

umbrellasussex.org.uk/news

Zoom Hatha Yoga

9.00am-10.00am (online only)

Pranayama, practice and

relaxation, video available.

Louiselovesyoga@gmail.com

Meditation and

Breathwork with Jung-ui

10.45am-11.45am

The Stables Theatre, Hastings

jung-ui.co.uk

Yoga at Hastings

Contemporary

9.50am-10.50am

oldtownyoga.co.uk

Strong Yoga with Lucy

Morning Yoga via Zoom

10.00am-11.15am

lamiles@hotmail.co.uk

Hot Yoga Hastings,

21 St Peter's Rd, Hastings

Book: hotyogahastings.co.uk

Gong Bath sessions

Weekly starting 1 April, 2pm

4 Courts Wellbeing Centre

off Sydney Close

Text Karen Hayler: 07986 911083

Antenatal Taster Class

10.00am

64-66 All Saints St, Hastings

First Saturday every month.

Free taster sessions to

learn about antenatal and

hypnobirthing with Siobhan

from The Mothership Antenatal.

themothershipantenatal.co.uk

Sundays

Yin Yoga

21 St Peter's Rd, Hastings.

3.00pm

hotyogahastings.co.uk

Historical Dance Group

Regency Dance Workshop

2pm-4.45pm, monthly

St Peter and St Paul's Church Hall

dianadancer@btinternet.com

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"plein air" group

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OPINION

Ba Kode



Conspiracy of Silence

KENT BARKER considers the Conspiracy Theory: defined as 'an explanation for an event or situation that asserts the existence of a conspiracy by powerful and sinister groups, often political in motivation when other explanations are more probable'.

A friend of mine in Hastings has been arguing for years that the sweetener, aspartame, is carcinogenic. It's a major ingredient in most low-sugar drinks including Coca-Cola. So it would seem improbable it caused cancer. Surely soft drinks manufacturers would have tested it? Unless, of course, somewhat improbably, they had conspired to cover up the information. But then the tobacco industry did just that for years – knowing that smoking caused cancer. So does this make my friend a Conspiracy Theorist? Well, earlier this month the World Health Organisation conceded there is indeed evidence aspartame can cause cancer.

My friend has also been warning that 'revolving doors' subvert effective regulation: This is where senior industry staff and its regulators go to work for each other. Another Conspiracy Theory? If so it's been rather demolished by the recent revelation that UK water

companies regularly recruit top staff from the regulator Ofwat.

Labour says it will stop former government members immediately taking jobs as lobbyists or advisors in areas related to their ministerial portfolios. In the US, one respected journal argues that "Big Pharma's revolving door is 'imperilling democracy', and they decry the pharmaceutical industry's 'titanic' profits that ensure a 'perpetual stranglehold over government'". A conspiracy by a powerful – or even sinister – group?

Speaking of the US, people like Rachel Carson and other opponents of DDT were branded "hysterical" for their opposition to that pesticide in the 1960s. Were they Conspiracy Theorists? DDT was finally banned in 1972 after proof of its risk to the environment and human health. Environmental lawyer and campaigner Robert Kennedy Junior – currently a contender for the US presidency – is branded a Conspiracy Theorist, having argued that neurotoxic mercury in medicines should be banned. Mercury was later withdrawn as an adjuvant in most vaccines. Current campaigners who argue its main substitute, aluminium, is also dangerous are now deemed conspiracy theorists too. As, indeed, is almost anyone who has the temerity to question vaccine safety at all – despite the public knowledge that millions have been paid out in Britain, the US and elsewhere to victims of severe vaccine damage.

Just what is it that so upsets those in power when people come

up with ideas they don't like? Indeed why are so many alternative views branded Conspiracy Theories and denigrated or even 'cancelled'? Of course, the powerful have a vested interest in remaining there, and multinational corporations – especially the pharmaceutical industry – have a vested financial incentive for disparaging or quashing negative comments.

Apparently so serious a threat to our nation are these Conspiracy Theorists that the BBC has appointed a 'Disinformation Reporter' (surely a daft title if ever there was one!). Marianna Spring apparently sees the enemy everywhere: "There's no prototype for a conspiracy theorist, they can be a doctor a nurse a teacher or an artist," she says in her didactic and one-sided podcast *Marianna in Conspiracyland*: "Conspiracy is muddled up with a range of views and hides in the most unsuspecting corners of communities." One might think that her views themselves are the very epitome of a conspiracy theory – an "explanation for an event or situation that asserts the existence of a conspiracy by powerful and sinister groups".

Her podcast focuses on – and traduces – a little-known independent newspaper called *The Light* which claims a circulation of 100,000 copies and purports to tell the 'Uncensored Truth'. It is certainly lockdown and vaccine-sceptic but backs up many of its assertions with government statistics and articles from the British Medical Journal. It also warns of the dangers of the 'Great Reset' – an

apparently sinister plot for widespread economic deregulation possibly creating a cashless soci-

ety and abolishing private property. This must surely be the greatest Conspiracy Theory ever? Except that it is not. It is – largely – true, and the brainchild of Klaus Schwab, founder of the World Economic Forum. Indeed his initiative for a post-Covid recovery plan was launched in 2020 by then Prince, now King Charles!

The point of all this is simple. One person's blue skies thinking may well be another's Conspiracy Theory. But what we are doing is effectively trashing either parties' ability to propose and discuss ideas. It's as dangerous as the 'No Platform' movement preventing people from speaking in university lecture halls. In fact, it's arguably more dangerous as it's not just stopping them, it's pouring scorn and opprobrium on their views and making them appear a danger to society. Whatever happened to the maxim – misattributed to Voltaire – "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it"? And above all what if a particular view, branded a Conspiracy Theory today, turns out to have been right tomorrow?

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FEATURES

HASTINGS INDEPENDENT IS YOUR PAPER – USE YOUR VOICE... HASTINGSINDEPENDENTPRESS



Digital Voice: Switching Off the Elderly

Due to a perceived conflict of interest, this contributor's employer has asked them to publish anonymously. While HIP generally prefers to acknowledge the source of its articles, in this case we can verify the writer.

The famous 1983 advert shows JR Hartley using a working telephone to locate a copy of his book, *Fly Fishing*. Fast forward to 2023 and vulnerable clients find themselves disconnected from their landline phones and Telecare health monitoring devices as BT migrates to Digital Voice.

My 83-year-old mum was moved to Digital Voice as a new BT customer. As my mum found herself promptly cut off, I discovered others tweeting into the abyss as their landline-dependent relatives, many also with health-care monitoring devices, were left without a phone or Telecare service. BT's 30-million customer base will be migrated to Digital Voice by 2025.

THE COPPER SWITCH OFF

The copper line has been good for telephone calls since 1911 but not so good for high-speed internet in 2023. BT plans to meet the demands of multi-household streamers, gamers, and working-from-home voice-conferencing users, but this comes at the cost of the landline user.

BT retires the copper line in 2025 after replacing it with full fibre optic cable, arguing that the

copper line is expensive to maintain, replacement parts are no longer made and quoting long standing service issues.

BT waves goodbye to a remotely-powered service which allows emergency 999 calls in a power cut and replaces it with Digital Voice which relies on power and a network to operate. If you have no power, you have no phone; if you have no network, you have no phone; if you have Telecare and no power or network, you are scuppered.

As Digital Voice is promoted to be "coming soon" in the East Midlands, National Grid tweets power cuts in Nottingham, Leicester, Bath, Stoke-on-Trent, Stafford, Brixham, Ashprington, Cardigan, Tewkesbury and Spalding. Battery back-up kits to power a router and digital handset exist, and so too does the hybrid phone that can switch to a mobile network. The battery back-up lasts 60 minutes and the hybrid phone won't help you in a rural area with poor network coverage. Neither products are widely-issued, despite Which? reporting that Ofcom "made it a requirement for telecoms providers to identify people who are reliant on their landline and provide them with a free back-up option in case there's a power outage." (*Fletcher, Y; 2023, see HIP website*).

Some landline users cannot use a mobile phone or a digital handset. Cognitive impairment, reduced hand strength, sight-impairment – common coexisting conditions in the elderly – make digital devices inaccessible. An

87-year-old with dementia was reported in the Stratford Herald to have struggled to use the digital handset and lost service for several days on three separate occasions due to network and equipment failure. She was later found wandering and confused with her Telecare device disconnected and unable to alert family or health services. Twitter user *@PeterGD* messaged that his 92-year-old dad was struggling to use a mobile phone in lieu of a digital handset:

"How do you propose the person who has mild dementia and arthritis in their hands and fingers will remember to recharge the life line phone? How do you think they will manage to plug in the lead when they are partially sighted? You have not tried and tested these products on the old."

@piersmudd tweeted to BT reporting his terminally ill mother disconnected for two weeks and *@SChristiansen87* tweeted that her parents' 91-year-old neighbour had been disconnected for five weeks, adding "he's really scared with the isolation. It's heartbreaking".

MY STORY

BT lost my mum's 41-year-old telephone number when porting to Digital Voice and eight weeks of inaudible sound quality followed. The digital phone soon failed to receive incoming calls. BT sent three replacement handsets which did not work. An Openreach engineer visited and was equally unable to make the digital phone receive calls. This wasn't just happening to my mum:

@Heather3 posted on an online forum that she "Can't receive incoming calls in Digital Voice phone since installation by BT engineer. On Wednesday 28 June I had two BT engineers come out, one from Openreach and the other a BT engineer. They set up my digital voice phone but I have never been able to receive incoming calls. I need the phones to work as I work from home!!! I have phoned BT everyday since the 28 June but no one as yet has been able to solve the problem. Please BT get your act together!!! I need those phones to work as it is essential to my job!"

BT asked me to buy an old-style handset and connect it directly to the router via an adaptor. I was surprised to find myself in an Argos queue to collect an analogue handset to replace a digital phone that could not be made to work. This hack worked for four weeks and then my mum lost incoming and outgoing calls for ten days.

BT could not book an engineer

sooner than this. This led me to complain to the Communications Ombudsman, and the report reveals an operational flaw:

"At this point we note that while Openreach forms part of the BT Group, it is a separate business to BT Consumer, which provides your services. Openreach is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the network and passes the charges for its work on to your service provider, in your case BT. BT has no control over the timescales Openreach provides to undertake any work" (report excerpt, 30th of June).

My take on this: the operational infrastructure between BT and Openreach is not designed to enable an 83-year-old landline-dependent user to be prioritised over a 30-year-old with multiple alternative means of communicating with the world.

VOLUNTEERS

A positive was found in the meeting of Twitter user *@MaggieCollard3*. We found solace in directly messaging our frustration as our mums were left at sea by BT. We also shared a curiosity for the Twitter account *@landlinesgoDigi* behind *landlinesgodigital* who first introduced themselves by elbowing into our tweets to BT and sending us unsolicited technical guides. Maggie and I were both in a protracted 'no-phone-at-all situation', how could a technical DIY guide from *@landlinesgoDigi* help where an Openreach engineer couldn't?

@landlinesgoDigi seemed to be defending BT in their free time. The account's biography states "volunteers" and is followed by 18 users including civil and cloud engineers, a broadband technical writer, a senior Ofcom PR manager and Ofcom's official account. The *ICANN LOOKUP* tool shows website registration has been redacted for privacy, yet The Wayback Machine pinpoints that the website started shortly after BT's failed digital launch in 2022. The account promotes Digital Voice in newly-migrated areas and appears to bamboozle online complainers with technical gobbledygook:

"Some ways to resolve this:

- 1) Use multi DECT based handset & unit
- 2) Some offer engineer to install extension socket to back up router or a wireless based adaptor
- 3) DIY at own risk voice reinjection that wires extension sockets to router (local telecom engineer in yellow pages)"

@oldlong replied "But I didn't want to change and I can't understand a word you've said. But,

thank you. Very kind."

The tweet clearly isn't actually for *@oldlong's* benefit. He "can't understand a word". The tweet serves to shut down Old Long and promote the narrative that issues are 'user failure' not service failure, a theme echoed in the apology for Digital Voice given in April 2022 by Marc Allera, CEO of the Consumer Division at BT Group:

"We underestimated the disruptive impact this upgrade would have on some of our customers. With hindsight we went too early, before many customers – particularly those who rely more heavily on landlines – understood why this change is necessary and what they needed to do." (Marc Allera, BT).

Which? states that there are "a million UK voice-only customers, some of whom will not have any access to broadband", adding that voice-only customers are "more likely to be older, financially vulnerable, not working or from lower socioeconomic groups" (*Fletcher, Y; 2023*). These users will not have recourse to mainstream complaint channels or an online presence to complain in public.

The elderly switch-off is happening quietly.

DIGITAL VOICE ISSUES:

The digital handset can unpair with the router. Vulnerable users will be unable to reset this independently and will require an engineer.

1. BT uses Openreach engineers and according to the Communications Ombudsman "has no power over timescales".
2. The handset requires the press of a button to receive and to make a call: additional steps to picking up a phone and saying "hello" or dialling a number. The handset can be replaced by an analogue phone via an adaptor but this is prone to unpairing with the router.
3. If the internet drops or a mouse sneezes, the phone will unpair with the router: this is not a simple fix for a vulnerable user dependent on their landline.
4. The handset has not been designed for elderly users with common age-related issues.

**Feadora by Tessa Thonett**

A New Gallery Takes Off

MARK WALTER interviews **Tessa & Markus Thonett**.

I first met Tessa and Markus at the Electro Studios earlier this year and straight away became interested in their story. When I was invited to a private view at their house in St Leonards, it certainly wasn't the usual private view, but it turned out to be a great chance to see their vast body of work – and in the following weeks to interview them both, about their life, work and their new gallery called Blast.

Both Markus and Tessa Thonett were born into artist families, Markus in Cologne, Germany, and Tessa in Hampshire. Markus' parents were full-time artists, as was Tessa's Mum, and her dad was very creative. Art was like breathing – a part of everyday life.

Markus and Tessa left their birth countries quite young. Markus left Germany at 18 to go to art school in Dun Laoghaire, Ireland,

while Tessa had already studied at Farnham and Chelsea art schools before leaving for the USA, aged 25. She travelled and lived there for five years before going to live in Brazil for 16 years, where she had her four children. After a divorce, she took them back to upstate New York, USA.

While living in America she was introduced (long distance through mutual friends) to Markus, who was by then an art professor in Ireland. They were soul mates at first contact, and they were married two months later (now 22 years ago).

They left America to go to Cameroon, Africa, with Tessa's four teenage children, to start up a project there for women, using local fabric. It's still going on independently, as Markus and Tessa originally intended. On returning to the UK, Tessa experienced cancer, then later they opened a successful independent charity shop in Hampshire, supporting projects interna-

**Portrait by Tessa Thonett**

tionally, nationally and locally.

Throughout their travels, both Markus and Tessa continued to make and show their art. Tessa has her portraits scattered around the world, while Markus made his unique and wonderful work, using locally found objects.

Markus has always been fascinated by the stories of found objects and materials. Initially, he used assemblage, but more recently has started working on previously used and discarded materials, such as plywood, OSB and Formica boards. His inspiration comes from nature, the passing of time and the multitude of human experiences.

Over the years, Tessa found she was painting too tightly and wanted to loosen up, so she started using palette knives, even making abstracts to help with that loosening up process. Now her portraits are mainly painted using palette knives. Her aim has always been to portray the spirit of the sitter, not just their physical attributes. She always looks for their essence and isn't satisfied until she catches it.

Together they also create their collaborative work, so-called 'icons'. First, Markus makes his wild and wonderful background through carving, burning, painting and sanding, and then he primes a space in the centre. Tessa then paints a face delicately in oils – expressionless, allowing the viewer to reflect and interpret.

They arrived in Hastings exactly a year ago, coming from Hampshire where they had been taking care of Tessa's Mum. They had had their eyes on Hastings for many years, coming for breaks here and wanting to move as soon as they were able. They have landed in exactly the place they have always dreamt of – a creative community with lots going on!

**Time by Makus Thonett**

Both have been showing in numerous venues in Hastings, with work on exhibition continuously since they arrived. Now, realising a long-time dream of Tessa's, they are about to open an art gallery of their own! David Sunney gave them this incredible opportunity in St Andrews Mews, Hastings, where they have a pop-

up gallery for three months.

■ All artists interested in participating in the up and coming exhibitions (*About Face, Minutia or Abstraction*) please contact Tessa at blastartgallery@gmail.com. Markus: artstudiotthonett.com Tessa: artstudiotessathonett.com Icons: thonett-icon-paintings.com

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Deepak Ram



Fusion - Sounds, Cultures, Worlds

Deepak Ram defies limits at Kino-Teatr and Jazz Hastings

VICTORIA KINGHAM

One of the earliest highlights of my auditory education was a 1966 album called *Indo-Jazz Suite*, an extraordinary, ground-breaking collaboration between UK-Jamaican saxophonist Joe Harriott and Anglo-Indian John Mayer, a highly-educated and classically trained violinist and composer. Listening to this album now, in the light of many years of familiarisation with the general sound of Indian music (tanpura drone, sitar, tabla) and Indian

scales combined with American and European instruments (endless, but think John Coltrane, Alice Coltrane, Josef Lateef, Ravi Shankar, Ornette Coleman, or if you don't listen to much jazz think George Harrison *Within You, Without You*) the combination of modern and ancient no longer sounds strange, but has come to be known as Indo-Jazz Fusions. The absolutely modern feel of this concept album, though, is still very striking.

The word 'fusion' has one meaning, but infinite associations



and connotations. The physical meaning of it, joining together, is clear, hence the fusion of two compounds or colours or metals, or teas or atmospheres. It isn't unusual to talk of the fusion of minds, or even the fusion of souls (though personally I have trouble finding out where my soul actually is). But we also talk of the fusion of sounds: the fusion of soprano and tenor voices among a symphonic accompaniment, or the fusion of a solo concerto piano with an orchestra.

Deepak Ram studied Indian classical music for many years, under one of the greatest exponents of the *bansuri* flute. Seeing him sitting cross-legged on the stage in St. Leonards with exceptional tabla player Sanjay Jhalla and a recorded loop of a tanpura drone, with an audience of 70 or 80 including several family members – I chatted with his uncle and his daughter buying ice creams during the interval – it was hard to believe that Ram is an acknowledged master of this simple-looking wooden instrument. Since the 1990s he has toured, recorded, and collaborated with some of the best musicians in both western and eastern hemispheres.

He is genial and unassuming and, as a true educator, has a gift for clarifying what he is about to play in terms that his audience can understand. Thus, for instance, he explains the ragas they play are

based on a seven-beat sequence, or a nine-beat rhythm *Taa Taa Taa, Taa Taa Taa, ta-ka-ta ta-ka-ta ta-ka-ta*. Or the last but one piece, a pentatonic scale, just five notes, he explains, and plays them. Then through the raga he and Sanjay Jhalla demonstrate exactly what can be achieved by exploring and developing complex melodies within and around those five notes.

One of the more striking aspects of this elegant concert was another kind of fusion, that of the interchange of musical ideas between Ram and Jhalla. They don't call the tabla 'talking drums' for nothing. Jhalla waited while Ram began his eloquent flute improvisation, shaking his head until he felt able to join him. Soon after he joined in the interchange started to happen between the sound of the tuned drums and the sound of the flute, conjuring up ancient worlds, embellished by modern technology, in a fusion of time-frames.

A strong feature of this kind of music is the interplay, the connection between the musicians, the *fusion* of ideas that make up the structure, length, and direction of the raga. For Indian classical performers though, P. K. Rejimon has written: "the music has a philosophical and religious connection and is deeply embedded in the whole structure of Indian culture." A fusion, then, a fusion of cultures, a fusion of philosophies, of worlds, of time-frames.

Ram's second performance, over four days in Hastings, was at Jazz Hastings at the EHSA on the following Tuesday, another evening of fine musicians put together by Reggie Hendrickse. Deepak Ram (who is from South Africa), Rowland Sutherland (a South African classical flautist), Gareth Lockrane (bass flute, alto flute, concert flute, piccolo), Terry Pack on electric bass, and Andy Williams, a very talented guitarist

hiding his light under a bushel in the corner, but with a guitar technique that sounds a little like that of John McLaughlin in *Shakti*.

So this was another fusion, of different traditions. After the first number (Coltrane's *Naima* with the same recorded tanpura) Ram introduced the band and explained – almost diffidently – that he was not a jazz musician, just a classical flute musician who liked to play jazz. The fact is he spent twenty-five years as a classical flautist and now returns to encompass the jazz he grew up listening to. The first two numbers were necessarily tentative – they hadn't played together before that evening – but by the fourth number the combo had, one could say, fused. They had fused Indian classical, African classical and Western classical, American and British jazz, and jazz-rock.

In the second half Rowland Sutherland faultlessly played two beautiful solo pieces by Nigerian composers: *Ilulu* by Joshua Uzoigwe and the wonderful *Visions II* by Bongani Ndoda-Breen: these pieces were new to me and are not as well-known as they deserve to be. The latter piece, incidentally, is also based on a pentatonic scale (a different one), and thus formed another link with the Indian tradition, another fusion.

The penultimate number was Miles Davis' *All Blues*; a version which should probably have been called *All Flutes*, and it was so good, so innovative, and so joyous that it brought tears to my eyes. "I was brought up on Miles Davis and John Coltrane," Ram told me. He also told me that a musicologist had written a very learned article explaining in great detail why it was impossible to meld the sound of the Indian *bansuri* flute with the sound of Western instruments. He is striving to prove that musicologist wrong. And he is succeeding.

Rye Jazz and Blues Festival

THE ORGANISERS ARE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE:

Since 2012, this festival has been a Bank Holiday mainstay for East Sussex. Having started small, it now attracts more than ten thousand visitors a year from all over the UK and abroad. It aims to pro-

vide a spectrum of events – many of them free – to showcase both well-established bands and new ones. This year is no different.

This year's line-up is gloriously eclectic and international. There are gorgeous singers – including Laura Mvula, Ruby Turner, Nashville rocker Mike Farris, jazz/soul singer Mario Biondi, and multi-talented award-winner Joe Stilgoe (son of Richard, for Radio 4 listeners). There are fine bands playing at St Mary's Church: the Brand New Heavies, Will Collier's Chet Baker Project, Collette Cooper, Kitty LaRoar. There are free events at The Ship: Martin Mc-

Neill, Jeff Horsey, Roger Hubbard, The Terry Seabrook Jazz Trio. There's live music at The Old Bell, the William The Conqueror, and The Lookout. The rest of the free events take place on the terrace of the Kino Cinema.

■ *It promises to be a fine weekend in all senses. If you wish you can support the Festival at their Crowdfunder page: [crowdfunder.co.uk/p/ryejazzmusic](https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/ryejazzmusic) – your donations will ensure the continuation of this fantastic programme. For the full programme see [ryejazz.com](https://www.ryejazz.com)*



Laura Mvula



Mike Farris

Images Courtesy of Rye Jazz



Muzak While You Work

In the last issue we carried an article decrying background music, arguing that it was an auditory oddity, an insult to the composer and players who created it. Here KENT BARKER begs to differ.

I am just old enough to remember listening to *Music While You Work* on the BBC Light Programme. It began, slightly before my time, during WW2 with the intention of increasing productivity of factory workers making munitions. Its fare was familiar up-tempo tunes, with a consistent volume to which workers could whistle or sing along. Jazz was discouraged as was loud drumming which could sound like gunfire. And also the song *Deep in the Heart of Texas* was banned in case production-line workers banged spanners on machinery in time with hand-claps in the chorus!

The programme continued well after the war, popular with both workers and motorists, only ending in 1967 when the Light Pro-

gramme morphed into Radio 2.

Meanwhile our American cousins had been playing background music in retail stores and public buildings since the early 1930s. Muzak was a brand name that became synonymous with what was generically known as 'Elevator Music' – though in fact the Muzak company never supplied its trademark easy listening fare to lifts.

Where the US leads, Britain and the world swiftly follows. This background music became so ubiquitous that in the early 1970s a young reporter doing one of his first radio features was sent by the BBC World Service to interview Muzak's UK head. I can't remember the executive's name but I do recall him explaining the principles of Stimulus Progression. The tunes were programmed in 15-minute chunks, getting progressively faster and louder to encourage workers to increase production.

Tempo was also upped after lunch and at other times when fatigue was prone to set in. Even if its function is background balm

or stimulation, it surely remains music, and of a type enjoyed by millions?

Not unrelated to this genre is incidental music – used mainly in theatre, film or television productions. Here again the composition is not designed to be actively listened to, but rather to be heard. It creates mood and ambience and is generally written specifically for that purpose. Many renowned classical composers have contributed – from Handel to Haydn and Mozart to Morricone.

These are among the reasons why I feel Victoria Kingham was slightly off-beam in her thoughtful piece *Play On* in the last issue of HIP. She criticises people who just have music on as background: "To treat music passively is to insult those members of the human species who created it," she argues, conceding this may make her seem a musical 'snob'.

I don't think it snobbery, but I do wonder if it's true.

I like to work with the radio on, whether it's classical, jazz or rock. Sometimes I'll stop what I'm doing and actively listen to a phrase or a chorus. Surely we all have? Even Victoria? In my limited time in a Ukulele ensemble we never expected the audience to listen to us in rapt attention, letting their beer go flat on the bar and eschewing banter and bonhomie. Certainly, don't talk through a chamber concert in the Purcell Room, but equally do feel free to chat while I throttle the chords to *Psycho Killer*.

Music does many things for many people, but please let's not try to shoehorn it onto just one corner – or disparage those who chose to listen differently.

VICTORIA RESPONDS

So, the original purpose of 'background music' was to speed up the work of employees making weapons of war, or, if you read Vance Packard, to reduce your resistance to buying random items in supermarkets. Indeed, then, a way for the employer class to improve the speed and productivity of wage minions without paying them more, or to manipulate the public into thinking that they want things that they don't need. Harder work for the wage slaves, more money for the already wealthy. Bring it on, Kent Barker – you just gave me a couple more reasons to hate the idea. Oh, and the only time I have ever worked with the radio on is in a school holiday job on a factory assembly line. I didn't have a choice, for the reasons you have so aptly stated.

ARTS DIARY



Show of Hands

CENERENTOLA 2023

The Barefoot Opera Production of *La Cenerentola* (Cinderella) is on tour this year. The initial date is 27 July at St John The Evangelist Church, Pevensey Road, St Leonards. This is an improved and expanded version of last year's successful and original performance, and proves in rehearsals to be enormously entertaining. It can also be seen at Rye Creative Centre on 19 August. In between it will be in London for five days at the Arcola Theatre from 1-5 August.

AGATA READ

Last chance to see this totally original artist's PhD show *Frames on the Distaff Side*, which runs at Project 78 Gallery, Norman Road, until 5 August. Incorporating the relationship between photography, feminism, and textile craft. Read creates unique, hand quilted and embroidered pieces using photographs and yarn, incorporating strong historical connections to women.

DAVID QUANTICK'S SUMMER MUSIC SEASON

The Summer Music Season is still ongoing at the Electric Palace, presented by music journalist, author, and Emmy Award winner, David Quantick. Bands featured in the film selection have included King Crimson, The Police, The Black Angels, Spacemen 3 and Tina Turner. The Slits, The Raincoats, Noel Coward and Delia Derbyshire (Dr Who Theme - electronic pioneer) still to come in August.

SHOW OF HANDS

The legendary folk trio, thirty years on the road, perform their final tour with Miranda Sykes.

Tickets are on sale now for their concert at De La Warr Pavilion on Thursday 16 November. Don't miss this – it promises to be an extraordinary event.

HASTINGS PHILHARMONIC

Another one not to miss at De La Warr is Hastings Philharmonic Orchestra and Choir, and guest choirs from Freiburg Germany, sing Mendelssohn's dramatic and inspiring oratorio *Elijah* on 30 July. This glorious music confirmed Mendelssohn's position as one of the greatest composers of sacred music of all time.

THE MONSHORE

The Moonshore Festival relates to the theme of The Sea in a photography festival running from 4-6 August, taking place at 40 Marina, St Leonards. The Moonshore is part of the local shoreline that hides an ancient submarine forest, revealing itself only scarcely and under the right conditions. The festival will include workshops, talks, exhibitions, a photo-book fair and a social event to celebrate the exhibitions and promote discussion.

SEAFOOD AND WINE

Forward to September, and the Seafood and Wine Festival will feature delicious seafood and luscious wines (with the emphasis on locally sourced and sustainable food and wine), and the best in live local music, including Liane Carroll, The New Blue Shoes, Kinsella and The Sam Calver Band. Starts Saturday 16 September, and both days will be covered by wristband entry. Wristbands can be purchased in advance from Hastings Museum and Art Gallery.



ARTS

HASTINGS INDEPENDENT IS YOUR PAPER – USE YOUR VOICE...  HASTINGSINDEPENDENTPRESS

Nick Pelling



Swallowers of Souls by Rachel Williams

Primal Dreaming at Electro Land

NICK PELLING

There used to be a time when the world teemed with deities. You couldn't move for them. Messing with every aspect of your life. Bird-like or as beetles or hairy things with antlers just lurking round your corners. But, modernity has banished them. Or are they still there? Something nasty in the woodshed of your mind?

It is with that visceral feeling that the two artists at the Electro

Studio Gallery were concerned. Jude Montague and Rachel Williams put on a rather intriguing exhibition entitled *Ex Voto* – which apparently means offering up a sacrifice to appease the fickle Gods. Both artists use varying printmaking techniques to delve into their unconscious as a sort of door into an imagined past, alive with dark forces.

Jude feels there is an affinity between her work and Rachel's: both artists are drawn to the enigmatic

and "animal-esque". Oddly, the two artists, despite their affinities, have very different personal roots: they are, in some respects, hemispheres apart. Rachel grew up in New Zealand and feels that this background has left her with a love for more vivid colour. And indeed, bright oranges, reds and blues beam from her work. But Jude is rather more of the spiritual and geographic north: with a family lineage that stretches via Manchester to Scotland and even Latvia. She loves to sing old Latvian songs, but then don't we all. Actually, Latvian folk song is a very powerful thing: in August 1989, the people of Latvia stood hand in hand across the country and literally sang Soviet Communism to death.



Double Rider by Jude Montague

The show itself was rather wonderful. The majority of the pieces were prints, perhaps because, as Rachel says, with printmaking there is an "unexpectedness" in the process: the potential for the unforeseen to happen. Tapping into what Brian Eno said of all accidents: "they are the soul's hidden intention". That is certainly part of the magic of printing. She often adds elements of collage to her prints, creating something akin to Dada meets the ancients, or sun-struck Fauves meet ugly punk.

Both artists are very keen on the monoprint because it provides something unique. Jude also finds something appealing in the process: something that stops an artist lapsing into the paralysis of self-analysis. The process offers rules to follow; but rules that Jude breaks for fun.

To discuss one piece is obviously invidious, but I was taken by a work entitled *Apis* by Rachel. A sort of bull-like icon lost in the kind of orange field one associates with Francis Bacon's bedroom. Who or what was *Apis*? (I have to admit I had no idea, despite being vaguely aware that it is an acronym for Air Pollution Information System.) In this case, however, *Apis* is a ref-

erence to the sacred bull god of Memphis. Not Tennessee but ancient Egypt. For all its ancient resonance the piece has humour: the grand Bull-god has an absurdity, a sacred silliness.

And that taste for the absurd definitely links the two artists. Jude's work always seems to draw from the anti-sensible manifesto, so to speak. Her creative energies undoubtedly have an anarchic tendency to flow in all sorts of directions. She is not only a printmaker, but also a writer, and a musician, and a singer-performer, and now she is exploring other modes such as her intriguing bronze works and big-scale paintings. (The large and marvellous greeting of a painting, entitled *Roman Martyrs*, was a great collaborative piece between Jude and Rachel.) Jude clearly enjoys slipping and sliding in and out of disciplines. As she says, "they feed into each other." A sort of self-charging creative circuitry.

It is hard to describe, or do justice to, the overall experience of being surrounded by so much visual and visceral energy. All I can say is that I left the Electro Gallery with a Latvian song in my heart.

Laundry Day

KATE SHAW on washing, queerness, inclusivity and having a great night out.

Laundry day – traditionally the day when you would wear your old clothes because the rest are in the wash. "But in this case, you're left with all your fabulous clothes which you can wear to my club night," says James Silva, creator of Laundry Day, a club night primed and ready to be unleashed at The Piper for the first time this Saturday.

James grew up in Eastbourne, born to a Swiss mother and a Spanish father. He worked in London for a few years and recently moved to Bexhill/Hastings to join the family business with his partner, John. James was a DJ in the past and always dreamed of running his own club night with a "real queer theme."

Now I'll be honest with you, having grown up in the late 70s early 80s, I winced a little at his use of the Q word. It was a term of abuse when I was young, and while I understand there may be empowerment in 'taking it back', I still feel a little uncomfortable using it.

I put this to James. He assures me that it is a fully inclusive term, including everybody who is not

heterosexual and cisgender, though he is very keen to point out that allies are all welcome. The term 'queer' is used in this sense so as not to separate Q from L, G, B or T, if you like. So Laundry Day is a night for anyone who feels they would benefit from a safe space in which to express themselves free from labels and judgment. This is about inclusivity. St Leonards is a perfect place to launch such an event.

Alongside James, Lemur Beats will be DJ-ing. They describe themselves as "proudly Queer civil partners in crime" and are resident DJs

at club Fliq, a night for "queer women and non-binary folk". They're excited now to be part of a night that's for the whole queer community.

"We can't wait to party with all our LGBTQ+friends and allies. Hastings is such a brilliantly eccentric place, with a rich history of wonderful weirdos. This night's focus on freedom of expression and queer joy feels absolutely right."

The main thing here is the safety of the space. The toilets will be gender-neutral for the night. There will be welfare volunteers on hand for anyone who feels uncom-

fortable or vulnerable, and a portion of all ticket sales will be donated to Hastings Trans Pride.

This is a space for you to come and have fun, look how you want, be who you are and not be approached or to feel threatened because of it. So dust off your sequins and help make this event spectacular. Bring your labels or drop them at the door. Lose (or find) yourself in a night of electro, pop, queer punk, LGBT icons, disco, house and fun. You will be welcomed whoever you are. Just "Keep it Queer!"

■ *Laundry Day launches at The Piper, Norman Road TN37 at 9pm, Saturday 29 July. You can follow it on Instagram at @laundrydayclubnight*



Nick Pelling

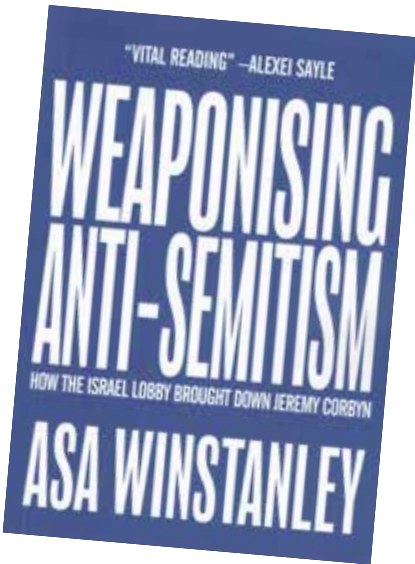
BOOKBUSTER REVIEW

Weaponising Anti-Semitism

By Asa Winstanley
Published by O/R Books,
2023 rrp £15
REVIEW BY GILL KNIGHT

In this book, Asa Winstanley takes the reader on a meticulously researched 7-year journey to demonstrate how accusations of anti-Semitism have become ‘weaponised’. The driving force for the research was a need to document what happened in the Labour Party during that time, and how the weapon was used to overthrow Jeremy Corbyn. If this sounds an exaggeration or misleading you only have to look at the Forde report. Martin Forde KC was appointed by Sir Keir Starmer to investigate racism and bullying in the party, and concluded: “some anti-Corbyn elements of the party seized on anti-Semitism as a way to attack Jeremy Corbyn.”

Winstanley chronicles the array of actors, groups, media reporting and events that fabricated a false ‘crisis’ of anti-Semitism, which actually began before Corbyn became Labour Party leader. He pinpoints the year of 2010 when, to assuage the groundswell of support for the Palestinians’ human rights, the Israeli think tank the Reut Institute urged Israel’s “intelligence establishment” to “drive [a] wedge between soft and hard critics” abroad. The former should be subject to “sophisticated engagement strategies” while the latter should be subject to “sabotage” and “attack”. The purpose was to divide and rule and build a firewall against Israel’s critics. And that is exactly what happened in the Labour Party –



those who supported Palestinian human rights were pitted against those who supported Israel’s Zionist project. This book shows how this happened using a text that is thoroughly referenced and underpinned by hundreds of footnotes.

ISRAEL BLURRING THE LINES

So, what constitutes the ‘Israeli lobby’ that was able to create this ‘crisis’ that became so influential in UK politics? Prior to the Reut Institute exhortations, BICOM (British Israel Communication and Research Centre) had been set up in 2000 to ‘bring about a significant shift in opinion in favour of Israel amongst the general public, opinion formers and the Jewish community.’ Moreover, Winstanley shows that Shin Bet, Israel’s secret police, had their eyes on Corbyn before he became leader.

In addition, pro-Israel actors had strong links with the Israeli Embassy. These links were sometimes more sinister, for example the spy Shai Mascot, exposed by Al Jazeera documentary *The Lobby*, was fixated on bringing down MPs sympathetic to Palestine.

Israel, says Winstanley, seemed to be ‘blurring the lines between pro-Israel lobby groups overseas and its own espionage operatives. It was developing a network of front groups in the UK and passing them off as Jewish community organisations’. The CST (Community Security Trust) frequently acts as an intermediary between the Embassy and the Home Office. So in reality, the CAA (Campaign Against Anti-Semitism), the JLM (Jewish Labour Movement), the LFI (Labour Friends of Israel), the Israeli Embassy and Tel Aviv government act in unison, both covertly and overtly. All sing from the same hymn sheet in an attempt to shut down the growing BDS (Boycott Disinvestment Sanctions) movement, that highlights the apartheid nature of Israel.

The adoption of the faulty IHRA definition of anti-Semitism, the sacrifice of good comrades – Ken Livingstone, Marc Wadsworth, Jackie Walker, Chris Williamson, Tony Greenstein, members of JVL (the Jewish Voice for Labour) – were all part and parcel of the weaponisation. Glasman of the CAA called JVL ‘the Jewish Voice for Stalin’. Here, Winstanley asks a really pertinent question: ‘what if Corbyn had stood up to this purge?’ Livingstone and Corbyn together would have made such a strong team to create a different, truthful narrative.

THE DEMONISING OF CORBYN

Winstanley chooses 2018 as the tipping point for Corbyn’s demise. Finding old Facebook comments, usually taken very much out of

context, is a favourite way to smear the Left, the post is then screen-shot on Twitter, the mainstream media takes up the baton, and it gets repeated by BBC Radio 4 on their *Today* programme. For example, Jonathan Goldstein of the Jewish Leadership Council said Jeremy Corbyn, by liking a post, was the ‘figurehead for an anti-Semitic political culture based upon an obsessive hatred of Israel’. Media hysteria is then fanned by the MSM; Jewish newspapers and the Daily Mail are to be expected but the Guardian has also been complicit in inaccurate and/or dishonest reporting.

The demonising of Corbyn continues, as does the purge of left-wing Palestine supporters in the

Labour Party. Winstanley has said recently that the Israel lobby has been gifted ‘this false, weaponized anti-Semitism as a really useful political weapon against the left’ and ‘It’s going to be used over and over again, it can’t be swept under the rug, it will never go away. It can only be defeated’.

As my Jewish friend, who features in this book, says, there are only 300,000 Jews in the UK and the BoD (Board of Deputies) which is the go-to organisation when the BBC wants a comment, does not represent all of the Jewish community. This book is a must-read for all concerned with accurate reporting in the 21st Century; it reveals the dark underbelly of our political environment.

POETRY CORNER

THE ARTISAN

JEMIA DE BLONDEVILLE

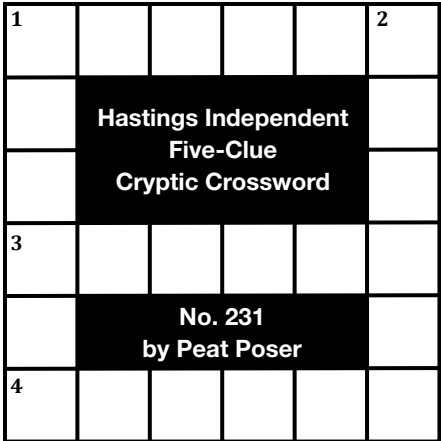
The fine end
Of a needle
That pierces through
The soft fabric
As it pulls
the cotton through
Marrying materials
Often of a different hue
Each stitch
Gently woven
The silent seams, seem soft
And delicate
Upon the shimmering silk
As patterns flow
Become complete
As the beautiful artistry
Of the artisan
Is never deplete
Like a trickling stream
Which glides
Along the pebbles
Rippling dappling beauty
As a gentle kiss
Upon marshmallow clouds
As a gentle breeze
Soft, and smooth, and delicate
Like melted cheese
Smooth as silk
And as fine
As the woven intricacies
Of freshly woven webs
Dew-bound
The tapestry
Is now complete
As the seamstress
Lays down her needle
Applying
A softening balm
To the blistered fingers
Of an artisan

CROSSWORD CORNER

- Across**
- Single not on and never repeated (3-3)
 - Twitch on part of curve could be polar (6)
 - Discourages from rested confusion (6)

- Down**
- Some won war due to moving ahead (6)
 - These powers could be armed (6)

Crossword Solution: Answers on page 13





FOOD

HASTINGS INDEPENDENT IS YOUR PAPER – USE YOUR VOICE... HASTINGSINDEPENDENTPRESS



Moroccan Delights

FIONA MCGARRY

Moroccan gastronomy developed from a combination of Berber, Andalusí, Mediterranean and Arab cuisines. It's all about big flavours and is more heavily spiced than Middle Eastern food; for example, the ras el hanout spice mix originated in Morocco and contains 27 different spices. Typical ingredients in Moroccan dishes include turmeric, mint, saffron, rose petals, lemon pickle and dried fruits.

Hastings has quite a few Middle

Eastern and North African restaurants, but St Leonards is lucky enough to have its own Moroccan café: Tagine Moroccan Delights. It serves coffee, cakes, pastries and snacks as well as having a larger brunch and lunch menu.

The owner, Nadia, prides herself on creating "authentic" Moroccan dishes. Everything is home-cooked, and portions are large – it's excellent value. It's somewhere you can pop into for a quick brunch or to while away the afternoon with a mint tea and a piece of cake, but also a good venue for a special lunch.

There are a plenty of loyal customers. Having been there once, it's the sort of place you might return to again and again and work your way through the menu. The

highlights include lamb or chick-pea and vegetable tagines, chicken shashlik wrap, delicate but tasty stuffed vine leaves (vegan) and their unique falafels. The mezze was probably the best I've ever tasted, complete with salads of slow-cooked vegetables: carrots, tomatoes and roasted peppers.

Nadia and her family create a real warmth and hospitality – and it's worth taking a selection of their baklava and macaroons home with you.

■ *Tagine: 5 Norman Rd, Saint Leonards-on-sea TN37 6NH*
Open Tuesday – Saturday
9.00am-5.00pm and Sunday
10.00am-5.00pm
Follow them on [Instagram]
taginemoroccandelights

COME JOIN OUR WORKER'S CO-OPERATIVE

If you are enthusiastic, hardworking, ethically driven, passionate about wholefoods and enjoy a busy working environment then please apply.

The current post is for a new co-operative member working approx. 31 hours a week. All members are equal and actively participate in running the business together.

Trinity Wholefoods has been providing Hastings with organic and natural products for almost 40 years.

Job application forms available to collect instore or via the links on our social media platforms & website:
www.trinitywholefoods.co.uk



Application deadline 20th August 2023

MOROCCAN COOKING: TAKTOUKA:

YOU WILL NEED:

- 2 large red peppers
- 1 tbsp olive oil plus more for garnish
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed or chopped
- 5 ripe tomatoes
- 1 tsp tomato paste
- 1 tsp cumin seeds crushed in a pestle and mortar
- 1 tsp paprika
- 1 tsp salt

METHOD:

1. Grill the peppers until charred for about 8-10 minutes, turning them halfway to ensure even cooking. Then put them in a Ziplock bag or a bowl covered with cling film and leave for 10 mins.
2. Heat the olive oil in a

medium-low heat and fry the onions and garlic for 5 mins.

3. Dice or grate the tomatoes and then add to the onions and garlic with the cumin, paprika and salt.
4. Cook for 5 mins and then add the tomato paste.
5. Peel the charred skin from the peppers and remove the seeds. Cut them into strips and add to the sauce. Cook for another 3-5 minutes and then turn off the heat.
6. Garnish with some freshly chopped parsley and a drizzle of olive oil.

OTHER MOROCCAN DISHES TO TRY:

Tagine: Morocco's most popular export after couscous. It's a slow-cooked stew of lamb, chicken or vegetables named after the distinctive claypot with a conical earthenware lid that it's prepared in.

Harira: served almost every day for iftar (the evening meal that breaks the fast) in most Moroccan households during the month of Ramadan. Harira is a filling soup/stew of tomatoes, chick-peas and lentils – sometimes with lamb.

Zaalouk: Moroccans do cooked salads really well, and this one is made from aubergines and tomatoes seasoned with paprika, cumin, garlic, and herbs.

Shakshouka: make some Tak-touka and top with a poached egg. Perfect for a healthy brunch.

Stuffed sardines: Morocco is famous for its sardines (it exports more canned sardines than anywhere else in the world) and these are a classic example of Moroccan street food. Sandwich two sardine fillets together with a generous layer of chermoula, dip them in flour and pan fry them.



BMX/SKATEBOARDING

Where Eagles Dare

KAITLYN MASSEY

Have you ever been out for a walk along Hastings promenade on a Sunday afternoon and heard the soft grumble of four polyurethane wheels spinning over the smooth red-and-white concrete tiles, or seen someone coasting down the bike lane on a BMX, and thought to yourself, “I know someone who would like to have a go at that!”?

The Source Park Eagles Coaching

team want you and this person you know to come and have a go. We're down below in what is the world's biggest underground skatepark.

Walk down the stairs of the Courtyard, located right at the centre of Hastings seafront just to the east of the pier and the White Rock Theatre. Go past all the hospitality venues, on through the building, and you'll find yourself facing the Source Park Shop. Down more stairs, and you'll be greeted by a friendly staff team, who'll direct you to the free spectators area located above the main park.

No equipment? No issue. All of our sessions, whether for skateboarding or BMX riding and whether in 1:2:1 lessons or in groups, are inclusive of all hire equipment as well as use of the park.

And we have a session for everyone: families, groups or individuals. Every lesson is tailored to meet the individual learner's

personal needs and goals. Qualified coaches run weekly tutorials for all abilities.

On Monday and Tuesday evenings during term time there are kids' sessions, and one for adult beginners. Summer master classes begin on 7 August, also running on Mondays and Tuesdays. Autumn term sessions will resume at the end of September or beginning of October.

Age is no bar. The qualified coaching staff are all flexible and will work around your schedule to ensure you have the opportunity to learn valuable and transferable skatepark skills. When you've reached a certain level you can move up to the next stage.

■ *The Eagle coaching team can be reached in person as above or online at coaching@sourcebmx.com. All coaches are qualified and DBS-checked.*

TENNIS

Park Courts Reopening

Six hard courts in Alexandra Park have been renovated by Hastings Borough Council (HBC) with funds from the Lawn Tennis Association, and will be officially reopened tomorrow (Saturday).

In celebration, Break Point tennis, an enterprise led by local coach Joe Adams, will be offering free tutorial sessions throughout the day, with games, competitions, and social events. Rackets and tennis balls will be provided, so anyone can come along and play.

Coaching sessions will be split across the day, including adult coaching, cardio tennis, family time, junior (11-16) and youth (5-10).

The future cost of playing on these courts has been set remarkably low. A household of up to five people can book them for up to two hours per day for 365 days a year at an annual cost of £36. This compares with an individual subscription of £147 per five-month year for a season ticket on the council's bowling greens.

Asked why there is such a discrepancy, a council spokesperson said that 'fine-turf' maintenance

of the greens is much more expensive than upkeep of hard tennis courts. “The prices for tennis were based on a combination of experience from other LTA-funded sites; they were set at the lower end of what is typically charged elsewhere. It was decided to make it as easy and affordable as possible for people to play tennis.”

Adams said: “It is with great excitement that we are partnering with Hastings Borough Council, the LTA, and Active Hastings to make tennis more accessible to the community of Hastings. There is no doubt that the quality of the courts and exceptional value of the membership will attract hundreds of new players to the sport. The full coaching programme will complement our existing activities at The Green and Amherst clubs, and at local schools.”

Cllr Andy Batsford, lead councillor at HBC for health and culture, added: “We are delighted with the new courts at Alexandra Park and are looking forward to seeing lots of people at the opening. The refurbished courts are a fantastic addition to the sports facilities in our town, a big thank you to the LTA for funding the improvements. Tennis is a great way of getting out in the fresh air and it can be played with friends and family, so it's a sociable activity too.”

■ *You can find out more and book your free session and/or annual subscription on-line at clubspark.lta.org.uk/AlexandraParkHastings*



CRICKET

Scowen Ton Nullified by Rain

15 July:
Haywards Heath 196 for 9;
Hastings Priory 128

22 July:
Hastings Priory 205 for 7
v Burgess Hill
(match abandoned)

Hastings may boast the most sunshine hours of any town in England and Manchester the least (see HIP

227), but for cricket purposes there was little difference last Saturday. While England's Ashes hopes were being rained off up north, the cricketers of Hastings & St Leonards Priory also enjoyed less than three hours play, hosting visitors Burgess Hill before their Claremont School pitch became too drenched to continue.

That time was enough for opener Harry Scowen to score a belligerent century – 100 off 113 balls – and Priory's overall score of 205 for seven off 41 overs was a welcome return to form after a series of low totals. But they will have rued the missed chance to bowl at one of the weaker sides in the league from a position of strength.

The previous Saturday, also at Claremont, Priory restricted Haywards Heath to a score of 196 for nine off the maximum 53 overs, with Alex Osborne taking four wickets and others shared be-

tween John Morgan, Adam Barton and Adam Page. But as in other recent matches the top order made a poor start, losing four wickets for 38. Osborne (a scratchy 14 off 47 balls) and Harvey Faulkner (a gritty 42) fought hard in a fifth wicket partnership of 58, but when Osborne was run out – for the second time in three innings – and Morgan followed without scoring, it was clear that the visitors' total was beyond them.

A draw was still on the cards as Henry Smith (19) and Barton put up some defensive resistance, but Smith, Dan Pascall and Page were all bowled out by returning seamer Rory Livingstone to leave Priory 68 runs short in the penultimate over.

Next opponents are Crowhurst Park, who also suffered home defeat by St James's Montefiore on 15 July followed by abandonment of their game against Haywards Heath last Saturday.

POSITIVE LEARNING

Parents' endorsements:

“The increase in F's confidence is amazing. I've watched my daughter go from very tentative beginnings to dare-devil skills in just a few months. It's all highly controlled by staff – they're always positive but also very caring”.

“Of course my son has come off his bike from time to time, and he's suffered a few scuffs and bruises, but I've never seen anyone seriously injured”.

CHARLIE MOON

Major Tom

Charlie Moon is only 12 years old, but he's already exhibited in the snug at The Crown in 2022, The Nest in 2023, and a further Crown exhibition is planned for 2024. Charlie also creates cards from his most popular prints and is looking to print t-shirts for his next exhibition.

Charlie says: "I created Major Tom because I saw a painter who was charging a lot of money to paint your pet in different styles. I thought it was too expensive and so I decided to do it for myself. I first painted my own cat Mingus, who always inspires me. He is black and white with four white paws and a white tipped tail. It turned out really well, so I decided to challenge myself and have a go at painting a ginger cat.

"The personality of Major Tom came out as I painted him, and the top hat really helped to support the idea that he is an aristocat. He is painted in acrylics on canvas. I like to use bold colours and enjoy looking at humans through the eyes of animals.

"For these cat paintings, I was inspired by the posters of Vincent Trinidad and a visit I had to the Cat Cafe in Eastbourne. I also enjoy the music of David Bowie."

