

Hastings Independent

Your local non-profit community newspaper



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FREE

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RyeJazz



Music to Our Ears
4-page review and
preview special 16-19



4 TORIES LOSE
COUNCIL



7 THE BANKSY
YEARS



15 JOURNEY INTO
ACTIVISM

REPORT PROMPTS COUNCIL SELL-OFF

HUGH SULLIVAN

A meeting of the cabinet of Hastings Borough Council on Monday evening approved the sell-off of four property assets. Amongst

them are two plots of land – at the rear of 419-447 Bexhill Road and off Bodiam Drive in Hollington – which have outline planning permission for house-building. A third, York Buildings at Wellington

Place, is a flagship housing renovation managed by the Council for prospective social housing.

The sales, which are together expected to raise around £3m, follow the publication of a Local Gov-

ernment Association (LGA) Peer report into the council's finances.

Earlier rumours floated in Private Eye and other media suggest-

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THE
HIP
LIST >

11 4-PAGE EVENT
LISTINGS GUIDE



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NEWS

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A NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

Music is much to the fore in this issue, with four pages showcasing a wide spectrum of local gigs: Barefoot Opera's acclaimed *Cinderella*, the Hastings Philharmonic's *Elijah*, southern US songwriter, Mike Farris, and "multi-dimensional" Joe Stilgoe - catch the latter two at the Rye Jazz festival.

In other eclectic arts coverage, HIP considers Banksy, hearing impairment-informed painting and (yes, really) *Cats in Cinema*, an innovative exhibition at the Electric Palace.

There's plenty of local political news; our reporters examine Hastings Council's disposal of publicly owned assets, an arguably Thatcherite stratagem once described by former prime minister Harold Macmillan, as "selling off the family silver".

Meanwhile, a shock to the Tories as, reflecting both national and regional trends, the loss of two recent by-elections means they no longer control East Sussex County Council – those wonderful people who look after local roads (see last issue) so assiduously.

In the *Community* section, Acacia Bake's inspirational, *Walking for My Brother*, is a life-affirming story of fortitude, friendship and love – be sure to read it and please donate to her fundraising page.

Finally, but only because it's at the back of the paper, a sporting roundup of the football, bowls and cricket fixtures which somehow escaped the recent rain.

Happy Reading!

AZUR TRIAL DATE

The petition brought by Sea Change Sussex in the High Court to wind up Azur Events Limited (AEL), the company leasing the Azur Marina Pavilion, on grounds of insolvency has been allocated a trial date – next February, according to a Sea Change spokesperson.

Teddy's Cocktail Bar and Grill, AEL's trading name, remains open for business in the meantime, notwithstanding evidently increasing deterioration in the physical state of the building. Company director David Thorpe-Tracey is reported to be in negotiation with "an interested local party" for prospective transfer of the company's

lease, though any such disposal would presumably need Sea Change's consent.

BRUDERHOF COMMUNITY IN SEDLESCOMBE PURCHASE

The Darvell Bruderhof, a part of the worldwide Bruderhof Christian church community who are currently resident on an estate on Brightling Road, Robertsbridge, have purchased the 138-acre land and buildings at Sedlescombe formerly known as the Pestalozzi Village. They say that they aim to establish a senior residential

school there, reviving the buildings and facilities which the Pestalozzi International Foundation developed over their 60-year tenure of the site.

The estate was sold to PGL Travel Limited in 2019, but has never been used for the children's activities intended by this adventure holiday company, the Covid pandemic being followed by a refusal from Rother District Council to give planning permission.

A local neighbour in Sedlescombe said: "Everyone is delighted that the Bruderhof are coming. They have an excellent reputation in the community, and the existing facilities should be a good fit for them".

CORRECTIONS

WATER OUTFLOWS

In HIP 229 we published an article *We Just Want to Swim in the Sea!* written by David Dennis which included the following paragraph:

"Gradually, as legislation demanded improvements, water companies made some changes, but even now the situation is unsatisfactory. It is salutary to learn how the current dual purpose outflow system was forced on the people of Bexhill by uncaring officials at government and local levels."

An overzealous sub-editor added words to describe the dual purpose outflow system as "where drinking water and sewage water are conveyed through the same pipe". As a reader has pointed out, this is not the case. Rather, the dual purpose is - as David explained in the following paragraph - the linkage between the floodwater overflow

system and the main sewer system.

We apologise both to David and to our readers for this error.

NORTHEYE

In our report *Twin Demos over Northeys* in HIP 231, it was stated that at the *No to Northeys* demonstration its chief organiser, Bexhill town councillor Nigel Jacklin, collected signatures for a petition urging the Government to consider alternative solutions. This was an error, referring wrongly to an earlier petition promoted on change.org by another opponent of the Northeys project. Mr Jacklin's petition being signed on 22 July called for Rother District Council to oppose "Northeys Asylum Seeker Proposals". We apologise for confusing the two petitions.

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HASTINGS TIDES

DATE	HIGH AND LOW TIDES				SUNRISE	SUNSET	MOON
FRI 11 AUG	L1:49am	H7:41am	L2:21pm	H8:13pm	5:38	8:26	
SAT 12 AUG	L3:12am	H9:02am	L3:46pm	H9:30pm	5:39	8:24	
SUN 13 AUG	L4:28am	H10:05am	L4:53pm	H10:30pm	5:41	8:23	
MON 14 AUG	L5@26am	H10:54am	L7:45pm	H11:17pm	5:42	8:21	
TUES 15 AUG	L6:13am	H11:35am	L6:27pm	H11:55	5:44	8:19	
WED 16 AUG	L6:51am	H12:10pm	L7:03pm		5:45	8:17	NEW
THURS 17 AUG	H0:28am	L7:22am	H12:44pm	L7:35pm	5:47	8:15	
FRI 18 AUG	H1:00am	L7:49am	H1:17pm	L8:07pm	5:48	8:13	
SAT 19 AUG	H1:30am	L8:16am	H1:47pm	L8:38pm	5:50	8:11	
SUN 20 AUG	H1:57am	L8:46am	H2:15pm	L9:10pm	5:51	8:09	
MON 21 AUG	H2:24am	L9:17am	H2:38pm	L9:41pm	5:53	8:07	
TUES 22 AUG	H2:50am	L9:46am	H3:04pm	L10:11	5:55	8:05	
WED 23 AUG	H3:22am	L10:17am	H3:39pm	L10:43pm	5:56	8:03	
THURS 24 AUG	H4:02am	L10:55am	H4:25pm	L11:28pm	5:58	8:01	FIRST

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

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Dave Young



Old Bathing Pool: EA Reviewing Flood Risk Report

HUGH SULLIVAN

Prospective developers of the Old Bathing Pool site at West Marina say they have submitted a 'risk report' to the Environment Agency, and are awaiting its review.

The site is owned by Hastings Borough Council (HBC) but has been licensed since October 2021 to West Marina St Leonards Limited (WMSLL), a consortium of two development companies County Gate and The Generator Group, under a joint venture agreement to prepare plans for building a mixed housing and leisure complex.

In November 2021 a spokesperson for WMSLL said: "We will initially be undertaking technical and survey work to gain a clear understanding of the constraints and opportunities afforded by the site. It is anticipated that this work will take up to ten months to complete."

When HIP raised questions last week concerning the progress of the intended development (or, rather, lack of it) nearly two years on, a joint response was issued on behalf of both HBC and WMSLL that "WMSLL have completed their surveys and the technical flood risk modelling work. A Flood Risk Report has been submitted to the Environment Agency (EA), which is currently being reviewed by them, and their formal response is awaited. Once EA approval has been obtained then WMSLL will move forward with preparing a planning application for the site."

MINIMAL CONSULTATION

There has in the meantime been minimal consultation with the

local community. WMSLL director Amanda Vint met with members of one opposition forum, the West Marina Group, in April 2022. She referred then to "a survey period" under the development agreement, to be followed by the formulation of a masterplan and planning application for the project. It wouldn't be possible, she said, to undertake any meaningful consultation or engagement earlier, but WMSLL "will be delighted to consult and engage with the local community at this point in time".

Virginia Vilela, chair of the West Marina Group, is unimpressed. "We've had no meaningful interaction since," she said, "except for an email saying they will communicate with us when their plans are complete. They've had double the ten months survey time and still say they are waiting for responses from Southern Water and the Environment Agency. How long are HBC prepared to wait for this? I believe there was a time limit, and I think it has been exceeded, but I'm not sure of the exact dates. When I spoke to HBC leader Paul Barnett about this, he said he felt they had to give more time as the delays were not their fault. It would appear to me that they are just hoping to present a tied-up planning permission to the group at the same time they present it to the planning committee."

"We as a group still feel very strongly that this is not a suitable site for dense residential development, due to its position by the sea and its complexities. It is far more suitable for a leisure-led development with possible low density

housing at the western end (where the car wash etc. used to be), even possibly a tower-block-type development there. This would still bring in revenue to HBC with rentals for small units and possible events, etc on the site, along with council tax, etc for the housing. It would also give West St Leonards, particularly West Marina, a boost."

"STABLE DOOR BOLTED"

Bryan Fisher, of West St Leonards Neighbourhood Forum, concurs: "To say that the local community and interest groups will be formally involved once a planning application is made smacks of the stable door being bolted... We want a proactive communication between HBC, County Gate and local interest groups now, whilst plans can be amended to benefit the local community."

The Forum has proposed alternative multiple sites for housing development in the area at Malmesbury House, Eversfield Chest Hospital, West Marina Station, the retail site that includes TK Maxx and Benson Beds, and the sites on Cinque Ports Way, where the design of a potential flagship tower offering a mix of high-end apartments and affordable rented/purchased one- and two-bed apartments could attract an architectural competition.

Mr Fisher says he asked Ms Vint what WMSLL would do if planning permission were refused. "No surprises really, she stated they would appeal."

But what if the EA turns out to be dissatisfied with the flood risk report, as they were two years ago with the one submitted by HBC itself for development of the Lower Tier of Bulverhythe Recreation Ground half a mile away up the Bexhill Road? Neither HBC nor WMSLL have offered any comment on such an outcome, though given the added complexity of the Southern Water installations on the Old Bathing Pool site, it surely remains a distinct possibility.

Dave Young



Upper Wilting Farmhouse

< Continued from page 1

ed that the conclusions of the report might force the Council to declare insolvency under section 114 of the Local Government Act. That's not the case, at least in the immediate future. The report advised that the Council "has the means to address the budget and savings problems if it works together to swiftly implement the cost reduction programme, and promptly realises planned savings".

However, the peer review team declared themselves "very concerned about the council's financial sustainability, the low level of unallocated revenue reserves and the record on achievements of savings and overspends in housing". Spending over £5m (and rising) in providing temporary accommodation for over 1,000 people was unsustainable.

"SLOW PACE"

The Council was also criticised for its management style. "The Council must find a way to maintain programme management discipline whilst working at pace. The peer challenge team found that the current pace of decision-making and implementation on key projects is slow, which is delaying the achievement of key savings. Agile decision-making, implementation and delivery are critical to the Council's recovery."

In a key passage the report referred to interviews "in which the peer challenge team heard that the political leadership is passionate about housing issues but does not consider the financial situation sufficiently. One interviewee stated that: 'compassion from the political leadership is not balanced to the reality of the financial position'."

In a press release issued before the cabinet meeting, a Council spokesperson said that selling the development land at Bexhill Road and Bodiam Drive "would allow social housing to be built more

quickly than if the council was to develop them".

COUNCIL OVERSPEND

As to 12/13 York Buildings, which is a grade II listed building, three upper floors have been converted to six one-bedroom flats above the Millets store on the ground floor. The anticipated cost of the renovation was £780,000 but over £1.1m has been spent. The spokesperson said: "The Council has been working on ways to use the flats for social housing, but it has been concluded that, due to the unique nature of the property, it is unsuitable for this. The proposal is to sell the whole building, including the retail unit. This would mean income for the council through the sale of the building and also savings as the council would no longer be responsible for the costs and management of the listed building."

The fourth property to be sold off is a farmhouse and nearly 200 acres of associated farmland at Upper Wilting Farm on the edge of the Combe Haven Countryside Park (within Rother rather than the borough of Hastings). Much of the land is designated as an SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest). It's also within the 'Strategic Gap' in the Rother Local Plan, designed to restrict built development, so has no immediate potential for housing redevelopment purposes.

Council leader Cllr Paul Barnett, who also holds its finance portfolio, said ahead of the cabinet meeting: "We believe that selling these four assets is the best way forward for the Council in terms of raising revenue to help with the financial situation and, in the case of Bexhill Road and Mayfield E [the land off Bodiam Drive], that the sale of the land will mean homes are built more quickly than we could build them. The housing crisis is the Council's top priority. Any additional finances we can raise will help us address this and also ease the pressure on our budgets."

Dave Young



NEWS

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Robert Booth



Swift Bricks a Green Win for Councillor Tony Collins

TESSA BOASE

Hastings Borough Council has voted to incorporate 'swift bricks' into every new building to help the critically endangered bird species. The motion was proposed by Green councillor Tony Collins at the full council meeting on 19 July, and passed unanimously by all councillors. It will now be incorporated into the Local Plan, as one of a range of policies aiming to reverse the decline in biodiversity.

Swifts migrate every summer from Africa to Europe, nesting in roofs and bringing their distinctive screaming calls to cities and towns. Since 1995, however, the species has declined by at least 60%, linked to drastic losses in airborne insects and to home improvements, as we increasingly seal up the crevices where the birds once nested.

Swift bricks are a simple but effective solution. From the outside they look like normal bricks, with the addition of a hole. Inside is a nesting box within a cavity wall. Once installed (at a cost of £35 per brick), they are maintenance-free and last the lifetime of the building. These bricks have already been put in place in the renovated Observer building and also at Battle library. Ian Donovan, head of Hastings and

Rother Swifts, has already done much groundwork liaising with builders and developers since this conservation group was founded in April 2020. "The pandemic worked in our favour," says Donovan. "People started noticing swifts, especially in Hastings Old Town. They were fascinated by the birds and very keen to support them."

Tim Allison, of Allison Developments, is one local builder who has listened to Donovan. He has responded by altering scaffolding, so that the top plank is placed above the nest holes rather than blocking them. He is also mindful to leave swift nests intact when replacing a roof, and creates new access holes to match the old ones exactly. But ultimately, he says, "the onus is on the property owner" to forewarn builders and scaffolders of nesting birds.

"It takes a long time for a swift to build a nest," Donovan points out. "Tim Allison photographed nests he discovered on a recent project on Castle Hill, Hastings. These nests have a long history. Swifts return to the same place to lay their eggs, year after year." The campaign for swift brick legislation has gained momentum thanks to a high profile crusade by nature writer Hannah Bourne Taylor, who walked naked through the

streets of London, painted in feathers, on 5 November 2022. Her petition for mandatory swift bricks in new buildings gathered the necessary 100,000 signatures to be debated in Parliament on July 10 this year, but – predictably – MPs passed the buck back to local councils.

"Part of me wants to gnash my teeth in frustration that the Government is so supine in this matter," said Cllr Tony Collins. "On the other hand, they have placed responsibility with local authorities and we're taking advantage of that."

Brighton and Hove District Council has already incorporated swift bricks into their Local Plan, along with 'bee bricks'. Since April 2020 a minimum of two to three swift bricks per dwelling is required on all new developments, ideally under the eaves. Other councils are beginning to follow suit. The bricks help not only swifts, but other cavity nesting birds also on the 'red list' of highest conservation concern: house martins, common starlings and house sparrows.

"An idea's time seems to arrive," says Cllr Collins, "and with the increasing anxiety about the natural world, a good news story is something to be celebrated. Nature will bounce back strongly if we give it a chance."

■ *If you are re-roofing, redecorating your building's façade, or extending up into the eaves, contact Hastings and Rother Swift Conservation Group for advice on how to save existing nests and encourage new colonies with swift bricks via their website evoice.org.uk/hastingsandrotherswifts. See also www.swift-conservation.org*

SOME SWIFT FACTS

- Arrive in the UK from central Africa in early May, leaving late July.
- The journey can take around four weeks, the birds travelling some 300 miles a day at impressive speeds of up to 70mph.
- Spend their entire lives in the air, eating and sleeping while airborne, apart from a brief nesting season.
- Strongly territorial, returning to the same nesting site throughout their lives.
- Mate for life, meeting up each spring at the same nest site.
- Form 'screaming parties' during summer evenings, when groups of birds will gather in flight around their nesting area, calling out and being answered by nesting swifts.
- Some swift colonies are very old, in use for hundreds of years.
- Can live up to 21 years, with an average lifespan of five and a half years (a robin lives an average of 13 months).

Tories Lose Majority on County Council

PAUL MCLAUGHLIN

The Conservatives have lost their majority on East Sussex County Council (ESCC) after being pushed into second place in a by-election last Thursday (3 August). The election, in what has long been considered a safe seat in the Eastbourne Meads ward, was triggered by the death of Cllr Barry Taylor who had represented the ward since 2005.

The Liberal Democrat, Brett Wright, triumphed at the poll with 1,649 votes, comfortably beating the Conservative candidate Nicholas Taylor with a majority of 288. He will now serve as the new councillor.

This latest Tory defeat comes just weeks after Anne Cross of the Green Party won a by-election in Heathfield and Mayfield following the death of another long-serving Conservative councillor, Rupert Simmons.

These two results mean that no single party now has overall control of ESCC. The Conservatives still hold 25 out of 50 seats whilst the Liberal Democrats have 12, the Green Party and Labour have 5 apiece and there are 3 independents. The Conservatives will continue to run the Council, however, by reliance upon the casting vote of its Chairman, Peter Pragnell, who represents the Ashdown and Conquest ward of ESCC as well as



sitting as Hastings Borough councillor for St Helens.

REDUNDANCY COSTS

If the by-election result made for uncomfortable reading for the Conservatives, they may be further embarrassed by figures released this week by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) which reveal that ESCC paid out hundreds of thousands of pounds in staff redundancy settlements last year.

The figures show that in the year to March 2023 the Council spent £552,000 to make 48 staff members redundant. This compares with 52 redundancies made by the Council in the year before, costing hard-pressed local taxpayers £997,000.

The Local Government Association said that the figures clearly demonstrated the severe budgetary pressure councils were being placed under to balance their budgets. It suggested it was often easier for them to cut senior staffing levels, even with generous exit packages, than to make cuts to front line public services. It is also recognition that, after years of having to find savings on services, such as bus route subsidies, streetlights, recycling centres, and community health services, there is now little or no fat left to cut.



Changing of the Guard?

When Immigration Minister Robert Jenrick told Parliament on 29 March this year that the Home Office was intending to use an unidentified location in East Sussex for the housing of asylum seekers, he emphasised the need to find cheaper accommodation for them, not to detain them.

As soon as the former Northeye prison premises on the edge of Bexhill were confirmed as the site in question, his government colleague, Battle and Bexhill MP Huw Merriman, issued a statement. He assured his local constituents that their safety was his main concern, given that the future residents of the site would not be locked in or

subject to curfew. He had been told that nearly 70% could expect to succeed in due course with their asylum claims, and drew from this the comforting idea that they would be highly motivated "[not] to break the law".

But the enactment of the Illegal Migration Act at the end of last month seems to turn this perspective on its head. Section 1(a) of the Act "places a duty on the Secretary of State to make arrangements for the removal of certain persons who enter or arrive in the United Kingdom in breach of immigration control as soon as is reasonably practicable after their entry or arrival". Section 1(c) provides for

"the detention of persons who are subject to removal under this Act".

If Home Secretary Suella Braverman really wants to make the Act effective, she surely has to start detaining the people concerned – and where is she going to do that?

Daniel Rushby of SUTR naturally condemns the whole direction of the policy. "When government ministers talk about 'illegal immigrants', 'invasions' and migrants bringing 'criminal behaviour'," he says, "they are deliberately stoking up racism against people seeking asylum. If the government were serious about stopping the small boats crossing the Channel, they could create safe routes for refugees to claim asylum. It is a political decision not to allow refugees from Afghanistan or Iraq or Iran or Sudan the same opportunity to

claim asylum as they afford to refugees from the war in Ukraine. Ukrainians, quite rightly, have been welcomed, allowed to work and to contribute to our community. We believe this welcome should apply to all refugees, whatever their skin colour."

Detention of asylum-seeking refugees should not, from Rushby's political perspective, be in the Government's contemplation. On the other hand, he admits he would not be surprised if Northeye were turned back into a detention site for this purpose. "I think the Home Office have been considering this all along," he says.

For Nigel Jacklin and his NTN Group, who have generally welcomed the passing of the Act, it's more of a dilemma. "The main concern identified by the Town

Council at the April open meeting with residents was safety and security based on 1,200 men being able to roam freely," says Jacklin. "The majority of residents don't want it (the camp) or them (people who have arrived illegally). Opposition to illegal arrivals is widespread across the UK."

"No doubt most local residents would welcome the removal of people who have arrived illegally. Using the site as a detention centre is clearly a different proposal."

He says that reports from when the site was used as a prison, initially for 250 inmates and then for 450, suggested it was well run and community relationships were good. But if detention of 1,200 "illegal arrivals" were to be considered, "residents would want to be consulted".

WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

NORTHEYE: CONTRASTING VIEWS OF BEXHILL DEMOS

Dear HIP

I am writing regarding the article about Northeye in your last edition. Thank you for correcting the information about the petition. We really shouldn't have to do a petition to get Rother District Council to discuss something as important as this. We got just over 50 signatures in just under an hour, taking the total to over 300 in a few hours' work. The numbers of attendees quoted elsewhere are a misrepresentation.

Your article failed to mention the fact that the Hastings Stand Up To Racism crowd shouted vile abuse such as "Nazi Scum" at the Bexhill crowd, which included

pensioners who were born in or soon after World War Two. The Stand Up To Racism crowd need to stop spreading hate. They were accompanied by two or three Black Bloc or 'antifa' members. They are particularly unwelcome. Let's hope they don't come back.

Nigel Jacklin

Dear HIP

On Saturday 22 July, Bexhill Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) called a gathering to show opposition to a rally called by the No To Northeye (NTN) group. About 50 people attended our rally from a variety of political persuasions and none. We are a broad-based campaign, part of a national movement to oppose racism and

to welcome refugees. We did not check the political affiliation of anyone attending but accepted anyone who agrees with our basic positions of opposition to the proposed camp and to all forms of racism. We had a few speakers at our rally, including a Labour councillor and trade union representatives of the Fire Brigades Union and the GMB local government workers. A powerful poem was read out by one of our supporters. We also did some chanting, mainly, "Stop the Hate, Stop the Fear, Refugees are Welcome Here". I did not hear anyone chanting or shouting about 'Nazi scum'. I have no idea if anybody supported the 'antifa' and 'black bloc' groups you mentioned – it seems unlikely as they did not make themselves known to us.

The NTN campaign has openly used racist slogans for their campaign. Placards at recent protests called for the deportation of migrants and to "put women's safety first" – promoting the racist view that refugees are rapists. This view and many more are regularly posted on the NTN Facebook group. The NTN Facebook group now includes Alek Yerbury, an open fascist, who has contributed to their discussions. This is why we opposed them.

This week we continued our campaign of door-to-door leafletting, putting, the case to the residents of Bexhill that "Refugees are not to blame". We received this email in response to our leaflet, just this morning, "Thank you for putting your leaf-

let through my door. I have received some very unpleasant and bigoted literature from those opposing Northeye for different reasons. I agree with you that we should stand up to racism and show our sympathy and compassion to all genuine refugees who have fled from appalling situations. I agree that asylum seekers should be allowed to work, as I'm sure they want to do, and we certainly need the contribution they could make to our society. Best wishes"

I have lived in Bexhill all my life. The people of Bexhill are compassionate, but a small number are stirring up division and racism. We will continue to oppose them.

Daniel Rushby, Bexhill SUTR

We would love to hear from you.

Please be aware we may need to edit letters for reasons of space and we will only withhold names if this is necessary for the protection of the writer.

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COMMUNITY

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



The sun's out!



Night falls

Walking for my Brother

ACACIA BLAKE

My brother Jethro passed away on 25 July 2019 and this year I decided to complete a challenge in his memory with the support of my friend Melie on the fourth anniversary of his death. I did this for myself and my brother, but I thought it would also be nice to raise some money for a local charity, Seaview, that can help people like Jethro.

I feel it is important to be honest with myself about the circumstances of Jethro's life and death and not to skirt around the difficulties he faced in terms of mental health, addiction, lack of access to a home, to feeling safe – and to fulfilling his potential. It's important we face these issues because the more we shy away from them the harder it is for vulnerable people to seek support, and there are many vulnerable people in Hastings, especially after the pandemic.

Melie and I decided to adopt some of Jethro's suffering – to sit in the mud with him and support him by experiencing some hardships he faced. So on Monday 24 July we walked 106km along the coast from Camber Sands to Ramsgate. This usually takes five days to complete, but we did the walk in one go; we missed the target of 24 hours but did manage it in 30!

We walked the entire way in complete silence to highlight how some people find it impossible to speak up about their problems – despite being able to speak. There was no chatting together to help us get through; no moaning, no sharing, no singing, we just communicated via notepad.

It wasn't what I was expecting, that's for sure. It ended up being

one of the most uplifting and empowering experiences of my life thus far. Surprisingly, I seemed to fly through the first 15 hours or so feeling upbeat, positive and determined to complete. My friend, Melie, was not so lucky and started experiencing headaches and nausea pretty early on.

We were worried about how we would manage the silent part of our challenge, but to our surprise it brought a lot of humour to the experience, and we enjoyed finding new ways to communicate with each other. But the difference is we were doing this willingly, and were then able to return to the comfort of our homes.

For me, it started to get tough once the sun had set. We had just

barely walk. I felt very emotional thinking about the fact it was Jethro's anniversary, but my friend was there with silent moral support and after a pitstop in Deal at 6am we felt ready to tackle the last chunk of our challenge.

Deal to Ramsgate was the toughest part. We were tired, in pain and still had 6 hours to go. For me, I was constantly thinking about my brother and the challenges he had to face on a daily basis, and that seemed to really fill me with this kind of energy and somehow propelled me forward. The power of love!

We hobbled into Ramsgate at 12.30pm, very emotional, very sore but feeling a huge sense of achievement.

Seaview's motto is *Practical services for complex lives*. They provide holistic support to a wide range of vulnerable people, including access

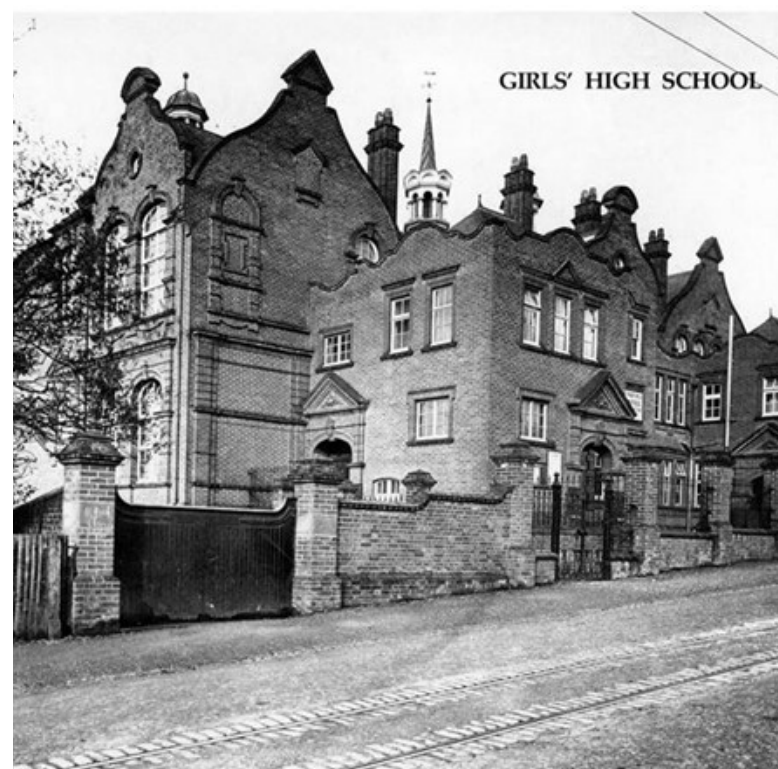
“We hobbled into Ramsgate at 12.30pm, very emotional, very sore but feeling a huge sense of achievement.”

reached the top of The White Cliffs of Dover; visibility became difficult even with head torches and I was very aware that we were quite close to the cliff edge so an element of fear started to set in. We walked through dark wooded areas and fields which made us feel very uneasy.

Blisters started to get pretty painful around 1.30am but we powered through the night making it to Deal around 6am. 3am-6am was probably one of the hardest parts, we were in a lot of pain and the blisters meant we could

to free dental care, a warm wellbeing centre, rough sleepers outreach teams, complex addiction help. They also put on the annual *Seaview's Got Talent* to showcase some of the amazing gifts that people accessing these services have: poets, singers, artists. Rough sleepers are also valuable humans with love and gifts to give; they just need the right support.

■ If our story resonates with you, please consider donating to our cause: justgiving.com/fundraising/jethroblake



Hastings High School Reunion

NOLA MCSWEENEY

On Friday, September 29, a school reunion will be held at The Royal Victoria Hotel in St Leonards between 3.00pm and 6.00pm. This is being organised for pupils who attended Hastings High School for Girls between September 1960 and July 1965 – or until 1967 for those who stayed on in the sixth form. A buffet tea will be served in the Sea Terrace restaurant.

After tea, there will be a chance to mingle and reminisce about your time there and what you have been up to since. Please let anyone else know who was there about the event and encourage them to bring along any photos or memorabilia.

For those not familiar with its history, the school was originally built in 1901 as an infants school on the Ridge, opposite the Borough Cemetery. It was then redeveloped as Hastings Secondary School for Girls in 1912. Partly due to its position far from the town centre, the school had falling rolls in the late 1920s and an attempt was made to raise its status with a name change to Hastings High School for Girls.

This also coincided with a Labour Party report recommending two levels at secondary stage, with high schools (or grammar schools) providing the more academic education. By 1930, the school roll had

risen to nearly 200 and a service of dedication was held in May 1933 at Robertson Street Congregational Church. The first head of this school was Miss Commin.

During the Second World War, Miss Commin along with many girls were evacuated to Ware in Hertfordshire. Meanwhile, the school served as a coffin store (in case of emergency), a food store, a community restaurant and a store for ATC equipment!

Miss Commin retired in 1949 and the formidable Miss de Gruchy took over from her. In 1967, work was due to start on modernising the Victorian school. However, serious structural defects were found in the upper floors and the borough surveyor recommended demolition and rebuilding.

During this time there was much controversy over selective and comprehensive education. In 1977, a heated meeting of the Education Committee recommended that Hastings should become fully comprehensive by September 1978: the high performing girls' High School and boys' Grammar School became Helenswood and William Parker comprehensive schools respectively.

■ You can register your interest to attend the reunion with Valerie Mighall by phone on 01424-830247 or by email at vmighall@yahoo.com.



The Banksy Years

The Collateral Damage of Myth-Making

HIP Talks to Stephanie Warren, the owner of art gallery Stella Dore, about her involvement with the Podcast *The Banksy Story* – and other things.

Many people have heard rumours swirling around Hastings and St Leonard's about Banksy's connection with the town. Rumours are part of the Banksy mystique, but in this town, there is usually some truth to anything about connections – as this town is all about connections.

The rumours incorporated Steph Warren when she returned from London to open her gallery in Norman Road, but details were sketchy. Recently I heard she was involved in a podcast about Banksy, even checking with her to confirm; but I was still shocked last week, while waking up listening to the *Today* programme, to hear Steph's gravelly voice suddenly come from the radio – a puff piece for the *The Banksy Story*.

So what's her story and why is she involved? In the early days, Steph had been company secretary at Pictures on the Wall, the business Banksy had set up to market his work – and crucially she hadn't signed a non-disclosure agreement. Apparently, James Peak, who made the podcast, had been looking for a "member of Banksy's secret team" and eventually, after a year of discussion "he wore me down". As we discover during the podcast, this was a big decision: you could say she ended up revealing more about herself than about Banksy.

That's not to say we don't discover a lot about Banksy as well, but much of it is still open to interpretation – and we certainly don't discover his identity.

James first came to meet Steph at Boyley Skatepark, in White Rock Gardens, and we quickly learn how Steph's life was full of challenges. The skatepark is named after her then boyfriend Richard 'Boyley' Ball, who tragically died one night in what may have been a hit and run accident. This led to her introduction to numbing pain through alcohol and later drugs.

Before interviewing Steph, I knew there had been tragedy in her life from listening to the first episode of the podcast – ill prepared,

I only listened to all of it the following day. But I'd picked up the humorous way James told the story and asked her about that: "I thought he was entertaining, and it was for me," she says. "Obviously a lot of my story was quite negative, but it was quite nice to have that to balance it out: the humour bit."

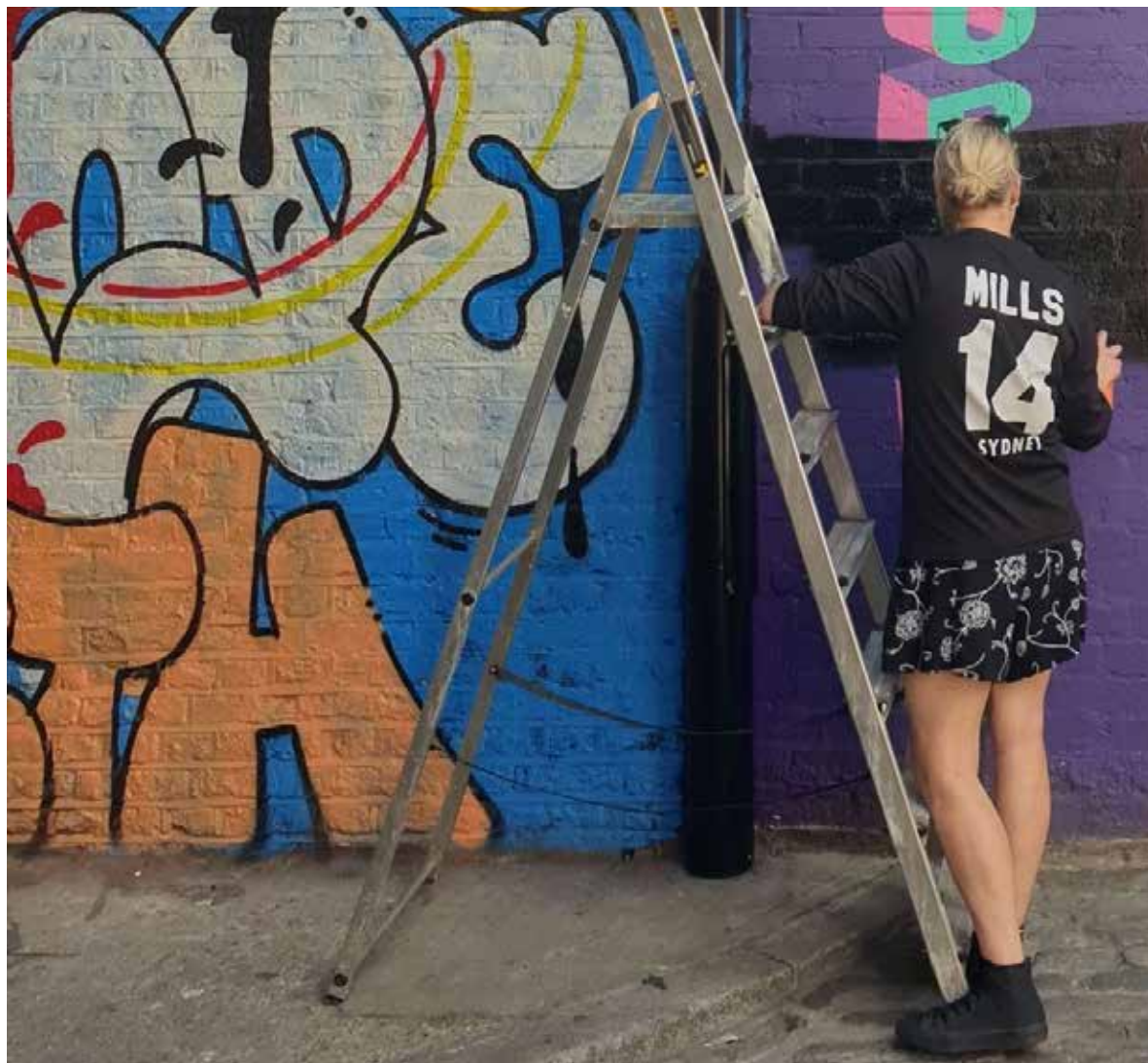
But it was still a big decision and Steph says she had a myriad of reasons for agreeing. "To start with, it was time to do something like that. It took a year of him convincing me to say 'yes'." But interestingly she also says: "I'm pleased with the whole process to be honest, which was a cathartic experience," adding, "I hoped it would be that. He did it in a way that was human."

That was an interesting comment and revealed a lot about Steph. She has an amazing ability to keep up a cheerful front, which you really pick up in the podcast; but underneath it's clear that life has been tough. And she feels that telling her story has a wider significance, particularly in Hastings, the town where she grew up: "I think that the times we live in, we have rising substance issues and alcoholism especially post pandemic, especially in Hastings, drug deaths doubled, and drug addiction doubled: that's the stats from the coroner. I think that stories of recovery are important at the moment."

Certainly for James, her story played a significant part. "I was incredibly important," she says. "Which is flattering. I think as we got to know each other more, he realised the value in my perspective." But she clarified, "It's the Banksy show, the Banksy story; people wouldn't have chosen to hear the 'tragic story of Steph Warren' otherwise."

Pursuing the line of how difficult it can be to face up to life, I asked if she'd found the interviews with James uncomfortable. Her answer was "yes", but necessarily so: "I used it as a counselling opportunity as much as anything – but they paid me instead of I paid them!"

So what about Banksy and how accurate was the picture that emerged from the podcast? "I think he built up a fair picture of what I know," she says. Then talking about James and whether he was the right person for the job: "I think he threw himself into it ... especially when he got thrown out



Steph at work

of the *Beyond the Streets* exhibition [two months ago in London]. He threw himself into the theme of street art, less so graffiti. But definitely street art, he was a follower of, a fan of."

He was also a 'superfan' of Banksy and it's interesting to hear

how this impacts the final thoughts he provides in Episode 10. We all have to come to terms with the realities of life at some point and it can be a messy business.

James Peak has done us a great service in producing this podcast. His human approach will help

many reconcile themselves with their younger self as well as helping one brave and honest Hastings resident find closure to her own experiences.

■ You can listen to *The Banksy Story* bbc.co.uk/sounds.

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COMMUNITY

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



Support for Children's Mental Health Launched

ROD WEBB

A series of online videos are now available to help parents and carers support their children to manage a range of mental health conditions.

Did you know that the Oxford University Press word of the year in 2021 from a panel of young people was *anxiety*? (in the previous three years it was *plastic*, *Brexit* and *Coronavirus* respectively). Understandably, the first video workshop focuses on this issue.

The live workshops, which were recorded in May this year, also deal with autism, eating disorders and sleep problems, with more workshops to be added over the coming months. More than 2,300 people have tuned in to watch these sessions live – which shows the level of interest in these subjects – and their accessible and informative presentation should ensure continued success.

The videos should prove a vital resource for parents and carers,

particularly during the school summer holidays when they can access the extra support they may need.

Kate Stammers, Clinical Lead for Sussex Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), explains that the workshops are a vital tool in helping parents and carers understand their children's mental health and what they can do to support them.

"We recognise the impact of the pandemic on children and young people's mental health and these workshops will help give some clarity to families who may be unsure how to handle certain situations."

Each workshop is accessible with subtitles and gives an overview of a specific difficulty and also some hints and tips on how young people can be supported. There are also links to other resources that parents may find helpful.

■ *Workshops available here: sussexcamhs.nhs.uk/resources/resources-for-families-carers-and-professionals.*

Quaker Meeting House Finally Reopens

In January a major part of Hastings town centre became flooded due, it is alleged, to the failure by Southern Water to properly maintain

the drainage. One of the areas worst affected was South Terrace, where basements were completely inundated causing horrific dam-

age and distress to the occupiers.

Hastings Quaker Meeting House at 5 South Terrace was another casualty of the floods and had to close for repairs. In the end the repairs took more than six months, but it was an opportunity to undertake refurbishment as well as extensive repairs.

The building is now better than ever, with new carpeting and a new kitchen. Ian Bunch, the lettings manager, says: "We're very excited to be looking forward to the return of our existing hirers but we also now have capacity for new hirers who may wish to use our facilities."

He points out that the Meeting House has been an important meeting place for many local groups and organisations; such groups being forced to cease operations or find alternative premises first during Covid and then during the reconstruction work.

Unfortunately, the disruption took place while many people were still trying to find a way forward following the Covid outbreak, which hit the poorest and those with health issues hardest, and even now many are still experiencing problems.

But now it's welcome back to the new upgraded Quaker Hall. It charges reasonable rates, is wheelchair accessible and even has a multi-storey parking nearby.

■ *For more information on booking, email hastings.fmh@aol.com.*



The Meeting House during the flood



Sun's Out, it's a Yard Party!

Time for a Yard Party

Times have been hard for the catering business with Covid lockdowns, massive cost of living increases and, so far, a very wet summer. MARK EDWARDS talks about why Tommy's closed and what has brought him back.

The closing of Tommy's Pizzeria was a difficult time for me personally. My business partner had chosen to explore a different path as a chef, and that, combined with many other factors, not least the long-drawn effects of Covid, eventually led to Tommy's as a business coming to an end. At the time it was difficult to bear.

We had always been extremely proud to be a part of the community around us, but it was only after hearing the many tales of how much Tommy's was loved and missed, that we realised how deeply we'd embedded ourselves into that community. It was very humbling. But it also reignited my fire to complete unfinished business with St Leonards. In short, I wanted to be back on that corner.

So, some seven months later, here we are embarking on something completely new – and yet so familiar. The finer details all took a little longer to sort than we had hoped, and a pressing need to be open for the school holidays led to us starting our new venture with a summer 'pop up': Yard Party.

We've deliberately kept it pretty simple; we want to deliver something good and consistent right from the get-go and this route seemed the best way to do

that with very little lead time. We plan to continue developing things over the summer as we lead into what will be our permanent project on the site. We're looking at everything through fresh eyes and trying to create a more agile business that will allow us to bring together a culmination of all our experience and passions: cooking with fire using our fantastic wood oven but really starting to explore the endless possibilities of cooking that way using local ingredients and seasonal menus.

So, Yard Party is here for the summer with exciting food. We've got an outside street-food kitchen – think an absolute banging Prego, a Portuguese-style steak sandwich with bavette steak grilled over wood and coals. We have our signature Yard Chix chicken burger with our own house hot sauce, vegan buffalo cauliflower burger and fresh BBQ mackerel served up real simple alongside celeriac remoulade.

Inside on the bar this summer we've got frozen cocktails – pink grapefruit margherita and a watermelon & chilli daiquiri alongside draft Brooklyn beers and a short well-chosen wine list. We'll be hosting DJs and live music both inside and outside throughout the summer. All in all, if the sun ever shows its face, we're aiming to have a lot of fun. If it doesn't, then we'll just move the yard party inside!

We are so excited to be able to unfold our new identity as the summer draws on and to share it with the wonderful and supportive community around us. We hope you'll all be as excited as we are.

For me personally, I could not be happier to be back on my corner, engaging in the day-to-day life of St Leonards. I hope to see you all down there.



Christine Zenino



Greenland – rapidly losing ice mass

Meltdown

The current trajectory of carbon dioxide emissions means that global temperatures could increase by as much as 4.4°C by the end of the century. RICHARD PRICE says that scientists think if that happens, the planet will be able to support fewer than a million people.

On a particularly hot day in June, Alex Booth, a Hastings seven-year-old, complained to his mother that he was worried about El Niño and the heat. His Mother replied: "It's no good telling me I can't fix it. If you're worried, write about it." She packed him off to school and he told his teacher, who helped Alex create a weather news report.

He wrote: "El Niño is the warm

phase of a larger phenomenon that affects the Pacific Ocean and the global climate ... El Niño has an impact on ocean temperatures, the speed and strength of ocean currents, the health of coastal fisheries, and local weather."

He was quite right. For oceans, small changes in water temperature can have devastating consequences. Marine heat waves cause ecosystem collapse and mass mortality of fish and shellfish. This year global sea surface temperatures continue to rise – an anomaly rapidly breaking records.

Scientists are concerned that tipping points have been crossed – critical thresholds which, when exceeded, lead to large and often irreversible changes in the climate system. Heatwaves in 1997, 2015 and even hotter years in 2024/5 have a time-lag effect, accelerating the amount of oceanic heat which is

predicted to cause a 'Super El Niño'.

Sea ice at poles is vital because of the 'albedo' effect. Light-coloured ice reflects sunlight back into space, regulating air and ocean temperature and circulating ocean water. Scientists say that loss of sea will also trigger a tipping point. In February 2023, sea ice around Antarctica reached the lowest level ever observed. The continent is losing ice mass at an average rate of about 150 billion tons per year. Greenland is even worse at about 270 billion tons per year.

The Earth Energy Imbalance (EEI) is the difference between the amount of energy from the sun arriving at the Earth and the amount returning to space. EEI is now at a record 1.36 watts per square metre, which has been equated to 11 Hiroshimas of excess energy per second accumulating in Earth's climate system

caused by protesters climbing motorway gantries.

On the other hand, you have to admire their dedication. Since April last year, more than 2,000 people have been arrested and 138 have spent time in prison according to Just Stop Oil. Many more face harsh retribution as the government's Public Order Act begins to bite. It gives the state widespread new powers to prevent protests, extends suspicionless stop and search, makes 'locking on' a new criminal offence, introduces 'protest banning orders' against citizens, and lowers the threshold defining disruptive protesting.

So who here are the heroes and who the villains? Or in the words of the 17th century rhyme: "The law locks up the man or woman/ Who steals the goose off the common/ But leaves the greater villain loose/ Who steals the common from the goose."

over the past three years.

Europe is currently experiencing an extreme heatwave that is causing wildfires. Here in the UK, we have just experienced the hottest June on record. A heatwave across the western United States broke all-time records in multiple states, with temperatures above 100 degrees Fahrenheit for days on end in some places. Since March, Canada has been experiencing an ongoing record-setting series of wildfires. Smoke from millions of hectares of burning forests drifted across into the USA where on 30 June, the US capital was engulfed in thick smoke.

Ironically a stratospheric wind anomaly is developing over the Equator which is expected to impact the weather along with the El Niño event in the next winter season making it colder in Europe, Canada and North America as a polar vortex is likely to develop.

Species extinctions are accelerating. Nature is declining globally at rates unprecedented in human history, with grave impacts on people around the world now inevitable.

Action on limiting emission and adhering to the IPCC's targets has been ineffective. World governments have constantly misled their citizens that the problem is being dealt with. However, emissions of CO2 and methane continue to rise. The situation is clearly an emergency yet global action is ineffective. We are locked into the paradigm of economic growth. Legislation prevents change. In 1994, the UK government along with several other European countries signed the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT). The ECT allows oil and gas companies to use secret corporate courts to sue governments. When the Italian government introduced a ban on offshore oil drilling, it was sued by UK-based oil and gas company RockHopper, who won £210m.

I am sixty years old and realise that the world that I grew up in no longer exists because the climate has changed. Seven-year-old Alex may be experiencing the coolest summer of his life. When he reaches adulthood, what will the global temperature be? Surely any responsible government would not allow this to continue.

Just Stop Protests

Given the scale of the climate crisis as outlined on this page, KENT BARKER asks what we can and what we should do to combat it.

Let's be quite clear, this government has an absolutely appalling record on combating climate change. Even before Sunak effectively washed his hands of Net Zero, the Tories had given £20bn more in support to fossil fuel producers than those of renewables over the past eight years – a fifth of that money given directly to the fossil fuel industry to support new extraction and mining. It's given the go-ahead for a new deep coal mine in Cumbria. It's extending licences for dozens of new North Sea oil and gas fields. It's slashed subsidies and grants for domestic solar panels. Onshore wind farms

have been on hold since David Cameron, in 2015 as a former minister, accused the PM of effectively blocking any chance of their reintroduction. Now his government appears to be reneging on commitments for gas boilers to be phased out.

It's no wonder that groups like Just Stop Oil have resorted to direct action to protest and publicise the situation. The question is, do you approve of their methods? If you are an arts-lover you may be angry that activists have glued themselves to paintings or thrown tomato soup at old masters. If you are a sports fan you may be irritated that your snooker, rugby, tennis, golf or cricket has been disputed by clouds of orange powder. If you are a motorist you might fume at delays

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COMMENT

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St Fagans National History Museum/Wikipedia



Housing Crisis Solved

As official figures show more than 105,000 people in Britain are living in temporary accommodation, KENT BARKER looks to history to find a solution.

As a small boy growing up in South East London, I well remember the mini-estates of 'prefabs' dotted around Blackheath and Lewisham. Sometimes the rows of bungalows were freshly decorated and had colourful gardens. Others were more neglected. These emergency

solutions to the post-war housing crisis were only designed to be lived in for 10 years, but in the mid 1970s, there were still more than 10,000 being occupied in London alone.

By the end of the Second World War, thousands of British people were homeless. Two million houses had been damaged or destroyed in air raids. In 1945, it was estimated that 750,000 new homes were needed. The labour government embarked on a massive housebuilding programme, but as a temporary solution they commissioned thousands of prefabs from various manufacturers. One of the most popular was the Aircraft Industries Research Organisation House (AIROH) which was largely made of aluminium and built in former aircraft factories. They were delivered in four sections that were assembled on site.

Each was single story with a kitchen, bathroom, two bedrooms and living space and each cost £1,600.

Today you can buy a small, prefabricated, flat-pack house for as little as £11,000. Groundworks, increased insulation, heat pumps and solar panels will obviously push up the cost, but bulk buying would generate economies of scale. So here, surely, is the solution to the housing crisis. The government invests a few billion pounds and commissions, say, 100,000 prefabs and within six months or a year they will have gone a very long way to solving Britain's problem of homelessness.

Now you may feel there is a fundamental flaw in this argument. Just where are these thousands of bungalows supposed to go? We no longer have the bomb sites that were around in 1945, and Tories,



Quick-Garden

LEFT: AIROH prefab ABOVE: A modern prefab marketed as a granny annex by QuickGarden

in particular, might cavil at estates of bungalows dotted across the countryside or covering the green belt. Well, instead of building estates, how about spreading them round the country? Britain has around 9,000 towns and cities. If each took a dozen prefabs you've almost solved the problem. Surely councils could be required to find the necessary land. But there are also 6,116 villages in the UK, each of which might perhaps accommodate a prefab or two.

And if people wanted to live in the country, then how about asking some medium-sized or large farms to find a bit of space? Most are already in receipt of the £1.6 billion government grants through ELMS – the Environmental Land Management Scheme. It could be a requirement that those getting the biggest pay-outs provide a couple of plots for prefabs for the homeless. It might even help towards solving the shortage of agricultural labour if more people lived on farms and saw what was involved!

Apart from complaining about the possible social engineering aspect of this, I'll bet a few may be wondering about the financing of my new prefabs. All this talk of

investing 'a few billion pounds' surely means higher taxes? Well, not necessarily. Local Authorities are already paying considerable sums to provide temporary accommodation for homeless people. Those 'rents' could go to pay back government loans. How about the issue of a special government bond to raise the capital needed to manufacture the homes and prepare the sites, linking them up to services and utilities? Interest rates could be attractively above those available for savings accounts. Rents from those in work, or the benefit payments from those not waged, then go to pay the interest and service the loan.

In many cases the post-war prefabs proved very popular. Some, it is true, were cold and leaky. Some were built of asbestos panels. But for many people it was the first time they had an indoor toilet, let alone a bathroom. And most had some space at the back for hanging out the washing as well as a small front garden which could be cultivated. As we have seen it was designed as a short-term solution that actually had a life span of more than double that originally intended.

I know people in Hastings who have actively chosen to save money by living in some of the static caravan parks dotted around. Those can have considerable problems in terms of year-round occupancy, high ground rents and minimal insulation. My prefab scheme could avoid those issues and, because the concept is to spread them round rather than concentrate them in parks, the visual impact on the environment would be greatly lessened. And I'll bet that many of those 100,000 souls currently in temporary accommodation in Britain would welcome a home of their own. How many would care that it was a prefabricated one?

Suzanne Pannell/Prefab Museum



AIROH Prefab construction in Plymouth



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 11 August
Seafront Session: DJ
Dave Valentine
The Albion, George St, 3.00pm
The Other Band
Oscar's on the Square,
Lower Promenade, Warrior
Square, 3.30pm
McNiff's Folk Sundowner
The Jenny Lind, High St, 5.00pm
Bliss Music Open Mic
Plough Inn, Priory Rd, 8.00pm
James Barrie + Twitch
+ Clara & Luke
The Pig, White Rock, 8.00pm
Martin Blackman
Pissarro's, South Terrace, 8.30pm

Saturday 12 August
Noughty 90s DJs
Hastings Pier, 12noon
Longshore Drifters
Oscar's on the Square,
Lower Promenade, Warrior
Square, 5.00pm
Fire in the Meadow
The Jenny Lind, High St, 6.00pm
B-Sides Beside the Seaside
with DJs Wendy May, Nick
Saloman, Haydn Ackerley,
Matt Le Chat, Dan Willett
& Southcoast Don Arden
Bullet Coffee House,
Robertson St, 6.30pm
Aquarius International
Club: 1973 Special
White Rock Hotel, White
Rock, 8.00pm
Dog of Man + This Living Wreck
The Pig, White Rock, 8.00pm
Brain Bushman Band
East Hastings Sea Angling
Association, The Stade, 8.45pm

Sunday 13 August
Alison Adamas
East Hastings Sea Angling
Association, The Stade, 2.00pm
Second Sundays at the
Hoxley hosted by Tom Cole
with special guests Danny
Goring + Tim Hoyte
The Hoxley, London Rd, 3.00pm
6th Anniversary Double Bill:
MG Boulter + Silver Hill
The Stag, All Saints St, 4.00pm
Los Twangueros
The Jenny Lind, High St, 4.00pm
Fire in the Meadow
The Royal Standard, East
Beach St, 5.30pm
Vinyl Night
The Jenny Lind, High St, 7.00pm

Tuesday 15 August
Irish Night
The Albion, George St, 8.30pm
Traditional Folk Session
The Stag, All Saints St, 8.30pm

Wednesday 16 August
Simon&thePope: Avant Bavard

Kino-Teatr, Norman Rd, 6.00pm
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
Medicine Wagon
The Seadog, Station Rd, 8.30pm

Thursday 17 August
OB Sounds: Shoulder
2 Shoulder Takeover -
Garage, Drum n Bass,
Jungle (Age 14-17 Only)
The Observer Building,
Cambridge Rd, 6.00pm
Live Jazz: The Jazz
Organisation plus Special
Guest Paul Eshelby (Trumpet)
The NUR, Robertson St, 8.00pm
Open Mic with James
& Meredith
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
Rattlebag Sing-a-Round
The Stag, All Saints St, 8.30pm

Friday 18 August
McNiff's Folk Sundowner
The Jenny Lind, High St, 5.00pm
The Cavaliers
The Piper, Norman Rd, 8.00pm
Vexxed
Pissarro's, South Terrace, 8.30pm

Saturday 19 August
Soul-Jazz Morning: The
Bongo Helix Quartet
The Crown, All Saints St, 10.00am
Hidden Beach Music Fest:
Afrobrazilika + Aba Shanti
+ Awale Jant Band + More
The Oval, Bohemia Rd, 12noon
Seafront Session: DJ Mark Day
The Albion, George St, 3.00pm
Bushman Brothers
The Jenny Lind, High St, 6.00pm
Nomad Shakes
The Piper, Norman Rd, 7.00pm
DJs Southcoast Don Arden
& Haydn Ackerley
The Piper, Norman Rd, 9.00pm
Mark Wright: Neil
Diamond Tribute
East Hastings Sea Angling
Association, The Stade, 8.45pm
Punk Night
The Carlisle, Pelham St, 9.00pm
Silent Disco
The Brass, Havelock St, 10.00pm

Sunday 20 August
Skinny Sunday: headlining
Buddha Triangle.
Stade Open Space,
12.00pm-10.00pm

One-day music festival
curated and produced by HFT
Youth Curatorial Panel.
Ocean Colour Scene
De La Warr Pavilion,
Bexhill, 7.00pm
Vibe 5
The Jenny Lind, High St, 4.00pm
Charlie Austen & Roger Askew
The Stag, All Saints St, 5.00pm
The Haystingers
The Albion, George St, 7.00pm

Tuesday 22 August
Albion Skiffle Company
The Albion, George St, 8.30pm
Traditional Folk Session
The Stag, All Saints St, 8.30pm

Wednesday 23 August
Open Mic with James & Jules
Tin Tins, Robertson St, 8.00pm
Jam Night
Pissarro's, South Terrace, 8.00pm
Bertie Whuksters:
Ukulele Jam Session
The Seadog, Station Rd, 8.00pm

Thursday 24 August
Live Jazz: The Jazz
Organisation plus
Special Guest Robbie
Robinson (Trumpet)
The NUR, Robertson St, 8.00pm
Open Mic with James & Meredith
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 11 August
Dali in New York, plus
Un Chien Andalou
Electric Palace, High St, 7.30pm
Oppenheimer, 3.00pm
Barbie, 11.00am, 7.30pm
Kino-Teatr, Norman Rd, 3.00pm

Saturday 12 August
Sunset Screening:
Back to the Future
The Lawn, De La Warr
Pavilion, 8.00pm
Rebel Dykes
Electric Palace, High St, 7.30pm
Oppenheimer
Kino-Teatr, Norman Rd, 3.00pm

Sunday 13 August
Dali in New York, plus
Un Chien Andalou,
11.00am
Rockers London (+Director's
Q&A), 2.30pm
Electric Palace, High St, 11.00am
Oppenheimer
Kino-Teatr, Norman Rd, 2.00pm

Thursday 17 August
One Fine Morning
Electric Palace, High St,
11.00am, 7.30pm
Oppenheimer
Kino-Teatr, Norman Rd, 7.30pm

Friday 18 August
Polite Society
Electric Palace, High St, 7.30pm
Squaring the Circle
Kino-Teatr, Norman Rd,
3.00pm, 7.30pm

Saturday 19 August
Sunset Screening: Moana
The Lawn, De La Warr
Pavilion, 8.00pm
Polite Society
Kino-Teatr, Norman Rd,
3.00pm, 7.30pm

Sunday 20 August
Wandering...But Not Lost
Electric Palace, High St, 11.00am
Squaring the Circle
Kino-Teatr, Norman Rd, 2.00pm
South Coast Film Festival
Stables Theatre, The
Bourne, 10.30am

Thursday 24 August
Mad About the Boy:
The Noel Coward Story
Electric Palace, High St,
11.00am, 7.30pm
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 11 August
The House of Kaleidoscopes
Archer Lodge, Charles Rd,
8.00pm
Shelf Life
Stables Theatre,
The Bourne, 7.30pm
The Wizard of Oz
(presented by The White
Rock Summer Youth Project)
White Rock Theatre, 7.30pm

Saturday 12 August
The House of Kaleidoscopes
Archer Lodge, Charles Rd, 8.00pm
Cherry Liquor
Forbidden Fruit, Grand
Parade, 9.30pm
Shelf Life
Stables Theatre, The Bourne,
2.30pm, 7.30pm
The Wizard of Oz
(presented by The White
Rock Summer Youth Project)
White Rock Theatre,
2.30pm, 7.30pm

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LISTINGS

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Sunday 13 August

The House of Kaleidoscopes
Archer Lodge, Charles Rd, 8.00pm
Ireland the Show
White Rock Theatre, 7.30pm

Monday 14 August

The House of Kaleidoscopes
Archer Lodge, Charles Rd, 8.00pm

Tuesday 15 August

The House of Kaleidoscopes
Archer Lodge, Charles Rd, 8.00pm

Wednesday 16 August

The House of Kaleidoscopes
Archer Lodge, Charles Rd, 8.00pm
Bavard Bar
Kino-Teatr, Norman Rd, 7.30pm

Thursday 17 August

The House of Kaleidoscopes
Archer Lodge, Charles Rd, 8.00pm
The Tenant
Stables Theatre, The Bourne, 7.30pm

Friday 18 August

The House of Kaleidoscopes
Archer Lodge, Charles Rd, 8.00pm
Martha d'Arthur
Forbidden Fruit, Grand Parade, 9.30pm
The Tenant
Stables Theatre, The Bourne, 7.30pm
Cirque: The Greatest Show
White Rock Theatre, 5.00pm

Saturday 19 August

The House of Kaleidoscopes
Archer Lodge, Charles Rd, 8.00pm
Dave Lynn
Forbidden Fruit, Grand parade, 9.30pm
La Cenerentola (Cinderella)
by Barefoot Opera
Rye Creative Centre, New Rd, Rye, 7.00pm
The Tenant
Stables Theatre, The Bourne, 7.30pm

Sunday 20 August

The House of Kaleidoscopes
Archer Lodge, Charles Rd, 8.00pm
Sarah & Duck's Big Top Birthday
White Rock Theatre, 1.00pm, 4.00pm

Monday 21 August

The House of Kaleidoscopes
Archer Lodge, Charles Rd, 8.00pm
Sarah & Duck's Big Top Birthday
White Rock Theatre, 11.00am, 3.30pm

Tuesday 22 August

The House of Kaleidoscopes
Archer Lodge, Charles Rd, 8.00pm

Thursday 24 August
Three Pieces by Pinter
– Landscape, Victoria Station, Night

Stables Theatre, The Bourne, 7.30pm
Joe Pasquale: The New Normal – 40 Years of Cack!
White Rock Theatre, 7.30pm

ART

Abraham Osorio & The Young Creatives Collective

Until 31 August 2023
Rooftop Foyer, De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill
A Moment in Time
Until 30 September 2023
Stables Theatre Gallery, The Bourne

Brian Aris – Two Worlds

Until 12 August 2023
Lucy Bell Gallery, Norman Rd
Decade – Folio 14 Artists
22 August until 3 September
Hastings Arts Forum, Marina

Edges and Elements: Wendy Smith and Steve Betts

Until 20 August 2023
Hastings Arts Forum
Jack in the Green 40
Until 6 October 2023
Hastings Museum and Art Gallery, Bohemia Rd
Katie Cuddon – Night Portraits
Until 3 September 2023
De La Warr pavilion, Bexhill (Artist Talk with Katie Cuddon and Hettie Judah 19 August, 2.00pm)

Matthew Radford: Succession

From 19 August 2023
Kino-Teatr Gallery, Norman Rd
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
Portraits of the Dove Café
Until 17 September 2023
Hastings Museum and Art Gallery, Bohemia Rd

Re-Imagined

Until 26 August 2023
North Staircase, De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill
Rip It Up (Group Show)
Until 30 August 2023
St Andrews Mews

Rossanne Pellegrino – Extremely Supernormal

Until 12 August 2023
Solaris, Norman Rd
Ruby Cox & Tom O'Brien
(18 August Cheese & Wine, Live Music)
Until 31 August 2023
His Place Community Church, Robertson St
Soutine/Kossof
Until 24 September 2023

Hastings Contemporary, The Stade
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

Saturday 12 August Football

Hastings United v Cheshunt – Isthmian League Premier Division
Pilot Field 3.00pm
First match of the season for new-look United team against Hertfordshire visitors relegated from National League South in April. Good crowd expected.

Saturday 19 August

Cricket
Hastings & St Leonards Priory v West Chilmington & Thakeham – Sussex Cricket League Div 2
Claremont School 12.30pm
Key contest between promotion challengers to be played under limited overs format
Crowhurst Park v Chichester Priory Park – Sussex Cricket League Div 2
Crowhurst Park 12.30pm

Sunday 20 August

Football
Hastings United Women v Newhaven – London & South East Regional League
Pilot Field 2.00pm
First league match for United women under new manager Tom Young

EVENTS

Summer Reading Challenge
To encourage children aged 4 to 11 to read for pleasure over the summer holidays. Goal set by East Sussex Libraries to read each week over the 6-week break. There's a prize for every book read and a medal and certificate after sixth book read!
your.eastsussex.gov.uk/2023/07/03/join-the-summer-reading-challenge

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-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
[#generalhavelockhastings](https://www.facebook.com/generalhavelockhastings)

The Seadog Quiz

32, Station Rd, Hastings, 8.00pm
1st place - £50 bar tab
[@TheSeaDogHastings](http://TheSeaDogHastings)

Every Tuesday**OHPS Original Old Town Guided Walks**

Meet by the café on the West Hill 2.30pm (until 26 Sept)
£6. Prebook online or at Fisherman's Museum
ohps.org.uk/walks
5IVE Rhythms
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.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.org.uk

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

Wednesday 9 August**Memories Lost & Forgotten**

Hastings Fishermen's Museum
Rock a Nore, Hastings, 4.30pm, £6 from museum
hastingsfishermensmuseum@googlemail.com

Violin workshop

11.00am-1.00pm
Kino-Teatr, Norman Rd, St Leonards
aysenulucan@hotmail.com

Saturday 19 August**Rye & District Country Show**

Elm Tree Farm, Icklesham, Winchelsea TN36 4BH
eventbrite.co.uk

Fairlight Hall Open Garden

11.00am-3.30pm, £10 or £22.50 with lunch
As part of Nation Garden Scheme, take in the magnificent horticultural sites such as the Tropical Border, Glasshouse and Walled Garden.
eventbrite.co.uk

Saturday 19/26 August**All about the Sea:****Porcelain Class**

Classes start at 11am, 1pm and 3pm
Pelham's Kings Rd, St Leonards
Create sea-inspired night lights/vases with Liz Emtage
Make your porcelain vessel on Saturday 11 and glaze on Saturday 18. Fun for adults and children alike. Each class approx.1.5 hours. From £50.
pelhamsonline.com

Tuesday 22 August**Circus Vegas – Hastings**

12.00 pm
Glyne Gap Field, Bexhill
a new death-defying circus is touring in the United

**Crossword Solution No 232:****Across:** 1. Sucker 3. Intend 4. Eminem (anagram) **Down:** 1. Strike 2. (Tou)R and om(it)

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LISTINGS

Kingdom, celebrating 255 years of circus performances
eventbrite.co.uk

Thursday 24 August**Hypno-Magick Nights**

19.30pm at the bar
The White Rock Hotel, Hastings,
A series of fascinating,
educational and interactive talks
on Hypnosis for the curious to the
expert. Expect the unexpected.
eventbrite.co.uk

Saturday 26 August**Moonlight & Memories Walk**

Start time 8.00pm
25 Upper Maze Hill, St
Leonards TN38 0LB
Celebrate life, love and friendship
and remember loved ones at St
Michael's Hospice's Moonlight and
Memories Walk. Start and finish
at the hospice. Registration £15.

CLASSES

Mondays**Slow and Easy Fitness**

11.30am-12.30pm, £3
Bewellfit, 9, The Ridge,
TN34 2AA
Exercise for older adults
07817 144812:
bodymoveshastings.com

Drum Club

4.15pm-5.15pm, £6.50
West Hill Community Centre
For 15-16 year olds,
booking essential.
juliansambadrums@gmail.com

Art Classes, including**Life Drawing**

10.00am-12.15pm and
12.45pm-3.00pm
Ore Community Centre,
455 Old London Rd, Hastings
£10.50 per session
sjflack.art

Darragh Dance

5.30pm-7.00pm, £10,
£5 concessions
Afri-Co-Lab, 3 Marine
Court, St Leonards
Get 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 4HJ
New 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

Candlelit Yoga

Hastings 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**Ore Youth Club Sessions**

4.30pm-6.00pm
Ore Community Centre
sarah.adams@freshvisions.org.uk
Bev 07732823800

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](https://www.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, TN35 4AD
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@laughyourselftohealth.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](https://www.facebook.com/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
kimhaviland@gmail.com

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LISTINGS

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Therapeutic Yoga

12.30pm-1.30pm
Hastings Centre, The Ridge,
Hastings TN34 2SA
£7 – All abilities welcome
ninayoga.co.uk

Legs Bums & Tums

1.00pm-2.00pm
Isabel Blackman Centre,
Winding St.
One of several classes
covering all topics.
isabelblackmancentre.co.uk

The Class Choir

7.00pm-9.00pm
The Unitarian Church,
South Terrace, Hastings
Friendly, Fun Uplifting
Women's choir
Free taster sessions, no music
reading or auditions.
theclassechoir@gmail.com

Sketchers/plein air group

First Wednesday of each month
9.00am start: Outside Hastings
Contemporary Gallery
11.00am reconvene: Eat@
TheStade for refreshments
and discussion
meetup.com/south-coast-skyers

Thursdays**Tilekiln Youth Club Sessions**

5.30-7.00pm
Tilekiln Community Centre
sarah.adams@freshvisions.org.uk
Bev 07732823800

Co-working social media Sessions

10am The Crown, 64-66
All Saints St, Hastings
Free group working sessions for
creative business owners and
freelancers designed to help you
spend focused, productive time
creating and sharing content.
Insta: @brassbeemarketing,
catherine@brassbeemarketing.com

Tai Chi for Health and Relaxation

10.30am-11.30am, £5
St John's Parish Hall,
Brittany Rd
Stuart 07961 949715

Nature Walks with HESNHS

Times and venues vary.

hastingsnaturalhistory.org
Meditation and Breathwork with Jung-ui

7.30pm-8.30pm, £55
West Hill Community Centre
A four-week course.

jung-ui.co.uk

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.
hastingtownsingers.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.
lucy.jenner@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

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**Broomgrove Youth Club Sessions**

5.30-7.00pm
Broomgrove Community Centre
sarah.adams@freshvisions.org.uk
Bev 07732823800

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

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

Horntye Club Room,
Horntye 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

Sketchers / plein air group

First Wednesday of each month
4.00pm start: South side,
The Stade open space
6.00pm reconvene:

East Hastings Angling Club,
The Stade for refreshments
and discussion
meetup.com/south-coast-skyers

Sunday Brunch-time

Kid's Art Club

10.00am-12.00pm, £5, Drop-
in or stay full 2 hours

Outside the Smokeshack,
St Andrew's Mews,

Waldegrave Rd, Hastings
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c.hwatts.art@gmail.com



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FEATURES



Photos: Robert Royston, a member of XR Grandparents and Elders

A Journey Into Activism

JILL KAYE moved down from London to St. Leonards 16 years ago and loves living so close to the sea. She used to run a gardening business and then a plant nursery but has now stopped work and is eagerly awaiting her state pension! She has an allotment and enjoys walking and sea swimming in summer - when the water's clean enough!

In April, as a brand-new member of Extinction Rebellion, I took part in The Big One, the four-day protest in London, alongside tens of thousands of others who are frustrated by the Government's woefully inadequate response to the climate crisis.

The decision to join XR had taken a while: according to the mainstream media they were trouble-makers and extremists. While I sympathised with their concerns and admired their courage in taking to the streets, I felt uncomfortable about their disruptive tactics. I was not prepared to glue myself to the pavement or get arrested.

But my anxiety had been increasing the more I heard about the environmental crises we're facing. Apart from donating to Greenpeace, signing online petitions and fretting to friends who felt the same way, I had done very little to make a difference. I felt powerless and inadequate.

JOINING XR

Then I heard about The Big One and read about XR's switch to non-confrontational tactics so I started exploring their website. I was impressed by the clear presentation of the facts behind climate change, and the positive solutions available. Clearly a lot of time and thought had gone into planning the event. The first of

their two key demands – no new oil and gas licences to be granted – was a no-brainer; the second was less clear – the setting up of citizens assemblies, but I liked their motto: 'Unite to Survive' – this was all about reaching out to other groups sharing similar concerns. They were working closely with the police to ensure the whole event passed off peacefully and would not disrupt the London Marathon on the Sunday. This all sounded totally reasonable as well as inspiring, and I wanted to be a part of it. I signed up for the first two days – my first step towards positive action.

I also joined the local Hastings XR group and met a few members on the train to London. Among them was Grace, a seasoned activist who was sceptical about the current change of tactics; Jane, wearing a white coat to show her status as a scientist; La, a worried grandmother of five in her late eighties who had been arrested three times; and Jaen, who disappeared into the Ladies at Charing Cross and emerged transformed into the spirit of spring in a long flowing robe decorated with XR logos and bees and wearing a garland of foliage round her head.

THE BIG ONE

Westminster had been turned into a cross between a street festival and pop-up open-air learning forum. 200 different organisations and loose coalitions were there: big players such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth but also trade unions and faith groups, health workers and teachers, grandparents and elders, pacifists and climate scientists. Various Hubs under headings such as Education, Health and Science offered a space where speakers and



experts shared their knowledge about the impacts of climate change. There were drummers, singers, processions, stalls bedecked with bunting, and people of all ages and ethnicities learning and connecting. And in the background, Big Ben struck the hours, a solemn reminder that this is the heart of power and that time is running out.

I listened to impassioned speakers at the Writers' Corner, including Zadie Smith, Ben Okri and others who are using the power of their pens to change hearts and minds. Some of the speeches and poetry moved me to tears or anger.

Later I took part in an experimental Citizens Assembly – an alternative system to the way power has traditionally been held, in which ordinary people would collaborate and work towards finding solutions to the problems faced by our society.

At the Families Hub, young children were encouraged to draw pictures inspired by nature or listen to stories and play games focussed on animals.

The sudden appearance of the Red Rebels spread a hush through the crowd: almost biblical in their apocalyptic full-length red robes and head-dresses, with death-whitened faces and unsmiling scarlet

lips, they processed silently, their arms held out in supplication or despair.

On the main stage, a series of inspiring speakers delivered their messages of hope and anger, each one stressing the urgency of their particular cause: Animal Rising calling for an end to the exploitation of animals; Stop Cambo fighting proposals to open up a huge new oil field in the North Sea; the Land Workers' Alliance working towards a better food system and use of land; a Professor of Entomology highlighting the vital importance of insects; and Chris Packham, the wildlife TV presenter and hero to many, who urged each person to step up their actions to help protect our planet before it's too late.

EARTH DAY

The main event of Saturday was the biodiversity march to mark Earth Day, an annual global event which started in 1970 and marked the beginning of the modern environmental movement. Tens of thousands of people coalesced into an enormous slow-moving snake which wove its way along a circular route from Parliament Square, passing austere government buildings and completely taking over the main roads normally choked with traffic.

I was bowled over with the imagination, creativity and humour evident in the amazing costumes and masks of animals, birds and insects. Colourful flags were carried high above the heads of the crowd and long banners supported by many hands stretched across the width of the road. And all the way there was drumming and chanting. I had had no time to make a banner or a costume but I bore aloft a 'tree' – a large branch hurriedly lopped off one of the shrubs in my garden before I left home.

The march ended with a mass die-in to represent all the species lost and facing extinction. Everyone lay down in the road for ten minutes of silence apart from the sound of multiple bird songs downloaded and played on thousands of mobile phones.

MEDIA BIAS

This was an overwhelmingly positive experience for me – I found it uplifting, sobering, inspiring, informative. Due to the months of hard work leading up to and during the event, there was no trouble throughout the entire four days. So it was disappointing to see that it attracted scant media attention: as a happy, peaceful event, it didn't hit the headlines. I have never before experienced first-hand the negative bias in most of our news coverage.

THE AFTERMATH

Following the event, I started a journey of discovery, exploring issues sparked off over those two days and filling gaps in my knowledge. The XR website is a rich source of information and support, offering talks and training on many subjects. Joining XR is not just about direct action: there are countless ways that everyone can contribute whatever their skills or knowledge.

CARING ABOUT THE PLANET

And far from being intimidating, I've found all the members in my local group are supportive and friendly. XR is a broad church which embraces people from different backgrounds and political opinions. While it is founded on principles of inclusivity and kindness, there is no ideology to sign up to. The one thing members agree on is that change is needed, and fast. These are ordinary people who care deeply about the future of our planet and have stepped up to try to make a difference.

■ Contact Hastings and St Leonards Xtinction Rebellion xrhl.org/contact



ARTS

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RyeJazz



Diffident yet defiant – the individualism of Mike Farris

VICTORIA KINGHAM in conversation with the blues/rock/gospel singer about his music, his life, and his spiritual search.

MIKE FARRIS made his first album as a vocalist with The Screamin' Cheetah Wheelies, having picked up a guitar at the age of 21, when he had almost died from a drug overdose. In recovery, living with his dad, he discovered his talent. He was a competent guitarist after three months, and after six months had written most of the songs on the first Screamin' Cheetah Wheelies album. Listening now to that quintessentially 90's album: post-punk, semi-apocalyptic, heavy blues-rock, it's hard to associate the sound with the comparatively reticent voice on the phone from Nashville, Tennessee.

He is firm in his disassociation with the band. "When I left that band, those guys didn't pursue music," he says. "They got regular jobs. We aren't associated now except for a few shows. I wanted to explore my own musical direction, and they wanted just to continue as they were, so we went our separate ways." Almost thirty years and a few grammy awards

later, Farris remains true to his cause. His solo albums are all different, all carefully produced by him. Taken consecutively, they seem to tell part of his story.

KNOW GOOD NO HOW

Goodnight Sun [2002], he tells me, "was the first solo album I had made, and I was clean and sober for the first time in my life". The songs are mostly originals: *Know Good No How* is beautiful, with a haunting, Leonard Cohen-like lyric. "It was one of those songs," he recalls, "that come to you like some kind of mirror or purging. In a matter of minutes, everything was written. You just hold the pencil and let – other forces – say what they want. A higher force could be speaking to me, or it's conversations that I'm having with people in general. It was about my headspace at the time, coming out of addiction and trying to recuperate." Further, he was striving to find his individual voice. Farris has the gift of great songwriters and poets, that of making the conversational seem poetic and vice-versa.

One other very notable number on that album is Johnny Cash's

Folsom Prison Blues. "We weren't a musical family or anything like that," muses Farris. "We didn't have money. We had five records – two Jimmy Rogers, two Tennessee Ernie Ford, and one Johnny Cash. So, it's my earliest imprint; these things you hear as a child are ingrained in you. It struck me as something that hadn't really been expressed in its *essence*. A man who's been locked away and is being tortured by an outside presence, trains going backwards and forwards, reminding him of his confinement for eternity. Dark, human condition subject matter, that's what resonated with me."

SALVATION IN LIGHTS

Salvation in Lights (2007) was his first foray into the kind of biblical expression he has become known for. He had relapsed into drug dependence and was embarking on another long period of recovery. "Music was a dangerous place for me, and I was afraid to get back into it: the drugs, the alcohol, they're all

part of the lifestyle". So his then manager, Rose McGathy, suggested that he make a record of songs he wanted to do. He wasn't even sure what that was any more. "She said, 'Just do what you love – all that stuff you play around the house.' I said, 'That's just old gospel music, nobody wants to hear that,' but she said, 'It doesn't matter, from now on, we'll make the music we want to make.'"

It was recorded in Nashville in three sessions, "and it felt like something kind of special. The best thing," he continues, "was that Rose then knew her belief in me was justified." They both knew, and had discussed, that she had had a terminal diagnosis, and had compared their relative existential positions – he at a new beginning, she at the end. The album was released by INO, a Christian record label. He knew little about 'that modern Christian stuff' at the time, but INO believed that people should hear his music. It won a swathe of 'album of the year'

awards locally and nationally and re-launched his career.

SOME SORT OF SANITY

I ask him about *Devil Don't Sleep*. It's an intriguing, evocative song and a great arrangement, lots of expressive, bendy minor chords. Like another number on the same album, *Selah! Selah!* it came to him in a dream. He wakes up and covers post-it notes with lyrics before the dream leaves him. About *Selah!* he confesses: "I didn't know what the word meant! It came out on the post-it note, then I had to look it up. As it turned out, it fit perfectly. We lived in New York City for several years – that's where I met my wife, Julie. So we were there during 9/11. And *Selah! Selah!* [a Biblical word meaning, essentially, take a pause] is a tale of those few days. It's a little bit cryptic, but the whole story is there. I was standing there, in the pit, two days after, looking at what humankind is capable of doing to humankind. That's how that song came about. Ponder on this insan-





no Nashville vibe! Everything that is here, is not from here. People don't know, but Nashville's been the home of Black gospel music for eighty years. The epicentre. My influences were an AM station – no FM. But we got fed everything from country to The Staples Singers.' He has recorded Staples' *I'll Take You There*, and *Good News*, and written *When Mavis Sings*, about her. One other really beautiful song, originally recorded by Bill Withers, is *Hope She'll Be Happier*, on *Silver and Stone* [2018]. It's heart stopping and perfect, so I thought Farris must be singing from personal experience. "No," he says, "It's just been on my list of to-dos for many years. You've got all these songs that you store up, and there's just a few that are other people's that you've always wanted to record. It just relates to the human condition – if there's suffering involved, I have a deep understanding of that. For me it has always been one of those incredibly beautiful songs." I remarked that I had never heard it and didn't know (until I looked it up) that it was a Bill Withers number. "Nobody knows it! I wanted to shine a light on it."

"Do you preach in a church at all?" I ask. "I am the Church! Jesus said we are the Church – you don't need a building! The Church organisation here won't have me to play. They *disapprove* of my music. But that's fine with me. My music and my message are for all people. I came from the street, and the music is meant for the street."

What will he be playing at Rye Jazz Festival? It isn't quite firmed up. The two-hour set will probably be one half solo and another with a band. Is this gig part of a tour? "Touring isn't living," he says. "I don't need that feedback from a crowd like a used to, and I don't enjoy going out and being on the road in a *bus*. I only tour when I go to Europe because I want to get home quickly! This Europe visit is going to be quite different. We're doing a festival in Norway, so Julie is going to fly over, and we're going to Paris." "How's your French?" I ask him. "Non-existent," he laughs, "even though I'm about ninety per cent French blood. Not Creole, I don't think my people came from Louisiana, but I think they immigrated to Virginia. So I'm mainly French and the rest is English. We're even talking about my DNA now!" he laughs. And I think, I really like this guy.

■ Mike Farris will play at Rye International Jazz and Blues Festival in St. Mary's Church, Rye, on Sunday 27 August, 3-5pm.

ity and try to get back to some sort of sanity."

Was he returning to the religious atmosphere of his youth? "Not at all," he tells me. "The South is always about Christian values though – we didn't grow up in the church, but it was always in the air. In my dad's family religion was a spooky, mystical thing, more about there's an angry God, he's ready to blast you into Hell. There was a sorcery and voodooish kind of vibe about it. When I came to God on my own as an adult, that was just me, discovering what I have discovered. I'm not religious. I'm more spiritual, in pursuit of this wonderful God that rules the world in a loving, kind and gentle way. The teachings of Jesus have been bastardised and misused. It's more about getting to the essence of the early Christian followers and believers."

Living near Nashville, had he absorbed the Nashville vibe, the country-and-western thing? "When I was growing up, there was



RyeJazz

The Multi-Dimensional Joe Stilgoe

JOE STILGOE, composer, singer, pianist, educator, all-round entertainer, takes time out of a hectic schedule to talk to VICTORIA KINGHAM about the upcoming Rye jazz and blues festival, old buildings and his new album

Joe Stilgoe is fast becoming a British legend, occupying something of the same niche as his father Sir Richard – radio work, TV, musical direction, composing, improvising, entertaining. His great love is musicals but he has a facility to absorb any song and make it his own. His communicative geniality belies his erudition; in fact he has advanced degrees in music from Southampton University and Trinity Music College London. At Rye Jazz and Blues International Festival on Monday 28 August he will perform an intimate afternoon concert in St. Mary's Church.

How do you feel about performing in a unique 900-year-old religious building?

We (he and his band) tailor each show for a particular place. Performing in a church – jazz and rock musicians worry about who's looking over you, if you see what I mean! But that church is so beautiful, and you can still have fun. It makes you think about playing music that really captures the beauty of the church. Rye is so amazing – people love being in the

town, and the festival takes over the town in a lovely way. We will have Giacomo Smith, the best jazz clarinettist in the world!

[Giacomo Smith has also led the house, and the house band, at the famous Kansas Smitty's club in Broadway Market, Hackney, since 2013].

What will your set consist of?

We're recording a new album of songs based on characters, Entertainers, in September, and we debut it in Ronnie Scott's in October. So in Rye we'll be playing a few of those songs. They concern characters you find in every jazz club: the drunk, the faded movie star, the guy who always goes up to the drummer. Composing these songs we talked around all those people we've met. We wrote the music together and I've written the lyrics, and we collaborated for an entire album. I can't wait to record them – we started writing before lockdown then I diverted to two other projects, and now I'm back to it. I love celebrating the quirky, people that have been forgotten. The songs sound like old favourites, but are modern and new.

Stilgoe loves buildings, and has recorded 'Mr Matcham', a song about the architect Frank Matcham who designed some of our great theatres, including the London Coliseum, the Palladium, the Hackney Empire. "We are lucky to

live where so much of our heritage is still here in the buildings, so maybe it comes out in my lyrics" he remarks. He has played at Rye festival before and was brought up not far away in Sevenoaks. He also regularly records in Hastings.

He has also watched almost all the musicals from which he has recorded songs. Listening to the many albums and singles he has recorded over the last 14 years, and putting those together with his frequent radio and tv appearances, tours, shows, YouTube channels, and other outputs, you'd be forgiven for thinking that he had no time to also compose. But he has a rare ability for instant composition, and his performances usually have an audience request spot. He has embraced the world of the popular song and made it his own, loves the world of entertainment and musicals and theatre and song and everything about them. He is delighted by the gentleness of Rye, the antiquity of the buildings and the church, and the musicality and musicians of Hastings.

■ You can read a full version of this interview our web site at hastingsindependentpress.co.uk. Joe Stilgoe will appear at Rye Jazz and Blues International Festival on Monday 28 August. For full details of the festival and events, go to ryejazz.com.



ARTS

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Photos: Chris Parker



Cinderella: The Eternal Story

VERA BELL is astonished, affected and humbled by a Barefoot Opera production of Rossini's classic *La Cenerentola* in post-modern, post-covid Britain

Imagine a classic farcical comedy: dressing up, disguise, mistaken identities, characters spying on each other, asides to the audience, love, loss, final resolution. Now imagine it updated to the twenty-first century with its super-waste culture, its reliance on joined-up technology and its posturing and virtue-signalling by dishonest politicians, wealthy sycophants, and WAGs.

Put the two together in a faultlessly-reconstructed listed church, and you have something of the message of *La Cenerentola* in an enhanced performance in St John The Evangelist, St. Leonards.

Without a doubt, I have never enjoyed an opera more. Seeing it in the round, characters coming in from all sides and utilising the lovely structure of the church lent it an immediacy that no proscenium could ever project. The char-

acters were dressed in (literally) rags and feathers, including Cinderella's beautiful blue ballgown and headdress.

If this sounds absurd, think again. The singing (in Italian, but 'surtitled' clearly on the church wall with a few thoughtful post-modern additions and knowing anachronisms) was transcendent. Angelina herself was performed by Rachel Deatherage, an American coloratura-soprano with a voice of great power and beauty whom I think we were privileged to see and hear in the early stages of a stellar career. In fact all the main performers, some recent graduates, seem destined for acclaim. Elora Ledger and Jessica Wise were superb step-sisters, singing marvellously while never letting up on their posturing frightfulness. James Beddoe was perfectly cast as an elegant and

accomplished tenor prince Ramiro, while in presenting the bodyguard Dandini, Toki Hamano (dressed like a mafioso complete with shades) projected strength, power, and just a little cynicism into his stentorian baritone. Denver Martin Smith, the one new member of the cast since last year, sang an excellent Don Magnifico, managing a powerful baritone to sound variously fawning, peevish, and self-important.

THE BAREFOOT PRODUCTION

Jenny Miller, the director, spared some time early the next morning to talk about the production. They were to strike the set by midday but she sounded lucid and unhurried. I speculated on how Jenny had managed to achieve the fluidity and integration of production.

"I really like working with Michael Spenceley," she says. "He is a dance choreographer, and we can work together very successfully. An opera singer is three things: an actor, a musician, and a dancer. The whole body is responding to the music, so that even if the action is to slump across the stage and fall in a heap, there is choreography to it. As to the story itself, I just thought about the character, trying to do



good, and thinking about the sisters who I could easily imagine as the kind of people who are obsessed with appearance, wealth, the superficial things of life. There's a dark kernel to the story too, which we didn't explore, the fact that she is being used as a slave." I am prompted to reflect once more on current affairs: modern slavery, or at the very least heavy exploitation of immigrants or vulnerable people at work is still a thing. This story, like many fairy tales, depends heavily on assumed societal wealth and heritage divisions – in this case Cinderella crosses class barriers by being both very good and very beautiful. "The surtitles" continues Miller "were written jointly by myself and my husband. We made them, then updated them. We had to think about how certain words would translate, and rework it."

The musical arrangement is also a factor in the marked artistic unity of this production. "I love the accordion player – I've been obsessed with using the accordion in opera for a long time. It's an instrument that is there to imitate the whole band, so to have it as the poor man's orchestra is a great thing. We had to book the accordionist [Iñigo Mikeleiz Berrade] early as he is so sought-after, but he couldn't do all of the dates." Laurence Panter [pianist and Music Director] has arranged Rossini's forty-odd-piece orchestral score into a four-instrument accompaniment. The opera is very Italian, and the inclusion of the accordion brings to mind, say, Neapolitan street music, but upgraded to complex operatic forms. It's just another instance of Jenny Miller's inspired approach to making accessible opera.

How did she go about finding the extraordinary cast? "London is an absolute hotbed of talent. I have a London Studio, and if you just advertise online in the relevant places (she mentions Opera Forum, Audition Oracle) you get swamped with very talented people. With the amount of available skill and talent, as an artist you have to be very tough." On the other hand, the clarinet player (who also sings Alidoro the philosopher) "has been with Barefoot from the start – someone who could play and sing at that level of accomplishment was difficult to find." Almost unique, I should have thought, listening to Andrew Sparling sing splendidly throughout, and hearing him play both in the accompanying orchestra and on stage in the last scene of the opera

LUCY IN THE SKY WITH DIAMONDS.

How did the idea for the stage set come into being? "The set was very abstract; it grew out of a kind of game we played, Jane Bruce and I – we had been given some strange objects, the platform and the strange tower were given to us, and the circle was from something else. It's an exercise: you're given some shapes and told, turn this into a farmyard. Anyway I wanted the production to be surreal, with a sort of 'Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds' take on it. Jane came up with the idea of turning that tower into something that represented continuance – a sort of tower, beacon, warning – the audience could read into what they want. I see it as some kind of strange space-ship from another realm."

The choruses are drawn from



local people and various informal choirs whom Miller has met during the course of her career. How does she maximise their skill levels? “I do voice work, breathwork, movement work with them, I get them to sing some of the music and decide how it will go.” One of the groups is the Seaview Choir, from a centre for vulnerable adults. “I do project-based work with them, and help with their Christmas fundraiser. We are also working in schools – we had twenty children from Bexhill College doing a whole enactment of the ‘no-hopers’ chorus at the Prince’s court. They loved it!”

This approach translates into the professional productions. “Barefoot always have – however tight the schedule – an hour of warm-ups. About ensemble, we use a lot of theatre and voice and breath and movements to get that ensemble feeling. And we do everything together. We eat together, we don’t just trot off to our separate Marks and Spencers sandwiches. I have to say most opera companies do not have a methodology about this. The ethos of the company is grassroots. We like to take it into intrinsic, surprising venues – schools, churches, local libraries.” This production is going next to the Arcola Theatre in East London as part of Grimeborn, a kind of alternative fringe opera festival, a street version of Glyndebourne.

After this tour, what next? “Next year’s production depends largely on funding. We have an idea, but I don’t want to spook it by talking about it!” About fifty percent of funding for this year’s production came from the Arts Council. “Europe is really the home of opera, it’s a much smaller culture in the UK.” I fervently hope that British opera culture is big enough to accommodate whatever the new Barefoot Opera production might be. If the Arts establishment are attempting to conquer elitism with inclusivity, to be making operatic performance relevant to current audiences, young and old, to be bringing audiences and musicians closer together, they could learn a great deal from the Barefoot approach. This town is fortunate to house such a gifted director, and I look forward keenly to next year’s production.

■ *There is another chance to see La Cenerentola locally: there are performances at Rye Creative Centre on 18 August, and Crowhurst Place, Lingfield, on 3 September. For details, full program and cast, see barefootopera.com/upcoming-events.*



Elijah! Audience at De La Warr Pavillion

Elijah! The Whole Story

VERA BELL at the triumphant finale of the Hastings Philharmonic 2023 season

Whether or not you believe in the authenticity of the Old Testament, the story of the prophet Elijah is vivid and bloodthirsty. Mendelssohn’s Elijah! oratorio incorporates various parts of the prophet’s story, told in tableaux with a cast including Obadiah (another prophet), baddies Queen Jezebel and King Ahab, various angels and a running narrative by a huge chorus. It’s a gloriously dramatic work of power and genius, and hearing it sung so very well in the De La Warr, with its very particular acoustic, brought goosebumps to my flesh and tears to my eyes.

This last concert of the season (a new season starts in one month, as Marcio Da Silva announced) was a tour de force that brought together a 40-strong Philharmonic Orchestra and a 200-strong choral section: the Hastings Philharmonic Choir, the Billingshurst Choral Society, and four guest choirs from Germany, with three guest conductors and a choral director. All were in full splendid voice. The drama and dynamics of the score, the excellence of the De

La Warr acoustics and above all the soaring voices were a sound to cherish. Something about the lush Romantic harmonies, complex voicings, and redeeming narrative of Mendelssohn’s finest achievement will appeal to most audiences, and this particular performance of it must surely be up there with the best.

It was a unique collection of talent by any standards, all the more so because it is concentrated in this area. Marcio Da Silva and his partner Helen May are a combined musical force well-known to residents of Hastings and St. Leonards. Da Silva directs both orchestra and choir, conducts, and sings. Helen May has a magnificent, flexible, expressive soprano voice, and is also general manager and outreach co-ordinator for the Hastings Philharmonic. Anthony Flaum, the tenor, also lives locally, has founded Prologue Opera and is also associate producer of Barefoot Opera.

The evening was carefully choreographed to allow each conductor a section of the whole, but also to sing along with the choir on stage when they were not conducting, an endearing feature of Hastings Philharmonic concerts. The soloists sang from various different positions on and off stage, depending on which character they were voicing. One of the highlights of the evening was the nine-year-old boy treble, Antônio Ulucan da Silva, (continuing the family tradition!) with a glorious, breathtaking, needle-sharp purity of tone. In evidence throughout were the sheer joy of the choirs



Fiona Myall and Stefani Trendafilova, oboes

and orchestra and the enthusiasm and skill of all the conductors and choir leaders. A mighty accomplishment.

■ *Full details of the narrative and all the musicians can be found here: hastingsphilharmonic.com/30th-july-23*

Photos: Peter Mould



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ARTS

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

Photos: Emily Louise Hendy



Alison Claire France and Visual Communication

MARK WALTER writes: I recently had the chance to interview Alison Claire France about her upcoming exhibition at The Rogue Gallery in St Leonards. We talked about her early artistic influences and processes, and how her deafness has heightened her visual awareness.

Alison, what were your early artistic influences and what artists have you been influenced by?

My family influenced my passion for art, especially two aunts. They nurtured my artistic interests and encouraged my creativity. While raising my daughters single-handedly, I took a temporary break from art to focus on parental responsibilities. As they grew more independent, my passion for art was rekindled and I found liberation and rejuvenation. The works of Nalani Malani, William Kentridge, and Nancy Spero have deeply influenced me with their themes of diaspora, belonging, and violence. Drawing from their unique perspectives and techniques, I express my emotions and experiences, creating artwork that resonates with the audience.

You have lived in different countries. Could you tell me a bit more about how that has affected you and your art, and how long you have lived in the local area?

Living in different countries has had a transformative impact on both my personal life and art. Frequent relocations due to my father's job exposed me to diverse cultures and landscapes world-

wide, shaping my artistic style and perspectives. From Australia to England, then South Africa, I gained a deeper understanding of various traditions and ways of life. My international exposure, however, sparked a longing to connect with my British roots, influenced by captivating stories from my great-aunt from British folklore and mythology.

Studying art history, particularly the Italian Renaissance at the University of Queensland, left a lasting impression on my creative process. Renaissance artists' techniques and expressions, with their sense of timeless beauty and craftsmanship, continue to inspire my work. As I delved into the artistic wonders of Europe, I also discovered disturbing aspects of British art history, and was inspired to use my art to address deeper emotions and societal issues.

Now, living in St Leonards for the past four years, the calming presence of the sea has become a constant source of inspiration, infusing my artwork with serenity and fluidity.

What is your process, making mainly large works? Do you work in the gallery or is all your work done in the studio? And how has your practice developed over the previous years?

My preference for creating large works of art is influenced by the sense of freedom and unrestricted expression it allows during the process. Working on a grand scale may be challenging but is essential to my creative flow. I prefer to work spontaneously, tapping into

my instincts and emotions to express myself freely on the canvas.

After a 20-year hiatus, reconnecting with my passion for art has revitalised my vision and provided a fresh perspective on my work. I currently work in my cold garage, where I can spread out and fully embrace the large canvases, bringing life and expression to my creations. Although I haven't exhibited in galleries yet, it is my future aspiration. Presenting large-scale works in gallery settings would enhance the impact of my art, allowing viewers to experience the full magnitude of my expression. I also plan to create smaller-scale works for purchase.

I am eager to expand my art into commercial establishments with spacious settings. I aim to delve deeper into the impact of these large artworks on the wider public—other areas to explore are public spaces like subways and transport interchanges, engaging commuters with large paintings. Additionally, office and hotel buildings provide great opportunities for my work, encouraging viewers to pause, reflect, and contemplate issues like migration, climate change, the sense of belonging. My artistic process involves embracing spontaneity and the vast canvas space. Through this, I want to leave an indelible mark on the art world and connect with a broader audience.

In your biography you mention your deafness. How long have you been deaf and how do you think it has affected your work?

My profound deafness since birth hasn't directly affected my artistic work. Art as a form of expression transcends physical barriers, speaking for itself regardless of an artist's hearing ability. Despite being unable to hear, I feel no different from others. My heightened visual awareness compensates, allowing me to notice intricate details and evoke emotions through my art. And my deafness



has empowered me to embrace visual communication, enabling profound connections with others. It has become integral to my artistic identity, enriching my perception and expression and proving that art can transcend barriers.

I see things differently and communicate visually. I understand emotions through body language and facial expressions. I embrace those who use gestures and movements to articulate their communications, such as in Italy and Spain. In Britain, I find people limit their visual expressions, recalling the notion of the 'stiff upper lip' mode of speaking, which I cannot understand. I also need light to be able to communicate, as in darkness I hear nothing, but sense movement.

Apart from the current exhibition coming up what are your plans regarding your art and future exhibitions?

I am grateful to the owner and director of the Rogue Gallery, who recognised my talent. Beyond this I have exciting aspirations for my artistic journey. I aim to participate in more exhibitions to showcase my work and shed light on experiences of migration, and on climate change. Through landscape and seascape art, I will continue to explore the diaspora theme and to advocate for

environmental preservation. My art promotes inclusivity, bridges cultural boundaries, and raises awareness of pressing global challenges.

In the digital age, I want to encourage younger generations to be visually aware and connect with the world's beauty. I actively seek art residencies to collaborate and enrich my artistic practice with diverse perspectives. My future revolves around exhibiting my art, focusing on meaningful themes, pursuing fine arts in a higher education setting, and seeking further opportunities through residencies and commissions to create a positive impact, to foster a deeper appreciation for art and our shared planet.

I plan to bring together the cultural influences of my upbringing in Australia, South Africa and the UK and combine my artworks into an animated format that can be projected onto buildings using large-scale presentations. I also want to see others who create music that can enhance my paintings and also present the way I 'hear' the world and for those who are hearing to understand what silence means for me.

■ Alison Claire France will exhibit at Rogue Gallery, 65 Norman Road St. Leonards, from 11 to 27 August 2023.



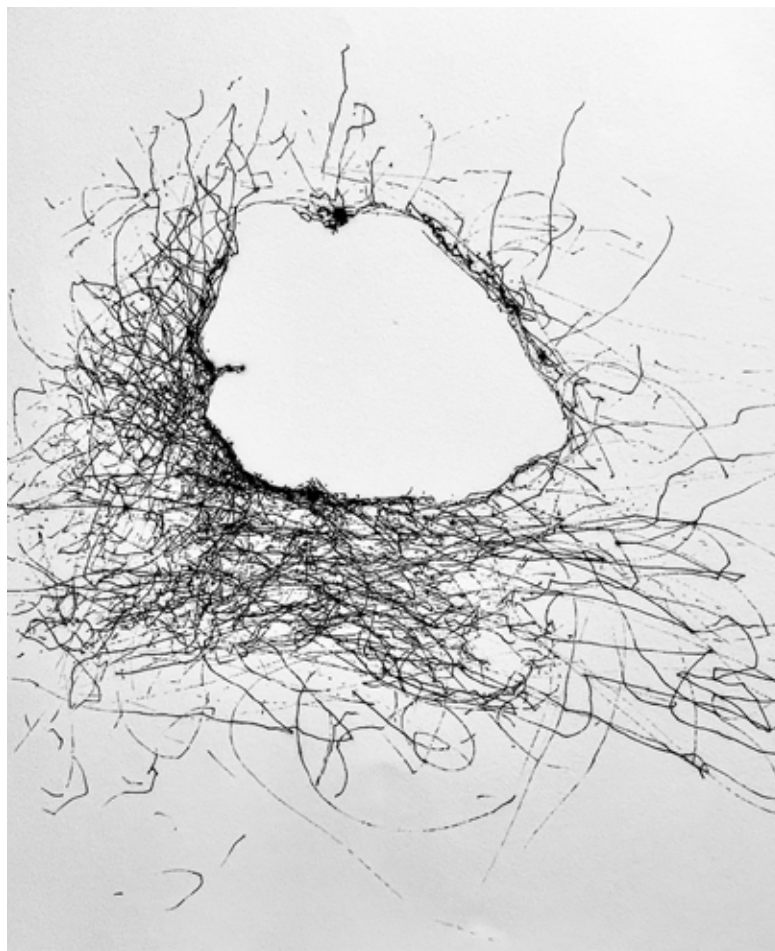
Rocking The Boat: The Presence of Absence

MARK WALTER in conversation with Anne Lydiat

A couple of weeks ago I was at Hastings Arts Forum gallery for the Changing Spaces exhibition. As I peered into and around every corner of the gallery my eye was immediately drawn to a series of drawings with a serene and delicate web-like quality. I was intrigued, and sought out the artist. This is her story.

Anne Lydiat first went to art school in Sheffield in 1978 to study sculpture. It was a great time to be a student, she explains: sit-ins, a full grant, free materials and creative freedom. Then, as now, her work was concept-driven, selecting a medium most suited to realising her ideas and not aligned to any specific discipline.

Leaving art school in 1982, she began teaching five days a week as a part-time lecturer at various art schools in the UK and abroad.



Anne Lydiat

ence I made a series of drawings by suspending a pen that traced the continual movement of the ship. I used a similar process when sailing around the Scottish Western Isles on board The Lady of Avenel. That time I collected stones from each place we anchored and used the ship's movement to trace around the stone. The wind and the tides, therefore, were also important elements of this process."

She started a PhD in 2014 researching women sailors, and discovered the American Arctic explorer Louise Arner Boyd. She explains "I began a series of Arctic voyages in the wake of Louise Arner Boyd, and in 2018 I hired an Icelandic sailing ship, the OPAL, to take me far north, to 'the lands that hold one spellbound': to Louise Boyd Land, named in her honour for her discoveries and contribution to the scientific knowledge of the Arctic.

"An outcome of this incredible voyage will be an exhibition of photographs at the Royal Geographical Society, London, alongside speakers who have a connection in some way to Boyd: a writer, a glaciologist, a Greenlander who voyaged with me, and the archivist Susan Peschel from the Boyd collection at the American Geographical Society, USA. I am particularly excited to be working on this project with artist Alexandra Drawbridge at Solaris who will be printing my photographs, Patrick Adam Jones at Project 78, and artist and framer extraordinaire and

local film-maker Rod Morris."

For personal reasons, Lydiat gave up her river existence and moved full-time to Hastings to be near the sea, just as Covid struck. "Like so many others, I felt that the profound sense of loneliness and isolation was hard to bear. I survived by meeting a very special person, who has sadly since died, and connecting with friends and family through Instagram where I could share photographs of my daily existence.

"Before Covid, I had been invited by Helen Savage to show my work at Hastings Arts Forum and this opportunity was only finally realised two weeks ago at the Changing Spaces exhibition where I showed a series of ink – wind – stone drawings made by placing a stone on paper, suspending three pens from a bamboo tripod, and allowing the wind to make the drawing. I finally removed the stone, hence the title 'The Presence of Absence'. The response to my work has been wonderful and has led to lots of new connections and opportunities to show my work in this wonderful vibrant town I now call home."

■ Anne will be showing at The Abstraction group exhibition at The Blast Gallery, St Andrews Mews, Hastings, TN34 1SJ. Opening hours; Wednesday 16-26 August 12-5 pm. Private View: 18 August 6-9 pm Website: anne@annelydiat Instagram: anneonrock

Cinema Cats

JUDE MONTAGUE

Cats have inspired worship throughout history. They are allegedly the second most popular search on the internet, and have been the focus of films that have been significant in my life. My daughter grew up on *The Lion King* (1994) and our own house cat was regularly shown in its kingdom. I will have new work at my next exhibition showing it held under the arms.

I was fascinated by the lions in Joy Adamson's *Born Free* (1966). *Puss in Boots* (2011) was a family favourite, and a poster of the wide-eyed ginger hero hangs up in the lounge. This exhibition of cinema cats is inspired by all these films, and casts cats as the main characters in other films, including those that never existed.

I make monoprints on my etching press on King's Road in the

Montague Armstrong workshop. These posters are one-offs, fine art pieces rather than commercial reproductions. They are not literal cinema posters, although some relate to films such as Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960) and *The Birds* (1963). I am often inspired by art from the former Soviet Union, particularly Czech and Polish cinema posters, and it's a dream of mine to visit the Terry Posters shop in Prague, where they have the greatest collection of film posters from the 1950s to 1989. Whenever I feel the need of inspiration, I browse this collection online.

The Cinema Cats exhibition has been selected by the Electric Palace Cinema for Coastal Currents in September – a first for this classic little cinema – and it opens with an evening screening of *Kedi* (2016) a magical documentary about the street cats of Istanbul told from a cat's eye perspective.

Cats have been part of cinema's stories since the very first days, and there will also be a chance to see *A Sick Kitten* (1901), in which two children play doctors with a kitten suffering from an unknown illness. Interestingly this was made by pioneer filmmaker George Albert Smith, who created most of his innovative films in Hove where he had his base at St Ann's Well Gardens.

Here in Sussex he also staged public exhibitions including hot air ballooning, parachute jumping, a hermit living in a cave, and various magic lantern shows. He collaborated with his old friend Georges Méliès at the Star Films studios at Montreuil in Paris, one of the most famous early filmmakers. For his trick films and fantasies such as *Trip to the Moon* (1902) with an iconic scene of a space capsule crash landing on the moon's face. It is wonderful to see these early films in this unusual cinema space, which echoes how in the days of cinematography before purpose-built auditoriums, when films would be



Vertigo

screened in shops and other buildings.

The cinema would like to see more creatives interacting with the world of cinema and extending the use of this unusual venue, reflecting the experimentation that was part of the earliest filmmaking culture. Because of the work of G. A. Smith, and his wife, actor-director Laura Bayley, on the South coast, the exhibition seems very appropriate for Hastings. As



Catzilla

entertainers, they recognised the everlasting appeal of the cat.

■ Kedi, Electric Palace Cinema, Thursday 31 August, 11am & 7.30pm Evening screening includes two short silent cinema cat classics plus live music accompaniment from artists and musicians Montague Armstrong. Cinema Cats exhibition for Coastal Currents opens Thursday 31 August, and runs throughout September.



LITERATURE

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

BOOKBUSTER REVIEW

Hawkhurst: Murder, Corruption, & Britain's Most Notorious Smuggling Gang

By Joseph Dragovich
Published by The History Press,
2023 rrp £16.99
REVIEW BY TIM BARTON

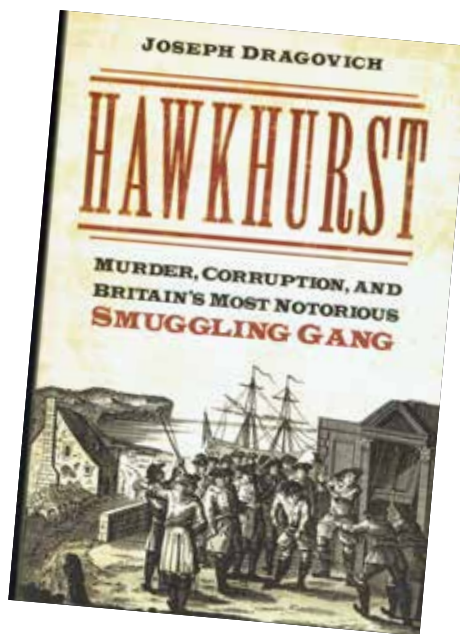
In the middle of the eighteenth century existed a smuggling gang, out of Hawkhurst, described by the author as being 'to Kent and Sussex what the Krays are to London, Al Capone is to Chicago, or John Gotti is to New York'. Such gangs today appear to become celebrities, with as many fascinated onlookers regarding them as some kind of cultural heroes as there are those aghast at their often terrifying actions. To an extent, an unhealthy obsession with, frankly, scum is not new, though modern media does amplify the numbers of people exposed to news of their crimes and, I suspect, magnify the effect. Surely, any sane observer could only wish, for example, that the Krays had been gifted concrete boots rather early in their 'career'?

Dragovich's book, however, is not a romanticised memoir from the criminal underground, but an engagingly scary and well researched history of one of our locally based criminal cartels. This motley crew were powerful, terrorising whole towns, and shifting smuggled goods all around the country. Where today's drug barons shift cocaine, cannabis, and heroin, nearly two-hundred years ago illegally imported camellia sinensis was the drug of choice – tea!

THE PELHAM FAMILY AGAINST THE POOR

In order to evade taxes, tea was smuggled into the country and naturally towns like Hastings, and beaches around the east and south-east coasts, were a common location for smugglers to base themselves. The book opens with a customs raid, impounding smuggled goods near Hastings, and the subsequent ambush of the customs men by the Hawkhurst Gang. The murder of Thomas Carswell, customs officer, as he attempted to transport the tea to a Hastings customs house, set off a national manhunt. The gang's reputation for bloodthirstiness went national. It took a decade to catch up with the murderers.

The author gives an interesting account of the political and economic context for the Hawkhurst gang's activities. Smuggling was dangerous, but highly lucrative. By the mid-seventeenth century the Cinque ports were famous, but in decline. Enclosure had increased, as the wool trade expanded. This pitched the very rich and corrupt local political forces, led by the Pelham family, against the poor, the desperate, unenfranchised and landless peasants, and ex-sailors and soldiers, as, like tea, sheep too were a catch worth stealing, despite the vindictive punishments meted out by those in power.



BRIBERY, CORRUPTION AND MURDER, A MICROCOSM OF THE ENGLISH STATE

Transportation to the colonies or hanging, to many a Hobson's choice, were typical punishments around the time of the 1736 'law and order bill'. 'Simply loitering by the coast without a good reason earned you a month's hard labour'. The degree of poverty and desperation, as well as the size of returns possible to those who would risk smuggling, were high enough that the gangs flourished. Alongside this, the law was extended to give customs men more powers.

The Gang were powerful enough that they effectively declared war on the customs men. The smugglers' trade was by mid-century taking place 'on an industrial scale' with huge numbers of men, and alongside them many teams of horses. Hiding smuggling became a game of bribery, corruption and murder, a microcosm of the English state under the Whigs. Secrecy was no option, force was necessary. The gangs were acting as 'paramilitary organisations', and 'by the mid-1740s

their bludgeoning and intimidation had managed to eliminate nearly all government resistance to their business', with the Hawkhurst Gang controlling much of the coastal smuggling trade from Hastings to Folkestone.

ONE HOPES THE 'COUNTY LINES' GANGS ACTIVE TODAY NEVER GET SO POWERFUL

Eventually, when war broke out between England and France, those in power took the opportunity to class smugglers as not 'just criminals, they were possible enemy agents'. Chapters 7 and 8 in the book are titled 'War' and 'Escalation', and Chapter 10, 'Mafia'. The latter relates, amongst other atrocities, military confrontations in towns like Bexhill with 100 smugglers against a detachment of 20 soldiers. Naturally, the smugglers beat them silly then proceeded to the customs house, tortured one officer, and destroyed the house of customs 'riding officer' Philip Bailey. By 1745 'they were

the law, and they knew it'. Hawkhurst itself was, by now, a no-go zone for any state authorities or those perceived as such.

A more edifying story told by Dragovich concerns the residents of Goudhurst, who, as a community, fought back. There, in 1747, the town had raised a militia to combat the lawless gangs. The battle saw two smugglers dead, including one of those involved in Carswell's murder. Dragovich sees this event as the start of the gang's downfall, and the last third of the book follows their demise: it is a fascinating bit of history, well told. One hopes the 'county-lines' gangs active today never get anything like so powerful as the Hawkhurst Gang, and are defeated more readily. Nevertheless, as in the seventeenth century, today's venal and corrupt politicians risk as significant levels of disrespect and alienation as existed two centuries back.

■ Available from Bookbusters, 39 Queens Road, Hastings TN34 1RE

POETRY CORNER

ALEXANDRA PARK WINTER SEQUENCE

JOHN R PARSON

like each twig, blade
and leaf in the park
I enter morning sun

cold day in the park
plumes of smoke from burning leaves
ghosts of trunks

bare winter trees
swaying on each lofty
pinnacle, a crow

Chinese geese fly low
across the lake on shadows
of calligraphy

ginkgo fills bench
dedicated to The Magic Man
with gold heart leaves

winter morning pond
in the park, a gull eats
toast on ice

frost in the park
a pigeon's turquoise breast
holds my shadow

ancient chestnut's warty
trunk tapers skywards, knotted
branches reach for sky

tree's shade on pond
becomes alley of ice where
ducks queue for food

CROSSWORD CORNER

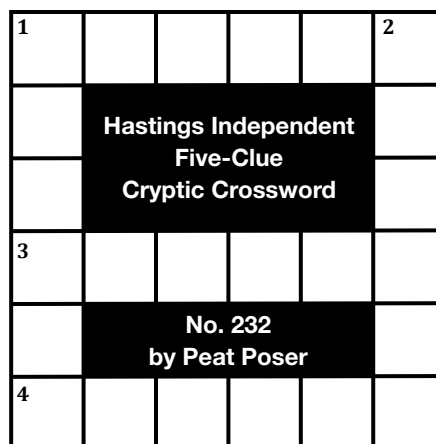
Across

- Breastfeeding baby can be easily tricked (6)
- This plan is mean (6)
- Rapper in me me turnaround (6)

Down

- Employees' protest is a hit (6)
- Tour and omit part without method (6)

Crossword Solution: Answers on page 13



BOWLS

Jack on The Green

DARREN EDWARDES

Only three sets of bowling greens still survive in the town following the Covid pandemic and council funding cuts – at White Rock, Hollington and West St Leonards. The third of these, based on the edge of Marina Gardens, is the home of St Leonards Bowls Club. Formed in 1906, it's clinging onto survival due to the determination of the current club members to secure a renewed ten-year lease from Hastings Borough Council, as they continue to run and maintain

the single green and club buildings. I met Ken Beaney, current club captain, and Joy Veares, club treasurer, for the first time just over a month ago when my visiting parents and brother joined me to re-enact a game of bowls which had featured in many of our past family holidays. I was immediately struck by the warmth and generosity of Ken, Joy and other club members as they shared their woods and provided refreshments free of charge on what was a hot sunny day. In between games we talked about the club, its history and current membership, which has dropped over the past ten years from over 70 members to around 30. I noted some sadness and weariness in Ken's face and tone as he shared the club's history and its recent problems of dwindling numbers and financial pressures. The elation of beating my parents at 'their game' was tempered somewhat by what may happen to this proud club. I left the green

feeling both admiration and a desire to support and help what is an incredibly valuable community asset keeping alive a traditionally social game, steeped in rich history over millennia. **CUP FINAL WEEKEND** The season runs from April to the end of September. The club is one of 12 that compete in the local Mermaid League. It also plays a number of friendlies with other teams across Sussex. Most matches are mixed doubles. But it also organises in-club competitive tournaments, with a cup final weekend on 2/3 September. There's no dress code for casual play, which costs £5 an hour or £6 for two hours per player, discounted for large groups. In competition, players don grey trousers/shorts/skirt and white tops. Autumn will bring the club some financial challenges. The close season requires a focus on vital green repairs, re-seeding and an overhaul of the water sprinkler



Opening of the St Leonards green in 1906

system in preparation for reopening in spring 2024. A local couple have already taken to action by funding promotional leaflets to encourage both participation and membership, as well as the use of local amenities around this treasured green space. Plans are afoot to hold a fundraising afternoon of 'quintessentially British Fun on the seafront', so come and see what this simple

skilful game has to offer you in the summer sun, and help contribute in the process to keeping this little gem alive and rolling. ■ *St Leonards Bowls Club is open to the public between 10am and 5pm every day up to the end of September subject to club events and weather conditions. For further details call Pam Beaney 01424 424227.*

CRICKET

Local Bragging Rights Maintained

29 July: Crowhurst Park 102; Hastings Priory 103 for 5

Hastings Priory completed their third successive victory over local rivals Crowhurst this summer, when winning by five wickets in their Sussex Cricket League encounter on 29 July. In an early season T20 encounter Priory had overhauled a score of 140 with four wickets to spare; in June, under limited over rules, Crowhurst had managed 162, but Priory got them with seven wickets outstanding. This time, in a traditional-format 100-over game, Crowhurst were bowled out for 102 in the 38th and Priory's batsmen, despite a mini-collapse, won comfortably by five wickets. From the start, Priory asserted

their dominance on a damp pitch, as Satchi Mahendran bowled out Crowhurst's top batsman Jordan Shaw, and Adam Barton dispatched fellow-opener Toby Burdekin likewise. From 12 for two, Crowhurst's third wicket pair, Tom Powell (30) and Bradley Payne (20) batted solidly in a partnership of 47. But John Morgan joined the attack to dismiss both, and only Nick Peters (20 before being run out) offered much resistance in the late order. Morgan finished with four for 27. Priory were without their leading scorer, Harry Scowen, but captain Tom Gillespie (35) and Dylan Woolley (24), under no time pressure, shared a careful opening stand of 67 to put victory within sight. An aggressive spell of fast

bowling by Shaw had Priory's middle order batsmen ducking and weaving from short pitch deliveries. He claimed three quick wickets, and Peters, with some gentle spin, took two. Then Harvey Faulkner provided a smart cameo, with three reverse sweeps off successive balls from Peters, to get his side over the line. Last Saturday all league games were abandoned without a ball bowled as rain and wind took their toll. That leaves four more games to play, all under limited-over rules. Back in third place, Priory will travel to their Chichester Priory Park namesakes tomorrow (Saturday), then have fixtures against the top two, West Chiltington and Worthing, over succeeding weeks. The results of these should determine whether the Hastings side can gain their season's aim – promotion back to the Sussex Premier. Crowhurst, meanwhile, also have games against the top two amongst their four outstanding fixtures – so, ironically, could help their local rivals along the way.

FOOTBALL

Rodari and Lovatt Return to New-Look United

Hastings United kick off the new season at the Pilot Field tomorrow (Saturday) under new manager Paul Barnes, having assembled a virtually new squad of players. But both the team and its supporters will have been buoyed by the return of two not-so-old favourites who have re-signed for the club following a couple of seasons playing at higher levels. Davide Rodari, 24, was once a youth player with Inter Milan, but made 69 appearances for the 'U's between 2017 and 2021, scoring 26 goals including, famously, eight in one League Cup match against East Grinstead Town. In January 2021 he signed for League Two club Crawley Town on a two-and-a-half year contract and played 13 times for them over the remainder of that season, scoring one goal. He was subsequently loaned out to Worthing (twice), Dorking and Dartford, but released this summer. Having already scored a couple of times for Hastings in pre-season friendlies at the end of last month, he has posted a quote

on the club's website: "Buzzing to be back home... excited to be working with Barnesy and Stony. I have unfinished business with the club". Adam Lovatt, also 24, made his reputation with Hastings as a tigerish midfield player. In November 2020 he was transferred to Sutton United, who have competed in League Two for the past two seasons. Lovatt enjoyed a run of nine successive matches in central midfield for Sutton in this league last autumn, as well as loan spells at Tonbridge and Dartford, but was not re-hired when his contract expired. Barnes has commented: "To attract Adam back to Hastings United is a real coup for everyone at the club. We know that we are getting a top person and player who can help bring success." As it happens, three of United's first four fixtures pit them against teams relegated from last season's National League South – starting with visitors Cheshunt on Saturday. The experience of Rodari and Lovatt could prove invaluable.

SUSSEX CRICKET LEAGUE STANDINGS – TOP FIVE

TEAM	P	W	D	L	T	A B	AT	PTS	BOWL
WORTHING	14	8	2	0	1	3	9	12	306
W.CHILTINGTON	14	6	1	2	2	3	30	9	279
HASTINGS PRIORY	14	6	0	5	0	3	20	33	263
BUXTED PARK	14	5	2	4	0	3	26	48	254
HAYWARDS HEATH	14	5	5	1	0	3	35	36	251

HIDDEN BEACH MUSIC FEST 2023

THE OVAL (HASTINGS) SAT AUG 19TH 12:00 - 23:00

ABA SHANTI

AWALE JANT BAND AFROBRAZILIKA
LAS CABRAS CUBANAS PATRICK FORGE
PERRY LOUIS AITCH B YPPFD POETIC FUNK
BASIL BLACK II BASIC AQUILA MIGHTY SOUNDS
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