



INSIDE: The HIP List
Your Pull Out Guide to What's Happening in and around Hastings

10

YEARS OF
INDEPENDENT
JOURNALISM



Plugging Away

Fat Tuesday Unplugged Saturday review in HIP List

BOOKBUSTER REVIEW

How Much Does Britain Cost?

Read the review on page 15



£3M REQUIRED TO COMPLETE ROAD, SAY SEA CHANGE

But County Council Still 'Looking' for Funding

Hugh Sullivan

At a meeting of the full East Sussex County Council on 6 February, a member of the public, Bernard Brown, raised questions concerning the stalled Queensway Gateway road. He put it to council leader Keith Glazier that the project was seven years behind schedule, that the £10m budget was fully spent, and that "he doesn't know when the road will open, what the final costs will be, or where the money is coming from to pay for it".

Cllr Glazier declared in response that "We are looking at areas of additional funding" while "trying to get the absolute costs of the final piece of work... It's my hope and wish that this happens sooner rather than later."

What Cllr Glazier did not spell out was that, according to his own senior council officer Richard Dawson, reporting on the project last month to the Accountability Board of SELEP (South East Local Enterprise Partnership), which provided the £10m already spent, a Scheme Surety Bond is required to cover the remaining projected costs before any further work is undertaken. Mr Dawson told the SELEP Board that

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NAZ MONTAG



A LOW LATENCY
FULL FIBRE NETWORK
FOR HASTINGS & ST
LEONARDS!

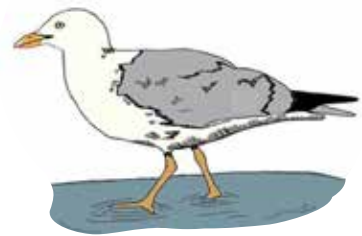


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YOUR DESIGN, OUR COVER
Sheryl Hall Lumen Designs & Crafts: lumen designs and crafts.com
Let's see your seagull on our cover!
Details from design@yourhip.co.uk

EDITOR'S NOTE

Could we be approaching spring? The sun seems less reticent about showing itself, and snowdrops are out and even being chased by the occasional daffodil. Meanwhile musicians have also been out and thronging the town for Hastings Fat Tuesday events, chased by eager listeners moving from venue to venue - see our photo-feature on p7 of the pull-out Listings section.

Elsewhere we have a cornucopia of articles ranging from Climate Plagues (p9) to Ragged Trousered Philanthropists (p10), and from mysterious 'world spirits' (p11) to a 'Stable' of paintings of Hastings (p13). In sport, Maidstone United's recent stunning victory over Ipswich in the FA cup must surely allow our own Hastings United to dream of greater glories. As ever, Hugh Sullivan charts their up and down record (p15). The newly expanded Listings section is keen to carry more details of events and activities around the town. So do keep sending them in – and how about paying a very modest sum to have your listing 'enhanced'? Of course, HIP is also open to general advertisers so don't be shy in contacting our advertising and marketing manager Owen, who would love to hear from you. As would we all!

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News



Azur Closure

The Azur Marina Pavilion has been closed to all customers and hirers since 29 January following an agreed out-of-court settlement between the leaseholder company Azur Events Limited and its landlord Sea Change Sussex.

Sea Change had approved an assignment of the lease to Azur Events in 2016 despite its sole director David Thorpe-Tracey presiding over two previous periods of tenure which each ended in company insolvency – of Lightning Leisure Limited in 2011, then Azur Marina Limited in 2016.

By 2019 Azur Events, too, appeared in financial trouble, unable to pay the rent for the premises, which by that time had risen to £90,000 per year, or to comply with repairing covenants. There was roof damage and increasing dilapidation. But when Sea Change eventually brought a winding-up petition in the

High Court, the leasehold company counterclaimed, alleging that there had been mis-accounting and that a potential insurance claim had been pursued inadequately by Sea Change and/or by the freeholder, Hastings Borough Council.

Eleven months after the first court hearing in this dispute, Sea Change have accepted a surrender of the lease and taken back possession of the building. Their spokesperson has said that they will commission surveys to assess its condition and to identify any works necessary. They will then put the venue on the market to seek a suitable operator “so it can be re-opened for the local community as soon as possible”.

Yoga classes and other hirers of the premises won't be able to use the building in the short term. Sea Change are holding open the prospect of their return, however, “as soon as possible”.

HASTINGS TIDES

DATE	HIGH AND LOW TIDES				SUNRISE	SUNSET	MOON
FRI 16 FEB	H3:14am	L10:12am	H3:44pm	L10:22pm	7:09	5:15	FIRST
SAT 17 FEB	H4:04am	L11:00am	H4:40pm	L11:18pm	7:07	5:16	
SUN 18 FEB	H5:06am	L12:05pm	H5:54pm		7:05	5:18	
MON 19 FEB	L0:35am	H6:31am	L1:24pm	H7:27pm	7:03	5:20	
TUES 20 FEB	L2:15am	H8:03am	L3:08pm	H8:45pm	7:01	5:22	
WED 21 FEB	L3:37am	H9:16am	L4:16pm	H9:40pm	6:59	5:23	
THURS 22 FEB	L4:35am	H10:08am	L5:07pm	H10:23pm	6:57	5:25	
FRI 23 FEB	L5:21am	H10:47am	L5:48pm	H10:59pm	6:55	5:27	
SAT 24 FEB	L5:58am	H11:19am	L6:20pm	H11:33pm	6:53	5:29	FULL
SUN 25 FEB	L6:29 am	H11:50am	L6:44pm		6:51	5:30	
MON 26 FEB	H0:05am	L6:58am	H12:19pm	L7:07pm	6:49	5:32	
TUES 27 FEB	H0:36am	L7:25am	H12:46pm	L7:33pm	6:47	5:34	
WED 28 FEB	H1:02am	L7:55am	H1:10pm	L8:01pm	6:45	5:36	
THURS 29 FEB	H1:25am	L8:24am	H1:33pm	L8:20pm	6:43	5:37	

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



1 “as of mid-December” the council was “awaiting final costs” from Sea Change Sussex, the publicly funded delivery partner, for this purpose.

But this appears to have been an obfuscation. Mr Dawson did not update the SELEP Board, nor did Cllr Glazier inform the council meeting, that the council was informed in December by Sea Change Sussex, that a budget of £3 million was needed for this purpose.

A spokesperson for Sea Change said last week: “We’ve completed the Queensway Gateway road; however, East Sussex County Council requires this to remain closed until improvements to the existing Whitworth Road and safety enhancements at the junction with the A21 are completed. These additional works required were not included within our agreement with the county council.

The spokesperson went on to claim that “We [Sea Change] have used our own resources to date to design the connection to the A21, which meets highways standards and has passed a road safety audit... If we’re instructed shortly to undertake the remaining works, they can be completed in a relatively short period of time.”

As to Cllr Glazier’s desire to “get the absolute costs”, it was said on behalf of Sea Change that these “can only be calculated based on confirmed design details, funding availability and start date, which are in the hands of the county council...A timely confirmation by the council of funding availability and start date for the final works will result in lower costs”.

So where is the money to come from? Certainly not from SELEP, which had been threatening over the past year and a half to claw back the £10m already spent on the grounds that the East Sussex council had lost control of the project

and its funding. But it’s been known for nearly a year that SELEP is to be wound up at the end of March. Public accountability for the project will then apparently be transferred to DHLUC (the Department of Housing, Levelling Up and Communities). Perhaps Cllr Glazier is “wishing and hoping” that this department, unburdened with the previous history of devious funding manoeuvres between the council, Sea Change and SELEP, will be persuaded to step in.

The only alternative, it seems, is for the council to bite the bullet and find another £3 million from its reserves.

In the meantime the traffic continues to queue around the Ridge and the A21, and the supposed benefits of the road for the development of adjacent commercial sites along Queensway remain unrealised.



Cabinet Approves Council Tax Hikes

A meeting of Hastings Borough Council's cabinet on Monday evening (12 February) approved proposals to bring forward the period from two years to one year when an unoccupied and substantially unfurnished dwelling can be charged double the standard rate of council tax.

Under previous law, double-charging was only permitted to councils when properties had been empty for at least two years, but this period has been reduced to one year by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023. The Act also allows a 100% premium to be charged on second homes from April 2025, which the cabinet also approved.

The change is designed to incentivise owners to use residential properties as their main home or allow others to use them as a main home. It is also hoped that the policy will allow more empty homes or unoccupied homes to be brought back into use, as well as bringing in additional income for the council.

The cabinet also debated a revised draft budget for 2024/25 following a presentation by Cllr Paul Barnett, now no longer council leader but still

lead councillor for finance, revealing what he called a "more positive" picture of the council's finances. Numbers of households needing emergency accommodation are "starting to stabilise", and savings that the council agreed to make across other services in December are bearing fruit. The budget also no longer includes costs for building the hotel at Cornwallis Street on the basis that Whitbread will build the hotel at their own expense following purchase.

There is, however, a 2.99% rise in the borough council element of council tax (representing an increase of 17p a week and £8.93 a year for a Band D property).

Cllr Barnett said before the meeting: "The Government settlement is yet again a real terms cut for Hastings after allowing for inflation, and they also expect us to increase council tax by the maximum allowed of 2.99%. We know that an increase in council tax is not something that people want to hear, but this increase is less than inflation has been in the last year, and we are continuing to offer reduction to those who are unable to afford to pay."

Independents Review Electoral Prospects

The newly formed Hastings Independents party – no connection with this newspaper, see below – held its first public meeting last Saturday at His Place in Robertson Street.

Cllr Andy Batsford said that he was "very satisfied" with the turnout of around 30 people who attended to discuss the change in style of party politics heralded by him and his seven fellow councillors who resigned from the Labour party in December. "As the Hastings Independents movement grows," he said, "one of the party's key commitments is the belief in embracing all the talents this town has to offer, to help shape Hastings and work collaboratively to solve some of the key issues the town faces."

The local election in May will be a limited testing ground for the political future of the party, since only one of the Independents – Cllr Maya Evans – will be putting themselves up for re-election: the others were

elected in 2022 and have another two years' tenure of their ward seats. Cllr Batsford made it clear on Saturday that they intend to put up fresh candidates in other seats with the aim of increasing their number, but given the resources required – not so much in monetary terms as in volunteer time and effort in distributing leaflets and knocking on doors – they will have to select prudently the wards that they choose to contest.

It will be interesting to see to what extent they decide to target sitting Conservatives or, on the other hand, seats currently retained by loyalist Labour councillors. Either way, they are likely to find themselves accused of splitting the anti-Tory vote, since there is clearly no prospect of the Labour party failing to field candidates in all 16 wards in a bid to re-assert its supremacy.

However, Cllr Batsford said that he feels a wind of change blowing in. "Of course we want the Tories

out. But no-one has the right to be the sole opposition," he argued.

WHO'S INDEPENDENT?

HIP maintains a strictly non-partisan stance in coverage of political issues between the loyalist Labour party and the Hastings Independents group – we are, and intend to remain, truly independent. We are concerned, however, that there may be actual or potential confusion in our readers' minds as to a connection between us and the new political group, particularly following the latter's decision to apply to the Electoral Commission to register themselves as the Hastings Independents Party (spot the acronym). We can disclose that we have written to the Commission making a formal objection to the registration on this ground.

As a separate issue, we wonder how acceptable it may be to the Commission to have the name of 'Independents' claimed for a particular party when there are no less than three other councillors on Hastings Borough Council – Sabina Arthur, Claire Carr and John Rankin – who are already styled as Independents on the council website without any intention to join it.

New Management at White Rock

As promised, a virtually seamless transfer of management has taken place at the White Rock Theatre. Gone from the end of January were Trafalgar Theatres, who had presided over the venue and its programming for the past 15 years. On 1 February, in came the Guildhall Trust, which has managed the Portsmouth Guildhall since 2010 and arrives with stated plans "to develop the programme on offer, build community partnerships, and increase engagement with schools, young people and the creative sector".

The first event was a three-day schools' dance show, Time to Dance, starting on Monday 5 February. Upcoming programming includes full hosting of the Hastings International Piano Concerto Competition starting next Thursday 22 February with finals on 1 and 2 March; the overlapping Hastings Musical Festival which runs for three weeks from Monday 26 February culminating in a Festival Finale Concert on 17 March; a series of comedy gigs from seasoned performers including Jo Brand, Al Mur-

ray, Frank Skinner, Ben Elton, Jimmy Carr and John Bishop; and live music from, among others, Kid Kapichi, Jools Holland and the London African Gospel Choir.

Nadine Passley, the theatre's Venue Director – prominent in a green dress in our launch party picture – commented: "We are really excited for the future of the White Rock. The Guildhall Trust's vision and values resonate with what we have already been achieving with our Youth Theatre and community programme, so we can't wait to see how this is expanded. The Trust has exciting plans for the venue in terms of how it wants to develop the programme, the studio space and new events it wants to bring to Hastings, including Dance Live! and a Games Fest."

Potential audience members are encouraged to support the venue by creating a customer account to stay up to date with latest news and offers. There will be a new ticketing system, powered by EVENTIM.Inhouse, to manage bookings and update contact preferences online.



Guildhall Trust launch party at the theatre 1 February

Local Transport Plan for County

MARK SULLIVAN

A new Local Transport Plan (LTP), issued in January by East Sussex County Council (ESCC) and currently up for public consultation, proclaims five aims:

- enable safer and more accessible journeys
- develop healthy places to enable people to live well
- decarbonise transport to help us to achieve net zero targets by 2050 at the latest
- maintain and strengthen our transport networks so that they are resilient
- support a more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable economy within our coastal towns, market towns and villages in more rural areas.

The Plan has been developed, according to ESCC, after “broad and extensive engagement... with seniors and young people, schools, and groups representing protected characteristic groups, transport

operators, business representatives, and community transport partnerships”. It highlights public transport, walking and cycling, with no proposals to build new roads, only vague plans for improvements. The LTP “supports”, in a ritual way, improvements to the A21 such as a bypass of Hurst Green and for a new A27 between Lewes and Polegate (said to cost £600 million), but these are trunk roads and for National Highways to undertake. They run through the High Weald AONB and the South Downs National Park respectively, which makes approval any time soon unlikely.

Stress is laid on the current national policy that seeks to “decarbonise transport”: the “transition to zero-emission vehicles” should be assisted. But the Plan’s main value is that it oversees three more detailed plans already prepared: the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), published in 2020, the Bus Service Improvement Plan, completed in 2021, and the rather old Rail Strategy, of 2013. These are not well-known, but they

are the nuts and bolts for improving transport in the County.

CYCLING

Spending on cycle routes and better provision for walking is at last significant nationally, after years of little or no money. A new government quango, Active Travel England, is able to fund improvements for walking and cycling. These forms of travel no longer depend on crumbs from the roads budget. ESCC has received £20 million in the last few years, though little has yet been spent in Hastings. There is much that could be done in the town to make walking more attractive, and safer, not least for children and older people. The LCWIP (pages 23-24) includes a plan for cycle routes for Hastings. The LTP confirms that money is available. But, as Charmaine Kenner explains below, cycle route development in Hastings has come to a stop. Getting this going again is a call that those commenting on the Plan can now make.

The most positive part of the LTP is the support it gives to developing bus services. National policy on buses has changed completely in the last six years. They are no longer deregulated. A new law, the Bus Services Act of 2017, gives County Councils the power to regulate and plan services. A “statutory partnership” between the council and the operators has been set up under that

Act, and a Bus Service Improvement Plan (‘BSIP’) was published in by ESCC in 2021. It explains that the national bus strategy seeks in each county:

- A fully integrated service with simple, multi-modal tickets
- More bus priority measures
- High-quality information for all passengers in more places
- Better turn-up-and-go frequencies that keep running into the evenings and at weekends.
- ESCC has received £41 million to start to deliver this in the County.

RAILWAYS

In contrast to the encouraging progress on bus services, the East Sussex ‘Rail Strategy and Action Plan’ is ten years old and is out of date. It seeks improvement of the Ashford-Hastings line, but the wider strategic case for electrifying that line to create a South Coast route from Thanet and Canterbury through Hastings, Bexhill and Brighton to Hampshire with faster trains – and reducing traffic on the A259 and A27 – is yet to be developed. What could be done sooner is to improve the Charing Cross line, which remains very slow. The “Rail Strategy” says that the electrical supply cannot provide enough power for faster trains, or 12-coach trains all day. “Network Rail is currently in the process of

undertaking study work looking at rail improvements in the Hastings area, including on the Hastings-London line, which includes consideration of upgrading the electricity supply between Hastings and Tunbridge Wells to enable a 12-car service to operate on a more frequent basis.” Ten years on, nothing has changed. The LTP needs to put that right.

The Local Transport Plan is fortunate in one way: it is being published while the government is maintaining the £2 cap on all single bus fares in England outside London. That simple step has caused bus travel to grow, when it had been declining every year. Originally for 3 months to get passengers back after the Covid period, the fare cap is now extended into 2025. One can’t see a change in government ending it; the election should ensure it lasts longer. Responses to the consultation could call for the promised service improvements to be brought in now so that the new users which the £2 fare cap has attracted stay ‘on the buses’.

The consultation runs until 25 February. Comments can be sent to the Local Transport Plan Team at LocalTransportPlan@eastsussex.gov.uk (tel: 0345 60 80 193) or go to the website page: eastsussex.gov.uk/economy-transport-environment/local-transport-plan-4-2024-2050

Plan Ducks Priority Issues

CHARMIAN KENNER

The ESCC Local Transport Plan contains a pretty comprehensive list of nice outcomes it would be hard to disagree with. But how is it going to be implemented? In particular, which interventions are going to be prioritised?

It includes a large number of road improvements and schemes - to the A27, to the A259 between Pevensey and the east of Rye (except in Hastings borough), to the A21 north of Hastings and to the A26 between Lewes and Newhaven. If these are done first, they will only prolong the reliance on cars and suppression of all other modes of transport. The targets of 18% reduced car trips and a large increase in Public Transport and Active Travel by 2050 leave the possibility of 25 years of making the composition of the atmosphere very



Hastings & St Leonards XR demonstrate last Saturday over Transport Plan

much worse before getting round to making it better again. Ominously, the Plan has no interim target dates.

Implementation will depend on local Councils and ESCC working together effectively. Unfortunately this has not happened in Hastings. No progress at all has been made

on the Hastings Walking & Cycling Strategy agreed in 2014. ESCC reallocated, to a road scheme, £3m of the £6m originally obtained for the network. Then in 2022 Hastings Borough Council (HBC) stopped the County from completing the much-delayed Alexandra Park Cy-

cleway, a key section of the network, even though HBC had approved it in 2016. Now ESCC have cancelled all safe cycling route projects in Hastings with a loss of over £800,000 of Government funding. Most people of all ages will not take up or return to cycling without

safe, mostly off-road, cycle routes. ESCC and HBC must work together to progress these vital routes in order to rebuild any credibility for their stated commitments to active travel and to tackling climate change.

The most positive outcome would be for East Sussex to find itself in a few years time with a clean, healthy environment and mobility for all - for young and old, rich and poor, urban and rural and everyone in between - with pleasant streets and thriving local shops. In that nice future, there would have to be comfortable and efficient, frequent and fast buses, given as much bus-only route miles as road space allows; joined-up cycle networks safe enough for a lone ten-year old to ride; wide uncluttered pavements and pedestrian priority crossings for journeys on foot; and a joined up motorised vehicle network which allows access everywhere but which no longer allows the vehicles to marginalise, dominate, dirty and endanger all other road uses.

But that will mean taking some road-space from cars, vans and lorries, because there is nowhere else to put the other modes of transport if you don’t. The time to start doing this is now.

Charmian Kenner is a member of Hastings Sustainable Transport Forum. See www.transition-townhastings.org.uk/category/minutes-for-the-forum/sfull-consultation-response.

WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

✉ From our website

JESS STEELE: QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED

Is your article *Jess Steele, Community Entrepreneur* in HIP 244 what passes for fearless, independent journalism then?

Not for the first time, HIP is unquestioningly painting Jess Steele as a selfless charity worker.

Many of us see her as a remarkably driven individual who repeatedly employs the phrase “bringing buildings into community ownership” as a deceptive euphemism for what it is... publicly funded private development. It’s inverted PPI dressed up as altruism. An entrepreneur risks their own money.

This curiously timed HIP puff piece, which quotes her oft-declared commitment to openness and transparency, should have raised a few questions which would have made the piece informative:

1) How much has she and her limited company Jericho Road Solutions (JRS) been paid for her time handling these many millions of public and charity funding? Wages, consultancies, rents etc?

2) As one of two 33% shareholder/“investors” in the property development aspect of this allegedly “community owned” property portfolio, how much cash have both JRS and Jess Steele personally invested in the purchase, renovation and upkeep of the jointly owned, appreciating assets? Who pays the interest on the loans other than Hastings Commons? How about Meanwhile, the other 33% shareholder? What have they actually invested or are they, too, just sitting pretty?

Look up the 2021 Confirmation statement for White Rock Neighbourhood Ventures Ltd (former name of Hastings Commons Neighbourhood Ventures Ltd).

3) Have these partners matched the public funding that’s gone into buying and renovating their share of assets, or are they just focused on raising public funding and loans in the name of Hastings Commons to invest in them?

4) When, as is planned, she leverages Hastings Commons’ assets to buy herself out, how much does she stand to walk away with? Somewhere considerably north of £1m would seem a conservative estimate, depending on the granular details of the deal, of course, which are conspicuously private for an

“open and transparent, bottom up, community group”.

5) Why isn’t this agreement published in full rather than in snippets?

6) Are future changes to that agreement (it could easily be quietly changed) within the power of Ms Steele and this other supposed “investor” or are they legally set in stone, and is it an honest and fair agreement made at arms length in the first place rather than an incredibly cosy sweet deal set up by Jess by herself for herself?

Did Anne Barnes use public funding to buy herself the building where the Seaview Project is housed? Did Camila Batmanghelidjh use public funding to end up owning the premises that she used? Imagine the stink!

The published plan for the £8.5m she’s just bagged on behalf of the town’s youth is, surprise surprise, to spend it renovating Rock House. More value to her share.

7) How does improving her own asset in the town centre focus on helping the challenged after-school kids in Hollington, Broomgrove, Malvern Way, Ore, where their own youth community centres simply can’t open their doors for want of some financial support?

8) Are those kids really expected to trek across town in the evenings to the sour dough and avocado middle-class love-in?

Some members and former trustees would dearly love to see a full audit of the entire web of companies, charities and trusts around the Hastings Commons to bring about clarity and proper governance. We have a highly experienced forensic accountant with many years of experience that we’d like appointed to carry out this function, much as any large organisation must from time to time to keep itself on track.

9) Will Hastings Commons accept the help?

Oli Smith

✉ Letter

ROSE-TINTED ROSIE

Dear HIP

I read with interest Rosie Brocklehurst’s article Suppressing Dissent in HIP 243. Unfortunately she was wearing her rose-tinted spectacles when reminiscing about Neil Kinnock in the 1980s.

As we approach the 40th anni-

versary of the year-long miners strike which commenced on 6 March 1984, I, like many long-standing members of the Labour Party, look back with anger at the failure of Kinnock (remember he was the son of a miner) to fully support the miners’ cause. He, with Norman Willis (the General Secretary of the TUC at the time), must forever carry the shame that they had the opportunity to stop Margaret Thatcher in her tracks if they had only wholeheartedly supported the miners.

Turning now to Rosie’s support of the Hastings Independent councillors, can she not see that they are merely a group of self-servers desperately trying to cling to political power in the light of the LGA peer review and the damning report of the external auditors Grant Thornton, which shines a light on their incompetence and ineptitude in managing Hastings Council. Luckily the wise people of Hastings and St Leonards will, I’m sure, give them short shrift when their period of office is up, and they finally have to face the electorate.

Mike Southon

✉ Letter

LACK OF USABLE TOILETS

Dear HIP

I am a 71-year-old lady. Today I visited Hastings Town Centre. I arrived by bus at Hastings Railway station and needed the toilet. I was not worried as I know the station has facilities. Unfortunately, when I asked the railway worker if I could use them, she informed me that they were out of use and that the public toilets were down in the town at Priory Meadow. Thank goodness I wasn’t desperate. So, I went down to the public toilets. There were five to cater for the female public of Hastings, three of which were out of order.

This is NOT acceptable. I have no idea how many toilets were available for the male population. But if public conveniences are not available in the town, more ‘accidents’ will occur with human waste and urine in the town. This situation badly reflects on the town, goodness only knows what visitors think!

A disappointed Hastings resident



JOHN FORD

My Art Belongs to Daddy

Hastings resident Phil Cooper watched a live TV stream of the Grammy Awards, the US music equivalent of the Oscars, with personal interest last week. His daughter Em Cooper was a nominee in the Best Music Video category as director of her three-minute animated film illustrating the Beatles’ song *I’m only sleeping* from their 1966 album *Revolver*.

She won the gong, and in her excited acceptance speech gave credit not only in time-honoured fashion to her production team and her immediate family but, in particular, to

her father “for teaching me to paint”. She said she had produced more than 1,300 oil paintings for the animation.

Phil is duly modest about his four seconds of global recognition, but recalls, on reminder from Em, that he had spent many hours teaching her (and her sister and brother) “how to look, and how to paint and draw...We always took a paint box and pencils on every holidays so we could sit and draw or paint the view in front of us”.

Both the film and Em’s speech can be viewed on Youtube.

SITE NOTICE FOR APPLICATION FOR A PREMISES LICENCE

This notice is to advise that on **10th day of February 2024** an application for a Premises Licence was made to Hastings Borough Council for the premises known as **Arigato, 5 Norman Road, St Leonards-on-sea,**

Was made by : **Yuka Yoshii Viellefon**
For the following licensable activities:
Regulated Entertainment e) Live Music, f) Recorded Music, g) Performance of Dance, 23:00 to 00:00 Friday and Saturday.
New Years Eve until 01:00

Late Night Refreshment 23:00 to 00:00 Friday and Saturday.
New Years Eve until 01:00
Sale of Alcohol by Retail (on and off the premises) 09:00 to 23:00 Sunday to Thursday, 09:00 to 23:30 Friday and Saturday. New Years Eve until 01:00

Any person wishing to make representations about this application should write to Hastings Borough Council, Head of Environment & Place, Muriel Matters House, Breeds Place, Hastings, TN34 3UY, or email Licensing@hastings.

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

Dated this **10th** day of **February 2024**

We would love to hear from you.

✉ letters@hastingsindependentpress.co.uk

📘 facebook.com/hastingsindependent

📷 instagram.com/hastingsindependent

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.

The Hidden Value of Carers

LOUISE VLADI, Charity Manager of the Association of Carers gives some facts and figures about unpaid caring and how the organisation helps this hidden army of caregivers.

There are over 62,000 unpaid carers in East Sussex, and three in five of us are likely to become a carer at some point in our lives. With these figures in mind, it might be worth learning a little more about the immense value of unpaid carers, which some of us, unless personally affected ourselves, have not thought about.

An unpaid carer is anyone who looks after someone who would be unable to manage without their help. Typically, the person needing support is a member of the family; this has the advantage of allowing the person to stay in their own home, in a familiar environment. Of course, in this case, the carer will know the person well, being

aware of their emotional needs as well as their physical ones. Who better than to carry out this role, being experts on the people they look after?

Apart from being most suitable, they also save taxpayers a lot of money: the care provided is worth approximately a whopping £132 billion each year! To put it in perspective, that's a saving to the public purse of around £2.5 billion a week, or £15.1 million an hour.

But this free care doesn't come easy and can come at a high cost to the carer themselves in terms of time, energy and commitment. That's where the Association of Carers comes in, providing a whole range of free, volunteer-led support



services to unpaid carers in East Sussex. These services include befriending & respite services, talk & support, computer help at home, carers lunch clubs and carers cafés.

The respite and befriending service allows a carer to have a few hours free time at the same time and day each week, whilst a volunteer sits with their loved one. For someone who is providing 24/7 care to their loved one, 7 days a week, this short break is often a lifesaver. As one carer explains: "This break

gives me something to look forward to. It's so great to have someone like this, who gives me some freedom. I feel secure for the first time in ages in leaving my wife for a bit."

If you think you could spare a few hours a week to help, please get in touch. Full training and support is given, expenses paid and there is no personal care involved, so don't worry if you're not very mobile yourself. We even have drivers to take you!

Or maybe you are a carer who

would benefit from the free services. Does it sound too good to be true? It's not. Call 01424 722309 or visit associationofcarers.org.uk.

We have recently moved into new offices in Silverhill, with on-street, free parking nearby, as well as being on several bus routes. Please feel free to come by and have a chat with one of the team.

We also run regular carer lunches and carer café's – please give us a call for more details.

This is Tomorrow Calling

HELEN MURPHY and NICK PELLING investigate an unusual new podcast.



It's not often that we hear the voices of the people of St Leonards when contemplating the state of the world today. But film maker and video-journalist Ross Domoney has now launched a podcast, which seeks to weave in the voices and opinions of locals as it explores what he calls the "sci-fi-like quality of

contemporary politics". The podcast is called Shadowgraph and although it is undoubtedly political it is very different from the mainstream matter of fact, and supposedly 'balanced', news that so often just sends us around in circles of despair. The idea is to reach out for the foggy, almost fictional, worlds that sit in

between creative video-journalism and hard documentary. It is an unusual and slightly weird sounding project so we met up with Ross to ask what it was all about.

IMAGINING THE FUTURE

Ross starts from the idea that most of us currently feel "overwhelmed by the current political chaos." He adds that he is trying to find a "new language" to help us engage our imaginations as well as our analytical brains. He hopes the podcast will help people navigate the bleakness by developing a more "nuanced" style of political storytelling which looks for almost unconscious connections.

The central paradox of Ross's approach, it seemed to us, is that he is hoping that elements of fantasy might help us not to 'escape' world news but to get under the skin of the modern 'spectacle' of madness. In some ways he is asking us to imagine a future, whilst hinting that the future is already here.

Part of the idea is to allow ourselves to dream forward and anticipate where current flows of history are taking us. A recent podcast of Shadowgraph looks at the possibility of a General Strike in 2035, as a desperate response to a system that is barely functioning on a planet that is apparently determined to pass its own judgement on late capitalism. In this future the usual sources of resistance, such as the labour unions, are powerless be-

cause traditional work itself is becoming impossible. This may sound like your everyday apocalypse, but the twist is that Ross brings in contemporary voices. A random local opined that this hostile 'nature' was annoyed with us for "chatting all the time".

The people of the town become almost actors in this imagined future. Recently he invited people into his intentionally blacked out home to explore what it might be like to be in a climate lockdown, in a dark but creative role play. The podcast comes with a disturbing soundscape that helps the listener engage in an all too possible reality.

AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

Ross is certainly an unusual character. How many people do you know who, upon hearing the news of war breaking out in Ukraine, decide that the best course of action would be to journey to Kyiv with a camera to ask commuters on trains what they dream about in their sleep? Just as the Russians were closing in on the capital. But, this is the essence of the Shadowgraph storytelling style: taking you into an other-worldly experience of the news through inventive storytelling. As if delving into the unconscious reality of people might shed light on actual reality.

You might think that someone so committed to looking into the hearts of darkness would be a serious and stern, bearded Hemingway-type.



But that would be way off beam. Ross is a very approachable and open creative who has taught practical workshops in filmmaking in Hastings and St Leonards.

If all this sounds a little strange, that is probably because it is. Shadowgraph offers a challenge to think about the world in different ways. I'm not sure we have fully comprehended it. We can only suggest that you check it out for yourself!

Shadowgraph is offering online and in-person workshops to teach this very unique style of storytelling. www.shadowgraph.co.



A regular column to update readers on the damaging effects of the current management of water in Hastings, surrounding areas (and nationally) and what people are doing about it. If you have any information, please contact community@hastingsindependentpress.co.uk marked *Clean Water Watch*.

DAVE YOUNG



Tankers in Bulverhythe

We're already in mid-February 2024, heading for Spring, so what progress has the new year brought so far for cleaner water in the UK. Perhaps the most significant thing is the way protest is turning into action, facilitated by the way so many protest groups are beginning to join forces.

ACTION FROM CWAG

The Clean Water Action Crowd-funder launched in November last year has reached £6,895 as of 6 Feb – and is still open for donations (keep it up!). When it reached its target of £5,000 it also received match funding from East Sussex County Council (ESCC). That funding is already being put to good use with a team of seven volunteers and more than 100 samples taken: sampling from Bulverhythe/West Marina beach and Pelham Beach (Denmark Place/St Helens Down outfall). They will also continue to carry out ad-hoc testing when there are unexpected outflow releases. The data is recorded, and any alarming results are shared with the EA.

Not only are CWAG working with other groups of water testers/anti-pollution campaigners across the Southern Water supply area, including SOS Whitstable, Swim the Wight, Eastbourne Sea Swimmers

and Hayling Island Sewage Watch, but they have also linked up with the Open Quality Lead at Southern Water, who has provided some equipment and training – and maybe SW will even fund future testing.

Action is also being taken to gain bathing water status for West Marina Beach for the 2025 bathing season. This is the kind of development which aims to change protest into concrete action: instead of asking the EA to test the water (without success), this would create a statutory duty for them to do so.

ACTION FURTHER AFIELD

Following the success of Mr Bates with the Post Office, step up Ms Bateman, from Exmouth. She says on Instagram that she's taking South West Water to court over sea sewage discharges that she claims have harmed her health and prevented her from taking daily swims. Jo Bateman swims in the sea every day, not only because she loves it but because she feels it's good for her mental and physical health – like many others. "They have taken away the amenity of the sea by dumping sewage in it," she says. "I've had enough," Jo says. She was already refusing to pay the part of her water bill that covered sewage disposal, but explains: "All I get

from that is the threats of debt recovery bailiffs, and I finally decided I needed to take action... If I win, it will set an amazing precedent."

SHINING A LIGHT

The constant pressure on Water Companies has scored some interesting results, the latest being documents obtained by the Guardian newspaper under freedom of information laws about discussions between three water companies (including Southern Water and South West Water) to discuss "how to handle communications around sewage spills and bill rises".

There have been ongoing suspicions of regulatory capture, and this appears to confirm at least aspects of that. And typically, these discussions have been held in the rarefied atmosphere of the palatial private dining room in the Royal Automobile Club's "magnificent clubhouse" in London, where members are promised an "unforgettable experience". As Sun Tzu says (and Rage Against the Machine sings) "Know your enemy". For those that feel we should not talk of "enemies" in such situations, this has been summarised as: "To win an argument is not only about finding strength and coherence in your opinions. Try to understand the opposite's perspectives."



Kathy Crane onstage at the Pig with Nick Wallis

Hastings Helps Kathleen Get Justice

HIP reports on the hard won justice for a local victim of the Post Office scandal.

Kathleen Crane, 69, a widowed, former Sub-Postmaster caught up in the Post Office Scandal, has thanked people in Hastings for helping to start the process which ended in her victory at the Appeal Court in London last month (25 January), when her conviction was overturned. Lord Justice Holroyde put it emphatically, "her conviction was an abuse of process". But who was doing the abuse?

This was the first such appeal since the ITV drama *Mr Bates vs The Post Office* gripped the nation on New Year's day. It is not widely known, however, that it was a meeting in a Hastings pub that started Kathleen on her road to justice.

THE FIGHT BACK

In a sold-out event last May, organised by Rosie Brocklehurst, at 'The Pig' on Hastings seafront - provided free by manager Solomon and also attended by Nick Wallis, journalist and author of *The Great Post Office Scandal* - Kathy's daughter Katy Crane, (who trained as a children's nurse at the Conquest) spoke about her family's fourteen-year anguish. That evening, Nick Wallis put her in touch with a campaigning barrister, Flora Page, who worked pro bono for seven months. The fight back had begun.

Kathleen Crane who, with her sadly now deceased husband Bob, invested life savings to run the Old Town Post Office in Eastbourne, was shamed and cowed by the wrongful conviction in 2010 at Lewes Crown Court. She never spoke about it. She was obliged to work in a care home to support her two daughters and regularly had to suffer humiliation in admitting to be-

ing a convicted felon in enhanced disclosure checks. With no remaining money for a lawyer - after paying £20,000 in fines and repayment to the Post Office, for an entirely bogus 'shortfall' - Kathleen could see no way out. With apparent almost casual indifference, the Post Office had wrecked one woman's life. It was, of course, as we now know, only a small part of a much wider systematic pattern of legal destruction of so many lives.

Nick Wallis sent out a newsletter to many thousands of supporters recently saying how moved he had been when listening to Kathleen's case at the Appeal Court. He praised local campaigner and "force of nature" Rosie Brocklehurst for organising the event in the Hastings pub which had put Kathleen on the route to redemption.

MIXED EMOTIONS

Clearly the whole scandal has left the family with mixed emotions. Kathleen wept in court, but outside she raised her arms in defiant triumph. Her daughter captured some of the anger they feel towards the upper hierarchy of the Post Office: with regard to those highly paid and as yet unpunished people she had this to say: "Someone should serve jail time."

But, she was also full of praise for local people who have rallied round. Reflecting on the way the Hastings meeting kick-started something she commented, "That night our family began a journey which ended up changing our lives. We are so grateful to all the Hastings people who supported us that magical, hopeful night."

CLIFF VAN COEVORDEN



Climate Plagues

DAVID EP DENNIS

Over the course of history across the world, there have been terrible outbreaks of diseases, and the local climate plays a part in spreading sickness. Science can now tell us what causes these diseases and, hopefully, how they can be prevented or cured. In medieval times, the causes of Black Death bubonic plague, Dengue Fever, Cholera, Typhus and Malaria were a mystery. People who became ill were said to be ‘elf-shot’. Nowadays we all have a responsibility to monitor and conserve our environment and to report certain infections.

LOCAL PLAGUES

Denge Marsh is a part of Romney Marsh in Kent. Its north-west boundary is the town of Lydd; to the south-east is Denge Beach and Dungeness. The area was one of the earliest parts in the region to be reclaimed, recorded in a charter of A.D. 744. Drainage dykes, known locally as sewers, were built to reclaim land and help remove mosquitoes that cause Dengue and Malaria. ‘Denge’ has the meaning ‘to beat’ or ‘strike’ in the Norwe-

gian language, a little like ‘elf-shot’.

In medieval times, Romney Marsh farmers and drainage workers suffered from ‘Marsh fever’ that had a malarial feel as the area was plagued with *Aedes* mosquitos. Symptoms of deadly Dengue Fever include high fever, headache, muscle and joint pain, and a characteristic skin rash. On 11th December 2023, the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) explained that climate change was developing rapidly, with an increased chance of mosquito-borne Dengue fever coming back to England. This viral disease is currently prevalent in tropical and subtropical regions of the world, being transmitted through the bite of infected mosquitoes. One defence is to ensure you do not have any open-surface buckets or bins of stagnant water in your garden, where mosquitoes could breed.

BLACK DEATH

The Black Death, caused by the *Yersinia pestis* bacteria injected by fleabite gave people a truly wretched death with groin ‘buboes’, vomiting, ghastly headaches and swollen tongues. Those who were dying in agony found their skin developing black patches. This awful dis-

ease came to England from Gascony via a ship sailing into Weymouth in June 1348. Although the Romans had developed sewers and ways to remove waste, these techniques were soon forgotten. During the medieval period in Rye, a large wooden tower was built stretching

the population of Europe (25 million). In England, when the remaining peasants realised that they were desperately needed by the gentry to revive ruined agriculture, they asked for more money and this eventually led to the Peasant’s Revolt.



out over the sea and from this was cast human waste. Our sea fronts now have an echo of that crisis. The Environment Agency is monitoring all 15,000 sea outlets and conducting a criminal investigation to discover which companies are allowing sewage into the sea illegally.

The first major bubonic plague of 1348 led to the death of one third of the entire population of England (2 million) and one third of

After King Henry VIII died in 1547, Hastings suffered from plague outbreaks in 1563, 1590, and 1597, but enough people survived to carry on the work of the Cinque Ports and the fishing industry.

GREAT PLAGUE

In the Great Plague of 1665-1666, Sussex was still a truly filthy place with open drains, animal and human dung waste, and sewage carts

attracting bacterially infected rats. The summer of 1665 was exceptionally warm, and by September across England, seven thousand people were dying each week. King Charles II and Parliament fled from London to Oxford. As rich people travelled, they helped to spread the disease. In February, as the temperature dropped sharply, the king and parliament returned to the capital. It seemed that the ‘evil spirits’ that caused plague were afraid of the cold. Rats and the fleas upon them seemed to be normal for the times. The specific plague bacterium was not discovered until 1894 by Alexandre Yersin.

THE PLAGUE SHIP

In 1822, rumours spread in the Newenden area that a Viking ship had been found. Local people knew that Vikings had raided Appledore with 250 longships in 897 CE, overwintering and causing havoc across southern England. They were eventually defeated by King Alfred.

Back in 1822, anything found in Sussex or Kent, made of wood and looking long and narrow, was seen as either a remnant of the Norman invasion- since Duke William had massacred the citizens of Old Romney on 20th October 1066 in retaliation for their killing of his longship crew on 28th September of the same year - or could be part of the great fleet of Viking longships that came to Appledore. This so-called ‘Viking Ship’ was 63 feet and 8 inches in length and 15 feet in breadth. After being taken to London and exhibited for some time, it was broken up and tea caddies and boxes were made with it.

Kent Archives Summary states: “About 1822, the remains of an ancient ship were found by accident in the former bed of the Rother near Maytham Wharf, W. of the Isle of Oxney on the Kent side of the boundary with Sussex. The vessel was clinker-built from oak, but not of British origin. When the vessel was refloated, the remains of a small boat were found about 16 feet from the stern. Earthenware pots and glazed tiles set up as a hearth were found in the after cabin of the larger vessel, and there were bones: a human skull, that of a man with several sound teeth and the bones of an adult, another skull, that of a child with several small child’s bones, the skull of a dog, the skull and horns of a goat or sheep and the lower jaw of a boar with its teeth and tusk.”

It was not Viking but probably Dutch, becoming derelict prior to 1623 because at that date, a complete stop was made to the navigation of the Appledore Channel. It is suggested that the crew might have been plague victims, accounting for human remains, and that the vessel was left, so was comparatively intact, blocking the river navigation channel.

As climate change bites, so do we need to be aware of the dangers of insect-borne diseases.

Rent Rage

TRACEY JOHNSON, who has lived and worked in Hastings for 27 years, decries local, private and often absentee landlords and says a secure affordable home is a basic human right.

Almost half of the homes in Hastings are rented. You'd think that would mean that tenants have a big say. But is there anyone else out there? Is it just me or are you also wondering why there aren't hundreds of us on the streets demanding fair rents, more secure homes ... and shouting from the (often leaking) rooftops for the right to a decent place to live?

I know we live in "1066 Country" and that William the Conqueror claimed England's land for himself by dividing up the country and handing a piece each to a hundred barons, who became feudal "Lords of the Land". Well, "1066 Country" is a great tourist slogan, but surely, now we're living in 2024, it doesn't mean we should still be working every day simply to hand over our hard-earned

wages to a 'landlord' just so we have the privilege of shelter? Especially when most of those landlords don't even live in Hastings.

Shouldn't we all have a right to live in a secure and affordable home without having to hand over so much of our salary every month? That's hardly a radical idea.

We all agreed as a country, just after WW2, that everyone has a right to free healthcare. The NHS was born and no decent person would question that right. In my view, I don't think it should only be the wealthy that get to live in a warm, decent, secure, affordable home in which you can bring up your family, work, be a part of your local community or be able to keep a pet. Even just to decide what colour the walls should be. A home is

an essential part of our life, just like healthcare is.

We can't live a healthy life if we're constantly running just to keep up with increasing rents and the constant worry of a letter from the landlord who might want to cash in on their investment and evict us for no reason, or just because a more lucrative business venture comes along - a holiday let maybe?

I know some people won't challenge landlords, they won't report leaking pipes, mouldy walls, lost

deposits, rip-off rents. I know some may think that's the way it's always been, we can't change it and if we tried, we might be evicted. Who can blame them? But there is strength in numbers. No one should feel alone. We need to change things, and this means we can't stay silent anymore.

We should all be saying that this situation is totally unacceptable in one of the world's wealthiest countries. Whether you're a tenant or not, we all need to agree that every-

one has a right to shelter. There would also be less pressure on our NHS and mental health services if we had this covered.

If you want to be part of a group who want to join forces and raise the voices of local people who've been hit by rising rents and the lack of REALLY affordable homes, then do contact me. We're hoping to launch a group in Hastings soon.

See acorntheunion.org.uk or email rentrage@mail.com

The Right to Rent

A private landlord, who has asked to remain anonymous, argues that high rents are a result of government policy, not individual greed.

Understandably, private landlords get pretty short shrift from tenants. No-one likes paying sizeable chunks of their income over to an individual or company who can, if they complain too much, simply evict them.

But to a large extent, current high rents and an imbalance of power are not really the fault of the landlord. It's down to legislation from successive governments. Secure tenancies for furnished properties where it was difficult or impossible for a landlord to evict a tenant were abolished, along with a requirement that suitable alternative accommodation had to be available before recovery of possession could take place. Rent officers and rent tribunals which determined 'fair' rents and protected tenants from eviction were abolished.

Plus, from 1919, there was council housing. Before the Housing and Town Planning Act of that year, three-quarters of all homes were privately rented, and almost all others were in owner occupation. The Act provided government subsidies

for local councils to build half a million new homes for rent. Over the next 60 years - up to 1979 - nearly seven million council houses were built.

By 1978, immediately before Margaret Thatcher came to power, a third of all homes (32%) were rented from a local authority and just 14% from private landlords - the rest were in owner occupation. Her decision to give council tenants the right to buy - coupled with forbidding local authorities from reinvesting the proceeds in their own housing stock - meant that more than two million council houses disappeared from the rental sector.

Today fewer than 20% of people have access to 'social housing' (now almost invariably from a housing association) while the number of people forced to rent from private landlords has risen to 20%. In numbers terms it means that, in 1979, there were 6.5m council homes, compared to 2.2m today. This forces 4.4m households to rent privately - twice as many as even 15 years ago.



The knock-on effects are obvious. There is far less social housing available and demand for private rentals exceeds supply, so rents increase to what the market will bear - virtually unchecked by competition from the social sector. This has been coupled with 'anti-landlord' legislation - the key piece being preventing the offsetting of mortgage costs against rental income for tax.

An indicative look at the figures show why rents are so high. In Hastings, buying a two-bed flat would cost around £350,000. The interest on a (5%) mortgage would be more than £1,400 a month. The

potential rent for two-bed flats locally is around £1,000 a month. So it's already technically uneconomic. Plus landlords have to budget for repairs and redecorating and for gas safety certificates and servicing on boilers and appliances. Then there's the cost of periodic electrical safety and energy performance inspections. Of course tenants should have the protection of these, but the costs will invariably be passed on to the tenants in their rent. Many landlords may agree with tenants that 'no fault' Section 21 evictions are completely unjust. But this Tory government has con-

sistently broken its commitments to remove them.

Being a private landlord is, in the end, effectively running a small business. Yes, it is uncomfortable 'owning' someone else's home, but on the other hand you are actually providing someone with a roof over their head.

I believe the greatest evil done to housing in Britain in a century was Thatcher's right to buy policy. It needs urgently to be reversed. Local Authorities must be given the resources - and the obligation - to return to providing social 'council' housing for anyone who wants it.



↑ 1896, Cape Town, with Kathleen
← Tressell speaking at Wellington Square

Robert Tressell: The Original Hastings Independent

STEVE PEAK

The creation of a new political party in Hastings – the Hastings Independent Group – because of the failure of the Labour Party to help ordinary people would come as no surprise to Robert Tressell, author of *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*, as he also helped form a new party for the same reason.

Robert's semi-documentary novel, first published 110 years ago in 1914, is often said to be one of the most influential books ever written. It describes how working class people were forced to lead lives of poverty, exploitation and misery in the typical provincial English town of Mugsborough – Hastings & St Leonards – in the early 1900s. The book was so moving and horrifying that it spurred many working people into becoming active trade unionists and political campaigners.

The General Strike in 1926, the setting up of today's welfare state in 1948 and the radical actions of the labour movement until the 1990s are all widely believed to have been inspired by this book. The late Tony Benn described the book as "a

torch to be passed from generation to generation".

But who was Robert Tressell? And how did such a man – a painter and decorator in the building trade, suffering from tuberculosis, and having to look after his daughter alone in a series of rented flats – come to write in his spare time a 1,706 page manuscript that became a book which was read around the world and which changed many people's lives forever?

THE MAN BEHIND THE STORY

Robert lived in Hastings from 1901-10, and his book is a factual account of those years as much as a novel, describing where he worked and lived, and many of these settings can still be seen in the town today.

But 'Robert Tressell' was actually the pseudonym of Robert Noonan, born in Dublin on 18 April 1870. He emigrated to South Africa in 1890, where he married in 1891, and soon became a father. He divorced his wife Elizabeth in 1897, however, and took custody of their six-year-old daughter Kathleen, whom he was to look after on his own for the rest of his life.

They came to Hastings in late

1901, partly because Robert's sister Mary lived in the town, and also because the tuberculosis which he had could be eased by living near the sea. They first stayed briefly with Mary in her flat at 38 Western Road, St Leonards (now demolished), and then moved to 1 Plynlmmon Road on the West Hill. In 1902 they moved to the top flat at 115 Milward Road, just below Plynlmmon Road, staying until 1906. Both houses have commemorative plaques on them.

Robert's first job was with Bruce & Co, a firm of engineers and builders, which had an ironmongers shop at 2 York Buildings, next to today's Kamsons Pharmacy. From early 1903 he worked for another building firm, Burton & Co, of 88 Stonefield Road, now a plumbing shop. From 1906 he was employed by the

Robert was employed on many buildings, including St Andrews Church in Queens Road, where Morrison's petrol station is today, and part of his wall-painting there is preserved in Hastings Museum.

Much of the building work in the novel's town of Mugsborough actually took place in upper St Leonards, around Hollington Park Road, then the borough's wealthiest area. The book's main setting is called The Cave, probably modelled mainly on the house Val Mascal in Gillsmans Hill, with other settings in nearby properties, especially Filsham Lodge at the top of Filsham Road and Grange Court in Hollington Park Road, all still standing and looking much as they did then.

THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC FEDERATION

It was the appalling and deteriorating conditions in the lives of many poverty-stricken local people in the early 1900s which gave birth to a strong socialist movement in Hastings following the disaster of the January 1906 general election. In that election, Hastings was one of only a handful of Liberal-held seats in the country that were lost to the Tories, with Labour standing impotently on the sidelines here in Mugsborough. The new Tory MP was Harvey Du Cros, the rich Irish owner of the Dunlop tyre business. He owed his success to the philanthropy of the ragged-trouser voters.

As a result of the Tory success, Robert and other socialists in the town tried to fight back by creating a Hastings branch of the Marxist party called the Social Democratic Federation (SDF) in late 1906. The new Hastings Independent Group of councillors may not be Marxist, but its members share Robert's disappointment with the Labour Party.



1908 portrait

then-builders Adams & Jarrett in Norman Road, today a domestic appliance mini-supermarket of the same name. This is the last firm that Robert is known to have worked for.

ROBERT'S LEGACY

Robert had a slight Irish accent and was described as being of slim stature, an atheist, very cultured, reader of a wide variety of books, an alcohol consumer, kind to his friends and fond of cricket. He always wore a trilby hat to work, not the cap common to most working men. He could speak at least seven languages.

By late 1906 Robert was suffering badly from tuberculosis, and this, added to his responsibilities as a single parent, forced him to spend much of his time indoors when not working, and so he began putting together the material for the book.

Robert and daughter Kathleen moved from Milward Road into the top flat above a cycle shop at 241 London Road, in late 1907 or early 1908, and it was in the front room here that he wrote most, if not all, of *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*. He adopted the pseudonym surname of Tressell to hide his identity from possible employers.

Number 241 was to be Robert's last home with Kathleen. He finished the book in early 1910 but no publisher would accept it, so in August he went to Liverpool, hoping to earn enough money to pay the fare for him and Kathleen to emigrate to Canada in search of a better life. His tuberculosis worsened, however, and he died in Liverpool Royal Infirmary on 3 February 1911, aged 40, and was buried in a pauper's grave.

By chance, Kathleen found a publisher, and *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* was first published on 23 April 1914 in edited form. It had an immediate impact, and since then the book has appeared in over a hundred different formats, reprints and languages, with the unedited version first being published in 1955.

For more information on Tressell and Mugsborough see my website-hastingshistory.net

MARK FRENCH



Yumino Seki as a 'world spirit'

The mystery of agency in a world full of forces

CALLUM THOMSON

As the performance begins, a long curtain drops from the ceiling to the floor. It does not take up the full width of the stage. Afrit Nebula, a three piece band, are set up to one side. The stage is plunged into darkness, and a voice emerges: "She wasn't there in the beginning, and

then she was. And she moved, she was moving. She moved. She came from something else, which was she, and which was 'she', before. She was there, and is there, and she came from what was before." The stage awakens: a projection appears on the curtain, a shimmering watery luminescence, and the band ignites. First there is a rumble, then an eruption as the sound of a soprano saxophone pierces the room.

Slowly, the sound settles, leaving only ambient, residual ringing. From behind the curtain, the face and fingers of a figure push out.

DANCING TO A MYSTERIOUS TUNE

The Spirit In The Dust is the product of a three-way collaboration between renowned Japanese Butoh-influenced dancer Yumino Seki, St Leonards-based three-piece band Afrit Nebula, and filmmaker Mark French. Seki plays the role of a world spirit who has been conjured into being "from darkness" and, brutally exposed to the world, "learns what it is to be human." The piece takes its inspiration from a quote attributed to Albert Einstein: "Human beings, vegetables, or cosmic dust, we all dance to a mysterious tune, intoned in the distance by an invisible piper." It is about

the mystery of human agency in a world full of forces: what animates us, and whether it emerges from within or without. The performance of this mystery is beautiful. Multiple agents act on one another; sound, light, material, body, but it remains unclear who or what is the primary agent: what acts and what reacts. By extension, it is unclear where the boundaries of each agent begin and end. As the eerie voice (the only detached entity from the interplay of actions and actors) describes, Seki's world spirit "came from what was before" and was conjured in a flash. There is a new reality, yes, but the material essence has not changed, only moved. "She was moving out of nothing" the voice says, "into a new space which had come out of nothing." Once alive, she is a part of what now surrounds her. She is part of the ebb and flow of the new reality and the causation within, and it is difficult to pick apart.

THE STRUGGLE OF THE WORLD SPIRIT

The feeling of dynamic interplay between agents pervades the entire piece, including the performers. I spoke to Ken Edwards, founding member and bass player of Afrit Nebula, about the intuitive nature of the relationships between each member of the band and Seki. Embodying the spirit of the piece, they intuitively allow the direction of influence between them to shift. At times, the world spirit is commanding, pulling around the curtain in tight step with the band's rhythms, demanding they keep up. Yet other times her movement lags in jolts behind them, and she seems distressed.

Both Afrit Nebula's avant-jazz influence and Seki's Butoh-influenced practice suit this scriptless approach to performance. Butoh is a dance form originating in Japan, born in the late 1950s as a rejection

of the constrained and refined traditional Japanese dance traditions. It is associated with 'unsocialised movements' and, befitting this piece, addresses the question of human control. Butoh begins, one practitioner describes, with an "abandonment of the self", creating an empty shell in which external stimuli can enter and move the body. Though Seki's world spirit is not an empty shell, she struggles for influence against the powerful forces of light and sound.

A MOVING METAPHOR

There are many reasons to find this performance moving. In it, I found a metaphor of infancy, in that my new nephew has just learned to walk. Though he came from "what was before" - the material essence of his parents - he is also a new force, slowly exerting his own agency on the world, fundamental to reality rather than a late addition. "That was before, and this is after. After is different in some way", the voice says. But it also speaks about a fundamental human anxiety around control. It is distressing to feel that life, with its demands and forces, is merely happening to you. As an audience, then, we welcome the world spirit, finding joy in the moments of calm when the sound and light settle and afford her respite to move for herself. The performers, too, have learned to relish those moments.

Over time, Ken Edwards says they have learned "less is more, to make use of the silence, to rein back at times and enjoy the space." These moments were the most moving: they are hopeful and optimistic. Recently leaving my job, I personally am craving space from the rolling demands of life to cultivate a new path forward. I cannot wait to see The Spirit In The Dust again.

The Spirit In The Dust perform again at Fabrica, Brighton on 23 May.

Poetry to be Enjoyed not Endured

SERENA FERRARI looks forward to when Henry Normal and Brian Bilston perform at the De La Warr, kicking off a nearly sold out tour.

The first time I read Henry Normal's poetry was in preparation for an interview for Hastings Independent on his then recent publication, *The Fire Hills*. A copy of *The Fire Hills*

along with his most recent collection, *A Moonless Night* (released 14 February this year), arrived in the mail, both warmly signed by the man himself. The poems were un-

expectedly tender. Most of them were funny about unfunny things - ageing, death - with an emphasis on word-play. The next time I heard his name was at a Lemn Sissay performance during the Small Wonder Festival at Charleston. Sissay said that he wished Henry Normal was on stage instead of him! Now, there's a chance to see Henry Normal perform locally, at the De La Warr in Bexhill this Friday, 16 February.

The Bafta-winning writer-and-producer-turned-poet will be joined by poet and author Brian Bilston. I have never met Brian Bilston. According to Normal, his face never appears on the internet, and because of this, he has been called the Banksy of poetry. Despite having no virtual face, Bilston has gathered a large and loyal following on social media, amassing 400,000 or so fans with his "funny, irreverent poetry." There is one online called: *Every day the planet burns a little more*. It is interactive, and light-hearted in that it can be



Henry Normal and Brian Bilston

read from the bottom up with a reversal in tone and meaning. Tackling subjects like the climate and refugee crises, Bilston manages to explore antithetical perspectives in one poem. He thereby demonstrates that hate and love, hope and despair, are two sides of the same coin.

Henry Normal and Brian Bilston will each take the stage for an hour performing poems, jokes and stories on 16 February at the De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill. There will be an intermission in between. For information or tickets: dlwp.com/event/brian-bilston-henry-normal/

RICHARD DAVIS

HPO Principals play Beethoven and Schubert

VICTORIA KINGHAM

Christ Church St Leonards is always impressive – Christ on the cross, with two other haloed figures, looks down lovingly from on high to the congregational space. Tonight that space was fully occupied with an audience for a unique chamber concert given by the Hastings Philharmonic Orchestra principals. And whether or not one believes in the power of universal love of Christ for his worshippers, the love of the musicians for the music of Beethoven and Schubert was certainly one of the strongest powers of the evening.

It was an impeccable performance. The principals are the section leaders of the orchestra, and the septet was in its original arrangement of violin, viola, cello, dou-

ble-bass, horn, bassoon and clarinet. Now these are young musicians of the highest order, and their instrumental skill is exceptional. But whether it was to do with the excellent acoustics of the church or whether it was to do with their having so often played together in the orchestra, this was a rare experience.

THE WORKS

There is probably no need to elaborate on the details of the two compositions. Synopses of both are readily available online. It's enough to say that the Beethoven piece is one of his most popular chamber pieces, despite the fact that he himself wished, after a while, that he'd never written it. Who knows why? It's a supremely balanced work in six movements: each instrument has its brilliant solo melodic moment, each movement has its rounded shape, its polished progression.

A glorious stately minuet makes up the third movement, a playful scherzo with a melody stated by the bassoon that sounds like the morning sortie of a hunting party, a dignified march leading into a presto with a climactic solo violin passage (and here we heard the accomplished musicianship of first violin and leader, Greta Mutlu).

The second half was Schubert's octet. This was commissioned by a noted clarinetist of his day, and it is thought that he asked Schubert to make it sound as much like Beethoven as possible. But the added second violin makes for a great richness of sound, and there is the most lyrical adagio with a clarinet statement taken up and embellished by the rest of the instruments, and returning, in a poignant melodic sequence.

Forget hi-fi or quadro or surround sound or whatever else you think makes for the best orchestral reproduction. Nothing comes near to a live classical performance where the players clearly adore what they are playing and display the technical skill, and the careful interaction, that make for a memorable recital. Furthermore, the acoustic in Christ Church is almost hypersensitive to volume and timbre, amplifying and distinguishing each instrument to its full advantage.

Hastings Philharmonic Or-



Hastings Philharmonic Principals in Rehearsal

chestra Principals played at Christ Church, Silchester Road, St Leonards, on 27 January. Instrumentalists were: Greta Mutlu (leader), violin; Jordi Morell, viola; Alexei

Sarkissov, cello; Adam Churchyard, double bass; Boyan Ivanov, clarinet; Ben Exell, bassoon; Hannah Key, horn.. The Schubert added Yuliya Ostapchuk on second violin.



Love, Mania, Transfiguration

VICTORIA KINGHAM on the St Leonards Concerts Weekender

Once more, it has to be said that down here in a small area of St Leonards and Hastings we are privileged to hear the most gifted of musicians. They are certainly attracted here by

the exceptional Max Baillie, whose outstanding musicianship and bold musical entrepreneurship has led to some notable, world-class concerts. It isn't only their performative skill,

but also the genuine enjoyment that is generated by groups of players who are able, together, to communicate what it is about Tchaikovsky or Schönberg or Bartók or Schubert that makes their genius eternal.

So it was last Saturday evening. *Love and Mania* featured the linguist, instrumentalist and singer Alice Zawadzki, who understands well the subtleties of how song communicates. Vocals arranged by her included a Brazilian standard (though written by Mexican Tomás Méndez) *Cucurucucu*, a Sephardic folk song, traditional Polish ballad *Oczy Czarne* (Black Eyes) and Schubert's transcendent *Death and the Maiden*. There were other songs,

some arranged by Max Baillie, one by his father, acclaimed cellist Alexander Baillie. Zawadzki seems limitlessly versatile. It isn't just about her extended vocal range or her impeccable timing or her perfect diction. She has something more: the special intelligence which makes a great singer able to communicate meaning through vocal expression, to render, through complexity, simplicity and truth. She is, I would say, a great artist.

TRANSFIGURATION

The first half of Sunday evening's concert was occupied by the original arrangement of Schönberg's *Verklärte Nacht* (Transfigured Night) which surely stands as one of the most viscerally beautiful musical constructs of the last 150 years. It occupied the first half of the concert; the second half was Bartók, Janáček, Tchaikovsky, all faultlessly rendered with verve, passion, and the certainty that comes from depth of musical understanding.

Dmitry Smirnov, outstanding Russian violinist, was refused a visa by the British authorities only three days before the concerts and one day before he was due to fly. Given that he had an invitation to play here, with dates and details, and then has an international professional schedule in Europe until at least October this year, this seems a draconian intervention. His place was taken on the Saturday by Magdalena Filipczak, who managed to learn the very difficult Janáček Kreutzer sonata in two days. Filipczak is, like all these players, an

international prize-winning multi-talented musician. For the Sunday replacement we were privileged to hear the confident, silvery tones of a young Japanese violinist, Yume Fujise.

You'd be forgiven for thinking that these musicians play together very regularly, such was the warmth and perfection of delivery and the communication among them. The websites listed below indicate their various achievements. Another St Leonards Concert is coming up soon, and promises to be exciting. Details below. Bring your cushion.

MUSICIANS:

- **Max Baillie**, violin and viola: maxbaillie.com
- **Alice Zawadzki**, voice and tambour: alicezmusic.com
- **Kirsten Jenson**, cello: kirstenjenson.com
- **Bridget O'Donnell**, violin: facebook.com/bridgetodonnellviolin
- **Hannah Roberts**, cello: hannahroberts.com
- **Ann Beilby**, viola: twitter.com/annbeilbyviola?lang=en-GB
- **Yume Fujise**, violin: wcom.org.uk/yeoman/yume-fujise
- **Magdalena Filipczak**, violin: magdalenafilepczak.com

Next Event: The Cosmic Concert, 24 February 8pm at Christ Church, St Leonards. Bring a cushion and bliss out. Details and tickets: stlconcerts.co.uk/event/the-cosmic-concert. Richter, Pärt, Glass, Ades, interwoven with baroque. Not to be missed.

COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR



Merryl Futerman, author

Don't Make a Scene

ELIZABETH ALLEN on a new book by local resident Merryl Futerman

In *Don't Make a Scene*, Merryl's twenty-five years of experience as PA to celebrities in the world of theatre and media are fashioned into a frothy, fast-moving account of the trials and tribulations of Maddy. She longs to become a script-writer but meanwhile has to pay her rent by dealing with clients who are needy, crazy and sometimes dangerous in their demands. *Find and fix my Cartier watch* is an acceptable task, but not *Take the points on your licence for my speeding offence*. And what about: *I'm in New York and it's freezing, can you send my parka?* As her sensible friend tells her: "Your clients wouldn't last five minutes in the real world." She copes so brilliantly with the neediness and craziness that one longs for her to turn her skills from fixing Cartier watches and getting tots in Primrose Hill into mindfulness classes to something more worthwhile. Becoming the homelessness tsar perhaps? Managing the national potholes crisis? On the evidence of her competence that we see here, Maddy could certainly give either a try.

Merryl Futerman, *Don't Make A Scene* is available at Hastings Bookshop

COURTESY OF BILL GREENHEAD



Bill Greenhead: Stormy Hastings Sky

Painting Hastings in Oils

VICTORIA KINGHAM on Bill Greenhead's new paintings at The Stables

The genial Bill Greenhead is one of those comparatively rare and happy people whose talent is also their livelihood. He has worked for the last thirty years as a cartoonist and freelance illustrator for newspapers, children's book series, and animated films. He went to college for just a year, before being offered a job at an animation studio.

"The thing with animation is, you're drawing someone else's style.

Do you remember *The Singing Detective*?" he asks. How could you forget it, I say. He goes on, "well someone put the soundtrack on, and I was drawing a letter dancing, in-betweening [creating intermediate frames between two key frames], and that song came on, *Don't Mess With Mr. In-Between*. And I wondered what I was doing, when I could very well develop and use my own style. So I went down Fleet

Street and got a job in two weeks and never went back."

He and his partner came down to Hastings from Maidstone about a year ago as a new beginning after the children had left home and, like many other midlife incomers, Greenhead loves the inclusivity, friendliness and genuine interest in all the arts that he has found here. The venture into oil painting is completely new to him, so between the Tuesday Painters Club at Rye, and Hastings Arts Forum he has been encouraged to work using previously unfamiliar techniques. The result is an impressive collection of seaside pictures with some particularly skilful renderings of that most elusive of painterly subjects, cloudy skies. There are also several fat or cross seagulls, fishing boats, and a very extraordinary *Sunset Over Hastings Pier*.

He works from photographs, as do many figurative painters, but the angle of each picture is unusual, well-chosen, individual. There is an angled view from the pier, for example, for which leaning over perilously to take the originating photograph may well have endangered his life. He talks eagerly about oil painting techniques and how surprised he was at the success of his first ever oil painting (of his dog) which now hangs over his fireplace. He is still working, and this is a comprehensive venture into new avenues. It is to be hoped we will see more of the same.

'My Year In Hastings', an exhibition of new paintings by Bill Greenhead, is showing in The Stables Art Gallery until 30 March



STUART LISTED PHOTOGRAPHY

The Hot One Two

Going Big at the Carlisle

AMANDA BROOKS takes in Not Now Norman, White Tyger and The Hot One Two.

The Carlisle Rock Venue in Hastings town, run by Gemma Weightman, now hosts live, explosive experiences for rock music lovers. See Ya There Promotions, the main event organisers, aim to promote the local original, independent, rock music scene, supporting new, sometimes explosive, music from lesser-known or unsigned bands. This was the first ticketed event for many years at the Carlisle, now equipped with a brand new, full 5,000W PA system operated by sound engineer Wee Jock.

NOT NOW NORMAN, A BALLSY APPETISER

Hailing from Berwick-upon-Tweed, the intergenerational, alternative hard rock band Not Now Norman (named as a tribute to a roguish cockerel) definitely know how to skewer down an audience. Fast, catchy tunes, powerful melodies, biting vocal delivery, solid drums, impressive, penetrating guitar jabs, and, holding it all together, Julie Plunkett's delicious, tight bass lines. Displaying a feathery top hat (in homage to the cockerel), red hot pants, and make-up to match, lead vocalist Taylor Grace displays unwavering energy, sound-puncturing tones and stunning vibrato. Belting out songs inspired by a personal message, the plumed young queen danced exuberantly, mesmerising the audience.

WHITE TYGER, WILD AND CRAZY

Welcome to ferocious heavies from the West Midlands, White Tyger, winners of the Hard Rock Hell-Raising Stars Award 2023. They generate an uninhibited and sonically fascinating show, with musical influences ranging from bona-fide classic

rock to sleaze 'hair' metal and contemporary styles. The one and only Nip Turner slaps the audience in the face with his vocal range, three or four octaves and climbing. Die-hard and raw, White Tyger rapidly establish themselves on Hastings turf. Ten seconds into their set, they had already set the stage on fire with a thunderous, mixed style of 'old-school' rock from the 1970s, 80s and early 90s, played with original, contemporary panache.

THE HOT ONE TWO, SENSATIONAL TIME MACHINE

Hailing from Cambridgeshire (stomping ground of David Gilmour and Syd Barrett), it is no wonder that this formidable, heavy rock quintet get going with racing guitar riff wizardry, commanding, powerhouse male vocals and stunning guitar licks. It's easy to see that the charismatic Hot One Two are driven by the spirit of rock 'n roll, which remains at the epicentre of their performances. Though utterly contemporary, the band keep alive the classic 1980s rock style backdrop they grew up in. They transfix the audience with their no-holds-barred stage presence, arousing a host of emotions and memories that whisk us back to a time when 'hair' rock, leather and lace, were up-to-the-minute trends.

Find See Ya There Promotions on Facebook. The Carlisle: carlislehastings.com, Not Now Norman: notnownorman.com, White Tyger: whitetyger.net/home, The Hot One Two: thehotonetwo.com/bio. Bands played at The Carlisle, Pelham Street, Hastings on 2 February 2024

BOOKBUSTER REVIEW

Follow the Money

By Paul Johnson
Published by Abacus, rrp £12.99
REVIEW BY TIM BARTON

The subtitle of this book is ‘how much does Britain cost?’, cost being defined here by the balance of taxes in and government spending out. As the author notes, public service and welfare spending are increasing year on year, in part due to ‘an ageing population’. Economists tend to have a panic attack at ageing populations, and even more so at lower birthrates. The irony, of course, is that pushing to raise populations to please globalised capital and the City is resulting in two things. One is that immigration increases drastically under this Tory government even whilst they hypocritically dog-whistle racist-pleasing propaganda about ‘great replacement theory’, and how great Brexit is going now they have their ‘sovereignty’ back; the other is that we risk driving our consumer-based society ever faster towards an ecological cliff edge.

REGRESSIVE TAXES HIT THE POOREST HARDEST
Meanwhile, taxes, the main source of government income, barring increasing IMF debt for example, are under pressure to be reduced. Or at least, the non-regressive taxes such as income and corporation tax are. Regressive taxes, that hit the poorest hardest, are rising. Sane functional economies in the global north tend to raise 25% from corporation

tax. Whilst the propagandists on the Tory-right whine that it should be 17% or less, it is well to recall that it has been much higher historically, and indeed after Thatcher’s free-market extremist clique left power having drastically cut the tax, it was still much higher than it is now. Income tax, too, has a number of

a result of PFI? The answers to the second and third question are, a lot, really a lot. The first question? You really can’t.

A UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME

Unless we want a social collapse that will make the disruption of the industrial revolution or the extreme poverty revealed in early

twentieth-century London by Jack London in his ‘People of the Abyss’, the economists’ obsession with raising immigration to combat (necessary) population contraction and the insistence on ‘growth growth growth’ must change.

What kind of growth? Driven by what? In itself growth can be a positive, but the kind we see pushed by industry and the financialisation sectors is dangerous to the majority of us. The tax base must be radically revised, with regressive taxes reduced or abolished; with tax havens and the City’s money laundering banned; with something more akin to a ‘universal basic income’ introduced to move us away from the stigmatised, unfit-for-purpose, and all too often vindictive Department of Work and Pension’s target-driven meanness.

With government debt at its highest since the 1950s, and a ‘free market’ ‘neo-liberal’ elite running the country from the City, offshore, with increasingly foreign ownership, and using an Oxford ‘educated’ privately schooled and interbred privileged elite dominating our supposedly ‘democratic’ institutions, these sensible measures are really not on the table for discussion. Similar issues are sabotaging attempts to address drastically needed environmental problems, which taken together risk an extinction-level synergy, and anyway will do for the UK economy sooner or later.

That we appear to have an ‘opposition’ party wedded to the same

planet-aping economic ideas as the worst of the right-wingers is desperately poorly timed. The last two Labour manifestos at least attempted to address the material realities of the world we live in, although many ecologists were right to point out it didn’t go far enough. If current statements from Starmer and company are anything to go by, those policies will be gone.

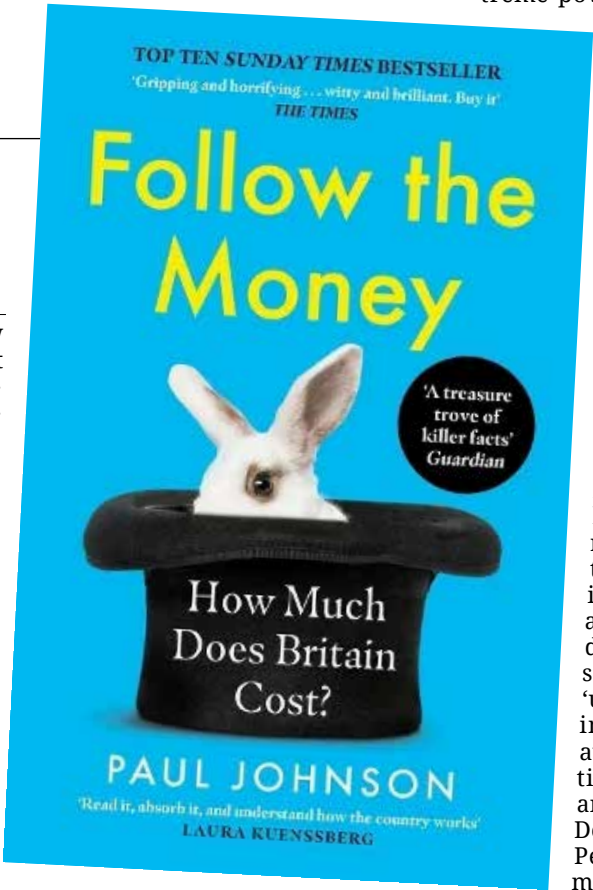
SO USEFUL FOR CONTEXTUALISING OUR CURRENT CRISES

Obviously, one of the most visible victims of this ideological shortsightedness is the NHS, already a tattered doily, with contracted out services, managerial class top-down interference, and the privileging of private practice over its actually intended recipients. Close behind, but less noisily decried, is a sweeping decimation of the education sector. And, of course, at least since Cameron’s Big Society nonsense and even more so under the current so-called ‘levelling-up’

agenda, municipal councils are completely hamstrung, starved of cash and the main target of local resentment. This latter helps no-one more than the very party causing the crisis.

In all of this, the role of the media is the elephant in the room. Who owns most of it? Billionaires. Many of them non-nationals. It’s no wonder the globalist agenda gaslights ordinary tax-payers into believing tax increases suggested by previous Labour manifestos will harm them, even though the majority would not in fact be any worse, in fact, better off if well-being includes a safe secure community because that too is chucked on the bonfire of neo-liberal market capitalism. Johnson offers much more detail and nuance than I can here, and would contest some of my positions, but his book is so useful for contextualising our current crises that it is required reading.

Follow the Money is available from Bookbuster, 39 Queens Road, Hastings TN34 1RE



POETRY CORNER

New Year Sea Poem
TOM GRINDROD

hear it
hear it before you see it

against the rain
shoulders hunched
blowing out
turn the corner and there
it is
a great roiling wall of
liquid concrete
pebbledashed
spitting and furious
sound and mass
and violence
rearing up high above us
as wide and obliterating as the sky

we run down
just to feel our feet sink into the pebbles
the wind in our mouths
in our eyes and hair
and our hands
pressed into each other’s hands
facing down the sea
spit and foam

but we are invincible together
nothing can stop us
nothing in the sea
or in the universe

she smiles
and in her eyes
she holds me
a hand
my hand
pressed to her side
pulse
within a pulse
within a pulse

CROSSWORD CORNER

- Across**
- 1. Composer into Bach and Elgar (6)
 - 3. Put out shoots for winter vegetable (6)
 - 4. Some crisp raw leeks spread out in an ungainly way (6)
- Down**
- 1. He’s so U-turn to make buildings (6)
 - 2. Fast time with the Italian pulse (6)

Crossword Solution: Answers on page 5 of The HIP List

1					2
	Hastings Independent Five-Clue Cryptic Crossword				
3					
	No. 245 by Peat Poser				
4					

FOOTBALL

Dissent Punished in Derby Defeat

3 February:
Kingstonian 1,
Hastings Utd 3

6 February:
Hastings Utd 0,
Horsham 2

10 February:
Hastings Utd 1,
Lewes 3

HUGH SULLIVAN

A comfortable away win for the ‘U’s at Kingstonian on 3 February elevated them to fourth in the Isthmian Premier League table. Two damaging home defeats have followed, however, leaving them bunched again with a number of teams on the fringe of the (top five) play-off places.

The loss to local rivals Lewes last Saturday was particularly disappointing to the majority home supporters in a crowd of over 2,750 at the Pilot Field. Many vented their anger at referee Elliott Mayer, who sent Jack Dixon off for dissent and verbal abuse shortly before half-time, leaving the ‘U’s – already a goal down – to play the rest of the game

with only ten men. However, Dixon has past form in this regard, and manager Chris Agutter will surely have felt his own frustration at his team’s collective lack of discipline under the pressure of the occasion.

Torrents of rain had fallen over the previous couple of days, and a light drizzle continued through the match. Lewes must have thought they had brought their home pitch (‘The Dripping Pan’) with them, as the defective guttering of the main Hastings stand deposited a steady dribble of water throughout. In the circumstances, the ground staff should be commended for the durability of the pitch, passed as playable in an inspection four hours before kick-off and justifying that assessment. Both sides, too, showed commendable skill and ball-control, considering the conditions.

The visitors’ forwards, though, were quicker on the counter-attack, and after 20 minutes a slick exchange of passes put the extravagantly named Calvin Lumbobo-Kalala through to round ‘U’s goalkeeper Charlie Grainger and slide the ball into the net from a tight angle.

Hastings looked to get back on level terms by finding space on the wings – John Ufuah on the left, Fred-



Jack Dixon heading out against Lewes

die Legg on the right. Legg became involved in a series of tangles with the Lewes left back, and was penalised three times within a few minutes for sending him sprawling. Both the Hastings player and sections of the supporting crowd vented frustration at the referee’s decisions in favour of the defender.

Then, when Legg finally burst through and set up a chance for

Ufuah, the latter seemed to have his legs taken from under him in the penalty area. The referee dismissed penalty claims. As the crowd became further incensed, Tommy Fagg raced 20 yards to confront Mr Mayer and was arguably lucky to receive only a yellow card. However, almost immediately, Dixon was also yellow-carded for showing dissent. He continued to make antagonistic gestures, appeared to shout further abuse, and was sent off.

Dixon is a former Lewes player and no doubt as keen to see Hastings triumph over them as he was last August when playing for Whitehawk against the ‘U’s. On that occasion he lasted just ten minutes against the team he had previously captained before being dismissed – a striking precedent.

Be that as it may, United’s ten men fought gamely through the second half. A second goal for Lumumbo-Kalala in the 62nd minute, converting a low cross from the right, seemed to have put Lewes beyond reach. But Davide Rodari scored a crisp penalty after Finley Chapman, substituting for the ineffective Fagg, had been tripped in the area, and the home side continued to press forward in hopes of an equaliser, only dashed when a third goal was conceded late in added time.

Next up in the league is an away trip to Potters Bar Town, followed by a hosting of league leaders Hornchurch. Femi Akinwande, who was banging in goals for Hastings at the beginning of the season, will be leading the Essex team’s attack after being transferred across in November.

TENNIS

Local Teams Seek Promotion

The Green men’s first team virtually ensured their promotion from the third to the second division of the TDS Ultra Sussex Winter Doubles League when they defeated Preston 3-1 last Sunday in their final match. The St Leonards club were without top coach Joe Adams, but Ross Cudmore, who has left Amherst to join them mid-season, teamed up with Alex Williams to win both their rubbers on the day. Chris Grief and Paul Tune chipped in with a vital win against the second-string opposition to raise the team’s overall points tally for the season to 15 from 6. Hurstpierpoint, who have 14 with



Anita Pearce of Amherst

two matches still to play, are almost certain to overtake them for the top spot, and Preston could still theoretically overhaul them too but would have to score at least 10 from their last three, a very low probability.

The Green Ladies remain very dependent on the quality of their first pairing, Beaula Page and Amanda Ruck. Playing together, they romped past both opposition pairs in their opening matches

against Saltdean and Seaford in the third division of the ladies’ league, but with Page missing for the third match against Angmering the team went down 4-0.

After relegation last winter, Amherst Ladies play in the same division just a mile down the road. They had lost 0-4 to Seaford in November and drew 2-2 with Saltdean in January but, by contrast, defeated Angmering 4-0 in a very one-sided contest earlier this month. Jada Ani and Anita Pearce lost only two games in four sets, while Nikki Crowhurst and Pearl Hare were almost as dominant. Amherst and The Green are scheduled to meet at the former’s courts on 25 February in what should prove a highly competitive contest.

Meanwhile Amherst men retain an outside chance of promotion from Division 5 after dispatching Crowborough 4-0 on 4 February. First pair Dylan Preece and Quentin Soucek are formidable at this level, and the second pair, Mark Cunningham and Anthony Hickey, have also been scoring well. Maximum points in the last match against Badgers on 3 March could be enough to raise them to Division 4 if other results go their way.

ISTHMIAN PREMIER LEAGUE STANDINGS AS AT 28 JANUARY

		P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
1	Hornchurch	28	20	7	1	68	23	67
2	Chatham Town	30	18	4	8	61	43	58
3	Billericay Town	29	17	3	9	49	25	54
4	Wingate & Finchley	29	17	3	10	56	50	51
5	Hastings Utd	30	14	6	10	54	42	48
6	Enfield Town	28	14	6	8	54	43	48
7	Bognor Regis	28	12	10	6	46	36	46
8	Carshalton	30	12	8	10	56	46	44
9	Lewes	28	13	5	10	47	49	44



INSPIRING, ENTERTAINING AND TRANSFORMING LIVES

From 1st February 2024, The Guildhall Trust was delighted to become the new operator for The White Rock Theatre, Hastings.

Having successfully operated Portsmouth Guildhall for over 14 years, we are excited to add The White Rock to our portfolio and develop the venue's potential to be a vibrant, multi-faceted asset for Hastings and the East Sussex region.

As a charitable trust (Registered Charity: 1153358) we are a values-led organisation which places the community at the heart of everything we do.

We have exciting plans to develop the programme on offer at the White Rock, build community partnerships, increase engagement with schools, young people and the creative sector and introduce investment into the building.

To stay informed of our plans, please create a new account online to receive our e-newsletter. Your details have not been shared with us by the previous operator, so it is important to sign up if you wish to continue receiving show news, offers and more.

We look forward to connecting with you and welcoming you to The White Rock!



SIGN UP NOW!

A FANTASTIC NEW PROGRAMME OF ENTERTAINMENT IS COMING YOUR WAY

22 MARCH



KID KAPICHI

23 MARCH



ROBERT PLANT

21 APRIL



JO BRAND

2 MAY



MOST HAUNTED

15 JUN



JOOLS HOLLAND & HIS
RHYTHM AND BLUES
ORCHESTRA

28 JULY



FIREMAN SAM

25 - 26 OCTOBER



JOHN BISHOP

4 DECEMBER



WHITNEY - QUEEN OF
THE NIGHT

WHITE ROCK

HASTINGS

WWW.WHITEROCKTHEATRE.ORG.UK