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New MP Raises UBAT Concerns

PAUL MCLAUGHLIN

Helena Dollimore, the newly elected MP for Hastings and Rye, has raised her concerns about the ongoing dispute between local members of the National Education Union (NEU) and the University of Brighton Academies Trust (UBAT), which has disrupted the education of over 3,000 pupils in four local schools. In one of her first acts as a Member of Parliament, she has written to the Minister of State for Education, Catherine McKinnell, to highlight the “urgent situation” affecting children attending the Hastings Academy, the St Leonard’s Academy, Robsack Wood Primary Academy and the Baird Primary Academy, where a series of strikes has resulted in children missing several days of schooling.

The industrial action by staff has been triggered by the amount of public funding UBAT retains for central administrative services rather than passing it on to the schools, which are having to make budget cuts as a result. Across all schools

run by UBAT, the average amount of public funding retained is 13%. In the St Leonard’s Academy, however, the Trust retained roughly 20% of funding for the 2023-24 academic year. This compares to a national average of 6% for all academy trusts.

The dispute escalated in April when UBAT announced a series of job cuts at the Hastings Academy. In response, the NEU called for industrial action demanding a change in the funding model with a commitment from UBAT that school budgets would not pay for the change. When the union coordinated strike ballots across the trust schools, local members voted by over 90% to back industrial action.

There have been a number of strikes in recent weeks with teachers and support staff manning picket lines outside of schools. They have often been joined by parents who are just as angered at the impact the diversion of funds away from classrooms is having on the education of their children.

In her letter, Ms Dollimore called on the Department for Education to review the situation “to ensure that as much public

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EDITOR'S NOTE

This is the dawning of the age of what exactly? Britain has a new government and Hastings has a new MP - only the second non-Conservative member since 1983, and the first labour MP in 14 years. While much of Europe seems to be moving to the right, left-leaning voters can take heart that here, in our country and our constituency, we seem to be moving in the opposite direction.

We look at the implications of the local result on pages 3 and 18, consider the shifting sands of the membership of the Borough Council and the plight of our County Council on pages 2 and 3. Our Community pages cover issues ranging from choosing a care home to sanctuary for refugees, and introduce the concept of a Wonky Women's Institute. If you pull out the regular and comprehensive eight-page listings section you will uncover a double page spread celebrating 50 years of Hastings Country Park, while the arts coverage focuses on folk, poetry and stand-up comedy, and our literature page considers the nature of contemporary capitalism.

Plenty for all to get their teeth into while, hopefully, celebrating and enjoying summer and contemplating the (brave?) new world order.

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News

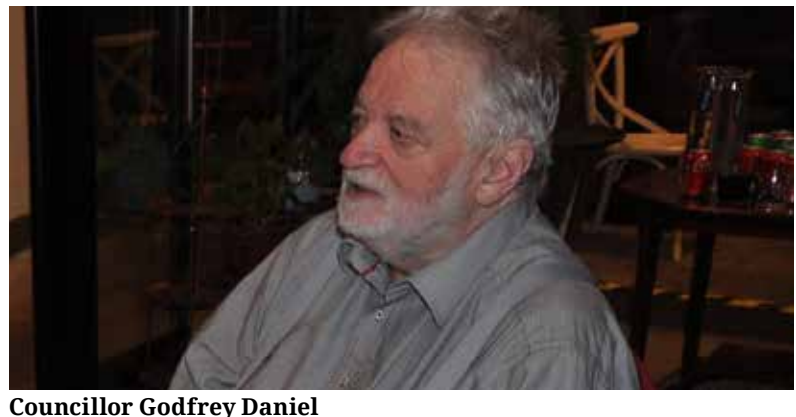
£55 million
Funding Gap in
County Council
Finances

PAUL MCLAUGHLIN

East Sussex County Councillors were presented with a bleak financial report for the year ahead at a meeting of the full council last Tuesday (9 July). The annual State of the County report set out a detailed analysis of the Council's finances and warned of a £55 million funding gap, which would make it almost impossible to maintain the current levels of service next year without a better funding deal from central government.

Government cuts over the last decade have forced East Sussex to make nearly £140 million of savings whilst continuing to provide essential services that have seen a rise in demand along with increased costs over that period.

The Conservative Leader of the Council, Keith Glazier, said "years of careful financial planning had put the County Council in the best possible position to deal with the growing pressures, but without a fairer longer-term funding agreement, the level of services East Sussex could offer would eventually be more severely affected." We are now at the point "where even our core offer, in



Councillor Godfrey Daniel

terms of Adult Social Care, Children's Services, economic development and infrastructure to the residents of the county, is under threat."

He indicated that "in light of the unsustainable financial position we find ourselves in, we have already taken steps to reduce day-to-day spending where possible and are reviewing all areas of the council's work to ensure we continue to make the best use of every penny we are able to spend."

Ahead of budget setting in early 2025, the County Council is looking at a reform to the Special Educational Needs and Disability system to ensure funding better matches the priority needs of children and families; agree a long-term national funding settlement for social care for adults; and introduce limits on the profits that commercial agencies, competing directly with local authorities, can make on placing children in residential care or providing agency staff.

Godfrey Daniel, the Labour councillor for Hastings Braybrooke and Castle ward, said the Council Leader's statement was a sorry obituary on 14 years of Tory misrule and its legacy of austerity, poorer local services and more potholes.

APPLICATION FOR A PREMISES LICENCE

Notice is hereby given that on 10th day of July 2024 an application was made to HASTINGS BOROUGH COUNCIL by

Chris Ostwald on behalf of Saint Leonards Church Ltd
Saint Leonards Church
London Road
Saint Leonards on Sea
East Sussex TN37 6AS

to obtain a premises licence for the premises known as;

Saint Leonards Church
London Road
Saint Leonards on Sea
East Sussex TN37 6AS

the hours of 09:00 to 23:00 (Sunday to Thursday) and 09:00 to 24:00 on (Friday, Saturday and Sundays preceding a bank holiday) as well as extended hours on New Years Eve to 02:00 on new Years Day.

2. Provision of Late Night Refreshment between the hours of 23:00 to 24:00 (Friday, Saturday and Sunday preceding a bank holiday) as well as extended hours on New Years Eve to 02:00 on new Years Day.

Any person wishing to make representations about this

application, should write to the Head of Environment & Place, Muriel Matters House, Breeds Place, Hastings, TN34 3UY; www.hastings.gov.uk within twenty eight consecutive days of the application date shown above.

It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application & the maximum fine is £5000 for which a person is liable on summary conviction for the offence.

Dated this 3rd day of April 2024

1 ← funding as possible reaches local schools." She said the "unusually high amount" of public funding being withheld from local schools by UBAT, was "leading to bigger class sizes and less support for children who need it the most, including those with special needs."

Ms Dollimore said she was also "extremely concerned" to hear from one whistleblower that, for the 2024-25 academic year, UBAT has suggested that a portion of pupil premium funding will be retained.

After speaking with many parents and whistleblowers working at the schools in question, Ms Dollimore said she would welcome the support of the Education Minister of State in reviewing the situation.

Given that local state schools in Hastings and Rye consistently rank below national and regional averages for educational attainment, she said it was "vital" that all public education funding "is effectively used and targeted in our local schools and frontline services."

NEU District Secretary Jenny Sutton welcomed the intervention of the local MP, saying, "We are all united in the campaign for better funding and staffing for our schools."

A UBAT spokesperson refused to comment directly on the details of Ms Dollimore's letter, saying only that they would welcome an opportunity to meet with her and that they remained optimistic about resolving the dispute.

Councillor John Rankin Defects to Labour

John Rankin has joined the Labour Party and will take the Labour Whip when he next sits in the Hastings Borough Council chamber. The Conquest ward councillor was first elected to the council in 2016 as a Conservative and he retained his seat in 2022.

He left the Tory Party last October to sit as an independent, saying he had become disenchanted with the way the party had changed since the Brexit referendum in 2016 and its adoption of "extreme right-wing policies which were anti-business and authoritarian."

His decision to join Labour was prompted after he suffered a heart attack whilst in Alexandra Park last November. There were no ambulances available, he says, and a friend had to drive him to the Conquest Hospital, only to be told that the catheter laboratory was shut. He was eventually put in an ambulance and driven to Eastbourne where he was fitted with a stent and survived.

Mr Rankin says he was lucky and had he been older or less fit he would not have survived, and, as a result, he was joining Labour, to save the NHS.

HASTINGS TIDES									
DATE	HIGH AND LOW TIDES				SUNRISE	SUNSET	MOON		
FRI 19 JULY	L 4:43am	H 10:17am	L 5:16pm	H 10:34pm	05:06	09:00			
SAT 20 JULY	L 5:40am	H 11:05am	L 6:07pm	H 11:32pm	05:07	08:59			
SUN 21 JULY	L 6:29am	H 11:51am	L 6:54pm		05:09	08:58	FULL		
MON 22 JULY	H 0:08am	L 7:16am	H 12:36pm	L 7:39pm	05:10	08:57			
TUES 23 JULY	H 0:55am	L 7:59am	H 1:22pm	L 8:22pm	05:11	08:55			
WEDS 24 JULY	H 1:45am	L 8:40am	H 2:09pm	L 9:04pm	05:13	08:54			
THURS 25 JULY	H 2:34am	L 9:21am	H 2:54pm	L 9:46pm	05:14	08:53			
FRI 26 JULY	H 3:22am	L 10:01am	H 3:37pm	L 10:28pm	05:15	08:51			
SAT 27 JULY	H 4:07am	L 10:43am	H 4:20pm	L 11:13pm	05:17	08:50			
SUN 28 JULY	H 4:52am	L 11:28am	H 5:08pm		05:18	08:48	THIRD		
MON 29 JULY	L 0:03am	H 5:45am	L 12:22pm	H 6:06pm	05:20	08:47			
TUES 30 JULY	L 1:02am	H 6:49am	L 1:28pm	H 7:17pm	05:21	08:45			
WEDS 31 JULY	L 2:14am	H 8:09am	L 2:47pm	H 8:38pm	05:23	08:44			
THURS 1 AUG	L 3:37am	H 9:28am	L 4:10pm	H 9:54pm	05:24	08:42			

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

A Vote for Change

PAUL MCLAUGHLIN

Helena Dollimore is the new Member of Parliament for Hastings and Rye. The Labour and Co-operative Party candidate topped the poll in the General Election with 19,134 votes to defeat the incumbent Conservative, Sally-Ann Hart, to win the seat with a decisive majority of 8,653. It was the largest winning margin achieved by any party in this traditional bell-weather seat in over 40 years.

Lucian Fernando of Reform UK came in third, ahead of Becca Horn of the Greens and Guy Harris of the Liberal Democrats, with the three other candidates: Phil Colley (Workers Party - For Britain, For Gaza), Nicholas Davies (Communist Party of Britain) and Paul Crosland (Independent) all failing to secure

the 5% of votes needed to save their £500 deposits. Voter turnout of 60.8% was broadly in line with the national average of 59.9% but was markedly down on the two previous elections here where 67.4% of people voted in 2019 and with 71.6% voting in 2017. The full result of the election was as follows:

CANDIDATE	PARTY	VOTES	PERCENTAGE
Helena Dollimore	Labour and Co-operative Party	19,134	41.61%
Sally-Ann Hart	Conservative	10,481	22.79%
Lucian Fernando	Reform UK	7,401	16.09%
Becca Horn	Green Party	5,761	12.53%
Guy Harris	Liberal Democrat	2,586	5.63%
Phil Colley	Workers Party - For Britain, For Gaza	362	0.78%
Nicholas Davies	Communist Party of Britain	136	0.29%
Paul Crosland	Independent	129	0.28%

Majority 8,653 on a turnout of 60.8%

The result of the election was declared at 4.21am after a long and exhausting night at the Horntye Park Sports Complex, off Bohemia Road. In her victory speech, Helena Dollimore said it was “the privilege of my life to be elected as the Labour member of parliament for Hastings and Rye.” She paid tribute to her predecessor, Sally-Ann Hart and, in particular, to her commitment to support the victims of domestic abuse. Looking to the future, she said she would “focus on



Labour’s Winning Team

the priorities of all her constituents and work to deliver the change the people across the country had voted for.”

Ms Dollimore headed off to Westminster the following week for a series of inductions and introductions, security briefings and party meetings. She was formally sworn in as a Member of Parliament on

Wednesday (10 July) after standing in a seemingly endless line before finally taking the Oath of Allegiance to the Crown.

The new MP is in the process of setting up her team in Westminster. She is also establishing an office in Hastings and Rye to use as a local base for her staff to address the concerns and problems of constituents.

County Council Hires Fresh Contractors to Complete Link Road

HUGH SULLIVAN

The Queensway Gateway link road is set to be completed by fresh contractors. It was originally to have been opened for traffic in 2016 but an unfinished section has been stalled for eight years by wranglings over land ownership, junction designs and funding.

The building of the road has been a project partnership between East Sussex County Council (ESCC) and regeneration company Sea Change Sussex, intended to make a direct connection between Queensway and the A21 to reduce traffic congestion on the Ridge and improve other local traffic flows. Last December Sea Change put forward a revised design for the final stage of the works, including making safety and infrastructure improvements at the eastern end of Whitworth Road and installing traffic lights where Junction Road joins the A21. They suggested, at that point, that a sum of up to £3 million would be needed to cover the cost, and that the works should take around ten weeks to be implemented.

In March, a grant of £2.5 million was secured by ESCC from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to fund the completion works. The money was allocated from levelling up funds offered to Hastings Borough and Rother District Councils (see the report in HIP 249: *Levelling Up Funds Raided to Complete Link Road*).

However, a press release from Sea Change has now revealed that ESCC intends to use its own highways contractor to undertake these outstanding works; the company’s contractors have been asked to remove their equipment and materials from the site to make space for the incoming team.

And, although Sea Change is willing to license their design for the project to save any additional cost and time of redesigning from scratch, a spokesperson for the company says East Sussex County Council has declined this offer and has indicated that “it won’t be using Sea Change’s intellectual property”, which presumably means working up a fresh design.

When approached for a comment by HIP, an ESCC spokesperson said the County Council was “committed” to the completion of the Queensway Gateway link road and would be working with its highways contractor, Balfour Beatty Living Places, “to deliver the final phase of the project.”

It’s anticipated that the costs of completing the scheme will come within the DLUHC funding allocation, though any costs over and above will be funded by ESCC.

No indication has been given by ESCC as to when the works will start nor how long they will take to complete. A council spokesperson said that a “delivery programme has been developed for the completion of the project and we will be working to keep local businesses and residents informed as the work progresses.”

WHAT’S ON YOUR MIND?

✉Letter

FUTURE OF ST MARY

Dear HIP
Christopher Cormack is right (Letter in HIP 255): St Mary-in-the-Castle is a gem, which is being allowed to fall into disrepair whilst available funding is destined for the ruins of Hastings castle.

How short-sighted is this! Our seafront is becoming a disgrace to the town, yet there is the obvious opportunity to revitalise. St Mary’s should be the centre of all our artistic and musical activities. Shame on the council if they fail to understand.

Trish Peak

✉Letter

OUR NEW MP

Dear HIP,
I was impressed to see our new Labour MP, Helena Dollimore, hit the ground running this week. Not long after taking her solemn oath in parliament, she was meeting with the Minister for Education, Catherine McKinnell MP, to discuss the University of Brighton Academies Trust withholding vital funding from local schools.

As a proud trade unionist, I

backed Helena for MP as she had proven herself to be a formidable campaigner with a consistent record of standing up for our public services: whether it be shining a light on local ambulance response times, or successfully campaigning against the dangerous downgrading of The Ridge Community Fire Station.

After fourteen years of Tory cronyism, corruption and scandal, I am proud to know that Hastings and Rye has an MP who will be a strong, passionate voice for us in parliament.

Michael Etheridge

✉Letter

OPTIONS AT CLIFTON COURT

Dear HIP
Regarding Clifton Court (and other properties no doubt), of course outsiders like me do not, as yet, have all the facts that appear to make demolition and re-build a sensible course of action. Let us hope a logical case follows. But to the casual, and even the informed observer, the decision by Orbit appears to be completely without foundation.

As someone who has designed and project-managed large scale

refurbishment contracts on both housing estates and multi-storey blocks of flats, the building seems to be structurally sound, while issues such as mould can quite easily be dealt with by the introduction of external wall insulation and heat recovery ventilation. As for the ‘not up to modern space standards’ case, most buildings in Hastings do not meet them, as those standards have steadily risen over the years. In my view the present space appears adequate enough and even has potential to be increased.

What is more, the two blocks almost certainly have considerable scope for adding further units. Subject to structural checks the roof might take another two floors, and both the gap between the blocks and the land on the north east side along Linton Road could probably take a stack of one-bed-roomed flats.

Moreover, isn’t the site within a conservation area where the planners have every right to expect a high standard not only of design but of sustainability? Retro-fitting these buildings in a creative way could solve both the technical and aesthetic standards that such a wonderful location demands.

Ken Davis

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

Historic Lifeboats find New Home



KEVIN BOORMAN

TIM MCDONALD
Chairman Nautical Museum Trust

Had you been passing by the junction of The Bourne and Harold Road at about 5am on Monday 1 July, you would have seen a group of assorted characters loitering by the side of the road. You would have been forgiven for thinking that nefarious activities were afoot at this unsocial hour of the day, suspicions that may have been heightened by the arrival of (a) a lengthy low-loader transporter, (b) the biggest mobile crane

you've ever seen and (c) a couple of escort vehicles.

The objective of all this activity was, however, perfectly legitimate – to move the two historic lifeboats, *Cyril and Lilian Bishop* and *Priscilla MacBean*, to a new home. The roadside site, where they had rested for many years, had not offered sufficient protection from the increasingly unpredictable weather, and both vessels were deteriorating at an alarming rate. A more sheltered location was required, and this had been found in the enclosed yard at the back of the Shipwreck Museum in Rock-a-Nore Road, where both

boats could join the last of the great Rye river barges, *Primrose*, a long-time resident of the Museum.

The early hour had been planned to enable the move to be carried out while it was still quiet but, thanks to two individuals who decided to ignore – or hadn't noticed – the temporary 'no parking' signs, everything had to be delayed by a couple of hours until the 'offenders' turned up to drive away their vehicles! This meant, unfortunately, that the operation had to take place at the height of the morning rush – and so huge apologies to those of you who may have been held up as the crane swung the boats out and over the main road, onto the transporter.

Happily, the rest of the move went smoothly – apart from a little damage to one of *Priscilla MacBean's* already fragile timbers – and both boats now sit proudly in their new surroundings. There is still a lot of work to be done and the Shipwreck Museum is in the process of putting together a team of volunteers to help look after and maintain the three vessels. Many of the people who have helped with the lifeboats in the past have pledged to continue assisting and the RNLI has also promised its support. More volunteers are needed – not just in looking after the boats but also in helping with many other aspects of the Museum, such as stewarding, IT, fundraising and publicity; so if you think you might be able to help, you would be welcomed with open arms. You can contact the Museum on 01424 713938, through the website shipwreckmuseum.co.uk or via social media.

For one local resident, the transportation of the *Cyril and Lilian Bishop* proved to be a highly charged experience. Kevin Boorman, referred to by many as 'Mr Hastings' after serving the town for more than a quarter of a century, was on hand to photograph its final journey. His great uncle, George Moon, was cox of the boat and sailed it to Dover in June 1940, where it was commandeered by the Royal Navy to help evacuate allied soldiers trapped on the beaches of Dunkirk.



STEPHEN HOLDEN

A view under the shed when lifted

Planned Impermanence

ROD WEBB

Decisions made by the planning department of Hastings Borough Council (HBC) are a regular source of complaints from the local community. These might appear to be an over-zealous application of regulation for the average householder, or the apparent lack of constraint placed on some with power and influence.

Stephen Holden has decided to hit back at one such decision by making a big splash in the media to publicise his concerns. Last Thursday, he arranged for his workshop to be winched onto a flatbed truck, driven to Muriel Matters House and parked outside. He not only wanted to demonstrate that the workshop was a moveable structure, but also to hammer the point home – which is why he had Meridian News waiting outside to film the event. In the end, safety issues with all the spectators apparently prevented delivery to the council offices; but they did manage to film the workshop being lifted clear off the ground.

Mr Holden's problems began when he received a notice from the planning department regarding an objection to the workshop he had erected in the garden of his flat in Emmanuel Road: a complaint about an obstructed view. This came as a surprise to Mr Holden as he had been told by the company supplying the workshop, JK Designer Builds, that he would be unlikely to need planning permission. In fact the

company website specifically states that the patented system removes the need for foundations and allows the structure to be moved in one piece, in conformity with the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960.

On being contacted by the council, Mr Holden was persuaded to apply for retrospective planning permission, but this was refused and likewise his subsequent appeal. Finally he was served with an enforcement notice, which is when he decided more decisive action was needed. According to Mr Holden, HBC has consistently refused to engage with him about its moveability. And he goes on to say: "I maintain (on the advice of the company who constructed it) that because it is movable on a flatbed truck, it should be classed as a caravan, which should not require planning permission when parked on my land."

Planning rules can be opaque not only for those applying for permission, but also for planning committees adjudicating them. As Nicholas Boys Smith, of the Create Streets Foundation, writes: "What can be built, and where, is arguably less clear than at any time during the last 100 years." He continues: The modern British planning system is curiously unclear and unpredictable, not just denying landowners development rights without formal consent, but also making it (in historical terms) unclear to neighbours what will be permitted.

Perhaps planning departments around the country should bear this in mind when making decisions and err on the side of the common good.

Ore Community Library Safe and Secure

Ore Community Library has secured a 20-year lease to secure its future and ensure it will remain a community cornerstone for years to come.

The library was closed in 2018 following a series of East Sussex County Council budget cuts and faced the prospect of being knocked down and sold for development, recalls Library Trustee Jim Breeds. The local community had other ideas, however, and a team of dedicated volunteers took matters into their own hands. With the help of an

initial grant from North East Hastings Big Local, matched by Orbit Homes, a local housing association, they raised £15,000 to keep the library open.

Their efforts have been rewarded with over 1,000 members and a collection of over 6,000 book titles. The library offers a range of services, including a book club and story time sessions for children under five. The library's computer and printing services also provide essential support for residents apply-

ing for jobs or needing assistance applying for universal credit and other benefits.

With its long-term lease secured, Heather Bishop, the Chair of the Ore Community Library Trustees, said the library "would continue to provide essential access to learning and enjoyment for the local community and would push ahead with future plans to make structural improvements to the building to ensure it can continue to serve the community for generations to come."



↑ Maryam, Gaza 2015 by Giles Duley → This is Bisan from Gaza and I am still alive by Yasmin Aishah



Hastings Artists Unite to Raise Funds for Al Mawasi

Artists across Hastings have come together to raise funds for the community of Al Mawasi in Gaza. The Art Raffle is a collaboration between Stella Dore Gallery in St Leonards, Hastings Art School, Hastings & District Palestine Solidarity Campaign (HDPSC) and Hastings Friends of Al Mawasi.

The collection of over 20 original works can be viewed online and will be on display at the White Rock

Hotel on Friday 19 July. Raffle tickets available online for £5 each will be drawn on 27 July.

Steph Warren, owner of Stella Dore Gallery, says that all the artists she works with have been affected by the last nine months of genocide in Gaza: official death toll 38,000, mostly women and children. Worse still, The Lancet medical journal revealed this week that the likely death toll, including from disease, starva-

tion and those still buried under the rubble, is likely to be over 186,000, representing 8% of the population.

"Gaza is the biggest injustice of our age," says Steph. "We all want to do our bit to help alleviate the suffering there. Every artist I spoke to about this wanted to give a piece to the collection to try to make a difference."

Julia Kotziamani from Hastings Art School also found huge support

for the fundraiser amongst local artists. "This feels like one of those moments in history when we need to be able look our grandchildren in the eye and tell them that we did all we could to help," she says.

The collection includes donations from artists of varying styles and mediums with contributions from Shuby, Giles Duly, Sue Lawes, Mawjood, Dorcas Magbadelo, Tim Sanders, Mew, Laure, Marta Munoz, Hollie Newman, Harriet Macaree and many more.

One stunning work is a portrait of Palestinian journalist Bisan Owda, famous worldwide for her honest and courageous reports from Gaza. The work by Yasmin Aishah is titled after the phrase Bisan uses

at the start of every report: "This is Bisan from Gaza, and I am still alive."

The Art Raffle will raise funds for the resilience committee in the coastal enclave of Al Mawasi, currently helping to distribute food and aid to the displaced peoples sheltering there. They have long-established links with Hastings Friends of Al Mawasi, but much more is needed because of the thousands fleeing to the small fishing village seeking safety.

Weekly messages describe a desperate struggle to find enough food and clean water. "Nowhere is safe in Gaza," says Grace Lally of Hastings Friends of Al Mawasi. "The area was designated a 'safe zone' and yet there have been numerous bombing and sniper attacks. Prices have skyrocketed so the meagre food that does exist is too costly for most people. Every penny we send makes a difference."

"Our friends have lost their homes, their relatives, their sense of security and their futures. They have suffered beyond human endurance and yet, we are constantly amazed by their strength and compassion for one another."



To view the collection and buy tickets, go to hastingspalestinecampaign.org/art-raffe-for-al-mawasi.html. For information on the exhibition see Facebook event page facebook.com/events/487934233745847/?rclid=ARs-bgUi6Vi7UNskP

Choosing a Care Home

FIONA MCGARRY

What should elderly people do when they can no longer manage to live independently?

Care homes had a bad press during Covid, and now that more people work remotely, they may find the idea of looking after elderly relatives at home more attractive. Also, they may be worried that care costs will swallow up their inheritance (although the last government pledged that from October 2025 no one in England will have to pay more than £86,000 in care costs).

What does this mean in practice? Older relatives being looked after by family – perhaps being taken to day centres, but also more people spending their days alone at home and being visited two or three times a day by carers, often for just 15 minutes. Sitting waiting for carers to arrive can result in anxiety, loss of mobility and other competences.

Jenny Miles runs Angel Health-

care. This is a woman-led company with mostly female staff that feels distinctly like 'a big family' as one resident puts it. She even employs her son-in-law Ollie, and her 83-year-old mum is the bookkeeper. They have three care homes: Abbey House, in Bexhill, with plenty of activities for the lively and active (think Italian nights and cheese-tasting nights); Glenmuir House in St Leonards for the more dependent; a quiet but imposing Victorian house with amazing views over to Eastbourne. There is also Arden House, a 'wet' house providing care for those with addiction problems.

Jenny is keen to address the care home stigma. She points out that local authorities are underfunded, which may make them more reluctant to move elderly people from hospitals (following a fall or illness) into care homes because this requires a transition from NHS to council-funded social care. Instead, vulnerable people are frequently moved back home where they may struggle to recover and consequent-



Glenmuir House

ly end up back in hospital.

Whilst there is more joined up work starting, families often have to fight for the care their loved ones need. She points out that care home residents have company, choice and dignity. "Hot meals are provided; activities take place to stimulate the mind; medication is on time; personal hygiene is undertaken; help can be summoned 24/7; in short, residents are cared for. My staff know every visitor who comes through the door and what every resident likes or dislikes."

Of course, staying at home can

have benefits for those able to cope. My own mother manages to maintain her independence and quality of life in a granny flat attached to our house - with the aid of the family and a team of people who help with things like cleaning, dog walking, shopping and hairdressing.

Perhaps a key thing to consider though, is that intervention is often "too far down the line" - especially as older people living at home may not be 'heard' and sometimes struggle to get help or even see a GP.

If you decide that a care home is the right way to go, what should you

look for when choosing one? Jenny points out that a care home is an ecosystem and it's important to consider whether the home fits your family member, not the other way round. Every home is different. Does your elderly relative want somewhere with activities, or are they a very private person?

Look for the personal touch. Most of Jenny's staff have worked with her for many years and she rarely uses agency staff. She is also a fan of the programme that allows care homes to sponsor staff from other countries who wish to establish themselves in the UK.

Person-centred may mean being wary of homes that have too many bells and whistles. Jenny feels that sometimes, homes with gyms and cinemas may be catering more to the family of the person being cared for. Higher fees do not always equate to better care. Similarly, we can put too much emphasis on the Care Quality Commission (CQC) star rating. The difference between an 'Outstanding' and a 'Good' rating can often be down to the individual inspector's personal interpretation.

And finally, Jenny emphasises that elderly people should not see moving to a care home as "the end" but as the reverse. "See it as other people doing the chores so that you can enjoy doing what you want."

What We Do at the WI

MANDY SKEATES explains the Wonky Women's Institute: a safe, social and educational space for chat, laughter - and always fun

Wonky WI is based in St Leonards at the Arthur Easton Centre at St Michaels Hospice on Upper Maze Hill. We meet on the first Wednesday of the month (except August), in the evening. It provides a supportive and safe environment that enables the diverse and wholly unique nature of St Leonards women to come together to chat and swap ideas, joining together in support of local charities and national campaigns that affect women, while learning together over a lovely cuppa.

Each month we have an invited speaker or presentation of interest to our members, given by a local person. We have a great programme of events set up this year (April to March) which includes subjects from Forensics to Pelvic Floor, and from Trees to All Things Chocolate!! We have arranged outings for theatre, cinema, fish and chip supper, crazy golf, as well as in-house quizzes. We plan to do a major garden centre trip soon, subsidising the cost to members. We also run a monthly craft club (Wonky members only,

with a small fee) where we try out new and clever crafts.

We have a great fundraising ethic, enabling us to support local charities by donating generous amounts on an annual basis. One way we fundraise is by selling beautifully handcrafted items at craft sales, all made by our wonderfully gifted members. Last year we were able to support three local charities with over £1,000 each and present them with their cheques at a lovely evening event.

This year we are supporting a local children's charity called Glow Baby, that provides safe and supportive sensory play, messy play and free play to children with additional needs, while also supporting the families. It was amazing to meet up with Lauren, its founder, when she came to speak to us in June.

We are currently recruiting new members, offering taster sessions (which are generally free to attend) to any woman wanting to see what we are about. We will invite you to a meeting of your choice, introduce you to key members, show you round our 'activity tables' and information board and enjoy a chat and a cuppa or two! We will also



2023 Charities Cheque Presentation Evening. Pictured L to R: Saving The Homeless; Sarah (former Secretary); Little Gate Farm; Jan (former President); Women's Voice; Hazel (Wonky fundraising member)

provide you with Wonky WI information along with membership details and the programme for 2024/25. The membership fee this year is £48 pro rata.

COME AND JOIN US! WE'RE A LOVELY BUNCH.

The Women's Institute is a progressive organisation for all who live as women, treating all fairly and

equally, no matter what their background, affiliations (non-political), characteristics or circumstances, with over 200,000 members (as of 2022). They are proud to state they believe in fellowship, truth, tolerance and justice. It is proven that membership of a social group contributes to an increased lifespan by giving a feeling of accessibility, inclusion and support, (NFWI, 2023)

National Women's Register

PATRICIA WATKINS tells HIP about 'the organisation that no one's heard about'



Battle Group celebration tea at the Royal Victoria hotel

National Women's Register (NWR) is a registered charity operating throughout Great Britain connecting women through discussions and activities. Some groups were founded at NWR's first inception as the National Housewives Register back in 1960 in response to a letter received by the women's page of The Guardian.

The founding principles are as

relevant today as they were then. Members enjoy conversation, intellectual stimulation and friendship through taking part in informal and social events, whether at a local, regional or national level. And they are fun. As one member says: "It has lifted my spirits in down periods, and at times I have laughed till I ached."

The organisation is governed by

a board of trustees and has a small staff team who manage day-to-day activities. Groups have come and gone since 1960 and new ones continue to be set up - which is always welcome. You can choose to join NWR affiliated to a local group, or as an independent member not assigned to any one local group, or you can join NWR to set up a new local group.

Members affiliated to a local group participate in their group's programme of events and activities. NWR members can also participate in NWR's national programme either with their group or as individual members.

BATTLE & DISTRICT GROUP

The lively group I belong to in Battle is interested in everything and we talk about anything.

But whenever we have speakers or visitors to our group meetings, they are always amazed not to have heard of the organisation before, despite its nearly 75-year history.

As a member on and off for 44 years, whenever we moved as a family to a new area, I would always contact the local NWR group. The welcoming, friendly group of women made settling into an unfamiliar place much easier.

The Battle group meets twice a month, and each year all members can participate in planning an interesting programme for the next 12 months. A typical programme might include speakers, discussions, theatre outings, craft sessions, garden visits, and social events.

For more information visit nwr.org.uk or email the Battle & District group at BattleNWR@gmail.com

OBX Connects - Technology as a tool for resistance in the UK's immigration system

Join OBX (The Observer Building's Creative Technology Hub) on 25 July from 6.30pm-8.00pm for the forthcoming OBX Connects talk.

OBX Connects are monthly free-to-attend talks by local and national digital artists on varied topics. July's talk will look at how technology can be used in an uplifting way - as a tool for resistance and resilience within the UK's immigration system.

It continues the energy of June's Refugee Week, with speakers Rossana Leal, founder and CEO of the Hastings-based Refugee Buddy Project and Lamin Joof, a musician, chef and trustee at music charity Hear Me Out.

Rossana will speak about the migrant and refugee-led charity Refugee Buddy Project and the campaign against immigrant detention centres, such as Northeye in Bexhill which is an ex-prison site where a 1,200-bed centre is being proposed. The UK is the only country in Europe which practises indefinite detention, in which people are held in detention cen-

tres for administrative purposes for an indefinite time scale.

Lamin Joof has previously been incarcerated in three immigrant detention centres in the UK, which is where he encountered Hear Me Out. The charity runs music workshops, gigs and radio stations in immigration detention centres as well as platforming musicians who met while in detention. Lamin will speak about his experiences in immigration detention, and about how music technologies helped him to cope. He will also talk about projects he has been involved in following his release from immigration detention, where technology has been used as a means of amplification, awareness raising, connection and solidarity.

Tickets to attend are free but need to be booked in advance via eventbrite.co.uk/e/technology-as-a-tool-for-resistance-in-the-uks-immigration-system-tickets-896214149647 More info at: therefugeebuddyproject.org hearmeoutmusic.org.uk

The Evolution of Sanctuary

Following a hugely successful event on 23 June to close Refugee Week in Hastings, organiser POLLY GIFFORD looks back on eight years of Sanctuary Festival

Things rarely end up where you expect. Back in 2017, Sanctuary Festival – which began as The Picnic by the Lake – was intended as a one-off event. Hastings had just joined the City of Sanctuary movement and we wanted to create a public welcome for the people who were soon to arrive in the town through the recently established Syrian Resettlement Programme. I had been involved in local group Hastings Supports Refugees, which had focused on sending aid to the Calais Jungle. As a

descendent of Jewish refugees, I was appalled by the treatment of people fleeing war and persecution and heartbroken by images of the body of two-year-old Alan Kurdi washed up on a Turkish beach. Setting up Hastings Community of Sanctuary (spearheaded by Felicity Laurence) was an acknowledgement that we needed to engage with our own community around this issue, and I wanted to contribute.

We had intended a modest event to kick off our fundraising but were

contacted by Ashburnham Place near Battle offering us their site for free. I'll admit that I hadn't been there and thought it was a bar or hotel rather than a beautiful country estate! It was the perfect location for a festival. I had worked in the arts in Hastings for many years and knew how much goodwill there was towards refugees among the creative community in the town. The vision was to put on a high quality programme and weave the message of sanctuary for all throughout the event. Having survived so much trauma, we wanted our new neigh-



bours to enjoy the day alongside everyone else, rather than having a light shone on their experiences.

About 500 people attended that first festival, which steadily grew over the following two years thanks to headliners like Liane Carroll, poet John Hegley and guest curator Gwyneth Herbert. We owe huge thanks to Ashburnham Place for their wholehearted support, and to the many people who gave their time for free in those first years. As our ambitions grew, so did the costs of staging the event, so we found funding from The National Lottery and others to ensure that all the donations went to the cause rather than the costs.

The pandemic forced us online in 2020, and when we all emerged in 2021, the festival found a new home at Hastings Museum & Art Gallery. It felt right to come into the centre of the town, making the event more accessible, and to be part of a renewed commitment by Hastings Museum to work for and with local communities, leading to them becoming a Museum of Sanctuary in 2024. They have been brilliant partners, as have the many community groups and organisations who animate the festival through stalls and activities.

Another important development has seen the festival increasingly becoming a platform for refugees and people seeking sanctuary as artists, performers and organisers. In the words of one of our long-term collaborators, Emma Joliffe:

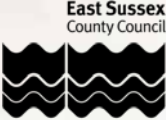
"I think it's got better and better year on year, especially in the sense that rather than being something 'by' the Hastings community 'for' the refugee community, it now feels much more like we are all one community, making something together."

Eight years on, Refugee Week in Hastings has a packed programme of events, many of them commissioned and coordinated by The Refugee Buddy Project. Support across the town is high, in contrast to the hostile environment perpetuated by those in power. Sanctuary Festival is taking a break next year, having brought thousands of people together and raising thousands of pounds. Thank you to everyone who has been part of it – you have helped ensure that Hastings really is a Community of Sanctuary.

Polly Gifford is Co-Chair of Hastings Community of Sanctuary. Find out more at hastings.cityof-sanctuary.org



HM Government



East Sussex County Council



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SPECIAL PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDY OF THE COUNTRY PARK BY JOHN COLE & GUY CALLABY



The Bale House

The Country Park is 50!

STEPHANIE DONALDSON, Editor of ‘Over the Glens’, the newsletter of the Friends of Hastings Country Park Reserve

The clue is in the name - Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve (HCPNR) - for this wonderful 835-acre open space on our doorstep is far, far more than a local park. Of course, it is a great place to go for a walk and enjoy the stunning sea views, but it is also a nationally significant reservoir of biodiversity and consequently a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Special Area of Conservation. Situated where the High Weald Ridge meets the sea, its unusual geology of sandstone and clay lies between the chalk of the North and South Downs and the alluvial plains of Rye and Pevensey Bay.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Country Park. Regular visitors may have noticed the plaque which



Dock bug

marked its official opening has recently had a spruce-up and was unveiled in its new, improved condition by the Lord Lieutenant of Sussex. In 2006, in recognition of the Country Park’s importance in nature conservation, it was re-designated Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve.

DIVERSE LANDSCAPES

As much as anything, the diversity of the landscape makes it an interesting place to visit. The wide open spaces of the acid heath grassland are a repository of plants such as heath bedstraw, heather and bell-heather. It is also a great place to let off steam for younger members of the family who have yet to develop an interest in plant life. Paths, including accessible ones, wind through the adjacent Firehills, where the vibrant yellow gorse flowers contrast vividly with the blue of the sea, and scent the air with coconut (just don’t be tempted to put your nose too close!) In the past, gorse was less dominant and areas of the clifftop bloomed purple with heather; however, conservation work is currently being carried out to reduce the gorse and re-establish the heather.

The three glens - Warren, Fairlight and Ecclesbourne - could not be more different. Steep-sided narrow valleys, known as gills, cut through ancient woodland, their humid and frost-free conditions supporting an entirely different

range of plants, including golden saxifrage, yellow archangel, bluebells, rare mosses, lichens, liverworts and ferns. In prehistory, plant-eating iguanodons roamed the area, and with a bit of imagination, it is quite easy to imagine them grazing the treetops.

The glens were a favourite destination for Victorian visitors - the Dripping Well in Fairlight Glen being a favourite spot. Visitors included those in the grip of pteridomania – a passion for fern-collecting – that meant large numbers descended on the glens, dug up the plants using special trowels and bore them home to display in Wardian cases – an early version of a terrarium. There is no knowing how many rare ferns were plundered on these expeditions, never to be seen again. Fortunately, we know better now and in common with all our wild places, the Reserve is a place where visitors should take nothing but photographs and leave nothing behind but footprints.

THE COASTAL PATH

Energetic visitors can follow the Coastal Path from the East Hill or the Coastguards Cottages. It descends and ascends through the Glens and along the clifftops, a challenging but rewarding walk (or run) with glorious views out to sea and winding paths that pass through the





Thick-Legged Flower Beetles on Ox-Eye Daisies



Exmoor ponies

ancient woodland. Keen birdwatchers should bring their binoculars, especially in spring and autumn when this coastline is an important passing point for thousands of migrating birds that can include chiffchaff, goldcrest, wheatears and smaller numbers of rarities such as ring ouzels. Seabirds on passage to and from their breeding grounds pass along the base of the cliffs, notably the dark-bellied Brent geese in flocks of thousands. Resident peregrines, black redstarts and fulmars nest on the cliffs.

You might not think the Reserve's well-worn, sometimes uneven sandy paths are desirable habitats, but this is perfect for populations of ground-nesting solitary bees that rejoice in some wonderful names, including the pantaloone bee and the

hairy-footed flower bee. Three nationally scarce insects, bush crickets, minotaur beetle and the glow-worm can also be found here.

VISITING THE RESERVE

Of course, you may already be a regular visitor to the Reserve or even a Friend, but it is surprising how many residents of Hastings have hardly ever visited and a surprising number know very little about it. Transport is sometimes an issue, but there is a bus service that passes by and there is plenty of parking, provided you have mastered the Ringo app!

In 2021 the innovative Bale House visitor centre opened. The straw-bale building, run by Groundworks South-East for Hastings Council, has proved to be a much-appreciated resource and information centre for visitors. The Friends of HCPNR – an interested group of local people who promote, protect and enhance the Reserve – have played an active part in providing additional resources, like a reference library and some children's furniture. Their current project is installing habitat planters where visitors can see examples of the different plants that grow in the varying conditions within the Reserve and assisting in establishing wildflower meadows around the Bale House. They have also produced a series of information leaflets on habitats and wildlife that are available at the Bale House and they run a popular series of talks and guided walks throughout the year.

The best way to ensure that this unique biodiversity hotspot continues to flourish in the future is for as many people as possible to engage with it. Whether it's through activities with Conservation Volunteers or Friends, family walks, watching wildlife, or simply finding moments of peace in a busy life, the Reserve can offer them all.



For information on becoming a Friend of Hastings Country Park visit friendsof-hastingscountrypark.org



Hastings Country Park Volunteers



Housing First, established by the Finland government, operates on the idea that having a place to live is both a human right and a basic right

The Writing’s on the Lamp Post

INGRID ALLAN, a charity caseworker and political activist explains what jolted her out of apathy in the recent election campaign

The enthusiasm with which I once participated in politics at a local and national level has waned in recent years. Where once a general election would have seen me knocking on doors, delivering leaflets, making badges, reading newspapers, and using every minute of spare time to scour the internet for the latest poll results, it was difficult to summon the same excitement this time around.

My general sense of apathy wasn’t just a matter of work and family commitments and the general chaos of uprooting my life in Worthing. The government seemed to have dragged itself so far into the gutter that it felt as though we had to wade through deluges of excrement (of the kind currently filling

our seas and rivers) just to get a sense of what was really going on.

The thing that convinced me to get back out on the campaign trail was a hand-drawn sign tied to a lamp post on my street, of the kind that usually details a lost dog, or a quarrel over parking spaces.

At closer inspection the sign appeared to be a well written plea by two local children for greater care to be taken of our communities, and more action to prevent homelessness.

Coming, as I do in part, from Finland, where homelessness has been all but eliminated through the successful Housing First policy, I have always been shocked by the levels of rough sleeping in England, and in coastal towns like Hastings in particular. But to my chagrin, I

hadn’t stopped to think about the impact that seeing human beings treated like unwanted debris was having on the next generation, who had been born under austerity and never known anything different.

But to get back to the sign on the lamp post.... last issue The Hastings Independent reported on the 11-year-old girl whose idea it was to put up the signs, and I was touched by how sincerely she expressed her desire to live in a country where human beings are treated fairly, regardless of income or social class. So, I’m thinking about writing a response and putting it on my nearest lamp post. It’ll look something like this:

I suppose, among all the challenges that await the new government, there is the question of whether they can look beyond the short-term thinking of these four-year election cycles, to the world that Seraphina and David will inherit.

Covid proved that when there is a political will to do so, we can house everyone, just as the Finnish government has done. Will these two earnest young people approach the ballot box for the first time in 2032 feeling a burning sense of betrayal? Or will they be emboldened to believe that a better, fairer future is possible?

Dear Seraphina and David,

As you might have noticed, an election took place the other day, and I hope that as a result things will change.

I hope that as you both grow up, we will find ways to give everyone a safe place to live and look after those in our communities who need more looking after, no matter what it costs.

I hope that in the years to come, your teachers are less stressed, and less tired, with smaller class sizes, so that all of you can be valued and helped to get the best out of your education.

I hope no-one ever tries to tell you not to be ambitious, to dream big, to believe that you can change the world, because if children don’t believe these things, adults won’t either.

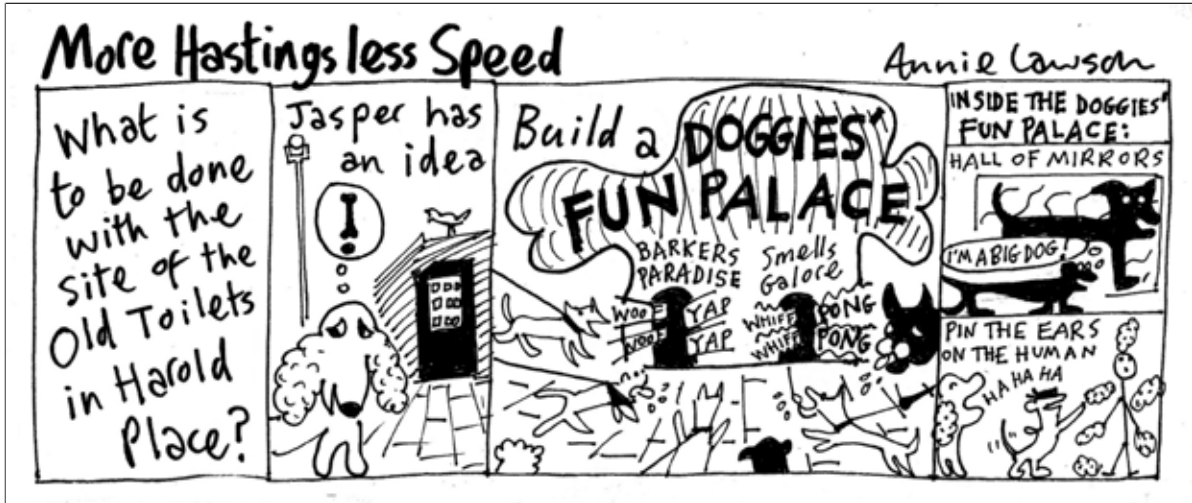
I hope that in five years’ time, when you’re old enough to vote, you will do so, and do so wisely, because not all politicians are the same. It’s easy to see which ones care about other people, and which ones only care about themselves, if you know how.

I hope too, that despite the admirable sense of responsibility you feel towards your neighbourhood, that you will never try to shoulder too much of the burden of fixing it. Changing the world is a marathon, not a sprint, and it may be a while before it truly feels like things are getting better, but they will.

In the meantime, keep smiling, keep dreaming, and if you ever feel burned out, take a break and spend time with the people who love you.

If you should walk past a blue house with red geraniums in the garden and a white dog standing at the window, know that the person who lives there is grateful to you for cheering up all of West Hill, after what has been a difficult time for our town and our country.

Yours sincerely,
Ingrid



EDDIE KNIGHT



The Gangster, the Window Box, and the Wardrobe

VICTORIA KINGHAM talks to playwright Francis Saunders about his work and reviews his recent adaptation of *Gangster No. 1*

Gangster No. 1 was staged at the Kino, St Leonards, on 14 June as a one-off performance. It isn't a new play – it was first performed at the Almeida Theatre almost thirty years ago, with Peter Bowles (the comic actor of *To The Manor Born*, *Perfect Scoundrels*) playing the lead part, with an emphasis on the 'comedy'. Written by Louis Mellis and David Scinto, who also wrote *Sexy Beast* and *44-Inch Chest*, it was made into a film five years later, directed by Paul McGuigan.

This performance, however, was directed by Jonathan Linsley, actor, director, presenter, extremely well-known television face (*Last of the Summer Wine*, *Emmerdale*, *Casualty*, *The Bill*) who lives locally in Bexhill. He's a great friend of Francis Saunders, who produced this version.

Though there were a few comic moments in this production, it was overall simultaneously menacing and tragic. Linsley's direction and Saunders' interpretation laid emphasis on the essential unmitigated depravity of the main gangster, (whose crime resulted in an associate being sent to prison for thirty years), his contradictory psychology, bravado, repressed homosexuality, and psychopathy. It was a compelling act. Linsley's direction required all the actors to be on stage the whole time, remaining in character whether or not they were the main speaker. They spoke directly to the audience, but were sometimes required to be also addressing another character. Difficult, I thought, but managed convincingly by all the actors.

Saunders, a most engaging hu-

man being, lives locally. To find out more about his work as actor, director, producer, and youth mentor, we talked by the window at the Kino. Our conversation was paused several times as people walked by and waved to him through the window; he has many friends in the local community and elsewhere. He talked candidly about his early life, his acting, his playwriting, his ambitions.

"I've always acted," he begins. Saunders fell into acting by chance, spotted by the drama-teacher mum of a friend, who told him he should study. So he studied at the Actor's Centre, and did some short courses at RADA. 'Keep that rawness', he was always told. He'd love to do Shakespeare, and indeed I could see him as King Lear personified. The only reason he didn't get *Titus Andronicus* was that he was too young.

"I started writing by chance. I'd been doing a big advertising campaign for TV Licensing, then the work dried up, and that's when I saw the writing competition." It was a BBC competition to write and direct a movie in two days. It was about alcohol, and he wrote about under-age drinking and the damage involved. "I won it," he says, "and they said, go ahead and do it!" After that I wrote *Tales From St Leonards* [2019] and we showed it here at The Stables and *The Horse*

and *Groom*, then at Eastbourne.

"More recently, we filmed a men's health campaign, *Why Men Don't Talk*, at the barber's. We spoke about suicide, anything, everything. Men don't really show their feelings – they'll say 'yeah, all right'? All right? We tend to say what we're doing, rather than what we're feeling. So I've written a film called *Window Box*, about a war hero, played by Don Warrington [*Rising Damp*, *Death in Paradise*, *New Street Law*]. It's based around an old war hero alone in a tower block. I got that from my dad,

"I started writing by chance. I'd been doing a big advertising campaign for TV Licensing, then the work dried up, and that's when I saw the writing competition."

who was a decorated paratrooper. I was brought up in Camden, when it was Camden, and King's Cross was King's Cross". I know what he means. "I rarely go back."

Hastings Independent also rave-reviewed his recent play *The Tenant* which showed at The Stables last August. I'm lucky that I've got friends like Bill Fellowes and Jonathan Linsley [actor, and director of *Gangster No. 1*]. We developed a really great

friendship and I'm so grateful. I feel like I was in *Educating Rita*, only the other way round, obviously."

He talks about Linsley's direction of *Gangster*, which requires the actors to remain in character the whole time, even when not speaking. There are only very basic stage directions in the play, and the presentation was all Linsley's vision.

It's about the tail-end of a *milieu* that probably doesn't any longer exist? "Yes," Saunders agrees, "but it was there, and that's what I love about the play." He plays the character as a closet homosexual; every remark he makes about women is derogatory. "Actually", he continues, "*Gangster No. 1* actually means: *Gangster No-one*. A bully and a psychopath, but in the end, nobody."

His approach is probably close to Method Acting: "I kind of really try to think how they think. I'd get up at 6 a.m. and put out my book, list the names of characters I was going to torment in rehearsals, and how. That's what someone like that would do. My voice is very London, so when I spoke in *Gangster* I found it easy to bring that. Walking around afterwards I felt I had to respond to everyone in a gangster-type way.

Saunders also works with young offenders for Rother District Council, running film and acting courses. A lot of the youngsters are in an intervention phase – they are recognised as troubled but social work attempts to divert them from criminality to creativity. "It was amazing to do it", he continues. "I still see them about. I mean a lot of them just need somebody there, to give them options, like, why not make a film instead of going out and doing a crime?" Watching the film, the boys know which is the one that makes good cinema and which one is in real life the best option. They know right from wrong, in other words. "Luckily enough, I walk in with a London accent, and they naturally

assume that I'm an ex-offender or something like that. If you get youngsters into art, I think any art, while their minds are wandering, then they'll wander in the right direction."

Future projects? He's approaching the *Gangster No. 1* writers, who hold the publishing rights, to see if they will allow him to take the play to London. But he's also working on a play that he'd like Jon to direct: "It's a comedy about a woman who marries an ex-gangster, and both are going through the menopause. It's based around a wardrobe. He thinks she's having an affair, so he kidnaps the therapist and puts him in the wardrobe."

It sounds a bit Pinteresque, with undercurrents of farce. But it will certainly be unique. Here's to the next phase.



Martin Carthy

Focus on Folk

VICTORIA KINGHAM explores the folk scene, local and visiting

BILL AND STEVE'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE: A CELEBRATION OF FIFTY YEARS OF THE HAYLOFT FOLK CLUB

Two stalwarts of the original British folk music revival will celebrate, in August, the return of folk to the Cove at Fairlight. The Cove was once The Hayloft, a noted and celebrated venue for folk musicians during the 1970s and 80s.

In those days you could see renowned stalwarts: The Taverners, Shirley Collins and Ashley Hutchings, Finbar and Eddie Furey, Bob Davenport, Ewan McColl and Peggy Seeger, Cyril Tawney (to name but a few), all in the space of a year or two. The 80s attracted, among many others, Brian Boru, Dave Swarbrick, Martin Carthy. Many of these, now celebrated veterans, continue to make wonderful music.

In fact, though the Hayloft was certainly a well-known venue among aficionados, the seventies was the tail end of the folk revival here and indeed everywhere. In the days of the American hippie dream, American folk artists (Joan Baez, Pete Seeger, Arlo Guthrie, Bob Dylan) extended the definition of folk to include political protest. What happened? Street protest in America became hip-hop; in the UK (and Europe) it became the anarchy of punk. Some of this change must be attributed to the marketing strategies of the big music companies, some perhaps to the changes in the global political situation.

Beautiful, melodic folk-rock bands (Steeleye Span, Fairport Convention, Pentangle, Jethro Tull et al) and enormously talented finger-style guitarists (John James, Gordon Giltrap, Bert Jansch, Davy Graham) are perennially admired, but have perhaps faded into the realm of cult-folk. Yet all of these developments

stemmed from the original idea that the sterling 20th-century folk music collectors had - of preserving and improving music and lyrics handed down by indigenous members of ordinary society. Life maybe doesn't have so much room for folk, or folk, now. There's always too much else going on.

But at Fairlight in August and September, you can see two of the original performers, who have been persuaded by local historians Bill Pocock and Steve Green to grace a nostalgic occasion - an anniversary celebration and reconvention of the Hayloft of fifty years ago. Paul Downes and Martyn Wyndham-Read, two of the original performers, will appear. Both Sunday evenings promise to be a unique opportunity to appreciate excellent musicianship in the immediate present. New interest will be formed for those unfamiliar with the genre, and a forgotten interest recreated for those of you who remember earlier days.

Folk Returns to Fairlight will be two evenings at The Cove (formerly The Hayloft) 53 Waites Lane, Fairlight TN35 4AX: Sunday 25 August, 6pm, Paul Downes, folk legend from Devon, has worked with Pete Seeger Sunday 1 September, 6pm, Martyn Wyndham-Read, accompanied by Iris Bishop, has worked with Shirley Collins

JASON MCNIFF - THE COFFEE HOUSE SESSIONS

McNiff is a devotee of the playing of Bert Jansch. With good reason. Unique guitar style, clear, rhythmically perfect, no frills. And immaculately pitched. So at his gig I expected a nostalgic sixties fingerstyle tribute. Instead there were songs by McNiff himself (from his new al-



Tarren: Left to right: Sid Goldsmith, Alex Garden, Danny Pedler



Jason McNiff

bum *Everything's A Song*) Bob Dylan, Johnny Cash, Paul Simon, and J. J. Cale. Why not, indeed?

McNiff's own guitar style is reminiscent of Jansch's, and his eclectic choice of numbers suggests an encyclopaedic repertoire. In fact he sings Dylan sometimes better than Dylan himself, and articulates the lyrics with meaning - even *Blowin' in the Wind* didn't sound like the cliché that it has inevitably become.

A highlight was an accomplished version of a song by Jason C. Frank, called *My Name is Carnival*. I hadn't heard of Frank, but having looked up his biography, I can see where McNiff is coming from. Frank has been called 'one of the best forgotten songwriters of the 1960s' but his style and his guitar playing have been cited as influences by, yes, Bert Jansch, also the late, tragic Sandy Denny and Nick Drake. It has beautiful, sad, off-the-wall lyrics and a great guitar accompaniment with a classic alternating fingered bass. I love it.

One thing: if, for example, there had been a couple of solo performances, a couple of slower numbers, more pronounced changes in mood, that would have varied the set a bit. But hey, I don't think that was the purpose of it - we all enjoyed it, Hanushka did a roaring trade, and McNiff, stick-thin with an old trilby and a traditionally hung guitar, looks really sexy. He is doing a great deal to make his audiences aware of remarkable and lovely songs; he also hosts a regular 'Folk Sundowner' at the Jenny Lind. Go and see him; you won't be disappointed.

Jason McNiff performs at Hanushka's, Robertson Street, every Saturday, 5.30-7.30

TARREN

Local music promoters Sounds St Leonards are bringing a Bristol-based folk group, Tarren, to Hastings in September. They will be playing at St John's Church, St Leonards, as the last stop of an extensive UK tour which coincides with the release of their second album, *Outside Time*.

Musically Tarren are impressive. There are just three of them: Sid Goldsmith, Danny Pedler, and Alex Garden, all experienced musicians. Their sound is insistent, unusual enough on the folk circuit in having no guitar or rhythm instrument more modern than the cittern, a kind of poor man's mandolin dating back to the Middle Ages. The total effect is redolent of those small Elizabethan bands that often accompany productions of Shakespeare. Combined, the instruments (played as they are by Tarren with extraordinary accuracy of rhythm, purity of tone, and melodic variety) sustain audience interest, building up a high level

of intensity which makes for compulsive listening.

Their debut album, *Revel*, gives us tunes written in complex modern time signatures with occasional socio-political lyrics - "Come all you good people/I must bring you in/to hear a few words about swindles and stings" and "Honesty's all out of fashion" state the subject matter of their composition *Hardwood*. There are various tunes on *Revel* which are traditional but highly unconventionally reworked. *Searching for Lambs*, for example, can be found in all good folk collections: it has been recorded countless times since it was discovered and collected by Cecil Sharp early in the twentieth century. Tarren make it sound almost menacing: there's a kind of minor drone to it that undermines its gay May-morning-proposal message, perhaps because we are now so far from the time when immediate sexual attraction largely assumed the necessity for immediate marriage. Tarren are very aware of the dissociation between that tradition and our own, in a band that includes one stated non-binary member. Embracing this theme, they have more recently released a single, *Neither Maid Nor Man*, which is a compilation of three traditional cross-dressing songs with added modern lyrics, and also appears on their new album.

For their gig at St Leonards the trio will perform from that album. The evening promises to be excellent, and Tarren continue the practice of making the traditional relevant in words, melody, and style.

Tarren will play at St John's Church, Pevensey Road, St Leonards, on Friday 20 September at 7pm. Tickets at Eventbrite, tinyurl.com/Shyyckd3

Palmerama's Comedyrama

EBM HUMPHREYS explores a new regular stand-up comedy event

On the last Friday of June, we headed down to Tin Tins – by now the longest-running bar in the Robertson Street area – for Palmerama's Comedyrama, a regular, free-entry affair held in the front room. It's charismatic, with a fetish for Belgian beers and only occasionally a drunken heckler. Let's be honest, the mild emotional peril of a heckle adds to the atmosphere.

Compère Dan hits a likeable tone, warming the audience without fully conforming to either comedy stereotype – superiority or self-deprecation. He'll hover between them, going in unpredictably for a groan or a laugh or even a wave of sympathy. And since this is a bar, and it is Friday night, he's the one act you'll get to see in both sober and slightly inebriated versions.

Kicking off with cheeky, saucy songs from musician Philip Milburn and ending with some even ruder

comic poetry from legend Sue Hicks (sold out at Hastings Comedy Festival), we heard more words for the female genitalia – all rhyming – than in the average year, including some I'd forgotten. Cl*nge anyone?

Besides the (per)verse we were entertained by four other classic stand-up performers, precisely half of whom featured bodily fluids in their jokes. Bilal Rashid has been doing some genealogy and made a remarkable discovery; and award-winning Siobhan Dodd had plenty to say about breastfeeding. The ever-smiling Rainer Haag had a lot to say about his compatriots the Germans, including some incisive cultural comparisons, and Neville Raven shared tall tales of his father's lightning ripostes.

Personally, I like the intimacy and inclusivity generated when a comic is openly testing new jokes and making fun of themselves when



they flop. It's like being consulted and entertained at the same time. That's what makes this night special – it feels like a small community that's come together for maximum silliness while nevertheless taking their art very seriously.

If you like stand-up and you haven't visited the Comedyrama yet, you have a treat in store. It seems to attract dating couples, and rightly so; it's a perfect way to discover each other's tastes and, dare I say, politics. But there's space here for

a bigger crowd, be it poor publicity or stiff Friday-night competition, I admire Dan's ability to pull in such good acts for a free show. Not every comedian can please every punter, and this is a place where new acts are supported, but I can't think of anything better to kick off the weekend than a good belly laugh in a living-room atmosphere.

Palmerama's Comedyrama takes place at Tin Tins from 8.00pm on the last Friday of each month.

The Poets & Poetry of Hastings



OLI SPLEEN

Hastings is connected with some of the biggest names in British poetry. The history of poets residing in, or writing about, this area is remarkable. From Edward Lear to Christina Rossetti, Lewis Carroll to Spike Milligan. And in modern times, the poetic pulse of Hastings has never faded: Salena Godden, Iain Sinclair, Brian Moses to name a few. So many published and performing poets continue to be linked to 1066 country.

What's more, even if not actually living here, many have found inspiration in the stories of places and people from the town, whether it be Grey Owl, John Logie Baird, the smugglers, famous residents like Poly Styrene of X-Ray Spex, or Lady Byron. And yet, there is no Poetry Anthology to commemorate this extraordinary legacy! Until now.

In Summer 2025, *The Poets and Poetry of Hastings* will be published by Moth Light Press, an independent press that has previously published collections by local poets.

The book is currently in the planning stages. We are seeking permissions and accepting submissions (until the end of August). But some amazing Hastings-linked writers have already confirmed they would like to be included, such as Salena Godden, Henry Normal, Ken Edwards, Anne Rouse, Penny Pepper and Fiona Pitt-Kethley.

The book will, in addition, aim to celebrate the work of up-and-coming writers and beloved local poets who are no longer with us, like John Hendrickse, Bill Wyatt, Pete Brown and Martin Honeysett. There will also be illustrations by Ed Boxall – and hopefully a map of local places with a poetic connection!

You don't have to be local to submit works. There will be a section on Hastings-themed poems. We need poems about: Jack-in-the-Green, Holidays in Hastings, local area landscapes, Alan Turing, May Day Bikers, Spike Milligan, John Logie Baird, Paula Yates, Screaming Lord Sutch, and any other great ideas you come up with!

Richard Newham-Sullivan, the editor of this anthology, says "Creating this book is like going on a huge poetry treasure hunt. As I research more and more, I have discovered that Hastings really is a sort of Poet Town: there are associations with poetry in every area, from John Keats staying at the Bo-Peep in St. Leonards, to Christina Rossetti falling in love on Pevensey Road. Some even say that the Owl and the Pussycat of Edward Lear's famous poem set sail from the Marina Pavilion. Who knows?"



You can submit your poems here: tinyurl.com/HastingsPoetry, or contact the editor at: editor.mothlightpress@yahoo.com



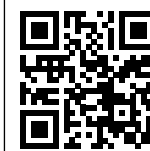
Coastal Currents builds Hastings Music network

Local arts festival Coastal Currents (CC) will receive Arts Council funding for 2024, having self-funded in 2023. CC say half the new money will allow the return of young and early-career musicians' support platform *Audiotrope*, founded in 2020. Previously *Audiotrope* has helped create hundreds of live performances, including studio sessions and live streams by local bands such as Hot Wax, Blue Stragglers, and Wild Horse.

Now *Audiotrope* can forge ahead offering free studio and mastering sessions with associated promotion and workshops for under 25s. The platform has also created the *Audiotrope Charter* – guidance for venues and bookers to set a baseline code of treatment which aims to support the livelihoods of musicians and safeguard the future of grassroots live music.

The Charter asks venues to sign up (free), with the promise of a connected destination marketing strategy, spearheaded by the placemaking organisation running *Audiotrope* – Sweet and Dandy Ltd. This would promote the area's live music as a whole, not just focus on a small selection of favoured artists.

The remaining Arts Council funds will ensure CC enjoys another year. There will be the classic Open Studios trail, and a varied events programme involving local partners from Romney Marsh in the east, to Eastbourne in the west and Robertsbridge in the north, further complemented by a curated programme from the festival itself.



Keep an eye on audiotrope.com or youtube.com/audiotrope for new performances as they happen, and support your local music economy by subscribing to individual musicians.

BOOKBUSTER REVIEW

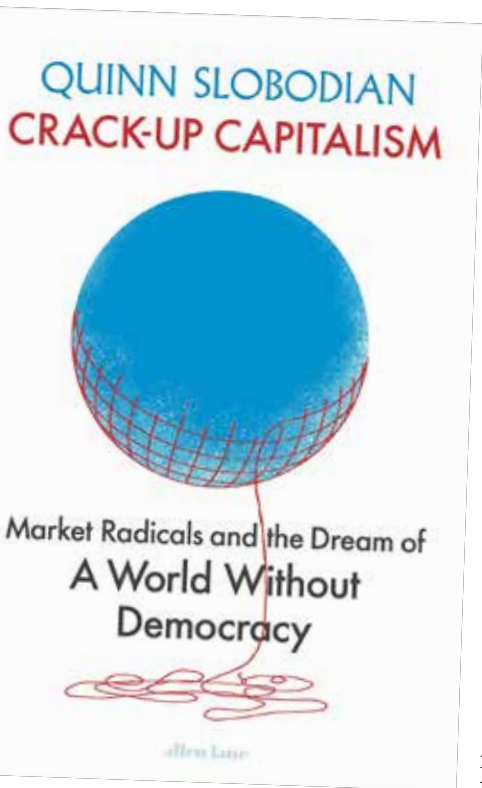
Crack-Up Capitalism

By Quinn Slobodian
Published by Penguin
REVIEW BY TIM BARTON

‘Americans are deeply sceptical of once well-regarded institutions such as universities, the media and the public health system, and do not trust the functioning of democratic politics. The economy is characterised by entrenched inequality, and intense polarisation between the parties makes it all but impossible to address long-term problems such as climate change,’ says Eric Foner in the London Review of Books (4 July 2024).

‘The BJP [in India] enabled the rise of this new oligarchy by instituting special economic zones, granting environmental clearances and providing cheap development loans, while overturning basic labour protections like the right to an eight-hour work day,’ says Aditya Bahl in the same issue.

And, same issue again, James Meek, writing on the housing crisis, says ‘just as Manchester’s industrial heyday made some people prosperous, even as it demeaned and exploited others, so the new manufacturing countries of Asia, Latin America and Africa have been doing it long enough to enrich a fairly broad section of society – to create people with money to spare and eventually, money to invest. What better way to invest it than by buying a flat in Manchester? Most of the new residential towers are developed on a build-to-rent basis, designed to be sold to people who’ll let them out rather than live in them, who may never see the property they own, or to people who don’t even know they own it, be-



cause it’s bought on their behalf by a pension fund. The internet is thick with agencies like the Emirates-based, British-run RPA Group, which markets UK properties to overseas customers [...].’

A MOVEMENT HELL-BENT ON ESCAPING THE CONSTRAINTS OF DEMOCRACY AND STATE REGULATIONS

What links these perceptions, all of which are applicable interchangeably across the nations of the deindustrialising North?

As I noted in my review on Monbiot’s latest tirade against neo-liberalism, the UK has been host to an increasingly toxic asset-stripping free-market playground. We are

host to freeports, and encourage the use of tax havens and ‘secrecy regimes’. Our ex-MP Sally Ann Hart kicked off her re-election campaign with a vigorous promotion of ‘freeports’. She must be aware that they are intended to attract companies into low-tax zones, often with extreme anti-union regulations, supposedly to encourage ‘inward investment’. This creates a steep economic cliff that leads to migration of firms from within the country into these zones, and a lower-pay lower-tax regime that sucks jobs away from the areas outside the ‘special economic zones’. Boris Johnson legislated for 8 of these in the UK, on his way out the door as PM, including one nowhere near a ‘port’, in Derbyshire. This is our ‘Brexit-bonus’; we played right into the hands of the ‘market radicals’ who ‘dream of a world without democracy’, as Quinn Slobodian’s sub-title to Crack-Up Capitalism has it.

The far-right economic hell ‘libertarian capitalist’ Mary ‘Liz’ Truss sought to unleash is not really the aberration the media painted it as. It is of a piece with Johnson’s policies, and with the policies of right-wing think-tanks that have had more influence on policy than any ordinary citizens groups, more perhaps even than industry lobbyists. Slobodian’s book shows the deep history of a

movement hell-bent on escaping the constraints of democracy and state regulations. They are a global force for evil, and clearly the real winners here in the post-EU UK – after all, they and their allies bankrolled much of the Leave campaign. Farage wants to take a few industries into a kind of part publicly-owned framework, but with 50% to come from pension fund investment. Pension funds can invest, but just as Meek noted above regarding housing, they are in fact often foreign-owned profiteering ventures – one of the reasons even Thatcherites began to criticise their own 80s policy of encouraging us to opt out of SERPS: there’ll be too little in the funds to come close to the demand about to hit as Boomers reach retirement age. As a stock deal-

er, Farage knows this well, and would ensure his investments are nicely hedged in these pension funds.

IF YOU WANT TO UNDERSTAND THE CLIFF WE ARE DANGLING OFF

Margaret Thatcher famously ‘wrote to a friend that she thought Britain should turn away from Europe to become “a kind of free-trade and non-interventionist ‘Singapore’”’. The ruling party of the last 14 years, and their deregulated City casino friends have pushed this agenda pretty hard. Slobodian analyses this ‘Singapore solution’, and looks, too, in depth at ‘models’ such as Dubai and Silicon Valley in order to warn us of our plight.

We can vote out politicians, but many are puppets of corporate and foreign interests, increasingly so, and they seem increasingly oblivious of our becoming aware of it. The extremist ‘gonzo capitalists’ once regarded as weirdo outliers are now very much mainstream. Any vestige of actually functioning ‘democracy’ is anathema to them, and they are winning their war against it. Small-c ‘conservatives’ may be beginning to wake up, but rather too late, and, as with Cameron’s ‘Brex-

it’, they have in fact enabled it: our old guard ‘establishment’ in our unequal and barely democratic system never wanted a public that could be mistaken for functioning citizens, they may insist in large numbers on real change. As the pressure-cooker of disaffection ramps up, ‘populists’ start to win, not because they are ‘right’, they are rarely so, in fact are dangerous, but it is hardly surprising that in a dysfunctional society extremism inevitably rears its head.

The left have often used the phrase ‘socialism or barbarism’. The demolition of the left-populist wave under Corbyn has left the field open for the far worse, far more cynical, and conspiracy-prone alt-right. Witness well over 4 million votes for the ‘ReformUK Party’. This is happening all across Europe. And, to a large degree, the ‘market radicals’ and their billionaire profiteering sociopath friends – the ‘global freedom class’ – are the cause.

If you want to understand the cliff we are dangling off, and the cynical alt-right role in pushing us over it, this book is a compulsory read.

Crack-Up Capitalism is available from Bookbuster, 39 Queens Road, Hastings TN34 1RE

HIP CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

8-Year-Old Hastings Girl Sees Her First Book Published

PETE DONOHUE

Frida Bee Barnard Mason is so excited to have had her first book, *The Headless Ghost, The Robot and The Boy*, published in May by Ginger Fyre Press. This is a new publishing imprint dedicated to providing quality books for children and young adults, with stories of adventure, fantasy and fun. Frida’s success makes her one of the youngest traditionally published authors in the world.

This enchanting story, about friendship, adversity and hope, is based in Hastings, where Frida is very proud to live, and features Hastings in its story and its fantastic illustrations. The main character is a boy called Stephen, who lives in Hastings and likes going on adventures. When exploring local woods, he chances upon a cave and encounters some spooky surprises. What would you do if you stumbled across a headless ghost in a cave...a ghost who is sad and lonely and just looking for a friend?

Frida seems an exceptionally talented child and writer and her



story makes great reading. She likes playing on the beach, eating chocolate, and looking at the sea and the stars in the sky. And of course, always full of ideas, Frida loves writing stories. To buy *The Headless Ghost, The Robot and The Boy* at £10 head to the Ginger Fyre Press website or their Facebook page.

veneficiapublications.com
facebook.com/GingerFyrePress

CROSSWORD CORNER

Across

1. Water flowing over the internet? (6)
3. A bit of a bold tattoo but cheap and low quality (3,3)
4. Like a company and its building maybe? (6)

Down

1. H’s cool broke up in July (6)
2. T led me to be clarified (6)

Crossword Solution: Answers on page 5 of The HIP List

1					2
3					
4					

EUGENE GOLOVESOV



Eat Write Love

NICKY TORODE & SONJA COLMAN
of Creative Concoctions - a local social
enterprise, boosting creative health

Courgettes, or zucchinis as they're known in other parts, are the perfect summer ingredient. Colourful, healthy, versatile and surprisingly light! Maybe you pass them by in the supermarket wondering what else you can make with them?

Wonder no more! Try this mouth-watering courgette tart – guaranteed to bring out the urge for a picnic in the park. Come on sun! We're so ready!

JOURNALING #1: DEAR COURGETTE... [3 MINS]

- Let's confess! Write a quick note to a courgette. Declare your love – love at first bite? Or is it more a make-up letter: sorry for leaving you on the shelf!
- Have fun!

FUN FACTS

- Courgettes are a fruit as they come from a flower (which can also be eaten)
- Courgettes are relatively new to the UK, making an appearance on our tables in the 1960s
- They have more potassium than a banana.
- Courgettes are 95% water, but high in fibre and nutrients!

NUTRITION INFO:

- Vitamin A – supports eye health
- Vitamin C – supports immunity and protects against oxidative damage
- Potassium – supports muscles and heart health
- Low GI as mainly water and a high fibre content, so good for stabilising blood sugars

COURGETTE AND COTTAGE CHEESE TART (SERVES 4)

Courgettes can be eaten raw, steamed, griddled, fried, baked or grated - as in this delicious tart:

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 large courgettes (any colour)
- 1 packet of ready-rolled puff pastry
- 1 egg
- 250g cottage cheese
- 1 lemon
- large handful of fresh basil, or a jar of pesto
- salt & pepper
- 50g pine nuts

METHOD:

1. Grate 1½ of the courgettes into a bowl and then thinly slice the remaining half into rounds.
2. Take the grated courgettes, wrap them in a thin cloth (muslin works best as it is so thin) and squeeze out as much of the excess water as possible. Leave in a sieve to continue draining whilst you prepare the other ingredients.
3. Warm a griddle pan, if you have one, or a frying pan will do just as well. Lightly fry your courgette rounds on a high

- heat to get a bit of colour on both sides – leave to one side.
4. Heat oven to 180oC
5. Grease a baking tray and lay your pastry on it. Score a line 2cms from the edge all around the pastry to create a square inside the pastry.
6. Beat the egg and brush over the bottom of the pastry, and, using a fork, prick small holes over the pastry base – inside that square you have marked.
7. Put in the oven for a few minutes to pre-bake – around 5 minutes should do it.
8. In the meantime, put the now fully drained courgette into a bowl, add the cottage cheese, zest of half the lemon and either the basil, shredded, or a couple of teaspoons of the pesto (you can add more of both the lemon or the basil/pesto to taste). Season.
9. Mix these ingredients together, by which time the pastry should have had a chance to pre-bake. The pre-baking helps stop the bottom of the pie going soggy.
10. Remove the pastry from the oven and spread the courgette and cottage cheese mixture over it.
11. Place your courgette rounds on the top, and sprinkle with pine nuts and an extra pinch of salt and pepper.
12. Pull the edges of the pasty over the sides of the filling and brush with the remaining egg.
13. Place back in the oven for about 20 minutes until the top takes on a pale golden colour.
14. Serve with a tomato salad.

SUBSTITUTES

- Swap cottage cheese for ricotta.

- Other herbs can work instead of basil or pesto: mint, thyme or oregano – dried versions of all of these would be delicious.
- Puff pastry is notoriously difficult to make at home so it's best to use shop bought. Alternatively, a homemade shortcrust would also work well.
- Pine Nuts work really well with these ingredients, but you could use walnuts, or sunflower seeds.

STORAGE

The tart is fine to keep in the fridge for 2-3 days, but it won't freeze well!

JOURNALING #2 ONCE UPON A PICNIC [5 MINS]

- Bring on summer by writing into a fond food memory of a picnic gone by.
- On the beach? In the park? In your own garden? Recall the foods you ate, helped prepare. Wander into the anticipation of the picnic. Who packed the blanket? Did you forget the forks?
- And if some of those memories remind you of loved ones no longer here, what heartening sentence can you write now that captures what you loved about them?

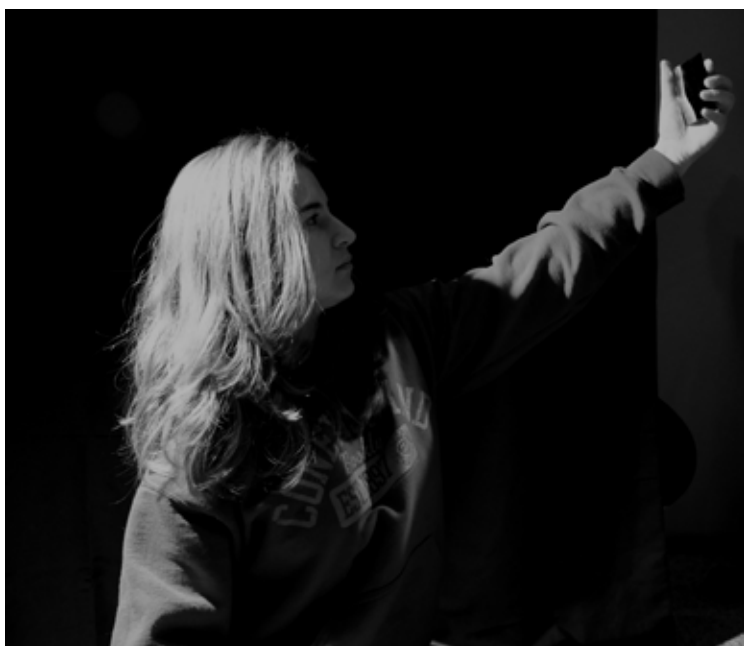
JOURNALING # 3 ACTION!

- Grate, slice, action!
- Ever tried a yellow courgette? Pick up different colours next time you're shopping. Add to favourite dishes such as pasta, salads or stir fries. Surprise your taste buds to boost your wellbeing!



Artist Spotlight

Hastings Independent



Clockwise from top:
My Own Reflection by
Hannah Osinoff
Cléa-Rose by
Andrii Bulavka
Rebirth by Sophie
De-Roe

LIVING LIGHT SUMMER EXHIBITION

After relocating to Hastings Arts Forum (HAF) earlier this year, international photographic exhibition Photopia wanted to collaborate on a new summer show. Over 160 images were submitted from 33 photographers on the theme of “Living Light”.

Curators Derek Cottrell and Chris Coombes said, “As photographers, we are always in pursuit of the perfect light, knowing that it has the power to illuminate even the simplest of subjects. Our challenge is to capture images that not only reflect this wonder but also expand upon it.

“We were honoured to receive international submissions from photographers hailing from as far

as New Jersey, Toronto, Lisbon, Paris, New York, Kyiv, Mykolaiv, and Dnipro-Ukraine, as well as from the UK, London, Newark, Bristol, and our local area.”

A primary objective of Photopia, a not-for-profit organisation, is to encourage photographers of all abilities and support them in professionally exhibiting their work, with a particular emphasis on promoting younger photographers. As part of this, free bursary places were given to selected artists under 25.

Derek and Chris continue, “The exhibition celebrates the living light, bringing together a diverse group of inspiring and thought-provoking artists. Through their work, they seek to convey a depth of emotion and meaning that transcends language. For these artists, vision, imagery, and space serve as their

most potent forms of expression.

“The allure of light lies in its ability to heighten our senses and reveal the world in its truest form: vibrant colours, fluid motion, and radiant brilliance. Its profound impact on our physical and emotional well-being shapes our very existence. May light shine upon us, infusing our lives with joy, happiness, and genuine purpose.”

Photopia Photographic Summer Exhibition, Living Light will be held at: Hastings Arts Forum, 20 Marine Court, St Leonards on Sea, TN38 0DX UK, from 23 July to 4 August. Gallery open Tuesday to Sunday, from 11am to 5pm. Open evening: Friday 26 July, 6pm to 8pm.

For more info and a list of exhibiting artists, visit: www.photopia.org.uk or [@photopiaexhibitions](https://www.instagram.com/photopiaexhibitions)