

Hastings Independent

258 16 AUGUST 2024 THE **FREE** & INDEPENDENT VOICE FOR HASTINGS



Inside:
Your Pull Out
Guide to What
is Happening
in and Around
Hastings



10
YEARS OF
INDEPENDENT
JOURNALISM



DAVE YOUNG

**Racism
Rejected** 2 ->

Housing Targets 'Ridiculous and Unrealistic'

Green-led council at odds with
Labour MP over government plans

PAUL McLAUGHLIN

Government plans to tackle the housing crisis by overhauling the planning system and introducing mandatory targets for all councils in England to build up to 1.5 million new homes across the country were met with hostility by the Green-led cabinet of Hastings Borough Council (HBC) at their meeting on 5 August.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government,

Angela Rayner, made the announcement in Parliament at the end of July. She told MPs that the country was experiencing the "most acute housing crisis in living memory" and required a "level of ambition to match the scale of the emergency".

In consequence, local authorities will be mandated to incorporate housing targets into their long-term plans to allocate land, and councils which fail to do so face seeing their power to block new developments curbed. In addition, the standard method for calculating local housing targets will be changed to in-

clude housing need so that new targets better reflect the urgency of supply for local areas.

Ms Rayner admitted that "the new Government's ambitions would not be without controversy", but she said the "need was urgent" and that "Labour would not be afraid to take the tough choices needed to deliver for our country."

IMPACT ON HASTINGS
The Government's plans are set to have a major impact on Hastings. The town has an acute housing shortage. There are some 500

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Once again, Hastings' strong sense of community has come to the fore. When credible threats of right-wing racist attacks emerged last week, hundreds of ordinary people took to the streets to protect their neighbours, arguably averting the damaging riots experienced by other less fortunate towns. Read all about it in the News section, which also highlights the continuing lack of affordable housing causing misery to many, particularly those renting their home, either from private or social landlords.

This issue also reports on several local anniversaries. The RNLI is celebrating 200 years of saving souls at sea with a series of events - see the Community pages. Established by a far-sighted philanthropist and councillors, it's the 50th anniversary of our much-loved Country Park. Now in its 10th year of publication, HIP, run by volunteers and without grant funding, is always short of money. Please donate, become a Friend, sponsor a page or take out an ad to keep your community (that word again) newspaper in print.

Contact

Editorial Enquiries & Submissions info@
Sales Director Owen Prachar advertising@
Newsletter Editor Serena Ferrari info@
Social Media Editor Harry Hawkins
via our Instagram page
Content Coordinator #258 Dave Young design@
Art Director Jason Ellis yourhip.co.uk

Section Editors
Kent Baker news@
Fiona McGarry and Rod Webb community@
Kent Barker opinion@
Susan McFie hands@
Ben Bruges, Serena Ferrari features@
Owen Prachar, Nadine Keats, Hugh Sullivan, listings@
Harry Hawkins & Merlin Betts arts@
Victoria Kingham literature@
Pete Donohue food@
Fiona McGarry sport@
Hugh Sullivan yourhip.co.uk

Sub Editors
Rod Webb, Fiona McGarry, Gill Goldenberg,
Serena Ferrari, Zakir Mohiyuddin

Contributors
Flo Graham|Tim Barton|Penny Pepper
David EP Dennis|Tim Searle|Steve Peak
Elizabeth Allen|Jonny Thompson
Vanessa Marr|Claudine Eccleston
Paul McLaughlin

Have Your Say letters@
yourhip.co.uk

Telephone 01424 559085

Hastings Independent Press CIC
57 Linton Road Hastings TN34 1TN

News



DAVE YOUNG

Hastings Rejects Racism

Hastings rose to the nationwide challenge of violent anti-immigrant protest last week with three anti-racist gatherings.

In the week beginning 5 August a message was circulated on the encrypted messaging platform Telegram naming the addresses of 39

offices of immigration lawyers across the country at which protest demonstrations were to be organised on the evening of Wednesday 7th. These included an address in Cambridge Road in Hastings. Attendees were advised to “mask up” and “be there or be cowed”.

Given the intimidatory violence of recent anti-immigration protests in Southport, Sunderland and elsewhere, an appeal was issued by Helena Dollimore MP, Hastings Borough Council leader Julia Hilton, and faith leaders for any objectors to this protest not to come out. Some businesses took no chances and closed early on the day. However, several hundred local people attended a rally organised by Hastings

Stand Up To Racism (SUTR), gathering outside ESK on Cambridge Road in a celebratory party atmosphere. Community activists chanted and sang for almost two hours, hearing speeches from former deputy council leader Maya Evans, current councillors Paul Barnett, Yunis Smith and Becca Horn, and from James Ellis of the National Education Union (NEU).

In the event no anti-immigration demonstrators emerged. Simon Hester, SUTR secretary and chief steward for the event, said: “We rejected the appeal for us to call the protest off. It would be utterly irresponsible of us to cancel it at the last minute... Many people would turn up anyway, putting them at real risk. More importantly, the way to defeat the fascists is to isolate them with ever larger numbers. There was no way we could stay at home.

“Frankly, it’s a bit rich for the police and national politicians to urge passivity in the face of far-right thuggery. Our community was under threat. Racism and Islamophobia spouted in parliament led to racism and Islamophobia on the streets. There has been a relentless campaign to scapegoat refugees, migrants and Muslims for years. We cannot rely on the politicians or police to defeat the racists. The only

way to do it is to stand up as a united community, face down the small groups of fascists and challenge the wider racist narrative.”

The counter-protest on Wednesday followed another display of solidarity on Sunday 4 August when Hastings Mosque received an email threatening an attack that afternoon. They contacted SUTR and 60 people quickly mobilised to defend the mosque if necessary. Councillor Yunis Smith, a member of the mosque committee, said: “I wanted to say a massive thank you to everyone who came in solidarity with us today. It was truly amazing to see so many people come out to stand with us.”

Maya Evans, chair of Hastings SUTR said: “Our movement must challenge racism and promote a fairer society for everyone. We need hope, not despair.”

On Saturday 10 August, over 200 people rallied in Hastings to mark a National Day of Protest called by SUTR to “stop the far right”, protest recent “right-wing violence” and show solidarity with marginalised groups. The Kid Kapichi drummers began an event which included speeches from, among others, Jenny Sutton of the NEU and local singer and activist Lily Kim. With many families in attendance, there was again a carnival atmosphere.

SITE NOTICE FOR APPLICATION FOR A PREMISES LICENCE

This notice is to advise that on 9th day of August 2024 an application for a Premises Licence was made to Hastings Borough Council for the premises known as **Indian Grocery Supermarket, 395/397 London Road, St Leonards-on-Sea, TN37 6PH** Was made by : **Sivaseelan Mahalingham**

For the following licensable activities

Sale of Alcohol by Retail (off the premises) 08:00 to 23:00 Monday to Sunday

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

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

Dated this 9th day of August 2024



SARA LOU BOWREY

Fat Tuesday Youth Band Gets Permanent Home

The Hastings Fat Tuesday Youth Second Line Band, a Mardi Gras-style ensemble first launched in November 2022 for young wind and percussion players, has found a permanent home and support partner.

Creative Music, the music hub for Brighton & Hove and East Sussex, has been hosting and managing the band in sporadic teaching sessions at their Hastings & Rother Music Centre at St Richards College in Bexhill, with renowned trumpeter Robbie Robson as guest facilitator. Now the band has been offered a permanent slot for sessions there every Saturday during term times, supported by their experienced staff.

Hastings Fat Tuesday company director Sally Lampitt said: “We are delighted that Create Music have

committed to supporting our youth band going forward. This is an important development for our organisation and will provide ongoing opportunities for our musicians and security for the band in years to come”.

The youth band has performed since its formation at numerous local festivals and parades including St Leonards Festival and Sanctuary Festival as well as Hastings Fat Tuesday. It is open to young people, Grade 1 level and above, from Year 5 upwards. For more information on how to sign up and for details of fees and bursaries, visit createmusic.org.uk/for-children-and-young-people/music-groups.

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

1 ← households living in temporary accommodation. In 2019, HBC spent £730,000 on temporary accommodation. This figure is expected to rise to over £5 million this year, accounting for almost a third of the total budget, and it is one of the main reasons pushing the Council to the brink of bankruptcy.

The problem is exacerbated because much of the existing housing stock is also in a poor state of repair. The Council's latest housing survey identified over 700 empty homes which could be brought back into use if money was available to fix them. HIP recently reported on the Housing Rebellion protest at Clifton Court where Orbit Housing have left 53 flats empty since 2021 because the property needs updating.

The Government's proposed

changes to the way housing targets are calculated based on housing need will mean that in Hastings a further 282 new homes will now be required to be built each year, in addition to the 490 existing affordable homes target identified by the previous government.

The town's new Labour MP, Helena Dollimore, speaking in the House of Commons, said she welcomed the Government's plans to increase house building, saying: "Labour was elected to tackle the housing crisis with a mandate to build the homes our community desperately needs, including the biggest expansion of social housing in a generation. Some parties may behave like it is a zero-sum game between building more homes and protecting the environment, but our

town is full of brownfield sites that could be homes for local people but have been left derelict. Our planning reforms will force councils like ours to make the most of these brownfield sites. The Deputy Prime Minister confirmed to me in Parliament that golden rules will apply to ensure we build the homes and local infrastructure, including sewage pipes and public services that we need while protecting the environment."

GREEN OPPOSITION

But the new target figures were described as "ridiculous" and "unrealistic" by Glenn Haffenden, deputy council leader and Housing and Community Wellbeing portfolio holder in HBC's cabinet. His irritation was apparent on hearing an updated report to the Cabinet by

Stephen Dodson, the Head of Strategic Programmes, on the landslides that impacted the Old Roar Gill and Caves Road in February.

Mr Dodson told the Cabinet there were many "complex and complicated" causes of the landslides and that coastal communities across the country had been impacted in similar ways. Global warming and climate change would result in more flooding, coastal erosion and landslides in the future. Part of the survey work currently being undertaken in the two areas most affected by the landslides, he said, was to better understand the impact of any new developments on land stability and the need to stiffen planning restrictions as a result. He concluded that the "restraints and restrictions that we have within Hastings

means we were not going to meet our existing house building targets, and we will be even less likely to meet the new targets."

Julia Hilton, the Leader of Hastings BC, shared her deputy's cynicism. She said the Council "awaits advice as to how a small, coastal town such as Hastings surrounded by protected landscapes and bounded by the sea is supposed to deliver an additional 282 homes a year on top of our existing targets. We have also yet to see any commitment to a requirement for these houses to be built to be zero-carbon or indeed carbon-positive standards. What would be really welcome is support to bring the over 700 empty homes we have in the town back into use. Using the stock we already have is the most energy efficient solution."



NAZ MONTAG

Council Offers Landslide Toolkit

PAUL McLAUGHLIN

Hastings Borough Council has prepared a 'toolkit' leaflet for residents concerned about landslides in the wake of those that impacted, separately, the neighbourhoods of Old Roar Gill and of Caves Road in February this year.

The Council was widely criticised at the time by residents living in Foxcote and Penhurst Close for its poor response to the ecological calamity at Old Roar Gill. The devastating landslide forced many people to abandon their homes, as parts of their properties were pushed into the ravine.

Their experience was shared by those living in Caves Road, below West Hill Road in St Leonards, who, just days later, were also instructed

to leave their homes in a separate incident with no certainty as to when they would be allowed to return.

There have been several other land slippages across Hastings and St Leonards in recent years, including cliff collapses between West Hill Road and the Marina and at Rock-a-Nore: all have caused extensive damage. Residents of the town have been told to expect more such events in the future as global warming and climate change are predicted to result in more flooding, coastal erosion and landslides.

COUNCIL TEAM

Stung by the criticism of its slow response in February and March, the new Green-led Council has assembled a Land Stability Team made up of communication and engagement officers, insurance and building control specialists, a hydrologist and a flood defence specialist to advise on future environmental events. The new team is headed by Stephen Dodson, HBC's Head of Strategic Programmes. He will provide regular reports to the Council on the many "complex and complicated" causes of the landslides and offer advice on how to respond to future events.

In the meantime, the toolkit seeks to give practical advice to those who may be affected. It sets out the first actions that residents should take if they fear a landslide is happening, such as to report it to the police and to the Council, particularly if they hear sounds such as trees breaking or rocks moving, or feel movement in the ground. They should also watch for secondary risks that can follow a landslide, such as flooding, fallen power lines, broken gas pipes and damage to structures. Residents are instructed to check their homes for any immediate damage or cracks and to contact their insurance company and utilities providers to make them aware.

The key aim is to prepare those living in vulnerable areas for the eventuality of a flooding or landslide

by better understanding the local risks and to make themselves aware of any previous issues. It sets out measures to reduce risk by making sure gutters and downpipes are not overflowing or leaking, and advises use of rainwater collected in water butts for watering the garden. It also advises against the removal of trees and bushes from steep slopes, as in many cases vegetation acts to bind the soil and remove ground water, reducing the likelihood of shallow movements.

RESIDENTS' RESPONSE

The toolkit is described as having been "put together with the help of residents directly affected by the most recent landslides". However Dr Ralitsa Hiteva, who was forced to leave her Foxcote home in February, said she found it "quite disturbing to watch Council officers briefing the Cabinet about the positive working with local residents, when my experience was completely different." The communication between residents and the Council "was so bad", she pointed out, "we had to file a complaint for maladministration, poor communication and unprofessional behaviour against HBC officers with the Chief Executive."

Dr Hiteva, who is a Senior Research Fellow at the University of Sussex and a key member of the Facebook Group *Falling through the cracks: Old Roar Gill landslip*, described HBC as "in denial" about the sheer scale of the problem, having "neither the capacity nor operational expertise" to deal with the landslides. She said she was pleased that the toolkit had been developed together with local residents, but pointedly added that she was "sad that it didn't include us. Had they asked for our input, there is a lot that we would have advised them to do differently."



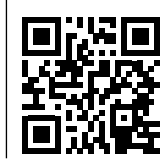
The toolkit is available online at: hastings.gov.uk/content/my_community/landstab/A4-resident-landslide-toolkit-leaflet.pdf

Disabled Facilities Grant Increases

Hastings Borough Council has announced receipt of increased funding for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) that may enable residents to stay in their own homes rather than needing to move to a care home.

DFGs are mean-tested but may rise up to £30,000 per household – whether homeowners or tenants – to cover adaptations like level access showers, wet rooms, kitchen alterations, stair lifts, external access ramps, door widening and electronic door entry systems. Initial assessments are made by the social care team at East Sussex County Council, but appropriate cases are referred to Hastings Borough Council, who will arrange for options to be explored in detail with an occupational therapist. A total of £2.2m is available for the 2024-25 financial year, a rise of £0.3m from the previous year's expenditure.

Glenn Haffenden, lead councillor for Housing and Community Wellbeing, said last week: "The funding we receive for DFGs can only be spent on making it easier for residents to live in their own homes, so we want to make sure that people know about the grants. If you, a family member or friend, are struggling to stay in your home and adaptations could help, please visit the website or call the team to find out more and start the process".



See hastings.gov.uk/dfg or phone 01424 251031 for more detail of how to apply and who is eligible.

WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

✉Letter

HOUSING COMPANY NEEDED

Dear HIP
I am dismayed to learn that the Green-led Hastings Borough Council (HBC) is proposing to liquidate Hastings Housing Company (HHC) and sell its housing assets (Massive Council Losses in HIP 257). My understanding is that HHC was set up to help HBC to meet housing demand in the borough.
Obviously the letting agent should have been sacked sooner, and HBC needs to pursue it for both the money withheld and costs.
There has been a massive underspend in Home England's affordable housing programme in recent years. Billions of pounds have been returned to the Treasury.

Theoretically HBC/HHC could bid for this money (capital grant) to assist with the refurbishment costs of affordable housing dwellings e.g. possibly 22 Wellington Square.
There is an urgent need to provide more social and other affordable housing in Hastings, and I am sure cooperative housing could play a part, along with the council considering to resurrect the Housing Revenue Account so that it could provide new council housing beyond the de minimis 200 dwelling limit. One would hope that local housing associations could play a part, but it is disappointing some continue to sell off social dwellings.
In the interests of transparency, I am a former affordable housing consultant and member of the Labour Party

Andy Seddon

✉Letter

ST MARY UNDER THREAT

Dear HIP
I write to express my agreement with Trish Peak (letter in HIP 256), who said how short-sighted it would be if St. Mary-in-the-Castle was allowed to fall into disrepair once more. The centrepiece of Pelham Crescent has in the past been described as a jewel in the crown with its magnificent domed interior and renowned acoustics. It was a split decision when the Council took the bold step of purchasing St. Mary's to prevent it from demolition, and with ownership comes responsibility.
St. Mary's was saved and restored thanks to the determination of the then Friends of St. Mary-in-the-Castle, with considerable input from the Old Hastings



internal sources of funding are out there and must be explored before it's too late. To hesitate is to lose.
We must not let St. Mary-in-the-Castle join the long list of what Hastings might have had but then failed to seize at the crucial moment. Think of a county-standard cricket ground, a marina, an Olympic-sized swimming pool, a sea-front tram system, a Turner gallery, a dual carriageway by-pass to the West Country. The list goes on. Remember that we once had a Hastings Embroidery, an Albert Memorial, an award-winning tourism centre and an Old Town Museum. All these are now in the distant past. Please don't allow St. Mary-in-the-Castle to be added to that sorely missed list.

Richard Stevens
Former Mayor
& Leader of the Council

We would love to hear from you.

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

✉ letters@hastingsindependentpress.co.uk
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HM Government

MORE BUS LESS FUSS



East Sussex County Council



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But he seemed like a 'nice guy' ...

FLO GRAHAM

When a man who seemed like a 'nice guy' murders three women in cold blood, what can we expect from the men who don't seem like nice guys?

Following the outrage that erupted after the murder of Carol, Hannah and Louise Hunt on 9 July, is it any surprise that the authorities overlooked the warning signs? The rhetoric surrounding the killer's personality highlighted how he 'always seemed pretty normal' and like a 'nice guy'; "He never seemed odd or aggressive." (Sky News) Yet here we are discussing how the red flags were missed by those who are meant to protect.

All over the country there are cases that mirror this, with domestic abuse and femicide rearing its ugly head to remind women that we are never really safe.

In 2018 St Leonards was host to

a similar case: the murder of Michelle Savage and Heather Whitbread, who were gunned down by Craig Savage after Michelle ended their marriage. The murderer also shot the family dog while Michelle's grandmother and sister, who was seven-months pregnant at the time, hid from the perpetrator; she eventually alerted the police and escaped *physically* unharmed. Another, perhaps even more disturbing, parallel is the fact that both Craig and Kyle have military backgrounds, though the British Armed Forces don't publish information about domestic abuse or IPVA (intimate partner violence and abuse).

Every time an event such as this takes place, we are reminded that the threat of being killed increases when women try to leave DV relationships. But what can we do if the police are taking no notice?

As a town, Hastings has a strange culture of overlooking people's pasts. But does this voluntary ignorance put women at increased risk?

A female friend recently disclosed the details of a horrifically abusive relationship with a man who has been known to be aggressive for many years. This abuser's violence hospitalised the woman for three days, with injuries which needed 11 stitches, as well as injuries to her internal organs.

Yet, a few weeks after this, his photo appeared on another woman's Instagram, pint in hand, watching the quarter finals of the Euros. Weeks later, over Pirate Weekend, I saw him out drinking, and I couldn't help feeling concerned over the risk he posed to other women. This is a risk that inevitably increases with alcohol consumption, not to mention how his presence alone undoubtedly made his victim feel unsafe – effectively excluding her from such celebrations.

When someone is causing this much of a threat to innocent people in society, why does it take the authorities so long to take action? If no one is following up the questionable behaviours of 'nice guys', then why are we not safeguarding women from men who are known for their violent and abusive behaviour?

RIP all those who have been murdered by partners in DV relationships.

SYDNEY SIMS UNSPLASH



Swimming against the Tide

ROD WEBB talks to Jacky Butler about her daughter's bid to swim the channel

In 2020, HIP carried an article about a young Brighton director who was making a film about the first British woman to swim the channel, a film that was partly shot in Hastings. Four years later, I went to see *Vindication Swim* at the Odeon cinema. It not only gave fascinating insights into what motivates such feats of endurance, but also the barriers that faced women back in the 1920s.

One important aspect the film highlighted was the importance of getting the right 'weather window': many hopes have been dashed when weather conditions have changed unexpectedly.

Now another woman, this time from Hastings, is waiting for the right conditions to do her first crossing. Her weather window is 27 August to 2 September. "All I can do is try my best whilst training and hope that the rest aligns," writes Bethany Butler in the introduction to her Just Giving crowdfunder. And she's so focused on that window of opportunity that, according to her moth-



er, Jacky, she's currently "incommunicado" while she does her final training.

Bethany doesn't have a serious swimming background, but she joined a masters swimming club (clubs for over 18s) eight years ago after being diagnosed with MS. "Wild swimming gave her a sense of freedom and adventure," says Jacky. She started volunteering at Ashburnham, where her sister worked, and used to swim in the lake there.

The MS was discovered after major eye problems led to a diagnosis of optic neuritis, a symptom of MS. Fortunately Bethany is able to live symptom-free which she puts down to her healthy lifestyle choices. Her mother told us how she is reluctant to go too far down the medication route and that she's "really careful with her diet".

Talking to Jackie about the dangers of channel swimming, she said Bethany's only real concern was "mother nature getting in the way of her swim". She also told us that

her daughter is "fearless"; for example, she went out sea swimming last week at 3.30am – in the pitch dark.

A typical day of preparation involves three hours of swimming every day at the local Bannatyne's club and long-distance sea swimming at the weekend: eight hours Saturday and six hours Sunday followed by eight and three-hour sessions the following week. She has a land-based trainer who helps her overcome any injuries, and a swimming coach who helps develop her technique in order not to injure herself in the first place – as well as "telling her to ease off when necessary," says Jacky.

Bethany's father loves swimming, and apparently had dreams of going to the US as a lifeguard when he was young. Now he's the one taking her to Dover at weekends to support her practice swims. But, of course, there are lots of other people behind the scenes: friends who've helped to raise money, others keeping her company in kayaks as she swims and an informal

sea-swimming group calling themselves 'The Swimming Pod'.

Jacky says her daughter is "a great believer in hope". So, a last word from Bethany on her motivation:

"I can only compare it to a magnet pulling me in – it's something that I knew I had to try. And at this moment in time, I am fortunate enough to be able to focus my all (and when I say that – that is no exaggeration) into the training that's required, it really does involve every ounce of my being. So here goes as I make my attempt to swim across the great British Channel – WOOP WOOP!"



Bethany has almost raised enough money for the event itself, which includes the boat, the pilot's fees and other sundries. Everything she raises beyond that will be donated to the MS society. To donate, go to [justgiving.com/crowdfunding/bethany-butler-swim-the-channel](https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/bethany-butler-swim-the-channel)



PHOTOS: KEVIN BOORMAN



The scroll in safe hands



Hastings Celebrates the RNLI

This is the RNLI’s 200th year of saving lives at sea – and the Hastings lifeboat station is taking part

Until recently, ‘retired’ lifeboats *Priscilla MacBean* and *Cyril & Lilian Bishop* were key landmarks in the Old Town, but it’s easy to live in Hastings and have only a vague awareness of the RNLI, maybe when you walk past the lifeboat station or see the boats at open days.

In case you didn’t know, the Hastings lifeboat station has been a presence in the town since 1858, and crews (many of whom were Hastings’ fishermen in the past) have won over 30 gallantry awards. According to their Facebook page and website, there were 16 callouts during June and July alone. Kevin Boorman’s family has a long association with the RNLI. The former Major Projects Manager at Hastings Borough Council told HIP: “The lifeboat is called out whenever it’s needed; we might get three shouts in a day,

then go three weeks without anything. It really does depend on who needs our help.”

Hastings has two boats, both called Richard. The all-weather, Shannon class lifeboat *Richard and Caroline Colton*, was funded by Richard Colton from the sale of two classic Ferraris he left to the RNLI in his will. The in-shore rescue boat is the *Richard Francis*, a more manoeuvrable inflatable that usually operates closer to shore. This smaller boat is currently ‘off service’ and for the time being there is a relief boat on station: *The Gentle Jekm*.

A key event in this bicentennial year was the signing of a commemorative scroll in March. On this scroll is the RNLI’s *One Crew* pledge in which they promise their commitment to saving everyone they can, without judgment – staying

true to founder Sir William Hillary’s vision when he started the charity in 1824. Six volunteers from Hastings signed the scroll, Liam from the crew, Mike and Tim from fundraising and shop, Sarah representing water safety, Brian one of the RNLI guides and life-guard Jodie. The starting point for the scroll’s journey was Westminster, and it is now travelling around the UK until it ends its journey in October in Douglas, Isle of Man –

the former home of Sir William Hillary.

The other key RNLI event to mark the bicentenary in Hastings was *The BIG Lifeboat Concert* at the Stade on 1 August. As well as sea shanties, folk songs, tap dance routines and a host of other nautical-themed performances, the concert included a ‘maroon salute’: the firing of 200 maroons into the air. Maroons are rockets that were historically used to call crews to their lifeboat station

during an emergency.

Look out for more RNLI events this year, including the visit of the Fareham lifeboat, AMiTy, to Hastings in early September.



For more information about Hastings RNLI, go to [rnli.org/find-my-nearest/lifeboat-stations/hastings-life-boat-station](https://www.rnli.org/find-my-nearest/lifeboat-stations/hastings-life-boat-station)

OPEN DAILY
from 8am

GOAT LEDGE

SUPPORTING LOCAL
SUPPLIERS
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FRESH FISH

BEACH BAR

COFFEE

ICE CREAM



PENNY PEPPER

In the sunny weather, I often find myself wheeling down the road attempting a slalom approach around the vast gruesome potholes, expecting a Saxon arrow to pop up into my wheels, so deep do these monsters go.

Why do I go in the road? may be your question. I hear many disabled people responding. For those of us who use power chairs and scooters the challenge often concerns the outrageous state of pavements, whether they are tarmac or slabs. Tarmac surfaces are often pitted and uneven, while slabs are loose and wobbly. Neither is great for those of us with mobility, balance and visual impairments. I

Pavements, Potholes and the Blocking of Dropped Kerbs

often feel herded by circumstance to use one inappropriate surface or another.

Not that the roads offer any reliability - as most residents in our town know. Here where I live, in central St Leonards, the potholes are deep enough to encourage ponds that would welcome new aquatic life. And this is also the reason I dread using my otherwise useful wheelchair accessible van. Sitting in your wheelchair strapped in, even with a head rest, gives you little comfort when up against these vicious cavities that cause the vehicle to bump and fling.

Don't get me started on the abuse of dropped kerbs and tactile paving. How many readers, I wonder, know what this is, and why it's there? How many have parked across a dropped kerb without a thought - not out of

maliciousness, but innocent ignorance?

The invention of tactile paving is attributed to Seiichi Miyake, a Japanese inventor who came up with the idea in order to help a visually impaired friend to navigate public spaces in the 1960s. The dropped kerb as we know it, was invented by Selwyn Goldsmith, also in the 1960s. Goldsmith, interested in design and architecture, had lived experience as a disabled person after contracting polio and becoming a wheelchair user.

Such beneficial contributions towards equality for disabled people seem somewhat lost these days in the current confusing application of them both.

Researching this piece, it was hard to pin down which precise body is responsible for the placing



and upkeep of dropped kerbs and tactile paving. In fact, the whole process is obscure. A visually impaired friend commented she didn't understand all of the intentions the different surfaces and directions of tiles are meant to tell you!

It's a shame people park over dropped kerbs and I would like to alert disabled people to the fact that a traffic warden can give a ticket to any offender. I have little compunction in reporting such blocked

dropped kerbs as I spiral around the savage craters on our roads, unable to get up to even a dodgy pavement.

Potholes should be reported to East Sussex County Council (can be online at: live.eastsussexhighways.com/report-problem) who are also - at least to a basic level - responsible for repairs to pavements. And please remember, a dropped kerb with tactile paving is a beautiful access-helpful thing, for us all.



The Acappella Bellas at the Big Sing

Get Ready to Sing Big at the Big Sing

St Michael's Hospice has announced the return of its Big Sing event. It's set to be a spectacular celebration of music and community and takes place on Saturday 12 October 2024 from 10am to 10pm - that's 12 hours filled with beautiful harmonies, joy and support for your local hospice.

The great thing about the Big Sing is its variety and relaxed atmosphere. You can come and go during the day at will and hear a diverse range of musical genres.

With twenty choirs performing back-to-back, there's no shortage of entertainment. In the past, the event has included classical, acappella, folk and world music, reggae, punk and rock. Each choir brings their own unique sound and energy, meaning there will be something for everyone. It's also a perfect place to come if you are thinking of joining a local choir, but can't decide which one to join. Drinks, delicious cakes and tasty

treats will be available to provide sustenance for a full day of singing for the choirs, but also for you to enjoy during their performances. And of course, there will be fantastic prizes to be won at the hospice's raffle.



This event offers an excellent opportunity for the community to come together and help raise vital funds for St Michael's Hospice, which supports and enables the community of Hastings and Rother to live well with dying, death and loss. For more information, visit stmichaels-hospice.com/event-diary or call 01424 456396.

First with the News?

HIP needs an editor (or editors if you wish to job share) for our busy news section. These essential pages at the front of the newspaper report on a wide range of local grassroots and political news throughout the town. This is an unpaid role on a community newspaper run by volunteers.

As news editor you'll write, collect and commission stories and pictures and prepare them for publication. The paper is produced every second weekend, and you'll work with other members of the HIP editorial collective to provide content for both the newspaper and its social media.

If this interests you, and you'd like become part of our team please contact: news@yourhip.co.uk telling us about yourself and any relevant experience.

Hastings Independent

We are also interested in hearing from potential guest news editors who would contribute on an occasional basis during this, our 10th anniversary year.



Pell Mell to Save Bexhill

DAVID EP DENNIS explains how a project that includes the repair of a rusty tide gate could help prevent annual flooding of Bexhill's Egerton Park – but help is needed to get match-funding for the project.

Although Bexhill's original town is on a hill next to the old manor site, the area of Bexhill's coast was once marshland used by rich clients to hunt wildfowl. In medieval times, the area now called Egerton Park and The Polegrove, was called 'The Pell', a large lake fed by a torrent (hence the term 'pell-mell' for rushing water.)

When Bexhill's urban infrastructure was being designed, no regard was given to the long-term effects of natural drainage of the Pell headstream, especially in winter. The strategy has been to constrain the natural flow into rapid transit channels pinned by housing estates and a formal park with lakes. Woodland has been removed and drainage slopes have been concreted over, making water run-off even more rapid. Since then, Rother District Council has not made any effective move to prevent the almost annual flooding of Egerton Park by the Egerton Stream.

DOMESDAY SOLUTION

Bexhill Wild Domesday Project has identified that the Pell torrent, now named the Egerton Park Stream, flows through Sidley Woods into Egerton Park. The efflux of rainwater to the sea is enabled by a currently damaged and rusting tide gate onto the beach. The tide gate shuts when the tide is coming in and stays shut to prevent saltwater coming inland. This has the effect of damming the Egerton Stream during high tides. If high levels of rainfall occur, the stream overflows and floods the park. Sea levels are still rising due to global warming.

During the 'Year One' phase of the Bexhill Wild Domesday Project, the Sidley Woods section of the Egerton Stream has been closely examined. A visit has been paid to the area by an expert officer of the South East Rivers Trust, who has confirmed that the provision of leaky dams, pools and scrapes would slow the flow of water. This

slowing may be sufficient to stop the flooding while the high tide gate is shut, by reducing the rate of water reaching Egerton Park.

The South East Rivers Trust have confirmed that they are willing to design the scheme and obtain a licence from the Environment Agency to implement it. No work can start until the end of the bird nesting season. The Sidley Woods stream bank edge areas are marshy, and this is an ideal location for the planting of black poplar saplings. This tree species has suffered great losses at present and is on the way to extinction in England. It requires the planting of male and female trees next to each other to ensure

furtherance of the species.

Other benefits of the Sidley Woods Project include the planting of berry-bearing blackthorn and hawthorn shrubs and the provision of a picnic table area for social enhancement. Path improvements to enable people with mobility disabilities to use wheelchairs safely in the woodland could also be achieved in a second enhancement phase.

FUNDING

To fund the project, a target total was set of £10,000 to cover the costs of equipment, including timber, stakes, a small mechanical digger, jackets and gloves for volunteers, insurance for volunteers to be obtained from Zurich TGV, shrubs, trees and picnic area tables and benches.

A crowdfunder was launched, and this immediately gained the attention of East Sussex County Council who emailed Bexhill Wild CIC to say they liked the project so much that they have confirmed in writing that they will pay £5,000 in match funding into the crowdfunder if it reaches half its aimed total of £5,000.

At the same time, 100 leaflets were distributed around Sidley by former town councillor Julie Norris, and this has resulted in some donations to the fund. However, many people in Sidley do not have extensive spare cash and so organisations are needed to help the crowdfunder reach its mid-aim thus generating the match funding from ESCC.



We have until the end of December to raise the funds to ensure that we get the match funding from East Sussex County Council. Please follow the link to the Crowdfunder to support the project: crowdfunder.co.uk/p/bexhill-wild-1.

GARDEN FOR A FASHIONABLE RESORT

Construction of Egerton Park began in 1888 by developer and building contractor John Webb on land belonging to 7th Earl de la Warr - Reginald Windsor Sackville.

The creation of lakes helped to drain the low-lying marshland. During the excavation of the boating lake the remains of an ancient boat and the fossilised bone of a dinosaur were discovered.

The Victorian park contained the typical facilities of a fashionable private garden of the time; water features, shaded areas, lawns, bandstand and tennis courts, but was available for public use.

Bexhill Corporation bought the park in 1901 and built a concert hall that later became the Bexhill Museum. A public bowling green and an indoor rink were added.

The area to the west of Egerton Park - The Polegrove - was developed in the 1920s. By the 1930s housing surrounded the north, east and south sides. The model boat pond, rose garden and pergola were added and the swimming pool rebuilt.

After World War II, the town's role as a fashionable holiday destination dwindled and the park mainly became an amenity for local people. In 1960 the swimming pool was extended and a sun terrace and cafe created.

Subsequently the pergola and theatre were demolished to be replaced by the Indoor Bowls Club. In 1986 the swimming pool was filled in and the bandstand removed.

Sources: Rother District Council/Sussex Gardens Trust

Meet the mighty Gruffalo!

Join us for a fun-filled family day out at **Bedgebury National Pinetum and Forest** to celebrate the Gruffalo's 25th birthday! Enjoy the ultimate party and meet your favourite story character



Scan here or more information on events at Bedgebury

The Gruffalo ©1999 & TM Julia Donaldson/ Axel Scheffler. Licensed by Magic Light Pictures Ltd.





A History of Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve

We recently marked the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Country Park. Local historian, STEVE PEAK adds to the celebration with a history.

The beautiful cliffs and glens to the east of Hastings have for centuries been an inspiration for many people, including Pre-Raphaelite artists like William Holman Hunt, pioneering ecologist Grey Owl and television inventor John Logie Baird. Today the whole area is part of the Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve, with 853 acres (345 hectares) of sustainably managed farmland, ancient gill woodland, heaths and grassland, plus three miles of dramatic sandstone cliffs and coastline.

The reserve owes its existence to the Collier and Milward families, who accumulated thousands of acres of land in eastern Sussex in the 18th and early 19th centuries, but in the following decades did not sell the reserve area for development. The town's most powerful land-owning families of two centuries ago became its main environmental benefactors.

The early history of the reserve up to about 1700 AD is mainly that of farmland, with some woodland and wasteland (also often known as 'common ground'), and with the unworkable steep slopes of the three glens – Ecclesbourne, Fairlight and Warren - left as natural habitats. In 2019 an archaeological survey of the open areas of the reserve (excluding the East Hill) using a magnetometer, found widespread evidence of continuous farming since at least Neolithic times, but no evidence of substantial buildings or large-scale settlements. The survey discovered prehistoric flints, pottery, field systems and circular burial enclosures, plus widespread mediaeval ridge-and-furrow plough marks and small farmsteads.

A 2008 English Heritage report on the East Hill concluded that the top of the hill may well have been an

Romans used the Nature Reserve, although they may have had a signalling station on the East Hill, where the barbeque area is today. This would have been to communicate with their ships trading with the major iron ore site at Beauport Park. In Saxon times, before 1066, there was a possible high status 10th-11th century Saxon burial site and stone building on the East Hill, by the lift.

Through the Middle Ages until the 18th century, the most notable farm was Fishponds Farm in Barley Lane. The farmhouse there today is on the site of the 'hall' of the manor of Brede from 1402 onwards. The only mediaeval church in the area was the one at Fairlight, built in 1180 and replaced in 1846 by today's Fairlight Church, although there was no settlement at Fairlight until modern times.

In the 18th and early 19th centuries the second most significant activity in the reserve, after farming, was smuggling. The indented cliffs and glens created ideal obscure land-



View from Lovers Seat in 1825

after 1815, when the end of the Napoleonic war left many Royal Navy crew members redundant. Large numbers then became smugglers, forcing the government to build Coastguard stations along the South Coast. One was built at Fairlight Cove, another on Fairlight Head and a third near the foot of the cliff at Ecclesbourne Glen. This was washed away by a storm in 1859 and was replaced by another on the cliff-top in 1864, which became a well-known feature of postcards until it had to be demolished following cliff falls in 1963.

A turning point in the history of the town was the appointment as town clerk in 1705 of Eastbourne-born solicitor John Collier (1685-1760). Collier and his two descendant relatives, Edward Milward senior and junior were the dominant individuals in the Hastings establishment throughout the 18th century, becoming the rich owners of thousands of acres of land. Collier and the Milwards were mayors many times. They also ran the borough politically on behalf of the powerful Whig the Duke of Newcastle, who in return paid them and also appointed them successive managers of the Customs service in Kent, which brought them into close (and probably profitable) contact with the many smugglers along the coast.

By the end of the 18th century the Milwards owned most of the undeveloped land between the West Hill and Warren Glen, plus much other property across eastern Sussex. When Edward Milward Jnr died in 1833 his estate passed into the hands of his widow, Sarah (1787-1873), who became the Countess Waldegrave in 1846.

Sarah was a well-known local benefactor, a strong Protestant, of stern character but great generosity. She did her best to preserve what is now the nature reserve by stopping any unnecessary development from taking place. It is to her that we owe much of what is now a unique environmentally and ecologically protected area.

When she died childless in 1873, the Milward Estate passed to the Sayer-Milward branch of the family. In 1888 they sold 60 acres of the East Hill and 24 acres of the West Hill to Hastings Council, and then the majority of what is now the nature reserve in 1963. The Hastings Country Park was officially created in 1971, then comprising 512 acres, becoming the Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve in 2006.

The full history of the nature reserve is on Steve Peak's website



↑↑ Postcard of Ecclesbourne Glen in the early 1900s.
↑ Smugglers running ashore in 1808, John Atkinson
→ Countess Waldegrave philanthropist (1787-1873)



Iron Age promontory 'fort' before the Roman invasion in 43 AD. These 'forts' were important cultural and economic centres, where people ('tribes') living in the surrounding area met for reasons still not fully understood. But they were clearly places of great significance – probably a combined church, market, town hall, sports centre, theatre, hospital and farm, as well as a possible fortification. There was probably another, smaller fort on the West Hill, on the site of the Castle and Ladies Parlour, but there were few others elsewhere in eastern Sussex.

It is not known if, or how, the

ing beaches, while the deep, dark glens provided concealed routes for transporting goods inland. Smuggling was, technically-speaking, a crime, but it was common practice engaged in by many ordinary people, like breaking the 30 mph speed limit is today. However, there were also some well-organised, and sometimes violent, gangs of smugglers carrying out the large-scale movement of goods from France to the big market of London, sometimes going through the reserve.

Smuggling became both a bigger drain on the government economy and a serious threat to public order



Jazz, Folk, and Forests

VICTORIA KINGHAM talks to Rebecka Edlund ahead of her performance at Jazz Hastings

To talk to Rebecka Edlund about her music is to talk to her about her innermost, heartfelt passions. They are one and the same. Ever since she stood up in her pushchair to sing for passing strangers in her home town, she tells me, you could call her a *teaterapa*, a theatre monkey. When young, with help from an enterprising and perceptive grandmother, she obtained the part of Jane Banks in the musical *Mary Poppins* at the Gothenburg Opera. The premier of the musical was on her tenth birthday.

Since then she has followed her passion for performance where it has led her. “I got obsessed by it. I didn’t go to school for a year. I just got completely mesmerised by this performing world. And since then, there’s been nothing else!” This single-minded drive for musical presentation, for invention, led her through an intensive exploration of folk music to form a band called *Oknytt*, which she describes as ‘Forest-folk jazz – a concoction of Scandinavian folk music and modern jazz’. She finished three years at Trinity Laban last year, as a gold medallist.

So far, so outstanding. She already has one album with *Oknytt*, *Något om en Björk* [translates as *Something about a Birch Tree*]. But Edlund is more than an exceptional student. “To me”, she goes on, “language is music. It’s the same, a way of communicating. My grandmother picked up on that. I had tea once a week with granny, and we were only allowed to speak English. We had Jane Austen, all sorts of classic

literature. So when I was studying English at school it became one of my favourite subjects.” Her English, in fact, is probably better than that of most English speakers. The only evidence that it’s her second language lies in its precision. Yet when I listen to her music, there seems to me a Scandinavian sound – something ethereal, pine forests and wide open spaces. I wondered whether that was just my imagination?

MUSIC FOR THE HEART

“I love hearing that, because that is my main source of inspiration and influence. Traditional folk music, Swedish folk music, gets to my heart more than any other genre. So I’ve listened to a lot of Scandinavian folk music. I studied it for two years in Falun [at the Falun Music Conservatory]. Growing up, I listened to the radio, the TV. But my main focus was writing. I played my own music, and fiddled about on the keyboard and guitar, and was very keen for anything I played to be *my own* material. So I was definitely influenced by folk music, but from when I was 14 or 15, it was just a big mixture of whatever was in front of me.”

Her interest, after gaining the place at Trinity Laban, was jazz. “Studying folk music, I knew that I loved it”, she goes on. “But I’ve always been a big nerd, so I knew I wanted to study jazz for the more adventurous harmonic material. The main reasons were to learn more about music theory, and also a love of improvising. I’ve transcribed Ella Fitzgerald’s scat singing, and solos

strings, I feel like I can get a lot of effects and sounds out of the guitar without having to play more intricate, sophisticated jazz lines – like percussion. We don’t have any drums in the band, so I like it as a sort of engine that drives the music forwards.”

OPENING NEW DOORS

One thing that she does not mention, however, is the uniqueness of her singing voice. It’s the kind of voice that is so pure, so straight, that hearing it sometimes makes you want to weep. Her vocal range is terrific, and there are very few singers who, like her, are able not only to use their voice as an instrument, but also to produce an enormous range of sound effects without sounding pretentious. I’m thinking Miriam Makeba, Badi Assad, Ella Fitzgerald, Bobby McFerrin. Not that you would make comparisons, as Edlund’s music stands on its own.

The band she will be bringing to Jazz Hastings in early September will be Elliot Galvin (piano), Calus Williams (bass) and Laura Jurd

throughout the gig. And she’s also not afraid of not playing. So when she does, it really means something.” Galvin, too, is someone who uses the whole piano, sometimes using the strings of the grand piano to make the sound of a harp, sometimes beating it as percussion. The three of them, as members of *Virgin Forest*, collaborate on a musical journey which extends the use of their instruments to produce something new, bold, unclassifiable.

“The *Virgin Forest* project will be recorded, next year or the year after. The songs I wrote are a collection of letters to my younger and to my older self. In them I reflect on health and love, and celebrate humanity through comparison with how we treat nature and the environment. I feel lifted up, and safe, and loved, by what surrounds me. It’s been a good, self-therapeutic process, looking back on myself as a teenager compared to now. Why would I care about having a thigh gap, say, when I can put my hand on the bark of a tree or climb its pristine branches, or smell the moss?”

It’s an ambitious project. But Edlund is ambitious – she has the driving force of the best musicians, always to create something new, unique. She is completely open to every kind of musical sound. Abba? I question, half joking. “I love Abba! They know how to write good melodies, and the melodies feel like they are one with the lyrics. There’s no difference between them. That’s what I think they’re brilliant at. And they’re groovy – you can’t *not* dance to them!”

So the Swedish forest will come to Hastings beach in September, and Jazz Hastings will present another innovative and professional performance. It promises to be a great night, and to send us away with an extended notion of what music can be, or could become.

Rebecka Edlund’s Virgin Forest Band will play at Jazz Hastings, EHSAA, The Stade, on Tuesday 3 September. Doors open 7.45 for an 8.30 start. Details and all gigs: jazzhastings.co.uk/upcoming-gigs

“Why would I care about whether or not I have a thigh gap, when I can put my hand on the bark of a tree or climb its pristine branches?”

by Sonny Rollins. But coming out of that genre now, I’ve allowed myself to blend the genres together so I have a theoretical knowledge of jazz but also a love of the sound, the ambience of the music.”

Is this, I wonder, why she is including a twelve-string guitar in her latest performances? “It happened that my partner’s dad had given him a twelve-string so it was just there in our house! I thought, why not? It makes me feel big, it gives me confidence. Playing just with the open

(trumpet). Jurd has already made a considerable name for herself as an improvising composer, and her work is dedicated, original. Working with her, relates Edlund, “is a dream. It really is. She is obviously a brilliant musician but has become a close friend of mine. She opens [musical] doors and windows that I didn’t even know existed. I feel that, every time I play with her. And I think it’s very obvious that she’s a composer – she really takes care of the wholeness of it, the story line,



Virgin Forest at the Vortex

ELIZABETH ALLEN



Hastings Poet on the Pilgrim Path

ELIZABETH ALLEN

In this time of violence and turmoil, we were granted an hour of peace and beauty in the calm space of Berwick churchwatching. Watching sunset light shimmer across the butterflies and flowers of a pulpit decorated by Duncan Grant, we listened to local poet Antony Mair read from his latest collection *Beyond the Seen*. For the last year Antony has been Poet in Residence for the Pilgrim Path, which links Berwick and six other Downland churches.

The collection of poems celebrates the very particular histories of the churches and his response to them. Voices of the anonymous crowd/ of spirits hidden from your sight, known to us only by their artefacts and traces/ in hilltop barrows, in the bend of roads mingle with the insights and pain of the famous, like Bloomsbury artists Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell, whose paintings surround us as we listen. Later, Antony talks to me of the inspiration given to him by these 'capsules of history' divided by the thunderous road running westwards to Lewes, at a time when he had been experiencing a dryness of creativity. The Pilgrim Path has offered, he says, "something outside yourself".

It is in the relation of this 'outside' with the 'inside', the poet's moments of intense response to the unseen whispering spirits of people, to rivers and paths, that some of the poems' most moving lines are achieved. The poem *Alciston Church* ends in one such moment:

something slots/into a gap I was never conscious of/ giving a sense of contact/ with a self I have forgotten/ or perhaps I scarcely knew.

Antony Mair was first prize winner in 2022 of Live Canon International Poetry Competition and is Poetry Society representative of Hastings Stanza.



GREGORY HEATH

Rod Youngs: New From Old

VICTORIA KINGHAM at Jazz Hastings

It's strange how musical appreciation changes over the course of half a century or more. What sounded to the majority uncompromising, unmelodic, on a first hearing, fifty years later sounds merely – modern. It happens with classical music, though it takes longer – Prokofiev, Schoenberg, Shostakovich were all once greeted with incomprehension and protest.

It happens with jazz too, though the development trajectory has been

much faster. In the very early 60s it was still thought of as 'popular music' following from the forties and fifties, the wild post-war dancing, the big-band formations, the cosy American TV shows. In the 1960s however a number of seminal jazz musicians rapidly took the music out of this realm into something serious, innovative, and inventive. Max Roach was one of these musicians, taking the idea of jazz drumming beyond 'time-keeping' into

something more subtle and instrumental, patterning around melodies, writing, fronting, improvising, transforming the nature of the small jazz combo and enabling modern jazz to emerge as a distinct genre. Roach's own history reads like an A-Z of American jazz, a lifelong list of collaboration with the best, and you can read it on Wikipedia without me restating it here.

Rod Youngs, a gifted drummer, presented us with an exceptional evening's music as a tribute and dedication to Max Roach. It was superb. And the long reach of the jazz innovations of the mid-sixties was reinforced. These are not easy tunes – even now, they are not 'easy listening' tunes, but they are part of the accumulated heritage of jazz in the way that Pollock and Warhol are part of the heritage of visual art. Youngs' quintet patently know each other's music, and they are all

highly accomplished enough to make the performance look easy and relaxed. They have evident enjoyment in each other's achievements, and Youngs' lead from the drumkit is minimal, but decisive. The sound of the lead saxophone and trumpet, often stating the melody in unison, sometimes in harmony, is joltingly reminiscent of the arrangements of the mid-sixties, yet because each individual musician is skilled and inventive, the music is fresh.

Tony Kofi is a much respected, assured British alto player who is constantly in demand; Byron Wallen is from a musical family, based in London, which includes his composer sister Errollyn Wallen (and if you haven't heard her music, you really ought to listen to it immediately – she justly has international status as a composer and singer). His playing is lyrical, original, educated. Bass player Larry Bartley has been a staple of the London jazz scene for some 25 years, performing or recording with major bands. Renato Paris the pianist, aside from his musical closeness, his sensitivity to Rod Youngs' ideas, turns out also to be an accomplished voice improviser, a scat singer.

As is often the case, the evening gained momentum and unity towards the end, and the last couple of numbers, *Members Don't Get Weary* and *Absolutions*, were, you might say, the absolute business; every musician took a shining solo, and a very full set ended late into the night, engaging an enthusiastic audience to the end.

The Rod Youngs Quartet played at Jazz Hastings, EHSAA, on Tuesday 6 August. Next up: Rebecca Edlund's Virgin Forest Band, Tuesday 3 September. jazzhastings.co.uk/upcoming-gigs

Notting Hill Carnival Comes to Hastings

JONNY THOMPSON on Reggae Room: The Summer Session

Once a year, at the very special Hastings Fat Tuesday celebrations, a unique event takes place. Beginning quietly and almost unnoticed back in 2018, *Reggae Room* on Fat Tuesday had a smattering of curious attendees. Having doubled in size each year, it now packs out the EHSAA to the rafters. Young and old from near and far join together, as the hosts Mighty Sounds and Dub Generals Sound System set up an all-evening Reggae

Extravaganza. Various special guests join them on the mic, bringing in their own individual flavour.

Past guests have been Cheshire Cat (from Leftfield), MC Mad-X, Henry Matic Tenyue and Tonbridge Wells-based Jack Curtis. As the event grew so quickly and for many became THE place to be on Fat Tuesday, Mighty Sounds decided to make a film of it. It's a story of the event, shot by local film-maker Simona

PHILZ HALDANE



Zinevicate, showing how for one night only the genteel EHSAA club became a heaving, pulsing, bass-heavy, Reggae Party!

Due to the success of *Reggae Room* on Fat Tuesday, Mighty Sounds have decided to do the same thing in the summer. *REGGAE ROOM: The Summer Session* at EHSAA on Sun 25 August is the first of its kind, so expect more of the same as the winter version but with a sunset!

And with a cold beer overlooking the beach. Live band, full reggae

sound-system, guest DJs and MCs – it's noisy, it's busy, it's vibrant and it's a lot of fun. EHSAA is a big venue with a balcony, plenty of space, a bar, lots of seating (if you are tired out from dancing), and this time a Caribbean food stall, courtesy of St Leonards-based TT Jerk Hut. Not to be missed. Make sure you can say you were at the first ever Summer Reggae Room!

Film at: youtube.com/watch?v=DMBJOYy_JH4



Vanessa Marr: ‘All these storms, lay heavy on my heart’ - Hands Holding

A Place for Creativity and Friendship

VANESSA MARR

This August, a group of local artists from the textile group unFOLD, will present the culmination of two years’ work with a show entitled *Raft: A Place of Safety and Survival*. It was initially inspired by their individual and diverse experiences of lockdown, but the loss of their found-

er member Christine Chester, from cancer in June 2023, brought a new meaning to this work, as a reminder of the power of creativity to heal and unite in the face of adversity.

Each artist has responded to the theme through her preferred creative approach. For Carly Ralph, proximity to the sea provided “calm reflection, drama and distraction” during a time of confinement. Her work, *The Sea is my Raft* echoes this sentiment

through mixed media textiles. For Sarah Welsby, a combination of paint, folding, sanding, stitch, and collage offered an opportunity to test the elasticity of discarded packaging, resulting in a personal metaphor for resilience.

Christina Ellcock was inspired by the contrast between the outside world and the shelter and protection provided by home. Her textured, careful compositions bring atmosphere and meaning through a limited colourway.

Home life is also a theme in Vanessa Marr’s work, which explores domestic spaces, such as kitchen tables, as metaphorical rafts where family dramas are played out time and time again. Her illustrative and poetic response revolves around a tablecloth featuring the words “All these storms, lay heavy on my heart”.

Sinéad Smith’s contribution cel-

brates friendship bound into two quilts, one “big, bold, and bright” created from fabric dyed over years of living in the States, the Middle East, and the UK. The other, constructed from tea towels donated by friends and overdyed, symbolises “the foundation upon which I stand”. The late Christine Chester’s work, started but never completed, will also be on display. Collectively, this work has soothed and inspired, challenged and comforted its makers as a tangible reminder of the power of friendship to bring women together.

RAFT will be at Hastings Arts Forum gallery, Tuesday 6 – Sunday 18 August (closed Mondays), private view 6-8pm Friday 9 August. Meet the artists: Sunday 18 August, 2-4 p.m. Further information: unfoldtextiles.com, Instagram @unfold_textiles

Tymon Dogg Lights Up Electric Palace

PETE DONOHUE reviews the biggest small gig of the summer

Walking into our Old Town fifty-seater, independent cinema music venue and bar for this extraordinary gig was like arriving at the party you’ve been most excited

about all summer. The atmosphere buzzed with cool intimacy and wild anticipation as the endearing Dogg personally welcomed familiar fans and new faces. Those of us already

in the know, along with recent converts, could tell it was going to be a very special evening.

Taking the stage, Tymon announced: “It’s great to be in this small space with you all...” (a ten-minute stroll from home) before launching into songs from his new album *The Granada Sessions*, recorded in Spain with his latest band The Dacots. The level of physical energy and charismatic passion stunned the audience from the outset. Wielding his five-string electric violin, held low, he leaned into the audience to strut punk poses and draw us all in with natural ease to his world of, what he wittily calls, quantum folk – “You can do anything you like!” It’s hard to believe he’s been professionally songwriting and performing for well over half a century and yet can still be so relevant and fresh.

Dancing across the tiny performance area packed with the tools of his trade, this multi-instrumentalist dodges cables almost balletically to grab his *Hermosa* Spanish guitar and enthrall us all with another new song, *Cruel Mind*, vibrating the strings exquisitely to match his unique voice. As the set continues, he flits from instrument to instrument: electric keys, acoustic 4-string violin, upright acoustic piano, even a harmonica taped to a mic which he plays simultaneously with a violin. Sometimes he changes his mind at the last second, as his engineer, Ian, darts behind and between him trying to keep up – “What did he do in his previous life to have to be my sound man tonight?”

In between each virtuoso musical performance, Tymon captivates the audience with his own skewed hu-

mour. Humble without being self-deprecating, he has us all laughing along with him as he shares his quirky takes on music, life and spirituality. The serious message, however, lies within his brilliant songs, both old and new. Check out *I Don’t Want To Be Poor* and *Conscience Money*.

After the gig, I caught up with Tymon as he signed vinyl albums and CDs up at the bar: “I’m going to keep going for as long as I can,” he told me. He doesn’t mean just churning out old favourites like many of his generation do, he means continually writing and performing new music. More power to the old Dogg!

Tymon Dogg played at the Electric Palace, High Street, Hastings, on Friday 2 August. For more dates and films see electricpalacecinema.com/whats-on

COASTAL CURRENTS ARTS FESTIVAL

This year, this important South Coast Arts Festival has events stretching from Rye to Robertsbridge, having gained major support from a variety of local organisations, including Hastings Borough Council, and the De La Warr Pavilion. Audiotrope, an organisation dedicated to supporting young and early-career musicians, are our associates, thanks to funding by the Arts Council and the National Lottery. Further details can be found online at the address at the end of this article.

Many of August and September’s Arts events are now included as part of the festival.

WEST STREET OPEN STUDIOS

- **FREE DANCE WORKSHOP:** This 7-day FREE workshop with dance guru Trash Dolls (Sam Amos) culminates in a live performance on 31 August. An amazing opportunity: participants need to commit to just 2 hours, 4-6pm, from 24-31 August.
- **ARTS FESTIVAL OPENING PARTY: FREE!** At White Rock Theatre Studio, 7pm-11pm, 30 August. 300 capacity, bar, music and entertainment supplied by Audiotrope participants.
- **TRASHDOLLS PERFORMANCE: FREE!** at West Street Open Studios, Saturday 31 August, 2pm Bar open.
- **SUSPENDED ANIMATION: FREE!** Daria Fisher will

perform upside-down at West Street Studios on Sunday 1 September at 8pm as part of our Open Studios weekend! Not to be missed.

OBSERVER BUILDING

- **COLLAPSE! FREE!** 5-8 September, Curated by Rowan Corkill and Sharon Wylde – a sideways glance at a post-collapse world.

TIN TINS BAR

- Sunday 1 and Sunday 8 September: Audiotrope Open Mic Nights for 18-25s, hosted by Reshad Rahman and James Friis-Lawrence. Register for a place, perhaps win a prize.

ELECTRO STUDIOS PROJECT SPACE

- **MAKING STRANGE:** Artist Colin Booth exhibits from 7-21 September
- **IN EVERY SHADOW:** Lorna Ough has curated a GREEN project exploring and interrogating ancient mythological figures such as The Green Man, Jack-in-the-green, Green George, Robin Goodfellow (Puck), The Green Witch, and The Girl Green

Much more! Special events, mostly free.

Full details and updates at: coastalcurrents.org.uk/ or Instagram [instagram.com/coastalcurrentsfestival](https://www.instagram.com/coastalcurrentsfestival)



Carl Sexton: *Untitled*. The **BLACK JOY!** exhibition runs until August 25th at the Hastings Museum and Art Gallery. It’s open every day except Mondays. playingtheracecard.co.uk/blackjoyexhibition2024

BOOKBUSTER REVIEW

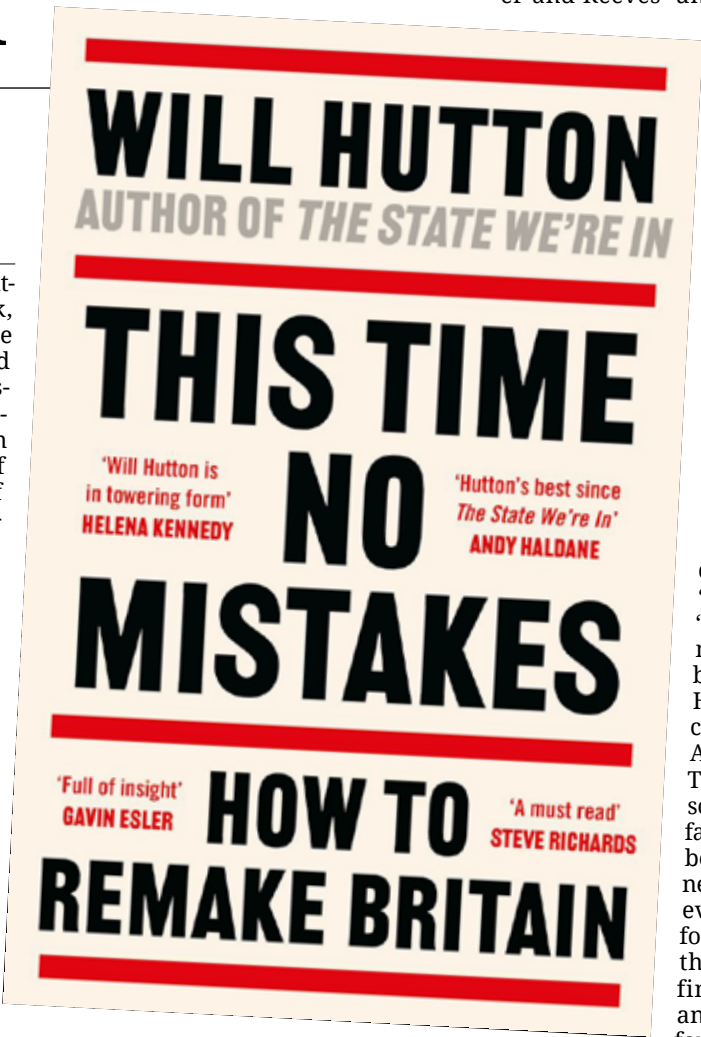
This Time
No Mistakes:
How to Remake
Britain

By Will Hutton
Published by Head of Zeus,
£10.99
REVIEW BY TIM BARTON

It is close to 30 years since Hutton's most influential book, *The State We're In*, first came out. In that book he argued that 'altruism and the civilising values of an inclusive society have been sacrificed on the altar of self-interest, of choice, of opting out and of individualism'. Some reviews, such as David Aaronovitch, took issue with that as too simplistic, and as a sentence taken out of context it is.

Nonetheless, it is difficult, all these years later, not to agree with Hutton, and in fact say the same thing even more loudly. In his new book, he gives the first few chapters over to an analysis of events that have led to the mess we are in today. As I have argued here in previous reviews, Liz Truss was not the aberration she is seen to be, but merely a less cautious and more stupid expression of the logic of post-1979 neoliberal Tory economic ideology. And that is pretty much Hutton's position, too. It would be interesting to see what Aaronovitch thinks of that 29 years on – I suspect he may be less quick to dismiss the argument.

The book features a blurb from



our new PM, no less, who said it is 'brilliant'. As always with Kier Starmer, he less U-turns than spins like a gyroscope. I wonder what he would say today now his and Reeves's announced economic policies seem so at odds with Hutton's

suggestions. The prescriptions for change start with addressing inequality and poverty, and require 'British capitalism' to change radically, indeed it must 'work for the common good', not just for shareholders. This is obvious good sense, as our recent experience with Southern Water's underinvestment in infrastructure repair drives home.

WORKFORCES NEED
TO BE ENFRANCHISED

Spending, here, unlike with Starmer and Reeves' unfunny Tory-lite routine, must start now, on a large scale, to repair 15 years of damage, and to 'drive productivity' in both the public and private sectors. This emphasis on both public and private spheres, marrying 'socialism' to 'progressive liberalism' should sound familiar. We are, here, slap-dab in the middle of the 1990s' 'Third Way', a 'sensible compromise' formulated by writers like Hutton and of course sociologist Anthony Giddens. This 'renewal of social democracy' failed then, in part because of Blair's neoliberal bent as evidenced by the foolish over-use of the fiscal 'private finance initiative', and also his liking for the 'communitarianism' he took

from Amitai Etzioni, which tended to push an unbalanced path to 'rights and responsibilities' that more than somewhat leaned on the latter at the expense of the former. So far, Reeves has talked up renewal of the PFI agenda, which as before

will simply increase debt for yet another generation or two.

Nevertheless, for those of us who actually read Giddens books, 'third way' policies did have some rational basis. Blairism did not do any favours to the way posterity views the 'third way', but Hutton, to a degree, seeks to revive aspects of the concept. For many on the left, it is too compromising with the capitalist order, but pragmatically it is clearly far better than the neoliberal garage-sale the Tories have pursued. How to actualise such policies in the face of our nation's greed-driven ideology is another issue, of course.

As Hutton said on an LSE blog, 'I thought when I finished writing the book that the ideas and policies might be too ambitious for Starmer's Labour party. I want to lift the economy by decisively raising public investment, reshaping our savings and investment ecosystem so it dramatically raises its support for business and to reconfigure our capitalism around the delivery of great purposes rather than putting profit first. Our tech sector needs careful nourishing rather than to be sold off abroad. Workforces need to be enfranchised.'

MORE OF A REFORMING
GOVERNMENT THAN
MOST EXPECT

I for one think he was correct to suspect Starmer would find such a blueprint too radical, but at the same time it is of a piece with the caution exhibited in the PM's recent statements. Hutton critiques the late 1920s Labour governments of Ramsay MacDonald, saying they 'lacked the self-confidence and the

will to make dysfunctional capitalism work better': we can only hope Starmer is more forthright, as forthright in a good cause as he has been on, say, the bad causes of suppressing the Labour left and of punishing a human response to the destruction of Gaza. That would do it.

Hutton takes a positive, if out-of-touch, cultural stance. He wants to see a new public sphere of debate, noting, quite rightly, that 'the common good, and the ability of individuals to live lives they value and find meaningful, are interdependent'. But, post-lockdown and against a global rise of the far-right, one that as Hutton notes, grows and grows 'in the fertile soil of economic and social distress', it is hard to see how to get there from here. At least, not without a far more iron-willed curbing of capitalist greed and of the mass media, alongside much more enabling welfare reforms such as a Universal Basic Income. Hutton's prescriptions do not go far enough toward these ends, and Starmer's certainly don't seem to, in fact as Reeves's cuts indicate, quite the reverse may be the case.

On the LSE blog, Hutton ended on a positive note: 'If Starmer meant what he said [when describing the book], Labour may be more of a reforming government than most expect. Perhaps this time there will be no mistakes.' It is too early to tell, of course, the signs are ambiguous. Personally, I think they auger badly, but let's hope I am pleasantly surprised.

This Time No Mistakes: How to Remake Britain is available from Bookbuster, 39 Queens Road, Hastings TN34 1RE

POETRY CORNER

kim has a beach hut
PETE DONOHUE

in that tideturn brainspace shingle
thoughts revolve around the daystar
seagull children shriek excitement
men in hats & yoga women
stroke the surf on paddleboards
slumbering weaver fish lie deep &
blackheads glide with herringbones
someone spots a sinewave seal
my lover swirls around my head
she swims from sinking groyne to groyne
the clouds are barely cotton buds
with microlight & helicopter
scan this beach for memories
of cooler less polluted days
as dogs & owners chase each other
tossing balls or harness leads
electric bikes come creeping by
along the public pavement path
between the playground café carpark
garish beach huts rudely stand
open sesame double doorways
show aladdin caves of pattern
opium drapes or seaside stripes
ice cream pastels neon wetsuits
summer comes to west st leonards
kim has a beach hut.

CROSSWORD CORNER

Across

- 1. Headgear for further education with the explorer (6)
- 3. Go in Di and mix up this colour (6)
- 4. Allows bursaries (6)

Down

- 1. Moving rapidly like some dragonfly in garden (6)
- 2. So, a mix turned around these self-evidently true statements (6)

Crossword Solution: Answers on page 5 of The HIP List

1					2
3					
4					



↓ Traditional food that 'requires practice and technique to eat' ↑ Chicken nugget: 'profoundly infantile'



According to the media, we British seem to think of our modern cuisine as an exciting and open multicultural diet. But I feel that much of it adds up to dinners of bite-sized pieces of indistinct meat, usually chopped chicken breast, coated in different sauces, be it tikka masala, or Thai green curry, or sweet & sour sauce. The carnivorous aspect of such dishes – the main event – amounts to a vague 'meaty' component incidental to the dish. We seem to know nothing of Punjabi or Thai cuisine, or Sichuan or Italian, but for an impoverished, denatured semblance.

We enjoy eating meat, so long as its presentation hides that it was once part of the body of a living animal. This is profoundly infantile. The logical end point is the chicken nugget, with its homogenous zero-texture texture; and the burger, which is hidden within layers of bread and ketchup and is indistinguishable in flavour and texture from its vegan substitute.

In stark contrast, recent visits to other countries have revealed menus that regularly include gelatinous pig's feet, delicate fish heads, soft

tripe, irony livers and other delights, all of which are enjoyed for their distinctiveness and for the variety of life that they represent. Other food cultures exhibit a wealth of flavours, textures and cadence; cadence because the different parts of an animal, when retained in their anatomical aspect, require practice and technique to eat. When you are required to encounter food, as you eat it, the pace of eating slows, and you confront the fact that you are made of flesh and bone.

EATING WELL EVERY DAY

Another measure of the poverty of our food culture is that we generally conflate great food with fine dining and novelty. It suggests that food is only taken seriously as something occasional, not as a sacred feature of day-to-day life.

On the other hand (apparently), London's 'street food' scene, most famously represented by a ramble through Borough Market, exhibits burgers, fries and churros. This compares with a centrally located food market in Seoul I recently visited, where one could encounter delicacies including chicken feet, pressed pig's head meat (pyeonyuk),

funky blood sausage (sundae), and chopped live octopus.

In Seoul, the food was not branded as 'street food': it was simply a concentration of reasonably priced, convenient food stalls where one could enjoy a delicious daily lunch. In London, the fact that it is marketed as 'street food' is more important than the food itself. Street food should be cheap, whereas in London it carries a novelty factor and is opportunistically priced at a premium.

LOCAL FOOD

In this national context, the seafood stalls in and around Hastings Old Town's fishing huts are somewhat miraculous. They are, in my experience, the closest thing we have to actual street food; and of course, they do not brand themselves as street food, they simply serve their seafood as they have for generations. There is no novelty here, unless eating oysters for £1.30 each at the historic black huts of RX Fisheries is itself a novelty.

If you want something warm, a portion of whole whitebait from the hole in the wall counter at Rock-a-Nore Kitchen is genuinely luxurious when you think about it. The pre-

ferred ritual of my friend Chris is to eat pickled baby octopuses held in a polystyrene cup while enjoying a pint or two on the terrace of the adjacent Dolphin Inn. Personally, I like to round things off with a cost-of-living-friendly £1.90 Eccles cake from Judges Bakery on my way home. But to reiterate, these food experiences are rare wonders in this fallen age of ours.

OUR RICH FOOD TRADITIONS

British food culture was not always like this. My grandparents recall that rabbit, tripe n' onions, liver n' bacon, beef dripping on bread and stuffed lamb hearts were the centrepieces of normal family dinners – eaten at the table with family. My grandmother has told me about her gran, who, being the cook for a household in Bloomsbury, would often buy half a pig's head and sublimate its various meats into a glistening brawn.

Of course, being able to create food from whole parts of the animal requires knowledge and skill. Its

and Wensleydale. It has the most delicious food in London because, filtered through centuries of native history, its dishes respond to the weather, and its ingredients are those that grow best here. The food there is deeply deliberate.

St John is perhaps one of a handful of restaurants in London whose food can match one of the countless 'everyday' eateries that can be found in pretty much any town or city in countries like France, Spain, the Philippines, China or Japan. Unfortunately, St John is expensive and must be booked in advance, so food on this level can only be enjoyed occasionally and sits on the inessential periphery of British food culture.

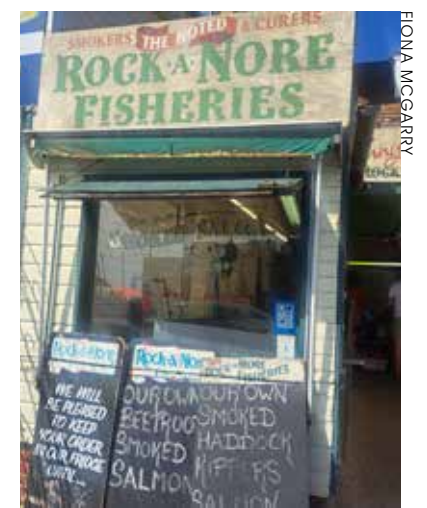
Melancholically, this is simply the food that my grandparents would have eaten all the time in their youth. Paradoxically then, we might say that our recent ancestors were closer in essence to foreign cuisines than contemporary multicultural British food culture.

PRESERVING FOOD CULTURE

That is not to say that multiculturalism is itself the reason for our terrible dietary habits; many cuisines, including those of Hungary, Singapore, and South Carolina are of quality partly due to their mixed heritage. However, these mixed cuisines, unlike ours, derive from an earlier time. British multiculturalism and its food culture is a relatively contemporary phenomenon, deeply rooted in global capital flows and patterns of consumerism. Cuisines pulled into our orbit are crushed into conformity with the lowest-common-denominator mass market.

I believe that hope for British culture doesn't lie in its so-called diversity, but through conscious reflection on a now distant life-world that used to revolve around locality, social bonding and the sacred. Today's best food cultures have somehow kept this earlier plane of existence safe, as they hold fast amidst the scattering forces of global capital.

Do you agree with Tim? Let us know your opinion.



Our 'miraculous' seafood stalls: 'the closest thing we have to actual street food' in Hastings

FOOTBALL

United Up And Running

HASTINGS UNITED 2, HORSHAM 0

HUGH SULLIVAN

Hastings United made an encouraging start to their Isthmian Premier League season last Saturday when they beat Horsham 2-0 at the Pilot Field. They had lost three times to their Sussex rivals at the back end of last season - defeat in the league both home and away, then a 3-0 reverse in the Sussex Senior Cup Final. But, playing now under new manager Danny Bloor and with some key changes in both style and personnel, the 'U's' merited their change of fortune to come out with all three points after a hard-fought encounter.

The surface of the Hastings pitch, baked hard by recent sun and blustery wind, made ball control difficult, and combative tackling and covering by both defences limited attacking options on either side. Nevertheless, a crowd of nearly 1,200 were treated to an entertain-

ing end-to-end contest with both sides preferring to hit the ball early and long, rather than essaying the patient build-up of the Agutter era. The 'U's' retain last season's league top scorer Davide Rodari; he was joined up front on Saturday by two former Arsenal youth players, Billy Vigar and Tyrese Briscoe, each making a promising league debut. In midfield, Adam Lovatt, Kian Moynes and Tommy Fagg ran their collective socks off, while full-backs Kane Penn and George Walker made enterprising sorties down the wings. In central defence, Dequane Wilson-Braithwaite had a shaky start but was dominant in the air. Alongside him was stand-out performer on the day, Jack Dixon, who seemed to be everywhere that mattered most, marshalling his fellow-defenders while making a heap of last-ditch tackles, interceptions and blocks on his own account. In goal, Louis Rogers, sporting a flamboyant all-orange kit, showed he has also retained the quick reactions and safe handling skills that marked his previous career at the



Jack Dixon (in claret and blue) in action for Hastings earlier this year

Pilot Field before he spent last season elsewhere.

TWO PENALTIES

Visitors Horsham, who are among the promotion favourites in this season's league roster, started rather the brighter: another former Hastings favourite now in their ranks, Daniel Akajaiye, outran the

home defence on a couple of occasions early on and set up near-misses. But eventually the 'U's' responded with more of their own attacks. Walker penetrated down the right wing, and Vigar was shoved from behind as he chased a ball in the Horsham penalty area. The defenders protested in numbers and with vigour against the spot-kick award,

but referee Daniel D'Urso, who had an excellent game, was unmoved. Rodari scored with aplomb.

Then, at the other end, a stray hand intercepted a ball from the Horsham right, and a reciprocal penalty was awarded. This time the kick cannoned against the crossbar and bounced over, to leave the 'U's' still 1-0 ahead at the interval.

They retained their shape and organisation for the second half, but were gradually being pushed back as Horsham upped the pace of their attacks. With 20 minutes remaining, Bloor replaced Vigar and Briscoe with Freddie Legg and Fin Chapman. He was rewarded ten minutes later when a break down the Hastings right wing opened up the visitors' defence, and Chapman scored with a spectacular volley from the left edge of the penalty area that swerved across the goal-keeper and nestled high in the far corner – a goal worthy of deciding any football match.

The Horsham players seemed to agree, creating little threat of note in the last ten minutes of regular time, nor in the further five minutes added. They will surely have better, or luckier, days ahead. This day belonged to Hastings.

By the time you're reading this, the 'U's' will already have played again, away at Whitehawk, and be preparing for tomorrow's match (Saturday) at home to Bognor Regis Town. Be prepared for further entertainment.

CRICKET

Depleted Priory Beaten Twice More

3 August: Middleton 367 for 5; Hastings Priory 140 all out
10 August: Hastings Priory 160; Three Bridges 166 for 5

HUGH SULLIVAN

Two heavy defeats for the cricketers of Hastings & St Leonards Priory over the past two Saturdays, coupled with more favourable results for other teams around them in the Sussex Premier League table, have



Tom Gillespie, captain in 2021

left the Hastings side in dire straits. Assuming that Worthing, with only one win and 13 defeats in 14 matches, are relegation-bound, avoidance of the second drop place seems to be a contest now between Priory and Bognor Regis, with just four matches each to be played. Two other sides that were struggling, Roffey and East Grinstead, seem to have hit form with three wins each in their last five. Bognor beat Priory by ten wickets on 29 June but haven't

won since. The two sides are due to play each other again on 31 August.

Priory will target this return fixture as a must-win game along with their match at Worthing tomorrow (Saturday), but will need both their batsmen and their bowlers to re-discover a winning streak.

BOWLING FLOGGED

On 3 August, Priory travelled to Middleton without captain and leading batsman Harry Scowen, overseas recruit Alex Osborne or most dependable bowler Adam Page. The home side opened with yet another century partnership – the sixth against Priory in 13 games – and the top order flogged the bowling mercilessly from start to finish, scoring at an average of more than seven runs per over. Seaver Cowley conceded 103 runs in his 11 overs; Felix Sheppard 51 in just three.

Priory were batting strictly for survival, and Tom Gillespie (20) and Adam Keane (23) each lasted for around an hour, but the rest of the batsmen subsided tamely. The margin of defeat was 227 runs.

Last Saturday Scowen returned to the Priory line-up for a home game against championship-chasing Three Bridges, but opening bowler John Morgan was left out to rest an injury, Osborne was again omitted, and Keane was also unavailable. Scowen opted to bat first, and he himself made a breezy 33, but thereafter the Priory batsmen

were tied down by accurate bowling and the inning became becalmed. Dylan Woolley took 70 balls to score 19, Gillespie 26 to make 10, and though Eddie Finch upped the scoring rate in making 33, the rest of the order batted without confidence or success.

Priory's opening attack featured spinner Adam Page partnering Adam Barton. Page bowled tidily to take the first four Three Bridges wickets – two in his fourth over, two in his ninth – to keep the outcome in the balance at 82 for four. But, as he tired and was withdrawn, the visitors' fifth and sixth wicket partnerships gobbled up the remainder of the bowling to give them a comfortable five wicket win.

THE STATS DON'T LIE

So what has gone wrong for the Hastings side? It's quite easy to see, from a statistical point of view. Last year's strength in teamwork was enough to make them stronger overall than the average Division 2 side.

But the Sussex Premier League is rather different: most sides there have a number of higher quality batsmen and/or bowlers that can step up to hit an unstoppable innings or bowl an irresistible spell.

Of the top ten batsmen in the league (by aggregate of runs scored), none are from Priory. Scowen is 14th with 422 runs at an average of 42.2; Caleb Laloo is next - 25th - with 312 at 31.2. Of the bowlers, Page's four wickets last Saturday have taken him up to 15th highest wicket-taker, with 16 at 24.3 each, while Morgan is 20th with 15 at 33.67 each. These are commendable returns, but they've too seldom been match-winning ones.

Can Priory still survive? Of course they can. Scowen, Gillespie, Morgan, Page, Barton and Woolley all played in the 2021 team which defied the odds by winning their last four league matches to retain their Premier status. But they surely have to start matching that finish by winning at Worthing tomorrow.

SUSSEX PREMIER LEAGUE TABLE (BOTTOM FIVE)

	P	W	D	L	A	BAT	BL	PTS
ROFFEY	14	6	2	5	1	38	30	258
EAST GRINSTEAD	14	6	1	5	2	20	30	250
BOGNOR REGIS	14	4	1	8	1	35	60	223
HASTINGS & ST L PRIORY	14	4	1	8	1	47	23	190
WORTHING	14	1	0	13	0	51	27	118



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