

Hastings Independent



260 13 SEPTEMBER 2024 THE **FREE** & INDEPENDENT VOICE FOR HASTINGS

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is Happening
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Piper's Label

Politics Returns with End of Summer Truce

PAUL MCLAUGHLIN

The relationship between council leaders and the local MP can often be a tricky one, even when they are from the same political party. When there is harmony and agreement on what they are both trying to deliver for their area, the local MP can be a powerful advocate in putting forward the council's case to parliament and government.

The recent stance taken by Helena Dollimore, the new MP for Hastings and Rye, and Julia Hilton, the Leader of Hastings BC since May, in standing up to the right-wing protesters that threatened to inflict damage to our town projected a unity, which galvanised local people to reject hate, racism and thuggery.

The Labour MP and the Green Council Leader also won plaudits for their united front in condemning Southern Water after meeting with the privatised water bosses. In television interviews they vowed to work together to make the water company pay for polluting our rivers and seas, and for hiking up bills whilst giving themselves massive pay rises.

Unfortunately, when the leading characters are from different parties such displays of unity tend to be short-lived. It may come as no surprise therefore that the summer truce between the Greens and Labour seems to have ended after leading figures from the Green Party sent a letter last week to the local Labour MP calling on her to reject much of her party's manifesto – the one on which she was elected in July – and to back their proposals, instead.

The letter was signed by Justin Wynne, the Chair of Hastings Green Party, Julia Hilton, the Leader of the Green group on HBC, and Becca Horn, the Green Party parliamentary candidate. It called on Helena Dollimore “to stand up to the Prime Minister” and reject austerity 2.0 and deliver the change people voted for in the election. Labour, it says, must “stop blaming the Conservatives for crashing the economy.” The letter was critical of the new government's decision to “scrap the Winter Fuel Allowance for all but the poorest pensioners” and to retain the “heartless two-child cap on child benefit.” It said “these are political decisions taken by a Labour Party which refuses to tax those with the broadest shoulders.”

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YOUR DESIGN, OUR COVER
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EDITOR'S NOTE

Autumn approaches, schools have returned, and Hastings resumes political activity. Our lead story examines whether competing Green and Labour councillors, along with our new MP, will prove able to work in harmony. At least all are united in their forthright condemnation of Southern Water.

In Arts we cover the birth of a new record label, investigate why a totem pole is assisting animal welfare and examine how plants can make music, along with other forms of sound art in a two-week interactive and instructive festival at Electro Studios. Plus, a series of local events celebrating the genius of Derek Jarman.

In the Community section, HIP reports on direct action in Clinton Crescent where residents have banded together to stop the use of toxic glyphosate weedkiller. Also on an ecological theme, Energise Sussex has arranged the chance to view homes where residents have installed energy saving and green technologies in the hope this will encourage others to do so.

Our regular Women of Hastings column has an interview with author Finley de Witt (see a review of their latest book on the Literature page) and reports on the crisis in women's metal health.

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News

1 < Inequality has rocketed over the past decade with more wealth held by fewer and fewer people, leaving the rest behind, including many people in Hastings.”

Helena Dollimore’s response to the letter pulled no punches and was equally bruising. She hit back saying “as a serious party of government, rather than merely a protest movement, the Labour government will not stick our heads in the sand and pretend we can tax our way out of this mess. We will take the tough decisions that have been ducked for too long.”

She said she was: “proud to be elected by people across Hastings and Rye with a mandate to clear up the mess left by the Conservatives and bring the change we need. During the summer I’ve been busy hiring a staff team and dealing with the most urgent cases of local residents from domestic violence to serious hardship. I’ve also met with the new Water Minister twice, the Secretary of State for Education, the CEO of

Southern Housing, and many more. I am working with my colleagues in government to deliver on our manifesto promises, whilst standing up for the people of Hastings & Rye and fighting for our towns and villages every single day.”

She went on to say: “The scale of the mess left by the Tories means that difficult decisions will have to be made. We were clear about that during the election campaign. We did not promise fantasy solutions like other parties did. People can trust that we will do what we say, and that we will only promise what we can deliver. I’d urge all other local political parties to work constructively with myself as the new MP and with our new Labour government, to get the best possible result for our community, rather than starting out by issuing political attacks and public statements.”

If the return of hostilities between the two parties was to be expected, the ferocity of the attacks did come as a surprise. The tone of

both the letter and the response, emphasising points of difference between them, reprised the arguments played out in the sometimes bitter and hard-fought local election campaign in May rather than the positivity of the working relationship over the summer.

It is not hard to find an explanation as to why. There are several very difficult issues facing the country and the town which will need to be addressed in the coming months and both parties are keen to pin whatever blame is to come on their opponents.

Top of the list will be discussions over the local government funding settlement for next year. The Labour government has already warned that the Budget on 30 October is likely to be very tough, especially in the light of finding an additional £22 billion ‘black hole’ in the public finances. It has warned the country that things are likely to get worse before they improve. The Greens caution against any further auster-

ity, however, and argue that council budgets have already been “slashed to the bone by fourteen years of non-stop funding cuts.”

Another key dividing line is over housing (which we look at in detail on page 3). Helena Dollimore supports the building of more than 700 new homes in the town, largely on brownfield sites. The Green-led council thinks this figure “unrealistic”, however, arguing that this is not physically or sustainably possible.

So, has the summer truce come to an end with the return of political hostilities? Perhaps, but a more likely explanation is that it is the start of the party conference season. The Greens in Manchester and Labour in Liverpool. Both are trying to depict themselves as the party of change and to consolidate their recent electoral successes. There will, inevitably, be skirmishes ahead, but it is in the interests of both Labour and the Greens to work together, locally at least, in some degree of harmony.

GAZA PROTEST TRIAL ADJOURNED TO BRIGHTON

The trial of three local men charged with aggravated trespass at a community protest outside a St Leonards armaments factory in February has been adjourned to a further hearing in Brighton in January next year.

The protest, organised by the Hastings & District Palestine Solidarity Campaign (HDPSC), related to the continuing manufacture of weapon systems by the US firm General Dynamics for sale to the Israeli Defence Force for use in Gaza. The men – Laurie Holden (71, a retired train driver), Clem McCullough (33, an NHS worker) and Thomas Delves (24, an artist), who have together been styled #Hastings3 – are alleged to have obstructed, disrupted and/or intimidated workers at the site.

Hastings Magistrates were due to try the case in a one-day hearing on 27 August, and around 50 supporters of the #Hastings3 gathered at the steps of the court for a rally to “show solidarity and demand an end to arms sales to Israel”. However, the Crown prosecutor Piers Restell requested a delay to consider legal points of human rights law submitted by defence solicitors Hodge, Jones and Allen, and it was mutually agreed that the case would be better suited to be tried by a District Judge with appropriate legal experience.

Lead magistrate, Dr Rebekah Gilbert, told the parties: “There are issues on both sides here that need to be addressed.”

HASTINGS TIDES									
DATE	HIGH AND LOW TIDES				SUNRISE	SUNSET	MOON		
FRI 13 SEPT	L 0:46AM	H 6:43am	L 1:31pm	H 7:39pm	06:30	07:15			
SAT 14 SEPT	L 2:23am	H 8:29am	L 3:16pm	H 9:05pm	06:32	07:13			
SUN 15 SEPT	L 3:52am	H 9:37am	L 4:28pm	H 10:02pm	06:33	07:10			
MON 16 SEPT	L 4:55am	H 10:27am	L 5:23pm	H 10:49pm	06:35	07:08			
TUES 17 SEPT	L 5:49am	H 11:11am	L 6:14pm	H 11:32	06:36	07:06			
WED 18 SEPT	L 6:37am	H 11:53am	L 7:01pm		06:38	07:04	FULL		
THURS 19 SEPT	H 0:13am	L 7:21am	H 12:33pm	L 7:45pm	06:39	07:01			
FRI 20 SEPT	H 0:56am	L 8:00am	H 1:15pm	L 8:25pm	06:41	06:59			
SAT 21 SEPT	H 1:39am	L 8:37am	H 1:55pm	L 9:04pm	06:42	06:57			
SUN 22 SEPT	H 2:21am	L 9:13am	H 2:35pm	L 9:41pm	06:44	06:54			
MON 23 SEPT	H 3:01am	L 9:51am	H 3:18pm	L 10:20pm	06:46	06:52			
TUES 24 SEPT	H 3:47am	L 10:33am	H 4:07pm	L 11:06pm	06:47	06:50	THIRD		
WED 25 SEPT	H 4:42am	L 11:25am	H 5:13pm		06:49	06:48			
THURS 26 SEPT	L 0:10am	H 5:55am	L 12:43pm	H 6:45pm	06:50	06:45			

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

Goodwill in Short Supply

Southern Water held another of its drop-in events at the Stade Hall last Thursday (5 September) to reassure local people about the ongoing works in the Hastings area to improve water supply and its wastewater treatment.

Tim McMahon, the Managing Director for Water at Southern Water, said everyone at the company was aware of the need to improve its performance to help customers and the local community. This is the reason why there are plans to invest £41.4 million at the Bexhill and Hastings Wastewater Treatment Works from 2025–2030.

Roger Williams, a Governance Manager at Southern Water, confirmed that the company would soon complete its mapping of all water connection pipes within the Hastings area, and this information would be made available to the public in November.

Southern Water also gave more details of its £1 million goodwill fund to support local businesses and community groups in the Hastings and St Leonards area following the weather-related flooding and loss of water supply incidents. The company says it is actively encouraging applications for a share of the fund from community groups and projects, and from the organisers of local events and festivals. The beneficiaries so far include: the Old Town Carnival Week, Hasting Pride and Hastings Fat Tuesday 2025. Some £380,000 has already been allocated from the goodwill fund to support local businesses.



Applications for the fund can be found by scanning here or visit: southernwater.co.uk/latest-news/hastings-community-set-for-1m-goodwill-fund/.

SITE NOTICE FOR APPLICATION FOR VARIATION OF A PREMISES LICENCE

This notice is to advise that on **28th day of August 2024**, an application for a Variation of a Premises Licence was made to Hastings Borough Council for the premises known as **POPPY'S CAFE BISTRO 39 Robertson Street Hastings TN34 1HL**

licensable activities:-
Sale of Alcohol MONDAY TO SUNDAY From 11am to 22:30PM

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 before **3rd October 2024**

Was made by: **Claudette Donaldson-Nareike**

For variation of the following

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 **28th** day of **August 2024**



Housing Action Man

PAUL MCLAUGHLIN talks to Hastings BC's Deputy Leader and Housing & Community Wellbeing Portfolio Holder, Councillor Glenn Haffenden, on the vital importance of housing to the future of the town

In a wide-ranging interview with the Hastings Independent Press, Cllr Haffenden spoke about the success of the first phase of the council's Housing Acquisition Programme and how "excited" he is to be moving on to the more ambitious second phase "ahead of schedule". He challenged the local MP over the Government's "unrealistic" house building targets and outlined how the Council was in the process of scoping a new five-year Housing Strategy for the town.

Cllr Haffenden said he is both "delighted" and "proud" of the success of the first phase of the Housing Acquisition Programme. The programme was launched in February 2023 with an initial £11 million budget to buy up to 50 homes to help relieve the housing crisis in the town. Since then, 40 properties have been secured, with 15 of these currently tenanted. This has resulted in a reduction in temporary accommodation costs of more than £185,000 and savings of £413,000 in grant funding by underspending on acquiring and renovating these properties.

The second phase of the programme will see Hastings BC acquire a further 124 homes after securing "unprecedented" external capital funding of £22.8 million from the Government. This money will be partly matched with around £6.3 million of the Council's own money. If all goes to plan, the Council hopes to save almost £2 million per year in temporary accommodation costs.

The £22.8 million is split across several funding streams. Up to 10 million will come from Levelling Up funds designated for direct property acquisitions. A further £3.5 million will come from the Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP), which funds homes and support services for people sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough, with an additional £4.5 million from the Local Authority Housing Fund.

The newly acquired properties will be required to meet the council's Fit to Let standard to ensure

they meet appropriate health and safety standards, are in good decorative order, and reach a minimum EPC rating of C.

When challenged as to the difference between the current acquisition programme and the approach taken by previous administrations - which resulted in huge losses for the council -

Cllr Haffenden insisted that the two approaches were totally different. He pointed to the purchase of 22 Wellington Square, bought in 2019 at an inflated price only to be left empty for years before being put up for auction with an expected loss of more than £200,000, as an example of the previous failed strategy. In the past, he said the Council had a twin-track approach of buying and restoring older, listed buildings with the intention to improve both the aesthetics of the town and to use the properties as temporary accommodation. Unfortunately, such buildings were expensive to buy and to bring up to the council's Fit to Let standard. They were also wholly unsuitable for use as temporary accommodation. Under the new acquisition programme, "only suitable properties would be purchased and improved" and he said he was confident that the mistakes of the past would not be repeated.

Cllr Haffenden acknowledged that there was still a long way to go to tackle the housing crisis in the town, despite the initial success of the programme. He indicated that with more than 560 households living in temporary accommodation, costing the council over £6.5 million per year, many more homes were needed, but there was "a limit to how many houses we can buy".

Turning to the new Labour government's plan to impose mandatory targets on councils to build more new homes, he said it was just not a viable option for a town like Hastings. "We are constrained by the sea on one side and the country park on the other and it is simply not possible to build over 700 new homes on the land available without building on either green spaces or sports grounds."

He challenged Helena Dollimore, the town's new Labour MP, to walk around the town with him to show him the brownfield sites that she believes are available. To emphasise how unrealistic he believes the government targets are, he said the draft Local Plan identifies the potential to meet just 30% of housing need over the next 20 years with building on available land. "We are not arguing that we do not want to build. We do, and we definitely have the need, but we do not have the land to build on."

He went on to say that Hastings "really needs more social rent properties but the pockets of brownfield sites that are available are often too small to encourage housing associations or developers to build on and without external funding the Council cannot afford to build the homes that are desperately needed." He pointed to the development of 16 affordable homes on land to the rear of 419-447 Bexhill Road as an example of what the council could achieve when such funding was available. The social rent homes are being built with £4.7 million from various sources with Hastings BC putting up £213,484 of its own capital monies into the scheme.

Cllr Haffenden concluded the interview by saying the council was in the process of scoping a new housing strategy for the town. This will be a five-year strategy with the aim of adoption by the middle of 2025. It will set out how we will meet our ambition for everyone in the town to have a decent place to live. In addition, it will consider how we ensure a private rental market which works for tenants and landlords.

it will consider how we ensure a private rental market which works for tenants and landlords.

The council's housing team is hosting two in-person workshops seeking the views of local people on what the strategy should include. They will take place on Tuesday, 1 October 6-8pm and Thursday, 3 October 2-4pm at Muriel Matters House.

No Access, No Way Out

Commonweal Housing has recently published a report focussing on the impact of the lack of available move-on options in the private rented sector for people experiencing homelessness.

No Access, No Way Out captures the emotional story facing tens of thousands of people across Britain and includes interviews with Hastings BC staff. It is told through first-hand evidence of the people living and working in homeless services in the context of an ever-worsening housing crisis, and a broken system that is "entrapping them with no work, no home, and no hope."

The report focuses on those individuals not considered to be in "priority need" under homeless legislation and are therefore limited in their entitlement to local authority housing. The private rented sector has historically been an important route out of homelessness, but this is no longer a reality due to the impact of rent increases. This creates a poverty trap resulting in people experiencing homelessness for longer as it is so difficult to afford rent when transitioning into work. This reduced availability, particularly in the lower end of the private rental market, is due to landlords who previously focused on renting to people on benefits preferring instead to rent to non-em-

ployed tenants, as they receive a guaranteed income through the tenant's benefit payments.

For individuals seeking to move on from homelessness services, the experience of living in services for long periods with no access to 'move-on' private rented accommodation creates a feeling of desperation and hopelessness. In some cases, this leads to clients abandoning the services and becoming at risk of rough sleeping.

The report calls on the Labour government to ensure that the new Renters' Rights Bill is robust enough to increase the rights of those who are accessing the cheapest end of the market including those who have experienced homelessness.

It also calls for the Bill to deliver a more secure private rented sector, a stronger approach on the enforcement on poor conditions and illegal practices, and an end to discrimination by agents and landlords when advertising for and selecting new tenants, for all renters, even those who are most disadvantaged in the market.

To shift the burden away from local authorities providing cash offers at the point of tenancy sign-ups, the report calls on the Treasury to explore new ways to incentivise landlords, such as through the tax system.

HBC Auction Bargains

Two properties purchased by Hastings BC to help tackle the problem of homelessness in the town are set to be sold at auction at a knock-down price - costing the council hundreds of thousands of pounds.

The land and property auctioneers, Clive Emson, have listed 12-13 York Buildings (the Millets store) on Wellington Place and 22 Wellington Square for sale at its next auction on 16 September.

Lot 57, York Buildings has a guide price of £950,000. The property was purchased by HBC in the 1980s and the council received an Affordable Homes Programme funding grant of £303,910 from Homes England. This will have to be repaid if the building is sold. The council spent a further £1.2 million on refurbishing six self-contained flats, which it intended to let on affordable rents to tenants selected from its housing register. The flats were never let, however. The sale includes the Millets shop on the ground floor and the basement which generates rent

of £28,000 per year.

The Grade II listed 22 Wellington Square is Lot 96. It was bought by the council in February 2019 for £612,000. The price paid at the time was above market value, but the purchase went ahead on the basis that it was worth more to HBC due to the potential savings that would be made to the temporary accommodation budget given that the council already had residents living in the property. It soon became clear, however, that the plans for the building were unrealistic and the property was left empty. It quickly fell into disrepair to the point it now requires significant investment just to bring it up to the council's Fit to Let standard.

The auctioneers have set a guide price of just £410,000 for the property and if this figure is reached, it will represent a £200,000 loss for the council. This does not include the £30,000 per year HBC has also spent on maintaining the empty property in the intervening years.

Pier Issued with Revised Licence Conditions

Following a meeting of the licensing sub-committee of Hastings Borough Council (HBC) on 2 September, the management of Hastings Pier has been issued with fresh licence conditions governing music events and other mass gatherings held there.

Max Wolf, director of HPier, which leases the pier superstructure from owner Sheikh Abid Gulzar, has been stripped of his role as designated premises supervisor for licensing purposes. The new conditions include a requirement to provide to HBC and to police, fire and ambulance authorities at least two months in advance an extensive event management plan for each event where more than 1,500 people are anticipated to attend.

This should include a noise management plan which allows complaints of excessive noise suffered by neighbouring premises to be delivered, monitored and acted upon in real time.

Fully functioning CCTV should be installed and adequately maintained.

As reported two weeks ago in HIP 259, the sub-committee's review of the existing events licence was triggered by SECamb (South East Coast Ambulance Service) following allegations of multiple breaches of conditions governing public safety.

Breaches included failure to provide adequate crowd control, emergency medical care and safety equipment.

Martin Watson, operational commander at SECamb, told the sub-committee that mass gatherings "pose significant risks to the health and well-being of many individuals, both those attending events but also those surrounded and impacted by potential activities". The pier's exposed position above water and the limited means of access made it particularly vulnerable, while the provision of medical services during past events had fallen to a "dangerous level". SECamb's concerns had been raised "repeatedly" with the pier's management through meetings of the local Safety Advisory Group but without adequate response.

Kirstie Rolfe, a senior licensing officer at HBC, added: "I am grateful that we haven't had a major incident...I am not confident even now that, if one were to happen, it would be dealt with in a sufficient manner."

Past failings were effectively admitted by a barrister Duncan Craig, appearing before the sub-committee on behalf of the pier's management. No comment has been made on their behalf following the issue of the fresh licence conditions.



O'Callaghan Unveils her Shadow Cabinet Team

Margi O'Callaghan, the Labour Group Leader on Hastings BC, has announced her Shadow Cabinet team following May's local elections. The Braybrooke Councillor took over the leadership of the Labour group from Heather Bishop,

who lost her seat in Ore. She says she is determined to "hold the Green-led minority administration in control of the council to account" and to "fight for a better future for the town".

In addition to being Group Lead-

er, Cllr O'Callaghan will shadow Julia Hilton, the Green Council Leader, on the Regeneration and Community Wealth portfolio brief.

The long-standing borough and county councillor, Trevor Webb, who took West St Leonards from the Conservatives in May, has been given a new Anti-Poverty and Community Engagement role. His brief is specifically focussed on tackling poverty "to ensure struggling families are not forgotten".

The new Labour councillor for Conquest, John Rankin, who was previously an Independent and before that a Conservative, has been given the Finance portfolio. He will shadow Darren Mackenzie, who is responsible for Finance, Assets, Risk and ICT.

Helen Kay, who won the Wishing Tree ward, has been given the Housing and Community Wellbeing brief. She will track Glenn Haffenden, the Deputy Leader of the Council.

Another new councillor, Danuta Kean, who defeated Maya Evans in Hollington, has been given Arts, Culture and Equalities. Judy Rodgers, the Mayor of Hastings, will speak on Leisure and Tourism. Together they will shadow Adele Bates, the Portfolio Holder for Arts, Culture, Tourism and Leisure, Equalities and Community Engagement.

Councillor Billie Barnes, who won in Silverhill, takes on Environment and Neighbourhood Wellbeing in opposition to Jo Walker.

James Bacon, from the Old Town, will come up against Tony Collins, the Charity Committee Chair and Foreshore Trust lead.

David Whitehill, who won in St Helens, has been given Planning and Infrastructure and will face off against Mark Etherington.

Asylum Hotel Sold to Private School

The Chatsworth Hotel in Carlisle Parade, which has been closed since February, has been sold to the Buckwood School in Guestling.

The hotel enjoys a prime sea-facing location and was used until last year to house more than 70 asylum seekers. The conditions they enjoyed, however, were far from salubrious. They were described by one visitor as being "horrendous" with rubbish piling up in the corridors, water leaking in the commu-



nal areas, and overcrowding.

The building has been empty since last September when the Jali Indian restaurant, based within the ground floor, closed its doors. There were ambitious plans for the hotel to be fully renovated but these nev-

er materialised, and the decision was taken to sell the building.

The Buckwood School describes itself as "a very British school, a global outlook". It is believed the hotel will be used to house the schools' international students.

Ore Train Travel Disruption

Network Rail has warned travellers to expect serious disruption between Hastings, Rye and Ashford International next month as a result of major repair works on the Ore Tunnel.

The line will be closed completely over the weekend of Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 October with buses replacing trains.

The following day, the line between Hastings and Rye will be closed for two weeks with buses replacing trains from Monday 21 October every day through to Sunday 3 November. A shuttle train service will run between Rye and Ashford International between approximately 7:30am and 6:30pm on these dates. Outside of these times, rail replacement buses will operate.

The essential work in the tunnel will improve drainage and prevent water seeping through the tunnel walls, damaging the railway equipment inside it. Sections of brickwork will also be repaired, with parts of the tunnel lined with sprayed concrete, and 700 yards of track replaced. Network Rail will also take the opportunity of the line closure to repair the footbridge at Ore station and the Briscoe Road bridge in Guestling.

A spokesperson for the company said the works have been planned to take place, in part, over the October half-term holidays to reduce disruption to school travel and because trains are typically quieter during school holidays. This should mean fewer people are likely to be affected overall.

BMX Battle of Hastings Was a Banger

The sold-out 2024 BMX Battle of Hastings at Source Park was a banger, delighting the audience and bringing a lot of people to the town.

This exciting, weekend-long event, including the BMX Nora Cup award, had a unique team format allowing captains to pick three of their favourite riders to compete alongside them and battle it out.

The first session was the Rail Jam, where 36 riders performed on a brand-new handrail built on the beach adjacent to the Source Park indoor BMX and skateboard park, located in a former lido underneath the seafront.

Saturday saw the Qualifiers and Best Trick sessions when a select number of riders for each team hit the indoor park to rack up points.

At the Sunday finals, the top five teams competed for a final time in a bid to be crowned the overall win-

ners! Each team rider got two runs and then three attempts at the best trick. Team Dove was the overall winner, bringing the trophy home to Hastings.

Despite the wet and windy weather, there was dramatic action on the Big Air ramp where competitors launched from the esplanade above Bottle Alley pedalled frantically, 'dropped in', and shot as high as possible up a custom-made 'quarter' set facing the sea on the shingle. The trick was to stay on during the descent... Don't miss highlights of the action on YouTube - the place was bouncing.



Watch the action at Source Park and the sea front here or on [youtube.com:sourcebmx.com/pages/boh](https://www.youtube.com:sourcebmx.com/pages/boh)



Josh Dove collecting the winning cheque on behalf of Team Dove

FAIR FARES FOR ALL!

Get on board with reduced fares on all East Sussex buses.

Visit our website for more information about eligibility and operators:
eastsussex.gov.uk/Bus-Fares



✉ letters@hastingsindependentpress.co.uk
📘 facebook.com/hastingsindependent
📷 instagram.com/hastingsindependent





Craig's Cabin

ROD WEBB

I'd arranged to meet Craig at the Hidden Eden Wellbeing Garden, an early project of his that involved turning a disused playground into a multipurpose place for the com-

munity. On this particular day, it was being used as 'Aileen's Kids Corner', with activities for local children. Aileen was organising with the help of Sarah (Craig's partner) and Denise, a volunteer who also runs her own community garden. Craig was in the thick of it, decorating wood for making totem poles.

Craig has lived his whole life in Hastings and he has hardly travelled beyond the borders of Kent and Sussex. However, he is passionate about the outdoors, something he first experienced in the Boys' Brigade – where, among other things, he learned to make rope out

of stinging nettles.

He went back to foraging and walking in the woods about five years ago to improve his own mental health when he was suffering from depression and in a difficult relationship. He taught himself about plants and made YouTube videos documenting his experience, and as he says: "Things sort of spiralled from there."

He was soon drawing on his childhood experiences with the Boys' Brigade as an organisation, getting the local community to join in his outdoor activities. He seems to have a 'Pied Piper' effect on the

people around him, managing to build a range of peer support services and encouraging others to join him as volunteers: running community walks, organising talks, leading foraging and litter-picking expeditions and setting up workshops – most of it outdoors and much of it in and around the local area. His monthly men's health walks around Alexandra Park start at 9pm – the time when his own mood tended to be at its lowest.

He also seems to have been adept at getting the backing of organisations such as Southern Housing (formally Optivo) as well as help from councillors such as Maya Evans (former Labour councillor) and Jo Walker – one of the first to volunteer with him and now the Green Councillor for Ore. He's also involved with Arts on Prescription – Wellbeing Wednesdays.

He's done work with other volunteer organisations such as Surviving the Streets, but as an 'ideas man' he's found he likes to develop his own projects in an organic way with like-minded collaborators rather than have them incorporated into the plans of others.

In fact, Craig says he has so many ideas about building community that "I can't switch off", a comment

that raises the subject of his neurodiversity and how it can be both a blessing and a curse. Which is why he's so full of praise for the volunteers who help him get things off the ground, saying: "They help me more than I help them." (He's a keen delegator.)

Last October Craig found himself homeless for a time, living in his car in Church Wood. It was during this time that he met his current partner, Sarah who "rescued and fed me" and is now very much part of the team, encouraging him to try out new ideas.

Our brief experience of Hidden Eden was certainly a very calming one: the kids painting butterflies on the walls, making wind chimes, listening to stories and practising first aid; Aileen was a smiling and reassuring presence amidst all the happy activity.

But it's also about learning: "Our Forage for Knowledge sessions are based on the literal definition of foraging," says Craig, "to search for knowledge, about ourselves, about each other, the world around us and our history, so we explore local areas such as woodland and other green spaces but also museums and other historical places to learn and expand our knowledge."

Eco-Open-Home Events to Take Place Around East Sussex

Local residents open homes to the public to view energy-saving improvements and renewables

Local residents from around East Sussex who have installed energy-saving and green technologies will be opening their homes to members of the public throughout September. Technologies on display will include solar panels, air source heat pumps, electric car chargers and the first small scale anaerobic biodigester in East Sussex.

A spokesperson for Energise Sussex Coast, which has helped to organise some of the events, said: 'An Eco-Open-Home visit is an opportunity for you to ask a neighbour about an energy saving improvement that they've made, and see if it might work for you. Throughout September local people who have made energy saving improvements are opening

up their homes to share their experiences. Visiting a home is a great way to find out about the reality of getting solar panels, insulation, triple glazing, or new heating options without talking to a salesman. You can have a good look at the technology, ask the residents whether the installation was a hassle and find out how much they're really saving on their energy bills as a result.'

Founded in 2012, local community benefit cooperative Energise Sussex Coast works to tackle the climate crisis and energy injustice through community-owned renewable power and energy-saving schemes. It runs a free Energy Advice service to help local residents bring down the cost of their electricity, gas and water bills: 01424 390 062. Its sister co-op, Energise South, has raised community in-



vestment to finance and install solar arrays on eight community buildings, including Baird Primary School and St Leonards Academy.

Other local groups involved in organising Eco-Open-Home events include Green Transition Crowborough.



The opportunities to visit local homes will be taking place in Crowborough (29 Sept), Wadhurst (28 Sept), Hastings & St Leonards (28, 29 Sept), Brightling (29 Sept) and Staplecross (28 Sept). A complete list of events – including links to book your free visit(s) – is available online at tinyurl.com/ecoopenhomeseastsussex

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17th November

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8th December

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WOH!

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A regular space to bring ideas and reflections. We discuss and write together to create awareness & encourage positive change for women and girls.

What's Wrong with me?

A question most girls ask themselves sometime in their lives

Finley de Witt, local writer and body therapist, felt compelled to write *Lovebroken* (pub 2024) about her tumultuous journey through life. Written with comic wit, surprising twists and philosophic reflection, she finally finds self-discovery and understanding. WoH interviews her.

WoH: Tell me about the drive to write this memoir.

FdW: I was in a very deep trauma healing process, and realised there was a defining event in my childhood which had pretty much informed everything in my life. The question I had was: "What's wrong with me?" This became the motivation, because everything I'd struggled with suddenly made sense.

WoH: That question is such a common experience of women and girls who don't feel OK or can't fit in.

FdW: Right, and then we self-criticise and think it's our fault, and that's exactly why I wanted to write, to offer hope. No matter how bad it's been, you can find meaning and you can

heal. I realised I had a powerful story – with a reveal at the end. The second motivation was that, as a trauma practitioner, I understood the dangers of ill-informed treatment. We don't need to be pushed. We never know what might come up. I wanted to be unapologetic and encouraging to others about whatever feelings, thoughts or behaviours they have experienced in trauma.

WoH: So, acting as a support in dissolving shame for readers who might have similar experiences.

FdW: Yes, to normalise it: to say "you are not alone". The amazing feedback I've had from people who've been sectioned or had breakdowns has been very humbling, much more than I expected.

WoH: I'm interested in the effect of the way you use humour to expose certain characters and situations in a very familiar, compassionate way. Did you have to be quick-witted to survive as a child?

FdW: I wasn't witty as a child. I was silent. But that northern work-

ing-class bluntness is in my DNA. I think about how people laugh when there is pain – you can say very subversive things with humour. Laughter helps the release of pain. Also, I didn't want a misery novel.

WoH: Yes, the blatant flaws in the characters are so funny; the reader quickly bonds with them. And that 'get on with it and stop moaning' aspect is funny but also shows the harsh side of northern culture that can bury uncomfortable secrets.

FdW: Exactly, and in storytelling we want contrasts. With the reveal, we see the taboo, which is still not talked about today. As children, we have to help our parents survive, even if they are not competent. We will always try to resource them so they can look after us.

WoH: How did university influence you?

FdW: University broadened what I was reading but it really gave me



for writers to learn the craft. I was in a group called *Anything for a Free Lunch* – experienced writers, giving each other feedback. That was more informative and useful than doing an MA. It was a special time for women writers.

WoH: Do you think there is a feeling now not to speak out, that there is no need to write about trauma, or social control?

FdW: There aren't the resources there were, with Outwrite, Spare Rib. It was new and exciting. We had a lot to say. There's nothing that beats having your writing as a practice. I don't write every day, but I trust things are composting and they will come out when ready.

pression of girls and their inner worlds?

FdW: As a trauma practitioner, I really encourage anyone to embrace their multiplicity. Part of me wants to go out, part wants to stay in; I feel despair, and happiness. We have opposite feelings. To get to open spacious curiosity, explore all our dimensions. Be open and curious about ourselves.

WoH: And the book shows how curiosity leads to discovery. You could say, it's a great book – but why did you have to put that bombshell at the end?

FdW: [laughs] Yes, it was the thing that makes sense of everything that goes before, so it can't be left out.

WoH: Well, lots of writers would leave that out. Keeping the story safe, avoiding the taboo. It's a role model of a book.

FdW: The more we do it, the more it can be said. Taking risks is so important.

WoH: And, of course, this all ends up in a special town: Tastings.

FdW: [laughs] Yes, they will recognise the location. And the very colourful and wonderful characters who end up here.

WoH: Yes, in the melting pot of community healing. Thank you so much for talking to us and best wishes for the next chapters.

"once you say them, you see the world doesn't explode."

confidence in not taking things at face value. Just because it's written down, it doesn't mean it's true. That was liberating. But it was Centreprise in Hackney – a community centre and bookshop – where I learnt the craft. I met so many writers and poets, and Jacob Ross [poet, playwright and novelist] was keen

WoH: Has it always been words?

FdW: I used to draw, but with words, you speak the unspeakable – which takes the power out of it. Secrets have to be spoken: once you say them, you see the world doesn't explode.

WoH: Where do young women need support today? Is there a new re-

Keeping Women Sane

Women's mental health is a growing crisis nationally, and especially in Hastings & St Leonards – one of the most deprived areas in England. We spoke confidentially to a very busy psychiatrist on the front line of women's health. Our policy is to allow women to speak freely, so we keep names private: this allows women who want to share sensitive experiences to discuss their experiences with us. We've called our psychiatrist Dr P.

Dr P works in several mental

health centres as well as a community mental health team, a project which aims to keep people out of hospital. The women in these projects experience severe mental health issues which are increased by, or are a direct result of, basic financial problems, often caused by impossible rent increases or lack of work. Worse still, many landlords feel pressured to sell property, resulting in tenants becoming homeless.

I asked Dr P what she has seen as the catalyst for the increase in men-

tal health issues.

"It's clear that covid, isolation and the effects of austerity have had a major impact on women's health," she says. "We see women losing connection with their homes, families, community and pets as a result of homelessness. This is catastrophic for women's mental health and wellbeing. The loss of connection is the main problem."

As a psychiatrist, Dr P works with social services and the voluntary sector, often with those who have housing issues. She can also prescribe medication, so I asked for her thoughts on using medication to alleviate distress when the problem is social. She explained that loss of community connection and the dire housing need cannot be cured by antidepressants or other medica-

tion: "The money from central government is just not there. Communities have to support each other and set up more projects – art, cycling, yoga, reading groups all help."

I suggested that we need easier ways for women to find groups where they feel welcomed and supported, and where they can recognise that they too have skills and can support others. Young women and children do get some support, but now we see older women with increased isolation.

Dr P agreed that older women often suffer, as they are not seen as a priority, and this can result in terrible isolation. "To be in your 50s with no home or garden and having to give up a pet is heartbreaking."

That women increasingly suffer these conditions requires action,

and communication. Supporting women to take action for themselves, join groups and become part of community life can benefit their mental health enormously. Something we are keen to raise awareness of in WoH is an increased sensitivity about how to support local women in distress.

SOME USEFUL LINKS:

Sussex Mental Health Line, 0800 0309 500: can signpost people to mental health support.
Health in Mind: can help you self-refer for therapy and counselling which bypass the GP.

wishingtreehouse.org, 07766 082272 low cost and free places for supportive women's writing.

Volunteer Weeding Scheme Takes Root

FIONA MCGARRY speaks to Liz Farr about how the residents of Clinton Crescent, St Leonards came together to stop the use of toxic glyphosate in their street

In December 2023 East Sussex County Council (ESCC) approved the use of glyphosate-based products to treat street weeds on the authority's highway network, despite its links to cancer and the declining bee populations.

ESCC said: "At the present time, there is no alternative solution that can be effectively used to treat weeds over a highway network of

over 1,900 miles of road channels and footways."

But if you're concerned about your street being regularly sprayed with toxic chemicals, there is a scheme which allows you to 'opt' out (see *Opt Out and Meet The Neighbours* in Issue 222).

Currently only about 10 streets in Hastings and St Leonards are signed up to the 'opt out' scheme.

Liz Farr lives in Clinton Crescent and became aware of it after reading a newsletter from the Green councillor, Tracey Lord. Participation requires that a minimum 60% of residents agree to be part of the scheme and that there are sufficient volunteers to "undertake some form of weed maintenance".

Liz canvassed opinion in her street and found that most residents were keen to try an alternative to having their street sprayed with glyphosate. Consequently, she contacted the council in the spring of 2023, and Clinton Crescent has been signed up for the last two summers.

In Clinton Crescent, most residents who signed up help by taking care of their own frontage when they can. There are also about 11 regular volunteer residents who get out and remove the curb and gutter weeds by hand, mainly between May and September. The busiest time of year is June and July, when there is some sort of weeding to do most weekends. Membership of the scheme necessitates good communication – there's a Whatsapp group for all volunteers so that everyone knows what needs to be done each week.

There's another WhatsApp group to keep the whole street abreast of what's going on, even if people don't have the time or inclination to join in the weeding and clearing. Liz says that an unexpected benefit of joining the scheme is the growth of community spirit amongst the residents of the Crescent. When they first signed up, it was discovered that there were two separate WhatsApp groups for their street. They have now amalgamated into one and it feels like "the whole street has bonded together and is more aware of isolated or vulnerable residents".

The council's 2023 report on the volunteer weeding scheme doesn't take this positive effect on the community into account. It is slightly 'lukewarm' about the success of the weeding scheme, claiming that there were: "mixed results in terms of the quality of maintenance on volunteer roads" and that "The insurance paperwork for volunteer groups remains the main issue with volunteer



Clinton Crescent

is part of a pilot scheme, opting out of the use of the toxic glyphosate weedkillers usually sprayed by the council.

It is therefore all weeded by hand, by volunteer residents.



weed maintenance, with some roads not completing any paperwork for the year and others not completing the documentation fully."

Liz admits that setting things up can be quite bureaucratic and that some groups might be put off by the amount of form-filling and the emphasis on safety (They have been issued with high-vis jackets and safety goggles even though Clinton Crescent doesn't have much traffic). She passed their scheme's details to

the council in the hope that other volunteer weeding groups in the area might be able to get in touch and share ideas and suggestions, but they haven't managed to make contact with any other groups yet.

Nevertheless, Liz emphasises that the benefits of the scheme outweigh the problems. It has even led to further initiatives in Clinton Crescent. "We lost a [diseased] street tree last year which the council removed, but unfortunately could not replace because of budget restrictions. Instead, we had a 'whole street tabletop sale' to raise the money to replace the tree ourselves."

They are planning to plant the new tree in October and there are hopes that in the future they will be able to raise money for more trees – and even to return to the days when long-term residents recall the crescent being lined with trees – 30-40 yards apart.

They have also designed a poster advertising their efforts, which is displayed along their street to catch people's eye. They are hoping that the positive energy and growth of community spirit in Clinton Crescent will inspire other streets to take action to reduce the use of toxic chemicals across the whole town.

Get Ready for the Hastings Seafood, Wine & Music Festival!

The highly anticipated Hastings Seafood, Wine & Music Festival is just around the corner, taking place from 13 to 15 September. With a lineup of events and activities, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

The festival will feature performances from over 10 bands from across the UK, offering a diverse range of musical genres throughout the weekend. For the first time, the music will kick off on Friday eve-

ning with the **International Rock Night**. You can also join the **Jazz Breakfast** on Sunday morning with local legend, Liane Carroll – a regular favourite.

For food enthusiasts, the festival is a must-visit. The focus is on locally sourced fish, and you can indulge in some of the finest cuisine Sussex has to offer, with a wide range of seafood and a selection of local wines. Cookery demonstrations will

be led by seafood chef **C.J. Jackson, 'The Fish Boss,'** alongside famous Hastings fishmonger and herring enthusiast, **Tush Hamilton**.

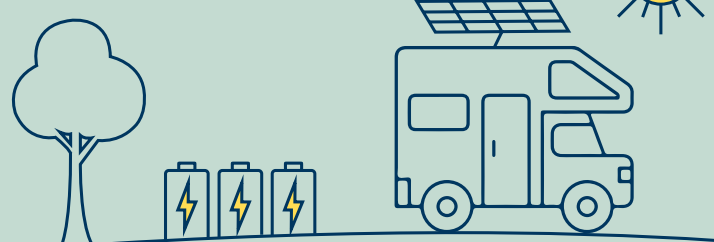
In addition to the festival's main events, the **RNLI** will be hosting an open day nearby, and the Fishermen's Museum will be offering **Stade Walks** throughout the weekend, providing an opportunity to explore the rich maritime history of Hastings.

Weekend tickets for the festival are just £6 for two days of non-stop entertainment, and if you purchase your Jazz Breakfast and International Rock Night tickets online, you'll receive free entry to the festival for the entire weekend.

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Snails in the Mizzle

Inspired perhaps by Sigourney Weaver's portrayal of Dian Fossey in *Gorillas in the Mist*, B.A RIEU offers this amateur study exploring the geotranslocational abilities of the common garden snail, *Cornu aspersum*, in relation to the dynamics of conflict and coexistence between that species, we humans, and Mrs Thrush

Year: 2024 / Time: Early morning / Location: Sussex Coastal Conservation Area Number 3 Fossey Road, Hastings / Weather: warm breeze, light mizzle.

I discovered that it is possible to reach the snails today by entering their territory on their terms and by gliding towards them very, very, slowly. I'm also learning at a similar pace that it is indeed possible to live

alongside an escargatoire in peaceful harmony. It necessitates a modicum of understanding and effort so as not to be perceived as a threat, and an approach that should not trigger the fear of blue pellets, saucers of beer, nor moats of egg shell.

A thorough planning phase lasting weeks, if not years, has led me to this experiment to examine the success of natural relocation on the

homing locomotion of Gastropoda. This trial was the first under controlled conditions and will assess movement patterns. If successful, further experiments will be conducted to observe response to different environmental factors. For now, mizzle can be assumed.

The local experts at Number 1 warned me that, without the morning mist, estivation or prolonged torpor would have occurred. This is fortunately not catastrophic and might provide a stay of execution - although whether for snail or the zinnia bedding plant I am as yet uncertain.

They are creatures often disregarded in the grandeur of nature's spectacle. The snails, that is, not those at Number 1. As I inspected the muddy pots on my morning rounds the back yard was gently rinsed by rain and the unmistakable, yet weirdly imperceptible, sound of muscular feet, moving (if god would still have it) underfoot. Each step is a deliberate dance to avoid disturbing the fragile balance of life beneath my own feet.

And there, I observed, amidst the glistening foliage, or what was left of it, the remains of Madame de Bouchard, and a myriad of snails, their shells adorned with intricate patterns that speak of centuries of evolution - the apexes of which, soon to be forever preserved in dayglo pink.

'Sheldon' is identifiable by his over-extended radula as a young

male, though snails are of course hermaphroditic. Accustomed as I am to the gender-non-neutrality of the English language I call him 'he' despite the clear insufficiency of the pronoun. Few other options seem available. 'S/he', as favoured in the feminist press, is inadmissible since the creature is not one or the other, but both he and she - though that description is simply clumsy. 'His/hers' similarly fails the test of accuracy. 'They' is numerically incorrect since Sheldon is one creature, not two or more, and I may wish later to distinguish between the actions of a single snail and those of many. For these reasons, 'he' must remain my preferred pronoun; in the absence of further evidence, I can only hope that it is his also.

Anyway, to return to my observations. As I crouched down to study the rasping tongue of Sheldon on young Salvia, I suddenly spotted the prime patriarch or matriarch - see comments above - Ernest/Ernestina sailing into my peripheral vision.

I marvel at his resilience and adaptability in the face of adversity. Despite his diminutive size, albeit larger than most of his kind, he traverses the terrain with a quiet determination, unmatched by anything other than my own. He is the largest, oldest and most dominant snail in the escargatoire. It seems a shame to paint over his distinctive markings, but the experiment has to take precedence for their own sakes [note numerically correct and gen-

der-neutral use of pronoun here].

Pink, of course, carries cultural baggage as a colour. An association with effeminacy, emasculation and perhaps, even homosexuality. Pride in being pink? I mean to ascribe none of these to Ernest or Ernestina unless the creature self-identifies as such; it was simply that pink was the only nail (shell?) varnish available in my local branch of Boots that was sufficiently distinctive in hue to show up against a background of live or rotting vegetation.

So I sit delicately painting the shells of these unassuming creatures, finding solace in the simplicity of their existence - a reminder that even in the darkest corners of the yard, life flourishes in all its diverse forms. Each snail - there are ten in this first trial - will become a symbol of patience and perseverance, silent companions on my journey of discovery. How long will they take to return? Will they return at all?

Parameters of distance, terrain, availability and quality of available food supply at their place of involuntary exile - all of these factors will play their part in the attempt, or indeed the completion of, the return journey. Motivation too will come into it. So also, perhaps, may the psychology of the individual. Will Sheldon be more sick for home amid the alien nettles than Slinky, Swift or Whorl? Will Tenacious prefer the unfamiliar new diet of tender dandelion to the altogether pricklier foliage of Mme de Bouchard, which has been his birthright and sole mess of pottage up to now? Nor is the journey home without hazard. *Turdus philomenus*, aka Mrs. Thrush, has her nest, and her nestlings, in the thick laurel hedge that must be traversed ere the exiles return.

As the morning sun breaks through the black elder, casting dappled shadows on the herbaceous border, I bid farewell to my fellow researchers, leaving them to continue their timeless journey, through the air and into the wild, where nature's chaos reigns unchecked at Number 5. And as I retrace my steps back to the kitchen, no longer needing to employ the well-rehearsed *Pas de Deux* and, passing by the forever grateful Mme de Bouchard, her buds simpering and whimpering their thanks, the Pod's memory lingers in my heart: a whispered promise of the beauty that awaits those who dare to break down garden boundaries. Those who are courageous enough to brave the journey to far-away lands (Number 5) and see beyond the blue pellet to embrace the wonders of the natural world, bearing the pink mark of Cain forever upon their housetop as they go.

"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me." Until we meet again: Sheldon, Ernestina, Snailbert, Slinky, Swift, Whorl, Tenacious, Resilience, Endurance, Endeavour, Scott, and Oates. Until we are reunited.



Left to right: Josephine Davis, Tamar Osborne, Max Baillie, Jason Yarde

Bach to the Future – a Four-Part Invention

VICTORIA KINGHAM

It seems to me exceptional the way that musicians in this part of the world seem happy to link up, be open to, and enjoy each other's particular unique talents. So it is that previously in this paper I have featured Josephine Davies – sax player and mountaineer extraordinaire, and reviewed Jason Yarde, formidable jazz saxophonist well known on the UK circuit, now recovered from an unexpected stroke almost two years ago. Today they play not jazz but improvisations on a theme by Bach, teaming up with local impresario and near-genius violinist

Max Baillie. Gradually Hastings music is getting known nationally, as the opera companies and the orchestra make their way to sharp London venues, and Max also gets a comprehensive slot in noted music magazine *Strad*. You can see his own detailed description of the ideas behind the Stargate concert at <https://tinyurl.com/enz5ba9j>. This is so good, undiluted from the mouth of the composer himself, that it makes anything I can say pretty redundant.

HOW IT WORKED

Still, I can say that though I think the church should be overflowing for this event, it's pretty full for a Sunday afternoon in St Leonards

and really ever so buzzy. Besides Yarde and Davies there is Tamar Osborne playing the baritone saxophone which came into its own as a solo instrument during the 1930s, played by Harry Carney in Duke Ellington's band. The three horn players (all composers, teachers, and bandleaders in their own right) together make up a group called JATAJ (JASON, TAMAR, and JOSEPHINE?) and listening to Max's lucid introduction to the performance puts the audience into a state of keen anticipation. He explains that the various movements, dense with ever-shifting harmonies, are not exactly what you would call catchy. Each movement is followed by its double (by Bach) that is, a variation that follows the same chord progression as the original. For each movement Baillie himself has inserted a 'Triple', and JATAJ elaborate with an improv of their own. Interestingly, their first extended tone sounds a discord that Bach might have written into the score on the way to a melodic resolution. But, held for a long time, its eeriness sets the tone for the first improv session.

It's a very unusual juxtaposition

of styles and ideas, but because these players are all expert musicians and know their Bach, it works well, flowing through to the next movement and Baillie's next section. This links two parts of the Partita's *corrente* in reverse, with Baillie's section and the saxophone improv in between. And so it goes on, forming an indescribably lovely and unique whole, a pattern of tones, discords, counterpoints and occasional resolutions. The whole thing, Baillie explains, is an exploration of the original partita "through the prism of contemporary music". The three saxophonists process to the back of the church in the middle, and come back up to the front for the end, which lands quietly, not on a resolution but a transitional harmony, as though there is an infinity to follow.

THE STARGATE, THE UNIVERSE

The title *Through the Stargate*, explains Baillie, "is a reference to Kubrick's 2001 A Space Odyssey where the astronaut, David, gets sucked through a black hole and spat out the other end and when he gets

there, he sees familiar things but they're all warped and super-weird. And I wondered what Bach would sound like through that Stargate."

Baillie plays Bach intently, as though there has never been music since – and in a way that's true. Bach was attempting to compose the music of the spheres, for God, and using the whole range of the violin to reach out beyond the music to something ethereal, divine, eternal. Given that Bach was about 300 years ahead of his time, I dare say Baillie's development is something closer to what he would be writing if he were alive now: warped and super-weird it might well be. I loved it, for its unrepeatability as much as for its invention.



Other St Leonards Concerts performances are detailed at stlconcerts.co.uk. The next one sees the return of the wonderful Lodestar Trio. See details at lodestartrio.com/about. Baillie's article in *The Strad* can be found on a search at thestrad.com. You'd be sorry to miss any of these.

Jarman in Hastings

BEN NEWELL

This September, Hastings and St Leonards will host a series of events celebrating the life and work of Derek Jarman, the renowned artist, filmmaker, and activist who famously resided at Prospect Cottage

in Dungeness. These events come as 2024 marks the 30th anniversary of Jarman's death from an AIDS-related illness.

Jarman is revered for his explorations of British identity, set against the backdrop of Thatcherism, and for groundbreaking portrayals of queer love and gay sexuality. His fearless approach to

filmmaking made a profound impact on the world of cinema, and his legacy continues to inspire new generations of artists.

In addition to his contributions to film, Jarman was a talented painter, writer, and gardener. His multidisciplinary creative practice and relentless drive to experiment across various art forms make his

work as compelling today as it was during his lifetime. In the last years of his life, Jarman made the South Coast his home, purchasing Prospect Cottage in Dungeness. It was here, with the help of Howard Sooley, that he created his now-iconic garden. Many of his films, including *The Last of England* and *The Garden*, were shot on location in or near Dungeness, making this local celebration especially poignant.

The events are organized by Jarman Now, a research network led by Dr. Elisa Oliver from Manchester Metropolitan University, dedicated to supporting and facilitating ongoing dialogue about the issues explored through Jarman's work. The network has arranged a series of exciting events this September in Hastings, designed to explore and discuss Jarman's creative legacy.

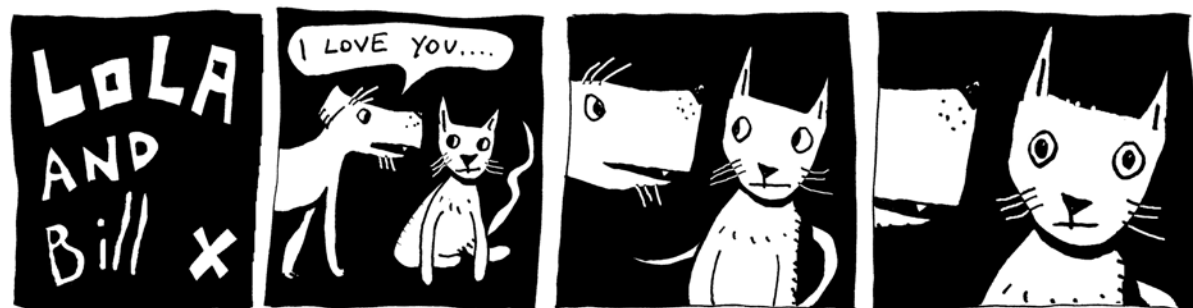
This is a unique opportunity to celebrate and engage with the leg-



Derek Jarman's House and Garden in Dungeness

acy of one of Britain's most influential and fearless artists.

Follow @jarman_now @electricpalacehastings @thehastingsbookshop for regular updates.



Sing Everything You See, or Vice-Versa: Sono-Electro Goes Large

VICTORIA KINGHAM

'Sound art' is one of those artistic concepts which has been in circulation much longer than most casual audiences would believe. The idea of making sound form an integral part of an installation probably began in the 1910s when the Futurists, who loved the sound of industry (and War, until some of them died in it) built noise machines to replicate the clatter and boom of their world. Dada artist Marcel Duchamp (the guy whose Urinal, presented in a 1915 exhibition, probably helped to change the definition of Art) also composed a piece where three voices sang notes pulled arbitrarily from a hat. This led up to early John Cage and his 4'33" of Silence in 1955, and certain visual artists - particularly in America, who used electronic media to explore the space around them. A century ago, the invention of recorded sound was comparatively recent, so the integration of sound was new, and definitely a challenge, in the realisation of an idea.

So far, so historical. Cut to the present day and the making of

sound, the inclusion of sound in sculpture and art installations is almost a commonplace. For those growing up with instant auditory availability (any old laptop or phone is now able to produce and manipulate any kind of sound) it is something they take for granted. Coming from the background of an earlier generation of computer technology, I do not. I think back to the late 80s and 90s and how difficult it was, for example, to find a decent piece of software that would read out text or enable the partially-sighted to use any kind of screen. Voice recognition was clunkily in its infancy, as was translation software, and Robotics was still just the stuff of academic conferences. Now that we can have an Alexa in any corner or a doorbell that we can speak to from New Zealand (just to say we aren't in, and can they leave the parcel next door please) and instant music composition application programs (lots of them - Sibelius First is one, Noteflight, Magic Score) and talk to Duolingo, the general concept of sound creation in everyday life is necessarily different. It improves and progresses apace.



Artist Isobel Anderson using plants to conduct voltage to produce music from synthesisers - plants making music!

THE IDEA

James Wilkie defines himself as a sound artist. He has worked commercially, producing suitable sensory experiences for high-end companies such as Bentley Motors and John Lewis, while simultaneously teaching and running independent workshops. He has now brought his expertise down to Hastings, and together with audio-producer Lucia

Scazzocchio he has founded a Festival called Sono Electro. Last year this new venture lasted a couple of days. Wilkie's idea originated in an offer of Electro Studios in Seaside Road for a project of his own, which he then turned into a small sound art weekend event, echoing and augmenting his recent Brighton Festival experience. This year it has expanded to a properly-funded two-

week enterprise, helped on by a successful application for a slice of this year's Arts Council pie. Full details of this ambitious project may be found at the web address indicated at the end of this article.

Wilkie's own process in the commercial environment is to think about the values endemic to a particular company or organisation, and how they might translate into sound. Applying this idea more socially, he aims to form a musical dialogue, asking the question, how is this sound going to bring people together? He shares ideas, using a guitar or computerised sound, and hopes to inspire people's curiosity. His festival offers new ways of doing this, building his audio-processing skills and ideas. He is particularly interested in encouraging local artists to explore sound and create for themselves artistic opportunities beyond what they may already have considered. There is a stylophone workshop for example, where young artist Orson Coupland shares his skills, a family installation by Benjamin Phillips, a curated listening session by Radio Commons, various workshops for children and/or young people, an improvised radio performance by Anthony Moore and Ed Baxter, and a self-generating art work created by ZeroH. Just a few among many other fascinating, interactive, and instructive events.

This promises to be one of the most engaging and unusual activities in the plethora of events that comprises this year's Coastal Currents Festival. Head along with all the family, to Electro Studios.



Schedule

Complete Festival Pass available at TicketSource: tinyurl.com/rckpsn3h

Insta: Sono-Electro

Smouldering Minimalism at Kino-Teatr

EBM HUMPHREYS on Delon's Le Samourai (1967)

An unexpected humour was injected into my first knowing foray into French New Wave when one of my companions innocently protested at the absence of Japanese sword-play. "We told you it was French," we whispered back anxiously. Once this question was settled, we all, thankfully, thoroughly enjoyed this film, myself from both an entertain-

ment and a curious-film-nerd perspective. Nothing tickles the nerd-nerve like watching an old film which feels for all the world to be composed entirely of scenes you have seen ten times: this surely marks a film as seminal.

In spite of the eerie feeling of watching a textbook lone-assassin story, the plot and staging were com-

PELLING enough, and I was impressed by the film's intense colour scheme: no spoilers to say grey. Apartment walls were painted in Dulux bleak. Today, this film would doubtless be shot in black and white.

We were, however, struck by just how much goes unsaid: I found myself being quite liberal afterwards in mentally filling in the characters' off-screen activities, to suit my taste. Clearly the hero does love the girl. Clearly the caged bird means everything. Clearly the Samurai code by which we are to assume the hero lives contains this, this and that regulation? Perhaps there is something of an intention within this minimalist storytelling - to incite the viewer to exercise their imagination to an extreme degree, arguably trickiest in film of all the arts?

Le Samourai stimulated my desire to see the other Alain Delon films featured by Kino-Teatr, but sadly I was unable to. I wonder what makes Delon a star worthy of a ret-



Delon (and bird) in many shades of grey

pective, and was especially gutted to miss their generous free screening of Zorro. I thought of this performance as forerunner to Bladerunner's Ryan Gosling, smouldering with completely interiorised emotion ... and remain curious about how it related to the mainstream of its time. Then again, Delon's stardom was probably based on more obvious criteria. I can tell

you that Youtube offers an eleven-minute 'Beauty analysis' of his handsome face...

I love the Kino-Teatr as a setting for any film. Happily, we finally overcame the lure of the armchairs for the better views in the 'proper cinema' seating. I wouldn't have wanted a head spoiling my view of this meticulous greysphere, even if it is one of Delon's least sexy roles.



Defence of the Realm: Dymchurch

Jeremy Llewellyn-Jones at Solaris Gallery

Jeremy Llewellyn-Jones spent over eighteen months prowling around the brutalist sea defences of Dymchurch. The resulting work is an oblique testament to the foolhardy human desire to control and dominate natural forces rather than respect and work with them.

Alone in a sometimes freezing landscape, he waited for his long film exposures to take place. In the resulting works, the sea sometimes becomes a force of its own volition, and our defences can appear insubstantial.

The artist reflects on the threat of climate change and ever-rising sea levels that could wash away a whole coastline. With over 1,500 engineered concrete units in place, completed in 2011, it is optimistically stated that the Dymchurch defences will hold off the invasion of waves for 100 years.

Jeremy's work draws parallels with Paul Nash's Dymchurch paintings from 1922. Nash was not long out of the trenches near Ypres, and his works at Dymchurch captured the brutality and threat of a different kind of invasion.

100 years on, and some things never change. The metronomic time-

table of the moon and its gravitational pull still creates tides that bash the brutalist concrete sea defences of Dymchurch – nature's own invasion force. The cycle is relentless and dramatic, yet peaceful to witness. There's a sense of the immortal, an awareness of place and power in the expanse of a moonlit night.

Photographer Jeremy Llewellyn-Jones was born in Uganda and grew up in Kenya. He studied photography at The London College of Printing then post-graduate film and television at the Royal College of Art. He has spent most of his professional career as a documentary filmmaker, directing films for UK and international broadcasters. He also works as an artist using analogue technology and assorted film cameras.



Solaris is a contemporary gallery and fine art & photographic giclée printer at 76 Norman Road, St Leonards on Sea. The exhibition of Llewellyn-Jones' work, *Defence of the Realm*, shows until 12 October. See his insta page at [instagram.com/p/C_LBx2doK6-/](https://www.instagram.com/p/C_LBx2doK6-/).

Animal Gods and Furry Friends

HELEN MURPHY & NICK PELLING look into an unusual way to help animals

There are few things more upsetting than stumbling across a wounded wild animal. A bird with a buckled wing or a car-struck deer can inject a sharp moment of horror into your life. Often you just feel utterly powerless. But there are people you can turn to. RSPCA Mallydams Wildlife Centre, in Fairlight, specialises in the rescue, rehab and release of wounded wildlife. Obviously, treating and caring for our fellow creatures does not come cheap. But there is a way that you can help. The *Mudworks* ceramics studio, on London Road, is running a raffle to raise funding for the centre.

What makes this fundraising effort so unusual is that the first prize is a totem pole, consisting of wonderfully weird ceramic animal heads, made by members of Mudworks. It is undoubtedly one of the most extraordinary prizes of any raffle we have come across in recent times. The totem pole is of human height and the animal faces that stare at you are strangely gripping:

ideal, perhaps, for those with a pagan leaning. Arguably, then, perfect for Hastings and St Leonards.

There is, of course, a darker side to this subject. Many of the animals that Mallydams deal with are the victims of human cruelty. They estimate that in the summer they receive phone calls about cruelty to animals almost every five minutes. It is an ugly truth that the biggest problem wild animals face is human behaviour. But their 55-acre woodland site is a wonderful habitat for recovering small creatures. Understandably, the centre is not open to the public, although educational sessions can be booked.

The second prize is equally as unusual. It is an animal sculpture by local artist Mark Daniels (also known as Boney's Island). His animal pieces are profound and childlike in equal measure, and very beautiful. To get tickets for this unique raffle, just pop into Mudworks studios - opposite The Tower pub. When you're there, you'll probably bump into one



MUDWORKS

of the two wonderful tutors that keep the ceramics studio so vibrant and welcoming: Chantelle and Isabella. Speaking from experience, we can say that these two are excellent tutors. They have fabulous enthusiasm and seemingly endless patience. They certainly helped us go from wonky to vaguely plausible. They offer courses in all aspects of the ceramic craft for anyone - from beginners to those more adept. They're also offering a sculpture weekend in October, with Suzie Zamit.

If you care about our furry friends, or even if you just fancy a pagan pole in your backyard, do drop into Mudworks and buy some tickets. The winners will be picked out on 30 September.

For information about the work of RSPCA Mallydams visit their website. For Mudworks courses, go to themudworks.co.uk



CIARA GAMBUTO

HotWax

St Leonards Venue Announces New Record Label

The Piper, St Leonards, is very proud to announce the launch of their new vinyl-only record label. Conceived during lockdown to help boost local artists, the venue plans a series of 7-inch single releases featuring bands from East Sussex. And, as our town was described as 'the new Seattle' by Mojo Magazine, there's no shortage of bands and acts here to choose from.

The first release presents Hastings' fast-rising stars HotWax, alongside psych rockers

Wytch Pycknyk, who have both provided exclusive tracks. Hotwax are now signed to Marathon Artists, have toured Europe and America and have played major festivals including Reading, Leeds, Latitude and Green Man. They say: "This is a live version of our song *Treasure*, the

first single from our debut EP *A Thousand Times*, recorded at Savage Sound in Hastings." It's available on 7-inch. Wytch Pycknyk are signed to Hastings label Property of the Lost, and have played BBC South's *Live Lounge*. Their debut self-titled LP was described by *The Arts Desk* as "The hard rock album of the year."

Chris Barnett, co-owner of The Piper, says, "We are delighted to be able to work with these bands and help them get the exposure and broader credit they justly deserve, whilst also assisting this great place to enhance its reputation further as a fast-developing music town."

Keeping things local, the 7-inch was cut with Curve Pusher, one of the country's leading vinyl record cutting and audio mastering houses which is based in Hastings. 350 copies of the records have been made, which will be given out to everyone attending the (now sold out) launch party on Friday 13 September. The remaining stock will be made available for sale through a collective of local stores.

The label's second release is planned for spring 2025 and will feature local rising stars Nomad Shakes and Bad Pedestrian.

For more information please contact: PR@thepiper.club First release: Friday 13 September

HIP REVIEW

Lovebroken,
a memoir

By Finley de Witt
Troubador Publishing
Paperback, 336 pages,
£12.99
REVIEW BY FRAN ELLERY

Lovebroken is a memoir by Hastings writer and trauma specialist, Finley de Witt (“For anyone who’s ever struggled with their mental health...”)

It’s been a long time since I was so engrossed in a book that I sat down and read it cover to cover at one sitting. But that’s what happened when I picked up Finley de Witt’s pacey, funny, moving and (though much of it resonated) shocking memoir. Lovebroken takes us on an eventful journey from Finley’s traumatic childhood in West Yorkshire to finally finding truth and peace in ‘Tastings’ (a thinly disguised Hastings).

Finley was born in West Yorkshire to Peggy, a narcissist who had “an insatiable need to be always right”, was neglectful and downright cruel. The book captures in graphic detail the experience(s) of being a bright child in a stultifyingly dull and terrifying world. Chad (both parents are called by their first name) was a charming but mostly absent father and (as we later learn) an abuser. “In the womb I’d been relatively safe; out of it, I was at my parents’ mercy.”

CONTROLLING LOVERS,
RISKY SEX AND INEPT
THERAPISTS

When Finley’s teacher tells them they’re bright enough to go to university, Peggy says they’re “not clever enough for that” and enrolls

Finley instead in secretarial college. That doesn’t last long. Through their own spirit of survival and rebelliousness, Finley is soon on their way to Oxford university, where they’re confronted with both beauty and snobbery, and where they meet upper-class Dan and Marianne – who become their first real lovers and long-term friends.

Lovebroken goes on to take us on a hilarious roller-coaster ride from love and learning (despite all their mother’s put-downs, Finley graduates with a first) at Oxford to wild (and not always liberating) lesbian love and feminism in London. Each

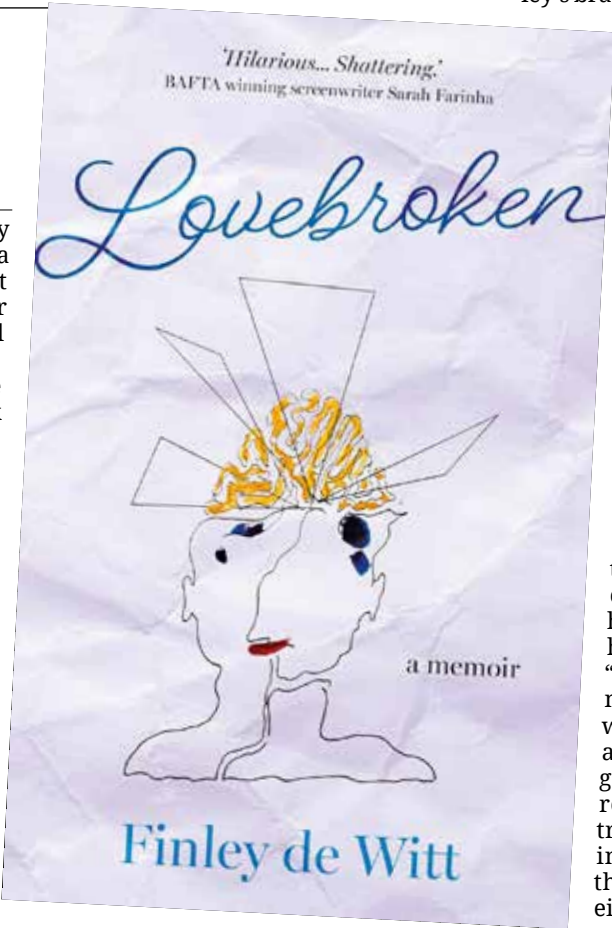
episode of Finley’s life – which includes a couple of breakdowns and psychotic episodes – is described in colourful detail, as are the people they meet. From the descriptions of their various homes to those of loyal friends, controlling lovers, risky sex and (mostly inept) therapists, what shines through, over and above the fear and despair, is Finley’s bravery and sheer determination. Their numerous attempts to get help expose the devastating effects of traditional, ill-informed approaches to mental health: “To realise that mental illness is a protector from unendurable pain, not a pathology, is too radical for most, too countercultural.”

A QUIVER OF
HAPPINESS

Only when Finley makes the move to Tastings with the love of their life, Dahl, and discovers the Internal Family Systems work of Richard Schwartz and a sensitive, trauma-trained therapist, are they able to confront a buried childhood atrocity that’s been haunting them all their life. “I’d lived with a kind of amnesia and coming round was appalling, agonising and potent. I’d never felt so gutted and I’d never felt so real.” In facing up to the truth, Finley has a harrowing decision to make about their parents, who, in their eighties, at last begin to feel more benign.

I wouldn’t say that Lovebroken is a ‘cosy’ read. But it’s deeply moving, especially for someone who’s had some similar experiences. Its honesty, gutsy-ness and the sheer quality of the writing are a breath of fresh air. Against all the odds, Finley makes it through to “a quiver of happiness”. Along with them, we can only hope it lasts.

Finley will be signing copies at the Observer Building on Sunday 14 September as part of Hastings Book Festival. Lovebroken is also available at The Hastings Bookshop and Hare & Hawthorn.



POETRY CORNER

The naked cyclist
VERNON KEITH FOWLER

The wind was whistling by the shore
And through the rowers’ rollocks
And as the naked cyclist passed
It whistled through his bollocks.

The wind was whistling through the boats,
It whistled through their futtocks
And as the naked cyclist passed
It whistled through his buttocks.

The wind was blowing out at sea
Displacing metres cubic
And through the naked cyclist’s hair
Both cranial and pubic.

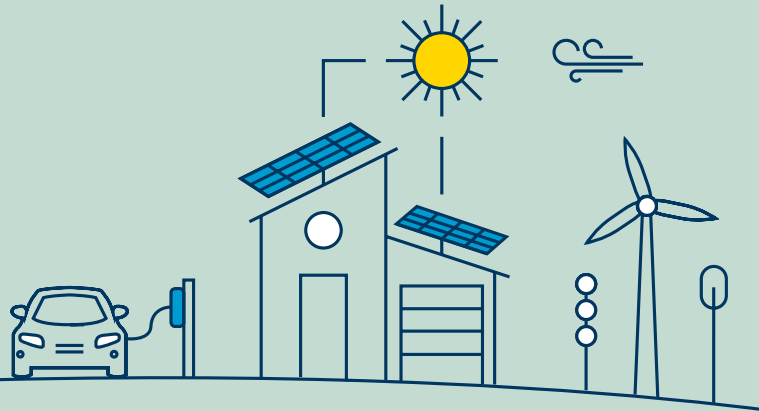
I saw his dick approaching me,
I saw his arse retreating,
A view one seldom gets to see
Which really takes some beating.

For some he is a USP,
For others he’s disgraceful
But either way you’ll not forget
When you have had a faceful.

The wind it bloweth everywhere,
On land and over sea
Just like the naked cyclist
Untameable and free!

ECO-HOMES

Around Hastings & Rother



An Eco-Open-Home is an opportunity to ask a local resident about an energy saving improvement that they’ve made, and see if it might work for you. From solar panels to insulation, heat pumps to electric vehicle charging points and many others.

TO BOOK YOUR FREE PLACE
www.energisesussexcoast.co.uk/events
or scan QR code



For more information visit: www.energisesussexcoast.co.uk
Contact: Chris chris@energisesussexcoast.co.uk or call: 07816 457 650

CROSSWORD CORNER

Across

1. Is oral at sea (6)
3. Mr Vale could be a wonderful person (6)
4. Tearing tool is very good in Oz (6)

Down

1. Problem over French sea may be coming to an end (6)
2. Big wave for a posh car (6)

Crossword Solution: Answers on page 5 of The HIP List

1					2
3					
4					

Eat Write Love

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

Who doesn't love the look of this glossy, wine-red vegetable with its little green hat? It's remarkably lightweight, superbly versatile and its flavour gets more intense over time. A winner in anyone's cook-book!

Make your mouth water with this quick-and-easy flavoursome dish, Aubergine Parmigiana. Packed with nutrients, not pasta. Just right for the night drawing in!

JOURNALING #1:
Ode to Aubergine [7 mins]

- Let's get in the mood for our shiny friend.
- Write 10 lines starting with Oh, aubergine....
- We can declare our love, admit our misgivings, confess why we left them on the shelf!
- Let it all out!



AUBERGINE PARMIGIANA (Serves 6)

Aubergines should not be eaten raw, but there are many ways to cook them, including in this slow-cooked, Italian dish. This version has a lot of veg tucked away in the sauce – it is a great way of adding nutrition and flavour, although you can of course just do a simple tomato, onion and garlic sauce if you prefer.

- Ingredients:**
- 3 large aubergines
 - 1 onion
 - 1 stick celery
 - 1 carrot
 - 2 cloves garlic
 - 2 400g tins chopped tomatoes
 - 500g passata
 - Dried oregano
 - 2 vegetable stock cubes
 - 2 tbsp tomato puree
 - 1 tbsp lemon juice
 - 250g mozzarella
 - Salt and pepper
 - Green Salad to serve

- Method:**
- Warm oven to 180° centigrade.
- Slice aubergines into ½ cm thick slices and place on baking sheets – rub in oil and a little salt and bake for around 10 minutes, turning half way through. You may need to do this in batches, depending on how large your oven is.
 - Once the aubergines have cooked, put them on a plate and leave to one side as you make up the sauce.
 - Whilst the aubergine is pre-cooking, start making your sauce: blitz up onion, garlic, celery, carrot (or chop very finely, or grate).
 - Warm some olive oil gently in a large pan and add the vegetables to cook slowly. Keep the heat low and add some salt.
 - Check your aubergine and turn, or remove, from the oven / add a new batch in for cooking.
 - Once your vegetables are softened, add your tomatoes, passata and tomato puree and mix in well.
 - Add oregano, stock cubes and season.
 - Keep stirring regularly, but not constantly. Gently simmer for as long as you can – the benefits from the tomatoes are increased through long, slow cooking, and it brings the flavour out
 - Check your aubergines again if you are baking them in batches.
 - You can keep your aubergines covered on one side for as long as you need whilst the sauce simmers.
 - Taste and add seasoning, or herbs to your taste. You want the sauce to be relatively loose, so add in extra tomatoes or some hot water, if it becomes too thick.



- Once you are happy with your sauce, turn off the heat.
- Take your baking dish and put a layer of tomato sauce in the bottom. Next a layer of aubergine, followed by a layer of torn pieces of the mozzarella. Repeat three times, finishing with a layer of the tomato sauce and mozzarella on the top.
- Bake in the oven for approx. 25 minutes – you want a nice golden-brown top.
- Remove from the oven and leave to stand for around 10-15 minutes – it will be incredibly hot!
- Serve with a green salad, and granary bread for mopping OR pop into the freezer / fridge when cooled for eating at a later date..

- SUBSTITUTES**
- Use anything you have left over to add to the base: Courgette, fennel, pepper, mushrooms
 - No oregano? Use mixed herbs, or dried basil, or any left-over pesto.
 - If you've got fresh tomatoes going soft, they are a great addition to any tomato sauce like this.

- STORAGE**
- This dish is fantastic for making in advance, it freezes brilliantly – just remove from the freezer a couple of hours before you want to eat it. Pop it

- in the oven for 30 minutes. Keep the top covered in foil to avoid burning.
- It can be kept in the fridge for 4-5 days. It often tastes even better the next day as the flavours have had time to mature and develop.

JOURNALING #2
Wasn't that a tasty dish [7 mins]

- This dish pops with flavour.
- Write into a memory of a dish that you tried, perhaps for the first time and perhaps reluctantly, that surprised you. As an adult - or even as a child.

JOURNALING # 3 ACTION!
Supermarket Surprise! [5 mins]

A spice? A veg? A packet of nuts or dried fruit?

- Next time you go food shopping buy something small that you haven't eaten in a while.
- Afterwards, journal into your experience of choosing, of eating, of imagining what else you might do with it.

FOOTBALL

Two Sent Off as United Suffer Third League Defeat

31 August:
Hastings Utd 3,
Redhill Town 1

7 September:
Hashtag Utd 4,
Hastings Utd 0

Hastings United suffered their third successive defeat in this season's Isthmian Premier League, finishing their match against Essex side Hashtag last Saturday at the wrong end of a 0-4 scoreline.

The first half was an even contest, but United were punished for failing to defend two set pieces and came in 2-0 down. They started the second half brightly, but defender

Dequane Wilson-Braithwaite was sent off on the hour mark after being yellow-carded twice in five minutes. Tom Howard (who was making his first competitive start for the 'U's after joining them in the summer) followed him to the dressing-room ten minutes later, receiving a straight red card after being adjudged to have fouled a Hashtag forward who was otherwise clear on goal. The home side were already 3-0 up by then, and notched a fourth goal in added time.

The previous Saturday the 'U's had overcome Redhill Town 3-1 at the Pilot Field in the first qualifying round of the FA Cup. The visitors put in a spirited performance de-



Davide Rodari - hat-trick against Redhill

spite their lowly status in the Combined Counties League, two tiers of the football pyramid below their hosts, and may have considered themselves unfortunate to lose.

The first half was a tale of three penalties: the first rifled in by Davide Rodari for the 'U's after Billy Vigar had been tripped; the second an equaliser, by Redhill's Tommy Smith after a foul by Hastings goalkeeper Louis Rogers; then a second

successful spot-kick by Rodari following a defender's handballing of a high cross from the right.

In the second half Redhill took the game to United, coming close to a second equaliser on a couple of occasions: one header was cleared off the line and another brilliantly turned over the crossbar by Rogers. But Rodari claimed his hat-trick up the other end seven minutes from time to seal the win that put his team

into the next round.

There they have been given what looks on paper a favourable tie, at home again to another Combined Counties team Harefield United, the match to be played tomorrow (Saturday). However, with Harefield beating Isthmian Premier leaders Lewes away in the previous round, manager Danny Bloor is surely right to warn against treating them lightly.

CRICKET

Over and Out

Gallant Priory Relegated After Nail-Biting Finish

31 August:
Bognor Regis 119 all out;
Hastings Priory 120 for 4;

7 September:
Hastings Priory 165 for 7;
Horsham 166 for 9

HUGH SULLIVAN

It all came down to the last over of the last game of the season at Horn-tye. On an evening of gathering rain-clouds and increasing murk that rendered the red cricket ball barely visible to batsmen, fielders or spectators alike, visitors Horsham needed nine runs to win with their last pair together. Victory would take them to runners-up position in the Sussex Premier League.

By contrast, hosts Hastings & St Leonards Priory needed to limit them to eight runs or less from six balls, or take the final wicket, to secure not only victory in the game but the points needed to overhaul Bognor Regis at the bottom end of the

league table. Defeat would leave Priory stranded below Bognor, despite a comprehensive victory over their relegation rivals the previous Saturday which had left a gap of only five league points between them.

The Priory total of 165 for seven had been scored off 40 overs, the contest being reduced to this number per side by a late start. Two days of heavy rain in Hastings had left the ground sodden, and a further shower at around 10am risked full abandonment – as indeed happened at East Grinstead, where Bognor's contemporaneous fixture was called off without a ball bowled. That meant the West Sussex side would receive ten league points; Priory would have to win in order to survive.

Priory skipper Harry Scowen lost the toss, and his side were sent in to bat. Scoring runs on a damp pitch and slow outfield was predictably hard. Scowen, who has led from the front all season, batted grittily for his 34, but other batsmen came and went, and after 30 overs the score of 94 for five looked patently insufficient. Old warriors Tom Gillespie

(39 not out) and John Morgan (28 off 28 balls, including three sixes) came to the rescue, however, and with Seaver Cowley (12 not out off 11 balls) hitting a couple of boundaries, the last five overs yielded 45 runs to give Priory renewed hope.

When Horsham replied, Scowen rotated his bowlers to good effect, but the visiting batsmen accumulated steadily and seemed in command at 95 for three with 17 overs still remaining. Then Morgan, returning to the attack, induced the dangerous Bertie Foreman into a swirling top-edge safely held by Eddy Finch and, though the score continued to mount in the receding light, wickets also tumbled. Adam Barton, bowling spinners off a shortened run, took two in successive balls, and when he then had the game's top scorer Nick Oxley (43) caught by Finch again at backward point in the penultimate over, 12 runs were still needed with only one wicket left. That target had been reduced to nine as Scowen threw the ball to Cowley to bowl the last over. The tension was matched only by the gloom of the evening.

The young seamer's first delivery was snicked past wicket-keeper Greg Devlin by number 11 batsman Oliver Avinou to reach the boundary. Only five runs were now required. The next three balls limited the batsmen to only one run between them, but the fifth was clattered by number ten George Briance through the off-side field to the boundary – a classic cover drive to win the game and break Priory hearts.

RUGBY

Centenary Season Starts With Win

Hastings & Bexhill 31
Beckenham II 16

PETER KNIGHT

Hastings & Bexhill kicked off their 100th season last Saturday with a pre-match lunch, the first of many celebratory events. The occasion was attended by local MPs, the Mayor of Hastings, the Principal of Ark Alexandra Academy, four Presidents of Sussex RFU and many of the club sponsors. The team went on to secure a convincing home win in the Kent 3 League against the newly promoted Beckenham II XV.

New coaches Bruce Steadman and Ben Petty selected a team based on last year's squad, but included two fresh faces, Jackson Coulter at full back and Vinnie Harrison in the pack. Both are products of the club's youth development programme.

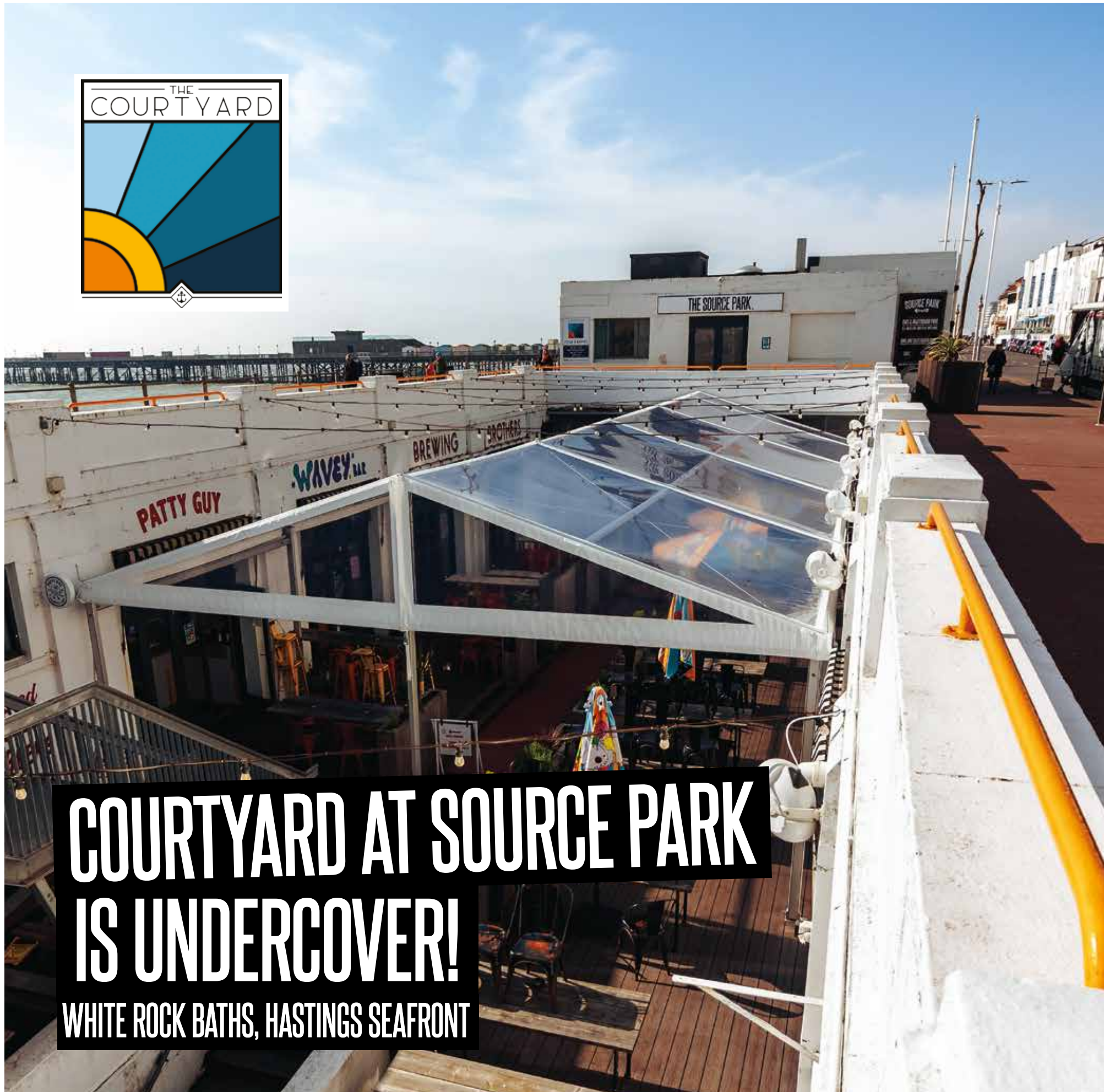
Hastings opened the scoring with an unconverted try from Coulter. The H&B forwards were dominating the play and fed the

ball out to the back line. After increased pressure on the visitors' defence, centre Jake Stinson benefited from a great break by Tom Hirst to touch down, Hirst converting to make the score 12-0.

Beckenham came back with a converted try and two well-taken penalties to lead by one point at half time.

Barring the concession of one penalty kick, the second half was all about H&B: they dominated every set piece and built up a clear lead. Harrison scored a good try to restore the advantage. Hooker Josh Clarke crashed over the line for the bonus point try, which was converted by Coulter. Then Hirst scored the try of the game with an incisive run through the visitors' defence to touch down under the posts. A further conversion by Coulter made the final score 31-16.

The whole H&B squad, inspired by captain Harry Walker, put in a great performance, beating a strong London club whose 1st XV play in a league five levels above. Next week H&B are away to New Ash Green, and hopefully they can build on this first success.



COURTYARD AT SOURCE PARK IS UNDERCOVER!

WHITE ROCK BATHS, HASTINGS SEAFRONT

