

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



Hastings Craft Weekend

Observer building, Hastings
Saturday 24th May, 9.30-4pm
Sunday 25th May, 10-4pm

Private View
Friday 23rd May, 6-8pm



Minister's Visit

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Wish You Were Here



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Wave of Protest

**HUGH SULLIVAN
and PAUL MCLAUGHLIN**

Plans for a major new housing development on the former bathing pool site at Seaside Road in West St Leonards have been revealed by prospective developers, over three-and-a-half years after signing a Development Agreement with Hastings Borough Council (HBC).

The proposals, showcased at a public exhibition last Tuesday (29 April) at Electro Studios, featured detailed drawings and visual projections for more than 150 new homes on the site. The exhibition was repeated in the concourse of Priory Meadow last Friday (2 May).

The developers, West Marina St Leonards Limited (WMSLL), presented two options. The first detailed plans for up to 151 new homes, to include a mix of houses, 'cottages', and flats. A second, smaller alternative proposed 118 homes.

WMSLL is a joint venture between the Generator Group and County Gate Properties. The company was granted a long lease on the site by HBC, as the freeholder, in October

2021—reportedly for 250 years.

Neither the company nor HBC has disclosed the terms of the lease. All Council Leader Julia Hilton would confirm was that her administration "had inherited an agreement for redevelopment of that site including commercial, leisure and residential uses, and that the site is in the local plan for development."

When asked about it last Tuesday, WMSLL director Paul Isaacs told HIP, "Why should we? Do Tesco's reveal the terms of their leases when they build a new superstore?"

A company spokesperson described the site as "allocated in the Local Plan for a residentially led, mixed-use development, incorporating commercial, leisure and residential uses. Our goal is to create a sustainable, dynamic and thriving community that brings together housing, work, leisure and culture."

The plans include a small water sports centre, and both design options feature a central square or 'park' set between two medium-rise residential blocks. In the presentation, this space was described as an area for community activities and events. However, its main purpose is to make practical

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Marvellous May Day Parade

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YOUR DESIGN, OUR COVER
Let's see your seagull on our cover!
Details from design@yourhip.co.uk

EDITOR'S NOTE

Apologies to readers who've recently tried to contact HIP and received no response. Technical issues have denied us email access and left communications in limbo.

Meanwhile, as Hastings recovers from a freezing Bank Holiday Monday with seemingly the most bikers and the longest Jack in the Green parade ever, there's lots to enjoy in this issue.

The News pages cover residents' protests at plans for housing developments in both West St Leonards and on the Ridge.

Elsewhere, an intriguing Community story suggests that the -let's be honest, scruffy - middle section of the town might benefit from an overdue visual makeover. A burst of colour and street art is an idea that's worked well in East London - why not here too?

Bustling as ever, our eclectic Arts coverage includes automata, a master guitar player, Indian flute music, the Hastings Philharmonic Orchestra, an 'artist that never was' and women's textile and tapestry workshops.

Or you might choose to bask in nostalgia, with a feature length glimpse of Edward Wood's late Victorian era photographs of Hastings in the 1890s, now on show at the Fishermen's Museum.

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News

Save Sandrock Bends

PAUL MCLAUGHLIN

Gladman Developments Ltd, part of the Barratt Developments PLC Group since 2022, has submitted a planning application to Hastings Borough Council for up to 65 new homes on land next to Sandrock Park and north of St Helen's Church on The Ridge. The plans also include public open space and vehicle access.

The planning application in an area of woodland has sparked strong opposition from local councillors, residents and environmental campaigners. They argue that the development would harm a cherished wildlife habitat and destroy the last remaining green corridor linking the High Weald to Hastings.

More than 130 public comments have been submitted on the council's website, with all but one opposing the application. Derek Tomblin, a retired Chartered Civil Engineer who has lived next to the proposed site—known as the Sandrock Bends—for over 37 years, said the area is completely unsuitable for housing development.

Sophie Stuchbury is another who is opposed to the development on the basis that, "The Ridge lacks infrastructure such as accessible GP surgeries, dentist and shops. The bus service is inadequate. The primary schools are limited and already oversubscribed."

The Save Sandrock Bends campaign group is leading local opposition to the planning application and plans to host a series of public meetings to give residents a platform to voice their concerns. A spokesperson said: "Our experts in ecology, hydrology, and planning firmly believe this site is entirely unsuitable for development. The proposed housing estate poses serious risks—not only to St Helen's Woods, but to everyone living in Hastings or using The Ridge."

The group expressed concerns about flood risks and ongoing erosion at the site, emphasising its importance as a critical wildlife habitat and a key corridor into the Sussex Weald. They also warned that the proposed development would lead to traffic issues and fail to meet any social housing obligations.

Phil Scott, the Labour East Sussex County Councillor for Hollington, registered his opposition to the planning development posting on Facebook: "No, No, No Not here! The Wildlife Value, The Fauna, The Amenity Value, The Ridge is already an Overburdened Road having become the new A259. What about improving the infrastructure first?"

The opposition to this housing development, driven by concerns over environmental impact, increased traffic, and the strain on infrastructure is similar to the concerns of many other residents across Hastings. The worry that any new development will threaten green spaces and disrupt wildlife habitats is real.

However, there is a pressing need for new, affordable housing, particularly for young people who are increasingly priced out of the areas where they grew up. Balancing these concerns requires thoughtful planning that protects the environment and community identity while ensuring the next generation has access to safe, affordable homes and the opportunity to stay rooted in their local areas.

HASTINGS TIDES

DATE	HIGH AND LOW TIDES				SUNRISE	SUNSET	MOON
FRI 9 MAY	L 4:40am	H 10:11am	L 5:02pm	H 10:24pm	5:16	8:31	
SAT 10 MAY	L 5:22am	H 10:49am	L 5:39pm	H 11:01pm	5:15	8:32	
SUN 11 MAY	L 5:56am	H 11:22am	L 6:10pm	H 11:34pm	5:13	8:34	
MON 12 MAY	L 6:24am	H 11:52pm	L 6:36pm		5:12	8:35	FULL
TUES 13 MAY	H 0:04am	L 6:50am	H 12:20pm	L 7:03	5:10	8:37	
WEDS 14 MAY	H 0:32am	L 7:18am	H 12:47pm	L 7:33pm	5:09	8:38	
THURS 15 MAY	H 1:00am	L 7:50am	H 1:15pm	L 8:07pm	5:07	8:40	
FRI 16 MAY	H 1:30am	L 8:24am	H 1:46pm	L 8:42pm	5:06	8:41	
SAT 17 MAY	H 2:03am	L 9:00am	H 2:21pm	L 9:20pm	5:04	8:43	
SUN 18 MAY	H 2:42am	L 9:39am	H 3:04pm	L 10:03pm	5:03	8:44	
MON 19 MAY	H 3:31am	L 10:25am	H 3:58pm	L 10:54pm	5:02	8:46	
TUES 20 MAY	H 4:37am	L 11:22am	H 5:14pm	L 11:58	5:01	8:47	THIRD
WEDS 21 MAY	H 6:02am	L 12:32pm	H 6:35pm		4:59	8:48	
THURS 22 MAY	L 1:13am	H 7:14am	L 1:49pm	H 7:39	4:58	8:50	

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

1 use of the space above a large underground water tank owned by Southern Water. The overall design has also had to accommodate the presence of major water pipes running beneath the site, which has shaped how the layout was developed.

Mr Isaacs made it clear that the primary focus of the development would be housing, with around 120 homes to align with the current Local Plan, or up to 150, which he said reflects the target outlined in what he referred to as "the Emerging Local Plan".

WMSLL claim they have had a lot of positive feedback from hosting the two exhibitions. The event held in Priory Meadow—specifically chosen to encourage broader engagement and to gather a more representative cross-section of views from across the town – elicited particularly positive responses from younger residents, for whom the lack of adequate housing remains a serious issue.

However, Anna Sabin, Chair of the West St Leonards Neighbourhood Forum (WSLNF), said she was shocked by the proposed housing development and questioned where the promised end of Promenade 'destination' was in the plans. "They show a car-heavy housing estate with acres of parking and tarmacked roads with little public space and nowhere to replicate our existing much-loved, sandy playground."

One of her two biggest concerns was the proposed 'town square' and playground, placed atop the Southern Water tank lids. She said "This area's permitted use in the existing Local Plan 'must not be built over' as the water company needs regular access to the site to carry out essential maintenance. In the draft emerging Local Plan, this has been changed to 'a new central square at the heart of the Seaside Road site...incl. opportunities for play.' Either way WMSLL cannot pretend the tank square, cut off from the beach by a row of two-story buildings, can accommodate a playground, astroturf exercise area and public green space worth considering as a destination."

Ms Sabin said the West St Leonards Neighbourhood Forum "has spent years developing a community-led plan that prioritises a village green, sustainable develop-



ment, and less traffic – reflecting residents' hopes for a vibrant social and economic hub on at least the eastern end of this prime seafront site, rather than a car-dominated housing estate. The WMSLL's vision, however, adds hundreds of cars to the neighbourhood. It devotes excessive space to roads and parking and offers only scraps like live/work studios as token gestures towards making this a destination for anyone who doesn't live there.

"Destination community space has been sacrificed to parking and a maximum number of new homes. If car parking were to give way instead, the development could be designed car-lite to use the abundant local public transport and a shared car hub. The site would then realise much better value and quality of life. East Sussex County Council would need to support such a shift, though, to date they haven't shown any commitment to pedestrian—or cycle-friendly planning. WSLNF and many residents still hope for a better outcome that reflects the area's unique potential."

Cllr Hilton stressed that "Nothing is ready to go." She said the "developers have only just started consulting on their plans, and there is a way to go yet before a planning application is submitted. Deadline for comments on this initial stage is 23 May, and I have encouraged them to engage with the various resident groups who have lots of ideas of what they would like to see on the site."

The consultation can be accessed at: <https://westmarinaquarter.consultationonline.co.uk>

SITE NOTICE FOR APPLICATION FOR A PREMISES LICENCE

This notice is to advise that on **25th day of April 2025** an application for a Premises Licence was made to Hastings Borough Council for the premises known as **Pizza Hour, 101 Bohemia Road, St.Leonards-on-sea, TN37 6RJ**

Was made by: **Mehmet Meral**

For the following licensable activities: **Sale of Alcohol**

by Retail (off the premises) 11:00 to 23:30 Monday to Sunday

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

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

Dated this **25th** day of **April 2025**

Not Feeling the Vibes

PAUL MCLAUGHLIN

Carib de L'Afrique, the Afro-Caribbean and African restaurant located in the heart of Hastings town centre, is a popular local dining spot. The restaurant was opened in 2018 by Bayo Olujobi and is known for its authentic, rich flavours and lively atmosphere.

As if to emphasise its cultural roots, the hypnotic rhythm of reggae and jazz music resonates across Wellington Place throughout the day, drawing in curious passersby and regular patrons alike with its warm, inviting energy. The steady beat sets a tone intended to capture the spirit of the Caribbean, transforming the surrounding area into a vibrant hub where the community comes together to enjoy not only the food, but a rich, shared cultural experience.

Not everyone is feeling the vibes, however, and the relentless musical onslaught has left some locals far from happy. There have been a number of complaints to Hastings Borough Council about the restaurant placing large speakers outside and, it is claimed, "blasting music for up to 10 hours a day." The complainants, who do not wish to be named, report that the persistent noise is "harming people's wellbeing, disturbing both homes and workplaces, and fuelling a rise in anti-social behaviour in the area."

Some residents say they have had noise complaints open with the council going back more than three years with no resolution. Many of them say they have spoken with the owner and politely asked if he could

reduce the volume or move the speaker indoors, but their requests have been ignored.

In a change of tack, they have launched an online petition calling on Hastings BC "to take meaningful action to address this ongoing noise pollution and restore a peaceful, respectful environment for all those who live and work in the town centre." The petition has attracted over 70 verified signatures.

Many of those who signed the petition say they appreciate the vibrant atmosphere of town centre living and enjoy the constant activity of shoppers and the buzz generated by buskers and street performers. What they struggle to accept, however, "is the relentless noise pollution from the nearby restaurant, which places a large 15-inch speaker outside and blasts loud, repetitive music for 8 to 10 hours a day." Some have even compared the experience to psychological warfare, drawing parallels to the tactics used by the CIA in 1989 to oust the Panamanian dictator, Manuel Noriega.

Bayo says it is "only a small number" who have complained, and he feels they are being "a bit unreasonable." He thinks the volume is "well within acceptable limits" and that the complaints come from a "lack of appreciation for the lively culture that makes the town centre unique." He is open to talking with anyone who has concerns and has offered to meet with residents "to try and work things out." That said, he believes the jazz and reggae music "brings character to the area and creates a friendly, upbeat vibe that attracts customers and brings the street to life."



Road to Nowhere – Lost in Time

PAUL MCLAUGHLIN

Work on the Queensway Gateway Road, the so-called road to nowhere, which began last September and was initially due for completion before Christmas, has faced further delays. The project is now unlikely to be finished before September—at the earliest.

The latest delay is due to complications involving a water pipeline. A spokesperson for East Sussex Highways explained: "As with any large-scale project, the Queensway Gateway scheme is highly complex, and we have encountered several unexpected challenges, including cables and pipes that were inaccurately recorded on official plans. As part of the process, we are now working closely with Southern Water to relocate a water main."

The spokesperson added that East Sussex Highways is "currently finalising plans for the final push to completion with the removal of 3,000 cubic metres of earth from an embankment—equivalent to about eight standard swimming pools. We are working well with partners and need to ensure we have an agreed plan and timeline in place before we reintroduce temporary traffic lights to allow us to carry out the work. Timings will be shared with the public as soon as they are confirmed. Work that doesn't require traffic management is continuing on the site."

East Sussex Highways acknowledge that "any work carried out on the road network creates disruption and we would like to thank the public for their patience and assure them that we are doing everything we can to minimise the impact on residents and businesses, where possible, and get the new road open as quickly as possible."

Phil Scott, Labour East Sussex County Councillor for Hollington, described the traffic congestion as "unacceptable." He said the ongoing

roadworks were severely impacting local businesses, threatening jobs, and negatively affecting the daily lives of residents.

His views were echoed by local Labour MP Helena Dollimore. She has written to Southern Water's Chief Executive, Lawrence Gosden, seeking clarification on whether the troubled utility company has played a role in the setbacks and says she is currently awaiting a response.

THE PIPER'S 6TH BIRTHDAY!

ADRIAN SHERWOOD
ON-U, OUR REGGAE + PUNK PIONEER
+ DAVE READING
FRI 6TH JUNE
8PM-2AM
THE PIPER CLUB

A GUY CALLED GERALD
+ SPECIAL GUESTS
SAT 7TH JUNE
8PM-2AM
THE PIPER CLUB

SOLD OUT!
WARMDUSCHER
THE PIPER
FRI 13TH JUNE
DOORS 8PM
THE PIPER CLUB

SOLD OUT!
SNAYX
+ HILARIOUS ARE O'ZEMISTS
SAT 14TH JUNE
DOORS 8PM
THE PIPER CLUB

WITCH
PLUS SUPPORT
AND THE PIPER
FRI 20TH JUNE
DOORS 8PM
THE PIPER CLUB

EROL ALKAN
RICHARD NORRIS
BEYOND THE WIZARDS SLEEVE
THE PIPER
SAT 21ST JUNE
+ SPECIAL GUESTS
THE PIPER CLUB

THE COLOUR BROTHERS
8pm-1pm
Band on at 8pm
A HIGHLY ACCLAIMED REGGAE BAND
WITH DAVE READING
THE PIPER
ST LEONARDS
FRIDAY 13TH MAY

BONNIE DOBSON
THE HANGING STARS
11TH JULY
THE PIPER
ST LEONARDS

TICKETS

TICKETS: THEPIPER.CLUB/EVENTS

Council Reform is coming – and we want YOUR ideas

JULIA HILTON – Leader of Hastings Borough Council

We've just seen some very sobering local election results. Kent County Council is now run by Reform, as are nine others, and Greater Lincolnshire has its first Reform mayor.

It is clear people do not feel the two major parties are listening to them, so at this time of huge change for local government in East Sussex, we must listen carefully to what citizens want from their local councils.

OPTIONS FOR CHANGE

In May and June, a major publicity campaign will inform Hastings of the proposed changes to the way local councils work. Our survey will ask your views on three options:

- a single unitary authority across East Sussex (which most closely aligns with the government's preferred population criterion of around 500,000 per authority);
- a coastal/rural split into two smaller authorities;
- an option which removes the county council and mandates

the existing borough and district councils to work together on a new 'board' to share running of county services (e.g., Highways, Adult Social Care, Children's Services) – effectively becoming five very small unitary councils.

We'll briefly set out the pros and cons of each, while noting that we have not yet built the business case for any of them. This work is happening now. The short timeline allowed by government entails running public engagement and evidence-building simultaneously.

We are keen to hear your ideas on how a new council structure can improve things for residents as well as whether you think Hastings should have a town council in the future.

CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY APPROACH

I am pushing for a Citizens' Assembly approach to co-designing the new councils. In June, focus groups, face-to-face meetings, and an online question time will allow all three proposals to be presented. I am grateful for the offer of help

from Hastings Assemblies.

You'll find dates and venues here: hastings.gov.uk/devolution We've also planned drop-in sessions at supermarkets from 10:30 to 12:30 on the following dates.

- 9 May: Morrisons, Queens Road
- 11 June: Asda, Silverhill
- 13 June: Tesco Extra, Hollington

The survey results will help inform the final business cases, to be completed by 28 September. We are expected to demonstrate the financial viability and sustainability of any option. Ministers will make the final decision on the size and shape of our new authorities.

As our resident participation plan has been extensively discussed in our weekly cross-party councillor working group over recent weeks, I was disappointed to find on the back of the last issue of this paper, a full-page advert placed by the Hastings Independent Group accusing the Green-led administration of being silent on the issue.

While timescales are incredibly tight to make a business case to government by the end of September, we can use the opportunity to design any new councils from scratch. For the residents who have expressed frustration with the lack of cohesion and collaboration between County and Borough, here is a real chance to change that.

I am strongly committed to embedding community-led work in the shaping of any new council. I hope everyone takes the chance to feed in their own ideas of what shape this might take.



Cllr Julia Hilton

HIGs to Oppose Reform Proposals

The Hastings Independent Group is to call on the Leader of Hastings BC, Julia Hilton, at next week's Annual Council meeting, to commit to leading a campaign against the government's local government reform plans.

The group's leader, Cllr Paul Barnett, said: "This campaign must listen to the people of Hastings and then act on their wishes. If she can't commit to this, the Green Party leadership does not deserve another year."

He added: "In the end, it comes down to leadership. Not policy paperwork. Not administrative process. Not consultation exercises performed for form's sake. This debate – which will shape the future of Hastings for a generation – hinges on whether those who sit at the top of our borough council have the conviction, the vision and the courage to fight for the town they represent."

He went on to say: "At stake is not just local pride, but democratic integrity. Hastings doesn't need another officer in a fluorescent jacket

managing engagement metrics. It needs leaders who will stand their ground in rooms filled with competing interests – leaders who can persuade, argue, and win the case for a governance model that doesn't leave this town languishing in the margins. Because let's be clear: unless action is taken, Hastings is on the verge of being swallowed into a reorganisation that suits bureaucrats but fails communities. The push toward a distant, Lewes-led unitary authority is not a compromise – it's a capitulation. It threatens to strip Hastings of its voice, its agency, and its ability to determine its own future. To stand by and let that happen would not just be a mistake, it would be a dereliction of duty. The next eight months are crucial. Our council's leadership must make the case – boldly, unapologetically – for a locally accountable system of government with Hastings at its heart. Not tacked onto a distant structure that doesn't know us and won't fight for us."

Torfield Among First to Get Free School Breakfasts

PAUL MCLAUGHLIN

Torfield School in Croft Road Hastings has been selected to take part in the launch of the Government's free breakfast club initiative which will give all primary-aged children at the school a free breakfast with parents and carers benefitting from at least 30 minutes of free childcare each day. The school is among 750 taking part in the early adopter scheme and has already opened its doors to provide the free meals.

The school is part of the Torfield and Saxon Mount Academy Trust. It caters for children and young people who have a range of Special Educational Needs, particularly autism and moderate learning difficulties. The school was graded as "outstanding" in its most recent

Ofsted Inspection, which took place in February 2023.

Local Labour MP Helena Doolittle welcomed the school's selection as one of the first to benefit from the initiative, which is to be rolled out to every primary school across the country in the coming months. It is part of the Government's Plan for Change, which aims to remove barriers to opportunity by making sure every child starts the school day ready to learn.

Ms Doolittle pointed to research showing that free breakfast clubs can have a transformative impact on children's lives. She said breakfast clubs have been shown to boost children's development in reading, writing and maths by an average of two months, and they also have a lasting impact on children's wider behaviour, attendance and attainment.

Flood Protection Boost

PAUL MCLAUGHLIN

The Government has approved funding plans for the construction of new flood protection schemes as well as the repair and maintenance of existing ones, across Hastings, Rye, and surrounding villages. Some £6 million has been allocated for eleven flood management schemes to help protect thousands of homes and businesses over the next year. The schemes to receive funding include Pett Level, Tillingham and Brede sluices, the tidal basin at Jurys Gap and Broomhill Sands beach.

Local Labour MP Helena Doolittle welcomed the investment, stating it would "protect lives and livelihoods in our area while reducing the severe impact flooding can have on our coastal communities".



DEPARTMENT FOR WORK AND PENSIONS



Sir Stephen Timms talks with trainee at timber yard

Minister Visits Little Gate Farm

HUGH SULLIVAN

Little Gate Farm is a social enterprise which supports adults with learning disabilities and autism into sustained employment. A fortnight ago, Sir Stephen Timms MP, the Minister for Social Security and Disability, took a team from his Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) in London to spend a morning at the Farm's rural headquarters, buried deep in the countryside between Beckley and Udimore.

From the Government's point of view, Little Gate's purpose and remit are in perfect pitch with its own stated aims of increasing employment levels and reducing benefits dependency. The DWP has highlighted figures that one in eight young people in Britain are not currently in employment, education or training (NEETs) and that 2.8 million people are economically inactive due to health and capacity issues. The level of PIPs (Personal Independence Payments) has risen rapidly since the Covid pandemic and is regarded by the Government as "unsustainable". In response, senior DWP Minister Liz Kendall pledged in March to spend £1 billion per year in employment support measures nationally to help disabled and long-term sick "back into work."

Little Gate, for their part, are hoping to benefit from a new government initiative, Connect to Work. They have expanded hugely in recent years as demand has

soared, now offering work skills training activities for five days a week, setting up a college for 16-25 year-olds in Bexhill, and installing an administrative office in Battle.

At the Farm itself they run their own work training programmes, which include a farm and horticultural garden, and a timber yard which makes charcoal logs for barbecues and other commercial uses. Sir Stephen and his team were shown around, meeting a range of staff and trainees involved, including two young men who shared their paid employment experiences. The main goal is to prepare learning disabled and autistic trainees for apprenticeships and other forms of work with local employers, then to continue to support them in those positions on an individual basis through job coaches so that they can become self-sustaining.

MAINTAINING SUPPORT

It's an ongoing process. Little Gate believes that anyone can be successful in a paid job with the right support. The work trainees can work in a regular and routine job very successfully but may find changes – of location or management or work direction, or else of personal circumstances, like a death in the family – difficult to adapt to and may need renewed support. "We don't ever fully step away", says a job coach.

Little Gate have a register of 168 trainees assisted into employment in the ten years since 2015 and are now aiming to push the rate of new employees up to 40 per year. But this

multiplication of individualised attention depends on maintaining reliable streams of income from East Sussex County Council's adult social care budget and from private trusts and charities as well as from the DWP. Those other resources are both under intense and increasing pressure, with the council experiencing year-on-year budget constraints, while grant funding is seen as the alternative source by social enterprises up and down the country. The result is a constant churn of competitive applications. Funding offers tend to favour shiny, new initiatives and limited-period support. Help to pay for core costs of a long-term enterprise, however necessary and successful it may be, is rarely available.

So, will Sir Stephen recognise Little Gate's value sufficiently to urge his department to fill in the funding shortfall? He referred at the end of his visit to a survey in which it was found that 60% of people with learning disabilities would like a permanent job but only 6% had one. He said he found the Farm "very impressive" in its endeavour to close that gap and said that the £1bn per year made available under his department's Connect to Work policy was going to "dramatically increase" employment rates generally. However, he sidestepped a question as to whether this policy may be undermined by the Chancellor Rachel Reeves increasing both the national minimum wage and employers' national insurance contributions.

Little Gate's CEO Andrea Randall-Smith commented afterwards: "We were delighted to welcome the Disability Minister here to see at first hand how our supported employment programmes are transforming the lives of people with learning disabilities and autism. We're proud

of what we achieve alongside our work trainees and local employers, and we hope the Minister will take away a deeper understanding of the value and potential of specialist employment support providers like us – and the importance of better-aligned, flexible, and reliable

funding models that empower us to do even more."

Little Gate Farm will be open to the general public for its summer fair on Saturday 7 June between 11am and 5pm. Further details are on its website www.littlegate.org.uk.

ST. LEONARDS CHURCH WEEKEND MARKET



Arts, Crafts, Antiques & Collectibles
Vintage Chic, Clothes & Jewellery
Coffee, Food Court & Licensed Bar!

EVERY SATURDAY & SUNDAY 10 to 4
London Road (corner of Pevensey Rd)
Saint Leonards-on-Sea TN37 6AS
stall hire + info - stleoschurch.co.uk

WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

✉Letter

HOMES AND GREEN SPACES

Dear HIP,
We need nature and development to be in harmony for the benefit of both. Our MP in Hastings and Rye, Helena Dollimore, is generally actively supportive in this matter. It is crucial that we address the local housing crisis whilst retaining our coastal and rural aspects for the wellbeing of all. Homes and green spaces are needed equally.

Penny Beale

✉Letter

ARTISTIC GRAFFITI

Dear HIP
In *Graffiti—Signs of Disengagement* (HIP 275), Tony Collins compared graffiti to fly tipping and dog mess. It's a false equivalence. Letting your dog shit all over Bottle Alley is not a legitimate form of self-expression. Graffiti can be.
Jean-Michel Basquiat, Keith Haring, Shepard Fairey and Banksy all started out as taggers. Humans have been scratching marks on walls for centuries, it's just the context that has changed.
Bottle Alley doesn't belong to

Studio ZeroH and its supporters. As your Editor's Note (also 275) states, it's a communal space. And the graffiti in Bottle Alley isn't simply mindless vandalism – it can be entertaining, surreal, witty and sometimes deeply moving. This poem was written on a column before the recent paint-job:
*My Mum
Mum, do you love me yet?
Mum, can I be your little girl?
Mum, will you wash my back this once?
Mum, do you still want to hurt me?
Mum, will I ever forgive you for what you've done?
Mum, I can't help but hate and miss you*

Hardly the "talent-free scribbles" that Tony Collins describes. An "enthusiastic volunteer" painted over it—I wonder if they read it. Confusingly, an adjacent statement that reads "*He Who Feeds You Controls You*" is not only left untouched, but is respectfully painted around. Why? Because it's art? Who decides?
This isn't an apology for vandalism, it's a plea for tolerance and engagement.
And being precious about keeping Bottle Alley pristine betrays a disheartening lack of imagination. Graffiti can be big business. Pay a visit to Leake Street Tunnel in London, Digbeth in Birmingham, St Paul's in Bristol—people flock there

to see the very thing that Tony Collins and Roger Lewis (his letter—"*Ignorant Destruction*" in the same issue) want to paint over. Leake Street is a vibrant, exciting, global destination. It could be a model for Bottle Alley: a democratic, sanctioned place for expression for whoever wants to leave their mark there. Continually repainting over each other's work will only increase disengagement. As one contributor succinctly put it—"*Stop Painting Over Art With Your Art*".

Noel Farragher

✉Letter

Dear HIP
"The government's planning and infrastructure bill is the worst assault on England's ecosystems in living memory". George Monbiot's words in a recent article—but I echo them, as does anyone with concern for our already beleaguered wildlife.
The UK's natural world is facing a significant crisis, with one in six species at risk of extinction, and many habitats in poor condition.
This bill, on the precipice of going through, will not save, it will destroy. It favours corporations and commerce over our greater assets of value, our shrinking 'green and pleasant lands'.

The Wildlife Trust's Natural Health Services Report lays out just some of the ways that our fragile heritage of nature helps us all. We cannot and must not let it slide into oblivion, and so must oppose this bill, at the very least in its current form.

Barnaby Green

✉Letter

KEEP THE STAIRCASE

Dear HIP
I am writing in response to, and support of, Robin Holtom's letter published in HIP 275, What Future for Azur?
I am in complete agreement with his description of the process of commissioning, design and then building of Azur, the end result of which is the deserted and defunct pile of builder's rubble which continues to obscure the seaview from the Burton terrace opposite.
There were so many things wrong about the process that it is difficult to point the blame, but it was wrong from the very inception. There was no need for anything like Azur in its current location, and the fact that it was built - literally—on top of the Sidney Little function rooms was a clear and early sign of the waste and

foolishness of it all. Less money could have been better spent on adapting the attractive (if overly large) function room on the lower level to better purpose.
As for the materials used in the build 20 years ago, Mr. Holtom remarks that they were 'high quality' materials, which they may have been, but without doubt they were the wrong materials, ill-suited to a position on a south-facing sea-front with exposure to the relentless cycle of wind and rain and storm (and sunshine) we enjoy. The exterior walls started failing within six months of the building's opening, and such repairs as have been made over the years have done little to maintain the precarious state of the building. It is now in a sorry state and only serves as a monument to the inept and wasteful teams of people who started the process, spent a great deal of public money, and left us with a useless pile of rubble.
By all means let us have this eyesore removed and start a sensible reversion to the use of the function rooms beneath. The staircase from the promenade is, indeed, still there, and would take the punters down to the beach, which may be where they want to go anyway.

Gilbert O'Brien

We would love to hear from you.

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

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Previous experience would be an asset but we're happy to support novices.

Editorial guidelines from and proposals to: info@yourhip.co.uk

Hastings Independent

Hastings Deserves Better: Let's Makeover Midtown

ANTHONY STANBRIDGE

While on my usual pleasant walk along the seafront from the Old Town to the town centre the other morning, I couldn't help being made aware yet again that there was no way of avoiding being greeted or confronted by what must be one of the drabest and most depressing sights in Hastings, the Sports Direct building.

In a town that is so rich in architectural heritage, I despair that such a building in such a prominent position has been allowed to become an eyesore, and worse, to get away

with looking like an eyesore for so long. For from whichever direction you approach this building, it is a draining blot of drab cream negative energy hanging over Hastings.

By contrast, I couldn't help but remember my excitement a few years ago, when after being 'numbed' by seeing so much drab cream paint on so many of the buildings of Hastings, I came across the work of Camille Walala on Leyton High Road in east London. I'd read about the project, and I'd seen the odd photo, but nothing could compare to the real thing. Just imagine almost an entire block of buildings on a high street with their facades painted in primary colours in a style



Cheering up Leyton

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS
'Midtown Makeover' that Hastings is full of creativity and new ideas and ripe for attracting even more new investment and employment opportunities for all.

Sometimes it takes bold ideas such as this which initially seem completely off the chart to kick-start new thinking. Hastings needs someone like Camille to design a scheme for the Sports Direct building and draw on her proven experience working on and completing projects on a large scale, transforming run-down stretches of town centres into places of wonder.

IT CAN HAPPEN HERE TOO.

I'm sure this idea will have detractors who for their own reasons like to talk the town down and keep it looking shabby and they might even sneer at this idea and call it 'gentrification', but they probably don't need the money, investment or employment that such a project would help create.

If there is any money left from the Town Deal, or other government pots of money, couldn't some of it go towards funding this project? In one stroke it would transform this tired and quite depressing part of town into a place of wonder and awe.

Come on, Hastings, let's do it.

inspired by Mondrian and the Memphis Group, transferred onto a parade of shops, and with each of their architectural details picked out in blocks and grids and pattern and colour. Wow!

WHY CAN'T THIS HAPPEN HERE IN HASTINGS?

Apart from transforming the town centre aesthetically, like the street in Leyton, it too could become a catalyst for attracting new investment and jobs to the town. What is

at present one of the most miserable buildings in Hastings would become a landmark and icon; a 'three-dimensional sculptural piece' and one of the largest public artworks on the south coast as well as a positive symbol for the new Hastings.

I think it would also help instil a sense of pride, it would attract more visitors to this part of Hastings and would help the town centre to become a vibrant meeting place. It would showcase in our very own

321

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Radio Times

JUDE MONTAGUE introduces a new community history project focusing on our economic past

A new radio project is taking to the air, devised by members of Parchment Trust, providers of day services for disabled adults based on the Ponswood Industrial Estate in St Leonards.

Parchment Radio will bring listeners creative radio programmes with music, sound art, local history, humour, interviews and conversations, poetry and experimental ideas. The radio programme is being facilitated and curated by Lifesize CIC, an organisation based in Hastings and St Leonards that specialises in the provision of music and arts activities for wellbeing. Lifesize have also been working with a group in Folkestone, bringing day-centre users together in both towns by working on the same radio programmes.

The first of two investigative pro-

jects tackled by the groups is the St Leonards history project, 'Ponswood Stories', where members of Parchment Trust have been looking back at the industrial history of their local estate and discovering many stories of the people and firms who worked here, a good number of which were electronic and audio-visual businesses.

The Hastings history of television manufacture begins with the incredible story of inventor John Logie Baird, who carried out the first television transmission here in the 1920s. This was recently explored in an exhibition about the scientist at Hastings Museum and Art Gallery curated by Geraldine Swayne and me. The Radio Group visited the show and even created their own prototype inventions inspired by John Logie Baird's creativity.

Local people connected with the Ponswood Industrial Estate were interviewed for the radio show, including postman Chris McKenna, from the Royal Mail's St Leonards Delivery Office on Drury Lane, in the middle of the estate. Another set of guests were Andrew Kötting, an artist, writer and filmmaker who works from a unit nearby, and his daughter Eden Kötting, also an artist, who has created many paintings and films with her father. Andrew answered questions about many aspects of his and Eden's work and life, even explaining the umlaut in their surname.

Alan Esdaile talked about running Masons Music on the Ponswood Estate and Queens Road. Back in the 1970s and 1980s, he and his team sold many singles and LPs from their shop, alongside stickers, patches, badges, scarves, t-shirts and bags. Alan now organises the monthly meet-up group, SMART Seventies Music and Retro Talk.

Lots of people offered stories on social media about working at the audio-visual manufacturing companies on the estate. Jayne Elizabeth said, "I remember the careers people coming round asking which factory you wanted to work at, there were so many and so much employ-



ment back then." Another contributor, Chris, commented, "I sat in a cubicle for six months testing circuit boards. It was mind-numbing and the 7:30am start was a target I often failed to meet if I missed the first bus in the morning."

The large firms of Kolster-Brandes / ITT have now shut down, although a few smaller companies are still making specialised electronic and related parts locally. Dennis reflected on his life on the production line: "Looking back it was quite tough but gave me an

experience of life I wouldn't otherwise have had."

Tom O'Hara from Parchment Trust reckons the radio project had offered a unique and meaningful opportunity to the participants, encouraging creativity, curiosity and real personal development. He added that their members, adults with learning disabilities, had developed "transferable skills that will benefit them far beyond the project itself".

The radio show *Ponswood Stories* will include original music and sound effects created using homemade instruments developed on previous projects with Lifesize Director Sam Dook.

Along the way there was so much to discover while creating original creative radio pieces, with lots of laughter and learning. The shows are currently being edited and produced and will shortly be available to all listeners. The launch will take place as part of the XMTR Festival of Radio Art in September 2025.

'Ponswood Stories' is supported by Historic England's 'Everyday Heritage' project, facilitated by Lifesize CIC (lifesize.org.uk) in collaboration with Parchment Trust Ltd

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Ye Olde Rock'n'Raise notches up £3k for Hospice

Staff at the popular Old Town pub Ye Olde Pumphouse organised a night of live music in memory of late local musician Phil Gill, raising a whopping £3,000 for St Michaels Hospice.

Leading local talents including Marlin Moon, Our Royal Displeasure, Elisha Edwards, Jack, Ben and George from Kid Kapichi, Ben Mair and Victoria McDonnell entertained a packed house all night, with Sam Willett acting as host.

One of the organisers, Alan Barwell, commented, "We would like to thank all of the local businesses and patrons that donated towards



this special event. In true Hastings spirit, there are too many to mention. Special thanks go to Alfie

Rolph, Jack Parrymore, Lee London, Tallulah, Eliza and all of the staff at the Pumphouse."

I want to ride my bicycle

Kidical Mass is a global movement committed to providing safe public spaces for children and young people to ride a bike. Its aspiration is to see zero road deaths through the provision of appropriate safety measures, such as separate cycle lanes and crossings, on main roads and secondary spaces, and joined-

up thinking linking individual bike lanes into coherent networks and traffic free zones.

There's activity here too, courtesy of Hastings Urban Bikes, who run a local Kidical Mass Hastings route, the next outing for which is on Saturday 31 May. The 2.7 mile flat route starts at the Lower Lawns by the war memorial in Alexandra Park at 10am with an anti-clockwise loop of the Lower Park before heading down Queens Road into the town centre. The route proceeds along Robertson Street and onto the promenade, finishing at The Hastings Bike Project for a coffee for the grown-ups and a babycino for the younger ones.

The ride takes over the road and fills the lane, with volunteers and marshalls in hi-viz jackets at the front, back and throughout the ride making sure that everything runs smoothly and safely. Where needed, they will stop traffic.

The organisers like to promote a celebratory atmosphere and encourage those joining to dress loud and bring flags, horns, bells and to make some noise.



For full details, go to hastingsurbanbikes.org/kidical-mass the campaign group promoting safe cycling routes.

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ALL PHOTOS GEORGE WOODS



George Woods – Seaside Hastings in the 1890s

A display of fascinating photos taken in Hastings in the 1890s has gone on display in the Fishermen's Museum in Rock-a-Nore Road, shares STEVE PEAK, local historian and museum trustee. They were all taken by one man, George Woods, between about 1891 and 1897, and give an intriguing glimpse into what life was like in the town just before the prosperous resort was hit by a major recession in the Edwardian era

Woods' photos are images of Victorian people at work and play: the crowded, varied life of a major seaside resort, fishermen struggling to make a living in small sailing boats, and the slow, traditional way of life in the country just before the inter-

nal combustion engine changed the face of rural England forever.

He is known to have taken about 2,500 pictures of Hastings, St Leonards and the surrounding countryside by capturing the images on glass plates. Photography with plate



glass cameras was hard physical work, as each negative required its own sheet of glass, while the camera itself was substantially built, usually of wood. Some of his seafront pictures show photographers using this type of camera.

George, his wife Mary and their daughter Margaret probably came to live in Hastings, in Mount Pleasant Road, because Mary was in poor health, and the seaside was then believed to have special curative powers for invalids. But Mary had an operation for breast cancer in 1893 and died in 1896.

In 1902 he married a well-off local woman, Ethel Rant, and their housekeeper, Helen Collins, later recalled him as being rather cantankerous; a perfectionist who wanted everything to be just so, but who was also very kind. He was quite tall, with a beard, and was quite sprightly when he was young. He loved talking to people and cycling, and collected books, butterflies and medals. George died at Priory Avenue on 4 April 1934, aged 81.

Although George Woods was such a prolific photographer, his work has not been widely known.

This is because he seems to have made no attempt to publish or exhibit his pictures during his lifetime, while after his death in 1934 his negatives and prints were simply preserved by his widow, Ethel. She died aged 90 in a Hastings rest home in 1962. George also worked alone, taking photographs out of an intense personal interest in his subjects, and apparently without joining any photographic societies that would have brought his work before a wider audience.

Hastings had been one of Britain's leading resorts for many decades, but just at the time George was taking his pictures it was at a crossroads in its history. Until the 1880s, the town had attracted many wealthier visitors, including the 'carriage folk' who came with their own horses and carriages to stay for months. A big attraction was Hastings Pier, which opened in 1872 and was an immediate success, so in the late 1880s a rival pier was built at St Leonards, almost opposite the Royal Victoria hotel (now all gone). In the 1890s, however, the better-off people were deserting Hastings for fashionable continental holidays,

or newer resorts like Eastbourne and Bexhill.

When the wealthy failed to return to Hastings, the town lost its sense of direction as a resort and entered a major decline, captured by Robert Tressell in the early 1900s in his book *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*. By chance, George was taking his photographs of Hastings beach in the early and mid-1890s, just before the new byelaws began to be effective in 'quietening down' the seafront. His pictures therefore provide an invaluable record of Victorian seaside life at its liveliest and most fascinating.



The exhibition is open now and will be on display for several months in the Fishermen's Museum, which is open every day from 11:00am–4:00pm. Admission is free (but donations are most welcome). Copies of many of the pictures are for sale. Many of George's pictures can be seen on Steve Peak's website hastingshistory.net/images-alias



Deepak Ram

Indian Flute Music for the Soul

Deepak Ram, an internationally-recognised Bansuri Flute player, returns to Hastings, this time for a concert at Christ Church St Leonards, and again accompanied by Sanjay Jhalla on tabla. Ram studied under acclaimed teacher Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia, with whom he has also performed in Geneva, London, and Paris.

Deepak has nine solo albums to date, and in 2000, his *Searching for Satyam* was awarded Best Instrumental Album at the South African Music Awards. He has also won many awards in the USA where he is based. He has collaborated all over the world with musicians of all genres.

Ram is genial and unassuming and, as a true educator, has a gift for clarifying what he is about to play in terms that his audience can understand. Thus, for instance,

when I saw his concert at the Kino a couple of years ago, he explained that the ragas they played were based on a seven-beat sequence, or a nine-beat rhythm: Taa Taa Taa, Taa Taa Taa, ta-ka-ta ta-ka-ta ta-ka-ta. He also demonstrated how much variety can be achieved through a pentatonic scale, just five notes. If you haven't already bought a ticket, please do so or queue at the church door for the chance to see this important musician in a spellbinding live performance.

"Deepak is a master of the Bansuri flute ... Music for the soul, make no mistake" - Wax Magazine

Saturday 10 May, 7pm at Christ Church, Silchester Road, St Leonards. Tickets £15 on the door or in advance from Reg Hendrickse, 01424 250221 or JC Mcfee, 07842 623217

Hastings Hosts Mechanical Marvels

Get ready for a magical weekend filled with mechanical marvels at AutomataFest 2025 in The Observer Building, Cambridge Road, Hastings.

This highly anticipated event, organised by Cabaret Mechanical Theatre and Automata Magazine, celebrates the intricate and enchanting art of automata. The festival, held from 9-11 May, has already sold out of three-day passes. There are still a limited number of tickets available for the AutomataFest Fair on Sunday 11 May, though, when the Observer Build-

ing (OB) will be transformed into a wonderland for automatists, makers, collectors, and enthusiasts from around the world. There is something for everyone to discover and learn, and guests will have the unique opportunity to see contemporary automata in action and meet the masterminds behind them.

In addition, there is a free exhibition, on 11 May, in the OB vaults and neighbouring Mechanical Making Space. Automata made by festival attendees will be showcased,



Hastings Philharmonic soloists Left to right: Helen May (Soprano), Julia Piñon (contralto), Lionel Pinheiro (tenor), Robert Winslade Anderson (bass)

Hastings Philharmonic Perform Stabat Mater

STEWART RAYMENT

Easter might have arrived early this year, with Dvořák's *Stabat Mater* performed at Christ Church, St Leonards on 5 April. But Bach's Easter Oratorio saw its first outing on All Fools' Day 1625; it is a movable feast. Not that the *Stabat Mater* in Dvořák's hands has ever followed the liturgical calendar – it was first performed during the Christmas season in 1877, and its second London performance in 1884 at the Royal Albert Hall, which he conducted, was a month before Easter. That had been an important concert in establishing Dvořák's career internationally; he was overwhelmed by the enthusiasm by which it was greeted.

I don't doubt that he would also have been well pleased with the Hastings Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra's performance at Christ Church. They were ably aided by Helen May (soprano), Julia Portela

Piñón (mezzo-soprano), Leonel Pinheiro (tenor) and Robert Winslade Anderson (bass). I would particularly commend Anderson's *Fac ut*

ardeat cor meum, and the soprano-tenor duet *Fac, ut portem Christi mortem*.

This was a potentially difficult piece for the choir, their weekly rehearsals being led by conductor Marcio da Silva on the piano, only meeting up with the orchestra and soloists close to the actual performance, but all of this was achieved.

The *Stabat Mater* is a Hymn to the Virgin Mary, the sorrowing mother at the Cross, most commonly attributed to Jacopone da Todi, a Franciscan friar. Despite it having been banned by the Council of Trent, Lassus, Palestrina and Vivaldi all composed versions before it was returned to favour 164 years later. Haydn, Schubert (twice), Rossini and Liszt were amongst those interpreting the work before Dvořák. There has been speculation that the deaths of his children may have given Dvořák empathy with the sorrowing mother as composition progressed between 1876 and 1877, but harrowing though that would have been, the last movement ends optimistically.

Hastings Philharmonic's next outing will be at the same venue on 5 July, featuring Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht*, a rather different set of emotions.



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alongside exhibits from Cabaret Mechanical Theatre's world-renowned collection, including the epic Gormenghast castle by artist Keith Newstead.

- Saturday 10 May will see a special screening of Martin Scorsese's acclaimed film *Hugo*, with insights and behind-the-scenes stories from the film's automata and horological consultant, Michael Start.
- Film: Saturday 10 May, Hastings Museum and Art Gallery TN34 1ET
- Tickets £5, Door 6 pm, Screening 7 pm

Book tickets at automatafest.com

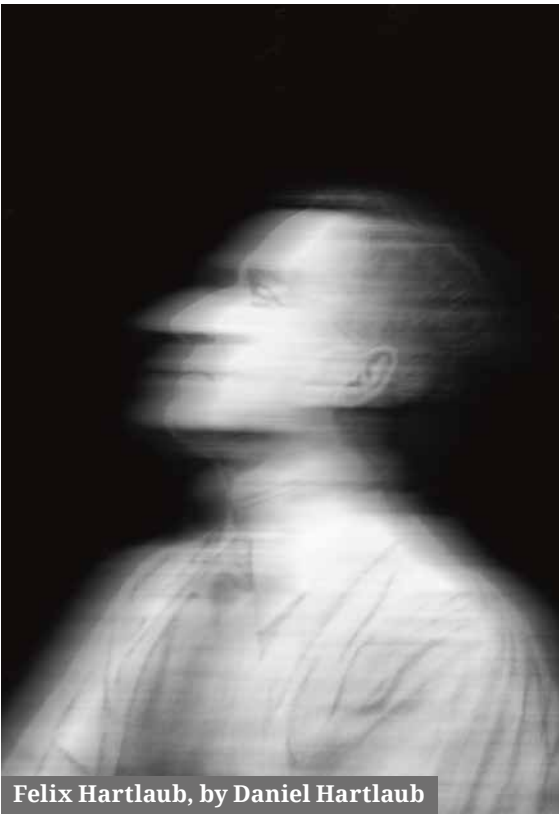
Electro Studios: The Artist that Never Was

JUDY PARKINSON

Lights All Awry in the Sky brings together works by artist and film-maker Daniel Hartlaub, from Frankfurt, and musician Keith Rodway, from Hastings. The centrepiece of the exhibition at Electro Studios is *Vanished, The Curious Life and Death of Felix Hartlaub*, inspired by Daniel's late uncle, with animated drawings and videos by Daniel, and live music.

In May 1945, three days before the end of WW2, Felix Hartlaub, a 31-year-old draughtsman and writer, was recalled for duty and boarded a train to Spandau. He was never seen again, cutting tragically short a promising literary career. Since 1940 Hartlaub had lived in

occupied Paris on archival work for the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He chronicled daily life in the French capital as 'word etchings' with a painter's eye for detail. He was only too aware of his presence as an unwelcome intruder, visible through meticulous sketches of the city's skyline and its people: civilians and soldiers in cafés and half-seen trysts during blackout hours, and not least an ever-looming threat marked with swastika flags distressed by the wind. His book *Clouds Over Paris* is a unique testament to the persistence of ordinary life, even when overshadowed by a calamitous backdrop. The mystery and strangeness which surrounded Felix Hartlaub's life are reflected



Felix Hartlaub, by Daniel Hartlaub

in his work, shaped by tumultuous times – an uncertain world in danger of destroying itself.

These fragmentary impressions give us a glimpse of an artistic and literary career that never was. "With the film *Vanished*" explains Daniel Hartlaub, "I hope to find some answers concerning an uncle I never met, and subsequently about the barbarous times he lived in and the parallels to today."

Hartlaub and Rodway lay open these parallels and leave the viewer to ponder whether history is in danger of repeating itself.

Electro Studios, Seaside Road, St Leonards, TN38 0AL Friday 16 May 5:30pm: *Necessary Animals* with music specially written for the show, plus *Simon and the Pope*. Saturday 17 May, 11:00am–5:00pm: gallery open, 7.30pm: AKA with Anthony Moore and Jury Service. Sunday 18 May, 11am – 4pm, gallery open



The Colours of Sprung

GARY WILLIS

All Us Women

Veronique LePlat

All Us Women is an arts and wellbeing project exploring violence against women. During 2024 we worked with 51 women, supporting them in producing textile artworks that were later exhibited at De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill, and Flowerfield Arts Centre, Northern Ireland.

A series of sessions combining textile work and photography are set to take place during 2025. The space created in the sessions allows for the exploration of the things that promote our healing: sitting together in community, connecting through our stories, gaining strength from the natural world, reclaiming our inner strength, reframing our narratives, and taking back our power.

So far: Local women were invited to take part in taster sessions. These one-off workshops provided

an opportunity for women to sample creative activity, ask questions, and help us consult with the groups we hope to engage with. Two of these consultation sessions have been held, one with women from Hastings and St Leonards, and one with women from a support group based in Eastbourne.

The next step: We aim to offer 6-8 sessions combining textile work and photography. The textile sessions will be led by artist Janey Moffatt. In these, women can explore the theme, and express themselves using items of clothing with machine embroidery and heat press techniques. The photography sessions will be an opportunity to record parts of our everyday life and to define our identity. These sessions will be led by photographer Veronique Leplat.

The final part of the project is for Veronique to take a series of professional portraits of the participants wearing the pieces of art they will



have produced. This will give an opportunity for the participants to further express and present themselves. The project will culminate in an exhibition where the pieces will be exhibited along with the photographic portraits.

Visitors will be able to reflect on the issue of Violence Against Women within our community. How can we all play a role in making "shame swap sides"?

Offer project sponsorship, or contact for more details: *The Crafttimation Factory* www.thecrafttimationfactory.org janey@thecrafttimationfactory.org

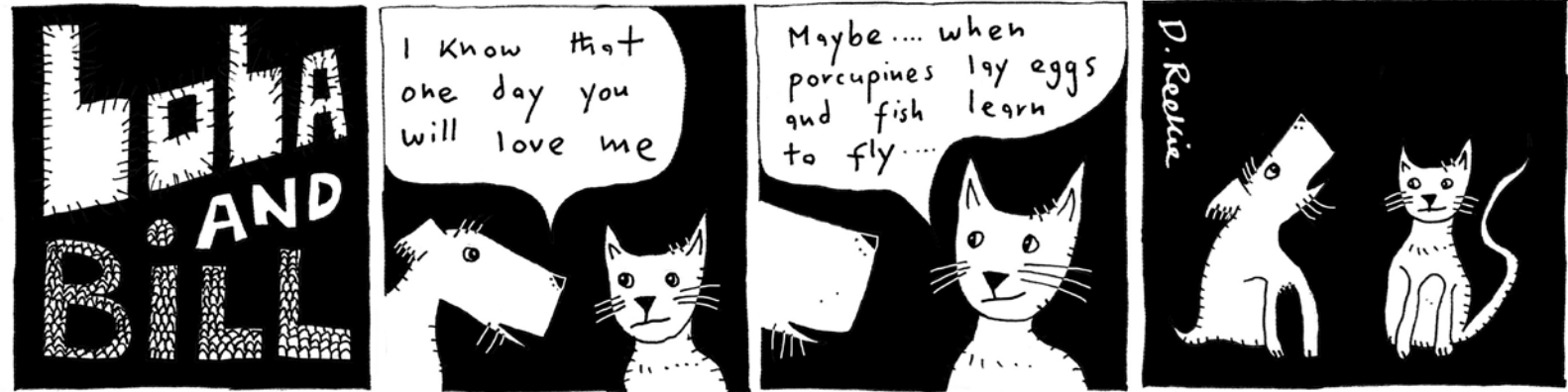
It's Sprungtime at Barnaby's! Introducing a joyous explosion of colourful art to celebrate the season, complementing the atmosphere at Barnaby's Lounge.

Sprung! is the inaugural curated exhibition by Louise Whitham, a local multi-media artist, musician and performance artist. Her energy has shaped the exhibition, gathering exciting art by 23 local artists. "*Sprung!* is the start of a bi-monthly art show in which you can vote for your favourite piece," she explains. To get closer to the artists, you can also watch a short video, which can be seen on social media (link below).

There's a lot to take in: dramatic paintings, both figurative and abstract, with the addition of some three-dimensional pieces, all interpreting the theme in abundant varieties of self-expression. Over this year Louise will continue curating at Barnaby's, and a host of imaginative exhibitions is planned: "As a curator, I find it an exciting challenge to work with local artists, creating engaging experiences that encourage people to interact with the work in new ways."

It is well worth going down to Barnaby's to witness these rich and evocative artworks for yourself. They are, also, all for sale. As Louise enthuses: "It has been a pleasure curating this exhibition, exploring the artists' unique interpretations of the theme."

The 'SPRUNG!' Art Exhibition is at Barnaby's Lounge, Hastings, until 28 June. Opening party, meet the artists, Friday 9 May, 6:00–7:30pm, Barnaby's Lounge, 46 Robertson Street, Hastings. Video at: facebook.com/artistlouisewhitham



HIP REVIEW

The Eyes Have It

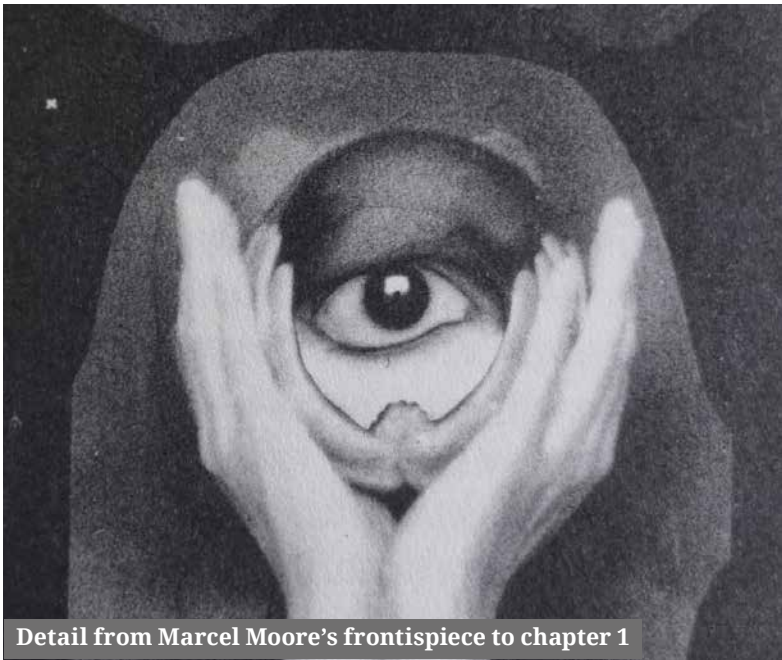
Cancelled Confessions, by Claude Cahun Translated by Susan De Muth
Thin Man Press,
new edition 2024, £27
VICTORIA KINGHAM

The first image inside the new edition of Claude Cahun's *Disavowals*, more literally retitled *Cancelled Confessions*, is a complex photomontage by Cahun's partner, Marcel Moore. That name was the alias for illustrator, designer, and photographer Suzanne Malherbe. Cahun was born Lucy Schwob. Malherbe and Schwob met at their local art school in Nantes, and lived in Paris, associating both intimately and artistically, for the next forty years.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF MYSTERY

The centre of this montage (cut out here) is obviously the eye – this vision is cupped by two graceful hands which end at the forearm with a pair of lips. In other parts of the image, another pair of hands cradles a globe, and a pair of cloaked fists grasp something that looks like a lens gazing into a confined world of classical sculpture.

Cahun's text is a long, fascinating, not always easy read. Presented more-or-less chronologically, the chapters of her 'narrative' are all preceded by similar photomontages. The beginning of each chapter appears to correspond roughly to its preceding image, but the text soon veers off in all directions, often following no discernible sequence and sometimes adopting a different form of address paragraph by paragraph. It is objective and subjective, metaphorical and literal, poetic and pro-



Detail from Marcel Moore's frontispiece to chapter 1

saic. "When the mechanism has been completely deconstructed, the mystery remains intact" writes Cahun.

This intentional creation of mystery, along with the prominence of hands and eyes in the images, broadly suggests a Surrealist intent. In addition, (after stars and hearts in other chapters) the sections of the last chapter are separated by small eyes. Think of Max Ernst's unforgettable *Eye of Silence*, Man Ray's *Glass Tears*, Magritte's *False Mirror*. To the Surrealists, the Eye represented a gateway to the Subconscious, a tool for revealing hidden truths. André Breton's *Manifestoes of Surrealism* (1924) refers 91 times, literally or metaphorically, to the eye.

In Breton's *Manifestoes* there is also *un chien* - the "Alsatian that has one blue eye and one yellow eye, the dog of the anaglyphs of my dreams." One of the lasting projects by arch-Surrealist Salvador Dali was his input (with Louis Buñuel) to the film *Un Chien Andalou*, an acknowledged milestone containing a wealth of Surrealist references, including the famous sick-making razor eyeball-slitting scene. A clear gel emerges from that wound: death, hope, or liberation? In dreams these are often one and the same.

Like many of her literary Modernist contemporaries, Cahun pays homage to her Classical antecedents. For example, she devotes a whole chapter to herself as an 'au-

rige' (Latin *Auriga*, charioteer). Cahun's wordplay, throughout the book, assumes readers' ready familiarity with the classics. She references Christian texts and ceremonies, philosophers and historians ancient and modern, Greek, Roman, and Norse mythology. She refers, too, to works by more recent luminaries, and her contemporaries: Apollinaire, Oscar Wilde, Molière, the symbolism of Rimbaud, the Dada and Surrealism of Breton.

ART AND QUEERNESS

Another feature of this unique text, especially relevant in recent times, is a connection between Art and Queerness. Bring to mind famous artistic couples (and triangles): Michaelangelo and Cavalieri, Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas, Virginia Woolf and Vita Sackville-West, Vanessa Bell, Clive Bell, and Duncan Grant, Oscar Wilde and Bosie, Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears, Tennessee Williams and Frank Merlo. Think also about the present-day activity that is (still) called cross-dressing. Marcel Duchamp, Grayson Perry, David Bowie, Beyoncé, Marilyn - all have created gender-defying alter-egos. Dali, too, was happy to wear a dress. Cahun and Moore were an unconventional couple; like a number of the aforementioned, they lived slightly outside regular society, but their kind of relationship was far from un-



Man Ray Tears

known among artistic radicals. So the fluid, unclassifiable writing of *Cancelled Confessions* is Modernist, Surrealist, of its time, but simultaneously infinitely contemporary. Its blend of reality and fantasy, the (Freudian) Conscious and the Subconscious, is unique, the intellectual reach, extraordinary.

As a most courageous work even

for its time, the book's disjointed form seems very relevant to today's copious fragmentary literary blogs, and also perhaps to the now heavily blurred association between the physical and the digital. It is a biography, though not at all as we might expect. Some sections could be called self-examination, but the text is so varied in form that the self being assessed becomes divided, fluid, and indistinguishable from its accumulated intellectual background.

This is, therefore, a timely reissue. As a physical object it is supremely well-produced, tissue-bound, reverse-engineered to look very like it might have looked in the original edition by Editions du Carrefour (a copy of which, incidentally, recently sold at Christie's for £3,500). It is perhaps important to notice, though, that while the original cover contained a few jolly neolithic nudes, the newer, more anodyne cover has cropped them out. Is nudity somehow less acceptable now? The eyes, though, are everywhere.



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CROSSWORD CORNER

Across

- 1. Players or sugar sprinkler (6)
- 3. Rail trade union became a tradition (6)
- 4. Urban kerbs show who holds the money (6)

Down

- 1. Revolutionary massage for angelic child (6)
- 2. A big wave to a big car (6)

1						2
3						
4						

Hastings Independent
Five-Clue
Cryptic Crossword

No. 276
by Peat Poser

Crossword Solution: Answers on page 5 of The HIP List

Weekend Ritual

This issue, HIP Business editor JORDAN CONNELLEY pops down to Ritual, a newly opened independent bar located at Marine Court, as they celebrate their first five weeks in operation

Run by the much loved Rory Myers of Half Man Half Burger fame and partner, designer Hannah Exley-Myers, and located next door to the flagship Half Man restaurant, Ritual offers a chic cocktail bar experience in the heart of St Leonards dispensing a well curated list of wines, local Sussex beers from suppliers like Floc (@flocbrewing) from Canterbury and Beak brewery (@beakbrewery) in Lewes, as well as a refined and unique bevvy of spirit-first cocktails.

In an animated interview with HIP, Hannah and Rory outlined the philosophy and emphasis behind

Ritual, a two year endeavor of passion to create an independent local watering hole designed, as Rory put it, to “do something for the community” and liven up the evening scene at Marine Court by offering a unique take on the Scandinavian style cozy cocktail bar. Indeed, it was a point of pride for Rory that Ritual does its own thing: “We are able to make our own decisions about the beers and cocktails on offer by opting for primarily independent and, where possible, local suppliers.”

Hannah described the early stages of Ritual’s inception and the design mentality behind the bar say-

ing “It was really an accident that we opened during the summer” with there being a real emphasis on creating a cozy space that can be used all year round, from sunny seaside summers to a warm and inviting Copenhagen-style refuge during the cold, wet winter months.

Both see Ritual as an addition to a growing bar scene in St Leonards and an accompaniment to the existing restaurant offering at Marine Court. When talking about their cocktails they stressed how hard it was to finalise their menu, which they have carefully balanced around an impressive list of high quality spirits that offer options for all tastes, as well as a growing list of non-alcoholic options.

Open Thursday to Sunday, Ritual also host a number of weekly music events, including a set from cult DJ Shed this past weekend (Saturday 3 May), playing vintage tracks fresh from Beauty and the Beat London (@beautyandthebeatldn) as well as a number of events delivered by local DJs assembled by local musician and DJ Elliot ‘Easy’ Green (@easy.green.uk).

Sampling the venue on a sultry spring Friday afternoon, my drinking partner and I asked to sample the most unique concoction on the



Mixologist James putting the finishing touches to a Raspberry Ritual.

menu, and the team duly delivered with their Raspberry Ritual—a heady but balanced cocktail combining strong nutty amontillado sherry, vibrant and rarely seen absinthe flavours, as well as refreshing hints of Raspberry and Rum. There is no cocktail quite like it in Hastings, and it was recommended by mixologist James as a Ritual staple.

Alongside the Raspberry Ritual, Rory and the team offer a full set of classic cocktails, from OG cocktails like the Frozen Margarita or Negroni, offered in classic gin style or with a smoky Mexican mescal twist,

and new flavours such as the Pandan Colada. A Guatemalan toasted coconut style rum infusion mixed with coconut milk and pineapple to bring back memories of pura vida and the Caribbean playa – the perfect choice to accompany a sunny spring evening pre-dinner aperitif.

Ritual is located at 8 Marine Court and is open Thursday through Sunday. For more information visit @ritualstleonards on instagram.



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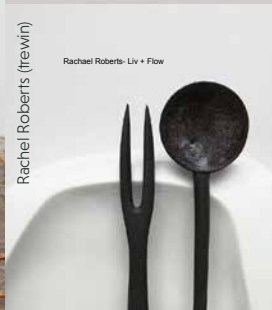
Catalin Filip - Melo Clay

Jo McAllister



add jewellery after name

Rachael Roberts (rewin)



Rachael Roberts- Liv + Flow

Ellen Xxxxxxx



Ellen Xxxxxxx

Rowan Xxxx



Rowan Corkhill

Becklands Studio



Replace air person has dropped

CRICKET

Priory Line Up Without Overseas Recruit

HUGH SULLIVAN

An unusually dry and sunny spring has brought cricket weather early this year, and the Horntye Park pitch off Bohemia Road is looking a pretty picture. The Hastings & St Leonards Priory team, relegated from the Sussex Premier League by the closest of margins last September, play their first Division 2 match away to Preston Nomads 2nd XI tomorrow (Saturday). They will open their home season the following Saturday, 17 May, when they entertain Brighton & Hove.

Harry Scowen captains the team for the second year, and it's likely that they will lean heavily on him again for runs at the top of the order.

Two of last year's regular batting line-up, Dylan Woolley and Adam Keane, won't be available, and Tom Gillespie is likely to make only intermittent appearances as he commutes between Hastings and Spain. But Caleb Laloo will be expected to build on his confident form of last summer, Ryan Hoadley is set to return, and there are two new recruits, Shawn Johnson from Bexhill and Freddie Hulbert from Linden Park (Tunbridge Wells). Both will bat in the middle order while also offering seam bowling options.

In this department, Priory have considerable depth: Adam Barton, Saatchi Mahendran and evergreen John Morgan should share the new ball, while Seaver Cowley and Iden McCleave will give dependable support. Jed O'Brien expects to be avail-



Iden McCleave at Little Common

in their immediate return. But Osborne's return for a second year was not a success, and he was released early. It remains to be seen how this summer's team will fare without any replacement.

One positive which Morgan as club chair feels will enhance team cohesion and spirit is the return of the 2nd XI to play alternate matches at Horntye. Promoted last season to Division 4 East, just two tiers below, they should be able to provide a good standard of experience for players on the fringe of the first team, and better opportunities for juniors to come through and compete for first team places.

For now, there's pressure through the club to get in the nets and find some form for the summer ahead. In a pre-season friendly against Division 3 side Little Common Ramblers on 26 April, the Priory batsmen, with Scowen absent, found themselves facing a keen bowling attack on a lively pitch and were dismissed for 204. McCleave top-scored with 45. In the field, the Hastings side held back their faster bowlers and gave spinners Francis and O'Brien, a fuller work-out. Their hosts won comfortably, reaching their target with eight overs to spare and only four wickets down, Francis taking three. More serious contests lie ahead.

FOOTBALL

United Bow Out Of Isthmian Premier

21 April
Dover Athletic 1
Hastings Utd 1

26 April
Hastings Utd 2
Potters Bar Town 3

HUGH SULLIVAN

On 10 August Hastings United won the opening game of their Isthmian Premier League season, beating Horsham 2-0. They also won three days later, away at Whitehawk. Eight-and-a-half months later they've finished 20th out of 22 teams, relegated back to the South East Division, while Horsham ended as champions.

In between, not so much a rollercoaster ride as a steady slide down the table, punctuated by changes of manager – from Danny Bloor to Sean Ray in October; from Ray to Danny Searle in December;

from Searle to Dean White at the end of March. None were able to find a consistent formation enabling both sustained attacks and solid defence; nor did any achieve a run of positive results that might have bred confidence, which gradually drained away.

On an individual basis, however, several players can look back on the campaign without remorse. Goalkeeper Louis Rogers had an excellent season, often required to compensate for defensive frailties in front of him and making very few mistakes. Centre-back Ollie Black, loaned for most of the season from Worthing, was similarly reliable, whilst his long throws were frequently the team's best attacking ploy. Adam Lovatt worked tirelessly, as ever, in midfield before injuries took their toll. Newcomer George Walker swiftly became a fans favourite with his speed and willingness to run the wide channels: Bloor started him as full-back, White ended up using him as an attacking winger. And Davide

Rodari never shirked his dual role as leader of the forward line and as regular goalscorer, hitting 18 league goals and, including cup games, a season's total of 25.

NEXT SEASON

We'll have to wait to find out how many of these stalwarts will remain in claret-and-blue colours come August. Black was already summoned back to his parent club for the final games of this season. Rogers, Lovatt and Rodari all have the talent and experience to play at National League level if they want to.

Back in the Isthmian South-East, Hastings will not only be looking for yet another new manager – White only stepped in on an interim basis to see out the season when relegation looked inevitable – but will probably have to rely more heavily on home-grown talent coming through. Fin Chapman, Freddie Legg, Kian Moynes and Tom Howard all played regularly this season. Joe Clifford and Charlie Scarles were given opportunities in the final few games to get a taste of senior adult football. Other juniors should now get their promotions sooner than if the team had remained at Premier level.

The Pilot Field ground, with its dilapidated stand and overplayed pitch, is in dire need of a major overhaul, though there's no probability of any large funding source being found in the near future to finance it. What has never been in doubt, throughout a consistently disappointing season in terms of results, is the loyalty and ardour of crowd



Adam Lovatt (in claret and blue), Louis Rogers (in green)

support. Overall attendance numbers were adversely affected by miserably wet winter weather and, consequently, by the proportion of home games that ended up being played midweek. However, even last month, when relegation was a virtual certainty, over 1,100 came up

the Elphinstone Road to watch the 'U's play Hashtag, maintaining fervent support to the end of a 0-0 draw.

There's no doubt that the club maintains a strong bond with its fans and with the wider town. All will be hoping that the team can bounce back quickly.



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