

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



Can't Run On Empty

Youth Commons Pleads for More Revenue Funding to Avoid Closure

HUGH SULLIVAN

In January 2023 Hastings Commons was awarded £8.7 million of public and charitable funds for investment in youth infrastructure and facilities at Eagle House and the Observer Building in Cambridge Road. Over 100 children and teenagers per week between the ages of 11 and 18 – from across the borough and beyond, many from socially deprived backgrounds and with complex needs – are being offered life-changing experiences and opportunities.

But its trustees warned last week that unless the core costs of the enterprise, including wages of youth workers, rent and food, are covered, or at least supplemented, by further government funding, it may be forced to shut its doors.

“We welcome the government’s recognition that young people need stability and continuity while we wait for the new National Youth Strategy,” said Jess Steele, CEO of Hastings Commons. “We’ve had a great injection of capital to create wonderful facilities. Now we need revenue funding to continue to pay staff and keep these vital youth spaces open. You can’t



Pulling Up The Bridge



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EDITOR'S NOTE

It's hot out there, so settle down in the shade with your favourite newspaper. Our News pages reveal worrying setbacks to grassroots projects in the town, with controversy over youth project funding at Hastings Commons and the alleged effect of the Chancellor's ill-considered National Insurance increase on Parchment Trust's Bridge Project in Ore.

In Community we've a shout out for building materials to assist a makeover of the Y Centre and an invitation to celebrate July's Community Energy Fortnight with Energise East Sussex.

If it's okay with the increasingly intolerant government, the Arts section hosts a collection of Palestinian children's poetry, plus a piano picnic in Fairlight and new music at The Beacon.

Eight pull-out pages of Listings remain packed as always. If you'd like to edit, improve and develop this essential part of the paper the door is very much open! Contact info@yourhip.com. As with all HIP's roles, the job is unpaid but a great chance to improve existing or learn new skills.

On the Literature page there's a topically relevant book review, 'The Lie of the Land', which examines just how much of Britain's beautiful countryside is publicly accessible. (Clue: not a lot.)

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News

1 just build youth centres and leave them empty.”

The original funding came from a Youth Investment Fund (YIF) grant financed by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport during Rishi Sunak's premiership and delivered by a charitable foundation, Social Investment Business. It was part of a programme intended to “transform and level up opportunities for young people” – one of 46 such projects across England costing a total of over £300m. The Fund was backed by what the Government called its “National Youth Guarantee” ensuring that every young person in the country “will have access to regular out-of-school activities, adventures away from home and opportunities to volunteer”.

At the time Hastings Commons described the funding as “enabl[ing] youth work and facilities that can transform health, wellbeing, skills and opportunities for young people. It is a ground-breaking opportunity to prioritise the needs of young people, to develop the life-changing environments they need and to create a more equal society for future generations.”

YOUTH PROGRAMME

Two years on, youth programme manager Sidney Ewing is keen to endorse the benefits which the Commons has been bringing. Sessions are run from 4pm to 7pm – different age groups on separate evenings. Young people can make their way to the venue directly after school and then travel back home at a reasonable hour by bus, though many of them (she says) are not enrolled in formal education, being either home-schooled or subject to exclusion. The Youth Commons works closely with Xtrax, a support agency for marginalised young people up to the age of 25, in giving assistance and advice to deal with crisis issues.

At the Commons, activities are guided and led by the young people. There's always hot food, table-top games, and arts and crafts, as well as organised trips, such as crazy golf or bowling, which are not charged for. Last summer, a day out in London gave many young people a chance to visit a city that they'd never set foot in before. During the Eagle House renovations, the youth club has been co-located with OBX,

the creative technology hub of the Observer Building, leading to opportunities, including work experience and training courses, with emergent tech.

Besides Ms Ewing there are three full-time youth workers and a bevy of volunteers, including some young members of the group being trained up as youth leaders.

REVENUE FUNDING

The vast majority of the YIF grant was awarded specifically for renovation and development of the buildings into usable space for young people. A much smaller proportion (less than £900,000) was earmarked for revenue funding. Jess Steele says they used this to develop and deliver the youth club and OBX while the building works were under way.

The long term aim has always been, and still is, that profits from events and a permanent bar planned for the rooftop of the Observer Building will generate cash that would be ring-fenced to support youth activities. In the event, the scaffolding has only just come down from the roof works, and there is

no bar yet nor any other profitable activities up and running.

“Delays in completing the building works haven't helped”, Steele admitted, “but it was always going to take time to build an income stream that can contribute significantly to youth work.... We've always known we would have to adapt and change over time, and we're doing that. But we—and youth clubs everywhere—need some base funding so we know we can keep opening the doors.”

In her Spending Review last month, Chancellor of the Exchequer Rachel Reeves claimed to be providing “record investment for training and upskilling our young”. She pledged £1.2bn a year by the end of the period “to support over a million young people into training and apprenticeships”, £555m of “transformation funding” for children's social care and £130m in “funding facilities for our young people”. The managers of Hastings Youth Commons are waiting to hear whether any of this largesse is coming their way. If not, what was the purpose of all that capital outlay?

Pulling Up The Bridge

HUGH SULLIVAN

The Parchment Trust has provided services in the community for disabled adults of Hastings for the past 30 years. As well as running the very productive horticultural nursery, Friary Gardeners (at Ore Place off the Ridge), and providing a day-care co-operative at Theaklen Drive in St Leonards, it has pursued for a

period of eight years an ambitious programme for a third venue: taking over and renovating The Bridge Community Centre in Priory Road on West Hill to create a supported environment for work and social opportunity.

Due to unspecified complications “beyond our control”, it took the Trust nearly seven years of complex negotiation with East Sussex County Council in order to secure full ownership of the site, finally

achieved in March 2024. That's at least how the Parchment Trust Team have described the process. Local residents who had previously enjoyed access to The Bridge as a community cafe and hub for diverse activities and gatherings have been less impressed, complaining that it has been kept closed, moribund and decaying throughout this period.

Be that as it may, the Trust made a successful bid last year for a grant on the Skills Capital Fund backed by the then Department of Levelling Up (now reverted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) to develop a reception area, ‘skills suite’ and meetings room. The amount allocated has not been publicly disclosed but it was one of 20 successful bids to share a £1million fund available in Hastings and Rother.

The Trust Team say that they also had to tackle a large-scale moth infestation, renew the fire equipment and intruder alarms, and undertake other “essential works”.

NO RE-OPENING

Most of this works programme has now been carried out. But in the same week as Hastings Commons Youth made their plea for fresh revenue funding to justify previous government-funded capital spending, the Trust Team made a more immediate announcement: the funding which it has received over the last year has proved insufficient to re-open the venue – and it won't.

The blame is put squarely on the Labour government's increase of employers' National Insurance contributions and of minimum wage levels along with its failure to offer any sort of relief to charities and other state-funded Adult Social Care providers.



The Bridge garden in former times

“We were almost at the point where we could plan the final works and open the top floor, when we heard the news of the increased duties on employers for National Insurance and minimum wage. We were hopeful that central government would step in with some sort of relief but, by 1 April this year, it was clear that no such support would be forthcoming.

“As one of Hastings' largest employers [theTrust employs around 130 staff and volunteers working across all services], the impact of the National Insurance increase is considerable. As a direct result, Trustees have concluded that we have to let The Bridge go; the additional cost of running a third site is now too great.

“This was an extremely difficult decision after years of hard work and investment, but essential in order to keep our core charitable services safe.”

The Trust Team say they are now “exploring options” for finding a new owner for The Bridge, ideally an organisation “which shares our values and purpose of supporting better lives”. They thank everyone who has helped with The Bridge “and been so patient while we've worked on it”.

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

Ask a Busy Man: Boorman to Chair Neighbourhoods Plan Board

Retired senior manager at Hastings Borough Council Kevin Boorman has been chosen by its members, in consultation with local MP Helena Dollimore, to chair the board responsible for delivering up to £20 million investment awarded to the town under the government's Plan for Neighbourhoods.

Previously introduced in 2023 by the Department for Levelling Up under Rishi Sunak's Conservative administration as the Long Term Plan For Towns, and re-branded by Labour's revised Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), the Neighbourhoods Plan offers £15m capital funds and £5m revenue over a ten-year period to each recipient town, including Hastings.

A Hastings Town Board was set

up last year, representing local community and business leaders, to identify issues and priorities. It has been chaired hitherto on an interim basis by Rebecca Conroy, CEO of the East Sussex College Group. But this spring, the Board invited expressions of interest in a voluntary role of permanent chair, drew up a short list of applicants, and last week unveiled Boorman as the chosen candidate.

During the invitation process, some criticism was expressed, including on the Hastings Creatives network, that such an important role should not be expected to be undertaken on a voluntary unpaid basis. However, it is understood that a wide range of applicants came forward, and there is general acclamation for the choice made.



JANESSA BOORMAN

The old adage that if you want something done, you should ask a busy man to do it, fits Boorman to a tee. A lifelong resident of Hastings, his early career was with British Rail, taking a wide range of managerial roles including strategic plan-

ning and marketing. After the privatisation of the rail industry, he joined Hastings Borough Council in 1998, taking responsibility at various times for all marketing and communications, IT, the cliff railways, the foreshore, the White Rock The-

atre, the museum and major events. In retirement since 2023, his CV looks hardly less busy: chair of the Two Towers Trust and of the Marshlink Community Rail Partnership (see adjacent picture), trustee of the Hastings Sierra Leone Friendship Link and of the Shipwreck Museum; PR officer for Hastings RNLI lifeboats.

He says he is delighted with his latest appointment: "I was born in the Old Town in the 1950s when it was one of the poorest parts of Hastings and have seen the town's fortunes change considerably over the years – with some good times and some bad times. It now gets a far better press than 30 years ago when we were dubbed 'Hellhole on Sea'."

"But I know there are still some major challenges facing the town, which remains very deprived in places. The Plan for Neighbourhoods gives us a real chance to make a real difference to our communities. We need to really listen to local people, and I am committed to consulting as widely as possible within the town."

Next meeting of the Board is scheduled for next Friday, 11 July. Its ten-year plan is due to be submitted to the MHCLG in November.



Hastings all weather lifeboat Richard and Caroline Colton on an earlier launch

Lifeboat Responds to Mayday Call

Hastings RNLI volunteer lifeboat crew towed a sailor safely into harbour after responding to his Mayday call last Thursday evening (26 June).

The lifeboat launched immediately and soon located the vessel,

which was approximately four miles west of Hastings and drifting eastwards. Once on the scene, the lifeboat crew assessed the casualty and, with force 5 winds and darkness approaching, the crew had a

conversation with the yacht's skipper to establish his welfare. They agreed that the best course of action was to tow the yacht to the nearest harbour, Eastbourne's Sovereign Harbour, for safety and repairs.

Arriving in the entrance to the harbour, the tow was shortened, and the lifeboat took the vessel into the marina via the lock.

Paul McCleery, Hastings Lifeboat's full-time coxswain, commented, "It's never nice being at sea sailing single-handed when the weather is deteriorating, daylight is fading, and you are a long way from home. When a situation of distress then arises which means you can't continue, it is fairly stressful – so I am pleased that we were able to locate and assist the casualty and get them into the safety of Eastbourne harbour."

The lifeboat returned to Hastings lifeboat station at 1am on Friday morning, and was refuelled and made ready for its next service. But the night had been one of the busiest the Hastings RNLI workforce has had for a very long time. Volunteers received three 'shouts' in the space of less than two hours – with two calls for the inshore lifeboat in addition to the Mayday call for the yacht. The crews of both lifeboats and the shore and support crews all worked extremely hard, showing great teamwork.

The Hastings lifeboat crew had answered a similar emergency call just four days earlier, on the evening of Sunday 22 June, when a 24-foot yacht came into difficulty off Hastings pier and also had to be towed to the safety of Sovereign Harbour.

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WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

✉Letter

EIGHTH CENTURY GENOCIDE

Dear HIP
Winston Churchill said that history is written by the victors. Although that is true, later historians are able to remove that bias and present a more balanced and fairer history. Reading our local Bexhill and Hastings histories, I don't think this has happened yet.
At some point before 771, the savage Hastings tribe retreated, or were pushed, to live on the Hastings peninsula, almost an island. They thought they would be safe living separately from the rest of the country. But in that year King Offa attacked them.
We know from the charter of 772 of a battle which took place at Cooden / Little Common on the east side of the huge Pevensey Bay of those days. The invaders moved across from Cooden as far as a windy hill, now Bexhill Old Town, and the charter of Bexhill 772 refers to building a Minster on this hill. The Hastings tribe had been pushed back to the Combe Haven estuary valley.
Over the following years the invaders began advancing around the Combe Haven valley, and experts say that they added to the original charter that they had been given that land, when they had not. The Hastings tribe is known to have made various stands—at Wilting Manor, at Bulverhythe where they enjoyed a few years, at White Rock and finally in the Bourne Valley.
It is not that our Bexhill and Hastings history is wrong, as far as it goes, rather it is incomplete. The Hastings tribe were defeated and had their land taken from Cooden all the way to the Bourne valley, being killed all the way. They had their backs to the Ridge

and nowhere to go. In any other country or place this would be called ethnic cleansing to extinction, i.e. genocide. The invaders took the name Hastings in memory of the people they destroyed. It's not a nice history, but it is a more balanced and less biased one. It shows respect to the 'followers of Haest', whom the people of Kent and Sussex didn't want anything to do with.
Paul Minter
✉Letter
HOUSING REFUGEES IN HASTINGS
Dear HIP
Upon reading your report *False Claims Spark Outrage and Fear* in HIP 279 I would like to comment, as an ex-private landlord. In a bid to help the people of Hastings seeking homes, I applied to let my property via HBC's LetStart scheme at a rent considerably below the current market value. Following a visit from Hastings Borough Council (HBC), I was required to upgrade various things, which I did at considerable expense. It was then suggested I contact a 'refugee scheme' who deal with HBC.
On meeting the people running this refugee scheme, I was astounded by the amount of money being offered to me to house the refugees; over and above any amount being offered by the LetStart scheme or, indeed, the open market. It felt like bribery! I didn't take up the offer. Please try to understand why people are so 'outraged' and sensitive to any story/information regarding migrants. We must remember the people arriving on 'little boats' are *illegal* immigrants. Perhaps, if they had applied to live in the UK via the legal process, people would look upon them more favourably.

I feel the difference between 'refugees' and illegal migrants is blurred and needs to be clarified. Also, it would help if HBC were more transparent with their housing policies and processes: perhaps a public presentation would help assuage people's fears and any misunderstandings they may have. Also, Hastings had a housing crisis prior to the influx of migrants, and the extra pressure has meant that the indigenous population of the town are experiencing increased competition to be housed.
L.F.O (full name provided)
✉Letter
COMMITTEE SYSTEM
Dear HIP
I do not support the creation of a unitary East Sussex (the less said about the so-called Mayoral Combined Authority the better). It would not only mean the continuation of the ineffective Tory-led East Sussex County Council in all but name, but also deprive the residents of Hastings (where I live) and other boroughs/districts of their right to control how services are provided in their own areas, thus furthering the centralised neglect for which ESCC is known.
I would prefer to abolish the county level authority in its entirety and delegate its powers to the existing districts/boroughs. But given that this Government, like its predecessor, is wed to the notion that 'bigger is better', and will push through unitaries whether we like it or not, I would suggest modifying the existing committee system within the proposed council to create geographically-based committees matching the boundaries of the existing boroughs/districts. The overall budget could be divided out between them, ef-



Former Hastings mayors Richard and Jackie Stevens - see letter below

fectively recreating those councils as nested bodies within the ostensible unitary.
Nicholas Davies
✉Letter
MAYOR'S TALES
Dear HIP
My wife and I really did enjoy reading *Bringing the Bling* in HIP 279 by our current Mayor, Becca Horn. She succinctly gave a flavour of what is expected of our Mayor and our town's representative during a Mayoral term of office.
Both my wife and I take a particular interest as we each served in this capacity, in 2000-1 and 1993-97 respectively. Hastings must do all it can to retain the right to have

its own Borough Mayor, which it was first granted in 1558 by Elizabeth I. We have one query about the Mayoral Chain or 'Bling' as Becca describes it, shown in the accompanying photo. This is different from the one both my wife and I wore. The chain in our time had two especially minted gold coins inserted within the chain's links. These were to honour our Queen's visit to Hastings in 1966 to mark 900 years since the Battle of Hastings. The Mayoral Chain is of great value, in more ways than one, so could Becca please clear up this mystery for us?
We also remember in the Mayor's Parlour there were furniture and wine coolers that once belonged to JMW Turner, the renowned painter—but perhaps we digress.
Richard & Jackie Stevens

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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Affordable Home Construction Behind Bexhill Road

Work has started to erect 16 affordable homes for Hastings Borough Council on waste ground to the rear of 419-447 Bexhill Road. Builders Boutique Modern, based in Newhaven, are using a modular method of

construction in which the components of the homes are built within their factory, then shipped to the construction site for assembly.
Among their workers are prisoners from Ford Open Prison, whose

inmates are being given the opportunity to apply for construction jobs under a scheme supported by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Ministry of Justice. With supervision and training, they are being given the chance to learn new skills that will increase their opportunities of long-term work after they are released.
Outline planning permission for the development was granted to the council by its own planning committee in 2019, despite objections that the land lies within a flood plain—at risk of inundation both

after heavy rainfall and from high tides—and with a further history of subjection to sewage leaks. After an earlier refusal of permission on these grounds, the ground floor levels throughout the development were 'strategically raised'. Three of the nine councillors on the committee again opposed the grant of permission, but a majority accepted experts' advice that an incorporated array of flood mitigation measures would be effective. Other planning conditions were discharged last month allowing building to proceed.

CORRECTION AND APOLOGY

In HIP 279, our lead story, *False Claims Spark Outrage and Fear*, covered the controversy surrounding a house in Sedlescombe Road. We inadvertently illustrated the story with a photograph of a house at 67 Sedlescombe Road North, rather than an image of 67 Sedlescombe Road South.
We apologise to the owners and occupiers of the former address for this error.

eastsussex.gov.uk/YourLibrary

Bingo is Back

Bingo returned to Hastings with the opening of the refurbished Deluxe Bingo at Pelham Place on Saturday 21 June – the hottest day of the year so far. Announced by a town crier and serenaded by the Beachy Head Brass, the ribbon-cutting ceremony was attended by Helena Dollimore MP and Mayor Becca Horn. Appropriately for the start of National Bingo Week, two lucky players won £1,000 jackpot prizes, and a £1,000 cheque was presented to St Michael's Hospice.

Jeremy Godden, managing director of Godden Gaming, who runs this and many other venues throughout the southeast, said: "The event was very popular, we've had good customer feedback, it's like I've delivered Xmas. Bingo is a social activity – two hours of putting the phone down; it's been lovely to see groups of friends attending."

He estimated that customers, who can play on either a tradition-



Inside the Deluxe Bingo Hall

al card or online screen five days a week, excluding Tuesdays and Wednesdays, are "80% local, 20% tourists." Downstairs from the bingo is an amusement arcade.

The premises began life in Edwardian times as the Hippodrome Theatre (with Marie Lloyd topping the opening bill) and later became the Royal Cinema Deluxe.

Cyclist Tackles Epic Journey

Robert Cooke, from Hastings, is set to embark on an extraordinary charity bike ride covering hundreds of miles from Burnhope, County Durham, to his hometown of Hastings – with a significant stop in Bournemouth. This challenging journey, taking place from 4-10 August, aims to raise vital funds and awareness for Prostate Cancer UK, a cause deeply personal to Robert following the loss of his father, Peter Cooke, to the disease in April 2023.

The ride is not only a tribute to his father but also a testament to Robert's incredible personal transformation. Having shed an impressive 9 stone, going from 26 to a current 17 stone, Robert has also forced his diabetes into remission through dedicated exercise and healthy eating.

This demanding physical chal-

lenge, undertaken by someone who only started cycling properly in 2023, aims to inspire others facing health battles and to highlight the importance of early detection and support for prostate cancer.

"Losing my dad to prostate cancer was devastating, and I want to do everything I can to prevent other families from experiencing that same pain," says Robert. "This ride is for him, and for everyone affected by this disease. It's also a way for me to demonstrate that with determination, significant personal challenges can be overcome, whether it's battling a serious illness like diabetes or achieving a healthier lifestyle. If I, someone who barely cycled until last year, can do this, then others can find their own path to better health."



Members of the public are encouraged to support Robert's incredible endeavour by donating to his fundraising page by visiting justgiving.com/team/robandtomsepicride You can also share his inspiring story to raise awareness and follow his journey and progress on TikTok at @fatmanonabike.



View of the Y centre kitchen

Calling All Builders and Suppliers

Sussex marketing agency PMW is asking local suppliers, tradespeople and businesses to step forward and help deliver a vital community makeover at The Y Centre. The centre is part of Hastings and Rother YMCA and is a community space dedicated to helping children and young people live a healthy lifestyle and reach their full potential.

This comes after PMW invited charities and not-for-profit organisations across Sussex to nominate projects that would make a difference as part of its Challenge PMW

initiative. The Y Centre was chosen for a transformation from over 60 nominations.

Making this vision a reality requires more than goodwill, however. It needs the hands-on help of local suppliers, tradespeople and businesses to turn it into something that provides a valuable service to the community.

Specifically, the team is seeking donations of essential materials to help renovate the small training kitchen, including kitchen cabinets, countertops, commercial sized pots

and pans, roller shutter and paint, as well as the time and expertise of local tradespeople, from decorators to carpenters.

Alternatively, if a local business or organisation would prefer to financially sponsor the purchase of key items, the Challenge PMW team would be delighted to hear from them. Every contribution will help bring this project to life.

Peter Sutton, Managing Director of PMW and leader of the Challenge PMW campaign, commented: "The Y Centre does so much to help children and young people be the best they can be. We want to turn their small kitchen into a purpose-built space to help young people develop real-life cooking skills and learn about healthy eating and nutrition, giving them confidence and tools for life."

"Just like the spirit of the old TV show *Challenge Anneka*, this initiative is about pulling together a community army, from big corporates with CSR budgets to local tradespeople who simply want to give something back. We know it's a big ask to donate time or materials in today's climate, but you'd be helping deliver a fantastic project for a brilliant local charity. Any business helping us will be recognised with pro bono marketing services from our team as part of the project."

Interested suppliers, businesses and trades should contact PMW on 01403 783400 to speak with a member of the Challenge PMW team or email challengepmw@pmwcom.co.uk by 30 June 2025, with their contact details and a description of what they can potentially offer.

Celebrating Community Energy!

Local community benefit society Energise Sussex Coast (ESC) will be joining Battle Solar Town and others next month in celebrating Community Energy Fortnight (1-14 July), a national celebration of people-powered energy.

Free local events include:

- two 'off-grid solar for beginners' workshops in St Leonards (Tues 1 & Tues 8 July);
- a special online Q&A with ESC's energy expert Martin Turner, about grants for insulation & home solar (Wed 2 July);
- a free community film screening of *We the Power*: the future of energy is community owned at Hastings' iconic venue The Pig (Sun 6 July, 5pm);
- a special talk and discussion, *Thinking about solar panels?*, at the Battle Memorial Hall (Thurs 10 July, 7pm).

Energise Sussex Coast will also be taking part in the mass climate lobby of Parliament on 9 July, organised by the Climate Coalition, and running free energy advice stalls at three local festivals: St Leonards Festival (Sat 12 July), Trans Pride Fest (Sun 13 July), the Protest'ival at the Old Bathing Pool site in St Leonards (Sun 13 July).

Founded in 2012, Energise Sussex Coast's mission is to act cooperatively to tackle the climate crisis and energy injustice through commu-

nity-owned renewable power and energy saving schemes.

Together with its sister project, Energise South, it has helped to install solar panels on a dozen sites across East Sussex, including six schools in Hastings & St Leonards, a block of flats in Bexhill, and community centres in Tilling Green and Pebsham. These projects are currently estimated to be saving local schools £82,000 a year in energy costs.

The government's Clean Power Action Plan envisions a massive expansion of the community energy sector over the next five years, creating thousands of new jobs.

Energise Sussex Coast is currently working on new community solar projects in Battle, Bexhill, Crowhurst, Eastbourne and Rye.

Energise Sussex Coast director Kate Meakin says: "Community Energy Fortnight is a brilliant opportunity to bring people together and show what's possible when communities take the lead on energy... Whether you're curious about solar, want to retrofit your home, or would like to learn more about community energy – there's something for everyone. We hope these events inspire more people to get involved and imagine a fairer, greener energy future, powered by communities."

Full details for all of these events can be found at energisesussexcoast.co.uk/events

Growing up to Become a Man

ALAN WRIGHT talks about his work with the Hastings community of ABandOfBrothers

The Hastings community of ABandOfBrothers (ABOB) held their twice yearly 'Homecoming' at The Salvation Army Hall, Hastings on Monday 30 June, marking the completion of each participant's journey through our mentoring programme, a significant milestone for the young men involved.

ABandOfBrothers is a charity that pairs trained mentors with young men (aged 18-25), who have grown up in care or are at risk of the criminal justice system. We run a ten-week programme to prepare men for a weekend camp, then a further three months mentoring and weekly meetings for as long as they like to attend.

ABOB mentors spend time listening, and reflecting with other young men, to help them find more meaning in their lives. This is done through one-to-one meetings and weekly community gatherings which aim to encourage a sense of purpose as a man, as well as a sense of integrity and accountability.

The organisation originated in Brighton in 2006; we started our Hastings group six years ago, joining eleven other groups around England. As an older man, aged 66, I wish I'd benefited from such a programme when I was young, to help deal with low self-esteem and to work out a future path in my life.

I only have very light addictions



Alan and Kerem share a hug

in my own life, but after listening to the young men we mentor, some with more damaging habits such as alcohol, drugs or gambling, I've discovered how a non-judgemental approach can help them to overcome these addictions.

Although I've found mentoring challenging, it's very rewarding to witness a young man's growth in confidence, and the results this

brings, such as seeing young men return to studies at college or finding a job.

If you know of a young man needing some guidance, or any older men in the Hastings area who would like to become a mentor, contact Stu on 07881 848965. For more information visit hastings.bandofbrothers.org.uk

KEREM WALLACE, AGED 20, TALKS ABOUT WHAT ABANDOFBROTHERS MEANS TO HIM

The name of A Band of Brothers is more than fitting. I see it as family. Just knowing that each man has gone through the same process that I have, gives me the comfort to open up when I need to.

It's helped me to socialise and getting out more. I'm talking to people I may or may not know; I can even hold myself accountable when I mess up or break an agreement I've made.

I'm glad I took that first step and took on a mentor. Don't get me wrong, I was nervous when deciding yes or no. I didn't know what would happen, I didn't know what I'd go through, but I'm sure glad I took that step.

I feel more alive and would love to see more men doing the same. I attend our community meetings regularly, and despite everyone knowing my past, I am welcomed with open arms.

Having a mentor has helped me to decide who I want to be, and one day I too will become a mentor.

Kerem

ADVERTORIAL

More Life than You'd Expect

Gardening with your grandchildren. Gaining confidence to volunteer. Feeling like yourself again. Not things you'd expect from a hospice – but at St Michael's they are part of everyday life.

Wellbeing assistant Andrea shares insight into her role supporting people through the Hospice's Wellbeing Programme.

Tell us about your role at St Michael's Hospice.

As a wellbeing Assistant, I work in a team of four, and our main goal is to support people with their physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs through our Wellbeing Programme and one-to-one support. We work very closely with our occupational therapists, physiotherapists, social workers, and the spiritual support team, as well as doctors and the inpatient and community nursed teams – we're all part of one big multidisciplinary team.

We support people at any stage of their journey with the Hospice, most of whom live in their own homes, but we also support those who are on the In-Patient Unit. Our aim is to support and encourage people to remain independent and active for as long as they can. We're there at a time where they might

feel they're not allowed or unable to do things they like, so it's about empowering people to continue being themselves.

Our Wellbeing Programme offers a range of groups from Tai Chi to Breathlessness Support, each group being tailored to the needs of the people we work with. Some people come with a set goal in mind, others just come to be in the space and share time with people who understand what they're going through. We're also here to help family and friends – anyone who is looking after the person with a life-limiting illness and needs some support too.

What's your favourite memory of working at the Hospice?

There was a person who came to the gardening group, unsure if it was for him. He had little gardening knowledge but, after a number of weeks, he started taking bulbs and tomato plants home. This activity helped him engage with his grandchildren and he found something new to enjoy towards the end of his life – it was very rewarding to be part of.

After he died, the family had the plants he'd grown and the memories of taking care of them together. Hearing his wife talk about the pleasure



Andrea on the seafront

he got from gardening and spending time with his family was very rewarding and left me feeling as though I was doing the right job. My job is about helping someone achieve something that people don't often think is possible near the end of life.

What has surprised you about working for a hospice?

The ability to give people our time that brings real benefits to their lives. We tend to see people at an earlier stage of their illness – those who can come into the Hospice and

engage in activities. Once we've supported them, they may not need us for a while, but they know we're at the end of a phone.

We also help people find the support they need locally – it's really important to help people stay within their community.

And finally, what's a moment you're proud to have supported?

One individual we supported in the Wellbeing Programme joined various different groups and built up her confidence to volunteer with us in

the Hospice café. Seeing her find a new sense of purpose and belonging has been truly rewarding.

Hospice care isn't just about the end of life – it's about making the most of every day.



Visit stmichaels-hospice.com/services to find out more about your local hospice. St Michael's Hospice supports the whole of Hastings and Rother, and all services are free of charge.



CHRISTINA WOCINTECHAT AT UNSPLASH

Use It Or Lose It: The Battle to Protect Free Advice Services

With face-to-face advice services under threat from continued austerity, INGRID ALLEN looks back at the unique role they've played in improving welfare across Hastings and East Sussex and offers advice



es facing our town. Though we work for different advice services, her verdict on the sector mirrored my own:

"A recurring theme over the past 42 years that HARC has been around is that the poor are always the hardest hit when there is a period of financial instability. Whether or not you would agree with the old adage that the rich get richer, it is difficult to deny the poor are getting poorer."

"Our clients tell us that the current welfare system is not accessible. Application processes and assessments are increasingly complex and restrictive, making the system incredibly difficult to navigate. In addition, parliamentary decisions and media communications have traditionally fuelled a narrative where benefit claimants are seen as 'idle' and fostered a culture of shame."

Wendy has no doubt seen, as I have, an increasing number of those who have never had to claim means-tested or disability benefits before, being completely overwhelmed by the bureaucracy involved, alongside a steady stream of returning clients with complex problems and chaotic lives who have been having to navigate the system for so long that they have given up hope things will ever get easier.

A rash of punitive and reactionary immigration reforms introduced since Brexit have also meant advice services are dealing with more and more immigration-related issues, whether from those who have been here for decades, or from recent arrivals. So, what happens when the advisers themselves start to feel a bit overwhelmed?

Luckily, the advice sector has the backing of a solid infrastructure of other charities and organisations that they can turn to when a particularly challenging case comes

their way. The No Recourse to Public Funds Network (NRPF) advises organisations dealing with anyone from asylum seekers to spouses of British citizens who cannot claim benefits, on their rights in the UK.

Shelter has a specialist team providing expert debt advice (including case law) to debt advisers who have exhausted every other avenue, and the Institute of Money Advisers give them excellent training and support throughout their careers.

Mind Infoline and Rethink can pick up cases where a client may be struggling with their mental health, including through conference calls to introduce a distressed client to a dedicated mental health professional.

This is to say nothing of the degree to which we all pitch in to help each other.

So, what can we all do to better support our local advice services? When you use them, treat their staff and volunteers well by keeping appointments or calling ahead to cancel. Don't misdirect anger over systemic injustices, and bring along relevant paperwork. Raise awareness of the good they do. Citizens Advice have long maintained a policy of never publishing posters or literature asking for donations, so few are even aware of their charity status, but it's important to remember that many of these services used to receive the bulk of their funding from local authorities and are now having to raise it elsewhere. To the majority of service users who have nothing to give, sometimes a kind word and a sense of a job well done is all it takes to lift an adviser's spirits. We're also partial to biscuits.

INGRID ALLAN is a charity caseworker and local campaigner who moved to Hastings in 2023. She can often be found on West Hill with her dog Bentham. For Hastings Advice and Representation Centre visit harcuk.com

Nearly everything we have come to enjoy and rely on in our everyday lives usually follows a familiar pattern: exclusively available to the aristocracy, then to the slightly better off, then, after a long uphill struggle, to the poor. This is true of tea, parks, chocolate, lawyers, central heating, medicine, mortgages, French bulldogs, access to the arts, and almost everything else you could think of, with one notable exception.

Advice services, one of the few pillars of our battered welfare state to have survived both Thatcherism and austerity in remarkably rude health, were set up entirely with ordinary people in mind. From the very beginning, debt played a huge role in any advice service's remit. Household incomes fell throughout the early 1940s, as men were called up to fight, or sent home in coffins, depriving many families of their main breadwinner. By 1942, there was a record 1,074 Citizens Advice Bureaux, from large, grand premises based directly in town halls, to

a converted horsebox which toured the areas worst affected by bombing to offer support to the survivors. Most had at least one debt specialist, a practice that continues to this day.

Brighton Housing Trust (BHT) sprang up from a single hostel on Islingword Road in 1968. It now offers expert housing advice to those facing homelessness across Sussex, including victims of the dreaded Section 21 no-fault eviction.

The Federation of Independent Advice Centres (which would go on to form Advice UK) was formed in 1979 when 100 or so activists from several major cities met at a North Kensington primary school. Unlike the Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB) model, where offices are reliant on well-established and standardised practices, any local charity could theoretically become a member. The original intention was primarily to pool resources where it made sense to do so. Following a spike in membership during the Miners' Strike, the FIAC turned its attention to de-

veloping educational tools and, from 1989, offered some of the first nationally recognised advice courses.

Hastings Advice and Representation Centre (HARC) was founded over 40 years ago to provide free and confidential benefits advice, to address inequality, relieve poverty and improve the quality of life for vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals and families. Today, they are staying true to these stated aims.

While the advice sector across Hastings, St. Leonards, and the surrounding villages can feel like a crowded field, with HARC, Citizens Advice 1066, the Seaview Project, and BHT Floating Support among others all providing crossover services, there are plenty of people needing help. Advice services will regularly make referrals across different areas of expertise, or where appointment slots are fully booked months in the future. Around 19,000 client contacts were made in the year to March 2024 to HARC alone, representing a significant chunk of our town's 92,000 population, and these numbers only look set to grow if next winter is as unforgiving as the last.

I spoke to Wendy Knowles, Development Manager at HARC, about the importance of advice provision generally, and the unique challeng-

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Piano Picnic - Competition Prizewinners at Fairlight

Hastings International Piano is delighted to present a full weekend of concerts, masterclasses and talks at Fairlight Hall. Four exceptional young pianists will be taking part: Curtis Phill Hsu, Harmony Zhu, and Mariamna Sherling (all recent prizewinners) and Lithuanian pianist Gabrielė Sukutė, a regular of the Learning and Participation Programme.

Friday evening will see an informal evening concert by Hsu and Sukutė, including music by Debussy,

Rachmaninov and Lithuanian composer Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis, and Mussorgsky's monumental *Pictures at an Exhibition*. The audience will be seated cabaret-style and a free glass of Pimm's is included in the ticket price.

On Saturday, there's a chance to watch all four pianists take part in open masterclasses with two of the UK's leading professors of piano: Aaron Shorr of the Royal Scottish Conservatoire, and Hastings International Piano's Artistic Director,



Harmony Zhu, one of the prizewinning performers

Professor Vanessa Latarche.

On Sunday morning there's an illustrated talk by Julian Dendy, one of the chief technicians at the world's leading piano manufacturer, Steinway & Sons. This company

plays a key role in supporting Hastings International Piano. Julian will show us how keys are balanced and hammers adjusted prior to a concert performance – and what difference this preparation makes

to the pianist and the listener.

Finally, on Sunday afternoon all four pianists will give a short but brilliant performance, followed by an opportunity to get to know all of them with a brief Q&A. The programme will include music by Chopin, Rameau, Ravel, Grandos and Debussy.

The perfect Fairlight gardens will be open all weekend, and visitors are encouraged to bring a picnic and explore the grounds at leisure. You can also book for a sit-down buffet lunch on the terrace before the concert on Sunday.

Tickets can be booked via Eventbrite - search for Hastings International Piano. eventbrite.co.uk Friday 4 - Sunday 6 July Friday concert - £25 + booking fee; Saturday Open Masterclasses - free but booking essential; Sunday Steinway talk - free but booking essential Sunday concert - £35 + booking fee; buffet lunch - £55 18s and under accompanied by a paying adult - free (but booking essential). Limited cover of the audience seating area will be provided in the event of bad weather.

Beau Flies Buzz

BEN THOMPSON

"It's a zipper, it's the act of flying, it's an annoying insect" explains Beau Flies singer and guitarist Otti Albietz, of the band's newly extended name (they were formerly plain old caps lock BEAU). Functional, thrilling, and with an insistent buzz, this explosively catchy power-trio have more than enough momentum to carry that expanded brand forward.

In the run up to their first full hometown headline show at Henry Ward Hall on 12 July, Beau Flies will be releasing the third in their series of double A-sided singles (universally accessible via Bandcamp, but you've got to be quick to get the seven-inch vinyl version on the Plural Baby label, as the first two sold out within days). When Otti has introduced 'A song about the 500 most important people in Hastings' at one of the sequence of



BEAU FLIES on the Road in Finland

gigs which have taken the band from a festival inside the Arctic Circle to a virtual residency at Lower Clapton urban cool epicentre Biddle Bros, it's seemed like a brutal put-down of self-appointed tall poppies might be on the cards.

"Poking fun at the cliques that be" is how bass player Haydn Acklerley puts it. But on closer listening, an infectiously humane depiction of people "looking for meaning and purpose" in testing circumstances also emerges—"I need to make a living... so little time to live!" Otti yelps, relatably.

The Hastings 500 is one of several Beau Flies songs offering a vision of collective betterment.

"This band is a community," explains drummer Colden Drystone. "It feels like much more than just three people, because musically we bring together a much bigger history and a broader sense of the world." Having first come to public attention as a visual artist, Drystone says the experience of being in Beau Flies compares favourably with his formative years in the Peckham art squat scene. "That was also about people with the same soul but different ingredients working together to make something new and hopeful, but generally speaking I think art struggles to do this as effortlessly as music, because it is so much more focused on the individual ego. I love our band because of its immediacy and democracy. When a gig goes well it feels like we are playing music that our audience has helped to write."

That sense of communal exhilaration is pithily summed up by Otti as "Real-time therapy for a town in dire need." Just don't call them Deep Purple to Borough Council's Rainbow...

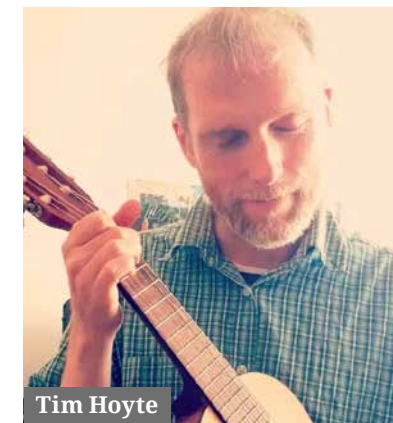
Show begins 7.30 pm. Tickets for Henry Ward Hall are £12 (+bkg) on Eventbrite or £15 OTD

New Music at the Beacon

Ambient electronic music ensemble Jury Service will return to The Beacon on Thursday 17 July with some very special guests for another summer evening of music to relax and immerse oneself in. The Beacon is known for its welcoming and unhurried atmosphere, and its gardens overlooking the town from the West Hill are at their best in the summer months.

The evening will also feature sonic alchemist Anthony Moore with virtuoso violinist Richard Moore (no relation), and renowned Alt-Folk singer and songwriter Tim Hoyte. Adding his distinctive visuals to Jury Service's dreamy psychedelic groove-scapes will be Exploding Cinema supreme Duncan Reekie.

Anthony Moore will need no introduction to many who have attended past events at the Beacon. His back catalogue is extensive and eclectic: founder member of art-rock band



Tim Hoyte

Slapp Happy, collaborator with German avant-gardists Faust, lyricist for Pink Floyd, plus other achievements too numerous to mention here. Moore will be performing his composition C-Sound and Violin, from his 2025 album Live in Cologne.

Tim Hoyte's subtle and skilful musicianship, with influences including Nick Drake and Sufjan Stevens, is widely admired. His 2019 album Summerland was nominated British folk album of the year by New York's St James Infirmary Radio Show. For this show Hoyte will be performing his mesmerising songs solo.

Jury Service was formed by drummer and percussionist Simon Charterton (Simon and the Pope) and Keith Rodway (Necessary Animals). They have since been joined by Ted Versicolor, renowned for his unusual choices of instruments (tree branches, car carburettors and other exotic objects) and his distinctive visuals.

Tickets available via Eventbrite or on the door, price £12.50. The Beacon has a fully licensed bar and food will be available. As ever, expect the unexpected. The Beacon, 67-68 St Mary's Terrace, Hastings, TN34 3LS



Hopes, Dreams, and the Sea

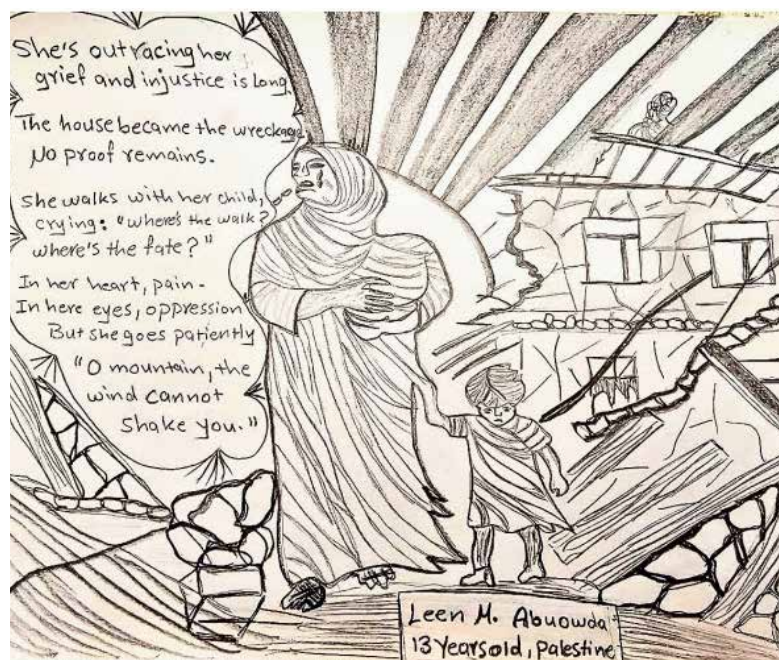
An astonishing collection of poetry and art by Palestinian children is coming to Hastings for a free exhibition, to be launched by famed British poet Alice Oswald. *Oh Big Blue* is a four-day exhibition of stunning poetry, written and illustrated by children aged 9 to 17 from all across Palestine.

The poems are entries to a competition run last year by British educational charity *The Hands Up Project*, in response to two paintings by Palestinian artists. One painting of the sea is by student Laila Mohammed, who escaped from Gaza the day before the Rafah crossing was closed last year. The sea holds special meaning in Gaza—it is Gaza's breathing place, representing horizons, possibilities, freedom and hope. The title of the collection was taken from one of the competition entries, a poem by 13-year-old Joud Isleem, who wrote: "Oh great sea, oh big blue! Take my dreams and bring me hope."

Award-winning British poet Alice Oswald, who edited the collection and will be opening the exhibition on 9 July, said that the work of the young poets had 'astonished' her.

"These are poems written by children, written in a second language, written from the centre of impossibility, written under bombardment, written with no water, written with no internet, written in a notebook and decorated with butterflies and sometimes decorated with blood," she said. "They show the beauty of the world, even in impossible circumstances."

Children from all over Palestine—including Jerusalem, Nablus, Ramallah, Hebron, Gaza and Jenin—contributed works to the collection. Author and competition judge Max Porter said: "Reading these poems was like walking in a spectacular light show made of feeling. The courage, hope and pride in these poems is an antidote to the poisons of this world. With their



resilience, tenderness and clarity, these poems amount to a genuine miracle of the human spirit."

Hosted by the Hastings & District Palestine Solidarity Campaign (HDPSC), the free exhibition at Stade Hall, Rock-a-Nore, is supported by The Chalk Cliff Trust and the Hastings & District National Education Union. It comes after a successful exhibition

of a previous book curated by the Hands Up Project, *Oh Moon Tell Me Truth* which was exhibited in Hastings in February 2024.

Katy Colley, from HDPSC, said: "We hear about what is happening to Palestinian children right now through the lens of the outsider, from reports of their suffering and their needs. But this is a chance to

get to know Palestinian children just as they are, as children; to peer into their hearts, to listen to their voices and hear their hopes, dreams, ideas and creative expression."

Jenny Sutton, from the Hastings & District NEU, adds: "We are proud once again to support this exhibition. We want our young people to gain some insight into the realities of life for children in Palestine, and we want to inspire them with a sense that we can make the world a better place. We urge schools, youth groups and families to visit the exhibition." Young visitors are also invited to enter an exclusive poetry and art competition, judged by renowned Hastings-based poet Salena Godden, based on the same paintings that inspired the work of the Palestinian children.



Oh Big Blue is free, open daily at The Stade, 10am-4pm, from 9-12 July. Tickets available for the opening launch event on Wednesday 9 July, featuring dramatic performances of the poems by actor Philip Woodford and by local young people. Visit stadehall.com/event/oh-big-blue-2

Blink and You'll Miss This: Rahman/Sutherland at Silchester Road

VICTORIA KINGHAM

Sometimes the most extraordinary musicians come down here and for whatever reason, the occasion is under-publicised. This is the case with an imminent concert by multi-award-winning, British jazz pianist Zoe Rahman and flautist, composer, bandleader, and educator Rowland Sutherland.

The two have collaborated before – Rahman's excellent 2023 album *Colour of Sound* features Sutherland on flute, along with other leading British jazz instrumentalists. Sutherland played here at Jazz Hastings a couple of years ago, presenting a variety of numbers including a couple of wonderfully evocative Nigerian tunes, all faultlessly rendered. Sutherland's skills on the flute cross all genres: endlessly versatile, he has soloed for Steve Reich at the Albert Hall, and graced orchestras such as the Philharmonia, the BBC Radio and the London Philharmonic. As a jazz flautist he has toured with David Murray, Dom Um Romao and Nana Vasconcelos.

Rahman has for many years now

been highly regarded on the British musical scene. A musician since childhood, with impeccable credentials from Oxford, the Royal Academy, and Berklee, her numerous albums are varied, innovative, inventive, and harmonically exploratory. Several of them have won, or been nominated for, coveted music prizes. She has appeared with Courtney Pine, Soothsayers, and Clark Tracey. She has featured on numerous radio and TV programmes here and abroad, and been named as 'one of the finest young pianists in Europe'. An uncompromising stylist, she strives for originality and new sounds. Her influences range from her one-time tutor Joanne Brackeen, through Julian Joseph to Alice Coltrane and the splendid Nikki Yeoh, who now hosts her own radio program and also appeared here, at Jazz Hastings, a couple of years ago.

Both Sutherland and Rahman were brought up in Britain with multicultural backgrounds, and this is reflected in the universality of their music, and in their own stated aims. "I grew up in West Sussex, when there weren't any other families who looked like our



Zoë Rahman

family, so that feeds into who I am as a human being and my experience of this world, and all that comes out in my music," Rahman has said. Sutherland has called his music a 'melting pot' and has brought together in his compositions a huge variety of melodies of every kind, from everywhere. Go and see them, or miss a unique creative experience.



Zoe Rahman and Rowland Sutherland play a one-off concert at Christchurch, Silchester Road, on Saturday, 12 July. Doors open 6.30 pm, concert starts 7 pm. Tickets from Eventbrite at eventbrite.co.uk/e/rowland-sutherland-meets-zoe-rahman-tickets-1387684414439, or on the door £12.50, or contact JC McFee on 07842 623217.

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Immutability

Fading Beauty: The Art of Anne Lydiat

VICTORIA KINGHAM

This article was originally intended to be the second item in an occasional series about Hastings photographers. However, from Anne Lydiat’s work and writing, it is quite clear that she is an Artist in the most profound sense. “Several years ago,” she has written, “I made a decision to make some changes in my life and my sense of being.”

This was the beginning, she continues, of her ‘expedition into the

territory of self’, which also involved a physical expedition to Europe, and a blank book called *lost for words...* which she placed surreptitiously into libraries wherever she went, usually in the Philosophy sections between Kant and Lyotard. She then took a photograph of the book. She was exploring ideas, the idea of loss, the idea of being lost.

Her photography is wonderful, but it is only part of what she does: a means to an end. For each project the photograph is part of a creative whole which depends as much on the process as on the finished prod-



On the first expedition at Scoresby Sound

uct. It is important to her and to her work that nothing is static, nothing is fixed. While she herself changes through the course of her life, everything else is changeable, mutable.

Her latest photographs are of icebergs. So far so remarkable, you

would think, and there are indeed some extraordinary images among them. But these are so much more than documentary evidence. Lydiat, with an extraordinary forty-year cultural and artistic life behind her, understands and communicates the changing patterns

of life – hers in particular, others’, and all life, in general.

ETERNAL QUESTIONS

The titles of her exhibitions raise a series of questions that are immanent, eternal. Loss, silence, existence within the elements, depth, awakening, mutability. Not only does she meditate on these things but she lives them; they are part of her, part of her life, and integral to her art and her photography. “Absence and loss and the idea of change have always been on my mind, part of my work” she tells me.

Some of her recent work was displayed last year in the PhotoHastings exhibition *There Not Here*, which was held in the very appropriate, decaying, upstairs space at St. Andrews Mews. “Just the ambience of the building leads you to being experimental” muses Lydiat. Her photographs have been reported as ‘faded icebergs’ and of course that’s what they are. But to go just a little beyond this bald description,



Cemetery, Ittoqqortoormiit, Greenland 2018

is to become aware of the real complexity of what is involved.

First, the icebergs themselves as subjects: to photograph them in 2016 Lydiat and her husband Chris Wainwright undertook a trip to Greenland. Travelling was not unknown to them; Wainwright was head of several colleges in the University of the Arts in London, and together they had undertaken countless international trips for outreach, art exhibitions, college occasions, conferences. They lived on an old British Medway Coaster, *MB Rock*, for years, and one of her earlier exhibitions documents not only the technical challenges of

life afloat but also its transience, its fluvial fluidity.

Second, to photograph icebergs up close (and personal) involves a trip round difficult terrain. Coming across these photographs again, Lydiat realised that the ice was melting so quickly that the likelihood of them still being there was remote. So these icebergs were fading, changeable objects, whereas a photograph implies something fixed in time, permanent. One of the photographs became faded by virtue of being left in the open air accidentally, and this triggered Lydiat's idea. Thereafter the medium be-

came the message: the photographs ceased to be static representations and became themselves mutable, disappearing.

Third, the technical challenge. "I had no idea of the work I was going to make, it was like, it's a photography show, what shall I do? I changed my photos from colour to black and white, and sought advice from Lucy Bell, and eventually left them out in the sun." She also hung a great many in Gallery 5 in the Art School (while the students were on holiday), hanging them edge on so that she could get more in, under the glaring glass roof. In a few weeks they were totally sun-faded. "Others were left out and it rained, then I swept the water off it, and that's what produced different kinds of interference." When she showed the photos in London, most people thought they were sepia copies – they hadn't envisaged the extent of the creative process.

DYNAMICS AND LOSS

This set of photographs is therefore a dynamic representation of a living process. The actual trips to the Arctic were extraordinary in themselves: the first trip in 2016 had been planned by Anne and her husband but on the second, after the anniversary of his death, she herself commissioned a boat and led an expedition that retraced and extended the one that Louise Arner Boyd made in the 1930s. She recorded the voyage via film, photography, drawings, audio and visual recordings, and, uniquely, drone footage. For this valuable exploration, Lydiat was made a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. The two trips are therefore a record of loss – loss of the ice subjects themselves, but also of her own personal loss.

Besides the trips, there was the idea of mutability. "I make the work



because I'm interested in the idea – so making them permanent is contradictory to what I want to do. I'd also like to do a book, and get it printed on cheap paper, then it would fade over time. So I want to save the idea of the image fading and disappearing." She has two – admittedly beautiful – images framed and hanging on her wall at home. She won't do this again.

The images are technically accomplished and complex. But digital imagery itself is transient, and the idea of a digital image, faded and fading, is infinitely transient and also continuous. And some of the works are photographs of photographs – two stages removed from the subject but still, through that distance, becoming the representation of the subject.

And though a digital image, especially a large one, *looks* solid, it is actually – what? Mutable to the point of non-existence. Electronic impulses representing colours and lines and spaces and sizes, not a physical image at all. Lydiat's photographs have been projected (by the Arteam Gallery, New York) on to enormous, lit-up, digital billboards in Times Square: "So it's quite interesting that on the internet you're not aware of their mutability," she continues. So what happens when the lights go off?

TO CONTINUE ...

Ewan Shah, of the Japanese online gallery and arts facility AATONAU, recently wrote an article about Lydiat's work called *The Art of Seeing What Is Not There*. He describes the nature of her work perfectly, and the link is at the end of this article. "Photography, for Lydiat, is not merely a method of documentation but a conceptual tool that enables her to interrogate the nature of perception," he writes, and ends with this sentence: "Lydiat's art does not seek to provide definitive answers; rather, it raises questions, inviting audiences to engage in a dialogue with what is visible and what is not. Her ability to capture the essence of time, space, and absence ensures that her work continues to provoke thought and inspire contemplation, pushing the boundaries of artistic exploration

in ever-expanding ways."

A further port of call after the icebergs was to Ittoqqortoormiit, an Inuit settlement. What is now well documented is the sinking of such villages due to the melting of the permafrost, and the considerable and rapid changes in the landscape which require a great deal of human adaptation, during which time there is a loss – of a complete lifestyle. All of this will feature in a new set of images. "The church is already sinking, the permafrost is melting and the church door won't work properly any more. Their hunting life has almost ground to a halt," she tells me. Global changes are therefore reflected at a local level: change, mutability, depth, loss – all of these ideas will be present in the works she will exhibit here in Hastings at the PhotoHastings show *Here, There* during October. Since this interview she has also been awarded a prestigious international art prize for one of her *Immutability* series, for inclusion in the 7th International Leonardo Da Vinci publication.

Lydiat trained as a sculptor, but she says she doesn't keep the sculptures any more. There isn't the space, so apart from some documentary photographs these, too, are lost. They existed, now they do not. Everything changes. According to the second law of thermodynamics, certain processes are irreversible; we call this entropy (roughly meaning transformation), a measure of the uncertainty of any given system. "As the entropy of the universe is steadily increasing, its total energy is becoming less useful. Eventually, this is theorised to lead to the heat death of the universe," wrote Matthew Norton Wise in 1989. Lydiat's art reflects this process, which is happening over a time that we may imagine is eternity, but is ultimately finite. "It seemingly takes something to threaten our way of being, in order to make us contemplate change."

Artist details at Annelydiat.com, also Instagram and Facebook. Lydiat's amazing work will appear in this year's PhotoHastings show at St Andrews Mews in October. More details at photohastings.org



BOOKBUSTER REVIEW

The Lie of the Land

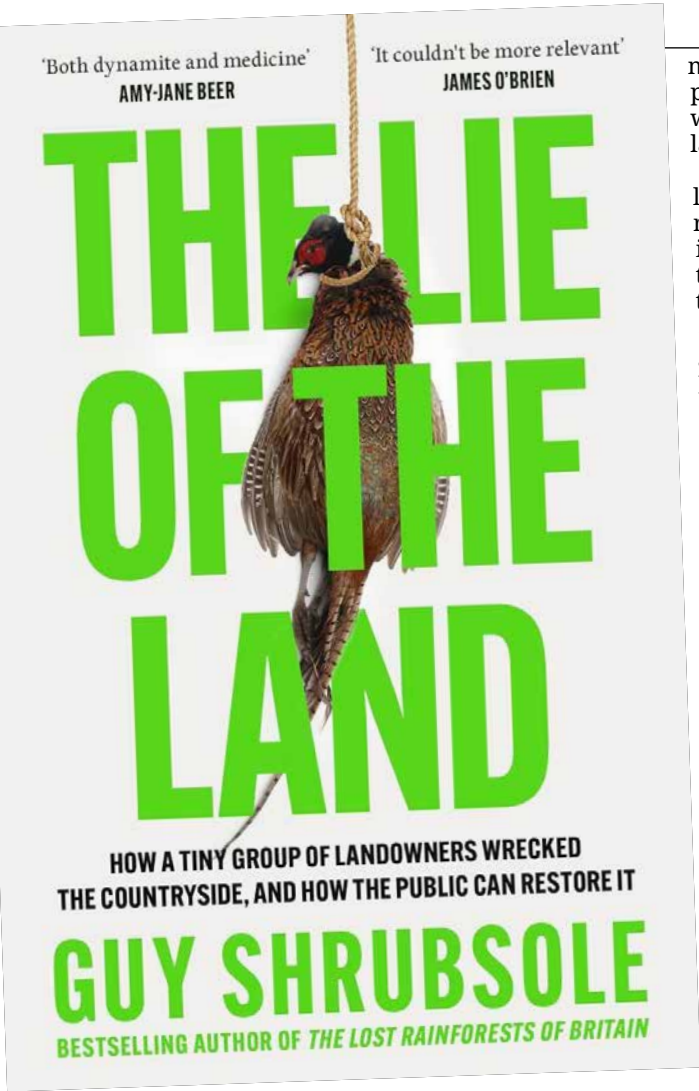
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PRICE £9.99
REVIEW BY TIM BARTON

Guy Shrubsole is the author of the bestselling *The Lost Rainforests of Britain*. His latest book, out now in paperback, includes some of the remnants of our temperate rainforest, along with 92% of English land – land we have no right to roam upon. Indeed, much of the 8% left over upon which we may walk is privately owned. The recent farce over camping on Dartmoor highlights this for us, and Guy, who himself lives in Devon, covers the court case over access here. The book went to print before the victory was won against the landowners last month – judges unanimously dismissed an appeal by Alexander and Diana Darwall against a 2023 ruling upholding Dartmoor Commons Act.

Lewis Winks of protest group Right to Roam, in an article in the Exeter Observer, said “Dartmoor remains the only place in England and Wales where the public has a right to wild camp and can lawfully experience the magic of sleeping under the stars. And the fact that one wealthy landowner, Alexander Darwall, was able to temporarily remove a right that belonged to everyone, demonstrates how England’s system of access is utterly broken.” He added: “The Labour Government must now pass a new

Right to Roam Act to defend and extend the public’s rights to access nature in England. Ministers must urgently change the law not only to protect the right to wild camp on Dartmoor from future challenges, but to expand the public’s right of responsible access to the wider countryside.”

‘AN END TO FEUDALISM’
Shrubsole’s hardback edition *The Lie of the Land* was subtitled ‘Who really cares for the countryside’. The paperback is more combative, with the new subtitle ‘How a tiny group of landowners wrecked the countryside, and how the public can restore it’. The book takes a look at who owns the countryside, how many landowners propagandise about what a great job they do as stewards and suggest the ‘townies’ will just treat the countryside as a garbage dump. Shrubsole gives this elitist claim short shrift. He gives us many examples of how these self-professed ‘guardians of the land’ in fact cause great damage. This ranges from agricultural runoff, through destructive alteration of the course of rivers and degradation of wetland including SSSIs, to the effect rape of the land has in the name of grouse and pheasant hunting for toffs. The latter alone causes immense destruction of our native flora and fauna for a sport which accounts for per annum CO2 emissions of half a billion tons. At the same time, he acknowledges and praises those landowners that do in fact care for their land.



All this makes for a fascinating read, and I recommend it. And I could fill this review with the dastardly behaviour of our elites – but in fact, the best thing about the book is its sections dealing with the second half of its new subtitle, how we can address stewardship and ownership issues. As Shrubsole notes, currently ‘in a country where 1 per cent of the population owns half of all England, such decisions are made by a tiny elite’. One clear change required to begin to solve pressing issues around degradation of our natural environment, and urgently enhancing the sustainability of our native food supply, is a widening of involvement in decision-making. It is an uphill struggle, landowners are rich, influential, and often angry – in 1983 effigies of conservationists on the Somerset Levels were hung by the

neck by farmers opposed to plans to re-wet drained wetlands.

The focus on England is tempered by reference to the various successes in protecting land, beyond the right to roam, in Scotland. Shrubsole gives over a fair few pages to the public acquisition of vast swathes of the former Buccleuch Estate, and what the Scottish government fairly describe as ‘an end to feudalism’, focussing on community ownership as well as the right to access. Centuries after the eviction of Highlanders from the land they lived on and farmed by arrogant lairds who could be richer with sheep than tenants, the ancestors of the victims of the clearances in Sutherland now have the right to buy the land. A Heritage Trust now owns the Isle of Eigg... Needless

to say, in England we remain quite definitely ‘feudal’, with a disproportionate amount of land still owned by earls, barons, and lords granted vast acreage after the Norman Conquest. Globally, more and more land is owned by venture capitalists, and even Utah’s Mormon Church. And changes of governance under Thatcher ‘closed down debate about the public ownership of land for a generation’.

‘THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM’ LAND OWNERSHIP
So, read this excellent book all the way through! But, here I will round off this review with a quick potted rundown of Shrubsole’s main recommendations for action. He says that reform must be a democratic process, a million miles from where we are now. There must be stricter prioritisation, as much land is

deemed ‘multi-use’ that in fact has quite narrow requirements if it is to be protected, such as our vanishing wetlands. One might mention the disconnect between those who think we can address the decimation of our forests through massive monoculture plantations, and those who see that different biomes should be seeded with appropriate native trees and flora in order to recover. And none of this means diddle-squat without addressing ‘the elephant in the room’, land ownership. To do this requires agriculture and forestry be bought into the planning system, as, unbelievably, they are not!

He finishes on a ten-point programme, beginning with protecting our greatest carbon sinks, moorland and the fens, and banning moorland burning and grouse-shooting. King Charles, our supposedly ‘green’ royal wouldn’t like that. Second, institute a community right to buy in England. Third, use public money to ‘buy land for nature’. Fourth, levy a carbon land tax on polluting landowners. Fifth, stop letting landowners unleash hundreds of thousands of imported pheasants on the land in shooting season (indeed, why not ban shooting?). Sixth, create a ‘right of responsible access’ giving the public rights to become whistleblowers when finding nefarious land practices on yer lordship’s manor. Seventh, let national parks serve the interests of nature, especially important now rare-metal rich uplands such as Dartmoor are now technically within the new ‘enterprise zones’. Eighth, ‘put in place a land use framework for England and open up data on land’. Ninth, ‘require landowners to give an account of their stewardship’, Shrubsole’s ‘Ecological Domesday Book’, and, tenth, not a policy suggestion, ‘but a plea to everyone reading this book’ – ‘Join campaigns to hold landowners to account and change the laws of the land’.

We cannot go back to ‘subsistence rights on the common land’, as once granted under the Carta de Foresta, not with a UK population of 70 million people, but we can and must be activists for change. Scotland is proving it works. Solidarity is the way.

The Lie of the Land is available at a specially reduced price from Bookbuster, 39 Queens Road TN34 1RE

POETRY CORNER

ONE MORE TURN
BEN FAIRLIGHT

Now that our sun softens its glare
To smile among shape-shifting starling clouds
As jackdaws call in startled crowds
That gift a fifth dimension to the tainted air,
Our scraping footprints knead each leaf
To know its beauty unbonded,
While we cling to our dough, our booty bagged,
To save us all from winter grief;
We sidle the rim of this pan of clay
And mostly sniff the other way
To spite our black hole's no escape
Wringing the abyss with an echo now hoarse:
How many seasons more of earth rape
Will those high-court judges grant us?

CROSSWORD CORNER

- Across**
- Not her arrangement for an insect (6)
 - Starting price covers chestnut say for this actress (6)
 - Number of the Spanish flat (6)
- Down**
- Irritating inconvenience when he has sleep deprivation (6)
 - This thief was a dick (6)

Crossword Solution: Answers on page 5 of The HIP List

1					2
3					
4					

TENNIS

Family Rules in Club Finals

HUGH SULLIVAN

The Amherst club tournament finals took place on the day of the summer solstice, Saturday 21 June. In mostly glorious sunshine, a full crowd watching from the central decking between Courts 1 and 4 enjoyed a free-flowing bar, ploughman's and strawberry comestibles, and a schedule that had to accommodate three of the four singles finalists also competing in doubles contests. Beginning at 1pm the ten-



Jada and Debi Ani after retaining their women's doubles title

nis continued unabated through the afternoon and evening until prizes were handed down some seven hours later. Quentin Soucek retained his men's title with a confident demolition of younger opponent, Josh Craig, who had already justified his no.2 seeding by eliminating senior club coach Pete Farthing in a three-set semi-final four days before. "A win for my protégé is a win for me", Farthing said.

Quentin then teamed up with son Orlando for the most enthralling match of the tournament in the men's doubles final. Top seeds Jack Watson and Stefan Le Breuilly had breezed through previous rounds with their non-stop running, retrieving and all-round hustling style. They took the first set 6-2, and seemed to keep the upper hand in the second. But with a number of younger Soucek family members cheering on from the decking

above, the father-and-son duo fought back, achieved 6-6 parity and won the set in a tie-break from 2-5 down. In the third set, their greater weight of shot from the back of the court and increasing volleying power eventually tipped the balance as they squeezed home 7-5. Over on adjacent Court 4, last summer's doubles champions mother-and-daughter Debi and Jada Ani were challenged by veteran pair Barbara Fentiman and Anita Pearce. The older team targeted Debi, less for her vulnerability than to avoid Jada's fearsome array of groundstrokes on both wings, but again family values triumphed by a 6-1, 6-4 scoreline. Women's singles title-holder Nikki Crowhurst seemed to have the measure of Pearl Hare in a repeat of their 2024 final, taking a 5-1 lead in the first set as her booming ground-strokes and mercurial serve launched waves of attack. But Hare is a redoubtable competitor and, as errors crept into Crowhurst's game, she turned the match round, winning the first set on a tie-break and the second 7-5 from 3-5 down. Hare went on to secure a second championship victory, teaming up with Craig to win a comfortable victory in the mixed doubles over

Watson – clearly a trifle weary after his epic men's doubles match – and Karen Cunningham. The whole fortnight of the championships was a triumph of club camaraderie – organised and delivered from beginning to end by volunteer members. Seventy-nine competitors (youngest aged 13, oldest 83) entered one or more of the five competitions; over a hundred matches were played, as first-round losers entered consolation events which peaked in a separate round of finals on the same day. But in case the Amherst club might be thought too insular or self-regarding in this narrative, they are holding a quite different event tomorrow (Saturday) – a Dawn To Dusk charity tennis extravaganza in aid of St Michaels Hospice. From first court entry at 6am until fading light at 9pm, all seven club courts will be given over to coaching sessions, to cardio tennis and other challenges, and to open play, with suitable refreshments offered in the clubhouse. All proceeds will be donated to the hospice. Tickets (to book time slots) are offered free through Eventbrite, and players of all ages and abilities, with or without any connection to the club, are encouraged to come out to play – and donate.

CRICKET

Priory Frustrated by Last Pair

21 June	
Roffey 2nd XI	272 for 6
Hastings & St Leonards Priory	278 for 8
28 June	
Priory	194
Eastbourne	110 for 9

HUGH SULLIVAN

In a topsy turvy game at Horntye last Saturday, the cricketers of Hastings & St Leonards Priory came within a whisker – that's to say an umpire's marginal call – of triumphing over neighbours Eastbourne. The visitors, previously unbeaten in Division 2 of the Sussex League, lost their ninth wicket in the 42nd over, 84 runs adrift of the Hastings score. Their last pair, numbers 10 and 11, were surrounded by close fielders, and subjected to a series of ear-splitting appeals every time the ball hit a pad but they managed to dead-bat the last 34 balls bowled by Prior's spinners Adam Page and Shawn Johnson to secure a draw. Earlier in the day, Priory's batsmen, invited to take first innings

after captain Harry Scowen lost the toss, had struggled to muster a decent total. Six of the top seven reached double figures, but only Tom Gillespie, making a rare return to the team, went on to greater profit, and at 126 for 8 in the 36th over, they were in serious trouble. A ninth wicket stand of 55 between Gillespie, who finished with 76 not out, and veteran John Morgan (25) retrieved some respectability. But it was costly too, in that Morgan pulled a hamstring in a scamper between wickets, leaving Priory short of a key bowler to defend the final score of 194. Their response in the field was admirable, with Freddie Hulbert (2 for 20) and Page (3 for 53) bowling a tight line and length from either end as they shared the first 24 overs of the Eastbourne innings between them. The batsmen laboured to get their score moving and then started losing wickets – five down for 51 at this halfway stage, and continuing to falter as Johnson (3 for 33) maintained the stranglehold as Hulbert's replacement. Page eventually bowled unchanged for the whole innings, 24 successive overs – a heroic feat of stamina, though Scowen might perhaps have tried another option to



Freddie Hulbert - hero with bat and ball

break the last partnership. A week earlier Priory and Roffey 2nd XI had accumulated 550 runs between them, the Hastings side scraping a remarkable two-wicket victory with just one ball to spare. Eddy Finch top-scored for Priory with 80 off 76 balls, then Hulbert (66 not out) and Page (25 not out) combined as numbers 9 and 10 batsmen in a winning ninth wicket partnership of 63, including 52 off the last three overs.



COMMUNITY ENERGY FORTNIGHT: 1-14 JULY 2025



FREE local events:

- FILM SCREENING: 'WE THE POWER: THE FUTURE OF ENERGY IS COMMUNITY OWNED' Sun 6 July, 5-7pm, The Pig, 37 White Rock, TN34 1JL Followed by discussion of exciting local projects
- WORKSHOP: OFF-GRID SOLAR FOR BEGINNERS Tues 8 July, 6-8.30pm, Hattons Yard, TN37 6LB Register: energisesussexcoast.co.uk/events
- ENERGY ADVICE STALLS: IS YOUR HOME COLD OR EXPENSIVE TO HEAT? WE CAN HELP!
 - St Leonards Festival: Sat 12 July, 12-4pm, Warrior Square Gardens, TN37 6BS;
 - Trans Pride Festival: Sun 13 July, 12-4pm, outside Hastings Museum;
 - Protest'ival: Sun 13 July, 12-5pm, at the Old Bathing Pool site in St Leonards

More info: energisesussexcoast.co.uk/events



**FRIDAY 18th July is our 10th Anniversary.
What the hell happened to time!!??**

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What the hell happened to time!!??**



Here is some of the stuff we wanna do to mark this historic occasion and give thanks to the Burger Gods...



- **£10 combo deal for any burger & a side of fries all weekend Fri 18th - Sun 20th**
- **Weekend Competition to win 10 x £50 HMHB Vouchers'**
- **Limited edition 10th Anniversary tee in summer white**
- **Limited edition 10th Anniversary cap in death metal black**
- **Launching our own beloved Gonzo BBQ Sauce first 100 bottles with limited 10th Anniversary artwork**

**THERE WILL BE LOTS OF SILLINESS ON THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY WEEKEND,
so please follow us for updates @halfmanhalfburger**