

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



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Taken for a Ride

Will Some School Children Miss Out?

HUGH SULLIVAN

Ever since the British Museum, backed by the national Government, persuaded authorities in France to loan the original Bayeux Tapestry for exhibition in England, Hastings & Rye MP Helena Dollimore has been campaigning to ensure maximum viewing access for her constituents.

Initial pleas for the eleventh century tapestry, which depicts events surrounding the Battle of Hastings, to be transported from its home in Bayeux, Normandy to the original site of the battle were swiftly trumped by concerns over security and insurance. It's going to be retained under many a lock and key in the Museum in central London for the length of the loan – September this year to July next.

However, Ms Dollimore has persisted in talking up the claims of '1066 Country' residents to priority

viewing. In July 2025 she wrote, in conjunction with popular historian Dan Snow, to George Osborne, former Chancellor of the Exchequer and now Chairman of the Museum, requesting the reservation of free tickets for all school groups from Hastings and the surrounding area, and assistance with their costs of transport. She also asked South-eastern Railway (SER) to offer reduced fares.

When the Museum was slow to give a positive response, she secured a debate in the House of Commons in February to put her case. Ian Murray, Minister for Creative Industries, Media and Arts reported back to her that the Museum had given him an assurance of schools in her area receiving priority booking.

And last week it was stated both by Ms Dollimore and by Hastings Borough Council that SER have agreed to fund 1,066 free train tickets to school parties visiting the Museum to view the Tap- 2 →



**Longboat
Leaping
Horses** 7 →



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EDITOR'S NOTE

In record-breaking temperatures last week Hastings residents and tourists alike had an excuse to feel hot and bothered. The return of the pier sauna next week may help (see page 6). In the meantime this edition of HIP tries to give its readers some cooler perspectives on a wide range of heritage issues facing the town.

On news pages Kent Barker reports on the borough council's response to vandalism of a nineteenth century neo-Gothic convent; Hugh Sullivan notes that the Neighbourhood Board is reserving its largest slice of £20m+ government funding for infrastructure projects with an emphasis on heritage; in his spotlight piece on page 14 Paul McLaughlin examines an intended makeover of the currently drained Old Town Boating Lake.

But if there's one cultural artefact that pitches the town of Hastings into national consciousness, it's the eleventh century Bayeux Tapestry. The occasion of its imminent loan to the British Museum in London has been rightly identified by MP Helena Dollimore as a unique opportunity to engage local schoolchildren in the history of their town. Can enough of them get there to view it? That's a story in itself.

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News



TOBY COLLINS

Pride in Place Applications Invited

HUGH SULLIVAN

The Hastings Neighbourhood Board (HNB), charged with allocating £20 million of government money over the next ten years to boost community amenities and activities in the town, is inviting bids from groups of residents or community organisations with proposals of how best to spend it.

This funding programme – originally launched by Rishi Sunak's government as the Long Term Plan

For Towns, then re-branded under Labour as its Plan for Neighbourhoods, then further re-branded as Pride in Place – is to be divided between three separate pots. One, styled Pride in Our Streets, will provide up to £250,000 per year for small-scale 'interventions' in the public realm, such as provision of bins, bus shelters, benches or murals; a second, styled Pride in Our Neighbourhood, offers up to £500,000 per year for projects such as improvements to community centres, sports facilities and youth activities; a third, named Pride in Our Town, will

make up to £1 million available per year for heritage projects and major infrastructure in the town centre or on the seafront.

A separate fund of £1m, called the Pride in Place Impact Fund, was announced in March to be spent on installing or upgrading playgrounds in neighbourhoods across the borough, including a 'transformation' of the existing facility in Alexandra Park.

Applications for funding from the first two pots are now being invited. The opportunity to bid will remain open until 31 August, with decisions expected in October. The criteria for choosing one bid over another have not been spelled out, nor is it clear who within the HNB will ultimately make the choices.

Former Hastings Borough Council (HBC) manager Kevin Boorman is Chair of the Board. Its decisions are supposed to be independent of either the borough or county councils, but its administrative staff are seconded from HBC employment, and it has proclaimed a policy of requiring 'match funding' from councils or other stakeholders – for example, a housing association will be expected to contribute where a facility is improved on its land.

Good relations, and favourable negotiation, with these authorities is therefore paramount.

Other current HNB members include Hastings & Rye MP Helena Dollimore, and representatives from the county council, Sussex Police, Hastings Voluntary Action, Arts Hastings CIC, the Chamber of Commerce and other business groups. In recent months the Board has sought to expand and diversify its membership "to add new voices and different perspectives", and has reported receiving 123 individual applications to join. Sixteen of these applicants have been short-listed; none has yet been appointed.

How any Board member, whether existing or to be added, will influence future funding decisions, remains to be resolved. Past decisions taken by the similarly constituted Town Deal Board (including the award in 2022 to develop the ill-fated Owens enterprise in the former Debenhams building) were taken opaquely, and seemingly determined in practice by external management consultancies assessing 'business cases'. The HNB is no doubt mindful of this history, and aims for something different.

1 ← estry. These free fares are stated to be available through participating schools once the museum visit is booked.

But this number is surely only a small fraction of the aggregate of local schoolchildren likely to want (or be guided by their teachers to seek) a free trip to London for viewing purposes. Are the tickets to be offered on a first-come, first-served basis to alert school heads? Or are they to be means-tested or rationed in some other way?

Some might question whether Ms Dollimore has fully thought this through, as on HIP's enquiry to her office it was suggested that SER be approached for their response. At the time of our going to press, they had not done so.

The offer of 1,066 free tickets could well, however, prove a lucrative earner for the railway company, if it stimulates a much larger demand beyond that number. A calculation from the group travel options advertised on the SER website suggests that the lowest off-peak day return from Hastings to Charing

Cross for an adult plus eight children would be £99: multiply that by four for an average-size class, and that's just under £400 a time.

But SER is in effect a nationalised business, supported by the taxpayer. Since it would be running the trains anyway, an offer of further free tickets on the same basis would not cost it anything. Ms Dollimore must surely be tempted to push her campaign a little further.

Although there's no question of Tapestry coming to the south coast, Hastings Museum & Art Gallery will host a special loan of a British museum object, the Stothart Cast. This object features depictions of Harold Godwinson, William the Conqueror and a medieval knight. They were taken from wax impressions lifted from the Bayeux Tapestry in 1816.

At the same time, the Hastings Embroidery, created in 1966 to celebrate the 900th anniversary of the Battle of Hastings and telling the history of Britain over that 900-year period, is scheduled to be displayed in Hastings Town Hall.

APPLICATION FOR A NEW PREMISES LICENCE

WE: V&K Private Limited Have Applied to: Hastings Borough Council for a New Premises Licence for:

Forever Food Mart,
7-8 Harold Place, Hastings,
England TN341JA

Licensable activities and accompanying hours. Applied for are: **Supply of Alcohol for Off-Premises consumption:** Mon-Sun (10:00-21:00). Any

person who wishes to make a presentation in relation to this application must give notice in writing of his/her representation by: 7 July 2026 stating the grounds for making said representation to: Hastings Borough Council, Head of Environmental Services, Aquila House, Breeds Place, Hastings TN34 3UY OR email: licensing@hastings.gov.uk The application may be viewed in the Register held at the above

offices or online on www.hastings.gov.uk It is an offence, under section158 of the Licensing Act 2003, for anyone to knowingly or recklessly make a false statement in connection with an application and the maximum fine for which a person is liable on summary conviction for the offence is unlimited.

Dated this **21st** day of **July 2026**

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Enforcement Threat over Convent Vandalism

KENT BARKER

Following repeated incursions and vandalism in recent weeks at the former Convent of the Holy Child Jesus in St Leonards, lead member for heritage issues at Hastings Borough Council (HBC) Cllr Julia Hilton has threatened the owners with enforcement action. She told HIP that those who are responsible for the site had adopted a “lax attitude to security” for too long. She added that council officers had “worked really hard to get the owners/receivers to engage” and was now hopeful that the site will be more securely hoarded “as soon as possible”.

The council previously said that its overriding concern remains the risk to life posed by unauthorised people entering the site and that damage to “this important heritage site that includes a Grade 2* listed chapel, must be limited”.

One problem appears to be establishing exactly who is currently responsible for the convent. The registered owners of the 15-acre estate are DKSS Holdings Limited, who paid £3.9 million for it in 2021. Company documents show that they borrowed nearly the entire sum from a Luxembourg-registered company Creo 12 S.a.r.l. The accrued interest on the loan rose to more £1m before the lender appointed a firm of receivers Kroll Advisory Ltd to try to recover their money. Kroll told HIP: “After a previous attempt to sell

failed, we engaged in protracted joint venture discussions with another party to bring forward the development as an alternative and, now that has ceased, we will revert to the original intention to market and sell the property.”

Kroll say they are in “almost daily” dialogue with HBC and the local police regarding safeguarding of the building. HBC say they are continuing to work closely with Historic England, the emergency services and other partners to take urgent action. They had identified a number of “priority steps” to secure the listed heritage buildings and reduce unauthorised access to the site.

Nonetheless within days of that statement being released, the Save The Convent pressure group (see page 8) released a video on social media of a person using a hammer to demolish window frames in the curtilage of the listed buildings. In June police made arrests following intelligence of plans for a ‘mass action’ at the site by users of Tik-Tok.

Around the same time, Hastings MP Helena Dollimore wrote to Kroll about the “many incidents of trespass” and demanded to know what the company was doing to secure the estate. Kroll told HIP they had sent a team to the convent “with a contractor to provide a price for the required works to protect the site and buildings”. They appear to accept that the lender – Creo 12 – can be required to “finance any works”.

Before taking enforcement action HBC are legally required to



notify Kroll and/or Creo of the works required of them and to allow them a prior opportunity to undertake them.

Meanwhile, the Save the Convent group question whether anyone has any real incentive to prevent further deterioration of the buildings before dangerous structure notices are imposed. They fear that at a certain stage of dilapidation, demolition will be the only practicable option.

around 300 homes in Rother District Council’s emerging Local Plan.

BEST BEACH

In a survey issued by AA Roadwatch last week, Hastings Beach was rated among the top beaches in the south-east – only Hayling Island and Hove scored better on an index weighting average: Google review scores and search volumes, car parking costs, lifeguard services, RNLI lifeboat station proximity, average water temperature and monthly hours of sunshine.

The quality of water at Hastings pulled down the overall score. However, average sea temperature in July (18.7C) was the highest among any of the top 20.

NEWS IN BRIEF

BUSINESSES FINED

Following investigation by immigration enforcement officers, two businesses in Hastings have been fined for employing illegal workers.

Edi’s Car Wash Ltd in Battle Road have had a £40,000 penalty imposed on them, as has Halsho Stores Ltd, previously trading in Bexhill Road. Both companies were found to be employing staff not entitled to work in the UK or undertaking insufficient checks as to their immigration status.

HOMES DEVELOPMENT AT NORTHEYE

Homes England is carrying out community consultation on prospective house-building on the site of the

former prison at Northeye, west of Bexhill. The site was bought by the Home Office in 2023 for £15.4 million as a potential immigration detention centre, but transferred to Homes England in February this year.

There was a general drop-in session offered at Little Common Community Centre last Saturday, and a guided tour of the prison itself scheduled for yesterday (Thursday). Homes England has, however, made it clear that it plans to demolish around 70 existing buildings within the site “at the earliest opportunity”. It claims to have, or that it will have, “detailed strategies” to combat known asbestos contamination and “protect nature”.

The site is allocated for up to

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WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

HASTINGS PALESTINE SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

to move forward, but we need to work around our history.

Bryan Fisher

The “above-ground shelters” listed as “in danger” at Robertson Terrace are the outlets for the fans that ventilated the car park when it was originally built. The machinery was removed some time ago along with the ducting which provided ventilation in a time when most cars produced a lot of fumes when running.

Peter Roadman

✉ *From our website*

REFORM IN CHARGE AT COUNTY HALL

Not even pretending to be objective, are you (*Tories Hand Council to Reform, HIP 303*)? Minority administrations exist in many councils and do so with the support of smaller parties. If they could have made the numbers, doubtless Labour and the Lib Dems would have supported a Green minority council.

Likewise Reform councillors may not be very experienced, but neither would the Green councillors if they had formed a majority, and they are now running Hastings Borough Council.

Also, consistently demonising Reform as ‘Nigel Farage’s far right party’ is doing you no favours.

Stephen Butterson

I’m extremely concerned. Decent social care was already a major concern for all of us and our families, and so much else too. If East Sussex County Council Reform leadership echoes Kent County Council Reform, which it will, we are going to be in even more dire straits. The result shows the utter mess that Labour nationally has brought to bear at the local level.

While national and local government are not the same, the local political landscape has been influenced by national performance. Starmer has been such an out-of-touch nonentity, an a-political disaster with no political nous, charisma or knowledge, being led by the nose by his handlers at the national level. The Tories were unable to cut through after years of Johnson, Truss and Sunak because no one believes them any more. They cut local government budgets to the bone as it is.

It’s no surprise to many that politically inexperienced voters are fed up and desperate for something

different, so have fallen for Farage’s racist-schtick and ‘nationalist’ messages of flag-waving hypocrisy that are meaningless. But just you wait, Reform voters – you will see he is nothing but a shape-shifter who only wishes to garner power and money for himself, like his friend across the water, Trump.

Rosie Brocklehurst

✉ *Letter*

COOL SCHOOL

Dear HIP

During this very hot week many schools have closed or curtailed their day length, and who can blame them? We would just like to give a shout out to Sandown Primary School’s response.

On Wednesday our grandchildren came out of school saying they had had “the best day ever”. The school had provided bowls of cold water for the children to put their feet in and wet cloths for their heads as well as other inventive methods of keeping them cool.

Today has defeated even this seemingly indefatigable team, but they deserve great credit for their actions.

Sheila and Charlie Hume

✉ *From our website*

GP CHANGES FOR THE BETTER

Yes, I remember the times when you had ‘your’ GP (*‘Medical’ Malaise* in HIP 304). Often working alone with no nurse or other specialist auxiliaries, and without the range of diagnostic tests which are now routine. And if ‘your’ GP was rude or just brushed you off (“you’re just a young girl, you’re not important to me”), that was it. Personally, I much prefer the present system with all its stresses and strains.

The government needs to turn its full attention to GP services and primary care generally. They should not be expected to run businesses alongside their medical practice, which means rethinking the contract with the NHS. They need the money to employ new doctors – at the moment those can’t get GP jobs. And I suggest that we should all be prepared to accept appointments with a nurse, or a call from the pharmacist, if that answers our issue.

Bea Rogers

✉ *From our website*

WE NEED DEFENCE

In response to *We Won’t Be Silenced* (HIP 303), I’m not for any war. However, we need defence, right? Or should we have no defence and just let any country that feels like it come and attack the UK? We’ll all be speaking Russian soon then.

So if we need defence, we need to buy things like F16s. Someone has to make them. General Dynamics employs a few hundred people in Hastings making parts – not whole systems, and not all for defence but some for luxury goods. So they’d rather they are unemployed instead?

It’s a very biased view. Where would you draw the line? We can probably link all industry to defence systems, so let’s shut down every employment opportunity in Hastings then? I can’t see why you choose to go with “mainly makes products related to war”, while saying nothing about defending our country.

General Dynamics is a global aerospace and defence corporation known primarily for manufacturing Gulfstream business jets, nuclear-powered submarines, main battle tanks, and advanced defence and avionics systems. So here’s hoping, for the jobs of the people, that the Green party have more sense than the journalist here.

Ian Summerfield

✉ *Letter*

CONTRA COSTA

Dear HIP

In the light of recent appearances in HIP, would you consider starting a conversation with your readership about what a community newspaper is, and what it is for?

I like having a community newspaper, and I appreciate the time and efforts of the volunteers that keep the paper going. For myself, I don’t expect to agree with everything I see because, obviously, different parts of the community have different opinions. I like the way HIP is usually full of information about a range of local, independent and community-friendly projects and businesses.

Usually. But HIP issues 303 and 304 dedicated whole pages to an advert for a coffee-house chain owned by Coca-Cola. There are several reasons why this is, in my opinion, a terrible idea. I’ll stick to the main two.

Firstly, I would expect that as a community newspaper, HIP is against genocide. I wonder if your editors are aware that vast numbers of people, charities and community organisations around the world are taking part in a BDS (boycott, divest and sanction) campaign to try and stop companies from investing in Israel whilst its government maintains its murderous stranglehold on the Palestinian people? It’s much the same as

the boycott campaign that people and organisations around the world successfully used to put an end to the apartheid regime in South Africa.

Secondly, the full-page ad for a corporate outlet sits very oddly with your usual content about local businesses, projects, charities and politics – the kind of endeavours, in fact, which are often threatened by the expansion and promotion of big, corporate businesses.

Perhaps you don’t see it that way, or perhaps you weren’t aware that the establishment you are promoting is a Coca-Cola company, and therefore should not, in many people’s opinion, be assisted by community-friendly organisations?

I’d be interested to know your position on this.

Kay Green

✉ *Letter*

HERITAGE RESPONSES

In response to *Hastings Heritage in Peril* (HIP 304), Hastings Borough Council and its officers do need to protect our heritage (and any tourism benefit), but we should all care. The protection and restoration of buildings and monuments must be the norm – not the exception! With the dearth of industry in our area we rely heavily upon tourism to supplement the rates. Not caring about our heritage is to not care about our area’s future. We do need

We would love to hear from you.

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HIP does not endorse the views on the Letters page. They are solely those of the writer. 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.

Big Names and Bright Lights

TOBY BULA-EDGE

Two local filmmakers were named 'Filmmaking Champions' at the Into Film Awards 2026 on 16 June. The awards, which celebrate young filmmaking talent and enrichment, took place at ODEON Luxe in Leicester Square.

The award ceremony was full of 'big names'. It was hosted by former Blue Peter presenter Konnie Huq and featured special guest presenters such as: Jodie Whittaker, Peter Capaldi, Bella Ramsey and Jason Isaacs.

On top of that, a big name of Hast-

ings was to receive the award – The Bright Foundation. Will Davies and Sophie Barnard from The Bright Foundation were celebrated for their work with young children. The 'Filmmaking Champions' award is for those that use film to support and develop young people.

HIP recently interviewed Will Davies for his work with local schools. He was one of four filmmakers at the foundation who helped pupils make films in time for the Children's International Film Festival, which took place in Hastings on 18 June. Sophie Barnard is the producer at the foundation.

An increasingly familiar institution, The Bright Foundation was



Will Davies and Sophie Barnard receiving their award.

set up by Oscar and BAFTA winning Costume Designer John Bright to inspire creativity in children and

young people – especially those experiencing disadvantage. They run events and schools at the Benbow

Art Space in St Leonards, as well as The Barn Theatre and Museum. They have an illustrious list of ambassadors, including such celebrated performers as Dame Judi Dench, Dame Helen Mirren and Ralph Fiennes.

Now, Will, Sophie, and The Bright Foundation as a whole, have been celebrated. Will Davies said: "It was an amazing privilege to attend this year's Into Film Awards. This is an annual award ceremony which celebrates young filmmakers from across the UK. There was so much talent in the room and I'm sure some of them will be household names in the future."

"The Bright Foundation was also there to receive the 'Filmmaking Champions' award. It was a really inspiring day and left us feeling really energised to continue with what is the best job in the world – making films with young people in Hastings and St Leonards. Thanks to Into Film."

Automotive Stars Shine at ESC Awards

East Sussex College's Automotive Training Centre celebrated student achievement, industry partnership and automotive excellence at its annual awards ceremony in Hastings.

The event brought together students, staff, governors, employers, families and industry partners to recognise learners' dedication, progress and success across the automotive curriculum. Awards were presented by Nick Backstrom, Deputy Principal at East Sussex College, who congratulated students and joined staff in celebrating an exceptional year for the department.

Opening the ceremony, Nick Wood, Deputy Head of Curriculum for Construction, Computing, Engineering, Motor Vehicle, Electrical and Access, praised students, staff and employers for their contribution to the centre's continued success. He said learners had gone beyond gaining qualifications, developing real-world skills, confidence and clear pathways into the automotive industry.

The ceremony was the final awards event to be held at the Automotive Training Centre's Northridge Industrial Estate site before the department relocates to East Sussex

College's new Green Automotive Centre of Excellence at the Ore Valley campus from September.

Students were recognised for improvement, academic achievement, attendance and commitment to the automotive industry. Most Improved Student awards went to Josh Cottrill, Joe Shuttlewood, Hermione Elrick and Hayden Foster. Top Student awards were presented to Lewis Ellis, Lewis Jackson, Conner Baker, Jude Foster and apprentice Teddy Clements.

The department also celebrated good results, including a 100% pass rate for both Level 2 Diploma and Level 3 Diploma learners, with the Level 3 group achieving 100% for the second consecutive year.

A highlight of the event was the annual ATC Attendance Raffle, which rewards students for strong attendance throughout the year. Thanks to local employers and industry partners, prizes included vehicles, toolkits, diagnostic equipment and vouchers. Jude Foster won the top prize, a Peugeot 107 donated by Central Cars of Bexhill, while Chloe Walton won a Honda Shadow 125 motorcycle donated by Beeson Motorcycles.



Oh Big Blue in Concert

JOHN ENEFER

A remarkable night is in store at the Stade Hall on 5 July which will showcase both the breadth of musical talent in Hastings as well as the big heart that beats within the local community of musicians and songwriters. *Oh Big Blue in Concert* is the brainchild of soprano Chiara Vinci, who has pulled together an array of talent to raise much needed funds for the Al-Mawasi community in Gaza, to which Hastings is officially linked.

Chiara was inspired to organise the concert after seeing an exhibition of poetry and art from Pales-

tinian children in Hastings last year and also the book which accompanied the exhibition.

"I went to the *Oh Big Blue* exhibition on my own," she remembers; "I came away silently and profoundly moved and full of hope. The book and the artwork captured my imagination, and my heart – these poems were songs. Something to be created and held in consciousness for all time. But I needed collaborators."

Stepping up to help Chiara realise her vision was the Hands Up project (an organisation that works – using art and theatre – with Palestinian children), the Hastings and District Palestine Solidarity Campaign as well as a slew of local musicians, singers and composers, all

of whom have adapted the children's poems into music.

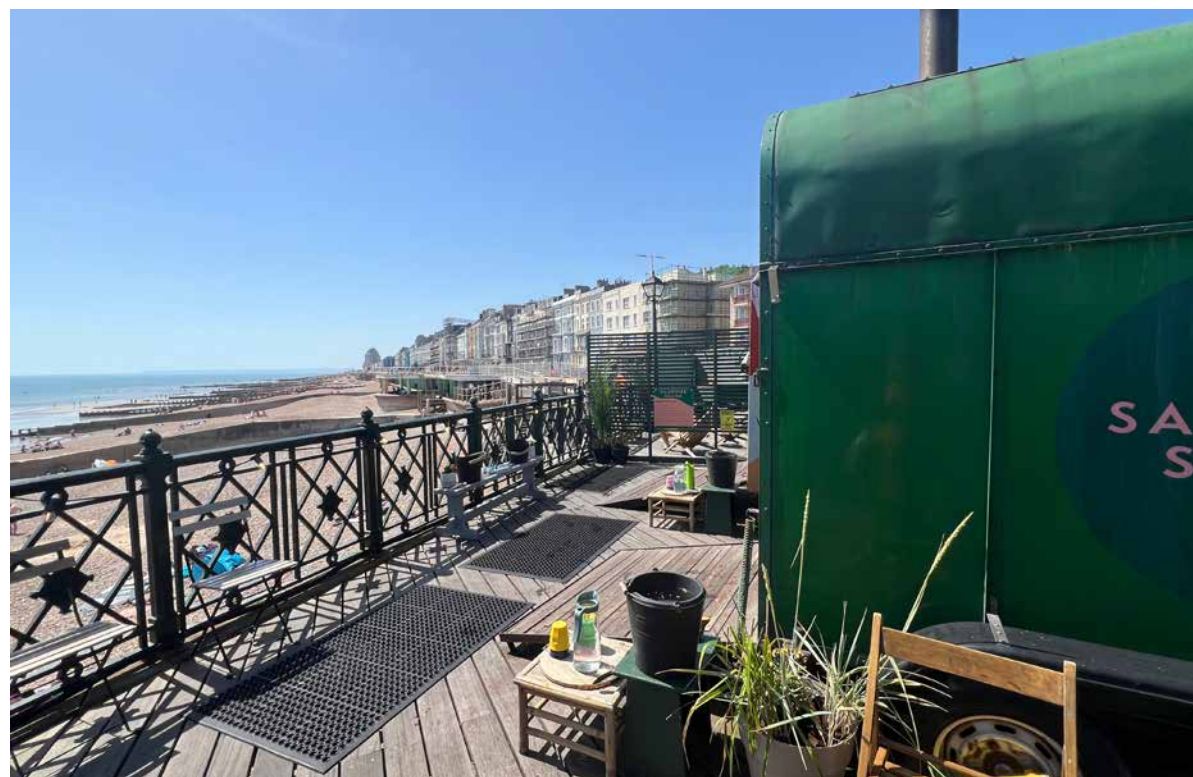
At the concert people can expect a variety of music from acoustic to classical, from established names like Bev Lee Harling, Frank Moon and Chiara herself, to promising new artists like Ruby Colley.

Funds from the event will go to the *Hands Up Project* and *Hastings friends of Al-Mawasi*, which for the last three years has offered friendship and practical solidarity to the community in southern Gaza, enabling them to install solar panels on roofs, construct a bakery inside a war-damaged building as well as other initiatives.

People from the Al-Mawasi Resilience Committee hold Zoom meetings with their supporters in Hastings to give updates on their projects and their lives in general. The work of the Resilience Committee, and of Hastings Friends of Al-Mawasi, only grows more vital as Israel tightens its siege on Gaza. In May there was confirmation that a ban by the Israeli government on 37 foreign organisations operating in Gaza, including Save the Children and Oxfam, will be enforced. Summing up the situation in Gaza since the 'ceasefire' began last October, Oxfam states: "Civilians in Gaza continue to face the horrors of a genocide. Indiscriminate attacks on homes, schools, hospitals, and refugee camps continue by the Israeli military. And life-saving aid is still being blocked."

Speaking of the concert, Chiara says: "As a collective of artists and musicians from Hastings, we deeply feel the urge and the desire to keep showing up in solidarity and support for Palestine." She promises the concert will be 'an evening to remember'.

Oh Big Blue in Concert will take place at the Stade Hall, on Sunday 5 July at 7pm. Tickets are available from Eventbrite.



FRANCESCA SULLIVAN



Zoya and Nell

Those interested can also be reassured that the daily 'deep clean' each morning is done using natural, non-toxic cleaning products, and

the Samphire Sauna's environmental footprint is carefully monitored.

"We use sustainable sources of wood from a local supplier in Battle," Zoya says. "Our electricity is derived from solar panels, we have LED lighting, and frankly the biggest electrical outlay is boiling the office kettle for a cup of tea in the morning!"

Sessions can be booked as a group or as individuals, but the revamped, reopened Samphire Sauna will have a new regular feature: special women only, men only and queer/trans sessions. Deals can also be had on multi-sessions booked in advance.

Replacement of one of the saunas with a larger, improved unit will also have the welcome innovation of a steam room option, something very much in demand at the moment. A slightly larger space will also give the opportunity for bigger group bookings and possibly sauna-inspired events, such as introducing a visiting 'sauna master'!

Watch this space?

A Sauna on the Pier

FRANCESCA SULLIVAN

After the Samphire Sauna's annual summer break for overhaul, the UK's only sauna on a pier will be back on 5 July, bigger and better!

Owners Zoya Jordan and Nell Monck have been at the helm of this Hastings success story. Four years after opening it has become an all year round attraction for visitors as well as a hub for locals, with a regular clientele and a reputation for community involvement. As it turned out, they have been riding the crest of a wave already in the making.

"We've been lucky in that we started the business at a time when sauna culture was really taking off," Zoya says. "At that time there were about forty mobile saunas in the UK, and now there are 650, so the expansion has been insane. It's no longer just about going somewhere to get warm after a swim. Sauna has become more of a way of life in the UK, whereas once it was something you only did at the gym. It's also part of 'contrast therapy' using hot and the cold to naturally raise serotonin and promote well being."

The Samphire Sauna (the name was dreamed up as a play on alliteration coupled with natural sea connections) began as a pop-up enterprise, moving around between Eastbourne, Bexhill and Bodiam, staying for short residenc-

es. Zoya and Nell initially intended the sauna to be on the beach, but local restrictions ended up working in their favour.

"Being halfway between Hastings and St Leonards makes us easily accessible to a wide range of customers, and also being on the pier has big advantages. Often beach saunas have to remove their mobile units each night, whereas we not only have the security of keeping them behind locked gates, we also have access to electricity and running water. We have an office space and, importantly, changing rooms, something we wouldn't have been able to offer customers had we been down on the beach. Winter is our busiest season and when the weather's cold people really want somewhere they can get changed in comfort."

Despite this (and who wouldn't love to luxuriate in the wood fired heat while gazing down at the crashing waves on the icy beach below) I sampled the sauna on a very hot day. The sun loungers, overhead shower and plunge pool out on the terrace would have been welcome even without the need to experience a bracing contrast, but of course that's not all it's about. Attention to detail – the way the space is laid out, it's rustic components and brightly painted horse box units, each containing a spotless and inviting interior, the scent of both the wood and availability of natural skin products (I sampled the 'Samphire Sauna' own brand of seasonal body scrub) and the friendly and attentive attitude of the staff, are all part of it.

The sauna may be on the pier but it's close enough to the beach to nip down for a sea plunge halfway through the session – something I took advantage of – thereby adding a saltwater addition to the sensory experience before lying back in the sauna for one last infusion of deep heat. As a single, I also had lovely



conversations with other customers.

"The communal aspect has really taken us by surprise," Nell told me, "with like-minded people using the Samphire as an alternative low-fi healthy environment in which to meet up instead of maybe going to the pub. Customers have connected here, started up friendships, businesses and even boyfriend and girlfriend relationships. Healthy hennos, family bookings and friends down for the weekend are all typical of the clientele."

Being able to employ people (even at the moment) is also something Zoya and Nell are proud of. "We began the business doing absolutely everything ourselves, including running all the sessions, looking after the maintenance and doing all the marketing. But each time we've expanded, we've reinvested that money back into the business, providing a better service for our customers and contributing to the town's economy, particularly during the slow winter months."

Sessions are forty-five minutes, allowing time for the staff to go in and clean thoroughly in between.

Bringing Generations Together

Generational conflict is an eternal battle where peace can seem ever distant. But that hasn't stopped people trying to bring an end to it. The Intergenerational Grants Programme is a new attempt at doing so for community groups and organisations across Hastings.

The grant was launched as part of the Age-Friendly Hastings programme and will support projects that bring generations together and help wellbeing. These can include projects such as gardening, storytelling, music, physical activity and digital skills. Projects that help people learn from one another – no matter their ages. Projects that challenge ageism and age-related stereotypes.

Grants of up to £500 are available for those who need an extra boost to fund these projects. All with the

objective of bringing people and communities closer together.

Cllr Solly Solamito, lead councillor for Corporate Services, Communities and Equalities, Hastings Borough Council, said: "Intergenerational activities create opportunities for people of all ages to connect, share skills and build stronger communities. I am delighted to launch this grants programme and encourage local groups to come forward with ideas that will help bring generations together across Hastings."

The deadline for application is 5.00pm on Friday, 31 July 2026. A further round of grants will be launched in Autumn 2026.

For further information go to hastings.gov.uk/my-community/Age-Friendly-Communities/





Only one horse

Could a Norman Horse Leap from a Longboat?

Hastings Borough council have declared that this is the Year of the Normans (1,000 years since the birth of William the Conqueror) for which there will be events across Hastings and the rest of the country and in France from this summer and into 2027. To kick off, PETER GRAY considers the role of horses back then and in more recent invasions.

One of the most surprising things about Operation Sea Lion, the German plan to invade Britain in the summer of 1940 was the number of horses involved. The first wave would see 360 horses put ashore, the second wave would include over 4,000 horses. It turns out that the supply lines for the mechanised Blitzkrieg attack system, which had got the German army so speedily across the Low Countries and France, were all operated by horse-drawn vehicles.

Another close call was the Spanish Armada, at the time (1558) the biggest invasion force ever gathered. There were just 300 horses in

the first wave but had the initial invasion been successful, many more horses would have come across with the Army of Flanders.

It wasn't to be. The smaller English ships were able to outmanoeuvre the Armada and eventually forced it to escape by going the long way round back to Spain (via Scotland). In the process, horrifically, the horses were put over the side because there was not enough fresh water for the extended journey. Some even say the Shetland Pony is descended from those that swam ashore from the flagship, the Gran Grifon, which foundered off the coast of Fair Isle.

Napoleon came close at the turn of the 18th century with up to a staggering 15,000 horses available. A dangerous time for Britain with few European allies and as yet no Martello Towers. By the time Napoleon met his Waterloo in 1815 the threat was over and Britain had European allies again and lots of those towers.

So much for the failures. All the successful conquests of Britain actually succeeded in shipping horses across the channel.

William the Bastard brought a couple of thousands of them over in late September 1066. Julius Caesar also brought a similar number of horses across the channel, on the second attempt. Not surprisingly the Romans were the best organised; their large Trireme ships with three decks of Oarsmen, supplementary sails and specially adapted hulls for beach landings, gave them speed, up to 8 knots (9.2 mph) and a large carrying capacity.

How the Normans got horses across the channel is a little harder to fathom. There are only a few independent historical sources about the invasion and one of them is embroidery (the Bayeux tapestry) which, it seems, has the most to say on the subject. The embroidery images of ships are all the longboat type. Their low freeboard (sides) meant they were fast but not great for heavy loads, and there needed to be a way of getting the horses off the boats.

In one scene in the tapestry, a horse is shown jumping out of a boat. In 1967, a replica longboat was used to establish if this was possible. It was not; although they did succeed in getting a single horse to jump out when the longboat was pulled over on its side. This would not work for multiple horses on a boat.

In 1985 Bernard S Bachrach published a very detailed analysis *On*

the Origins of William the Conqueror's Horse Transports trying to explain how the Normans got the horses across the channel in a fit state for battle and in sufficient numbers. He considers that the longboats depicted are unlikely to be accurate, and the horse jumping out is more likely artistic licence.

He concluded the most credible scenario is the use of Byzantine ships designed to carry 10 or 20 horses with their riders and equipment. After all, it was these ships that had landed Norman invaders on Sicily with their horses in 1038. It is interesting to note that another historical character in Sicily fighting with the Normans was no less than Harald Hadrud, who would later play a part in the Norman conquest by engaging King Harold in the Stamford Bridge battle.

So back on the River Dives, as boats were being built for the invasion, no doubt they were influenced by that Sicilian campaign. One feature of Byzantine horse-carrying boats was that they were designed to match the organisation of their cavalry. They used a decimal system, which matches another scene of the embroidery where ten horses can be seen with their riders in one ship. The Normans were a pan-Euro-

pean force well versed in invading and conquering. Although there is every chance that Harold may not have been defeated had he waited to recover from the battle at Stamford Bridge and not rush down to meet William, possibly by boat. It seems likely the Normans would prevail and conquer eventually. It took decades and many battles for the Norman conquest of Southern Italy to be completed.

Those horses should have been decisive in battle against a static Anglo-Saxon human wall, but they couldn't be shifted. The defensive position on Senlac Hill, or whatever hill it was, was a tactical advantage until the almost comical bluff by the Normans of running away then circling back. This almost worked. Towards the end of the battle, they finally broke through with the horses, by which time Harold was almost certainly dead, either from an arrow in his right eye or from being hacked to death by four Norman knights.

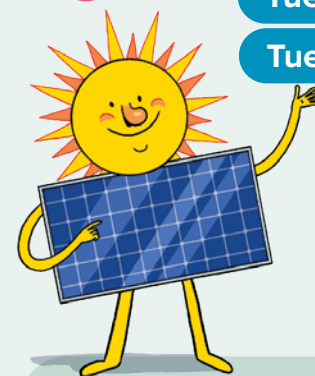
Within a year, the conquest was complete, and William got to change his last name to Conqueror. His brother-in-law commissioned the Bayeux Tapestry, the social media of the day, and they went with the arrow-in-the-eye storyline.

FREE
online
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Tuesday 7 July (solar)

Tuesday 14 July (heat pumps)



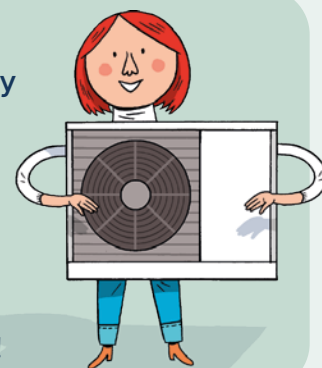
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Energise Sussex Coast is a non profit community organisation providing impartial, expert advice to East Sussex residents.



AI Projection of what the Convent could look like

Convent for the Community

The SAVE THE CONVENT pressure group who want the St Leonards site turned into a Community Village give voice to their vision

The site of the former Convent of the Holy Child is a large area of land with commanding sea views on the boundary of St Leonards and Hastings. It contains heritage buildings and a Neo-Gothic grade 2* listed chapel with surrounding gardens and sandstone boundary wall and numerous outbuildings. The problem is that the school and associated buildings are now empty and falling into disrepair and are being actively vandalised. The 'jewel in the crown', the chapel built in 1868 by Edward Pugin, son of Augustus Pugin is now on the 'Heritage at Risk' list.

At 'Save the Convent' we are campaigning to see the whole site come into community ownership, serving the most needy in our local area. Bear in mind that the Convent sits in the middle of one of the most deprived wards in Sussex. Most of the properties facing the Convent are rented, multi-occupation homes, and most people do not have access to gardens.

ALTERNATIVE HOUSING

We want to restore all the buildings and convert the interiors into a Community Village, comprising affordable (yes, really affordable!) rented accommodation, for use by an alms charity and housing co-ops, providing accommodation for over-55s and assisted living spaces for the neuro

divergent and people with autism. We propose an innovative 'Umbrella' Scheme which would mean being able to offer alternative housing to the Council, in special circumstances. We aim to devote a small part of the site to a museum and library about the Convent's history, a community cafe and we want vegetables grown in our gardens along with a community multi-use space with public access to the chapel. We must see the chapel restored, and would like it to be used as a community arts space, something which had been happening with the previous owner.

Outside, we would like to create a community garden space and walk with a nature trail, on the plateau of the North Field, perhaps with a living agricultural museum for the Convent dwellers and locals alike, so the Convent becomes integrated with the rest of the local area.

We envisage workshop spaces for small businesses, with a real emphasis on building renovation, and other skills for young people, so they become able to restore their own homes in the future, joining with local building colleges and youth groups to maximise the number of helpers we can get. We envisage the same process with the grounds, using local trainees under the supervision of experienced gardeners.

This may sound excessively aspirational, but just look at what is

there currently, and consider what we will have lost if – as seems increasingly likely – it all disappears to be replaced with a bland 'market' – i.e. unaffordable – housing development.

This would mean that other amazing features would vanish, including an outdoor pool, a nun's graveyard and a football pitch and playing field that have been there for decades. Indeed most of the convent has been in place since halfway through the nineteenth century. The Priory, or Presbytery, was built in 1858 by William Wilkinson Wardell. Parts of the Convent were built in 1840, also designed by William Wardell then later added to. This larger addition known as the Training College was built later in the early 1900s. The older buildings are Grade 2 listed. The site is – theoretically – protected under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and is on the National Heritage List for England. It sits within the Magdalen Road Conservation Area no 11 of which the Convent makes up around 50%.

A BRIEF HISTORY:

In 1848, Cornelia Connelly came to St Leonards to set up The Convent of the Holy Child Jesus on this site. By 1850 she had set up a 'Poor School' for girls and a 'Training School'. It was an extraordinary place, way ahead of its time, an encouraging and nurturing environment. Cornelia dressed the girls in red because she liked bright colours, and believed firmly in using art and music as a basis for education. The school changed the lives of many girls; nobody was turned away due to their lack of funds.

In 1979 the school moved to Mayfield and the St Leonards' site became a Spanish language school, then more recently a football academy.

REMNANTS OF THE PAST

Inside the convent, there are remnants of its history; a Catholic nuns'

tapestry, prayer books and written records. Some of the schoolrooms are untouched and there is the Chapel, complete with its Gothic Revival interior, alabaster statues and a church organ with original hymn books. There is a nuns' and children's graveyard in the North Field, and local knowledge of the site also being used to bury babies. There used to be gardens, orchards, and even a donkey called Jenny who grazed there.

This is a most important piece of heritage in St Leonards and yet it has been hidden away from public view by high walls and private ownership. We think it is time that changed.

The North Field is a sensitive local site because of the graves, but we are very interested in exploring the possibility of some underground parking areas and possibly building below ground. We would like to see the outbuildings and classrooms below the North Field replaced with Eco housing and small units to home people immediately, while restoration work is done.

BEACON OF LIGHT

We believe that this could be a beacon of hope in community self-management and would like to work with Hastings Council to bring this to fruition. The local council are very much in accordance with our ideas for the buildings. As a beacon of progressive conservation, we would like to encourage the use of solar and renewable power for the whole site. We already have interest from two major power providers, as the roof space is enormous.

We hope to attract local and national interest, and to this aim we meet weekly, connect with other local groups and run an ever-growing mailing list. We want the Convent to become a useful and beautiful addition to our local landscape and we believe that it should be serving the poor and vulnerable, enriching lives, providing education and sanctuary, just as Cornelia Connelly intended all those years ago.



For more information please visit:
facebook.com/p/Save-The-Convent-61584946118558 or email savetheconvent@gmx.co.uk

ACTIONS NOT WORDS

My name is Mary and as a convent pupil at St Leonards from 1967-1972 I was privileged although at times I didn't feel it. The buildings were stately, but very cold. The food could be spartan – though we did enjoy currant buns every morning, sent in vast wooden trays from Acres the bakers. However the site was glorious, particularly in the summer. When the fair was on the adjacent field, we peered out of the windows at the giddy rides – the Umbrella and the Dive Bomber while listening to the Archies sing 'Sugar, Sugar', but ever mindful of the threat of expulsion if we were to venture there.

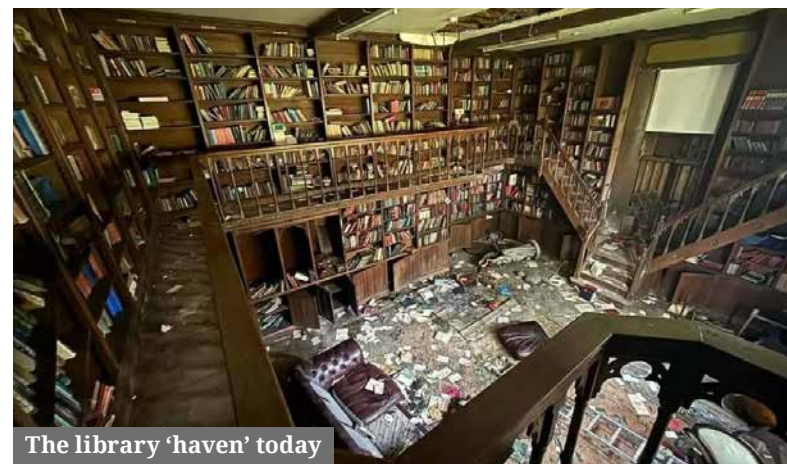
We spooked ourselves walking alone through the damp, dripping, underground passage leading from the convent to St Michael's building (adjacent to Magdalen Road). The oak-pannelled library was a haven on wet January exeat weekends when overseas parents meant no home leave. We relished forbidden midnight feasts on the roof overlooking the sea. So many memories, and so sad to see such despoliation and vandalism.

The convent's founder, Cornelia Connelly, was an iconoclast. She was a married mother of five children when her husband left her to become a Catholic priest. After she had become a nun – whilst keeping two of her children with her in the convent – her husband returned demanding his 'conjugal rights' – and took her to court to regain them. He eventually lost.

Mother Connelly founded the Society of the Holy Child Jesus in 1846. She believed passionately in girls' education, and Holy Child schools throughout the world continue her radical vision.

I think that she would be delighted with the proposals to convert the convent into a Community Village. Cornelia was committed to doing things her own way – "Be yourself, but make that self all that God wants it to be," and our school motto was 'Actions not Words'.

I'm with Cornelia. Actions not Words. Save the Convent. Now.



The library 'haven' today



Let Nature be your Teacher

CHRIS WATKINS

When I met Elliot Riley he showed me round his sunny suburban garden in Bexhill, which itself has grown unusually wild. He told me about the plants there, their traditional uses, the history of their names and how they helped improve the soil's condition. He has a habit of picking up everyday greenery, plants more often removed as weeds, and offering them to you as an unexpected snack. He speaks with confidence and enthusiasm about his work at St Leonard's Academy, where he is building and planting a 'Food Forest', to provide a long-lasting, self-sustaining organic food source for the school and help transform waste products into a source of fertility. "We are directly teaching students the skills to reduce our reliance

on imported, oil-driven food; growing your own, harvesting rainwater, transforming waste into fertile soil and back into nourishment." Elliot tells me that during his lessons the children learn how to improve the water retention of soil, which reduces the impact of our cycles of flood and drought, and how plants put atmospheric carbon back into the ground. "We're creating the opportunity to talk about community, bring the varied skills of different students and members of the wider community into our project. Schools are intended to prepare students for the future. For any school which aims to do this, I believe teaching their children how to grow food is an obligation." His enthusiasm is certainly contagious. A small garden with a few raised beds had already been started on the site but Elliot approached the school with a plan that would



teach children to re-engage with nature whilst helping pupils struggling in a mainstream environment to rebalance their emotions and find a valuable outlet for their energy. Elliot explained what his pupils do during lessons. This includes sowing seeds, caring for seedlings, transplanting, watering, using companion plants such as clover for nitrogen fixation and garlic for pest repellence, selective weeding, making high quality compost, building 'lasagna' beds which layer waste materials rather than soil and, as he puts it, "breaking up bricks of mushroom-inoculated sawdust which acts as a useful mulch whilst producing oyster mushrooms when it rains". It also involves painting signs and building fences and dead-hedges. The list is long, busy and rewarding. Elliot's early story is one of transformative opportunities. Raised in Bexhill and "well-looked after" at Little Common Primary, family connections helped him successfully apply to Christ's Hospital School in Horsham. From there he earned another scholarship to study at AC Grayling's New College of the Humanities in North London. After three years of History and Philosophy he was left uncertain what would come next. Then the Covid lockdown hit just as he was graduating. What he felt during that time was the people's exclusion from land ownership and inability to provide for themselves, as well as the impact of industrial farming on our planet. He explains "That pausing in the global supply chain showed us how much we were reliant on it and how fragile it was." After lockdown he began to learn more about permaculture, a form of regenerative agriculture that focuses on working with natural ecosystems to be self-sufficient, produce no waste and regenerate the soil. Soon he was introduced to the work of The Human Hive and travelled to work at their school in the Dominican Republic. There his first project was helping to build a food forest on the site. "Within a matter of weeks I saw this barren, dirty, derelict space absorbing rainwater, producing stupid amounts of food,

creating a place where kids could not only take the food scraps but also get out a load of energy and sit in nature. It just worked. I thought: 'This is absolute genius' – it was what the planet needed." By the time he returned home, Elliot was convinced he needed to find a way to practise permaculture education in the UK and, since he had no land of his own it occurred to him that schools "with their abundant land and their need for

emotional support systems" would be the easiest way forward, benefiting the school, the eco-system and pupils themselves. "It's a win-win-win scenario, which is what permaculture is built on." Through working with other established practitioners, he was eventually invited to help develop the project at St Leonards Academy, which he now co-ordinates under the name Future Growth. This kind of work is far from commonplace, but listening to Elliott talk it's easy to see why the school has embraced his vision, providing significant space, financial investment and support to the project, which has already gained local recognition as well as an imminent Level 5 RHS School Gardening certification. Elliot's organisation Off-Set Food Forests, which you can find on various socials and Patreon, is also in the process of developing similar projects in other Primary and Secondary schools in the area – to train new generation of permaculture gardeners.

Future Growth at St Leonards Academy was part of the Edible Open Gardens scheme on 28 June. To help support the initiative visit: patreon.com/offsetfoodforests





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Emma Rawicz

VICTORIA KINGHAM

Love Supreme – Musica Feminina Rawicz and Spalding – Amazons at the Festival

The *Love Supreme* jazz festival takes place this weekend at Glynde Place, near Lewes. Tickets are still selling but it starts now (3 July) and if you like jazz, and you get the chance, you should really get over there.

I admit it's outside this newspaper's local area, but some of the greatest and/or most popular jazz musicians are there – Courtney Pine, Lemar, Ezra Collective, De La Soul, Joe Lovano, Jalen Ngonda. Represented in the programme (in slightly smaller letters for some reason) are two of the most exceptional musicians you're ever likely to hear, both supremely gifted. I was privileged to speak with them ahead of the festival.

EMMA RAWICZ

Emma Rawicz, saxophonist, graduated from music college two years ago. A year before that, she had already made two albums, the second, *Chroma*, gaining her international recognition at the age of just 22.

It's the most astonishing album – a combination of variety and whimsy, intricacy and sheer joy. Rawicz is known for experiencing chromesthesia – seeing colours and shapes when hearing sounds. If this sounds unlikely to you there is a long record of composers whose chromesthesia forms the basis of their music, from Messiaen, Scriabin, and Ligeti through to Duke Ellington and Billie Eilish. Visual artists Kandinsky, Van Gogh and Hockney also attested to it.

Even if you didn't know this, there are unique forms in Rawicz's music which defy genre and transcend boundaries. My favourite of her albums is the one she made last year with pianist Gwilym Simcock, the British updated equivalent of Keith Jarrett. Music pours out of him, and I could (and occasionally have) listen to his music all day. There's so much freedom on this album, from two musicians who produce more or less stream-of-consciousness invention, alongside technical excellence. "I love playing with Gwilym" she tells me. They have exceptional rapport. "We both



esperanza spalding

went to Chetham's school (of music) and the Royal Academy, and had the same teachers we were there, and we both got into jazz and improvised music via the same sort of gateway people, like Keith Jarrett and Egberto Gismonti. We both love Brazilian music and we love ECM, and as a result, I think there's a lot of unspoken stuff that works really well." They have toured together "probably in five or six different countries" and written music together. "He's such a really lovely, kind person, and obviously musically brilliant," she adds.

Her tour schedule this year looks punishing, but she seems astonishingly fresh, not to say joyous. She divides her time, and her residence, between London and Berlin, and speaks to me from Berlin, from where she is touring festivals in Portugal and France, then the Love Supreme here, and straight afterwards at Copenhagen then the

North Sea Jazz Festival at Rotterdam. "A busy summer," she laughs.

The tenor has been her saxophone of choice, though she loves playing soprano too, and bass clarinet – she doesn't always take all her instruments with her because it's "just too much to carry!" For female players there is the additional fact that playing the tenor demands physical and internal strength. Whereas a six-foot, built male can sometimes be seen to swing the tenor, on its strap, round his bull-neck muscles, for women it's a more significant weight. To maintain and improve her strength, Emma has become an avid weightlifter. To clear her mind of clutter between different activities (she's also a huge reader, and has credited authors like Murakami and Adichie with inspiration for composition) she practises mindfulness techniques.

She is quick to praise the people

she works with, and is especially enthusiastic about her current band *Inkya*. At the Festival they will largely perform music from their latest, eponymous album. The band comprises David Preston on guitar, Gareth Lockrane on flutes, Scotty Thompson, Kevin Glasgow, and Jamie Murray. "I really feel one of the biggest privileges I have," she adds, "is to be surrounded by such brilliant human beings."

ESPERANZA SPALDING

...writes her name in lower case. This is an aesthetic choice, but in my subjective opinion signifies a shift away from ego, thus away from personality or persona, and towards ideas: melodies, music, poetry, all the things that she is and that she does.

She has long been a jazz phenomenon, and a hero of mine since, in concert at a young age, she filled the main auditorium at the Barbican. In the 20 years or so since then she has had an unstoppable, world-class career trajectory.

On stage, she presents as one, organically, with her instrument – on that occasion an upright double bass. Just a few great musicians have this quality. It's very special, and I think a kind of genius – like looking at a great picture, say *Wheatfield With Crows*, and as you gaze, it becomes all the wheatfields and all the crows in the world. In the same way, watching and listening to Spalding becomes all the music in the world. More generally, jazz brings with it each moment the sum of the musicians' skills and influences, cultures and backgrounds. It's never the same way twice; the ultimate ephemeral art form, composition on the wing, human achievement at perhaps its most immediately creative point.

She has played at the Festival before, at the inaugural one in 2013 and again in 2016. She has also played at all the major venues in the world and with almost every top named jazz musician you can mention, and at the Obama White House. Neither her creativity nor her stamina seem to know any limits. She cites Milton Nascimento as one of her inspirations, and the last album she made (2024) was actually in collaboration with him, with a glittering cast of guest musicians. He's 83 now, but you can still hear the kind of ethereality (one of his finer albums is called *Angelus*) that makes him one of the greatest vocalists of his time.

She agrees. "We've become friends, over the years" she says, "and developed a great rapport and mutual affection. You know, he has heart, joy in the whole process." Recorded in the exotic climate of Brazil, there is some fine music on this album. Besides viscerally faultless bass playing, Spalding sings too – singing is integral to her performance – with an enviable purity of tone. Some of the songs on the *Milton + esperanza* album are her originals, others could become, but aren't, clichés – a far-out version of the

Beatles *Day In the Life* for example. Some are inimitable Nascimento-Brazilian standards. All her albums incorporate a different musical approach – this one has Brazilian rhythm and language at its heart.

There are some very personal-sounding lyrics on the album *Radio Music Society* – but, she said "it's fiction. Speculative. Just imagining contexts for these dimensions of the human experience to be at play." Most of her words make sense not as straight narrative but as poetry, perhaps the 'open-field' mid-20th century American poetry where form and content are purposefully intertwined. I wondered about her process of composition.

"It very much feels like an architectural process, a structural craft. And it's laborious, you know? Toni Morrison talked about writing as suffering. Like, don't expect it to be all pleasure and fun." The numbers grow organically. She sometimes creates a sketch, so "here's the form, here's the harmonic progression" then she hands it over to Matt (Matthew Stevens) and Justin (Tyson) and they put the flesh on it. "With a project like *Exposure* [her 2017, 77-hour one-take, limited edition physical album] we were really creating in real time."

From 2017 to 2022 Spalding was a professor of music at Harvard, and looking at various accounts, there seems to have been some controversy about her resignation. She's quick to disabuse me of that idea. "It's become this scintillating story! I just realised that the subject matter of my classes was at odds with the track record and current priorities of this institution." Basically, representative of some of the traditional musical ideas she is trying to transform. "But I loved my experience. I loved my department. I left on such positive terms. It was just time."

I wondered if she has a new album in progress, but she said no, not just now. She isn't even quite sure what they'll play on Saturday: "perhaps a combination of numbers from the last nine albums." *Love Supreme* is just one of a swathe of prestigious international dates – after Cincinnati, Dallas, Atlanta, Portugal, then on through Spain, Italy, Germany, The Netherlands (at the North Sea Jazz Festival, where Emma Rawicz will also be – I hope they meet), then Norway, then back through the US again.

So there you go. At the age of 42, a unique, supreme musical powerhouse. You may already be at the Festival to see her. It's a significant date, Independence Day. One of her songs, 'Vague Suspicions' [2012] she tells me, is about "the shit that my country was perpetrating around the world ... standing by watching people being obliterated." At that time, US versus Afghanistan, plus their Global War on Terror in Yemen, Pakistan, Somalia, Pakistan. One wonders if any of her music at the festival will form a reaction to the current Great American Nightmare.

COURTESY OF THE LOVE SUPREME FESTIVAL

COURTESY OF THE LOVE SUPREME FESTIVAL

Tea Museum Hosts Telly Event

TOBY BULA-EDGE

Free cups of tea, and a retro feel, will be on offer at two exciting *Tea and Telly* pop up events on 8 and 22 August. They will take place at The British Tea Museum at 42 George Street, organised by the charity Screen Culture UK. Together they form the first stage of a process leading to the foundation, here in Hastings, of a permanent TV Museum.

As well as downing as many cups of tea as you can manage, you'll be invited to suggest what you'd want to see in a permanent TV Museum. It will also be an opportunity to discuss your favourite – and least favourite – TV shows and moments.

Martin Dickie, project co-ordinator, considers it vital for Hastings to celebrate the town's connection to TV. John Logie Baird “essential-

ly developed the concept of television here, and transmitted the first static image from one room to another,” explains Dickie. “We need to celebrate that fact.”



Enthusiasts for the project already include *Smack the Pony* writer and comedian Doon Mackichan, Trix Worrell (the creator of *Desmond's*), film actor Paul Freeman, and documentary filmmaker Jan Leman. The *Tea and Telly* events are also supported by the Electric Palace Cinema and Hastings Museum and Gallery.

A permanent museum would look at people's relationship to TV, and its past and possible future. There are also plans that such a museum would host workshops for young people. Dickie says: “We'd love it to be a place for young people to come and build ties with the industry, to learn how to film, script-write, act – to give them some of the tools needed to move into the industry.”

At the moment, however, the focus is on gauging public interest, how it might look and how it might operate. “Tell us about your favourite TV shows, favourite personalities, things you love to hate about TV – and look at some test exhibits as well,” suggests Dickie.

You can do all that, while making use of the free cups of tea, on 8 and 22 August.

BOOK FESTIVAL AND COMPETITIONS

Hastings Book Festival is returning for its 9th year with a bumper programme of talks, performances and workshops. Their short story, poetry and non-fiction competitions are already open for entries. People interested in booking a table to sell books, or book-related wares, at the Book Fair on Saturday 12 September, please email hastingsbookfair@gmail.com.

A terrific line-up of national treasures, fascinating speakers and local heroes will be making

appearances in mid-September. One confirmed speaker will be historian and broadcaster David Olusoga, known for *A House Through Time*, *Empire*, and *Black and British: A Forgotten History*. Another speaker will be Liverpool Poet and broadcaster Roger McGough CBE, who is also president of the Poetry Society.

For more details, go to hastings-bookfest.org/competitions. Book Fair takes place 12 September at the Observer building, tickets on sale this week.

EVERYWHERE AT ONCE FESTIVAL

This is a fallow year for Glastonbury, allowing the litter-strewn, dog-infested, mud-trodden or dried-rat fields to regenerate. Instead a Lottery-funded project, the Everywhere At Once Festival, has temporarily taken its place, enabling unique performances everywhere in the UK between 26 and 28 June.

In Hastings two venues will participate: on Friday 26 The Piper will host a hybrid rave with Aaron Liberator, after an hour's set by Admiral Sir Cloudesey Shovell,

a post-punk, post-metal, post-apocalyptic outfit whose latest album has titles such as *Laughing Gravy* and *Head in A Noose*, along with *yet Another Greasy Spoon*.

True to their usual genre output however, over the same weekend The Jenny Lind hosts Americana idol, multi-award-winning singer-songwriter from Oklahoma, Carter Sampson. Her recordings include *Rattlesnake Kate* and *Tighten Up My Strings*, and *Queen of Oklahoma*. Go along and see if you agree.

See thepiper.club for details



THE PIPER PRESENTS

THE MADCAP'S LASTING LAUGH

An eight-day 20th anniversary celebration of the life of Syd Barrett and the unveiling of his iconic floorboards.

4th-11th JULY

THE PIPER PRESENTS
THE MADCAP'S LASTING LAUGH
A celebration of the life of Syd Barrett and the unveiling of his iconic floorboards.

SYD'S LAST STAND

Sat 4th July
THE PIPER
LIGHTS
PROJECTIONS
SOUNDS
Q&A WITH SYD BIOGRAPHER
ROB CHAPMAN
with Tony Marshall

8pm
THE PIPER CLUB - EVENTS

THE PIPER PRESENTS
THE MADCAP'S LASTING LAUGH
A celebration of the life of Syd Barrett and the unveiling of his iconic floorboards.

THE UNVEILING CEREMONY

For the afternoon only, the floorboards from Syd Barrett's The Madcap's Lasting Laugh will be at full public display.

WITH SPECIAL GUESTS

SUNDAY 5TH JULY

FREE, BUT TICKET RESERVATION ESSENTIAL
1.30pm-6pm

THE PIPER PRESENTS
THE MADCAP'S LASTING LAUGH
A celebration of the life of Syd Barrett and the unveiling of his iconic floorboards.

TWINK

Pretty Things and Pink Follies psych pioneer
- DAVID CATLIN-BIRCH

Sun 5th July
THE PIPER
ST LEONARDS
Doors 8pm

THE PIPER PRESENTS
THE MADCAP'S LASTING LAUGH
A celebration of the life of Syd Barrett and the unveiling of his iconic floorboards.

SHINE ON YOU CRAZY DIAMOND

A PANEL DISCUSSION AND CELEBRATION
WITH
TWINK
IAN BARRETT
ROB CHAPMAN
JERRY SHIRLEY
- VERY SPECIAL GUESTS

MON 6TH JULY
7PM
THE PIPER
PLUS
Exploders

A FILM ABOUT THE EXPLOSIONS GALLERY BY-OB
WITH INTRO BY DIRECTOR JILL BROWNE - DUREY

8pm
THE PIPER CLUB - EVENTS

THE PIPER PRESENTS
THE MADCAP'S LASTING LAUGH
A celebration of the life of Syd Barrett and the unveiling of his iconic floorboards.

ERIC TENGLER

ELECTRONIC
+ Column 258

Thu 9th July
THE PIPER
ST LEONARDS
Doors 8pm

THE PIPER PRESENTS
THE MADCAP'S LASTING LAUGH
A celebration of the life of Syd Barrett and the unveiling of his iconic floorboards.

SYDCAST

THE PIPER
SAT 11th JULY

THE BLACK DOLDRUMS
INDEX FOR WORKING MUSIC
BOBBY ZODIAC - THE CLAIRVOYANTS
- O. B. IS
THE GREAT SILKIE
THE EMBROOKS

THE PIPER CLUB
All profits go to MEND
in honour of the Barrett family

THE PIPER PRESENTS
THE MADCAP'S LASTING LAUGH
A celebration of the life of Syd Barrett and the unveiling of his iconic floorboards.

BERNARD BUTLER

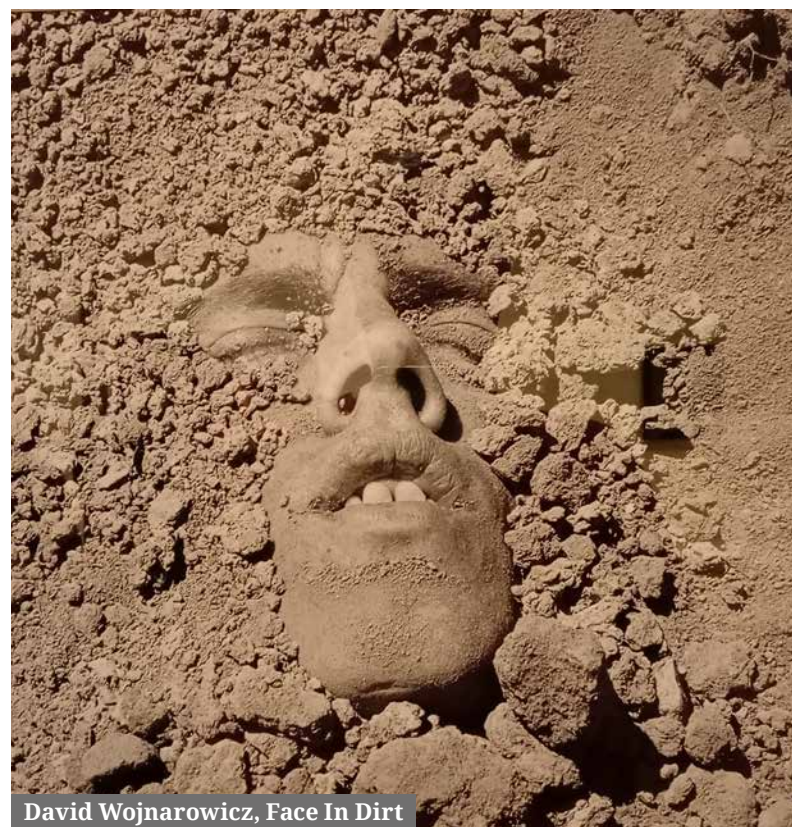
Fri 10th July

THE PIPER
ST LEONARDS
Doors 8pm

THE PIPER PRESENTS
THE MADCAP'S LASTING LAUGH
A celebration of the life of Syd Barrett and the unveiling of his iconic floorboards.

MYSTERY JETS

Sun 12th July
THE PIPER
ST LEONARDS
6.45pm-10pm



David Wojnarowicz, Face In Dirt

COURTESY OF DE LA WARR PAVILION

A Meander Through an Artist's Mind

DAVID MILTON

Visiting De La Warr Pavilion's art shows recently has been a bit like the three cream cracker challenge – an unpalatably dry, instantly regrettable experience that has you reaching swiftly for a drink. After this spring's Klondike-bleak barrenness of Jenine Marsh's new wishes. (sic), with its aridly didactic deconstructed wishing-well and meaninglessly mounted dead pigeons, and the cack-handed colour-blind beachcomber crock of last winter's *Betty Parsons: Sheer Energy* – a misnomer so wide of the mark as to suggest a deeply cruel in-joke – DLWP greets mid-summer with *To Improvise A Mountain*: Lynette Yiadom-Boakye Curates.

The title is far too long for word of mouth recommendation. But the good news is, it's a banger. Respect to the newly appointed Head of Visual Arts, Ned McConnell, who whether from modesty, caution or strategy has brought this Hayward Gallery Touring show to the south coast.

Born after punk, in 1977, Yiadom-Boakye missed the memo about never trusting a hippie and refers in her curatorial notes to "poets, dreamers, thinkers and wanderers" and "that spirit of infinite knowledge and infinite knowing that poetry allows us" – which all

seems a bit evasive, frankly. No matter, because among the 17 artists on display are obvious greats like Bonnard, Sickert and Vuillard, and exciting but less obviously substantial (because suddenly hip) figures including David Wojnarowicz, Peter Hujar and Yiadom-Boakye herself.

DEVELOPMENT OF A SENSIBILITY

It's unapologetically Yiadom-Boakye's show. Her own paintings are swanky, light-headed and even a little goofy, her charcoal drawings measured and coolly idealised, classically composed but ultimately, ethereal. Most intriguing is *Oracular*, a dark figure posed against an enormous black globe that might be a beach ball, a war memorial or a symbol of global transformation.



Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, To Improvise a Mountain (titular work)

COURTESY OF DE LA WARR PAVILION

It's enigmatic in a way the lightweight portraits of earnest bespectacled male heads that is *To Improvise A Mountain* itself, is not: they look like newspaper illustrations. Conceptually the exhibition might seem slight: Artist Selects Stuff She Likes. But it's a brave and engaging attempt to trace the development of a sensibility. Don't expect narrative coherence or an encyclopaedic range: it's as idiosyncratic as your own interior monologue – chaotic, playful, a work in progress. It offers above all an aspirational perspective, formally a little nostalgic, carefully avoiding the stylistic dead-end of the YBA dinosaurs who have doubtless dominated LY-B's artistic life, instead cherry-picking outlier heroes and binging in some treats and surprises.

Singular spots of suspended time abound. Kahlil Joseph's short but dense film *Wildcat* pinpoints Black cowboy culture and exhibits both the grace of Eadweard Muybridge and the starkness of Monte Hellman. Wojnarowicz's *Untitled (Face in Dirt)* is one of the late American artist's incandescent enactments of calculated self-destruction. It's a minor work and could be a film still from a student pastiche of Pasolini, but still burns like a white hot coal. Walter Sickert's remarkable *Self Portrait* is simply alarming – a heartless brown study exuding Munch-like vigour, with a blotchy face the ferocious focus of which is the artist's stony left eye. Pierre Bonnard's *Garden at Le Cannet* pro-

vides a post-impressionistic oasis of volatile, energised colour and crackles with fiery life. Lisa Brice's *Parting at Dusk* is a sullen nocturnal bright blue demon set against a glowing gold panel, a fierce, eyeless, disarming study in passive aggressive composure.

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

There are some telling and provocative juxtapositions. Sickert's *The Blackbird of Paradise* is beautifully brash, a luridly cackling creature who exudes the energy of an unexpected electric shock in the age of steam. Yiadom-Boakye's *Sunbird 3* subtly references it with quiet and delicate attention not to spittily character armour but to inner contemplative power. More powerful still and still palpably steaming – content warning: close attention is likely to scare the horses or spook your labradoodle – is *Sex Series*, Wojnarowicz's photo-collages of reckless NYC cocksuckers, illuminated in stark negative relief like furtive crime scene contact prints from the Reaganite dark night of AIDS. These are placed alongside the photographic semi-sculptural staged studio portraits of Paul Mpagi Sepuya whose *Studio with Gazing Balls* formally reflects the queer American iconoclast's brittle perspective (channelled rage against the 'pre-invented man') in an illuminating way, suggestive of a trajectory from the rough and ready techniques of a heedless radical underground to the slick production values of a so-

berly calculating mainstream.

There are a few lapses in judgment. Glenn Ligon's *Untitled (If I Can't Have Love, I'll Take Sunshine)* is a pointless and yawn-inducing neon sign of the kind made utterly banal by Tracey Emin, among others – as trite as a Chinese fortune cookie, as redundant as a Future Mrs Tom Daley mug. The complex arrangement of photographs and sketches by Sickert, Hujar, Samuel Fosso, Toyin Ojih Odutola and Zoe Leonard which takes up most of one long wall is dominated by Wojnarowicz's 'Rimbaud in New York' sequence: the artist wearing a badly made mask of the French poet/gun-runner. It's juvenile stuff and the jumble of adjacent works don't gel or offer any memorable insight. It feels miscalculated, mere filler. (Who'd ever have thought one might complain that in Bexhill-on-Sea there'd be too much David Wojnarowicz?)

AND UPSTAIRS ...

In the upper gallery The Otolith Group (in truth just a couple) gives us *The Third Part of the Third Measure*, a two-screen video which repurposes the compositions of (African-American, gay, deceased, inspired) composer Julius Eastman. It's meticulously shot, expertly performed and in the small cinema the music from two grand pianos sounds great. But it's bullshit: opportunistic, self-important, an intellectually compromised exercise in reframing another artist's work as an important piece of art in itself, part of a widespread and dubious tendency of bourgeoisification which throws into relief the entire exhibition.

Art about being art or art shows about art tend away from lived experience into a rarefied and abstract – sometimes cynical – realm, then into nothing. Carping aside, *To Improvise A Mountain* has a higher purpose and actually asks you to collude, to be attuned – and to be played. As you wander round you will make your own selection, will spot and/or fill in the gaps according to your own predilections, knowledge and tastes, your own ignorance and prejudices. And surely that's the point. Don't miss it.

Exhibitions run daily till Sunday 13 September 2026, 10am to 5pm. Free entry. De La Warr Pavilion, Marina, Bexhill On Sea



Eight Days of Syd's Last Stand

NICK TUCKER

There's a good reason The Piper has been hosting Syd's Last Stand – an annual tribute to Syd Barrett – since opening seven years ago. Syd Barrett, the most enigmatic figure in the British 60s psychedelic underground, played his last increasingly erratic show with Pink Floyd – the band he'd formed – at the Pavilion Ballroom on old Hastings Pier in 1968. By then, the band's writer and charismatic frontman had become a disconnected figure in his own band, perched on the edge of the stage, randomly strumming a detuned guitar, empty eyes gazing from beneath a tumbling mass of corkscrew hair.

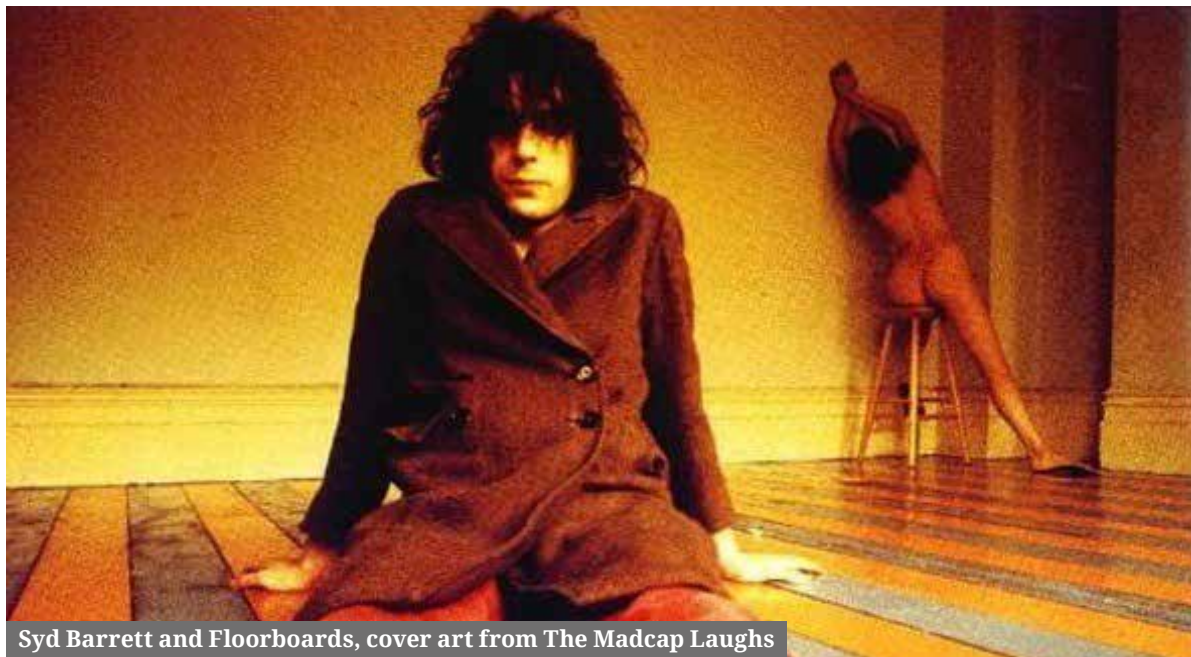
It's exactly that unsettling rejection of pop idol status that's become his enduring legacy. Syd Barrett transformed from a fading musician into something close to myth,

a conduit for the dark unknowable realm of the human psyche. The consensus narrative blames drugs and calls it madness. But others ask: what is madness? What if it's a dark visionary place, a lifting of the veil between subject experience and reality itself? We don't know. And it's precisely that not-knowing which captivates us.

THE FLOORBOARDS BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

After *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn* (a title borrowed from *The Wind in the Willows* – the reason The Piper is called The Piper), Syd recorded two albums in 1970: *Barrett and The Madcap Laughs*. The latter is a stark, disjointed masterpiece with huge cult status. Its iconic cover shows Syd crouched on self-painted blue and orange floorboards in his London home; ghostly, both present and absent at the same time.

I bought the album in the late 80s, and remember being struck imme-



Syd Barrett and Floorboards, cover art from *The Madcap Laughs*

diately by those floorboards. How often do you say that about floorboards? Unless you're a carpenter or a family of termites: not very. But they felt iconic even then: the kind of detail you assume has been painted over, ripped up, or vanished into some collector's vault as a novelty item. Like the desiccated head of Oliver Cromwell, which circulated

as a curio in a leather drawstring bag through the 17th century – a whole other story of objects that shouldn't persist, but do.

Except these floorboards are here. In Hastings. Rescued by Chris Barnett, The Piper's owner, and two friends, they'll be unveiled on 5 July as the centrepiece of this year's *Syd's Last Stand*—a kind of holy

grail for psychonauts. The festival runs eight days, featuring talks from Syd's ex-girlfriend Jenny Spires, live psych-rock from Ozric Tentacles, and luminaries like Bernard Butler. It promises to be extraordinary. You will not want to miss it.

For full details: thepiper.club

Birnam Wood Comes to West Hill

Family-friendly, funny Shakespeare comes to Hastings Castle

Hastings Castle will welcome The HandleBards to the West Hill on Friday 10 July for a riotous open-air production of *Macbeth*, marking a significant step in the Castle's long-term ambition to become a regular destination for touring outdoor performance.

Amongst the ancient ruins, audiences are invited to bring blankets or low-backed chairs, and enjoy a playful Shakespearean production with a dramatic seascape backdrop. Perfect for an impassioned soliloquy or two!

The HandleBards are known for fast, funny, and environmentally conscious Shakespeare. Their 2026 *Macbeth* is performed by a 3-strong troupe touring the UK by electric van, bringing a high-octane, slightly chaotic version of the Scottish play to outdoor spaces across the country. Forget sol-

emn tragedy: this *Macbeth* is full of mishaps, mayhem and mirth, suitable for all ages and apparitions.

For Hastings Castle, the performance is more than a one-off summer date. It represents the first full outdoor theatre production in the castle's current events programme and, the team hopes, the beginning of many more. As the site continues to develop its role as an open-air events space, the arrival of The HandleBards points towards a future in which Hastings Castle becomes a distinctive stop for touring the-

atre companies, artists and audiences looking for performances in extraordinary places.

Ellie Westbrook, at Hastings Castle, said: "We are so excited to welcome the Handlebards to help us open this next chapter for Hastings Castle. Their work is dynamic, irreverent, interactive and does everything possible to bring theatre alive in the outdoors. We want to do more of this programming and see this event as a beautiful launchpad."

The story may be familiar: three witches promise Macbeth the Scottish crown, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth make one spectacularly bad decision, and things rapidly unravel from there. Foul deeds are done, plots fall apart and mysterious spirits appear. In *The Handbards'* hands, however, Shakespeare's darkest play becomes a gloriously unhinged evening of theatre.



Venue: Hastings Castle, Castle Hill Road, West Hill, Hastings, Friday 10 July, 7pm–9pm, doors open 6pm. Tickets: hastingscastle.org.uk/event/the-handlebards-do-macbeth. Audience advice: Outdoor performance. Bring a chair or blanket and clothing suitable for the weather. The *Handlebards' 2026* summer season includes *Macbeth* and *As You Like It*, with *Macbeth* touring from June to September 2026.



When shall we three meet again?

MARKET

FREE EVENT

AT THE MUSEUM

4 JULY, 10-5PM | HASTINGS MUSEUM & ART GALLERY

FREE TRAVEL

FREE CRAFT WORKSHOPS

SPORTS DEMOS

BOOK READINGS

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

MAKERS MARKET

SECOND HAND MARKET

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**SANDERS
DE ROEPER**

BOOKBUSTER REVIEW

Challenging the Hope Deficit

MAKING A MOVEMENT
BY BARNEY CULLUM
PUBLISHED BY ACROPOLIS, 2023,
RRP £14.99
REVIEW BY TIM BARTON

Those paying attention to world affairs today know there is something of a ‘hope’ deficit. It is with this in mind that I have chosen to review Barney’s book looking at successful movements ‘driving social change around the world’ or as he calls them, ‘the disruptors’. Each of the groups covered have limited goals and limited success, but taken together give cause for at least some hope!

In his introduction, Barney touches on the double-edged sword of hope for change versus reality, so he is not a naïve optimist, which makes his book all the more beneficial. His introduction talks about Just Stop Oil, and their relatively successful early ‘nonviolent direct action’ and much more successful ‘marketing’, but also the limits imposed by changing legislation aimed at smothering people-powered lobby groups. In this case, that was Suella Braverman’s amendments to the Public Order Act of 1986. And, since the book was written, we have seen ‘Labour’ extending the reach of legislation to stop any protests they don’t like, and even ensuring

police action continues despite the courts overruling the government. This is, of course, an unacceptable attack on our civil liberties, and taken alongside other extensions of policing of protest from the Thatcher era, the Criminal Justice Act of the early 90s, and Blair’s reforms after the 2000 petrol strike, gives the framework for future governments to enforce a police state clampdown on us all.

Nevertheless, amongst the weeds and cobbles there is still hope for new shoots to sprout. The trick is ‘how to achieve social change’ despite the obstacles. Barney has, as he puts it, ‘met and quizzed activists, lawyers, political scientists, campaigners, graffiti artists, anthropologists, peace-builders, hacktivists, charity directors, authors, Olympians, refugees, researchers and every other kind of change agent you can think of. For this book.’

TEN PARTS BY THEME
He takes a global approach, from Greta Thunberg, through Black Lives Matter, to Greek refugee NGOs and reconciliation activists in the Sahel. The book is divided by theme into ten parts. The first addresses environmentalist groups, such as Extinction Rebellion and Freetown Christianity; the second, race-related activism and education. In part



three, Barney looks at issues around abortion law in Turkey and in Ireland, and the social movements fighting for justice during Brazil’s ‘Zika crisis’. The fourth part is ‘Health and Healing – Creative Confrontation’, and touches on mental health politics, drug legalisation, and the ‘wall museum’ in Palestine – the latter is especially poignant given the genocidal war that has no doubt destroyed such initiatives since.

In the fifth section Barney looks at legal roots to change in Spain; Mary Hwye’s ‘International Alert’ group, building peace by confronting trauma in the Sahel; and the Columbian peace accords.

Parts six and seven cover the fight-back against censorship and repression in Albania, Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and Turkey. Part eight takes on hacktivism in Iran and resistance to internet control in Ethiopia. This latter has global importance today. At the time of writing, Barney records that ‘whilst there have been policies restricting access to the internet across the world, they had arguably never been attempted on the scale seen in Ethiopia’ in 2016. Attempts to control access to Facebook, YouTube and ‘X’ have since become ubiquitous from China to here in the UK; banning VPNs to those without digital proof of identity; the ‘great firewall of China’ that

former Hastings MP Amber Rudd advocated for copying in Britain, and that Starmer gives every sign of also wishing to perpetrate, all seek to censor and control dissent. As with the clampdown on protest in the streets, this adds to an arsenal of dubious control that is just begging for a paranoid extremist future government to misuse even more blatantly than today. Analysing successful methods of resisting this is imperative.

Part nine looks at refugees and asylum seekers, in the face of state attempts to effectively criminalise NGOs seeking to help them. Speaking of Greek attempts to shut down humanitarian support, Ellim Xenou of charity ‘Doctors of the World’ states that ‘the new asylum law and the defaming and blaming of NGOs... they are all different pieces of the same puzzle that is to make refugees and migrants lives unbearable so as not to create a pull factor for more to come to Europe. [Yet] ethnocentric policies may add a challenge – a barrier – but you don’t put an end to the people’s hope for a future, for a better life, for peace this way.’ The last chapter in part nine addresses women’s rights in sports in Qatar.

The last part looks at the role of Human Rights Watch and Legal Agenda in Lebanon, and the relative success at the time Barney was writing of anti-corruption protests in Israel, which, like Just Stop Oil here, used non-violent direct action in the form of roadblocks. Sadly, the military events that have taken place since 2023 will have negated any successes. Then Barney looks at anti-Beijing activists in Hong Kong and Taiwan, with the activist collective Scholarism, and the ‘Umbrella Movement’.

Barney is not unrealistic about the limits of these activist and legalist movements, but sees them as demonstrating ‘the imagination, independent thought and optimism fundamental to all social change movements’, the importance of international links, and of solidarity and ‘shared leadership’. Activism for positive change is a ‘permanent revolution’, with a step forward here and a step back there, but the green shoots persist. To quote Galaxy Quest, “Never give up, never surrender!”

POETRY CORNER

WRITING MY WILL ON THE TOILET
PETE DONOHUE

i’m writing my will
on the toilet
drinking strong coffee
laden with whiskey
waiting for that
familiar movement
of mind & bowels
when i’ll think about
what i might leave
behind
if anything
& who shall get
each part of me
or those parts that
haven’t already
wasted away
or gone down
the toilet
elvis died
like this
i hope i don’t
i haven’t yet finished
my will
or this shit.

CROSSWORD CORNER

Across

1. Tree mixed up with part exchange for person with high skill level (6)

3. Select new hose co (6)

4. Saint gets mineral deposits and supplies (6)

Down

1. Builds tree mixed up with Lewis say (6)

2. Rig set out for dangerous wild animals (6)

Crossword Solution: Answers on page 3 of The HIP List

1					2
3					
4					

TENNIS



Stefan Le Breuilly receives trophy from Amherst club president Michael Foster

Stefan Steps Up in Amherst Club Finals

BILLIE KOTTING

This year’s Amherst club tournament involved around 60 players playing across five formats – mens and ladies singles, mens and ladies doubles, and mixed doubles. With a main draw and ‘consolation’ contests for first round losers, that resulted in 97 matches over 12 days, including ten on finals day, Saturday 20 June.

Surprise winner of the men’s singles, with a career best perfor-

mance, was Stefan Le Breuilly. He is son of former club chair Trevor Le Breuilly and became acting chair in his own right earlier this year. After clinching the first set against defending champion Quentin Soucek, Stefan trailed in the second, but saved two set points at 4-5 and another two at 5-6, and eventually triumphed in the tie-break.

In the men’s doubles, Stefan teamed up with Jack Watson to play teenager Toby H— and Pete Farthing, veteran coach. Pete put on a master-class of serve and volley, but also employed the SABR, sneaking

forward on service returns to be first to the net. He and Toby stormed to a first set advantage. Stefan and Jack turned the tide, their angles getting sharper, and they took the second. In a full third set, Toby held service bravely at 2-1, the momentum shifted again, and the age-contrast duo saw out the match.

The other three finals in the main draw all featured perennial finalists Nikki Crowhurst on one side of the net and Pearl Hare on the other.

In the mixed doubles, Nikki partnered Dylan Preece to play top seeds Pearl and Josh Craig. The match couldn’t have been tighter, with each pair each taking a set, the decider a Championship tiebreak, nicked 11-9.

Straight back on court in the women’s doubles, Pearl paired with Karen Cunningham, while Nikki teamed with Debi Ani. The former pairing enjoyed a straightforward win.

In the ladies singles Pearl and Nikki went head to head in a re-match of last year’s final. The first set was even, only sealed by a late break of serve in Nikki’s favour. In the second, Pearl got off to a flying start and equalised. In the Championship tiebreak – a full third set was an option, unsurprisingly declined by the players after six full sets – Pearl hit some gems but it was Nikki who swooped in to take back her crown. Both have vowed never to play the singles again – but rival club members shouldn’t count on it.

FINAL RESULTS

- Mens singles: S Le Breuilly bt Q Soucek 6-4, 7-6
- Ladies singles: N Crowhurst bt P Hare 7-5, 2-6, 10-5
- Mens doubles: P Farthing and TH bt S Le Breuilly and J Watson 6-3, 1-6, 6-1
- Ladies doubles: P Hare and K Cunningham bt N Crowhurst and D Ani 6-3, 6-0
- Mixed doubles: D Preece and N Crowhurst bt J Craig and P Hare 4-6, 6-4, 11-9

CRICKET

Priory Sink to League Bottom

20 June	
Horsham	220 for 9
Hastings & St Leonards Priory	185 for 9
27 June	
Priory	303 for 9
Three Bridges	304 for 2

A magnificent innings of 152 not out scored by Joe Billings last Saturday wasn’t enough to save Hastings

& St Leonards Priory from defeat at the hands of high-flying Three Bridges. Priory’s total of 303 looked defensible, particularly when Freddie Hulbert was bowling a tidy opening spell, but the rest of their attack was taken apart by the home batsmen. Sussex squad player George Thomas made an unbeaten 159, and his team cruised to an eight-wicket victory with more than seven overs to spare.

After wins for both Horsham and Haywards Heath, the sides below them at the start of the day, Priory now prop up the Premier League table.

The previous Saturday Priory hosted Horsham at Horntye. Spin duo Adam Page and Alfie Hunter took four wickets apiece as the West Sussex side were limited to 220 for nine off 58 overs. Priory lost two early wickets in reply, recovered through a partnership of 67 between Hunter (43) and Scowen (39) but slumped again to 130 for seven, with the later order having to battle hard to save a draw.



Alfie Hunter - top score against Horsham

FOOTBALL

New Supporters Club Formed to Boost United Future

IAN GRANT

Hastings United fans have begun the process of forming a new Independent Supporters’ Club with a combination of aims: representing their views, organising social events, and promoting the club within the town.

Despite two gruelling seasons,

in which United have come perilously close to consecutive relegations, attendances at the Pilot Field have remained comparatively high. However, at an initial meeting on 1 June, many supporters voiced concerns that the connection between the club’s loyal fan-base and its players and owners has been lost. In particular, it was felt that there was a lack of communication from the boardroom on the

progress of plans for redeveloping the ground.

In response, an open forum was held with Ben White, the club’s General Manager, on 6 June. Lasting nearly two hours, and very well attended despite an early morning start, a constructive and positive meeting covered matters both on and off the field in considerable depth.

White confirmed that the plan remains to rotate the pitch in order to create space for a range of additional facilities, with the aim of turning the Pilot Field and the neighbouring Firs site into a ‘sporting hub’ for the benefit of the local community. The existing grass surface will be replaced by a 3G pitch.

One new suggestion is that the new pitch will be located further south on the site, to lessen the considerable costs of excavating the grass bank that runs along the other side. The new pitch location would

require the demolition of the main stand. It’s a century-old structure much admired for its architecture but increasingly dilapidated and accommodating a diminishing number of spectators for safety reasons.

At an estimated cost of over £4million, the project is certainly ambitious. However, White was bullish about the prospects of delivering it, indicating that the club aims to submit a planning application in the near future and raise funding thereafter. The hope is to begin preparatory work during the coming season, with the new pitch being laid next summer; a clear desire was expressed to avoid any long-term ground-share elsewhere.

More immediately, the club will be trialling the opening of car parking facilities on the Firs site, accessible via Ochiltree Road, at the start of the new season. It’s hoped that the car park will reduce on-road

parking in the local area on match days, benefitting local residents.

On the pitch, new manager Ronnie Dolan has appointed backroom staff, including club legend Sam Adams as one of two assistants, and begun assembling his squad with a number of new signings. One notable comment from White was that “the manner in which we stayed up last season wasn’t good enough.” Supporters will be hoping for better next time around.

At a further meeting, the management committee of the Supporters’ Club was appointed, with Chris Laverick heading it as chair. Members will be able to sign up from the start of the new season. In the meantime, ideas and assistance are very welcome.

The Supporters’ Club can be contacted at HastingsUnitedSC@gmail.com.

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