

Your Pull-Out Guide
to What's Happening
in Hastings

Friday 28 August to Thursday 10 September 2026

The HIP List

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The HIP List

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KILEY'S KARPETS

CARPETS • RUGS • VINYL • WOOD LAMINATES

MUSIC

Friday 28 August
AcidFest with Thee Lucifer Sams, Dead Zoo + more
7.00pm - The Piper, 1 Norman Rd
Eclectic psychedel-ic roadshow
The Forbidden Fruit Cabaret: Sam Solace
9.30pm - The Forbidden Fruit, 22 Grand Parade

Saturday 29 August
Talent Accelerator Summer Sessions
2.00pm - De La Warr Pavilion, Marina, Bexhill
Busking on our outside stage - talent TBA!
Free event. Chilled summer afternoon sounds.

Sunday 30 August
Milton Hide
5.00pm - Noah's Goat Wine, 68 George St
Folky Americana from this Hastings Duo
Hibushibire + Black Helium
6.45pm - The Piper, 1 Norman Rd
Japanese hard psych

Thursday 3 September
The History of Rock
7.30pm - White Rock Theatre, White Rock

Friday 4 September
Pram + Simon & the Pope
8.00pm - The Piper, 1 Norman Rd
Atmospheric, elec-tronic post rock

Saturday 5 September
A Place to Bury Strangers + Die Anstalt
8.00pm - The Piper, 1 Norman Rd
Spacey American shoegaze/noise rock

Thursday 10 September
Courettes + Joanna & the Dropouts
7.30pm - The Piper, 1 Norman Rd

WEEKLY MUSIC

Sundays
Circuit Sundays
6.30pm - The Seadog, 32 Station Rd
Sunday evening sessions featuring rotating local musicians and bands.
BYO Vinyl Night
7.00pm - The Jenny Lind Inn, 69 High St

Mondays
Just Landed
7.30pm - The Jenny

Lind Inn, 69 High St
A monthly residen-cy of alien blues.
The Jam on the Hill
8.00pm - The Plough Inn, 49 Priory Rd
Bring your instrument and voice and join in!

Tuesdays
Sounds at the Hound Open Mic
7.00pm - Cactus Hound Bar, 33-35 Western Rd
Weekly Open Mic Night, hosted by Steve Didge.
Open Mic
7.00pm - Barnaby's Lounge, 46 Robertson St
Every second Tuesday, hosted by NZ song-writer Konnaruchi.
Monthly Jazz Jam
8.00pm - Barnaby's Lounge, 46 Robertson St
2nd Tuesday of the month.
Folk Night
8.00pm - Stag Inn
Singing and mu-sic, all welcome.
Albion Skiffle Company
8.30pm - Albion Hastings, 33 George St
Open acoustic mu-sic session.

Wednesdays
Open Mic
7.00pm - The Piper, 1 Norman Rd
Weekly. Hosted by Steve Didge
The Circuit x The Stag
7.30pm - Stag Inn, 14 All Saints' St
Weekly live acoustic music curated by The Circuit, featuring local acoustic artists. Free entry.

Thursdays
Berth of the Cool
7.00pm - The White Rock Hotel, 1-10 White Rock
Jazz music and eclectic DJs, downstairs at the White Rock Hotel. Second Thursday of the month.
Open Mic
7.45pm - The Nags Head, 8-9 Gensing Rd
First Thursday of the month
The Jazz Organisation
8.00pm - NUR Restaurant & Lounge, 13 Robertson St
Shanty Night
8.30pm - The Jenny Lind Inn, 69 High St
Weekly Sea Shanty Night.

Fridays
Custard Caravan
4.00pm - Barnaby's Lounge, 46 Robertson St
An afternoon of mu-sic and mirth, last Friday of the month.
McNiff's Folk Sundowner
5.00pm - The Jenny Lind Inn, 69 High St
Weekly acoustic strand with a different guest fea-tured every Friday.

The Get Down
7.00pm - The White Rock Hotel, 1-10 White Rock
Funk music every first Friday of the month.

Saturdays
The Coffee House Sessions
5.30pm - Hanushka Coffee, Robertson St
Free entry. Jason McNiff and friends present.
Punk Night
8.30pm - The Carlisle, 24 Pelham St
Monthly on last Saturday, check Punk Rock at the Carlisle for updates on bands.

PERFORMANCE

Saturday 29 August
Dead in a Ditch on Ragland Road
7.30pm - The Stables Theatre, The Bourne
All tickets £10.
Thursday 3 September
Let Them Eat
7.30pm - The Stables Theatre, The Bourne
All tickets £10.

Friday 4 September
Let Them Eat
7.30pm - The Stables Theatre, The Bourne
All tickets £10.
The Forbidden Fruit Cabaret: Scarlett Harlett
9.30pm - The Forbidden Fruit, 22 Grand Parade

Saturday 5 September
Let Them Eat
7.30pm - The Stables Theatre, The Bourne
All tickets £10.
The Forbidden Fruit Cabaret: David Dale

Crossword Solution No 309:

Across: 1. (Di)Sc or ch(annel) 3. In-sect 4. En-sign

Down: 1. Stride (anagram) 2. Hasten (anagram)

Everything is Always the Same and Everything is Always Different
Until 29 August
Solaris Gallery, Norman Rd
Lemons, Laws and Secret Doors: A Hastings Queer History Collective Exhibition
Until 30 August
Hastings Museum and Art Gallery, Bohemia Rd
Michelle Mildenhall - After Dark
5 and 12 September 12-6pm
Electric Palace Cinema, High St
Moore/Freud
Until 13 September
Hastings Contemporary, The Stade
Outside the Lines Group Show (Home Educated Artists)
Until 4 October
Hastings Museum and Art Gallery, Bohemia Rd
Richard Phoenix - Many Disguises
Until 13 September
Hastings Contemporary, The Stade
Alexandra Richardson - Love in Fleurescence
Until 30 August
St Leonards Pub, London Rd
Merv's Eye View/ Jo's Point of View
Until 2 September
The Crown, All Saints St
Until 4 October
Hastings Museum and Art Gallery, Bohemia Rd
Miguel Rothschild - Undercurrents
Until 13 September
Hastings Contemporary, The Stade
Smalls! HAF Members' Small Artworks
Until 13 September
Hastings Arts Forum, Marine Court
Annie Soudain
Until 2 September
The Crown, All Saints St
Summer Exhibition - Group Show
Until 26 September
Stables Theatre Gallery, The Bourne
Summer Exhibition '26
Until 30 August
Bus Stop Studios, London Rd
Janaina Tschäpe - Conversations with the Sea
Until 13 September
Hastings Contemporary, The Stade
Unhung Heroes Group Show
Until 29 August
Barnaby's Lounge, Robertson St
Paul Watson - Flesh and Bone
4 to 26 September (Preview 4 September 7pm)
1200 Postcards, Queens Rd

Val Wilmer - Blue Moments, Black Sounds
Until 12 September
Lucy Bell Gallery, Norman Rd
To Improvise A Mountain: Lynette Yiadom-Boakye Curates
Until 13 September
De La Warr Pavilion



SPORT

Saturday 29 August Cricket: Hastings & St Leonards Priory v Three Bridges - Sussex Premier League
11.30am - Horntye Park



ACTIVE SPORT

Sundays Free Tennis session in the park
10.00am - Alexandra Park Tennis Courts
To book: clubspark.lta.org.uk/breakpointtennis
AlexandraPark/FreeParks

Mondays Hastings Blister Sisters Slow Jogging Group
7.00am - Alexandra Park, St Helen's Rd
Details: blistersisters.co.uk
Badminton
9.30am - Summerfields Leisure Centre, Bohemia Rd
Adult class £5.60, hosted by Cathy Bargh
Booking freedom-leisure.co.uk
Walking Football
1.30pm - Summerfields Leisure Centre, Bohemia Rd
Voluntary donation £3
To book: eequ.org/experience/9252
Disability Cricket with Sussex Cricket
5.00pm - Horntye Park Sports Complex, Bohemia Rd
sussexcricket.co.uk/super-1s-hub
Active Hastings Walking Football
6.00pm - TN34 2LD, Lower Park Rd
Alexandra Park Multi-Use Games Area £2
Adults 50+ Booking eequ.org/experience/6144
Eclipse Netball Club
7.00pm - The Hastings Academy, Rye Rd
First session free then £5.
To book: 07754105836eclipsenetballhastings@gmail.com. Age 14+.
Badminton
8.00pm - Summerfields Leisure Centre, Bohemia Rd

£5.60 Adults Booking freedom-leisure.co.uk
Hastings YMCA Badminton Club
8.15pm - The Y Centre, 26 St Paul's Rd
Adult club, limited spaces for juniors.
Booking essential £5.50 hastingsymcabadmintonclub.co.uk

Tuesdays Hastings Active Fit
11.00am - West St Leonards Community Centre and Social Club, 130 Bexhill Rd
Contact weststleonardsca@gmail.com for details
Table Tennis
1.45pm - Isabel Blackman Centre, Winding St
Register at: isabelblackmancentre.co.uk
Badminton
6.00pm - Summerfields Leisure Centre, Bohemia Rd
£5.60 or £4.70 with a Leisure Pass.
Booking: [01424457691](tel:01424457691)
Judo with Hollington Judo Club
6.15pm - Holl

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Sunday 6 September
Sussex Makers' Markets in Alexandra Park
11.00am - Art in the Park, Arts on Prescription, Alexandra Park, Lower Park Rd, St Helen's Park Rd
Sonic Sanctuary
3.00pm - The Humble Hub studio, 4-5 Shepherd St
£12 [ticketsource.com/a-sonic-sanctuary](#)

Monday 7 September
Paydens Free Community Health Day
10.00am - 126 Bexhill Rd
Free health event. Blood pressure and ear health checks, weight management, on-site pharmacist advice, info and free tea, coffee and biscuits. Repeating Events

Sundays
Hastings Beach Meditation
9.00am - Hastings Motor Boat & Yacht Club, Rock-A-Nore Parade
40mins quiet meditation on beach opposite. Check Hastings Beach Meditation on Facebook
Brunch at the Beacon
10.30am - The Beacon, 67-68 St Mary's Terrace
Homeground Kitchen's cosy, hearty food and delicious cocktails. The first 3 Sundays of the month. Book at [hgkhastings@gmail.com](#)
Culture Club
10.45am - The Crown, 64-66 All Saints' St
a group for grown ups who love books, pod-casts, films, art & all things cultural! DM on Instagram @[cultureclub](#)
Pokemon League
1.00pm - Table Flip, 201 Queens Rd
Play packs for entry and prizes to be given.
Social Sundays at The Nest
2.00pm - The Nest, The Old Town Hall
A relaxed weekly social space for neurodivergent adults (16+) Come along for chats, games, optional creative activities or just a quiet cuppa in a calm, friendly space.

Mondays
Writing Hour
7.30am - 7 Trinity St
Writers can come together to write at the workshops [hastings-writersworkshop.com](#)
Monday Coffee Club + Free Play Session (Toddlers/Young Children)
9.30am - play., St Andrews Mews
Free play session for toddlers and young children with any food

or drink purchased.
Brede Flower Festival
10.00am - St George's Church, Brede, Brede Hill
30+ flower displays in a weekend of events and stalls for young and old.
Volunteering: Hidden Eden Wellbeing Garden
10.15am - 27 Parsons Cl
Craig's Cabin asks for volunteers to turn this green community space into a sensory garden [craigs-cabin87@hotmail.com](#)
Health Walk Old Town
2.00pm - The Stade, Rock-A-Nore Rd
Free one hour walk, just pop along [tcv.org.uk/southeast/sussex](#)
Backgammon Club
6.30pm - The Horse & Groom, 4 Mercatoria
All abilities welcome
Overeaters Anonymous
7.30pm - Clifton Centre, 1 and 2 Stainsby St
Pop Quiz
7.30pm - The Piper, 1 Norman Rd
Dave Valentine your Host
The Hastings and St Leonards Model Railway Club
8.00pm - Baldslow Memorial Hall, 216 Harrow Ln
New members welcome [hastingsmrc.org.uk](#)
Monday Night Quiz
8.00pm - Noah's Goat Hastings, 68 George St
Teams of up to 6, £2 p/p entry fee and prizes for winning and losing teams. Message/call if you'd like a table [01424 438791](#).

Tuesdays
Storytime@Ore Community Library
11.00am - Ore Community Library, 467 Old London Rd
Stories, rhymes, singing and craft. Weekly themes. Free to members and non members.
Health Walk St Leonards Seafront
11.00am - Meet at the clock on prom - free one hour walk, just pop along [tcv.org.uk/southeast/sussex](#)
Original OHPS Old Town Walks
2.30pm - The West Hill Cafe, Castle Hill Rd
Walking tour of the Old Town £6 [ohps.org.uk/walks](#)
Sew It's Tuesday
7.00pm - 161 Bexhill Rd
Share your crafting sewing, crochet, knitting or anything in-between [sewitstuesday@outlook.com](#)
Sound Waves Community Choir
7.30pm - Salvation Army, 26 St Andrew's Square
Free taster session. No auditions. [admin@](#)

[soundwaveschoir.org.uk](#)
Bingo Night
7.30pm - The Dolphin Inn, 11-12 Rock-A-Nore Rd
Booking advised: [01424 434326](#)
Ruxley's Crew Morris
8.15pm - West Hill Community Centre, Croft Rd
Morris dancing - with a Hastings pirate twist! Contact: [crewruyleys@gmail.com](#)

Wednesdays
Writing Hour
7.30am - 7 Trinity St
Writers can come together to write at the workshops [hastings-writersworkshop.com](#)
Green Gym at Hastings Centre
10.00am - The Hastings Centre, The Ridge
Horticultural volunteering for health, [carrie.edmonds@tcv.org.uk/07764 655609](#)
Health Walk Alexandra Park
10.30am - Alexandra Park, St Helen's Rd
From Ranger's Office - free one hour walk, just pop along [tcv.org.uk/southeast/sussex](#)
Community Open House
11.00am - Afri-Co-Lab, 3, Marine Court
Make Afri-Co-Lab your home, work space, chill-out lounge and studio for the day! [afri-co-lab.org](#)

All Sorts Auction
6.30pm - West St Leonards Community

Church Hall, St Augustine's Close, Cooden Dr, Bexhill
Free singing group for people with Dementia and their carers in Bexhill. Every 1st and 3rd Friday. discdementiasupport.org
Hastings Library of Things + Make and Mend Fixing Fridays
11.00am - Maslow Housing Cooperative, 5 Harold Place
Borrow tools and useful items, from bolt cutters to sewing machines, from tents to trombones. Find out more: umbrellasussex.org.uk
The Damascus Runners
11.00am - Bonjour Café, 13 Grand Parade
Social walking group, meet on the seafront opposite
Chess at The Nest
4.30pm - The Nest, The Old Town Hall
Broomgrove Youth Club Sessions
4.30pm - Broomgrove Community Centre, 85 Chiltern Dr
sarah.adams@freshvisions.org.uk Bev 07732 823800

Saturdays
Saturday Table Sales
9.30am - Christ Church St Leonards, Silchester Rd
First Saturday of the month
Weekly Indoor Market
10.00am - Saint Leonards Church Market, London Rd
Weekly market: clothes, bits, food, tat. Stalls still available loveamarket.co.uk
Heritage Explorers
10.00am - Christ Church St Leonards, Silchester Rd
Free drop-in family art & heritage activities.
Plant Sale at Alexandra Park Greenhouse
10.30am - Alexandra Park Greenhouse, St Helen's Rd
Monthly Vinyl Market
11.00am - The Piper, 1 Norman Rd
Family Day @PLAY
11.00am - play., St Andrews Mews
Good food, good company, good play and a lovely way to spend your Saturday.
Thai Food at the Albert
2.00pm - The Royal Albert, 293 Battle Rd
Gravity & Grace
2.30pm - Clifton Centre, 1 and 2 Stainsby St
Taking care of mind, body & soul with the Alexander Technique. Introductory talks/workshops. Booking not required, Suggested donation £5. For further details contact Chris livingtenderly@yahoo.co.uk



CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

Thursday 3 September
Modern Clowning Taster
7.00pm - Makers' House Hastings, 15 Tower Rd W
£10 makershousehastings.co.uk
Wednesday 9 September
Intro to Mahjong
7.00pm - Makers' House Hastings, 15 Tower Rd W
£10 makershousehastings.co.uk/allevnts

Thursday 10 September
Screen Acting Taster with Chris New
7.00pm - Makers' House Hastings, 15 Tower Rd W
£10 makershousehastings.co.uk

WEEKLY CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

For regular classes and workshops visit: hastingsindependentpress.co.uk/classes-and-workshops



HEALTH & WELLBEING

Friday 28 August
Phoenix Fire Night
7.00pm - The Hastings Centre, The Ridge
3-hour immersive breathwork experience designed to help you regulate your nervous system, release tension, and reconnect.

WEEKLY HEALTH & WELLBEING

For regular health and wellbeing listings visit: hastingsindependentpress.co.uk/health-and-wellbeing



Hastings Careers & Recruitment Event

IAN LYDON-JAMES

For anyone looking for a new job, considering a change of career, or interested in finding out more about job and career opportunities in the area, the Hastings Careers & Recruitment Event coming up in September may be just the answer. Whether you're actively looking for your next role or simply want to explore the options available locally, the Hastings Jobs Fair is a good starting point. Taking place at The Hastings Centre on 30 September, from 10am until 1pm, the event will bring together a range of local employers and organisations from across the region who will be offering jobs, training and career opportunities. Visitors will have the chance to meet

prospective employers face-to-face, find out more about the roles they have available and discover opportunities they may not have previously considered. It's also an opportunity to make useful local contacts and learn more about the skills and experience employers are currently seeking. The event is open to everyone, and employment opportunities will be provided by both the public and private sector employers. Young people may be looking for their first job after leaving school or college, returning to work after a break, searching for a new challenge or thinking

Twins, Cancer, and Comedy

People are often quite curious about what it's like to be an identical twin. Local sisters Anna and Georgina Lewis have been asked this question many, many times, and decided it was finally time to perform a much-needed act of public service to give people real answers.

The result is *Unravelling Twins*, a brand-new, comedic, autobiographical play written and performed by the sisters, premiering at the White Rock Theatre's Studio 27 on 16 September.

Anna and Georgina initially started writing together to dispel the twin-myths propagated by films like *The Parent Trap*, *Sweet Valley High*, and the 90's classic *Twins*, before life took an unexpected turn. Just a couple of months after their 40th birthday, Anna was unexpectedly diagnosed with breast cancer. The writing project soon turned into the sisters' exchanging letters to keep their spirits up and to pass the

time during endless hospital appointments.

Then, in 2024, and six months into her treatment, Anna saw a message in a Hastings WhatsApp group spreading the word about a free playwriting course. "I remember the date well because I was in hospital, recovering from a bilateral mastectomy," Anna recounts. "Was it a sign? Maybe. Was I high on morphine? Definitely. In any case, the idea piqued my interest and I applied. I'd never written a play before, but I had an idea that I felt could work."

The sisters' earlier writing, combined with their letters and short dramatisations of their hospital experiences, became the foundation for *Unravelling Twins*.

Unravelling Twins is a play about twins. It's a play about cancer. There's also quite a lot about boobs in it. It's also a comedy, proving that finding the humour in a dark situation is often the only way to stay



sane. But, as Anna and Georgina are keen to emphasise, it is ultimately a love letter to everyone who has been there for someone else going through something incredibly difficult.

The project has been truly incubated and nurtured by the Hastings

community. The sisters raised an impressive £3,700 through a Kickstarter campaign backed by 80 supporters. This funded collaboration with local creative professionals, LightSpaceColor and original music composed by Helen Riley.

Co-produced by Hastings Theatre

Project, the twins have received ongoing mentoring and direction from Dan Hutton and Poppy Rowley. The production was also developed with support from Ellie Westbrook (TUFT Arts), who instigated a new work night at the Stables Theatre in December, the team behind a new writing showcase at the Scene and Heard festival in June.

The sisters feel incredibly lucky to be based in this area, noting the extraordinary support of local friends and family – from love and care packages at the school gates to joining them for the local *Race for Life* while Anna was undergoing chemotherapy. Now, thanks to the programming team at the White Rock, the fully developed script will make its stage debut, with hopes of touring the production elsewhere in the future.

Unravelling Twins will be performed at Studio 27, White Rock Theatre, Hastings on Wednesday, 16 September 2026 at 7:00 pm. Tickets: £14.80: whiterocktheatre.org.uk/whats-on/event/unravelling-twins-2026

Explore The Arch Latest Project

GAIL BORROW

In the latest exploration of trailblazing women who travelled great journeys around 1000 years ago, Explore The Arch Theatre explores Agatha of Hungary at Pevensey Castle. Early-career team member, Zoë Zics, channels this politically significant female decision-maker from the eleventh century who mirrors Zoë's heritage.

In *Agatha in the Wind* they have re-imagined Agatha at Pevensey Castle. It isn't actually known where she lived in England, after she arrived from Hungary and settled for more than a decade before migrating again to Scotland. William of Normandy's landing at Pevensey on 28 September 1066 would have had particular significance for her, and this act of the imagination helps us to step inside her shoes.

The installation, with music by Alice and Juliet Beadle is located in the base of the North Tower. Ten years ago, Explore The Arch was supporting Juliet and her sister Alice as they started out on their creative journeys. Juliet and Alice spent much of their time performing in a cup-



Juliet Beadle

board or on a shelf at Archer Lodge – which seems to have stood them in good stead: Juliet has just become Sussex Young Musician of the Year!

She and her flute now enter the final year of a Masters degree in music at the Royal College of Music and will be playing with the Sussex Symphony Orchestra in 2027 as part of the prize. We congratulate her

and wish her every future success.

The installation will be at Pevensey Castle until October 2026. Tickets to Pevensey Castle are required book at english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/pevensey-castle

POETRY SPOTLIGHT

THE FIRE HILLS HENRY NORMAL

Sunset in mid December
the skyline lit like dying embers

Pitch as the
immediate landscape appears
the distance
promises a new dawn
somewhere on our shared Earth

High tide at our hind
night closing in
We raise our eyes to the fading glow
climb the slope
and haul our cold bones home

WHERE A LOVERS' SEAT HAS

Mettle: Arts, Domesticity, and the Rise of the One-Man Show

VICTORIA KINGHAM

It's well known around these parts that some of the finest artists, musicians, and creatives of all kinds make their home in the area. It also seems unusual that so many original projects take place in premises that double as private houses of great character and versatility.

There's Crown House – living quarters with a beautiful small theatre and bar space on the ground floor, and the oldest house in St Leonards. Then there's a smaller and more Bohemian version of that at 74 Norman Road, where poetry and song abound on the ground floor. Then there's the classical element at the end house in beautiful Uplands, where an enormous ballroom, once hosting salon balls for the upper middle class, doubles as a rehearsal space for famed experimental opera productions.

There's The Beacon – a family home and a thriving family business – I've seen experimental music with film, singer-songwriters, jazz bands, and free improvised music there. Explore The Arch, too, is a lovely old house in Charles Road that houses youth music, theatre, and literature workshops and grows them up into accomplished performers of all kinds. Domestic Theatre is a unique genre developed in response to that house, where the audience follows performers from room to room and the house becomes an integral part of the performance. Also in St Leonards, in Tower Road, is the Maker's House.

The Makers House is run by a live-in couple, Chris New and Liz Matthey, who together tot up an astonishing number of years' acting, teaching, and performance experi-

ence. Their publicity is low-key, but they have built a substantial reputation for the quality of their workshops, retreats, plays, and talks. Under their auspices Nicholas Collett – actor, writer, researcher – will present his self-written one-man show *Mettle*.

THE RISE OF THE ONE-MAN SHOW

We talked of the changing face of theatre in this country, and the fact that touring theatre receives just 13 per cent of what it used to in public subsidy. The rise of One-Person Theatre must surely be a corollary of this.

Over the past few years a number of excellent examples of the genre have been staged in Hastings: Patrick Kealey's frenetic and funny *Archy and Mehitabel*, Bev Lee Harling's magical and autobiographical *Hey Good Lookin'*, and Steve Furst's multi-faceted *Fagin* among them. Coming up this Christmas, Jud Charlton, fresh from his role in the latest *Spider-Man* blockbuster, will present a one-man version of *A Christmas Carol* twice a day for ten days. It's no wonder that actors are often reported as suffering from exhaustion. It's a genre that takes an enormous amount of stamina – one actor, alone on stage, for up to two hours.

But Collett is no stranger to the idea. He says he was inspired by Guy Masterson's acclaimed single-person presentation of 60 characters in *Under Milk Wood*, which has been staged and praised all over the world. While they were talking after the show, Masterson encouraged him to write a solo piece – just have a go, he advised.

He did. First he wrote a factual-historical piece about the Battle of Britain – but the BBC got there first. To get round that, he fiction-

PETER MOULD



Nicholas Collett

alised it, and has toured that show, *Spitfire Solo*, internationally since then. Then there was *Nelson, The Sailor's Story* that he has played in Adelaide, Australia, and here in the hold of the Cutty Sark. He has re-imagined Shakespeare too, in *Your Bard* – where Shakespeare defends himself (in the pub) against an academic who doesn't believe he wrote what he did. There are several others – you can see details on Collett's website.

SHOWING METTLE

Banned from public performance during the Covid period, Collett turned to researching recently-released Admiralty records and writing, and the result is *Mettle*, which is based not only on his father's wartime heroic events, but also on some previously-unknown personal information learnt from his father, which had a substantial effect on his own life.

The piece is about his father's service on the destroyer escorts to the Atlantic convoys – vulnerable merchant ships that brought essential food, equipment and raw materials to Britain from North America

and what was then the Empire. These ships were so important, but so exposed to attack, that convoys were organised with a number of naval escorts. Collett's father served on one of these destroyers in some major conflicts involving injury and death. Like many World War II veterans he never talked about it, until one day in 1993 – his golden wedding anniversary. He took Nicholas aside and began to open up about his fighting experiences, but also about his lighter moments and shore leave adventures.

STAGE DIRECTION

A very impressive feature of one-person shows is how well the actor handles a very minimal set – Kealey (to use an example I mentioned before) used several hats and a chair to present about twenty characters. Lee Harling used a wonderful metal-sculptured tree. "The default production setting," Collett mused, "is a bare hall with some chairs in it." For *Mettle*, he went on: "it's kind of more figurative. I have a table and chair that kind of become other things in the environment. We use a few props and a hat

to be able to move between



10th–20th
Sept
2026

BOOK
NOW



DAVID OLUSOGA
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ROGER MCGOUGH
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