

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



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Festival**

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Unity over Fear

PAUL MCCLAUGHLIN

The past few weeks have exposed some uncomfortable divisions within the town. Volunteer lifeboat crews in Hastings and Pett Level have faced disruption and hostile encounters amid anti-migrant demonstrations; Hastings Borough councillors angrily disagreed over a motion in support of the RNLI, which reaffirmed the town's status as a place of refuge where all who are rescued are welcome and can feel safe; and a Unity Parade, organised by a coalition of faith groups, trade unions and community organisations under the banner "Hastings Celebrates Multiculturalism, Diversity and Inclusion" was met with a small counter-protest that highlighted the tensions the parade was intended to address.

The targeting of the RNLI and the Pett Level Independent Rescue Boat comes in the wake of recent anti-migrant protests in Dover and Portsmouth. Volunteer crews report that demonstrators have verbally abused them and accused them of "treason" for helping to rescue migrants crossing from France in small boats.

At a meeting of the Full Council (23 September), the independent councillor, Danuta Kean (Hollington), moved a motion in support of the RNLI. It reaffirmed "Hastings' status as a town of refuge, where all who are rescued from drowning, be they local sailor or asylum-seeker forced by the lack of legal routes into the hands of people smugglers, are welcome and can feel safe."

The Reform UK group leader, Cllr Doreena Ross (Wishing Tree), placed on record her admiration for the work of the RNLI and said she "condemned any attacks, abuse or intimidation directed towards RNLI crew and volunteers." She said she could not, however, support the motion, because it linked support for the RNLI

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EDITOR'S NOTE

For over 150 years, the RNLI has been at the heart of Hastings. To hear it publicly denigrated by councillors was until recently unthinkable. As our lead news story explains, despite the positivity evidenced by a recent Unity march, the town's residents remain riven by polarised views on immigration and refugees, putting the accepted norms of neutrality and humanity in grave danger.

Having saved St Leonards Post Office from closure a few years ago, further grassroots campaigning has resulted in desperately needed repairs being made to the building; an example of what cooperation can achieve. More in our vibrant community pages.

Throughout this autumnal issue, we showcase just some of the many events and activities available locally:

Our excellent museum and art gallery hosts a touring exhibition: *Tapestry of Black Britons*. There's one-to-one help for adults who struggle with reading, while for those with strong heads, the Old Town Cider Festival returns in mid-November. Choose from the Chamber Music festival, the hospice 'Pawtrait' drawing challenge, a new exhibition at the Contemporary, a National Poetry Day feast at the library and a story-telling night at French's. Or simply do the lot!

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News



to immigration and asylum policy. “Residents in Hastings hold a range of views on immigration, asylum and border policy, and those differences of opinion are legitimate, and they should all be respected.”

Her colleague, Cllr Rob Drew (Conquest), said he too could not support the motion, because there was no way of knowing whether those arriving on small boats were among the “persecuted or the persecutors.” He added: “We can’t tell you that you

are safe in this country.” Long-standing Labour councillor Trevor Webb (West St Leonards) took strong exception to the comments. He said in his 28 years in public office he “could not recall such an intemperate speech.”

The Green deputy Leader of the Council, Julia Hilton (Old Hastings), said “that Hastings is a town of refuge is the settled view of this council – a view reiterated in a motion not long ago. This is not about linking things or encouraging people

to come or whatever else. It is about reiterating, a settled view and the commitment of this council. We are a town of sanctuary.”

The motion was passed with Green and Labour support. All but one of Reform UK’s six councillors voted against the motion, with Derek Lawrence (West St Leonards) joining with the Conservatives in abstaining.

Just days later (Saturday 26 September), hundreds of people gathered in Warrior Square Gardens for the Unity Parade along the seafront to a rally in the town centre. The event was largely peaceful, but not incident-free. While some drivers

sounded their horns in support, others slowed down and shouted abuse at participants.

As the parade turned into Robertson Street, a verbal confrontation between a marcher and a protester briefly threatened to turn violent.

When the Unity Parade arrived in the town centre, it was met by a small group of counter-demonstrators, some carrying Union Jack and St George’s flags.

Nandi Msezane, a migrant worker from South Africa, told the rally, that living in the UK had become “much scarier” since the intimidating events in Dover.

Jenny Sutton, Chair of Stand Up to Racism, said the Unity Parade was “a celebration of multicultural Hastings, of diversity and inclusion, and of the simple principle that all of us belong here”. She added: “those values are under threat. The danger is clear when masked Blackshirts block ports and intimidate refugees and those who stand beside them, including brave RNLI volunteers. We need unity across our workplaces, our unions, our faiths, our communities and our streets. We need solidarity not scapegoating and we need the confidence to say: Hastings belongs to all of us. We will stand together and we will not be divided.”

Hastings prides itself on its alternative, diverse and welcoming character. It is a fun town that loves to dress up for Jack-in-the-Green, Pirates Day and Carnival Week. As recent weeks have shown, however, it is now grappling with an uncomfortable polarisation, and the values of tolerance and solidarity appear not to be universally shared. For many migrants, refugees, and members of our Jewish community, the impact is deeply personal, and many now question whether their community is as safe and inclusive as they once believed. It is incumbent on us all – not just our politicians – to act. The road ahead requires sustained effort to bridge these divides and reaffirm Hastings’ commitment to unity over fear.

HASTINGS TIDES						
DATE	HIGH AND LOW TIDES				SUNRISE	SUNSET MOON
FRI 9 OCT	L 5:41	H 11:04	L 18:04	H 23:29	7:11	18:18
SAT 10 OCT	L 6:26	H 11:40	L 18:46		7:12	18:16
SUN 11 OCT	H 0:02	L 7:04	H 12:13	L 19:22	7:14	18:14
MON 12 OCT	H 0:33	L 7:37	H 12:45	L 19:52	7:15	18:12
TUES 13 OCT	H 1:02	L 8:01	H 13:15	L 20:14	7:17	18:10
WEDS 14 OCT	H 1:31	L 8:21	H 13:45	L 20:34	7:19	18:08 THIRD
THURS 15 OCT	H 2:01	L 8:45	H 14:15	L 21:01	7:20	18:06
FRI 16 OCT	H 2:30	L 9:16	H 14:46	L 21:35	7:22	18:03
SAT 17 OCT	H 3:02	L 9:55	H 15:21	L 22:18	7:24	18:01
SUN 18 OCT	H 3:41	L 10:44	H 16:11	L 23:12	7:25	17:59
MON 19 OCT	H 4:57	L 11:17	H 18:19		7:27	17:57
TUES 20 OCT	L 0:23	H 6:59	L 13:05	H 19:40	7:29	17:55
WEDS 21 OCT	L 1:45	H 8:05	L 14:27	H 20:38	7:30	17:53
THURS 22 OCT	L 3:03	H 8:56	L 15:36	H 21:22	7:32	17:51 NEW

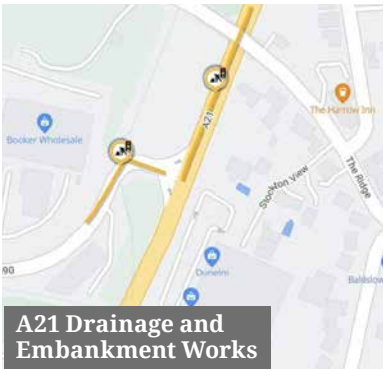
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Small group of counter-protesters

More Misery on A21

East Sussex Highways has begun works to stabilise the western embankment of the A21 at Sedlescombe Road North and Whitworth Road. The works are expected to cause more misery for drivers and local businesses along a stretch of road which experienced intermittent and extended disruption for almost two years, and which were



only completed earlier this year. The works are needed following “significant rainfall in the winter and spring and hot, dry summer spells causing ground movement.” The planned remedial work will

stabilise the embankment and protect against further issues. Drainage measures will also be installed at the top of the embankment to better manage surface and groundwater to reduce the risk of future issues. The first phase of the work lasting until 16 October will take place at the Whitworth Road junction of Sedlescombe Road North between 8pm and 6am, with temporary traffic lights in operation. Daytime drainage work will then be carried out from 19 October before the works are due to be completed on Friday, 30 October. A section of Junction Road will be fenced off while the work is carried out, but can still be accessed by pedestrians and cyclists.

Bid for Designated Bathing Water Status

The Clean Water Action Group (CWAG), the local, volunteer-led grassroots organisation focused on ending sewage pollution and protecting local coastal waters, is applying to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) for official designated bathing water status (DBWS) for the West Marina beach in St Leonards. Hastings and St Leonards currently have two designated bathing beaches. Pelham beach, near the town centre, holds a Seaside Award, whilst the Marina beach in St Leonards has both a Seaside Award and Blue Flag status. The West Marina Beach, beside the old bathing pool site, does not

have bathing beach status despite having more than 100 beach huts, a foreshore café, a nearby playground and parking. CWAG says West Marina and the Bulverhythe seashore have previously suffered serious sewage pollution from Southern Water broken pipes and wastewater spills. These incidents flooded beach huts and produced extremely high faecal bacteria levels, according to the group’s citizen science testing programme. CWAG says it is determined to see the beach, its users and the marine environment protected. If Defra grants DBWS, the Environment Agency would monitor the site during the bathing season from

May to September, testing water quality and alerting the public to pollution hazards. Bathing waters are tested for intestinal bacteria that indicate sewage pollution and reviewed annually. Sites receive an end-of-season classification of Excellent, Good, Sufficient or Poor under the Bathing Water Regulations 2013. Local Labour MP Helen Doolimore has backed the application, saying: “This would be an important step towards protecting public health, improving water quality and supporting the long-term health of our local marine environment.”

CWAG is seeking public views on this application. Click this link and share your thoughts: docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe-NSQN-Za6-dMW11f6g3Je2jzdNptmMHf4d-V7DMM-GO7I91LQ/viewform

Eagle House Wins Award

Eagle House in Hastings has been named Retrofit of the Year at the 2026 AJ Retrofit & Reuse Awards. The project also won the Adaptive Reuse into Mixed Use category at a ceremony in London on 24 September. The 28-strong jury praised the “extraordinary relationship” between the architects, IFDO, and the client, Hastings Commons, which converted the dilapidated 1860s building into a vibrant and contemporary youth hub, public common room and workspace. The five-storey building on Cambridge Road was purchased in 2023, with money from the Town Deal unlocking Youth Investment Fund support to build a multi-communitary space (the Common Room) and



develop a new youth programme (Hastings Youth Commons). The refurbishment transformed the run-down carpet shop into a youth and community centre. The building retains much of its existing fabric, with a distinctive glazed frontage opening onto a bus stop to encourage interaction between occupants and the street. The AJ editorial team said: “In

the context of scarce local resources, Eagle House is not the only community-led regeneration of a derelict building in a challenged town centre. It stands out because of the deep social and environmental convictions that underpin it, its success in bringing people together and an extraordinary client-architect relationship. These ingredients have produced great architecture.”



Hastings RNLI Mourns Loss of Crew Member

A member of the Hastings RNLI lifeboat crew died last Tuesday evening (30 September) following an incident at the station on The Stade, in Hastings Old Town. Emergency services were called after receiving reports that a person needed medical attention. In a statement, Hastings RNLI said it was “devastated” by the loss of a much-loved member of the crew following a medical incident and asked for the privacy of the crew member’s family, friends and colleagues to be respected. There has been an outpouring of support from local people on social media in response to the sad news.

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A comprehensive refurbishment is needed

Concerns Over Future of Hollington Community Centre

The future of Hollington Community Centre remains uncertain after an East Sussex County Council (ESCC) report warned the building requires “significant capital investment” to ensure its long-term sustainability.

Reform UK’s Cllr Stephen Chapman, the Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change on ESCC, presented a condition survey commissioned by the council, which identified approximately £735,000 of works categorised as either “urgent” or “important,” which needed to be undertaken within the next five years. A further £71,500 of suggested or optional works was also identified, though the council has warned that actual costs may be significantly higher.

The property is recognised by the council as a community asset, but Cllr Chapman indicated ESCC does not have the budget available to undertake the comprehensive refurbishment of the property needed and has no operational requirement for the building.

ESCC has agreed to launch a bidding process for the community centre and is hopeful that a new operator will come forward to take on the ageing building.

Under the approved process,

community and voluntary organisations will be invited to express their interest in taking on a lease. A successful bidder will be expected to have a good plan to ensure that the community centre is used for the right purpose in addition to meeting all other lease obligations.

The property has been nominated as an Asset of Community Value under the Localism Act 2011, meaning eligible local groups have a Community Right to bid if the owner decides to dispose of it. Leases granted for 25 years or more are regarded as disposals under the Act.

The council says that granting a lease to a community or voluntary organisation in the first instance will enable the property to be retained as a sustainable community asset, while allowing the operator to access external grant funding for improvements.

Cllr Chapman warned that if no suitable community or voluntary organisation comes forward, further options will have to be considered.

The report stresses that the bidding process relates only to the community centre building and not the adjacent Hollington Youth Hub, which has only recently reopened after a £3.3 million refurbishment.

Town Deal Interest Black Hole

PAUL MCLAUGHLIN

Hastings Borough Council has admitted it does not know how much interest has been earned on £10 million of unspent Town Deal funding sitting in its bank account. This is amid Labour claims that the interest accrued from the money has helped the council to boost reserves rather than being targeted on regeneration projects for which it was originally intended.

The Town Deal Fund was established by the Conservative Government in 2021 as part of its levelling up initiative to drive long-term economic growth and regeneration in 101 ‘struggling’ towns across England.

Hastings was allocated £24.3 million to support local regeneration, skills, and town centre improvements. Among the projects that benefitted from the funding was the delivery of 12 affordable, sustainable and energy-efficient homes within the Observer Building, support for the refurbishment of Eagle House, and schemes to improve pedestrian flow, green spaces, and town centre connectivity.

Local Labour MP Helena Doherty has been raising her concerns about the lack of transparency in the funding process and has called on the council to commit to publishing a full breakdown of Town Deal



Cllr Darren McKenzie, Finance, IT, Risk and Assets Portfolio Holder

receipts, spend, balances and interest earned to date.

At a meeting of the full council on 23 September, Cllr Billie Barnes (Lab, Silverhill) highlighted the current lack of transparency and claimed that some £10 million of the Town Deal funding has been left unspent. She believes the money is held in the council’s general account, with the accrued interest being used to fund general council spending rather than any specific regeneration projects as intended.

Cllr Darren McKenzie (Green, Maze Hill), the Finance, IT, Risk and Assets Portfolio Holder, defended the council’s approach, pointing to its Treasury Management Strategy as the governing policy for how grant monies are invested. He said the “expectation of that policy is to make sure that we are adequately investing to ensure an adequate return within the parameters of how we can actually spend that

money,” adding that the money “is being managed consistently with that.” However, he conceded that he didn’t know how much interest had been raised on unspent Town Deal funding over that period of time.

The Town Deal Board met two days after the council meeting. The council’s Chief Finance Officer reported that unlike Pride in Place funding, which the Labour government introduced in 2025, Town Deal funds did not require ring-fencing. He acknowledged that there were concerns with regards the interest accrued on the unspent funds and added that he has now opened a separate bank account for Town Deal funds in the interests of transparency, though this will not apply retrospectively.

Hastings Borough Council was asked to clarify how much interest has been generated on the unspent Town Deal funding but had not responded at the time of publication.

Council Housing Partners Go Bust (Again)

HUGH SULLIVAN

Another private property company working with Hastings Borough Council to identify, acquire and manage housing stock for letting to homeless households has gone into liquidation – the third in 18 months.

The council does not admit that it has suffered any financial loss as a result, nor that its housing acquisition programme will be halted or slowed. Instead, its spokesperson says that the consultancy functions of the liquidated company will be “managed in-house through the programme budget”.

Between August 2023 and January 2025 two associated companies

Phi Capital Investments Limited and Simply Phi provided acquisition and management services before being wound up for non-payment of tax. Their directors then formed fresh companies Phi Property Acquisitions Limited (PPAL) and Phi Technology Solutions Limited, which took over the respective businesses of the insolvent companies. They claimed that the prior insolvencies arose “as a result of an HMRC tax credit misfiling and not the result of [their] underlying operational business”.

But in July this year, PPAL followed its predecessors into liquidation with total debts according to its Statement of Affairs of over £4.5m.

After the collapse of the initial Phi companies in January 2025, it

was stated the council would not be affected as it had been paying them only at each acquisition or associated works. This time, although the council is not named as a creditor of PPAL in the Statement of Affairs, it seems that there may be deeper implications.

HIP has been told that the council has appointed “specialist insolvency advisers to assist in the winding-up process” and that it is “engaging with the liquidator and with affected contractors and consultants who may be impacted”.

An average of approximately 50 properties per year have been purchased under the acquisition programme over the three-year period from August 2023. A council spokesperson insisted last month that it “remains committed to the delivery [of this programme] and to completing works already underway”. However, asked whether the council were taking on more staff to fulfil the functions which PPAL would no longer carry out, or whether the rate of acquisition was now intended to slow down, the spokesperson declined to comment.

Consultations – Are they Worth the Effort?

JAMES PRENTICE

Over the last five years, Hastings Borough Council has conducted 38 consultations on issues from the local plan to the culture strategy. But do people want so many? Response rates suggest not: a review of polling districts gained just four responses, the Public Spaces Protection Order 13, landlord housing 26, Alexandra Park CCTV 44, and the corporate plan 45. The culture strategy, corporate plan, and gambling policy received no comments at all.

Across the last 38 consultations, an average of 336 responses were

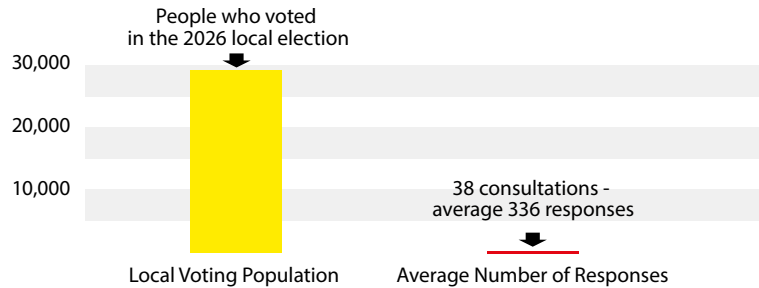
received – just 1.1% of recent local election voters. True figures are lower, as HBC doesn't track multiple comments from one person. The Local Plan's 2,300 responses came from only 540 people, averaging four each, likely reflecting repeat responders rather than broad engagement.

DOES THIS MATTER?

This seems harmless, but consultations can skew policy, creating false confidence that the council reflects public wishes. In housing, this can block building, as campaigners use consultations to claim public opposition.

But does this give a representa-

AVERAGE NUMBER OF RESPONSES FOR HBC CONSULTATIONS 2021 – 2025



tive sample of public preferences? Possibly not. In the general election, the winning party committed to building housing and won far more votes than Local Plan consultation responses – yet those responses suggest strong opposition to most proposed development.

This also matters because consulting can delay important council work. It can also incur costs as sometimes consultants are needed to help improve response rates. Yet, if consulting yields such poor response rates, is it worth the time, energy and cost?

HOW AND WHEN TO CONSULT?

Response figures reveal what motivates public engagement. The Dog PSPO consultation drew the largest reaction with 2,854 responses. Another dog control order gained 834 responses, followed by Priory Street car park with 1,272. Yet, major changes like local government reorganisation received just 810 and budget decisions rarely exceed 100. The exception is when huge resources are invested, such as neighbourhood plan spending, which received 1,875 responses. This suggests people are most motivated by issues directly affecting their daily lives.

So, if the consultation affects dog walking or parking, expect to hear about it, but if it relates to boring policy stuff affecting local government, you probably won't.

HBC has adopted various consultation methods in recent years, including online surveys, drop in events at Priority Meadow and other community venues, as well as through steering groups – as was the case with last year's housing strategy. It is clear that to generate an adequate public response demands huge effort, time and money.

Council consultations are sometimes legally required, but often not, which begs the question: is it worth delaying council work for such poor, unrepresentative data? In most cases, the evidence suggests not.

The council has just launched a new six-week Regulation 19 consultation giving residents, stakeholders and interested groups a final opportunity to shape the town's Local Plan. Any comments must be strictly technical – addressing whether the plan is legally compliant and sound – not proposing new sites. The consultation closes Thursday 12 November. Details are available at: hastings.gov.uk/localplan

WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

✉Letter

LOCAL PLAN

Dear HIP,
Most residents of Hastings will not be aware or interested in the Regulation 19 stage of adoption of the proposed new local plan and yet most people will be aware of the need for more homes nationally. So how does Hastings play its part without becoming a concrete jungle?

The fundamental problem is that the system under which we now plan is no longer fit for purpose, indeed, if it ever was. In more advanced societies there are two types of planning: Use Class (UK), and Zoned (USA, Australia, Canada, etc). There are faults with both, and both are trying to reach out to the other by compromising and adjusting the main existing system, yet both are already proven not to produce the type of urban areas that work best. In a nutshell, ones with mixed uses and higher density.

Zoned systems are very prescriptive but have generally led to suburban sprawl, using land inefficiently and generic characterless appearance. Over many years now Hastings has permitted low density urban sprawl just like in zonal systems even though we have what is called a 'discretionary planning

system'. Why are these powers of discretion not used in a positive way? The reasons for this are complex but largely driven by the demands of the commercial housing providers combined with a lack of innovative thinking by planning officers and councillors. Bureaucracies are naturally cautious.

The availability of land would appear to be a major problem, except that Hastings actually has quite a lot of it and is not a high-density urban area as some would have us believe. No, it is how land is used that is critical, both in terms of numbers and quality, that are at the heart of successful urban places. We must not build in flood risk areas and yet the plan proposes that, and we must not build in areas of high environmental value and yet the plan does that too. Why is the plan so wilfully bad at planning (looking forward)?

A further apparent burden is the amount of history in the town. Onto this, how conservation is interpreted locally has been laden with pointless restrictions by a regime that does not seem to understand that history is made of successive futures. It is not fixed.

However, there is land, and there are sustainable solutions, and our planners have means of achieving better outcomes, but ultimately now it is up to the people

of Hastings to bring these solutions to the planning inspectorate.

Ken Davis

✉Letter

TOWN CENTRE TO LOSE YATES PUB

Dear HIP,
Yates appeared to be thriving. Surprised it was closed. It always seemed to be full and busy. It does not make sense that the Stonegate group considered it "not viable" unless they were just asset stripping.

Michael Haywood

✉Letter

EXPRESS RAIL SERVICE GETS PEAK TIME PRICING

Dear HIP,
This is hardly worth getting too excited about. A fast journey should really get you to London Bridge in an hour max. So this offering is still way off the mark. Plus one train? For commuters only? The powers that be are trying to hype this up, but we all know this will never cut the mustard.

Nick Clark

We would love to hear from you.

✉ letters@hastingsindependentpress.co.uk
f facebook.com/hastingsindependent
i instagram.com/hastingsindependent

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

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Draw your own 'Pawtrait'!

Rockinghorse Children's Charity, the Sussex-based children's hospital charity, is calling on primary school children across the county to put pen to paper for *Pawtraits*, a new animal drawing challenge launched on 28 September.

Children aged 4-11 are invited to create their own 'pawtrait', an imaginative animal drawing, in one of three categories:

- Draw your own pet – their own animal friend, if they have one
- A fictional animal – a brand-new creature that's never existed
- A super animal – an animal with an amazing superpower

Entries can be submitted online for a minimum donation of £3, with every penny raised going towards Rockinghorse's *Pets as Therapy* sessions at the Royal Alexandra Chil-

dren's Hospital in Brighton. These sessions bring specially trained therapy animals to the bedsides of seriously ill children, offering comfort and calm during hospital stays.

Entries will be accepted until 31 October, with judges selecting winners in each category in mid-October. Once you have created your 'pawtrait', it can be uploaded on the charity's website by visiting rockinghorse.org.uk/pawtraits

All entries will be judged by a special panel including Rockinghorse Ambassador, Dr Marc Abraham OBE, veterinary surgeon, broadcaster, author and animal welfare campaigner. Winning designs from each category will be turned into real soft toys and celebrated at a public exhibition and awards ceremony in Brighton this October.

Dr Marc Abraham OBE, vet, author, campaigner, broadcaster, and Rockinghorse Ambassador, is really pleased to be supporting this new campaign. He says: "As a vet, I've seen first-hand the incredible bond that exists between animals and children, plus how much comfort an animal can bring, especially to a child who's feeling unwell."

"That's exactly what Rockinghorse's *Pets as Therapy* sessions do for young patients at the Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital in Brighton. As a proud 'pawtraits' judge, I'm really looking forward to seeing the imagination and creativity Sussex's children bring to their 'pawtraits'; every drawing, however wild or wonderful, helps make these visits possible for sick children who need them most."

Schools across East and West Sussex will be sent entry forms, posters and assembly materials to help spread the word, and Rockinghorse's mascot Rocky is available for school visits on request.

To find out more, visit: rockinghorse.org.uk



Mike Wade, Barbara Echlin, Marie Mille, Abul Azad, Mark Bishop and Clare the dog at the Bexhill Peace Pole gathering

Bexhill Supports the United Nations

Two important dates are marked each year by the United Nations in September and October which encourage people, groups, and nations to commit to non-violence, put aside differences, and focus on building a culture of peace.

The first was the UN International Day of Peace – also known as World Peace Day – on 21 September. This year, the Bexhill and Hastings United Nations Association (B&H-UNA) held a seminar titled *Peace begins where you are*, on 19 September followed by a gathering at Bexhill Peace Pole on the summit of Galley Hill on the day itself.

Introducing the seminar, Barbara Echlin quoted from the UNESCO Constitution: 'Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the

minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.'

To illustrate the difficulties of living peacefully in the midst of conflict, the Rev Stephen Need, Rector of St Peter's, shared his personal experience of living and working for over ten years at St George's College in East Jerusalem. He noted the many layers of complexity that exist in Israel/Palestine and the need for understanding and compassion.

Sheila Kesby, Chair of the B&H-UNA, concluded the day by quoting the UN's concept of Sustainable Peace being "both a goal and a continuous process aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, or recurrence of violent conflict. It shifts the focus from simply ending wars to proactively addressing the

root causes of tension through inclusive development, human rights and diplomacy."

Sheila also noted that the UN appears to be sinking into an unprecedented state of weakness, irrelevance and ineffectiveness largely due to the rich and powerful member states who persistently misuse and abuse the UN Charter.

The second event, United Nations Day, will be celebrated on Saturday, 24 October. This is the anniversary of the day the UN Charter came into force in 1945. It will be marked in Bexhill with a talk on *What's up with the United Nations?* by Richard Sakwa, Emeritus Professor in Politics and International Relations at the University of Kent.

The talk takes place on 24 October 2026 at St Peter's Community Centre, Bexhill Old Town, 2.00pm-5.00pm. For more information contact Barbara Echlin, Secretary of Bexhill & Hastings United Nations Association bjechlin@btinternet.com 07442 243395

Are You Reading This?

MO HEARD

Imagine someone in a restaurant who cannot read being asked what they'd like to order. If you can't read the menu, what do you do? "I'll have what he's having" might be the only way out of embarrassment.

For adults who struggle to read, navigating everyday life can be difficult. Being unable to read can be a shameful secret. Life without literacy skills is limiting and distressing. Imagine not being able to read your child a bedtime story or understand the instructions for assembling a flat pack. How do you

make sense of signs and directions? How can you follow a recipe on your phone? Think of the consequences of not being able to fill in a form for a job application.

2.4 million adults in England alone cannot read at all or can barely read. This is a shocking statistic for any literate person to hear, and they might find it difficult to conceive of not having this basic skill. Literacy opens the mind to the world, to communication and understanding. Achieving one's full potential without being able to read is surely an impossibility.

Read Easy is a national charity which provides a confidential reading coaching programme for adults. It is volunteer-led and provides one-to-one assistance. The East Sussex local group serves Rye, Battle, Hastings and St Leonards, as well as Bexhill, Eastbourne and surrounding areas.

Our local group is currently looking for volunteers for its management team to assist with publicity, fundraising and other activities. We particularly need help in seeking out and inviting referrals from agencies, such as Citizens Advice, who may be in touch with people who would like help in learning to read.

Being part of an adult's reading journey is rewarding and inspiring for all our volunteers, and the work can be transformative. Everyone deserves the chance to achieve their life goals, however small, and being able to read is the foundation for that opportunity.



Anyone interested in *Read Easy* and our volunteer opportunities can find out more at: readeasy.org.uk/groups/read-easy-east-sussex



The post office today



The disintegrating post office

Scaffolding, Struggle and St Leonards Post Office

ROD WEBB

For newcomers to Hastings and St Leonards, the fact that yet another building in the town has been covered in scaffolding is unlikely to mean anything – and perhaps hasn't even been noticed. But St Leonards-on-Sea Post Office has a recent history not dissimilar from Hastings pier, a history that has raised passions and galvanised sections of the community into action.

Before the sub-postmaster scan-

dal broke, the same Post Office Ltd were quietly selling off post offices with 'Crown' status around the UK so that they became franchise operations rather than being directly owned and operated by Post Office Ltd.

Hastings Crown Post Office had already been moved from its magnificent building in Robertson Street and tucked away in WH Smiths, despite a nearly 7,000-signature petition and local protest. St Leonards Post Office was the last one standing in the area – so the fight was on. The attempt to sell it

off and dismantle a valuable public service became a cause that many people could rally round as a symbol of the way towns and cities were being gutted by neoliberal government policies.

As reported in a 2018 article in HIP: "The aim of the campaign was to keep the Crown status rather than selling it off in a franchise deal. The campaign started with high hopes, but it quickly became clear that Post Office Ltd, the government-owned company that runs counter services, was picking off Crown post offices all over the coun-

try and had honed their strategy to a fine art, using obfuscation and toothless public consultations to damp down the inevitable local protest that sprang up."

Even Private Eye could see this wasn't a good move for St Leonards and included an article in its Christmas edition, titled *It's Counter Productive*. The remnants of that article could still be seen affixed to the post office in 2026 as the scaffolding went up.

The campaign prevented Post Office Ltd from selling off the post office but failed to maintain its Crown Post status. Potent Solutions was brought in to run the business on behalf of Post Office on a temporary basis in January 2018 – and eight years later, is still running it.

It's important to acknowledge that the staff themselves are doing a good job. But since the takeover, the inside of the building has lost

its lustre, and the outside has been simply left to crumble.

At this point local democracy stepped in. Over the past three years, the dogged persistence of one local resident, campaigning with the help of local councillors, the planning enforcement officer and local MP Helena Dollimore has finally led to a rescue attempt. Scaffolding has now gone up and work is about to commence to repair the dilapidated building.

As local resident, Julia Van Coevorden, says: "It's incredible that it's taken three years for Post Office Ltd to acknowledge this risk of injury to the public and to start repair work on the building."

Not one to mince words, she goes on to say: "Aside from their criminal disregard of public health and safety, the building had become an eyesore. The visuals of that sort of neglect breed a loss of civic and community confidence and wellbeing. It's how town centres become abandoned. St Leonards is a busy town and has a thriving small business community. We deserve better than the dismissive, negligent attitude that Post Office Ltd has shown to date. Let's hope they do a good job in repairing and improving the building."

To read the 2018 article go to hastingsindependentpress.co.uk/articles/culture/features/st-leonards-post-office. For more articles on the Post Office protest google 'St Leonards crown post office protest' or go to the HIP website hastingsindependentpress.co.uk



Litter collection on the West Hill

Keeping Hastings' Streets Cleaner

FIONA MCGARRY

In March, Cllr Glenn Haffenden wrote on social media that Hastings Borough Council would be recruiting more staff to ensure cleaner streets in Hastings. Last week, the council reported that it has now introduced "additional barrow routes to tackle litter and other debris in local neighbourhoods". They say that this "enhanced" service has meant that more than 530 addition-

al bags of litter and waste have been collected across four new routes over the past month.

In Bohemia Road, 200 bags of litter and waste have been cleared, and local residents have noticed a clear difference, despite ongoing challenges with regularly dumped rubbish and fly-tipping.

There has also been a significant transformation in Priory Road, with 160 bags of litter collected, and on the west side of London Road with 71 bags collected, helping to improve the local environment and

maintain cleaner streets for residents. Meanwhile, Queens Road has benefited from the removal of 99 bags of litter and other waste.

According to HBC: "The improvement to this busy town centre route has been noticeable, with residents commenting on the positive difference in the area's appearance."

Cllr Becca Horn, lead councillor for community safety and environmental services, said: "We're pleased to see such a difference being made in such a short space of time, and it's been great to receive positive feedback about our barrow-hands from residents who've noticed their streets looking cleaner. We'd like to thank our team as well as the many fantastic volunteers who litter-pick across our town. Their hard work and commitment is really helping to keep Hastings tidy."

"Please do your bit by using the litter bins provided, taking recyclables home and reporting any litter or overflowing bins to us on My Hastings [myhastings.gov.uk]."

Have you noticed cleaner streets in Hastings recently? Are there other parts of Hastings that would benefit from (more) barrow collections? Email community@hastingsindependentpress.co.uk to give us your opinion.



Kidical Mass

Dozens of families joined Hastings Urban Bikes (HUB) on Sunday 27 September for a *Kidical Mass* on-road ride round the lower part of Alexandra Park, down Queens Road, past the Council's offices and along the A259 to Warrior Square. This was an outing organised by HUB to mark International Car-Free Day on 22 September, to have fun together, and to demonstrate to our councillors and to the local transport authority that non-car journeys need protected safe space.

The route is a long way for children as young as six to cycle, especially with the hills, but several did. Bikes of all sorts turned up: the

youngest's first-gear bikes, cargo bikes, Brompton bikes, shopping bikes with baskets and racing bikes with drop handlebars. It was a collective show of the potential everyday utility of this minimal machine to (almost) everyone.

Anna Sabin of Hastings Urban Bikes says: "We have a great pent-up need for a borough-wide segregated cycle lane network for school, college, work, shops, beach and anywhere anyone fancies going to – without a car. There is Government funding to design and build the infrastructure – and everyone on the ride wishes our councils would find a way to use it!"



I'll Swim to France!

SARAH MILNE

There are some things you say as a child that disappear completely. Others, for reasons you can't quite explain, stay with you.

I was born in Hastings, although we moved away when I was four. Thankfully, my grandparents stayed, and some of my happiest summer memories are of their concrete chalet at Bulverhythe Beach. One of those memories is of me, aged six, swimming in the sea in my favourite 1970s swimming costume, complete with pleated skirt and white piping. My grandma called out that I was too far out. I shouted back: "I'll swim to France!"

I loved swimming. When we went as a family, I would leave my dad and brother to their games and present a lifeguard with a soggy piece of paper so they could count lengths towards my next distance badge. I lined the badges up on my swimming costume, ridiculously proud of them. The skating and gymnastics certificates and Brownie badges have long disappeared, but I still have my swimming bad-

ges, most slightly shrivelled from years of water.

I had plenty of determination and endurance but very little speed, so I never made it into a swimming club. But whenever I stood on a beach, I would look beyond the horizon and remember that six-year-old who simply wanted to keep swimming until she reached the other side.

Then I grew up, got a job, got married and became a mum. I had three premature babies; one of my children was seriously ill throughout his childhood. There were hospitals, appointments, uncertainty and the exhausting business of bringing up a family when one child needs more than most. Dreams became the sort of thing you could think about later: when there was more time, more sleep, more money, more certainty. I became very good at putting myself at the bottom of the list. But the idea never quite disappeared.

My tiny premature babies grew up. My daughters left home, while my younger son, who still needs support, began dividing his time between my home and his father's. Like many of us, the slower pace of lockdown gave me time to look at

my life differently. I began to wonder what I wanted the next chapter to look like. The answer, unexpectedly, was Hastings. The family home in Croydon came with a huge mortgage and many memories, but Hastings

had always felt like home to me. In 2021, I finally made the move back.

I immediately built a life around the sea, starting each day walking the dogs along the seafront, drinking coffee on the beach and swimming. Within weeks, I joined the RNLI, first as part of the shore crew and operational team and more recently with the water safety team. The sea gives us so much, but it demands respect. I've learned to understand its risks, the weather and tides, and the importance of knowing your limits. Now I have the privilege of sharing that knowledge with others, helping people enjoy the water safely.

The more time I spent looking out to sea, the louder that little girl's voice became. So now I'm finally going to attempt to swim the English Channel. Writing that still gives me butterflies. I'm not an elite athlete. I'm an ordinary, middle-aged woman who had a childhood dream and has finally decided to find out whether she can make it happen.

The plan is a Channel relay in July 2027, followed by a solo crossing from England to France in July 2028. The pilot boat is booked, the contracts are signed, training has begun. And I'm going to share all of it: relearning a more efficient front crawl, endless pool and sea sessions, sewage alerts, rising sea temperatures, jellyfish stings – and the life reflections and strange thoughts that emerge when you spend hours with your head down, following a dark line on the pool floor or disappearing into open water.

There will be stories of Hastings and St Leonards, the beaches, the

sea and the characters I meet along the way, because this is where the story began and where much of the training will happen.

One of my first discoveries has been the extraordinary community of channel swimmers. I signed my solo swim contract on the way to Dover to celebrate the centenary of Gertrude Ederle becoming the first woman to swim the Channel. Surrounded by seasoned swimmers, I felt somewhat overwhelmed. It didn't last long. Everyone was generous with advice, encouragement and stories.

That sense of community is something I want to bottle and share, because we often keep our dreams to ourselves. We're frightened of being laughed at, told they're unrealistic, or discovering that we don't have what it takes. I was afraid to share mine. But I must, because no channel swimmer succeeds alone. A team is needed to keep you safe, hydrated and fed.

I would love you to join my team, whether by sharing advice, joining me for a swim, helping raise funds for the adventure and for the Alexa Trust – which supports other families of premature and sick babies – or simply offering encouragement when it all feels overwhelming.

And perhaps there is something bigger in this than one woman trying to swim 21 miles across a cold, unpredictable stretch of water. What if we all shared our deepest dreams? What if, instead of talking each other out of our ambitions, we helped each other achieve them? I hope that by sharing mine, I might start a ripple effect across Hastings and St Leonards – and that, along the way, our stories might become part of each other's.

My story started when a six-year-old girl stood in the sea at Bulverhythe and made a rather ambitious promise. Now, finally, I'm going back for her – to find out if she was right.



You can follow my journey at [sarah_milne](https://www.instagram.com/sarah_milne) on Instagram and at [gofundme.com/sarah-milne-swims-to-france](https://www.gofundme.com/sarah-milne-swims-to-france). HIP will continue to follow Sarah's journey into the blue.



Sarah Milne is a writer and public health psychologist based in Hastings. She has a PhD in health psychology and has worked for many years in public health, specialising in behaviour change, motivation and wellbeing. She also writes theatre reviews and performs at The Stables Theatre. Since returning to Hastings in 2021, she has built much of her life around her love of the sea, swimming and volunteering with the RNLI. She often writes for HIP, including arts and theatre reviews and has taken part in productions at The Stables Theatre.



Poppy Daniels

Hastings Jazz Festival – A Dedication to Joy

VICTORIA KINGHAM

Last weekend's Jazz Festival was a sell-out, hugely successful, supremely managed and organised, with some of the best performances from all across the genre. Musicians and audiences alike were on top form. Importantly the success of this festival will put Hastings in the frame nationally, for an even bigger weekend event next year.

The event showcased the best in British jazz, across the genre from tested vintage to *vin de primeur*. Over 100 musicians took part and it's impossible in this brief round-up to mention all of them by name; details and links are given at the end.

MORNING

Liane Carroll began the day with resounding voice and instant musicality, honed through years and years of national and international performance, recording, and session work. Her inexhaustible repertoire ranges from hundreds of jazz standards through to blues and rock-and-roll. A born performer, she lends her own personality and style to composers as diverse as Hoagy Carmichael, Laura Nyro, and Don Fagan (of Steely Dan), while always remembering and crediting composers. She's also very funny – what could the 'cuddly ram song' be but *Embraceable You*? Barnaby's

Lounge was full at 10:15, and people were eating delicious breakfasts.

Rory Ingham's Trombone Assembly is a unique five-trombone outfit. For the most part they played standards in inspired arrangements that showcased their individual styles. Joined by multi-instrumentalist Ross Stanley, whose technical skill and invention lend any keyboard a whole-band sound, bass and drums, and for the first time by virtuoso trombonist Harry Maund, they packed out Henry Ward Hall. Outstanding number that brought me to my feet: *Gvoove*, by bass player Laurence Cottle.

Will Barry led a beautiful trio: bass and drums were father-and-son duo Jeremy and Louis Brown, and perhaps the family rapport (they are also Barry's cousins) lent a warm glow to everything the band did. Barry's pianism is clearly inborn: his solo introduction to the classic Eckstine ballad, *I Want to Talk About You* (immortalised by John Coltrane on *Soultrane*) was a complete joy; the casual brilliance evidenced by the band's entire set, Barry's careful acknowledgements to the originators, and their instant musicality, clearly captivated the audience.

AFTERNOON

Simon Spillett's performance was partly in celebration of 30 years in the music business – a steadfast rock on the British jazz scene. Absolute torrents of fluent tenor sax demi-

semi quavers make you think of (too-short lived) Tubby Hayes, and it comes as no surprise that Spillett readily acknowledges Hayes' classic hard-bop as a primary influence, and that his 2023 album is entitled *Dear Tubby H*. Amid the fast and furious tunes – Clark Terry's completely frenetic *Opus Ocean* among them – was Hayes' perfect ballad, *A Dedication to Joy*. And it was.

Fliss Gorst leads an all-female swing ensemble. Tenor saxophone player, teacher, composer, arranger, and band leader, she has been pleasing crowds in London and the south since 2011. The band played at The Printworks, in a hall which accommodated the accompanying dancers, Grounded Movement, who encouraged the audience to dance with them. The room was full, and people were standing at the door for a set that started with *When the Saints Go Marching In*. It's a real feelgood dance band, ideal for a late summer afternoon.

Poppy Daniels is an extremely talented trumpeter. Her speciality is a heady mix of contemporary jazz that pays tribute to the greats while

incorporating today's universal influences: latin, funk, beatbox, hip-hop, R&B. Her set at Barnaby's – a half-hour improvisation by an accomplished quartet – was based on lovely jumpy bass riffs in alternating time signatures laid down by bass player Alley Lloyd. There was an infectious freshness about this performance, and their evident enjoyment of their own musical inventions and interactions was almost palpable. A lovely set.

Samaki collective recreates the sound of 1970s African musicians like Fela Kuti, Tony Allen, and Oscar Sully. Relentless grooves and soaring melodies, very much driven along by local legend, teacher, arranger and promoter Julian Humphries on hand-drums and percussion. The biggest surprise of the day was this team-up of Samaki with Barnaby's Big Band, playing Afro-beat arrangements for a 12-person horn line-up (including guest trombonist Trevor Mires). These arrangements lent space for short improvised breaks (notably by Mires and trumpeter Pete Auckland) and were played with great musicianship, plus that intangible thing that I've come to love, Hastings joy.

EVENING

As a highlight, the festival was privileged to present long-running Canterbury outfit Soft Machine, absolute bastions of the 1970s prog-rock/jazz fusion scene and still going strong – the festival here is part of a tour of the UK and Europe. Guitarists' guitarist John Etheridge has been touring, mentoring, and teaching for something like 50 years but has never stopped inventing. His music is as full of fresh riffs and phrases now as it was in 1975 and is at the forefront of this band's current work. What they do is still marvellously *off* the wall, in fact, *Out-bloody-rageous*.

UK jazz aficionados will need no introduction to Soweto Kinch. His career spans hip-hop, jazz, classical composition, teaching, mentoring, and broadcasting and he effortlessly manages Dolphy-type riffs along with 21st century electronics. He played most of his recent piece *Soundtrack to the Apocalypse*, the final part of a trilogy of works be-



Soweto Kinch

gun in 2019. This had its debut with the London Symphony Orchestra at the Barbican last year. In Hastings he performed with rising-star bass player Josh Vadiveloo and drummer Louis Hamilton-Foad. It's ambitious and unique, and Kinch used loops and samples to fill the large hall (full to capacity) with an essentially orchestral sound, over which he played, in his customary controlled-anarchic alto style. He also featured an electronic mouth-blown machine called an aerophone, which produces a sound oddly reminiscent of Weather Report's funk years. Like Courtney Pine he has become almost venerable, and also like Pine he encourages audience participation – in this case a rap loosely based on words like 'Hastings', 'tension', and 'seagull' randomly supplied by the audience, who loved it all.

Veteran musician Jim Mullen is one of the founding luminaries of the UK jazz scene, and one of the best jazz guitarists in Europe. He played a predictably tasteful set with his customary sidemen Ross Stanley (back on the Hammond this time) and Tristan Maillot (drums). His playing has only improved with age, and frankly I love his elegantly-presented sets and his spot-the-tune-type solos. This skill of inserting lines from (in his case) *My Favourite Things*, *Bewitched*, *Bothered*, and *Bewildered*, *Tiptoe Through The Tulips*, and *Dixie*, among several others, into the improvised line, is given to relatively few jazz greats. The band's last number, in which this skill was highlighted, was a version of the theme from *University Challenge*.

The festival's final performance was that of Bucky Leo, with a vibrant and joyful set at The Paintworks that had the crowd on their feet and dancing. With a brilliant full band, and a talented backup singer, he played a mixture of his work. He ended with the song very familiar to fans of Fela Kuti (his former bandleader), *Water No Get Enemy*.

Next year's Hastings Jazz Festival will be even bigger and even better. I'm looking forward to it already.

Full details and lineups at hastingsjazzfestival.com



Samaki and the Big Band at Henry Ward Hall

Blue Humans

DAVID MILTON takes a well-defined view of *Edge* at Hastings Contemporary

Cool college kids chew the fat about it. Ambitious young curators fixate upon it. Gretna-green gatherers and neo-Nazi nativists alike gnash their teeth at the very thought of it – while like angler fish, the rest of us still swim in deep oblivion, blissfully unaware of ‘the blue humanities’.

That’s the term used to describe a heady contemporary theoretical current which draws attention away from *green* issues towards the *blue*: to focus on the importance of water – as source of life, as colonial pathway, as hidden depths, real and metaphorical. It embraces such high-end academic ideas as ‘transcorporeality,’ Stacy Alaimo’s notion of the human body as inter-meshed with the material world (for instance via the plastic waste we absorb through what we eat); Timothy Morton’s disorienting concepts of ‘dark ecology’ (a probing perspective which approaches environ-



George Rouy, *The Witness*

ments as ‘either unimaginably deep or having no depth at all’) and ‘hyperobjects’ (things so massively distributed in time and space as to defy clear perception – global warming, for instance); and Karen Barad’s ‘agential realism’ which suggests that independent entities

don’t exist in and of themselves so much as come into being – or at least into perception – through ‘intra-action’ (mutual entanglement which typically entails a perceptual bias: culturally and as a species we don’t and can’t sense everything).

Like I said. *Heady*.

SOIL FOOD

These are complex and radical ideas which point us simultaneously towards an understanding of the multiple scales at which we live as well as the instability of our identities in the raging torrents of 21st century data technologies. As ideas they are not necessarily new: think Jackson Pollock or *Zootropolis* for distortions of scale; *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* or Gunther von Hagens for transmogrified bodies; the unnoticed arrival of Captain Cook’s ship in Botany Bay or Faulkner’s *As I Lay Dying* for perceptual partiality. But they are present in the work of a significant strand of forward-looking emerging artists and can also be seen in the rearview mirror where now established creatives vie for a place in what’s left of history.

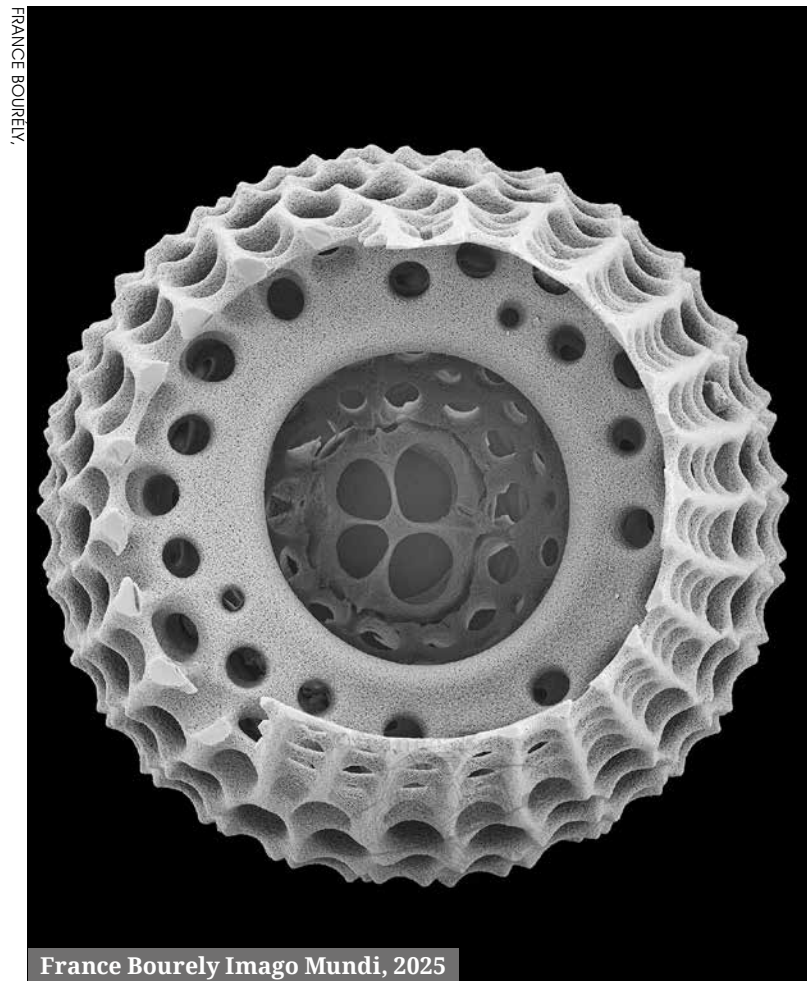
It’s the latter that feature predominantly in *Edge: Where the Land Meets the Sea* at Hastings Contemporary till New Year. The exhibition of 40 artists ranges from overlooked late-19th century landscape painter Theodore Roussel through influential inter-war years educator and horticulturalist Cedric Morris to acclaimed present day practitioners including Turner Prize nominees Tanoa Sasraku and Thérèse Oulton and winners Wolfgang Tillmans and Gillian Wearing. It’s co-curated by The Land Gardeners, an evan-

gelical duo with one foot in the art world and another in ‘soil advocacy,’ presenting soil as ‘the foundation for all life’ – although the exhibition suggests the sea could equally lay claim to such a title.

EBBS AND FLOWS

As usual with institutional art shows there’s a payload of legacy landfill and a lot of conservative rot to plough through, here in the form of the dreary daubs of the sexually Stochastic, stylistically stagnant Duncan Grant with his ditchwater dull *Dieppe* and the garish swirls of the ghastly Maggi Hambling whose *Wall of Water XXXII* looks like a horse has pissed on a poster for Toilet Duck. The childishness of Susie Hamilton’s soft-boiled Lime Beach is outdone only by Jo Pearl’s winsome ceramics of microscopic ‘mud-flat heroes,’ *Intertidal*, each competing for faux-naïf family friendly approval. Anya Gallaccio’s *Days that cannot bring you near* comprises a half-arsed *Arte Povera* installation of clods of local earth. It’s unoriginal and utterly underwhelming. You’d have a more profound contemplative experience cleaning your boots after a wet Sunday walk in the park.

By way of contrast, Wolfgang Tillmans’s *End of Land 1* offers a sudden



France Bourelly *Imago Mundi*, 2025



Andy Goldsworthy, *Sand brought to an edge. To catch the light and incoming tide*

jolt to the senses with its cliff top scene of (politicised) suicidal ideation, while fellow photographer Jem Southam's *Whale Chine* diptych looks askance at the vast and existentially forbidding form of a collapsed rock face off the Isle of Wight. The sense of scale here, temporal and physical, and of starkly impactful profundity in the absence of the human figure, is immediately expressive. *Whale Chine* is a split-second but infinite time piece; a monument and a ruin; a stark statement of the irrelevance of the human race and a meditation on gravity as eloquent as Newton's apple.

At another extreme, self-styled contemplative biologist France

Bourély's skills with the electron microscope inform her forensic snapshots of nanospacial structures invisible to the human eye, subatomic sci-fi matrixes coolly rendered in metallic monochrome. Despite the abundance of material detail it is impossible to tell whether these mind-boggling images are of objects in some sense eternal or whether, like soap bubbles, their existence is over in an instant.

Faversham's favourite fashionista George Rouy's assured and vibrant *The Witness* blasts a lot of the more delicate art right out of the water. *Edge*'s edgiest work is a deconstructed muscle beach party of dissolute Francis Bacon-stamped

bodies bathed in Daliesque sunlight. Its slickly rendered technical accomplishments are those of an artist who eschews clunky YBA conceptualism (here represented by one of Gillian Wearing's sub-Pennebaker photoshoots) and instead harks back to 20th century modernist masters. With his shiny, glitchy scenes of blissfully Ballardian gym-bunny ballet, Rouy is surely on his way to being established as the *enfant terrible* of tech bro chic.

In such company some of the big guns go off sadly half-cocked. Land-art legend Andy Goldsworthy's *Rockweed* video is an endurance piece, for both artist and audience, as he covers himself in seaweed and takes

a lie-down beneath a gentle tide for half an hour or so. Cornelia Parker's *White Cliff Crossings* is a slight work by another major artist, using chalk from the cliffs of Dover to obscure a little window. A mere footnote to her earlier Brexit-era *Island*, it's a conceptual stretch too far to make this feeble faxed-in filler fit with the exhibition's epochal aims.

HERE AND NOW

Edge is soaringly ambitious and abounds with provocative ideas. But it's heritage heavy and implies that there's an undercurrent we've all been missing in the work of the assembled artists, as if they were custodians of some deep hidden lore but were keeping it to themselves out of politeness. That's curatorial wishful thinking. What's absent from the show is anything by palpably 21st century artists, by funky Gen Z visionaries whose perspective is physically, psychologically and politically informed by contemporary theory. Who are actually living it and can tell us what they think. None of those who are featured are under the age of 30 and it's here that *Edge* starts to feel a little disconnected from here and now.

The exhibition might be brought instantly into the cutting-edge present through the inclusion of the

work of, say, Gesiye, whose eerie *All That I Touch I Change* combines video, tattoo and submersive performance-art in a visceral post-colonial *danse macabre* that draws on a seemingly bottomless lake of pitch in Trinidad (discovered or at least first exploited by pirate, plunderer, potato-head Sir Walter Raleigh); or the limpid photographs of Alfie Barnes whose *What The Tide Might Take* presents fluid self-portraits shot in the hyperobjective ocean and whose emblematic *Touch Without Contact* reconfigures Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* as a stoically beatific blue human origin myth.

As the world burns and mad men fight over the ashes, it's such works, neither hidebound by history nor compromised by the Frieze-adjacent market, that stop the term 'contemporary' from becoming a mere aesthetic flag of convenience. A less earnestly reflective, less didactic vision than that articulated by *Edge* might boldly posit art itself as a hyperobject and take a few more risks with exactly who and what is represented.

Exhibition runs: 26 September 2026 to 3 January 2027, Wednesday to Sunday and Bank Holidays, 11am to 5pm. Hastings Contemporary, Rock-a-Nore Road

HASTINGS CONTEMPORARY INSTALLATION PHOTO



Ototong Nkanga, *Tied to the Other Side*

Tied to the Other Side

VICTORIA KINGHAM

There's much to admire about the work of Ototong Nkanga, a Nigerian-Belgian artist whose extraordinary tapestry *Tied to the Other Side*

fills one wall of the Foreshore Gallery in the new Hastings Contemporary exhibition *The Edge: Where the Land Meets the Sea*. Now in her early fifties, Nkanga is probably at her optimum in terms of artistic achievement. She has exhibited all over the world – see her web page for full details – and there seems to be no limit to either her output or the media she chooses in which to create.

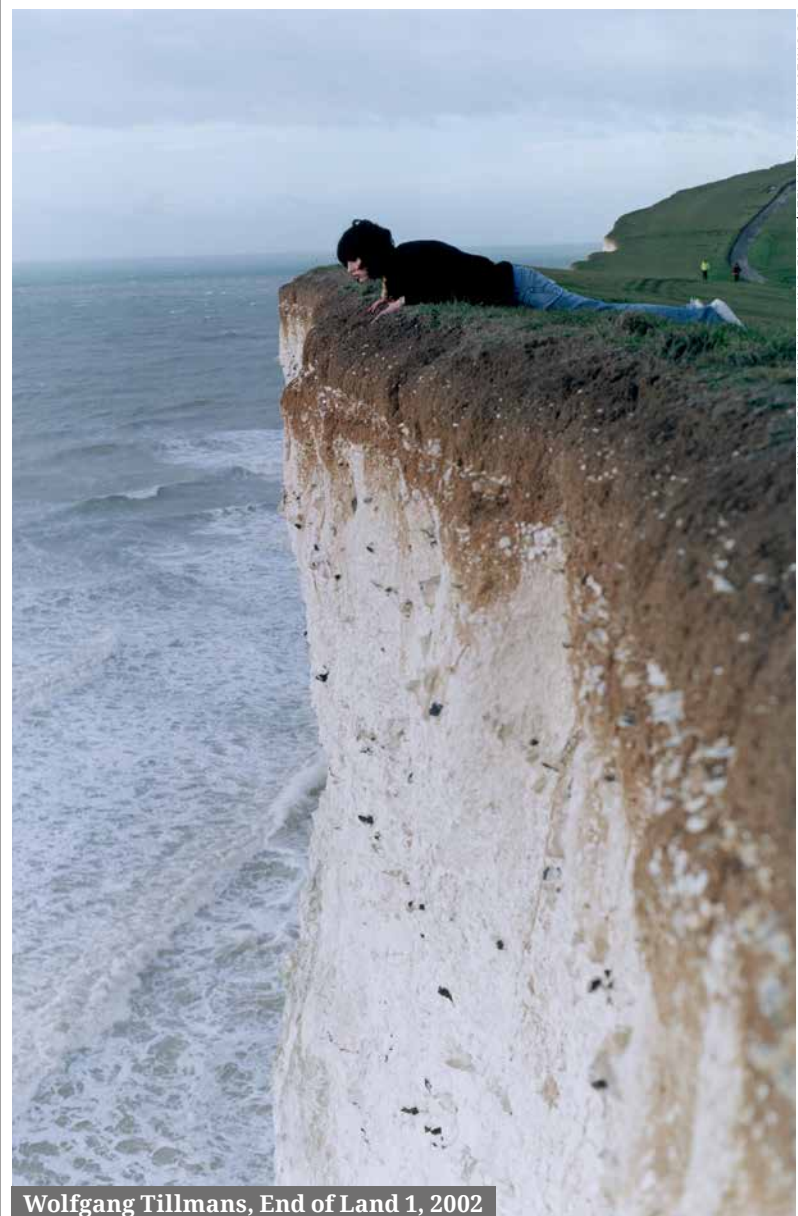
There are no details currently available about how this was worked, but I suspect in the same way that Grayson Perry produces tapestries, that is in collaboration with a company who produce digital weave files, and another who actualises the designs on high-tech digital Jacquard looms in specific textile media. It's an incredible thing. A landscape neither sea nor land, human limbs either submerged or sprouting, searchlights,

a kingfisher – it can be interpreted in 100 ways. Maybe that's the point: her work (in all kinds of media) has been extensively exhibited in major galleries; it consistently highlights the jagged relationship (or Edge) between the land, its natural resources, and how it relates to humanity and human artefacts.

The presence of this work in the exhibition indicates the national importance of Hastings' local art gallery, which deserves to be treasured and nurtured.



A selection: tinyurl.com/5bk4mhk4.
Nkanga's webpage: ototong-nkanga.com.
Hastings Contemporary exhibition page: hastingscontemporary.org/event-category/exhibitions



COURTESY MAUREEN PALEY LONDON, TOWNER EASTBOURNE

Wolfgang Tillmans, *End of Land 1*, 2002

De La Warr: News, History, and Outer Space

From historians and cultural commentators to an astronaut who has seen Earth from space, the upcoming lineup of talks at the De La Warr Pavilion brings fascinating people and thought-provoking stories to the iconic Bexhill building.

Over the months ahead, remarkable voices from a range of worlds will offer audiences the chance to hear new perspectives or discover something unexpected, or simply enjoy an evening of conversation.

TIM PEAKE, ASTRONAUT

British astronaut Tim Peake offers a rare and compelling insight into the human story of space exploration. Drawing on extraordinary archive footage and powerful storytelling, this new show goes beyond his own journey to share the remarkable experiences of astronauts across the decades, from the earliest missions of the 1950s up to the future of human travel to Mars.

Along the way, Peake reveals

what life in space is really like, showing breathtaking views of Earth and describing weightlessness. He points to the dangers, humour and intense physical and psychological demands of astronaut training. This is a one-of-a-kind opportunity to explore the final frontier with someone who has lived it.

JOHN SIMPSON

After successive sell-out tours, legendary journalist and broadcaster John Simpson returns with *Leaders and Lunatics*, a sharp and unflinching exploration of leadership and power. Drawing on nearly 60 years of reporting at the heart of global events, he examines why some leaders inspire while others descend into tyranny. He uses example figures Putin, Assad, Saddam, Gaddafi and Trump to Mandela, Gorbachev, Havel and Zelensky. Through firsthand insight, John unpacks what tyrants

have in common, how sane societies can slide into despotism, and who is really leading in an age of war, instability and climate crisis.

In the second half, the audience takes the lead. From the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union to Tiananmen Square and the Gulf Wars, Simpson invites your questions, in a timely, thought-provoking evening about power, personality and the world we live in now.

BETTANY HUGHES, HISTORIAN

In *Uncovering Ancient Egypt*, award-winning historian Bettany Hughes brings Ancient Egypt into sharp focus, exploring how this extraordinary civilisation helped shape the modern world. Drawing on 25 years of research, bestselling books and acclaimed documentaries, she reveals how Egyptian in-

novations in medicine, mathematics, engineering and governance laid the foundations of modern civilisation.

From beliefs about justice, leadership and the afterlife, to the enduring power of its myths and monuments, Hughes uncovers why Ancient Egypt still speaks so strongly to us. Spanning the Sahara to the Valley of the Kings, this thoughtful and richly illustrated evening connects past and present, offering fresh insight into one of history's most influential cultures.

All talks in the DLWP auditorium. **TIM PEAKE, ASTRONAUT**, Wednesday 14 October. **John Simpson, Leaders and Lunatics**, Saturday 17 October. **Bettany Hughes, Uncovering Ancient Egypt**, Wednesday 11 November. Tickets: dlwp.com/whats-on/talks-building-tours or boxoffice@dlwp.com

Five Alive Hastings Library Hosts a National Poetry Day Feast

CHRIS CONNELLEY

Politicians often bang on about our lack of productivity compared to other countries, and there may be some truth in that. But there are noble exceptions to this rule, and any of them looking to take inspiration from an exceptionally productive group should take a trip here to Hastings to meet our poets, who must surely count as some of the nation's most committed grafters. For barely a night goes by without a reading or performance at a local bookshop or bar.

We've only just finished a particularly poetry-centric Hastings Book Fest, a veritable verseathon in its own right, and rather than take a well-earned breather, a bunch of our finest talents were back out celebrating National Poetry Day with a special event at Hastings Library.

It also marked the first anniversary of the publication of *Poet Town*, the bumper compilation of works by poets past and present living in or connected to Hastings, the launch for which was one of the highlights of last year's book festival.

This 'plus one year' reunion saw five poets take the stage to present a club mix of their own work, alongside the writings of someone else with a past connection with Hastings.

First on was Tim Barlow, one of our most prolific talents, and the co-ordinator of the event. He opened with a typically warm and engaging new piece, specially written for National Poetry Day, that name-checked some of the greats who have enjoyed our town's hospitality. He then chose *Alice in Wonderland* author, Lewis Carroll, as his classic poet, reading *A Sea Dirge* and *Jabberwocky*.

Next up was curator, facilitator and Director of neighbouring Eastbourne Literature Festival, Jane Midwinter. Still basking in the



warm glow of its successful first outing last weekend, Jane delivered a beautifully elocuted set that looked back upon her early years

in Fairlight. She also gave the evening's first recitation from memory, a spirited rendition of Edward Lear's *The Owl and the Pussycat*.

Multi-talented St Leonards legend Jude Montague occupied the middle slot, starting with two pieces from her past inspiration, Victorian priest with an eye for the fantastical, George MacDonald. She also shared two of her own poems, a splendidly surreal riff on the universal appeal of the chair and a more sober piece, fresh off the press that day, remembering a recently deceased acquaintance.

Next up was son of the Sussex woods now living in Hastings, poet and ghost writer Tim Rich, who delivered a thoughtful set, made most memorable by his delicious tribute to what he characterised as a near-extinct social group, the "disgusting genius" of the pub professor, the autodidact who knows a lot about a lot and will happily share it over a pint or three of mild. Tim also tapped into the widespread fear many people feel about poetry and ended with a love letter to John Keats, his classic poet, who, we discovered, stayed at a boarding house in West St Leonards close by the Bo Peep junction.

Bringing the evening to a close, Katie Taylor mesmerised us with a free-form performance without notes, treating us to an extended account of the life and times of Victorian artist, model and poet Elizabeth Siddal. Taking in class, gender, aspiration, Tennyson and a pat of butter, Taylor fused this vast canvas into a fast-paced, ten-minute wordscape that brought this lesser-known poet to life, establishing her local connection with Hastings, where she married Dante Gabriel Rossetti at St Clements Church in the Old Town, whilst staying here to recuperate from serious illness.

Five pitch-perfect poets honouring a tradition as old as humanity itself in just under an hour. And all for free. In my book, that's a masterclass in teamwork, productivity and value, and another National Poetry Day done exceptionally well with typical Hastings panache and style.





New Beginnings & Old Schooldays

TOM FORDE

At The Yarn, a regular storytelling night held at French's on Robertson Street, there's a theme for each evening. Last Thursday it was *Back to School*, a theme ripe with recognisable experiences, shared memories, and plenty of opportunity for humour.

Half the stories we heard were first-person retellings of true events, which seemed particularly well suited to the format – ten-minute stories told to a bar full of people drinking red wine.

Chloe White interpreted the theme as *New Beginnings*, a beautifully self-reflective story about the time her baby was observed by a psychotherapist for one hour every week for the first year of its life. It moved us all greatly, tapping into rich experiences of vulnerability before school even starts.

Three of the storytellers happened to be ex-teachers; not a great reflection on rates of teacher-retention, but excellent material for the rest of us. Paul Graham's retelling of his teacher training assessment where he cos-played as a Norman Conqueror – French accent and all – in front of an increasingly bemused class, ended with him firing a Fisher Price bow and arrow directly into the eye of his steely assessor.

For James Young, the sight of school children starting the year in shiny new uniforms prompted old memories of turning a new page himself – returning to his old neighbourhood and trying to find love despite his relentless thriftiness.

Jon Loades-Carter, Emma Joliffe, and Raven Hurste all dealt more directly with school days. Each of their stories caused me to reflect on how these experiences shaped the person in front of us, and indeed,

how all our school days leave marks on us. I have been witnessing my friends' children start school in recent weeks. What stories will they tell in the years to come?

All the stories at The Yarn were filled with humour, but many also touched on the difficulties and cruelties that seem to be an unavoidable part of growing up. The adolescent diaries of the night's host, Helen Black, exemplified the point. Hilarious in retrospect, they were also a reminder of the cruel ways in which young girls talk to each other and, perhaps, even more painfully, to themselves.

Maybe that's what makes school such a rich subject for storytelling. It's one of the few experiences we can assume almost everyone in the room has shared, while knowing that no two people experienced it in quite the same way.



The Yarn, a monthly open-mic storytelling evening hosted by Hastings Writers Workshop, took place at French's, Robertson Street, on Thursday 1 October. Catch them on Instagram at [instagram.com/the_yarn_storytelling](https://www.instagram.com/the_yarn_storytelling) for up-to-date details.

Sahib & Matta-Clark at De La Warr

PREM SAHIB

Chamber is a mid-career survey of work by British artist Prem Sahib, bringing together work spanning twenty years of one of the most distinctive practices in British art today.

Working across sculpture, installation and sound, Sahib explores the architecture of social and intimate spaces and the ways they shape experiences of community, desire, belonging and exclusion.

GORDON MATTA-CLARK

Discrete Violations is a focused retrospective exhibition of work by Gordon Matta-Clark (1943–1978), one of the most radical artists of the twentieth century, whose practice transformed the way we think about buildings, cities and the function of architecture. Bringing together drawings, photographs, films and archival material, the exhibition explores Matta-Clark's experiments with buildings and urban space.

Sahib: ground floor gallery, Matta-Clark, first floor. Exhibition Opening Party, Saturday 10 October 2026, 12 – 2.30pm. Free Entry. All are invited, with a complimentary drink on arrival. Welcome and introduction from Head of Visual Arts, Ned McConnell at 12.30pm.



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Old Town Cider Festival 2026

Hastings Old Town Cider festival will return from 7-15 November, with pubs across the Old Town offering a broad selection of the UK's best ciders, perries and apple juices. ELLA LOWDEN gives a taste of what's to come in this preview.

Over the course of nine days, Old Town pubs including The Albion, The Jolly Fisherman, The Crown, The Jenny Lind, The Dolphin Inn, The First In Last Out (FILO) and East Hastings Sea Angling Association will take part in the festival.

Local cider-makers from across Sussex and Kent will be showcased in all venues. Look out for Ascension's super juicy ciders made from Sussex apples. Not to be missed is their sparkling cider, *Pilot*, their wild cider made with red grapes,

Wrath, and their sour cherry blend, *Dance Commander*.

Other brilliant local cider-makers include Mainomenos, produced by Joe Marsh at Middle Farm. Mainomenos produce low-intervention ciders, inspired by the old ways and rooted within the South Downs landscape. One of their ciders, *Gil*, is named after a South Downs giant from ancient times who made his home in Mount Caburn, Glynde. The Mainomenos orchard, planted in 2023, is farmed completely by hand,



without the use of machines. As a result of these methods the ciders are unique, varied and very delicious.

Make the most of the variety available during the festival by ordering a flight paddle which will give you a chance to taste a selection of ciders within each venue.

There will also be a chance to

meet some of the cider producers, with talks and tastings happening in participating venues throughout the week. Visit the websites of individual pubs to find their full programme of events closer to the time.

Beyond cider drinking, pubs will be offering apple-based food specials and live music throughout the

festival. For those who prefer a non-alcoholic apple beverage, local juices from Ringden Farm and Maynards, among other producers, will be available in many of the venues.

If November can't come fast enough, have a go at Andrew Swan's rabbit and cider casserole recipe to whet your appetite in the meantime.

Rabbit in Cider with Suet Dumplings

A recipe from ANDREW SWAN, The Crown Hastings

This casserole combines rabbit, cider, smoked bacon and garlic, finished with cream and tarragon. The suet dumplings cook in the same pot. The dumplings are a family recipe passed down on my dad's Georgie side of the family and are the star of the show.

The perfect dumpling features a golden crusty top and a sticky bottom soaked in the braising juices.

My nan would have served her suet dumplings with minced beef and onions braised for the whole day. Substituting the beef for rabbit is a much more sustainable way to eat meat and the addition of fresh tarragon and cream lightens the dish – a perfect bridge between summer and winter.

At The Crown, we use rabbit supplied by Sustainable Meat Eater in East Sussex and cider from Ascension. For this home version, choose a dry or medium apple cider and ask your butcher to joint the rabbit.

If you find rabbit hard to come by, or dislike game, chicken thighs on the bone would be a great substitute.

INGREDIENTS

Serves four. Allow around 3–4 hours; cooking time will vary depending on the rabbit and how efficient your oven is.

For the casserole

- About 1.5kg jointed rabbit, on the bone
- 150g smoked streaky bacon cut into lardons
- 2 tbsp first press Sussex rapeseed or olive oil
- 2 tbsp plain flour
- 2 onions, sliced finely
- 4 garlic cloves, sliced
- 500ml dry or medium apple cider
- 250ml chicken stock or vegetable stock (we make our own at the pub but a stock cube works fine)
- 150ml double cream
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh tarragon
- Salt and black pepper

For 8 dumplings

- 200g self-raising flour
- 100g shredded beef suet
- ½ tsp fine salt



Suet dumplings in progress

- Cracked black pepper to suit
- About 100ml cold water
- A dash of milk

METHOD

1. Heat the oven to 160°C / 140°C fan. In a wide, ovenproof casserole with a lid, fry the bacon in

a little oil until coloured, then lift out. Dust the rabbit with seasoned plain flour and brown in batches, adding oil as needed. Set aside.

2. Soften the onions in the same pot for 10 minutes, then add the garlic for another minute. Pour

in the cider, scraping up the browned bits. Add the stock, rabbit and bacon, and bring to a simmer.

3. Cover and cook in the oven for roughly 2–3 hours, until the meat pulls easily from the bones. Check occasionally, adding hot stock if the pot is drying out. Continue cooking if the meat is not tender.
4. Lift out the rabbit. When cool enough to handle, remove the meat, checking carefully for small bones. Return the meat to the pot and stir in the cream. Taste for seasoning. Keep the sauce fairly loose, adding a splash of stock if needed: the dumplings will absorb some.
5. Mix the self-raising flour, suet, salt and pepper. Add cold water and milk gradually to make a soft, manageable dough. Divide into eight balls.
6. Bring the casserole to a gentle simmer on the hob. Stir the tarragon into the sauce. Place the dumplings on top, with their bottoms in the sauce and space between them to expand. Return to the oven uncovered for 30 minutes until the dumplings are golden brown.
7. Serve with buttered cabbage and carrots.

If you would prefer us to do the cooking, this dish will be available at The Crown's autumn Cider Festival in Hastings Old Town. 7-15 November.

FOOTBALL

United
Toppled
from
League
Summit

22 September

Sittingbourne2

Hastings Utd3

26 September

Hastings Utd2

Dulwich Hamlet1

29 September

Crowborough Athletic2

Hastings Utd (lost on penalties)2

3 October:

South Park2

Hastings Utd1

HUGH SULLIVAN

Hastings United lost their status as league leaders last Saturday when they were edged out in a 2-1 defeat by South Park. The Reigate side now has a two point advantage at the top of the Isthmian League (South East Division), though the ‘U’s have played a game less.

The defeat followed a couple of excellent results – an away win at third-placed Sittingbourne, followed by a home win over Isthmian Premier side Dulwich Hamlet in the FA Trophy. All three games featured goals by free-scoring striker Max Walsh, who has now notched ten goals in 12 league and cup matches this season.

At Sittingbourne on 22 September, United produced probably their best performance of the season. After Walsh’s 12th minute goal had been equalised on the half-hour, Kesna Clarke put them back in front early in the second half from a right-wing cross by Freddie Legg, and they held their lead into the fourth minute of added time. The Kent side thought then that they had gained a share of the points with their second equaliser, only for Walsh to head the winner 60 seconds later.

TROPHY SUCCESS
Four days later, back at the Pilot Field, the ‘U’s entertained Isthmian Premier League side Dulwich Hamlet in the third qualifying round of the FA Trophy, the knock-out cup

JON SMALDON



Max Walsh: ten goals in 12 games

for all non-EFL teams.

A crowd of almost 1,350 saw Sam Pidgeon score in the first minute, heading in a long throw by Ollie Black. The South London visitors soon equalised in fortuitous fashion when an attempted clearance kick by goalkeeper Harry Haines rebounded unkindly into his own net off a challenging forward. But the lead was restored by Walsh, rifling his left foot shot high into the Dulwich net 15 minutes into the second half, and this time United held on for the win without conceding further.

A midweek game at Crowborough in the Velocity Cup, another knockout competition confined to Isthmian League teams, gave ‘U’s manager Ronnie Dolan the chance to field what was effectively a reserve eleven. Walsh was rested, along with all but one of the team who had started against Dulwich. On the other side, though, Fin Chapman, having just agreed a move to Crowborough after several years in and out of the Hastings team, made a prominent appearance.

But his former United teammates also gave a good account of themselves. They took a first half lead with a header into the bottom corner from Delwin Duah, and

equalised again late in the second half through a strike by Emmanuel Abudioré after the home side had gone 2-1 up. Abudioré almost snatched the winner in the dying seconds, when his long-range dipping effort was saved by the fingertips of the home goalkeeper.

Unfortunately the penalty shoot-out exposed some inexperience as the ‘U’s converted only one of four attempts and lost 3-1.

The game at South Park featured three goals in the first 20 minutes. The home side went ahead; Walsh (who else?) headed a United equaliser from Callum Erskine’s cross from the left; then a second goal was conceded by the ‘U’s, and from then on they were playing catch-up. In the second half Dolan replaced Warren Mfula with Clarke and Erskine with Ayo Olasimbo, but to no avail.

Next league action for his team will be two more away trips – to play Sheppey United tomorrow (Saturday), then Margate on Tuesday, followed by home fixtures against Erith Town and Eastbourne Town the following week. On 24 October they will host Waltham Abbey of the Southern Central Division in the FA Trophy – the fourth successive tie in this competition where the ‘U’s have been given home advantage.

ISTHMIAN LEAGUE SOUTH EAST DIVISION
TOP FOUR AS AT 4 OCTOBER

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
SOUTH PARK (REIGATE)	9	6	2	1	20	10	20
HASTINGS UNITED	8	6	0	2	20	12	18
SITTINGBOURNE	9	5	1	3	14	13	16
AFC CROYDON ATHLETIC	8	5	0	3	16	11	15

MINIGOLF

Seve Kukielka wins
the 2026 British Open



Winner Seve Kukielka in action on Pirate course

JON ANGEL

The International British Open Minigolf Tournament returned to the Pirate Course at Hastings Adventure Golf on the last weekend of September, with a record turnout. Seventy-four players took part, playing eight rounds each across two days. The field included players from the home nations as well as Germany, New Zealand, Hungary and Austria.

Last year’s runaway winner, England’s Adam Kelly, was looking to secure another title, but stiff competition was expected from the likes of Wales’ Seve Kukielka, locals Daniel Cornwall and Murray Thompson, and a host of other players. International minigolfers Matt Ansley and Patrick Reiner were also hoping to make waves.

After the four rounds played on the Saturday (day one), Kelly held a slender advantage of one shot from Kukielka. Refreshed for day two, Kelly then pulled further ahead to lead by five shots after round six. The title looked to be in the bag.

But the world’s top-ranked adventure golfer, Kukielka, had other ideas. His 29 in the penultimate round saw him close to within three shots of Kelly. Round eight was nip and tuck all the way to hole 11. But from hole 12 onwards, Kukielka took charge. In a remarkable display

of minigolf he aced (achieved a hole-in-one on) each of the last seven holes to pip Adam Kelly to the trophy by a single shot.

With a 59 under-par total, Kukielka is the new British Open Minigolf Champion.

Murray Thompson took bronze after a sudden-death play-off with Daniel Cornwall. In the International Tournament New Zealand’s Matt Ansley claimed the title, coming in four shots ahead of Patrick Reiner (Austria). Hungary’s Marton Geda was third.

Dee Relf came through to win the Women’s category by the slenderest of margins. Ruth Sturdy finished one shot behind to take silver, and Shelley Cooper was third.

All eyes were on the Novice section where golf content creator Peter Finch was being followed by a camera crew for his YouTube channel. Peter confirmed his putting prowess as he took the title by three shots from Vincent Hawke. Valeria Bradshaw Goatley was placed third in the category.

One of the stories of the weekend was 14-year-old Julian Teubler. The minigolf prodigy won the Juniors title in style, but his superb play also saw him finish seventh in the overall standings. Quite remarkable.

£1,635 was awarded in overall prize money. The event was live-streamed for YouTube, see youtube.com/@BritishMinigolfAssociation/streams.

RUGBY

Slow Start
for H&B

playing on hard-baked pitches after the summer drought. The wait was longer for Hastings & Bexhill, as Old Gravesendians, their scheduled opponents for the revised opening on 26 September, couldn’t raise a team and scratched.

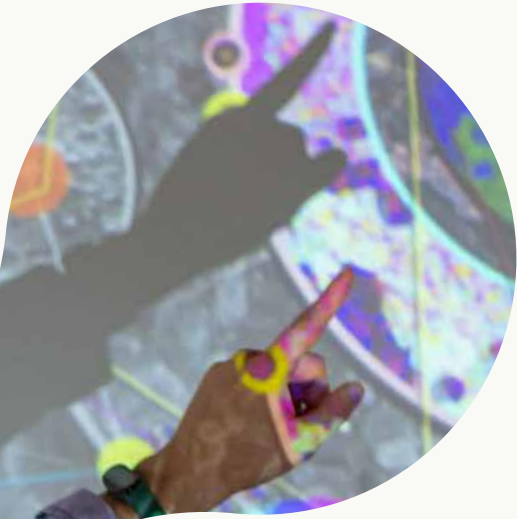
H&B finally played a competitive fixture last Saturday, going down narrowly 20-23 to South London hosts Brockleians. They’ll be back at their Ark Alexandra ground on 17 October, entertaining Meopham side Vigo.

It’s been a slow start to the new season for all local rugby teams, with the original fixture list for the first half of last month cancelled to avoid

OPEN EVENTS 2026

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HASTINGS

13th October
19th November

EASTBOURNE

14th October
19th November



LEWES

15th October
19th November

3:45 - 6:45pm



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