With our district already attracting thousands of holiday makers, to enjoy the time at the seaside, a reminder that a pleasant trip to the beach can be hidden with dangers.

Every year about this time, The Looker always features an article about what to do at the beach to ensure beach safety. Already this year we have highlighted the dangers of walking in some parts of the beach, which can prove hazardous.

Last Bank Holiday weekend, another danger was highlighted when someone used the slipway at Dymchurch, to launch their jet ski. And then became stranded at the bottom of the ramp. Despite attempts to try and pull the car and trailer to safety, the sea proved that it will wait for no one and soon the only part of the car visible was the roof as the tide swamped the car. Over the past 12 months this is the 8th car that has got stuck on the slipway, with locals preferring to use the facilities of the Varne Boat Club at Littlestone, where tractors launch watercraft. For many years local councillors had asked for there to be a full time lifeguard presence at Dymchurch. This was first brought to the Parish Council 3 years ago after the tragedy at Camber Sands, in 2016 when 5 people drowned. At the time, the then Parish Chairman Roger Wilkens told The Looker: “People flock to Dymchurch because we have one of the best beaches in the country and on a hot day, the beach attracts thousands of people. The local traders do very well out of the tourists. But following on from what happened at Camber, I think as a council, we should do something to help protect the people whilst on holiday and also for locals who use the beach. We had a person from the RNLI to look at manning the beach. We set up a beach advisory board, ...
Planning permission for the latest addition was unanimously granted at the Folkestone and Hythe District Council (FHDC) Planning and Licensing Committee last week.

Outlines planning permission had already been granted as part of a wider original planning permission for 1,050 dwellings in 2010. Four hundred of those houses already have detailed planning permission, 200 of which have already been built by housebuilder Barratt Homes.

But due to an expired time condition, a new outline application for the remainder of the land was submitted.

As well as the 650 new homes, the application included plans for up to 15,000 sqm of offices or care uses, 1,150 sqm of shops and restaurants, and 14.02 hectares of open space.

The campaign suggests that visitors choose a lifeguarded beach. If you get in trouble in the water, 999 or 112 in an emergency and ask for the Coastguard or RNLI.

In a survey commissioned by the RNLI, 75% of those questioned - aged 16-64 - expect to visit a UK beach or the coast between April and September, with around half of that number likely to do so three or more times. A significantly higher proportion of the public (38%) also said they plan to visit the coast more than usual this year, compared to 2020 (24%).

Last summer, RNLI lifeguards recorded more than 15 million visitors on the beaches the lifesaving charity was patrolling on.

But with continued uncertainty over foreign holidays and international travel, the RNLI is predicting this summer will be the busiest ever as Covid restrictions are eased and people choose to ‘staycation’.

‘We are expecting this summer to be the busiest ever for our lifeguards and volunteer lifesboat crews,’ said the RNLI’s Head of Water Safety Gareth Morrison. ‘These new figures back that up.

‘We want people to enjoy the coast but urge everyone to respect the water and think about their own safety and know what to do in an emergency.

‘Our main advice is to visit a lifeguarded beach and swim between the red and yellow flags. RNLI lifeguards will be patrolling around 245 beaches this summer to offer advice on how to stay safe and they are also there to help anyone who gets into trouble.

Coastal areas provide a great opportunity to enjoy fresh air and open space but they can be an unpredictable and dangerous environment, particularly during early summer when air temperatures start warming up but water temperatures remain dangerously cold, increasing the risk of cold water shock.

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Some aspects of the original application have been changed to take into account updated planning policy.

Cllr David Wimbale (Ind) called the updated plans “actually an improvement” on the previous scheme. He went on to say, “I was part of the council when this was first brought in and we were all very excited at that time. From what I can see this is actually an improvement on the original one as well. It’s more green space and a better use of space overall.”

Cllr Nicola Keen (Lab) said she hoped a bus stop would be added to the area very soon. “There will be kids run over right, left and centre. I’m rather concerned that there isn’t a stop on that site, as I’d imagine there will be lots of children of all ages living there,” she said. “I would like to think there would be a bus stop there so they’re not running across a dangerous main road.”

Hythe Councillor Georgina Trelore stated that “she really did not want the houses being built there as they were ‘within view of the designated area of outstanding natural beauty’ (AONB).” This was refuted by Cllr Wimble, who pointed out that the council had to build over 700 new homes a year, just to be able to control the districts own planning authority and that Ms Trelore should have known that the AONB stopped at the top of Lympne Hill and if her logic was sound, then there could be no building anywhere on Romney Marsh as it was all within sight of the top of the hill.

Kate Holland, who was speaking on behalf of the applicants, said buses would start to run “when a certain mass of people are living there, and when it becomes profitable for the bus company to run from there.”
Parents and pupils fuming at early closure of College

Parents and pupils where said to be fuming after a decision to close the Brockhill Park College two weeks before the planned end of the school term.

The school has sparked a furious response after surprising leavers in two year groups by ending the term early.

Not just parents, but teachers showed their surprise and shock when parents were left fuming and teachers were reportedly in tears last week, after Brockhill Park Performing Arts College in Hythe gave students “twenty minutes notice” that it would be the last day of the school year.

Part of the issue one parent told The Looker, was not that the term was ending sooner than expected, but the way we were told! Parents of the two year groups were informed of the move via a letter from head teacher Sonette Schwartz, and deputy head Charles Joseph, which was sent out over email.

It means that all Year 13 students have now finished at the school, as they have any Year 11 students who are not returning for Sixth Form.

The letters, which have both been seen by The Looker, were sent to some parents as late as 2.58 pm, less than 20 minutes before the end of the school day.

At the same time, Senior Leaders were reportedly walking around the school handing out the same letter to pupils, telling them that their term – and for some, their time at the school – was over.

The letter reads: "Dear parents and students, thank you for your support during this school year. We are writing to inform you that from today Wednesday, May 26th students may remain at home to complete any outstanding tasks for submission to their teachers this week.

"Subject teachers may need to call individual students in this week and if they do you will be contacted by the school office."

The letter to Year 11s also says that anyone returning to the school for Sixth Form will undergo an induction on Monday, June 21, before starting their A-level subjects until the end of term.

Many parents have hit out at the timing and nature of the decision, with many saying that it was preventing the pupils from having a proper send-off and that because of the last minute nature of the decision, it would be very hard to make arrangements at home due to work commitments.

Parents and pupils fuming at early closure of College

Pupils had reportedly been expecting Friday to be the last day, with many planning on spending it saying goodbye and reminiscing their time at the school with photos.

"It’s just sad that those last celebrations were taken away from them..." One parent, who wished to remain nameless, said: “My daughter was actually told by a friend from another class that they were finishing school that day.

"One of the Senior Leaders of the school then came to her class to hand out their letters.

"My daughter and her friend ran over to see a favourite teacher to say goodbye - the teacher cried so they hugged her, and the she told them she had planned a party for them the next day."

"It’s just sad that those last celebrations were taken away from them, it’s like being sacked at work and having 20 minutes to clear your desk before you are marched off the premises!"

Following the announcement, a fire alarm was reportedly triggered at the school, and several windows were allegedly found to have been broken.

Litter Picking Watch Romney Marsh

All warmly invited to these events including children, refreshments and all equipment will be provided. Do you fancy a day helping your local community, getting some fresh air, keeping the area clean and tidy, a locality to be proud of? Then come along.

Saturday, June 12th, Lydd Community Clean-up, Lydd town. Meet on Park Street, behind the George Inn. Sunday, June 13th, Littlestone Beach, 9.30am. Meet at the RNLI Lifeboat station.

Some of the devices were given to a local school that was able to refurbish them and the remainder, 53 laptops and tablets in total (together with numerous laptop cases also donated), were taken to a Company in Sandwich, Highway Business Services, that was already involved in a Rotary Laptop Campaign; the Company was refurbishing the devices free of charge and programming them ready for donation to schools because, they said, “...it’s a great cause...” and they wanted to help to support as many schools as possible.

In addition, because we received extremely generous financial donations to our Appeal, we plan to purchase 5 laptops that had already been refurbished for sale and they will be delivered to local schools.

We have now ceased to collect any more devices and would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your wonderful generosity. Yet again the people of the Marsh have shown such a wonderful community spirit in this Appeal and made a difference.

By Gill Singfield – Appeal Coordinator

The Rotary Club of Romney Marsh Laptop Appeal

The Rotary Club of Romney Marsh Laptop Appeal

Flowers For All Occasions
Wedding Flowers
Corporate Events
Bouquets
Floral Arrangements
Vase Arrangements
Bespoke Sympathy Tributes

enquiries@loulabellesflorist.co.uk
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Rubbish Collection ... is Rubbish

Jan Holben

As the district refuse collection contract with waste contractors Veolia came to its end, and was renegotiated by F&H district council it was thought that changes made by Veolia to the collection schedule should be made in order to make the service more effective for householders. Letters were sent out across the district with the new schedule explained and advising patience whilst this settled in – but residents are furious that the service appears to have become infinitely worse.

There is no collections service at the moment, as a result of route changes

Local people have been complaining to the district council loudly by telephone, letter, email and to each other on social media, that collections of household rubbish across the district are being missed and that letters received about changes to collection routes have been misleading or outright wrong.

Some residents have complained that they have not had refuse collected in weeks – others that the letters give incorrect information such that they have no idea when their rubbish is being collected.

Residents are understandably wondering what is going on – some residents have waited up to four weeks for their rubbish to be collected and yet others have two collections in two days. This was the case with one Sandgate resident who received a letter to advise that her collection would change from Wednesday to Thursday, then a second letter arrived to say that the first letter was incorrect and should be ignored and her collection would be Wednesday as it always has been – but that wasn’t the end of it. A third letter was received a few days later to advise that the collection would be Thursday yet again, and when the collection did actually happen – the big refuse trucks visited Wednesday and Thursday.

To address concerns FNDC published an announcement on social media to explain; ‘We’d like to apologise to all residents who are experiencing problems with our waste collection service at the moment, as a result of route changes put in place by our contractor. We expected some teething problems just due to the sheer number of properties affected by the route changes and had asked you to bear with us while the changeover took place. However, the changes are taking longer than expected to bed in which means that the normally excellent levels of collection services aren’t being met for a large number of households. This just isn’t good enough and we apologise to all residents affected.

Please be assured that waste crews on the ground are working extremely hard to collect missed bins and ensure the service gets back to normal as soon as possible.

If your collection is delayed please leave your bins out and we’ll get to you as soon as we can. Where possible, please secure your rubbish so that it doesn’t get blown away. Thanks once again for your patience and understanding’ – but local people are not impressed with some questioning the need for changes in the first place or suggesting that Veolia revert to the old routine whilst they get their act sorted out.

Local councilors who often take the brunt of these service failures have been contacted by Chief Executive Dr Susan Priest to say: I can only apologise once again for the poor level of service being experienced and can reassure you that this is the top priority for me and the senior team as we press Veolia to improve.

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REQUIRES A

Part Time Planning Clerk

Initially 12 Months Fixed-Term

14 hours per week (plus occasional evenings)

Remuneration: National Joint Scale SP02-SP07

Main duties to include: Administration of and preparation for Planning Committee meetings and general clerical duties.

Min requirements: 5 good GCSEs or equivalent, including English & Maths and ability to demonstrate a high level of spoken and written language.

Clerical experience / computer literacy essential

For an application pack please contact:
The Town Clerk, Town Hall, High Street, New Romney, Kent TN28 8BT

Phone: 01797 362348

Email: town.clerk@newromney-tc.gov.uk

Closing date for applications: Friday 18th June 2021

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Editor’s Word

Someone asked me the other day, how do you know what to write in the paper? I said if I’m honest, it almost fills me with dread. Just as you deliver the next edition, you think ‘wow! I can have a rest now, but it is not long before the realisation hits you that you are looking at 32 blank pages, and let’s face it, they will not fill themselves.

At this point I should point out that about a quarter of the job is done for me with the adverts along with the contributions from my father, who does the Marsh memories and the Romney Marsh from the Air. Along with our two other stalwart contributors, June and Michael Gooch, who have now become regular feature writers on budget tips, gardening and the Church Roundup.

But the rest of it is down to me and Jan to come up with stories to tell you about. I have said this before and will repeat again, that if we do not know about your story, it’s very hard to put it in. The Looker is not like a full-time job for me, but tends to get written between the hours of 6am and 9am before I head off to the shop and then between 9pm and 11pm.

I also have an ongoing joke with Vicki Dawson, one of our most loyal supporters, who delivers hundreds of copies to Lydd every two weeks, that there is nothing in the editions about Lydd? And I am just putting that out there, if anyone wants to know more about the paper and advertising, but they never seem to last too long, until the reality hits them in that in order to get paid, they have to really put the effort in.

But I think the way for the paper to grow and maybe look at becoming weekly, or a wider circulation, would be to get a partner or Editor and advertising sales person. BUT they would have to have a buy in… not necessarily financial, but work for a profit share, so the more they do, the more they get paid. I am just putting that out there, if anyone wants to know more about the paper and advertising, but they never seem to last too long, until the reality hits them in that in order to get paid, they have to really put the effort in.

That is the main problem…. Not much has been happening. I am always very happy to write about that which are happening, but I need to know about them, in order to publish them and, let’s face it all the big events have been cancelled, like the Lydd Club Day and the New Romney Country Fayre.

The other comment I get occasionally, is that the editions are full of council news? Both District and Town and Parish. This is very simple, obviously I am involved with our district Council, and get involved with the things that are happening. And also once again, the articles are part of what is actually happening in the area. Recently I have had a few guarantors about what to do with the paper? It has a very real value as it is more than self sufficient and covers its production cost (which trust me is very rare in modern times for a printed publication). We always used to regard the Folkestone Herald as our opposition, when we launched nearly 11 years ago. But having looked at a copy recently, I honestly think we have much more local news. And our circulation across the whole district has increased as well. Then you have the ‘big boys’ the KM Group. I think its fair to say that when we launched they regarded us as quite quirky, and we have never really been in competition with them. They are a completely different animal and occasionally I even send them stories and work with their local reporter, if a story breaks just after we have gone to press. But again, talking to newsagents we have a larger circulation.

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Making Art To Sell (Part 2)

By Paul Apps

In my last article I talked about some of the ways that you might sell your artwork in the real world so to speak, by way of shows, galleries and events.

In part two I want to discuss some of the numerous ways that you can find to sell work online, using the internet generally as a platform. Over the past two decades and moreover the last ten years or so the internet has grown beyond many peoples expectations. It has without doubt established itself as the number one method of trading products and services throughout the world, with little more effort can your home office a computer and good internet connection.

The internet has been a success story as a whole for many entrepreneurs and the way that it has evolved over each, connected to their market place by the internet.

So it is also for the artist or creator. Whatever you choose to make, produce or offer, as an artist, writer, maker or musician, there is a platform within this massive sphere, that will accommodate your needs.

Within this vast network of information, several specific platforms have evolved to dominate the information arena. It is also worthy of note that many websites have been created and done well for a good while, only to fail and disappear from the net. So the cautionary note here is to diversify and spread the risk. If one platform goes down or becomes unpopular, you have another still doing well.

Many platform names started with their own niche on the internet offering their own brands of usage. Many of these you will I am sure know. Again it is worth noting the services offered by each have over recent times, become almost the same in many cases. This is no bad thing as you can create your needs in the same way in various platforms thus giving you the best chance and almost future protect the work you have put in.

So who are these platforms? Well Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are the three main platforms that many use. Many others too many to mention exist, but these are the main one with the greatest following and usage. These however have only been used to create a social media following in the past. Only in recent times have markets for selling your products within each platform, been available or allowed and adopted. Instagram will almost certainly be at the forefront of this new revolution.

However many other platforms have risen that are specifically designed for selling the work that artists and craft person make and sell, notably ESTY, Saatchi, Adfinline, Vango and Ugallery to name a few. There will always be a charge for these services and it is really worth doing a lot of investigation before you commit your time and hard earned cash to any of them. That said they have already done much of the hard work in promotion so that you do not have to.

They in most cases have a ready established buyer/ client database and following to really give your artwork a good chance. Promotion and getting your artwork/craft seen by enough people is key. Worrying when the clients are there not yours, so building a client list most likely will not happen.

For myself I have an art page on Facebook, but do not count that as my main social media platform. For me Instagram fulfills that role, as it is grown and changed over time to allow creators to showcase their work and offer it for sale. At this time there is not extra of hidden costs imposed for selling in this platform. I guess in time someone will figure that out and see a way of capitalising on that aspect. Equally although Instagram does not advertise the ability to sell, nor do they provide any back up to make it easier to do.

So the key point here is having a sufficient following and building upon that, in order to get your work seen by those who might like to support your efforts as creator by buying something. During lockdown I have been selling many smaller paintings at a price to stimulate sales. It was a hashtag Artistsupportpledge that started and gained great momentum during the first lockdown. It is still active today and has been the success to many artist the world over to carry on selling work during such terrible times.

So I have touched upon a couple of ways to promote and sell your work online. Here though I have omitted the most obvious one of all. Having your own platform in the shape of a personal/business website. These can cost especially if you have it professionally designed. You do not need to spend anything though in order to create an online web presence.

There are many sites offering free domains and free website and builders with lots of help and support, without spending a penny. It does require a commitment of time however, but then most everything does. Even creating web style blogs in Blogger or with Facebook are great ways to start promoting yourself.

There is so much you can achieve to help promote yourself to others, and eventually lead to the sales you desire.

For me I use social media to create a funnel action driving prospective sales to my website. Such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram (I have already stated that these are changing).

I also do a lot of promotion (not selling) on Youtube. I have over time become a content creator on Youtube with my own teaching channel. I upload a new video tutorial in either oils or watercolours, (Fridays at 3 pm GMT). I also have a paying community on Patreon www.patreon.com/paulappsart

Here for a small monthly fee of £4 to £8 + vat you get access to many fully narrated videos by me. They are added to each month, and there is also a weekly live stream that you can get involved with. That is also linked to a private Facebook community just for my patrons to upload image seek help and advice, make friends and connect with me and other patrons. That is a great learning resource that I have created and add to. If you want to learn more check it out and you’ll be welcome on board.

So I will return and make a part three of this ‘Selling Your Art’ in a future issue of the Looker. Next time I will be giving you a step by step watercolour, to enjoy and follow. Happy painting everyone.

Happy 4th Anniversary to Lydd Dementia Café

On the 19th May, the leadership team met to celebrate Lydd Dementia Café being 4 years old. At the meeting we discussed how we could re-open the Café to our members in a safe and controlled way.

We re-opened on the 1st June and it was lovely to welcome 19 (both cafe members and the team) back to the Methodist Hall in Lydd. Our first meeting was quite laid-back, where everyone just talked and talked, then talked some more! But that is what we all needed after the last year or so. Everyone as so pleased to see each other after all the restrictions we had been through.

We had managed to have a couple of impromptu meetings at Brew at 32 in Lydd High Street during October 2020, before we were once again advised to lockdown. During all the pandemic, we kept in touch with our members via regular newsletters and telephone calls.

All in all, it was lovely to see such happy chatty people back at the café. If you would like any information on the Café, please contact Suzi Finch on 07751 332757.

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**Our Man in Westminster**

We continue to see excellent progress in Kent in our efforts to combat the spread of the coronavirus. Infection rates in Folkestone and Hythe still remain at their lowest levels since the start of the pandemic as are hospital admissions for the East Kent Trust. Based on the latest available information, there is no evidence to show that new variants of coronavirus from elsewhere in the world have had an impact on local infection rates recently. This is consistent with the trend that the existence coronavirus vaccines are effective against these new variants of COVID. Overall, six million vaccines have been administered in the UK, which is an incredible achievement. Credit is due to the NHS who have conducted their vaccination programme, and to the companies that have developed and supplied it, but we should also remember the invaluable work of the many thousands of volunteers who have helped to make all of this possible.

Last week I visited Sandling Sports and Social Club to see the fantastic work being done at the local tennis club. The club has two outdoor floodlights, which are being put to good use, with a substantial increase in membership since the return of outdoor grassroots sport. Many people who had previously stopped playing have now decided to come back to tennis, as a way to keep fit and enjoy being out in the fresh air. The club is also offering introductory programs for primary schools to give more children their first proper introduction to the sport. You can find out more information on the website about how to get involved and what they offer. I’d like to congratulate them on everything they have achieved so far. Whilst there I was also pleased to call in at the team at the adjacent Boris club, which was preparing to open for the new season. Again, they have also seen increased interest in participating in outdoor tennis bowls in the last few months.

Last Friday I also visited The Beacon school in Folkestone to meet with the Head, Neil Birch and members of his team. The Beacon is an all age school, with students aged from 3 to 19 years, for pupils with complex needs, profound and severe learning difficulties, and physical and sensory impairments. The school has been rated outstanding in all areas at its most recent Ofsted inspection, due to the very effective teaching, clear vision of the leadership team, and the ‘excellent progress’ made by the students. I was very interested to hear about the achievements of the students through their personalised learning programmes. The school itself has become a centre of excellence for its approach, and it’s great that we have such an excellent, and state of the art, facility in our community.

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**Hythe’s latest Business OPENING 10am Saturday 20th June www.hythesweets.co.uk 58 High Street, Hythe.**

Over 250 different types of sweets to choose from including Sugar Free & Vegan.

Come and support Hythe’s latest business. OPENING 10am Saturday 20th June www.hythesweets.co.uk 58 High Street, Hythe.
District Council a Great Place To Work

Folkestone & Hythe District Council (F&HDC) has been ranked fourth in the Best Companies Not-For-Profit Body’s to work for list and 57th in the best companies to work for list in the South East Region.

Best Companies compile an annual report of the top companies to work for across the UK – formerly the Sunday Times Top 100 List. The places are awarded based on the results of a workplace survey covering the topics of: leadership, my manager, my team, my company, wellbeing, fair deal, personal growth and giving something back.

Almost 75% of staff from F&HDC took part in the survey which is far above the average response this type of survey receives. The key trend that emerged from the survey response was that staff enjoyed working with colleagues and working for an organisation that benefits others.

A Folkestone & Hythe District Council spokesperson said: “Happy, engaged staff do better work. We’ve been focused on delivering a quality service while being a great place to work over the last 12 to 18 months and we’re delighted that staff feedback about working for F&HDC has been so positive. Engaged staff are more productive and motivated, off sick less, and more committed to their organisation. They are also happier and healthier. We want to attract and retain the very best people to deliver outstanding services to our residents, being a great place to work is a key part of that.”

The Best Companies rankings were revealed in a live online event on Friday 21 May. These awards complement the 2 star ‘Outstanding’ accreditation for employee engagement that F&HDC achieved earlier this year.

The council is currently recruiting for a variety of roles and details can be found at folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/job

Migrant Update

By David Wimble

Two years ago, if The Looker ran a story about how more than 1000 migrants tried to cross the channel in one week it would have made front page news on every daily National paper and been the lead story on the TV news.

But last forward 2 years and you will not see anything in any of the papers, it has become a commonplace. Most days whilst writing The Looker I sit by the window on the Littlestone coast Road and regularly see the Boarder Force vans make their way down to Dungeness.

I have said many times when the first migrants arrived 4 years ago by small boat that there would be an influx and was laughed at as being sensationalist!

The Looker has said it will continue to follow the story and update our readers of the Facts! No sensationalist journalism, or hate speak. Just reporting the numbers.

In the last week before we went to press, the UK and French intercepted 1,042 suspected asylum seekers in separate 54 incidents with 1,942 suspected asylum seekers over five days.

The Home Office said that last Friday (28 May) UK authorities dealt with 19 events involving 336 people and the French prevented seven crossings involving 165. The next day UK authorities dealt with seven events involving 144 people and the French prevented a total nine crossings concerning 144.

Last Sunday UK authorities dealt with one incident involving 17 people. On Bank Holiday Monday UK authorities dealt with three events with a total of 75 people.

That day the French prevented two crossings involving 37 people.

Overnight on Monday and Tuesday French authorities discovered 31 people near their coast with marine equipment such as boats and engines delivering excellent quality and further six crossing attempts where 20 people were concerned.

UK authorities also dealt with six events Tuesday which had 132 suspected asylum seekers.

And Wednesday, the French intercepted one crossing, preventing 16 people reaching Britain.

A Home Office spokesman said: “Criminal gangs are putting profits before people’s lives through these dangerous and unnecessary crossings. More than 3,500 people have been prevented from making the dangerous crossing so far this year and we are cracking down on the despicable criminal gangs behind people smuggling. Inaction is not an option whilst people are dying. The government is bringing legislation to go forward with our New Plan for Immigration which will break the business model of these heinous smuggling networks and save lives.”

The Home Office says that it has secured more than 65 small boat-related prosecutions since the start of 2020 leading to total of more than 53 years in jail sentences.

It adds that more than 3,700 people have been prevented from crossing the Channel by the French so far this year.

The occupants have either been stopped by the French and brought back to France or have been rescued on the British side of the Channel by the UK’s Border Force.
Napier Barracks; Lessons Learned Or Forced To Close?

Residents were invited to submit questions and concerns about the asylum seekers housed in Napier Barracks reception centre so that FHDC and Kent Council councillors and the various partners involved in housing asylum seekers at Napier Barracks could address these issues.

The questions submitted provided the themes which were addressed during the virtual meeting held on 27th May. The meeting was chaired by FHDC Leader, Cllr David Monk. Folkestone & Hythe MP Damian Collins was on the panel and the leader of Kent County Council, Cllr Roger Gough. Representatives from the Home Office, Kent Police, Migrant Help and KCC Public Health was also invited to attend.

The virtual meeting was opened by Cllr David Monk who welcomed and introduced all participants on the call. MP Damian Collins thanked FHDC for hosting the virtual meeting and reminded all that the original decision to host asylum seekers as Napier Barracks was not taken locally but by the Home Office and local councillors had not been involved in that decision. Nevertheless the council had worked closely with the Home Office to ensure that all residents concerns, given the close proximity to residential housing as well as health and safety concerns especially pertaining to the Covid pandemic, would be addressed.

Damian Collins pointed out that some of those original concerns have indeed been borne out by what has happened since then, and that the Napier Barracks arrangement should be considered a temporary one only - ending September (2021) when the MOD 12 month lease, taken out by the Home Office, completes.

Cllr Roger Gough Leader of Kent Council went on to say that in addition to their responsibility to provide assurance and challenge when needed on the suitability and arrangements at Napier. They also have responsibility under Sect 42 of the Care Act to provide assurance to all adults at Napier to ensure they can access support they may need. Roger said that until Napier was closed, it remains an organisation of am seeking children who stayed within the county, with all adults and families being dispersed across the country.

Sean Palmer Director- Resettlement, Asylum Support and Integration in his opening remarks said that he was immensely grateful for the support of the local council and participation of local charities and local people too some of which have helped the lives of asylum seekers in Napier more tolerable. The following is a summary of the Question and Answer responses:

1) Use of Napier – Length of time to be used and is it fit for purpose? Sean Palmer (Home Office) responded to this – Napier is considered short term accommodation for healthy adult men for between 60 and 90 days – and advice given was that Public Health England (PHE) should be informed. Residents of Napier have dormitory style accommodation has been taken on board. The number of men accommodated at Napier has been reduced to 330 – which has made spare capacity available should an asylum seeker need to be isolated. As mentioned in his remarks and the MOD lease is due to end in September 2021 and there have been no further discussions to extend it.

2) Site security – concerns about litter, broken glass in the vicinity of Napier (need for a PSPO - public space protection order?), concerns also about the need for emergency services to attend site in recent months. Cllr Monk explained that Chatham and Shorncliffe already have a PSPO in place, and as with all parks and gardens in the district which are kept to a high standard, the green area adjacent to Napier is regularly attended by our officers to collect rubbish and keep the area free from broken glass and any other dangerous substances and this area is treated as a ‘hot spot’. Although it does help when residents report incidents of antisocial behaviour or broken glass and similar dangers if they spot it as this highlights issues of concern more quickly. Steve Lakey, Managing Director Gearsprings Ready Homes Ltd addressed the issue about emergency services – and said that as with any group of adults living together there are occasional need to seek emergency services for various reasons, although recent incidents have been minimal, his management team will, on these occasions, deal directly with emergency services to resolve issues quickly.

3) Community safety – coach trip to recently advertised event and lessons learned. Alice Ames – F&H District Commander. Kent Police addressed the recent coach trip to protest at Napier – she said that they were aware of the coach trip and monitored it fairly closely and it was a very small group of people. As a result of this, the Home Office had been involved. Proporately. As of 17th May Government had relaxed rules which restrict numbers of people who can gather together, which would allow gathering in public spaces, including peaceful and non-violent events, to take place. As with any public gathering it is always good advice to consult local authorities and the police to ensure the event is Covid safe. For this particular event officers did attend but no enforcement was required. In terms of police presence in the area at the number of police in the vicinity has increased and this is to ensure safety of all persons, those in Napier and those in the vicinity.

4) Health and wellbeing of service users – including wellbeing and mental health safety against racism, protests, nutrition at Napier, asbestosis issue and integration into local community. Steve Lakey (Gearsprings) said there was an on site nurse if there were any wellbeing or mental health issues which could not be dealt with on site she was linked in with other appropriate services. Residents of Napier are also advised in advance if there was a potential racist protest outside the barracks so that they could avoid confrontational situations. A new chef and catering team had developed multicultural and appropriate meals using nutritional guidelines, the men could give feedback on meals and this would also be taken on board. With regards to asbestos on site this had been risk assessed and was being managed. In terms of greater integration with the community – this was taking place with valued assistance from the voluntary sector within the barracks and outside when possible.

5) General questions about the process – illegal crossings and asylum seekers buying alcohol. Sean Palmer (Home Office) said that ministers were under no illusion that illegal crossings needed to stopped for good and were working closely with their French opposite numbers to that end. Sean referred to the recently published proposal ‘New Plan For Immigration’ which lays out proposed reforms to the asylum system. Cllr Monk addressed the issue about asylum seekers buying alcohol and pointed out that as long as they were of legal age to purchase alcohol then there is no reason to stop them.

Finally before the summing up MP Damian Collins asked if asylum seekers were tested when they arrive in UK – he receives many enquiries from local people about this. Sean Palmer (Home Office) confirmed that yes, asylum seekers are tested on arrival in the UK and again on arrival at Napier – and thereafter they are received lateral flow tests twice weekly.

UPDATE

Headlines today (03/06) announced; “The Home Office’s decision to house cross-channel migrants in a “squalid” barracks in Folkestone was unlawful, the High Court has ruled”. Six asylum seekers had claimed that Napier Barracks was unsafe and the use of dormitory sleeping caused the recent Covid outbreak. However, the Home Office has said that they will continue to use the barracks and are considering next steps. This judgement is likely to lead to further cases from other men who will bring similar evidence to court.

FIRST DATES ANNOUNCED FOR SHORNCLIFFE HERITAGE WALKING TOURS

Shorncliffe Trust are pleased to announce The Heritage Walking Tours following relaxation of lockdown measures.

Heritage and Education Charity, the Shorncliffe Trust are pleased to announce the restart of their popular, guided tours at Shorncliffe Military Cemetery (West Road, Folkestone CT20 3HL).

Tours Commence at 10.30 a.m and 1 p.m.

- Sunday, 13th June
- Sunday, 20th June
- Sunday, 4th July
*special theme of the “Battle of Waterloo” tour; or “How the Light Brigade from Shorncliffe won the Battle of Waterloo”

The meeting point is at the gates of Shorncliffe Military Cemetery. West Road, Folkestone CT20 3HL.

Tour; or “How the Light Brigade from Shorncliffe won the Battle of Waterloo”

Pre-booking is essential via: [email protected] or 01304 643004

Heritage Walking Tours followings relaxation of lockdown measures.

Now you can find out more about history on your doorstep by joining the Trust for a 90-minute guided tour of the former military training land around the Shorncliffe Military Cemetery and learn more about its hidden heritage assets. Shorncliffe, can truly claim to be the birthplace of the modern British Army under Sir John Moore.

The Trust are very pleased to welcome local historian expert and historian on Shorncliffe Military Cemetery, Peter Anderson and are joined on some tour dates by renowned experts and authors including Dr. Stephen Summerfield.

On The March From Shorncliffe Camp

Shorncliffe from where it would tell the story of Shorncliffe Garrison and its 200 years of military and social history.

To find out more visit www.shorncliffe-trust.org.uk

Allison Duggal – Public Health Kent Council, said that there is definite improvement in the coordination of health care provision to the men in Napier, and they were also looking at the provision of dental care.
Before You Knock Down That Wall – Check Materials Source

Jan Holben

For avid DIYers who are working on a building project around the house or garden there will be a period of irritation and frustration ahead, although reluctant DIYers may heave a sigh of relief. This is because, for a few months at least, it is anticipated there will be an acute shortage of some building materials, cement being one of those items which is hard to get hold of just now.

The cause of this shortage is due to many things – but in part because as the building industry slowed down during the worst of the Covid months and then started to pick up again as restrictions got easier – there was a much greater demand for cement and other building products. This slow down and gradual increase of course happened around the world – so enforcement and other building products. Then there was an increased demand for bagged cement due to the increased demand for polymer and kraft paper – and low pallet availability is also a concern. Even the US trade sanctions imposed on Cuba impacted the overall cement shortage as it caused a fuel shortage making it difficult to process cement – although this particular supplier indicates it will meet demand.

So all in all, if you are starting a small building project around the house or garden – before you start to dig that hole or knock down that wall – check availability of all necessary materials, including cement. This situation is causing international concern – and may last for some months.

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MY PLEDGES TO YOU:

**SUPPORT THE HIGH STREET**
Support Hythe Council to obtain funding from Central, County and District Councils to regenerate our area.

**FREE CAR PARKING**
Lobby to extend free car parking to cover all Council Car Parks for Council Taxpayers.

**SAFER ENVIRONMENT**
Work with the police and others to install CCTV to deter crime and fly tipping. I will also lobby for funding to establish an enclosed dog exercise area and more dog bins.

**LOOKING AFTER EAST HYTHE**
I will challenge house building targets, scrutinise planning infrastructure and decisions by the Council. I will campaign to reverse household waste charges and introduce a local small business waste disposal scheme.

**REMEMBER TO VOTE!**
Read more of our pledges and how we aim to achieve them at: www.fthlabour.org — Working for the many, not just the few
www.facebook.com/551324608411912

PAUL BINGHAM — YOUR VOICE ON HYTHETOWN COUNCIL

Promoted and published by Paul Cooper on behalf of Paul Bingham both at Folkestone and Hythe Labour Party, 18 Newbridge Way, St Mary's Bay, TN29 0HA.
Community Garden – RHS ‘It’s Your Neighbourhood’ Visit Expected
by Leonie Woolton – Sandgate Society

May bank holiday, June is now upon us and at last the weather is starting to improve. We were sorry to see that a large tree had fallen in Enbrook Park, always a sad sight, however we were assured that the tree had been suffering from Ganoderma (a fungus) for some years. We were lucky enough to benefit from some of the logs to make extra seats for the garden, and on the sunny Saturday morning session we spent a happy hour sitting on the logs sowing spring onion seeds and around 240 dwarf beans. The poor sick looking plants having spent too much time in their pots shivering and being blown about are finally getting into the soil. The courgettes are all planted as are the squashes and sunflowers, plus the chard seedlings. A bit of sunshine and warmth should see them romp away. We have held back from planting the basil as the cucumbers just yet as they are really tender and could do with getting a little bit bigger and stronger.

Whilst pottering about and planting at Enbrook this week, we came across a very interesting insect none of us had ever seen before. It was photographed so that we could find out if it was a friend or a foe to the garden. There have been several new insects and invertibrates to watch out for such as the marmorated stink bug, the harlequin ladybird, and the New Zealand flatworm, to name but a few. However, this fellow is a wasp beetle, and a friend, which seems to occupy most of the world except for Ireland. We were also most interested and we shall now know to be pleased if we ever cross another.

We currently have plenty of fresh herbs as well as salad leaves. Mixing the two together in a variety of combinations makes for the most amazing salads you can imagine. The leaves range from bright green through to a deep red and various shades between, the herbs are parsley, coriander, dill and chervil which lift the leaves to another level. Add calendula petals, borage, and viola flowers, then you have something extra special which would cost a fortune in a posh restaurant. This week we also added pea shoots, a real taste of early summer before the peas arrive! Absolutely delicious! We are always pleased to share what we can, and often do with visitors to the garden, and we took a batch to the library for distribution too. However we were delighted to be contacted by the Kent Food Hub keen to work with us and other groups in or close to Folkestone like the Incredible Edibles, on a new project to promote growing seasonal local food and to make fresh food accessible to all. We are looking forward to doing as much as we can to enable this to happen in the wider area and to make links and work together on common goals and interests.

In the meantime we have plenty to get on with as we have heard that the judge for the RHS ‘It’s your neighbourhood’ scheme is visiting the Enbrook garden on 17th June, no pressure! The judge is in a commanding position, to evaluate our progress, and our Shelia has been the most amazing supporting statement to give to the judge as requested, because he only has an hour. The statement sums up our history and achievements so far. We have laboured hard on this, and Sheila has turned it into a work of art, but it is still early days and we continue to work on our progress.

What’s next: Keep up with the weeding, Keep watering the new planting for a few days until established, Pick the salads and herbs, Pull up the finished coriander to make way for the basil, Keep removing old and yellowing leaves around all plants. Start dead heading, Plant last of the summer bedding we have sown from seed. To keep up to date with community gardens, allotments and related items across the district do check out www.growpawhse.co.uk

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Vince Shelly
The Man on The Telly

For those of you who follow my reviews you will know that I am an aficionado of the zombie genre. The genre in the past has thrown up some very interesting and original ideas most of which have been derided as an allegory of mankind’s struggles. The concept of zombifying zombies for the Viet Cong the theme of Overlord and the concept of zombie-like love in The Horde is plausible but the premise of every story is a tale of heroic survival against a relentless enemy and played out to a backdrop of impeding doom. Ultimately through the greatest of corny usually provokes a man’s inability to work together in the face of adversity in a nihilistic world.

So, it was with great anticipation that I set about to watch: Zack Snyder’s new Zombie film Army of the Dead. Army of the Dead, is a remake of Romero’s Dawn of the Dead, was a fast paced and atmospheric action packed and a worthy addition to the genre so what could go wrong. The basic plot of Army of the Dead which at first look appears to be a standard heist movie, involves a shady businessman in getting a large sum of money from a vault under a Vegas hotel. He therefore employs a team of mercenaries to retrieve the money. The only problem is there is an army of the dead in the way and the US government are about to launch a nuke on Vegas.

As a heist movie it would be ok but Army of the Dead sadly falls short as a ‘Z’ movie. While the inevitable gore is present the plot has more holes than the characters after a Z attack. Snyder’s zombies are far more evolved than their human counterparts and are led by King and Queen. The King wears a Spartan helmet (an oddity to 300 perhaps) to protect him from fatal head shots and Snyder’s zombies appear to be too stupid to reproduce, the Zombies, we assume, are obviously responsible for a lot of eye rolling.

Where the film loses all plausibility is the end battle as the zombie hordes swarm the city. I couldn’t help but notice that despite the obvious cutting from the zombies displayed graphically in their faceless zombie, this was however bypassed by the zombie’s apparent dance moves which could have gained zero Hollywood musical. Yes, I know this is Vegas but the idea of a rampaging horde moving forward on the command of “Step, step, piouette, jazz hands” to a soundtrack of ‘Fame, we are destined to live forever’ was too much for me.

Perhaps I am being over critical but I do get very protective of a little genre I love so much. As a screenwriter I have written a prequel to Army is a semi decent movie but as a zombie movie it is a very poor attempt and I’ll let you be the judge of that.

For now, watch the first three Romero films Night, Dawn and Day, the South Korean zombie Train to Busan, French film The Horde or the hilarious Shaun of the Dead. Judging by the surprising ending we can expect a follow-up and I know perhaps the Mexican City teens Army of the Dead 2: Who ate Bambi’s will be slightly better.

When I heard that the venerable Chris Rock was taking on the Saw franchise, I was quite excited to see where he would take it. I wasn’t expecting a comedy but definitely wanted a change of approach.

Spiral is a worthy addition to the franchise and offers enough to separate the Saw films and I’mRuinsing we can expect to see more of Rock until such time as the audience will get a bit bored of them. By which time we may be expecting more of the Saw spin-offs. By the way, the logo is a rework of Spiral 12: Where’s the Body? First & Double Trouble 18: The Nameless.

Halloween 15: The true tale of Michael Myers...yet again.

Spiral delivers all the expectations of a Saw movie such as body parts, creepy puppets and the same idea of good turns to death dirty. It does however beg the question of why they can’t take The Divergents Guide to Killing Dead Toads off the bookshelves, still available at all good bookshops while the need for redemption remains.

The plot of Spiral sees a copycat killer (Jigsaw is dead, isn’t that what?) taking the ‘bastard cops’ sounds like a job for AC12. It’s up to Detective Zeke Banks (Rock) and a rookie partner Detective Schenk to find the killer as the red cloth is tied. Banks, who blew the whistle on a provacous partner and now finds himself despised by the very officers he hopes to protect with a partner he doesn’t want to babysit. Aside from the frequent shots of Rock ‘driving the classic car in his face’ with a face that suggests he has just fared it unbearably in the role of a good cop amongst the rotten policemen. Samuel L. Jackson plays his Father Marcus Schenk to find the killer and prove he is a typical S.L. J performance, complements the odd UK setting.

The feel of Spiral is reminiscent to Seven with lots of atmospheric set pieces and dark shots. There is a real tension and comedic application to be permanently swirling in the excessive and oppressive wet.

Spiral is good story telling and it would appear the franchise is in a good hands with Rock and while they have to create a plot that doesn’t relies heavily on Saw and its ideals. The story unsurprisingly ends on a cliff and an open ending so I’m sure a sequel is in the cards.

6-11-2021
It really was an oddball audience which appeared to have comedy all delivered at a breakneck pace. To be fair though, found at holidayscamps and replicated the same high energy music, quizzes and the finale which was a short comedy play very rigid in its format and consisted of comedy sketches, Crackerjack despite its anarchic approach was very rigid in its format and consisted of comedy sketches, music, quizzes and the finale which was a short comedy play played out to a by now delirious live audience. Looking back on it now the format was very similar to the entertainment found at holiday camps and replicated the same high energy comedy all delivered at a breakneck pace. Crackerjack at the top of their straining voices. It really was an oddball audience which appeared to have been press-ganged into action with the promise of being allowed to shout and scream without fear of robust. I can only guess that the man responsible for directing the young audience had three cards ‘Shout’ ‘Scream’ and ‘Crackerjack’. Everything about Crackerjack ‘Crackerjack’ was obsidian including the games the stand out one being ‘Double or Drop’ this game consisted of three contestants who were asked questions and received a random item if they were right or cabbage, yes, a cabbage, if they were wrong. Three cabbages or dropping your items meant you were out leaving the winner pick an item from the selection of goodies available. The lucky winner then went on again next week in an attempt to increase his winnings. The games were all frantic and played out to a backdrop of deafening noise and were another excuse for the audience to go wild. There is a clip of you tube of the ex-speaker of the house, John Bowore competing in a ‘Crackerjack’ ‘Crackerjack’ game. At the time (little did those who foolishly to seek the big prize knew but the competition prizes of a ‘Crackerjack’ ‘Crackerjack’ jacket, later replaced by a pen, would prove to be a bigger prize than the actual first prize. The original marbled effect pencils are as rare as noodle porpoise.

Crackerjack ‘Crackerjack’ ran for 29 years covering 29 series and an absolutely staggering 451 episodes before, like a number of its competitors, it fell foul to a BBC Children’s TV cut in 1984. The cast list of ‘Crackerjack’ ‘Crackerjack’ reads like a Who’s who of British TV, including the likes of Ronnie Corbett, Jack McLean, Bernie Clifton and the legendary Basil ‘Boom, Boom’ Brown. ‘Crackerjack’ despite its anarchic approach was and cardigan. He looked like a friendly old school master but that “leftover queen” Nothing in her house is wasted. If you have leftovers, you have food for thought. When you do take the trouble to cook. It is worth doing a big batch, and freeze enough for another day or put it in the fridge for tomorrow. Sometimes with children, it is hard not to waste anything, but try serving from the middle of the table, and let the family, including children, help themselves. Make it known that you expect them to eat out of their plates. There are over 2 million people in UK being fed by food banks, and it’s time to stop wasting food. It seems a shame that so much bought food is wasted. So worth making sure you shop and manage your kitchen. And of course save money.
Not All Angels Are Good For You

Jan Holben

2021 PLANT SALE IN AID OF THE OLD SCHOOL

As with so many fundraising events this year, the Trustees of the Old School in New Romney had to rethink their plans for the annual Plant Sale. In view of the covid restrictions we decided to hold a socially distanced event in various driveways around the town and despite the rather damp weather managed to raise over £1600. Thank you to everybody who came along to support us and buy - all monies raised will go towards the upkeep of the Old School.

The cold spring meant that plants and cuttings needed careful nurturing by our growers preparing plants for us to sell. We were overwhelmed by the variety and profusion of garden, indoor and vegetable plants that arrived with us and would like to thank all those who spent the dull, dark and wet winter and spring encouraging their specimens to grow. And they did! They were over the top of the height chart! Not only did we sell plants and garden bric-a-brac but also cakes, sausage rolls, cookies, flapjacks and fudge! Thanks to all our produce makers - everyone looked and tasted delicious.

We missed the social gathering and full range of refreshments and the Plant Sale held at the Old School offers, but hopefully next year things will be back to normal and the sun will shine too. Meanwhile enjoy the summer and your colourful, blooming gardens.

Basic Gardening Tips

By Michael Gooch

So summer has suddenly arrived! Make sure anything newly planted and your pots are well watered. Lots of local soils are very light, and will show signs of dryness, very soon, despite the wettest May on record. If you have bought or planted up hanging baskets, they will need watering at least once or twice a day. Put in a smaller amount of compost it will dry out quickly. Even if it rains, hanging close to the house, they need watering. The rain may not reach them especially if you have an eaves overhang. There are gradual feeding systems, which may be worth trying, especially if you are going away. If you have a good friend, you can take baskets down, and ask friend to water them. It is easier if they are on the ground. Also worth feeding them at least once a month.

If you have had a lot of spring bulbs, they are probably looking very scrufy now they are going over. But they can be tied down, just straighten a bunch of leaves, and make a rough knot with your hands. Monty Don will tell you not to do it, but most of us haven’t the luxury of space, and need to plant other things! Don’t cut them off, the leaves need to die naturally to feed the goodness back into the bulb. The only exception is if they are naturalised in the lawn, you have probably had to mow over them to keep the lawn tidy. Weeding will be a big job now, just keep up with it as best you can. Our weeding is very behind. I’m sure if you had the time you could watch them grow! But don’t get hung up about it. And the environment people are telling us we need to be less tidy for the sake of all the critters and plants we share the planet with!

If you have inherited a garden, you are probably getting some pleasant surprises, finding perennials and shrubs, springing into life and colour. Look them up in a book, and make a note of what they are and where, so that if you do want to make big changes, you know what is there. It will also inform what is happy in your garden, and any decisions you want to make.

Most of all enjoy your garden, and no matter how small, you can probably make room for a simple BBQ. The charcoal bloomer, or small wheeled stand are good, check they have been moved around, and usually come with a cover to keep the wind off, and a rack for your tools and a metal tray to put your food on when it is cooked. Don’t feel you have to get into debt to buy a lot of fancy outdoor furniture. You will get just as much fun from fold up and plastic chairs and a plastic table, if you are just starting out in the “equipping your garden” world. A simple round sun umbrella will probably be adequate. They can be tilted to face the sun. Sun loungers or outdoor tables, have a hole in the middle to put the pole through. AND NOW FOR THE VEGETABLES

As we move well into June, much of the seed-sowing is over and looking after your veg, takes most of the time. You can continue to sow salad crops in succession, but find that once June is over the germination rate falls and crops become less prolific.

If you have brassica plants such as cabbage, Brussels and broccoli, the big enemies as summer progresses are pigeons and caterpilars. If you have the time and resources, a good plan is to cover these crops with netting, but the snare is that as the plants grow taller, you have to adjust the height of the netting. Even when plants reach maturity, they are still prone to attack. I have memories of returning from summer holidays towards the end of August to find a wonderful array of lace patterns which would credit the most skilled lacemaker! After a snowfall one January I went out to find that pigeons had demolished my plants to the level of the snow! The delights of growing your own!

As tomatoes grow taller, you must stake them up or support with strings, otherwise they bend over and in a matter of days they resemble the U-bend under the kitchen sink. Likewise with broad beans. This year looks to be a good year for broad beans with heavy cropping thanks to the intense winter frosts. Sadly, honey bees in our garden seem in short supply again. If you have plum trees, you should be able to spot tiny little plums forming on the end of the blossom. These seem a favourite food of pigeons, and we have had to cover as much of the tree as possible with black netting to protect them.

As crops mature, a good feed with liquid plant food is a good idea. There are various kinds available, including liquid seaweed. As tiny tomatoes form, feed regularly with tomato or similar, especially if they are in growbags or pots. Don’t forget to pinch out side shoots. As always, weeds are rampant at this time of year, so hoeing and hand-weeding is essential.

Don’t forget to earth up potatoes as they develop, as exposed potatoes turn green and are poisonous. Thin out root crops to give a good growing space, and beetroot seedlings are tasty on salads.

Try to disturb carrot seedlings as little as possible, as their enemy the carrot fly is always lurking to lay its eggs. Their sense of smell is said to be phenomenal. Happy gardening!
In May 1940, Anthony Eden the Minister of War, broadcast to the nation seeking volunteers to help guard their districts against a possible German invasion. As a result, Captain Morton, the local Drainage Board Engineer, went around the Marsh looking for volunteers to man various church towers for observation purposes. Soon afterwards, most of the church towers were manned every night from just before dusk to just after dawn. This continued until September but no weapons were ever taken to the towers during this time.

By September, the title of Local Defence Volunteers had been changed to the Home Guard. The Marsh was then organised into a platoon of four sections based at New Romney, Lydd, Brenzett and Dymchurch. Later, the Marsh platoon became a Company under Captain Morton and the four sections became squads with weapons etc. made available. Because of its geographical location, Romney Marsh had a priority with weapons. At this time it was difficult for the Marsh to be defended as the coastline was too long for the troops available. It had been decided that the Royal Military Canal would be the first line of defence and some of the Canal bridges were demolished and the rest had explosive charges in place.

Whilst the LDV and the Home Guard were being set up, another organisation on Romney Marsh was also being formed. Captain Fleming was sent into the area to find places and men who would hide while the enemy were striking inland, and to come out at night and sabotage stores, fuel vehicles and aircraft etc. These stay behind groups were called Auxiliary Units and there were three of them on the Marsh. This ‘Secret Army’ as it was known was to act offensively on the flanks and in the rear of any enemy troops who may have obtained a foothold on the Marsh. They were equipped with rifles and grenades and had enough food for about 14 days. Secret underground bunkers and observation posts were built, ready for the men to disappear down into when the Germans invaded. A local landowner, Captain Alnutt, was asked to form the groups and each patrol had a code name. There was ‘Mushroom’ at Snargate, ‘Toadstool’ near Dymchurch and ‘Truffle’ near New Romney and Toadstool near Dymchurch. There were between six and ten men in each group.

My father was a member of the ‘Truffle’ Patrol. Their operational base was located just outside New Romney, to the west of the Old Romney Lane and about ½ mile south of the ruins of Hope Church. The bunkers were made of reinforced concrete and lined with bitumen and were virtually invisible from above the ground. Also in the group were Ted Bolton, Frank Carey, Percy Clark, Ray Fagg, Jack Lancaster, Gordon Prior and Charlie Veness. None of those joining knew what they had let themselves in for until they had read and signed a copy of the Official Secrets Act.

For the rest of the war, they went about their daily lives without their wives, families or neighbours knowing what they were up to when the sun went down and the moon rose. When it was all over, no official recognition could be given and many took their secret with them to the grave.

Acts of worship in the churches are gradually opening up more, although they are still bound by all the rules and restrictions about indoor gatherings, masks, social distancing, and hand hygiene, and limited movement. This only applies to acts of worship, wedding and funerals, we will have to wait for news of all the other activities that take place in churches. There are worries about the Indian variant, and the possibility that the promised total relaxation in June may take a bit longer. Individual churches, will differ in what they can offer, so do keep an eye on your own church’s notices and announcements.

Nearly all the local churches are in financial difficulties. If you normally give to a church, they would be grateful if you contributed towards your church a little more.

Brookland St Augustine.
The next service will be an evensong on Sunday June 13th at 6.30pm.

GREATSTONE St Peter.
Weekly services have recommenced at 10.30am each Sunday.

LYDD All Saints.
Weekly services have recommenced at 10.30am each Sunday.

Stepping out in faith, the church has organised a Summer Fête and Teddy Bear parachute jump on Saturday, August 7th. This of course will be subject to the regulations in operation at the time, but everyone is looking forward to some normality and the chance to socialise and raise money for the church!

New Romney St Nicholas.
Services each week at 10.30am.

Romney Marsh Community Church.
North Street, NR.

Services continue on Sundays at 10.30am. Because of limited numbers, both booking and pre-intended. Ring church office on 01797 366855 to secure a place. The recorded YouTube service is still going ahead, for those who cannot attend the church building. The service in the building is part recorded service, with some live prayers and the pastor has just started preaching a sermon in person, but the same one that is on the recorded service.

If you need any help or support, or just someone to talk to, please ring the church number, and the church endeavour to help you, being in touch with many agencies.

Food bank- see below for details.

Snargate St Dunstans.
The next service will be on June 13th at 9am, and will be the usual communion service. All are welcome.

Food Banks.
These are continuing as before, but with a delivery only service. If you are struggling to feed yourself or your family (and it applies to single people and couples, not just people with children) RING DEBBIE, FOOD BANK manager, on 01797 375455, to explain your problem. The food will be delivered to your home. You can have 3 days supply of dried and tinned food, and help in other ways, if your problems need to be referred to another agency.

If you cannot get through on that number; ring the RMCC number 01797 366855, during weekday mornings, or Rev Chris in Lydd on 01797 320345. Ring before 11am on the day of the food bank, which is Tuesdays in New Romney, from 5.30pm-7pm and Fridays in Lydd.

Demand is high at present, and although all dried and tinned food is welcome, they are short of Long life milk and fruit juice, tinned ham, jams and spreads and breads ‘You need not need tinned soup, pasta or baked beans. There is plenty of stock of these items. There is also no longer any donations to cover needed food items. Go to the website.

Contact THE LOOKER

10 Mulberry Court, Grand Parade, New Romney, Kent TN28 8LZ
Telephone: 01797-364837 • emailinfo@thelooker.co.uk
NEWS or STORY? Contact David Wimbble, 07423-562696 or info@thelooker.co.uk
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Wit and Wisdom.
“You have brains in your head, You have feet in your shoes, You can steer yourself, Any direction you choose”

“Oh the places you’ll go!” children’s book by Dr Seuss.
Folkestone & Hythe District Council are piloting a park and ride service in Folkestone this summer. The service – which will be operated by Stagecoach – will run from the Motis Business Centre in Cheriton near J12 of the M20, CT19 4QJ. Users can enjoy hassle free parking paying just £5 per car to park all day. Shuttle buses will run every 30 minutes between 9am and 6pm to Folkestone Harbour via Folkestone Central Station. The park and ride service will operate every weekend until October and daily during the summer holidays.

This park and ride service is a pilot to assess demand and help alleviate parking congestion in the harbour area during the summer months. The service has been made possible by Welcome Back funding from government.

A council spokesperson said: “We are expecting a high number of visitors this summer which should be great for our local businesses but the influx of additional cars has caused issues in the past down in the harbour and coastal park area where parking is limited.

“By piloting this park and ride service we hope both visitors and residents will benefit from easier parking and fewer cars in the traditionally busy areas. The shuttle buses will also stop at Folkestone Central station providing a new important transport link between the station and harbour area.”

Setting up a park and ride service is just one of the many things that the council is doing to help ease the impact of increased visitor numbers this summer. Following on from successful interventions last summer, barbecues at the Coastal Park will remain banned and the Coastal Park car park will continue to close at 8pm to discourage anti-social behaviour.

Other actions include putting out more bins than ever, encouraging people to take their litter home and stepping up the number of environmental enforcement officers on patrol.

For more information about the park and ride service please visit folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/parkandride

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