

Spitfire crashes near Hythe Caravan Park



Historic wartime aircraft makes emergency landing in mustard field as UK prepares to mark VE Day

A historic Second World War Spitfire was forced to make an emergency landing in a Kent field last night, narrowly avoiding a caravan park full of holidaymakers just days before the UK commemorates the 80th anniversary of VE Day.

The dramatic scenes unfolded at around 7pm when the twin-seater aircraft, operated by Biggin Hill's "Fly a Spitfire" experience company, began misfiring over Daleacres Caravan and Motorhome Club in West Hythe.

Eyewitnesses reported hearing a "loud, low misfiring sound" as the aircraft flew overhead before dipping dangerously low, skimming past treetops and

crashing into a nearby mustard field just off Lower Wall Road.

Despite the dramatic descent, both the pilot and a passenger on board emerged uninjured, waving to another Spitfire in the air moments after the crash. Emergency services, including fire crews, police and paramedics, arrived quickly to secure the area and assess the scene.

Eyewitness Account: "It could have been catastrophic"

Holidaymaker Sharon Gooda, 59, from Rainham, had been enjoying the bank holiday weekend with her husband when she heard the distinctive growl of a Merlin engine overhead.

"We heard the roar of a Spitfire, so I stood outside the caravan and watched

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"Like Labour's infamous note – but worse": Kent Council's special needs funding bombshell exposed

By Peter Bird

In a move drawing eerie parallels with Labour's infamous 2009 "sorry, there's no money left" note, the outgoing Conservative-led Kent County Council (KCC) stands accused of leaving behind a devastating legacy — one that could shatter the lives of hundreds of families and throw the futures of vulnerable children into chaos.

The Looker has learned that a swathe of redundancies is looming for hundreds of High Needs Funding Teaching Assistants (TAs) across the county — vital staff who provide one-to-one support for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The scale of the potential cuts has been described as a "county-wide cull" by insiders, with fears the axe will fall quietly — only becoming fully apparent once schools break for the summer holidays.

This chilling revelation was first brought to us by a concerned family member of a Marsh-based TA, now facing redundancy at the end of this term. According to the whistleblower, this is not just an isolated case affecting a few local schools but part of a broader, orchestrated rollback of SEND support across Kent.

In a since-deleted online post, Ashford Autism Support relayed an anonymous plea from a panicked parent who had

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it fly over," she told KentOnline. "It looked like it turned back around again, then I heard a really loud misfiring sound. My husband said, 'That doesn't sound good.' He was right."

Within minutes, word spread around the caravan site that a plane had come down nearby. "I saw people rushing toward the field. When I got there, the aircraft was nose-down in the soil with the tail sticking up. The pilot and passenger were standing outside — they looked shaken but okay."

Gooda said the aircraft came dangerously close to striking trees. "It was so low, it missed the conifers by inches. If it had come down just a few seconds earlier, it might have landed right in the middle of the caravan park."

Spitfire MJ627: A legacy in the sky

The aircraft involved — Spitfire MJ627 — is a storied warbird built in 1943 and originally flown by the Royal Canadian Air Force. It first saw action on 25 September 1944 and shot down a Messerschmitt Me 109 just two days later over Arnhem during Operation Market Garden.

After the war, MJ627 changed hands several times and has since been restored for heritage flights, allowing passengers to experience flying in an authentic Second World War aircraft. It is powered by a Rolls-Royce Merlin 266 piston engine.

This is not the first emergency landing involving MJ627. In 1998, the Spitfire was involved in a "wheels-up" landing at Coventry Airport. And in June 2023, an incident during take-off at Biggin Hill saw the aircraft's front canopy detach mid-flight. The plane returned to the airport safely on that occasion, with no injuries reported.

Timeline of the Incident

6:50pm: Two Spitfires spotted flying over Daleacres Caravan

Park.

6:55pm: Loud misfiring noise heard; one aircraft seen circling low above the site.

7:00pm: Aircraft crashes in mustard field near Lower Wall Road.

7:05pm: Pilot and passenger seen standing outside the aircraft, waving to second Spitfire.

7:15pm: Emergency services arrive on scene; area secured.

9:00pm: Fire crews leave the site after making it safe; aircraft remains under cover.

This morning: Recovery operation begins. Air Accidents Investigation Branch (AAIB) confirms investigation.

Investigation Underway

The Air Accidents Investigation Branch (AAIB) confirmed the Spitfire, registration G-BMSB, suffered a loss of power. Although investigators did not deploy to the crash site, the AAIB is working with the operator to determine the root cause of the malfunction.

In a statement, a spokesperson for Fly a Spitfire said: "We are aware of an incident involving one of our Spitfire aircraft in the vicinity of Hythe. The pilot made a precautionary landing at a non-airfield site. Both occupants are safe and uninjured."

As Britain prepares to remember the sacrifices of the Second World War on VE Day, this dramatic episode serves as a stark reminder of the fragility and heroism tied to these legendary machines — and the men who still fly them

just been informed that the Higher Needs Funding their child relies on is being withdrawn. The post urged others to urgently check their children's support status for the upcoming September term.

"The understanding," the message read, "is that almost all TAs funded under Higher Needs are to be let go. It's a county-wide programme. It's being kept quiet until school holidays so the backlash is delayed."

Even more concerning is the allegation that some headteachers may have known about the plans for weeks — possibly longer — but were gagged by internal directives or informal guidance not to raise the alarm.

The Looker understands that Kent County Council is facing significant financial challenges, leading to potential job losses in various areas, including education and youth services. The council is now implementing sweeping measures to reduce spending, including:

Cuts to support for schools

Changes to how youth services are delivered

Reductions in staff across frontline services

The SEND Funding Crisis

At the core of the turmoil is a ballooning overspend in the SEND budget. In response, KCC entered into a Safety Valve agreement with the Department for Education (DfE). This deal involves a DfE contribution to reduce the spiralling deficit — but also binds KCC to enforce its own drastic cost-cutting measures. The result? Schools are being asked to tighten their belts, including reducing staff and scaling back essential support for vulnerable students.

As part of the proposed restructuring, the council is consulting on the loss of over 200 posts. This includes roles within the children, young people and education directorate — with open access youth teams and educational support staff firmly in the crosshairs.

KCC is also shifting to a new "Family Hub" model for youth services, a move that could further erode traditional youth and community programmes and reshape how support is delivered across the county.

Staff and Families in Crisis

Those working in affected areas have voiced deep concern over both the impact on their livelihoods and the knock-on effect on Kent's young people. Many staff, especially those in SEND roles, say morale is at rock bottom, with some describing the process as "underhand," and a betrayal of those most in need.

"This isn't just cruel — it's calculated," said one source. "They're keeping it quiet so no one can fight back until it's too late."

Support Amid the Cuts

Recognising the knock-on impact of its own financial pressures, KCC is also launching a Financial Hardship Programme to support struggling residents — but campaigners argue that this is cold comfort to families losing educational support or workers staring down redundancy.

Newly elected members of Kent County Council must now face the fallout — a political, financial, and humanitarian storm that could define their first months in office.

Have you been affected by these changes? Contact The Looker: Info@thelooker.co.uk



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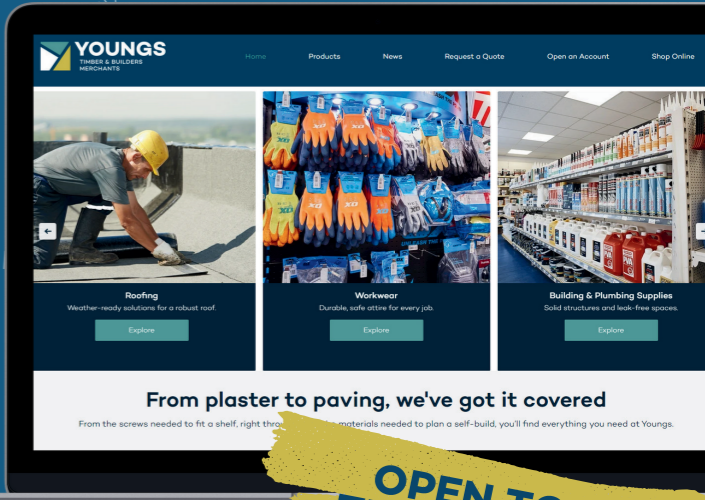
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Reform UK shatters Tory grip on Kent in political earthquake

Farage hails "death of two-party system" as Reform takes control of Kent County Council in unprecedented landslide victory

By Peter Bird, Political Correspondent



Looker Editor David Wimble celebrated his historic victory in Hythe looking a little bleary eyed after a night of celebration at the Hop Farm with Reform UK Membership

In one of the most dramatic shifts in recent British political history, Reform UK has swept to power in Kent, toppling the long-dominant Conservatives and sending shockwaves through county halls across the country. Party leader Nigel



Farage returned to Kent on Saturday night to celebrate the extraordinary result, calling it "the most seismic change" in local politics Britain has ever seen.

"This is proof the old two-party system is dead," Farage declared at a victory party at the Hop Farm in Paddock Wood, where jubilant candidates and supporters gathered to mark the occasion.

Kent, considered a Tory stronghold for generations, saw a near-total reversal of political fortunes. Reform UK won five out of six local seats in the county and seized control of Kent County Council with 57 seats, leaving the Conservatives with just five. Among the most eye-catching wins was in Romney Marsh, where Looker editor David Wimble recorded a staggering majority of 3,903 votes—an astonishing 64% of the vote share—decimating the Conservative candidate in second place.

Farage told reporters: "It's not a Tory stronghold anymore. This is extraordinary. I always thought we'd do well in Kent, but this result is beyond my wildest dreams."

The Fall of the Old Guard

The scale of the defeat for the Conservatives in Kent is unprecedented. Since the council's formation in 1974, it had been under almost continuous Tory control, save for a brief period in the 1990s. Now, household names in Kent politics—such as former KCC leaders Roger Gough and Sir Paul Carter—have lost their seats in a rout that one party insider described as "apocalyptic."

Roger Gough, speaking at the Sevenoaks count, said: "Obviously I am deeply disappointed. It is extremely sad to lose my division, which I have represented for 20 years. But it appears to be part of a much bigger picture we are

Hythe West Councillor Peter Osbourn celebrating with Dr David Bull at the Hop Farm Party



Five very happy Reform Councillors, David Wimble Romney Marsh, Chis Hespe, Elham Valley, Peter Osbourn Hythe West, Mary Lawes Folkestone East and John Baker Folkestone West. All of the candidates said they could not have done it without their amazing supporters within their association

seeing across the county and indeed the country."

At the time of going to print, no announcement had been made regarding who will lead Kent County Council under Reform UK. However, appearing on Politics South East on Sunday morning, David Wimble admitted he was "up for the challenge" and hinted that a joint leadership model may be under consideration.

Farage's Roadshow and Radical Plans

Farage's day began in Runcorn, where he congratulated by-election winner Sarah Pochin—Reform's fifth MP—before travelling to Durham, where the party took control of the county council from a coalition of Lib Dems, Tories, and independents. Staffordshire soon followed as the first county council to fall to Reform that day.

Back in Kent, Farage outlined his vision for sweeping changes in local government. He pledged to review long-term council contracts, scrutinise spending with external auditors, and move away from what he called "bloated bureaucracy."

"If you're working in DEI or climate change for the county, then perhaps alternative employment is where you should be looking," he said, indicating that job cuts could be on the horizon.

"We want to slim down local government and get it back to basics. That means better value for council taxpayers and increased productivity, which has collapsed since the pandemic."

Ready to Govern

Among those celebrating at the Hop Farm was Claire Fennell, a volunteer from Dartford who distributed 2,000 leaflets in the run-up to polling day. "I have two boys and I want them to have a good future, which Reform will give them," she said.

Grace in Defeat

Appearing alongside David Wimble on Politics South East, Roger Gough was composed and reflective. While acknowledging the painful loss, he said: "The people have spoken." Wimble responded graciously: "I certainly am not here to gloat, and Roger has had a tough job over the last six and a half years he's been in charge. But the public

demanded change—and Reform was the party to deliver that."

As Reform UK cements its hold over Kent and sets its sights on Westminster, the UK's political landscape appears poised for a period of profound transformation. Whether this momentum can be sustained into a general election remains to be seen—but one thing is clear: the status quo has been shattered.

Addressing past criticism about his position as a Reform councillor on Folkestone & Hythe District Council, Wimble concluded with a smile: "Some people said I had no mandate to be a Reform councillor on FHDC—well, I think I now have 3,903 people who've given me that mandate."



Mary Lawes & John Baker celebrating their comfortable win over Conservative and Labour incumbents

The Looker at a crossroads –

Nearly 18 years ago, I launched The Looker with nothing but a passion for Romney Marsh and a firm belief that local news matters. Back then, I couldn't have imagined the journey this little paper would take—from a one-man-band operating out of a garden shed to a Marsh institution with a circulation that dwarfs its commercial rivals.

We've come a long way. I've been lucky to have worked with some brilliant people over the years, including the late, great Paul Ecclestone—a Fleet Street legend who brought a level of professionalism that helped shape the tone and credibility of the paper. Others, like local school year head Vinny with his film reviews, June and Michael Gooch on gardening and budgeting, and my own father, John Wimble, now 87 and still delivering over 1,000 copies by hand, have all made The Looker feel like a true community effort.

How It All Began

The origins of The Looker go back to a light-hearted spat with Simon Finlay, then editor of the Folkestone Herald, who used to join me on my breakfast show on Romney Marsh FM. During one of those early-morning chats, I joked that his paper had nothing for Marsh residents. His comeback? "Nothing ever happens on the Marsh!" I can't say for certain if he was joking, but my response was instant: "Fine, I'll start my own paper." He quipped that it would be lucky to last four editions. We're now closing in on edition number 377.

What started as a black-and-white pamphlet has evolved through spot colour to full colour more than a decade ago. Our first few editions were printed locally by Wealden Printers in Hawkhurst, but sadly, that press closed last Christmas. Since then, we've partnered with Micropress in Lowestoft. That's not exactly next door, which means I now send the paper off to print every Friday morning, with copies arriving by Tuesday afternoon—tight deadlines that we just about manage to meet.

The Secret of Our Success

So why has The Looker endured when others folded or faded into irrelevance? The answer is simple: local content, written by local people. Readers know that when they pick up The Looker, they're not getting recycled national headlines or generic filler—they're getting news that matters to their lives. Whether it's church updates, council decisions, or birds spotted on the Marsh, the stories are rooted in the place we call home.

Yes, there's politics—how could there not be? I've been involved in local government since before the paper's inception, and part of the reason I launched it was to keep residents informed about what their councils are up to. My Dad grumbles that there's too much politics in both The Looker and its sister publication The Hurricane, but I stand by it. People might not love it, but they deserve to know how their money is being spent.

Not Always Easy

I've made my share of enemies. Let's not pretend otherwise. In Hythe, I'm very much a marmite figure, and I often have a laugh about that with Colin from the newsagents opposite my shop. But I don't shy away from having an opinion, especially when I feel someone isn't acting in the public interest.

Take Jim Martin, current Council leader for Folkestone &

Hythe District Council. I've had ongoing disagreements with him—not personal, but political. On matters like the Princes Parade development, I've questioned decisions that seem more self-serving than community-focused. I've also been excluded from committee roles, which I suspect has more to do with long-standing personal feuds than for any valid reason. Still, I try to remain constructive and transparent. I even hope someone shows him this article. I genuinely believe most councillors, him included, are decent people trying their best.

The Dilemma Ahead

But now comes the difficult part. With a new role at Kent County Council and the possibility of a leadership position on the horizon, I have to confront a challenging question: can I still run The Looker the way it deserves to be run?

When I launched this paper, it was my side hustle (as they say now). I was running one of Kent's largest sound and light warehouse, managing an entertainment agency, and even returned to sea, working on some of the world's most magnificent cruise ships—sending editions to print from places like Tahiti, Bora Bora and St. Petersburg. Somehow, I kept it all going.

Two years ago I moved The Looker into a new office within the £3 million Romney Marsh Business Hub, a project I helped deliver during my time as cabinet member for district economy. Before the cynics start—yes, we pay full rent.

Now, I need to look to the future. Here are the options I'm considering:

Close the paper: Go out on a high, knowing that we've served our community and built a readership five times larger than our nearest competitor.

Introduce a cover charge: Charge £1.20 per issue and merge The Looker and The Hurricane into a single, super-local paper. This could fund a full-time editor and sales manager, allowing me to continue contributing a column or two.

Scale back operations: Reduce the paper's size and shift publication to Thursdays, buying me a little more time to juggle responsibilities.

Pass the baton: Hand over the reins to someone else—ideally with experience, since I won't have time for much handover or training.

I'm not making this decision alone. I want to hear from our readers, our advertisers, and anyone who's ever felt this paper made a difference. Could you help shape its next chapter? Are you a journalist or sales expert with local ties and time to spare? Or are you a reader who simply wants to make sure the Marsh continues to have a voice?

Looking Ahead

We've always been more than just a paper. We've been a platform for debate, a diary of Marsh life, a place where people can see themselves reflected in print. I want that to continue, but it has to evolve.

This isn't the end—not yet, anyway. But it might be the start of a new era. I remain, as ever, committed to Romney Marsh and to representing the people who trusted me with that honour. If we can find the right way forward, The Looker and The Hurricane will keep doing what they've always done: giving a voice to the voiceless and shining a light on the issues that matter most.

So let's talk. I'm listening.

Edith Nesbit comes to New Romney



Most of us have seen the film and maybe read the book 'The Railway Children' by Edith Nesbit. She wrote many other books and poems, but many people don't realise that she lived for many years on Romney Marsh at Dymchurch and St Mary's Bay. She is buried in the church graveyard at St Mary in the Marsh.



The Old School in New Romney has been fortunate to hold in its heritage collection a number of items relating to Edith and in particular the Nesbit Bible. Recently the Nesbit Society were looking for a suitable new home for their extensive collection of Nesbit memorabilia and approached the Old School in the hope we might find space for it. We are thrilled to be considered a worthy repository and now have what we are calling 'The Nesbit Collection' on show along with information about Edith's life and works.

Come and see what we have. The Old School is open from 10 – 12.30 the first and third Saturdays of the month and we will also be open on Country Fayre Day 26th July. We also hold a vast array of local historical memorabilia, photographs, records and artifacts relating to the Old School, New Romney and the Marsh.

For more information, please visit www.newromneyoldschool.co.uk

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EDITOR'S WORD



It's great to be back after a whirlwind few weeks on the campaign trail with Reform UK. First and foremost, I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who supported not only myself but also all of our fantastic candidates. The level of encouragement and enthusiasm we've received has been overwhelming. We're proud to have a brand-new cohort of County Councillors ready to represent you with integrity and fresh energy.

I must also pay special tribute to my wonderful partner, Sarah White, who stepped in to take the reins for three editions of The Looker during my absence. Balancing that responsibility while running her own local accountancy firm is no small feat—so thank you, Sarah, for keeping the ship steady in my absence.

In our local Looker area, both Peter Osbourn and I are now on board to bring you not only a shared wealth of local knowledge but also our own unique styles of communication, grounded in years of experience across both public and private sector management. We're committed to delivering a publication that reflects and supports the community we serve.

As I write, final positions are still being confirmed at County Hall, but one thing is already clear—I'm going to struggle to juggle editing both The Looker and The Hurricane on a fortnightly basis. That said, the support and reception from readers has been phenomenal, and I want to assure you that we are actively seeking a new editor to carry on the good work. If you've ever considered joining a passionate, community-minded team and playing a role in your local publication, this could be your moment. We're the only free bi-weekly paper in the area—and we'd love to have you on board.

With summer fast approaching, there's a wealth of exciting events on the horizon. If you're organising something and would like help spreading the word, please get in touch via David@thelooker.co.uk

We'll do our utmost to help promote your event.

We'll also be getting involved in several key events ourselves, including the much-anticipated Leeds Castle Summer Concert. With the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra providing the soundtrack, it's set to be an afternoon and evening of top-tier entertainment. In the next issue, we'll be offering complimentary tickets for the best reader-submitted article we receive and publish. We're particularly looking for stories rooted in your local area—pieces that tell a compelling tale or explore an aspect of our shared history.

So dust off your keyboard and get writing—we can't wait to read your stories.

Until next time, happy reading.

David Wimble



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Have You Got the Bottle to Open the Throttle?

Tucked away on the sweeping plains of Romney Marsh, Lydd Speedway at Belgar Farm is revving up for a new generation of thrill-seekers. This grassroots club is calling on young riders to take advantage of a unique opportunity: a free trial session designed to introduce schoolchildren to the exhilarating world of speedway racing.

The initiative invites youngsters to bring their own electric or petrol-powered bikes and experience the adrenaline rush of navigating the 210-metre oval dirt track. Safety is paramount—participants under 18 must be accompanied by an adult and wear appropriate protective gear, including helmets and clothing.

Lydd Speedway has a storied history dating back to 1996, serving as a training ground and hosting open meetings until 2000. Over the years, it has been a hub for both novice and veteran riders. Notably, in 2011, former Hackney Hawks captain Barry Thomas clinched a veteran speedway event at the track, highlighting its enduring appeal to seasoned racers.



The Looker has long championed Lydd Speedway. Nearly 15 years ago, editor David Wimble took to the track

himself. Reflecting on the experience, he remarked, "I really did not know what to expect, and if I am honest, I did not even realise we had a speedway track at Lydd. But it's great fun, and I really recommend it. Fifteen years ago, I was a bit more agile than I am now, so perhaps my involvement would be as a spectator."



For those eager to embrace the roar of engines and the thrill of the ride, Lydd Speedway offers an accessible entry point into the sport. To learn more or to book a free trial, email lyddspeedway@gmail.com or contact Malcolm Smith directly at 07870 471 770.

So, the question stands: Have you got the bottle to open the throttle?



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Vape wars erupt on our high streets: Barber shop bloodbath fuels crime fears

New Romney – A brutal midday assault outside a high street vape and barber shop has reignited national fears that vape stores are fast becoming the new frontline in Britain's high street crimewave.

The quiet town of New Romney was rocked on Wednesday when emergency services flooded the High Street following a vicious gang attack on a man believed to be associated with a newly opened vape business. Witnesses described scenes of panic as police and paramedics raced to the scene around 12.20pm, where the victim was left bloodied and hospitalised.

While Kent Police confirmed the man's injuries were not life-threatening, the incident has intensified scrutiny on the burgeoning vape shop industry, which insiders say is increasingly being hijacked by criminal enterprises.

A police spokesperson confirmed: "We were called to reports of a man assaulted by a group of individuals at a commercial premises on New Romney High Street. An investigation is underway."

The assault comes amid growing concerns that vape shops – now ubiquitous on UK high streets – are being used as a smokescreen for darker dealings. National reports have alleged that some vape stores are covertly peddling black-market cigarettes, smuggled in from Turkey and Russia, and worse – luring underage customers into illegal purchases.

In major cities like Birmingham, Manchester and London, similar stories have emerged. Last month, a sting operation in East London uncovered a warehouse packed with counterfeit tobacco products, traced back to a chain of local vape stores. In Liverpool, police say vape outlets are being used to "groom" schoolchildren into becoming



regular customers, sometimes in exchange for favours or small payments – a practice alarmingly likened to the tactics of county lines drug gangs.

High street traders and residents alike are now demanding tougher regulations.

"They pop up overnight, these vape shops – five in a row sometimes – and no one knows who's behind them," said one New Romney shopkeeper who asked not to be named. "We're not against vaping, but this is something else. It's criminality dressed up in neon signs and bubblegum flavourings."

Local councils have reportedly raised red flags with the Home Office, urging a national audit of vape retailers and stricter enforcement of licensing and underage sales laws. Critics argue that existing oversight is woefully inadequate for a sector growing faster than regulators can track.

Trading Standards are now being urged to work alongside Kent Police to launch random searches and deploy undercover checks to expose rogue operators and illegal sales across the county.

While vaping was once hailed as a healthier alternative to smoking, the sector's rapid growth and weak regulation have opened the door to exploitation, experts say.

As detectives continue to investigate Wednesday's attack in New Romney, residents are left wondering just how safe their high streets really are – and who is really behind the shop fronts.

Anyone with information is urged to contact Kent Police.

Romney Marsh Morris step into summer

The summer is here, and Romney Marsh Morris are, once again, out and about across the Marsh and beyond.

They kicked their season off in style on Greatstone beach at 5.28am, dancing the sun up on May Day. Their summer programme is a diverse mix of pub stands, fetes, festivals and fayres, with plenty of fun and laughter thrown in for good measure.

The set for 2025 includes four new dances that they have been learning during their winter practice sessions, plus a lot of the old favourites. This year they've welcomed two new dancers and a musician who are all doing really well.

The 2025 Tour 'The Melford Mile Gambol' will take them to Suffolk and Essex, where they will meet up with some of the local sides, for a long weekend of dancing and merriment.

Every year Romney Marsh Morris collects money that they donate to a local charity. This year it is the Air Ambulance Charity Kent Surrey Sussex. So, if you see them out dancing, please drop some coins into the collecting bucket for this worthwhile cause.

Further details of the side, and up to date information on their programme can be seen on their Facebook page **Romney Marsh Morris**,

on their website:
www.romneymarshmorris.com,
 or you can contact them by email :
rmmorrissec@gmail.com



PROGRAMME 2025

March	12 (Saturday, time TBC)	The Three Mariners, Hythe
(Saturday, 11.30am & 1.00pm) 29	Spring Equinox +1	Guosts of Motley Morris
Romney Marsh Community Hub	19 (Saturday, times TBC)	Dead Horse Morris Ale, Whitstable
April	20 (Sunday, Noon - 4.00pm)	Boughton Monchelsea Morris
(Saturday, 2.30pm) 19	Picnic on the Green, West Peckham	26 (Saturday, times TBC)
St George's Day, The Black Lion, Appledore	May	New Romney Country Fayre
May Day, sunrise on the beach, Greatstone	(Thursday, 5.00am) 1	August
(Saturday, 11.00am) 10	Hythe High Street	16 (Saturday, times TBC)
(Monday, 12.30pm) 26	The Mermaid Inn, Rye	Walmer Castle
With Invicta Morris & Motley Morris	(Saturday, times TBC) 31	With Wild Women
East Kent Morris Day of Dance, Folkestone	June	30 (Saturday, 11.30am)
(Saturday) 14	Britannia Inn, Dungeness	Rye Town Centre
The Lord Whiskey Animal Sanctuary (10.00am)	With Steampunk Morris & Offcudmunds Border Morris	With Ruxley's Crew
Rose and Crown (1.30pm)	13 (Saturday, times TBC)	September
Stelling Minnis	Hop Hoodening, Canterbury	7 (Sunday, Noon)
(Wednesday, 7.30pm) 18	The George, Bethersden	Britannia Inn, Dungeness
The Bell Inn, Ivychurch	With Boughton Monchelsea Morris	With Steampunk Morris & Offcudmunds Border Morris
(Saturday, 2.00pm & 3.30pm) 28	October	13 (Saturday, times TBC)
Hawkhurst Summer Fete	4 (Saturday, 10.00am - 4.00pm)	Hop Hoodening, Canterbury
July	The Old Dairy and Station, Tenterden	28 (Sunday, 1.00pm)
4-6 (Friday-Sunday)	With Invicta Morris, Wolfshhead & Vixen,	The George, Bethersden
The Melford Mile Gambol	Motley Morris, Kits Coty Morris &	With Boughton Monchelsea Morris
The Romney Marsh Morris 2025 Tour	Wild Women	October
Long Melford and Ingatstone		4 (Saturday, 10.00am - 4.00pm)

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Sharp rise in attempts by migrants to enter UK hidden in vehicles

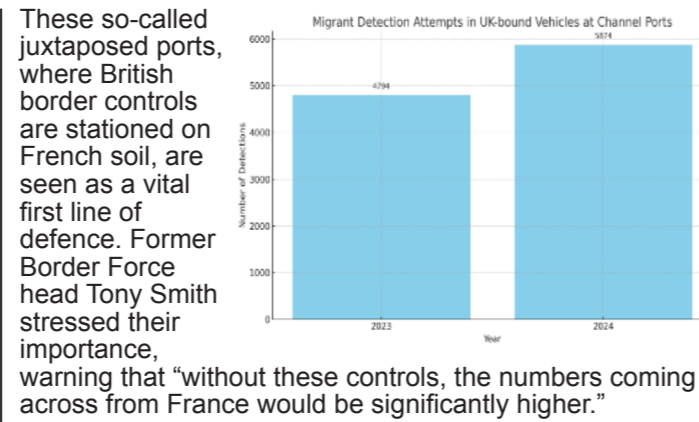


Nearly 6,000 attempts by migrants to stow away in vehicles bound for the UK were recorded at Channel ports last year, according to new figures obtained by the BBC. The data highlights a sharp rise in clandestine crossings despite years of bolstered border security.

A total of 5,874 detections were made in 2024 at continental ports including Calais, Dunkirk, and the Channel Tunnel terminal at Coquelles — up from 4,794 in 2023. Although the peak was seen in 2016 with over 56,000 cases, authorities warn the threat remains "unrelenting".

Border Force officials and security contractors are in a constant race against people-smuggling gangs, who closely monitor operations to exploit any weaknesses, the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration has warned.

"Border Force resources and capabilities are stretched," said former inspector David Bolt. "It is vital that the UK continues to invest in staff, detection equipment and IT systems at juxtaposed ports."



These so-called juxtaposed ports, where British border controls are stationed on French soil, are seen as a vital first line of defence. Former Border Force head Tony Smith stressed their importance, warning that "without these controls, the numbers coming across from France would be significantly higher."

Recent prosecutions underline the grim reality of the smuggling trade. Last week, traffickers were jailed after attempting to bring five Vietnamese nationals into the UK hidden beneath piles of rubbish and heavy motorcycle parts in a van intercepted at Coquelles.

The UK government is responding with tougher penalties for transport operators. Since 2023, hauliers can be fined up to £10,000 per clandestine entrant discovered in their vehicle. In 2024–25 alone, 1,787 fines were issued, totalling millions of pounds in civil penalties.

The clampdown has also affected tourists. Several cases have emerged of unsuspecting holidaymakers facing fines after migrants were found hidden in campervans and motorhomes. In two recent cases involving families from Kent and Essex, fines of up to £3,000 were later rescinded after appeals.

Lucy Moreton of the Immigration Services Union, which represents Border Force staff, noted that all types of vehicles are vulnerable. "It's not always lorries — campervans and even caravans have been targeted," she said.

Vehicle checks are conducted by both French authorities and UK Border Force teams, using a combination of scanners, sniffer dogs and carbon dioxide probes.

A Home Office spokesperson said: "Border Force officers have uncovered inhumane cases of migrants crammed into lorries for many years. We are now introducing measures in the Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill to allow closer collaboration with the DVLA to intercept threats when a suspicious vehicle enters the UK."

Despite the increased scrutiny, officials concede that continued investment and international cooperation are crucial to deterring smugglers and safeguarding borders.

JAM on the Marsh is now on sale

From 3rd – 13th July, JAM on the Marsh returns with a stunning array of outstanding international and local artists, lighting up from Romney Marsh to Hythe with music, theatre, film, art and workshops. The festival unfolds in a variety of locations; from the intimate mediaeval churches to local gardens and steam railway carriages; bringing the arts to unexpected places.

Highlights of this year's festival include the harmony and flair of world-leading King's Singers - the gold standard of unaccompanied singing for over 50 years. Enjoy Spanish fire, Parisian jazz and sizzling tango with the London Tango Quintet full of energy and charm



Treat yourself to Shakespeare's Twelfth Night by irreverent open-air Changeling Theatre; this is a fast-paced comedy of mistaken identity, secret love and outrageous confusion. Bring a picnic and a chair and enjoy outdoor theatre (mic'd) at its flamboyant best.



With Radio 3 broadcast, the BBC Singers premiere royal composer Paul Mealor's captivating Light of Paradise with the Ferio saxophone quartet performing melodic motifs through the choir, interspersed with a flamboyant saxophone quartet. Don't miss National Theatre Live screenings of A Streetcar Named Desire at Cinemarsh or a rare late-night recital of piano meditations with Jonathan Dove. Britten Sinfonia bring orchestral drama performing Satie, Dove and Mealor, extracting extraordinary colour from strings, piano, and percussion.

Based on a Celtic legend of fear, exile and redemption, the dramatic tale The Farthest Shore will be performed by the Chapel Choir of Selwyn College, Cambridge, professional soloists and brass quintet, with a community choir of local singers including the Romney Marsh Community Hub's Sunflower Singers and Marsh Academy students. A



community set out to oust a stranger washed up on the shore only to discover a miracle

Be transported to smoky world of Cabaret with Royal Opera House mezzo Rebecca Afonwy-Jones and pianist John Frederick Hudson. Travel the world with Kosmos Ensemble performing their dazzling fusion of Jewish, Gypsy, flamenco and Celtic influences.



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Harmony turns to discord: Folkestone music town plan hits sour note with residents



Once proudly heralded as the UK's first official "Music Town," Folkestone now finds itself in a row that's anything but harmonious. Elderly residents of a town centre retirement block say plans to reopen a former live music venue across the street threaten to turn their golden years into sleepless nights.

A licensing application has been submitted for 11 Grace Hill—formerly the site of the popular dive bar The Harp Restrung—by London-based firm Gail 1 Limited. The



Grace Court residents do not want the music venue to go ahead as residents say it would be a major disturbance

proposal aims to transform the premises into The Old Harp Club, complete with live music and alcohol sales until as late as 2am on weekends.

But across the road, residents of Grace Court—a block exclusively for those aged 65 and over—are sounding the alarm. "Every day will become a nightmare," one resident said, citing concerns over noise, late-night disruptions, and street drinking. "We're incredibly anxious," added another, echoing a sentiment widely shared among the complex's tenants.

While Folkestone made headlines in 2017 as a pioneer in recognising music as a driver for economic growth and wellbeing, the town's efforts to nurture its cultural landscape are now colliding with the lived realities of an ageing population.

The original Harp Restrung, known for its gritty charm and 4.3-star rating on Tripadvisor, closed four years ago during the pandemic. Despite its loyal local following, Grace Court residents argue that reviving the live music scene on their doorstep is inappropriate and detrimental to their quality of life.

Under the current proposal, music and alcohol sales would run from 11am to 11.30pm Sunday through Thursday, and until 1.30am on Fridays and Saturdays. Weekend closing time would be extended to 2am.

The Folkestone & Hythe District Council is expected to rule on the application by 20 May. Until then, the town once lauded for its harmony faces a growing chorus of discontent.

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Lydd Bell Ringers



The Ring of 8 Bells in the Tower at All Saints Church, Lydd.

Have you ever wondered who rings the bells?

All Saints Church has existed in our town since late Roman times and is a building we all take for granted. As a child growing up in Lydd I often heard the bells and used 'The Cathedral of The Marsh' to navigate the lanes to get home from cycling trips.

Now as a bell ringer I have found All Saints provides a fascinating pastime. Bells in the tower go back to the early fifteenth century and from 1799 onwards the Tower had five bells. In 1926 Arthur Finn financed the recasting of the old bells into the 8 bells that you hear today. The smallest 'treble' bell we ring weighs 5cwt and is roughly the weight of a small sports motorcycle swinging above our heads. The heaviest 'tenor' bell weighs 15cwt is equivalent to a very small swinging car! All eight bells are securely hung in a solid teak frame and the bells swing in various directions to counteract any excessive swaying of the tower, that the heavy moving bells may cause. The tallest strongest member of our band can ring

the treble and the slightest member can ring the tenor bell. It is the technique of ringing that is important. Bell ringing is a social activity that is excellent exercise for body and mind. It is open to all ages and is a very satisfying skill to acquire.

This leads to the big question. Are you looking for a local activity to do in Lydd and have you ever considered bell ringing? Here are some of the questions we often get asked about ringing.

Do you have to go to church to be a ringer?

Yes and no. The bells are tucked up out of the way in the church tower so yes..... but you do not have to be a church attender to ring the bells.

Do you have to ring for church events?

Everybody loves hearing the bells for Sunday service, weddings, Christmas and New Year, so yes. We also ring for funerals and other special occasions like the Kings Coronation and Remembrance Sunday and at ringing meetings because we enjoy ringing. Next year we are also looking forward to celebrate the centenary of our lovely bells.

Is it hard to learn?

Not particularly but it is a skill just like riding a bike, playing an instrument or completing stages of a computer game it requires practice. Come and try you may just catch the ringing bug.

What does it cost?

Your time and effort, 56 steps to the ringing room and regular practice.

How can I find out more about bell ringing in Lydd?

- Seek us out and talk to us on Lydd Club Day Saturday 21st June
- Come to our Open Tower event and try ringing a bell Saturday 28th June.

Or if you can't wait!

- Visit us and find out more at our Monday practice evenings at 7.30pm or come along and see us ringing 10am before Sunday service.

If you wish to find out more, or would like to learn how to bell ring please contact:

**Tower Captain : Nicky Jones on
07752612874**

Or email: lyddbelling@gmail.com



Have you ever thought about trying your hand at bell ringing?

Would you be interested in learning a new skill?

Are you looking for something to do that is a little bit different in your local area?

Then get in touch and come along to our Monday evening practice in the tower at All Saints Church, Lydd.

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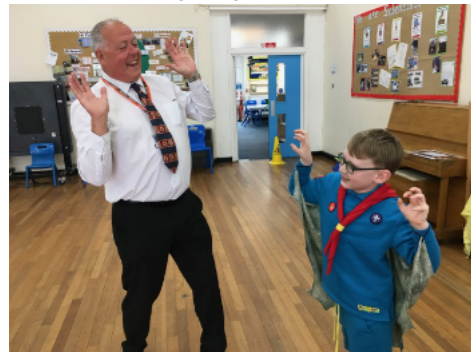
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Popular Headteacher – Sensationally - Eaten by a Dragon!!!



1st New Romney Beavers and Cubs performed a world premiere of St George & the Dragon @ St Nicholas School, New Romney. In a sensational twist to the tale, the Headteacher was slain and eaten by a ferocious roaring dragon, aka Jacob.



The St Nicholas pupils were amazing, they entered into the spirit of the play, cheering the actors on, offering support and finally finishing with one of our greatest Campfire songs, Alice the Camel. We would like to say a huge thank you to Mr Dale, the Headteacher, his staff and all the amazing pupils for this fantastic opportunity. The story did have a happy ending – by the power of MAGIC – we were able to re-incarnate Mr Dale who survived his ordeal and lives to fight another day. Smiles all round!!



Meanwhile Scout groups on Romney Marsh celebrated our annual St George's Day @ 1st Dymchurch HQ with a fabulous St George's Funday. It was great to see so many youngsters and families taking part in a huge variety of activities: archery; tomahawk throwing; crafts; biscuit decorating; team challenges; knots; campfire circle and the ever popular s'mores. The atmosphere was great, buzzing with all those varied activities.



We renewed our Scouting promises and celebrated the achievements of our Young and not so young Leaders!! Freya received her Young Leader Award and Explorer Belt; Maurice his Wood Beads as District Scout Leader; while Alexis and Jackie were rewarded for their hard work, passion for Scouting and dedication to Dymchurch Scout Group with a Commissioner's Award. Congratulations to them all.



St George's Day is the time of the year when we come together as a Scouting community and reflect on the principles that underpin our movement. The Story of St. George... focuses on an individual taking positive action for the good of the whole community. Our local Scouts are still doing that today, individually and with Community Impact projects - locally for litter picking; supporting Royal British Legion; Bees; Mental Health charities; Holding on Letting Go; International Communities including the Mount Kenya Tree Nursery; Harambee in Kenya and we celebrate their achievements, working in partnership with other community providers – they are a force for good.



And let us remember that Scouting is not just about badges, tents and outdoor adventure – it's about character, responsibility and about making a positive difference in the world. We hope every Scouting member has an amazing year ahead, particularly the Kent International Jamboree participants who have the opportunity to experience the Adventure of a Lifetime. . . .



It was certainly a memorable day, filled with fun and friends and a renewed sense of purpose. Thank you to everyone for being part of the Adventure, to all the Leaders for making the day happen and to 1st Dymchurch Leaders for organising and hosting our celebrations.



Bobby on the beat

Steve Putland (Kent Police, Police Constable, Folkestone Neighbourhood Beat Officer)



Hello all.

As you know we are lucky enough to be surrounded by lots of rural areas on the Marsh and therefore many farms.

Unfortunately farms get targeted by criminals due to the amount of expensive equipment and tools that the farmers need and because the vast majority of farms are relatively isolated, they are 'easy' targets.

All farmers are very aware of the problems with rural crime and the vast majority of us non-farmers are also aware however, this message is just to bring the subject to the forefront so that we remain vigilant and whether or not you live near a farm or you travel past a farm and notice anything suspicious, please ring 999 if you think a crime is in progress or a crime is about to be committed.

There was a burglary at a farm site in Church Lane, New Romney at approximately 23:15 on

25/04/2025, this is the site on the S bend halfway along Church Lane beyond all of the houses. I have been making enquiries today alongside my Rural Task Force colleagues and have already knocked on a number of doors requesting CCTV footage. If I have missed your property and you have CCTV and you are either in Church Lane or very near to the Fire Station in Church Road, please can you review your CCTV between 22:45-23:45 and let me know if you see any vehicles particularly if there's anything suspicious about it.

As ever you can contact me at 13183@kent.police.uk

PS Just to clarify a recent Facebook post that I saw about how long we've been on the Marsh, in total I've been policing the Romney Marsh for the last 8 years and then October 2023 as Marsh Beat Officer. PC James Hockless has also served a few years on the Marsh prior to becoming a Marsh Beat Officer in October 2024.

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NIGELLA



Revered chef Nigella Lawson on a life spent shattering conventions, from microwaves to Merlot-stained bedsheets... and what comes next.

Nigella Lawson has long stood as an enigma in the food world. With no formal training in gastronomy, she has ascended the ranks, earning the adoration of countless fans around the world.

Her paradigm shifts and the legacy she has crafted – often by breaking kitchen etiquette – are some things often forgotten, as her heritage as a television chef is almost taken for granted.



And despite the 65-year-old's vast influence she often shies away from titles and, in particular, the term 'celebrity chef'. This is what she had to say to Looker founder David Wimble, when he popped along for a tasting menu.

"I've never been comfortable with that one," she says.

"I feel it places more emphasis on the 'celebrity' than the 'chef'. While I'm grateful for the platform and the love I've received, my main drive has always been the food and the stories it tells. Adding 'celebrity' to it somewhat detracts from that genuine narrative.

"I've always tried to approach food with an intense passion and curiosity. From my days penning thoughts about dishes to showcasing them on television, it's always been about sharing the joy of food."

She adds: "Over the years, I believe I've grown more confident in embracing my own style, celebrating both the simple and the exquisite, but always authentic to what I truly feel."

It's hard to imagine the culinary landscape without the indomitable presence of Nigella. Her approach to cooking and presenting food is unlike any other.

Before Nigella, many female chefs on television seemed to emphasise their professionalism, often styling themselves in ways that downplayed their femininity. It was almost as if in order to be taken seriously in the largely male-dominated world of cuisine, they had to fit into a certain mould.

Enter Nigella, who shattered this image with a hammer of authenticity.

"In a world where culinary television was often seen through a predominantly male lens, I wasn't aiming to champion the voice of the female foodie," the Londoner admits.

"It wasn't about replacing one with the other, but about celebrating the richness of experiences and flavours that women bring to the table. I believe every dish tells a story, but it was high time more of these tales were told by women."

Embracing a 'sexy food' image, Nigella didn't shy away from indulgence, but rather relished in the sensuality of food – its textures, flavours and the sheer joy it could bring.

"If I can encourage someone to trust themselves more in the kitchen and find joy in the act of cooking, then I feel I've succeeded."



Wheel Power: Folkestone teacher's global ride for children's hospital

A history teacher from Folkestone is pedalling his way into the record books – and people's hearts – by cycling around the world to raise funds for the children's hospital that helped one of his pupils.

Jacob Zintel-Warner, 31, formerly of Brockhill Park Performing Arts College near Hythe, set off from Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children in London on 4 April 2024. His extraordinary 18,000-mile journey is expected to come full circle this August when he returns to where it all began.

So far, Mr Zintel-Warner has clocked up an impressive



12,600 miles, riding through 24 countries including China, Thailand and Vietnam. He is currently making his way across Australia before flying to Canada – his birthplace – and cycling south through the United States towards New York. From there, he will fly home for his triumphant finish at Great Ormond Street.

Inspired both by a chance encounter with a world cyclist in China and a moving conversation with a pupil treated at Great Ormond Street, Mr Zintel-Warner combined his dreams of adventure and charity into one life-changing mission.



"Seven years ago, I met a tourist in China cycling around the world and until then, I didn't even know that was possible," he said. "When a student at school later shared how much Great Ormond Street had helped her, it just felt right. This way, I could help others while achieving a personal goal."

Leaving behind his classroom duties – temporarily – Mr Zintel-Warner resigned to take on the challenge. Fortunately, his school has left the door wide open for his return.

Brockhill's principal, Charles Joseph, called his journey "inspirational", with students rallying to fundraise alongside him. "Jacob's journey is inspirational to us all," he said. "The whole Brockhill community is in awe of what you are doing."

Over the past year, Mr Zintel-Warner



has cycled through a host of countries – from the deserts of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan to the mountains of China. Highlights include an 800-mile desert stretch he completed against the odds and the cultural wonders of China, though he admits the solitude and language barriers posed real mental challenges.

"I spent three months barely speaking to anyone," he said. "And there were some scary moments, like an attempted robbery in Vietnam and fending off stray dogs in Turkey. But overwhelmingly, the kindness of strangers has been humbling."

His efforts have so far raised over £5,000 for Great Ormond Street Hospital, with hopes that figure will grow as he approaches the final stages of his 'geocycling' mission.

Reflecting on his adventure, Mr Zintel-Warner said: "I think I'll feel sad when it's over. This journey has shown me just how much good there is in the world. It's made me want to help others even more."

You can support Jacob's fundraising efforts by donating via his JustGiving page: <https://www.justgiving.com/page/geocycling>.

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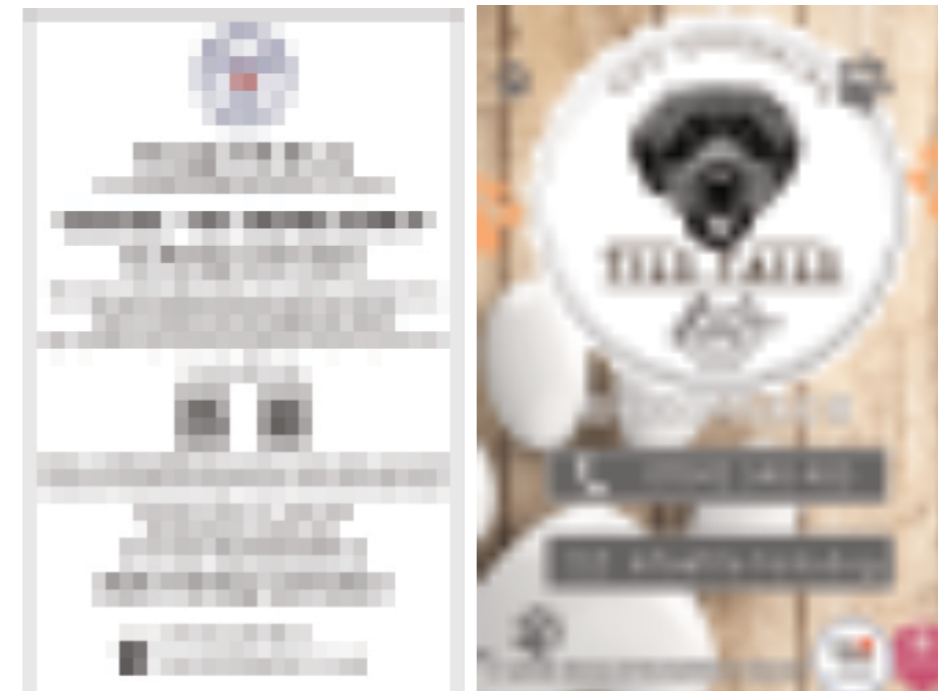
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Rotary Club of Romney Marsh supporting the local community

As a club we are always keen to support deserving local charities and good causes across the Marsh. One such organisation is CARM Romney Marsh and we were pleased to make a significant financial contribution towards the hall hire costs of the venues that CARM uses for its Meeting Point sessions. The funds were part of the money raised during our Santa sleigh runs.



As can be seen in the picture, a number of our Rotarians visited the Bridge Meeting Point in New Romney today to chat to the CARM team and the members who come along to the sessions.

We all found the experience both enjoyable and rewarding and realise just how important this type of social interaction is to those who may otherwise feel isolated and lonely.

The Club was pleased to welcome Amanda King, CEO of the Lighthouse on the Marsh to one of our recent weekly meetings. Amanda gave a very interesting presentation explaining that the Lighthouse on The Marsh is a charity built on 30 years of community activities, support services and specialist education on the Romney Marsh and beyond. The picture shows Syed Rahman (Club



President), Amanada King and Colin Norgate (Club Vice President).

Presently, the Lighthouse provides three main services:

- Lighthouse College which offers employability-focussed Study Programmes for people aged between 16 and 18 years (or 19 to 25 with an EHCP) who may have struggled in mainstream schooling.
- SEND services that focus on supporting those living with (and those supporting those living with) SEND in our community.
- Re-set programme providing help for people to manage the everyday stress of modern life, the trauma of specific events and/ or long term medical conditions which can all take their toll. The members were interested to hear about the help and support offered to the residents of Romney Marsh and beyond. The members agreed that the services provided by the Lighthouse are valuable and unfortunately appear to be increasingly in demand.

If you are interested in joining the Rotary Club, please contact Stephen Hagues (07900 736018) for more details.

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Dates for your Diary

Email your Dates for your Diary to: john@thelooker.co.uk

Thursday 15th May

Yoga, Hub on the Beach, 9.30 a.m.
Lydd Meeting Point, Hardy Hall, 10 a.m.
Dance Moves with Chris, St. Mary's Bay Village Hall, 10.15 a.m.
Craft "N" Laughs, St. Peter's Hall, Greatstone, 2 p.m.
Dymchurch Short Mat Bowls, Village Hall, 6 p.m.
Romney Marsh Photographic Club, St. Mary's Bay Village Hall, 8 p.m.

Friday 16th May

Pilates, Dymchurch Village Hall, 10 a.m.
Friday Art Group, St Mary's Bay Village Hall, 1 p.m.
Sunflower Singing Group, Hub on the Beach, 1.30 p.m.
Sequence Dancing (with tuition), St. Mary's Bay Village Hall, 7 p.m.

Saturday 17th May

Old School Trust Open Morning, New Romney, 10 a.m. (1st & 3rd Sat)
Book Sale, St. Nicholas Church, New Romney, 10 a.m.

Sunday 18th May

'Plants, Ploughmans & Pimms', 40 Acre Farm, Burmarsh, 11 a.m.

Monday 19th May

Dymchurch Meeting Point, Village Hall, 10 a.m.
Dance Moves, Burton Hall off Stade Street, Hythe, 11 a.m.
Crafty Club and Games Club, RMCH, 1.30 p.m.
The Games Club, St. Peter's Hall, Greatstone, 2 p.m.
Dymchurch Belles WI, Village Hall, 2 p.m. (3rd Mon)
Bingo, St. Mary's Bay Church Hall, 2.30 p.m.

Tuesday 20th May

Pilates, St. Mary's Bay Village Hall, 10 a.m.

Walking Group, RMCH, 10 a.m.
Greatstone Meeting Point, St. Peter's Hall, 10 a.m. (1st & 3rd Tue)
Dance Moves, Burton Hall off Stade Street, Hythe, 10.30 a.m.
Dymchurch Art Society, Village Hall, 1 p.m.
Short Mat Bowling, St. Mary's Bay Village Hall, 2 p.m.
Romney Marsh Poetry Society, Old School, New Romney, 2.30 p.m. (3rd Tue)
Foodbank, New Romney Community Church, 4 p.m.
Dymchurch Short Mat Bowls, Village Hall, 6 p.m.

Wednesday 21st May

Computer Club, Village Hall, St. Mary's Bay, 9.30 a.m.
Arthritis Peer Support Group Meeting, Hub on the Beach, 1 p.m.
Diabetes Peer Support Group Coffee & Catch Up, RMCH, 1.30 p.m.
Woman's Wednesday Club, St. Peter's Hall, Greatstone, 2 p.m.
Needlecraft Club, Old School, New Romney, 7 p.m.
Short Mat Bowling, St. Mary's Bay Village Hall, 7 p.m.

Thursday 22nd May

Yoga, Hub on the Beach, 9.30 a.m.
Lydd Meeting Point, Hardy Hall, 10 a.m.
Dance Moves with Chris, St. Mary's Bay Village Hall, 10.15 a.m.
Pebbles Dementia Café, St. Peter's Hall, Greatstone, 10.30 a.m. (2nd & 4th Thurs)
Craft "N" Laughs, St. Peter's Hall, Greatstone, 2 p.m.
Dymchurch Short Mat Bowls, Village Hall, 6 p.m.
Romney Marsh Photographic Club, St. Mary's Bay Village Hall, 8 p.m.

Friday 23rd May

Pilates, Dymchurch Village Hall, 10 a.m.
Friday Art Group, St Mary's Bay Village Hall, 1 p.m.
Sunflower Singing Group, Hub on the Beach, 1.30 p.m.
Brookland Meeting Point, Village Hall, 1.30 p.m. (4th Fri)
Sequence Dancing (with tuition), St. Mary's Bay Village Hall, 7 p.m.

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John's Marsh Memories



IF CARS WERE MEANT TO FLY . . .

The idea of carrying cars by air made little sense before the last war, because aircraft were still struggling out of the era when it was all they could do to carry people at a profit. By 1945, the experience of the war had made the aeroplane safer and stronger. Better still, the peacetime world was full of aircraft for sale cheap and there was no shortage of ex-service enthusiasts to run them.

It was still not time for loading cars into planes because they were not readily adapted to the idea. To drive a car on board you needed a very large door at one end of the fuselage. The first aeroplane to provide this in a realistic way was the Bristol Freighter, built by the same company that developed the ill-fated Brabazon.

The Freighter was a simple, solid and workmanlike design, its far from beautiful fuselage was hung under a massive wing, and the power was provided by two big Hercules engines. The blunt nose opened in two halves, leaving room for two cars to drive up a ramp and inside without too much trouble. In Britain, it became quite famous as a result of the efforts of one airline, Silver City Airways.

The name originated in Australia in 1946 when an Australian Mining Group formed its own aviation company with a fleet of Dakota aircraft. The name was chosen because the mining company's interests were concentrated at Broken Hill, the 'Silver City' of New South Wales, so called because of its once rich silver deposits. Silver City Airways was registered in 1946 with a fleet of Avro Lancastrians and Douglas Dakotas and its first flights were from Heathrow Airport to Sydney and the round trip via Johannesburg with refuelling stops en route took 14 days.

A large engineering base was established at Blackbushe Airport in Surrey and one of the Director's favourite pastimes was to take his car touring in France. Making the Channel crossing by sea was a time-consuming business in those days and he soon realised that the standard Freighter could provide the answer. The first Silver City car ferry operation took place in 1948 from Lympne to Le Touquet on the French coast with just one vehicle, his

Armstrong Siddeley, and a set of loading ramps on board. The airfields had been chosen as being the two closest cross-Channel civil airports - just 47 miles apart. The inaugural public flight followed shortly and the Silver City Car Ferry was born.

Initially, the Car Ferry flights were operated on a charter basis, with most flights being taken by the AA and RAC but in 1949, the Ministry of Civil Aviation issued a licence for one year's scheduled service. By 1952, with the ferry operation a success, it was realised that a larger aircraft with a bigger payload but lower operating costs would be needed. The result was the Bristol 170 Mk 32 - or 'Superfreighter', which could carry three cars compared with the standard Freighter's two.

Towards the end of 1953, it was clear that the all-grass airfield at Lympne was unsuitable for future expansion and a new home was needed. After reviewing a number of possible locations, a site near Lydd was chosen. A contract for £400,000 was awarded to Richard Costain and it was completed the following year and called 'Ferryfield'. (The photo shows the early construction of the airport). In July 1954, the inaugural flight took off for Le Touquet. Three months later, the final flight left Lympne. The airfield had seen nearly 55,000 vehicles and 208,500 passengers carried since 1948 - all without incident. Meanwhile, at Ferryfield, there were 222 Channel crossings during one day in July and crews were now often flying six round trips a day. With the concentration of the fleet at Ferryfield, all maintenance activities were transferred there.

However, it took almost another two years for the



official opening ceremony to be performed when the Duke of Edinburgh arrived at Ferryfield on board the Royal Heron. The occasion marked the Duke's first visit to a private British airline at an all-new, privately owned airport. Following his tour of the airport's facilities, the Duke boarded one of Silver City's scheduled air ferry services to Le Touquet. By this time, the airport handled 250,000 passengers annually and this made it busier than Gatwick. By 1960, Silver City had become a household name and taking their car on the Air Ferry was often a family's first experience of air travel. Stars of stage and screen, politicians and members of Royal families all used the Air Ferry as the best way to cross the Channel. By this time, around 90,000 vehicles and 220,000 passengers had been carried and 40,000 Channel crossings had been made. Over the years, Silver City had carried a huge variety of freight loads including carpets, helicopters, 60ft racing yacht hulls and masts, printing presses, tractors, sheep, pigeons, a midget submarine, race horses and a stuffed pink elephant! In January 1962, British Aviation Services (Silver City's parent company) decided to sell its shares to P&O. This enabled P&O to set up a new company - Air Holdings Ltd - which took over BAS, Channel Air Bridge and the newly formed British United Airways. Silver City's thirteen-year adventure was over. The Air Ferry service continued at Ferryfield with other operators - British United Air Ferries and then British Air Ferries - for another nine years. The last Bristol 170 flight from Lydd was in 1970.

But things didn't last. Travel patterns were changing, the hovercraft had arrived to do in effect, the same job that the Freighters had done back in 1948. There was more money to be made from carrying cargo other than cars. The last airborne car-ferries from Southend were run in 1976 to mark for the end of an era. In its thirteen years of operation, Silver City had provided a unique service that had developed into a huge operation, the like of which will probably never be seen again.

Today Lydd's proud history is remembered in many ways, from original drawings and illustrations of old aircraft on display to autographs and brief messages written by aircrew, passengers and staff captured and shown for posterity. The Silver City Airways Association - made up of former staff and those with an interest in Lydd's aviation heritage - is a thriving body and stages a well-attended reunion at Lydd each year.

This year's reunion is on Saturday, 5th July at Lydd Golf Club from 12 noon. For more details, please contact Mrs Sally Maycock, 14 Prescott House, Rolfe Lane, New Romney TN28 8JR. Phone 07941-008311.

The Association aims to keep alive the spirit of Silver City that was so evident during the company's halcyon days and has a membership of over 100 ex-Silver City employees and employees of other associated companies.

Full membership is restricted to ex-Silver City employees and employees of other associated companies.



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Looker Letters

Email The Looker : info@thelooker.co.uk



Dear David Wimble,

Just wanted to say a huge well done on winning the election — and not just scraping through, either! You had the biggest vote of confidence of anyone in the whole country, let alone the county. That really is something to be proud of.

Now, if you ask me (and I've lived in Dymchurch long enough to know a thing or two), I'd say it's because people round here know you get on with the job and get things done. No nonsense, just action. We see that every fortnight when The Looker drops through our letterbox — rain or shine, it always turns up, and you always speak straight.

I know local politics has got a bit nasty lately. The abuse you get — not just from other candidates, but from the parties behind them too — is completely out of order. It's become less about helping people and more about point-scoring and name-calling.

And don't get me started on the Hythe Green lot. They go on about kindness and caring for the planet, but some of the spiteful things they've said — the bad language, the fibs — it's just shameful. It puts decent folk right off.

Then there's the comments flying around Facebook. Douglas Wade, a former Green councillor who really should know better, has been stirring things up instead of setting a decent example. And John Wilcox, well — it's easy to throw stones when you're hiding behind a keyboard, isn't it? It's not how grown adults should behave, let alone those involved in public life.

That's why I reckon so many people voted for you. With you, what you see is what you get. You've always been one of us, and you've got a history of actually delivering for the Marsh. That matters more than any political spin.

Keep going, David — you've made us proud.

Yours sincerely,

Gladys Puckle
Dymchurch

Dear Looker,
Are School Detentions Getting Out of Hand?

As a working parent, I'm growing increasingly frustrated with how easily schools, and particularly The Marsh Academy, seem to hand out detentions. It feels like we've reached a point where the punishment is no longer reserved for serious behaviour issues but instead dished out for the smallest infractions. In my school days, you knew where the line was. Detention was a real consequence, not a daily occurrence.

What's particularly concerning is the lack of clarity and communication around these detentions. I often receive a same day text message saying my child has been given a

detention, sometimes without any explanation. There's little regard for how this affects working parents, especially those who rely on school transport arrangements. If your child normally catches the school bus, a late detention means scrambling for alternative plans at short notice. That's not just inconvenient, it's unfair.

Even more troubling is that my son often doesn't even know what he did wrong. How can a detention be a deterrent if the student doesn't understand the reason behind it? Surely the goal should be to correct behaviour, not to punish blindly. When schools fail to explain or engage with the root cause of behaviour, it becomes less about discipline and more about control.

Many parents I speak to feel the same. We're not against discipline, far from it, but it needs to be measured, meaningful, and communicated properly. When detentions become the norm rather than the exception, they lose their impact. Worse still, it risks undermining the relationship between school, parent, and student.

The Marsh Academy, and others like it, need to take a long, hard look at how they're managing behaviour. If they want respect from students and support from parents, they should start by making their systems transparent, fair, and focused on real learning outcomes. Discipline should be a tool for growth, not just a tick-box exercise.

— A Concerned Parent

Dear Looker,
Huge congratulations on your absolutely stonking election victory — what a result! Here's hoping you can now use your mandate to stand firm against those dreadful proposed solar farms. Fingers crossed common sense will prevail.

All the very best,

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People of The Past

MICHAEL 'MICK' LINDSEY

Mick was born in Lydd in 1939 and lived on the Marsh most of his life. He started an apprenticeship at Noble's Garage in the High Street when he left school and did two years National Service in the Army. He also worked at Greatstone Garage and for the contractors at Dungeness Power Station.

From an early age he was very keen on football, trying to emulate his elder brother Brian. He played football for Lydd Primary School and also Southlands and scored the winning goal in the Chadwick Cup Final in 1954. He was a regular for Lydd from the middle 1950s and was probably their most prolific goal scorer and in the 1957/58 season he scored 100 goals. In one game against Betteshanger he scored 13 goals.

However, there were downsides as well and he was sent off in the final of the 1963 Lydd Charity Cup against New Romney after a goalmouth scuffle.

When he was on National Service, he occasionally played for Aldershot Reserves.

He married Rika Knipmeyer from Brookland in 1960 and they lived at The Green, Lydd and they had two sons, Andrew and Paul. Mick also played cricket for Lydd. After he retired from playing football, he took up refereeing locally and finished as a Level One Referee. He moved to Littlestone and died after a short illness in 2011.



Cinemarsh

Thunderbolts

Tuesday 13th May 11:00am 2:30pm 7:15pm

Wednesday 14th May 11:00am 2:30pm 7:15pm

Thursday 15th May 11:00am 2:30pm 7:15pm

Lilo and Stitch

Friday 23rd May 11:00am 4:00pm 7:15pm

Saturday 24th May 10:00am 1:00pm 4:00pm 7:00pm

Sunday 25th May 11:00am 2:30pm

Monday 26th May 10:00am 1:30pm

Tuesday 27th May 11:00am 2:30pm 7:15pm

Wednesday 28th May 10:00am 1:00pm 4:00pm 7:15pm

Thursday 29th May 11:00am 2:30pm 7:15pm

National Theatre Live- A Streetcar named Desire

Monday 7th July 2:00pm

Thursday 10th July 2:00pm



Politics

By local democracy reporter Peter Bird

"A Landslide, A Helicopter, and a Dash of Drama" – Peter Bird Interviews Reform UK's New Kent County Councillor David Wimble

PB: So, David, has the result hit home yet or are you still pinching yourself in disbelief?

DW: Honestly, it took a few days. At first, it was just numbers on a page – then I looked again and thought, "Crikey, I've absolutely walloped them!"

PB: "Walloped" is an understatement. Is it true you achieved the largest majority of any county councillor in the entire UK?

DW: I know, right? Yes – apparently I bagged 64% of the vote and left the runner-up, Tony Hills from the Tories, trailing by a mere 2,925 votes. I'm told it's the biggest majority nationally. Even Nigel Farage rang to say well done. Very nice of him – didn't send flowers, though.

PB: At what point did you realise you were about to make political history – or at least a very awkward morning for the Conservative Association along with Labour, Greens and Liberils?

DW: Oh, as soon as they tipped the first ballot box out and my name was practically on every other slip. I started off humble, but by the fifth tub of votes I was getting embarrassed. The Greens and Lib Dems? Their entire vote count wouldn't have filled a salad bowl.

PB: And to think, some people questioned your decision to join Reform UK...

DW: That's right. When I joined, every party except the Tories kicked off. "He should resign," they cried. "Let the people decide!" Well, the people have spoken – loudly and with capital letters. I don't think there's much left to argue about, really.

PB: You were also the campaign manager for Reform across the district. How did that side of things go?

DW: Surprisingly smoothly, though not without a hiccup or two. We had months to plan, managed to get 47,000 pre-election leaflets printed and mailed, all thanks to a generous donation from Lorenzo at Alkaline Aviation. The snag? They hit doorsteps during Purdah – whoops. They had a KCC logo on them, which turned it into a bit of a bureaucratic no-no. Only about half made it out before we pulled the rest. Still, the ones that did get through clearly did the trick.

PB: I hear some of the other parties were less than thrilled about that?

DW: Let's just say some people got a bit dramatic. Labour went full pearl-clutch. One candidate even called the police – I'm not joking. We got the all-clear from KCC's legal department, but that didn't stop the social media mob. Tony Cooper – bless him – was especially animated. Said I should be prosecuted. So, I messaged him with a friendly wager: if he got more votes than me, I'd donate £500 to his

chosen charity. If I won, he'd cough up the same to Pilgrims Hospice. So lets see if he is a man of honour and the hospice are £500 better off.

PB: How were relations with the other parties overall?

DW: The Tories were pretty civil, apart from their Hythe candidate who didn't get the "play nice" memo. Everyone else? Utterly vile. One Lib Dem, in particular, posted something so libellous I half expected to see myself in a Netflix documentary. Claimed – in his opinion, naturally – that I was a pedophile. Classy campaigning.

PB: Delightful. So, what was the moment of victory like when the count was done?

DW: I knew I'd won before the announcement, but kept a straight face. Didn't want to be that guy. Then the returning officer read out the result – nearly 4,000 votes. The Reform team went bananas. Everyone else looked like they'd just been told the bar was closed.

PB: Did you pop the champagne?

DW: We did one better. Headed to Sotirio's with Sarah and Liz Kershaw. Mid-dinner I got a call asking if I was coming to the Hop Farm party. Said I'd think about it. Next thing I know – we've got a chopper coming to pick us up. Proper Bond villain moment. When we landed, the media thought Nigel Farage was stepping out. You should've seen their faces when it was just me.

PB: So what happens now?

DW: Off to County Hall on Tuesday for induction. Should have a group leader by the end of the week.

PB: Are you throwing your hat into the ring?

DW: Look, I've probably got more experience than most of the 57 new members, but we'll see. I wouldn't say no to a decent portfolio – planning and economic development would be lovely. Something with teeth.

PB: David, congratulations again on what can only be described as a thumping win.

DW: Thank you – but it wasn't just me. We had a brilliant team. The amount of work that went in – thousands of leaflets, hours of canvassing, dodgy knees from doorsteps – and not one dodgy spreadsheet in sight. We've got the best supporters in the county, and that's official.

Commentary: In what was arguably the most colourful result of the local elections, David Wimble didn't just win – he stage-dived into County Hall, helicopter blades and all. Reform UK may not have painted the nation torquise overnight, but in Kent, they certainly gave the political establishment something to chew on.

And as for the rest of us? We'll be watching with interest – and maybe a pair of earplugs for the next social media fallout.



Driving etiquette is dead – and I, for one, am not mourning

There was once a time, so legend has it, when the roads of Britain were places of decency, patience, and the occasional cheery wave. Today, stepping into a car is like entering an apocalyptic gladiator pit, except with worse music and more hazard lights.

Let's start with the courtesy of letting people out into slow-moving traffic, shall we? Remember when flashing your lights and beckoning someone out was a charming little ritual? A civilised nod to our shared misery? Well, forget it. Today's drivers have the generosity of a damp tea towel. Sit there all you like, indicator blinking like a desperate lighthouse, while the endless snake of dead-eyed commuters slithers past pretending you're an optical illusion.

And when — miracle of miracles — someone does let you out, you'd better salute them like you're on parade at Buckingham Palace. Fail to give the sacred "thank you" wave and you'll receive a look so poisonous through their rear-view mirror that you'll wonder if you've just insulted their ancestors.

Meanwhile, the "letting people out" game is made all the more thrilling by the herd of rage-addled drivers behind them, who behave as if allowing you onto the road is a direct personal attack on their birthright to sit bumper-to-bumper.

Moving swiftly onto the soul-flattening despair that is temporary traffic lights. Temporary. Ha. Some of these lights have celebrated birthdays. There you sit, heart shrivelling in your chest, while nothing happens. You could knit a jumper in the time it takes for them to change.

Then, finally — green! Salvation! Except, of course, it's wasted, because the leader of your convoy has decided that today is the day they test out their new "driving-like-a-crippled-snail" technique. Tap tap tap on the accelerator, as if they're scared the car might bolt for freedom. By the time they've crossed the threshold, the light's already going orange and the four cars behind them are contemplating ritual sacrifice. You, my friend, are not getting through. Not this century.

Now, let's get to the real blood-boiler: Parking. Ah, parking — the simple art form that has now been rebranded as "Rules for Other People." Double yellow lines? Pfft, mere decoration. Zigzags? Lovely place for a quick phone call. Pavement? Excellent. Let's inconvenience pedestrians, wheelchair users, and pushchairs in one fell swoop.

But no, let's zoom in on the masterpiece of idiocy that is New Romney High Street, where the worst offenders demonstrate their craft.

Particularly outside the spot opposite Oak Hall Surgery — you know, the place we locals still call Country Mouse because, believe it or not, we have memories that stretch back more than three minutes.

If you're not from around here, picture it: a crossroads, a key bottleneck, a place where visibility is critical unless you fancy playing vehicular Russian Roulette. So what better spot, thought some dazzling intellects, to plonk their cars directly on the double yellow lines, obliterating any chance of seeing oncoming traffic?

Trying to edge out onto the High Street now is an exercise in pure blind faith. You creep out millimetre by millimetre, eyes darting

wildly like a warthog at a fireworks display, all while hoping the next thing you hear isn't the crunch of your front bumper being pulverised by an unseen Volvo.

And why? Because Mr or Mrs "It Won't Take a Minute" decided that walking an extra twenty yards from a legitimate parking space was too great a hardship to bear. After all, they had vitally important business to attend to — like picking up a coffee and a paper.

And here's the real kicker: there would actually be plenty of parking — if the council, in its infinite wisdom, hadn't designated half of New Romney High Street as "emergency vehicle spaces."

Because clearly, the only logical solution to a small-town parking problem is to create huge empty zones that no one can use, in case of some hypothetical emergency. Never mind that if an actual emergency vehicle needed to get through, it could (and would) park wherever it jolly well liked. No, best to fill the town centre with vast stretches of completely empty tarmac while the rest of us circle like frustrated vultures, looking for a spot that doesn't cost you a parking ticket, your dignity, or both.

Oh, and don't dare challenge the serial parkers outside Country Mouse, either.

You'll be met with a barrage of excuses that would make a schoolboy blush:

"I was only two minutes!" (Translation: rules don't apply if I'm quick about it.)

"I had my hazards on!" (Translation: flashing lights create an impenetrable force field of legality.)

"There was nowhere else to park!" (Translation: I cannot physically survive walking an extra thirty seconds like a normal human being.)

And when they emerge, takeaway latte in hand, they'll give you a look of utter bewilderment — as if you're the mad one for not understanding their divine exemption from traffic laws.

Frankly, if I were Prime Minister for a day, I'd make it legal to launch inconsiderate parkers directly into the English Channel via a medieval trebuchet. Society would be cleaner, quieter, and the roads a thousand times safer.

Because, let's be honest, this epidemic of parking stupidity, light-dawdling, and courtesy-deficit isn't about ignorance. It's about pure, uncut selfishness. A generation of drivers who learned all the rules, nodded politely during their tests, and then promptly forgot everything the second they got a whiff of "I'm more important than everyone else."

What we are witnessing is not simply the death of good manners on the road. It's the complete burial, funeral, and repurposing of the headstone as someone's DIY barbecue pit.

Driving in Britain today isn't just a means of transport; it's a daily masterclass in trying to keep your blood pressure below "exploding tomato" levels. And if things don't improve soon, I suggest we all start fitting our cars with medieval-style battering rams and getting on with it.

At least then, when some idiot parks on the double yellows outside Country Mouse for the sixth time in a day, we'll be properly equipped to express our heartfelt thanks.

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Budgeting Tips

By June Gooch



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Welcome to our new 'Pet Page' we asked our readers what they wanted and you said 'more pet features' so here you go.... Brought to you by our Friends at Abbeywell Vets in Folkestone



The telltale signs that your beloved pet may be under the weather.

Animals are creatures of habit, which is perhaps why we find them so comforting in a chaotic world. For no matter what the state of the stock market, or the latest geo-political crisis, our trusty pet will wake you up at 6am for food, a walk, a snuggle like clockwork. By this logic then, devoted pet-owners are able to instinctively know when something might be up with Fido. However, it is still worth knowing the signs that something might be amiss.

One of the earliest indicators is a change in appetite. If your pet suddenly loses interest in their favourite meals or treats, it could be a sign of an underlying health issue. So if a usually-ravenous pet is suddenly disinterested in their meals, or stranger still, turning their furry nose up at treats, keep an eye on them.

Another telltale sign is lethargy or a decrease in energy levels. Most pets are usually quite active and playful, so if they are suddenly sleeping more than usual or seem less enthusiastic about activities they once enjoyed, it's time to take note. Of course, you may have on your hands a supremely lazy Labrador or an unflappable feline, in which

case, be on the lookout for excessive sleeping or signs that moving may actually be painful.

Behavioural changes can also signal that something is amiss. If your pet becomes unusually aggressive, anxious or withdrawn, this could be a response to physical discomfort. Just like when us humans are suffering from a headache, we tend to be grouchy and hate being fussed. Similarly, a usually friendly animal who suddenly snaps when petted may be feeling discomfort.

Additionally, keep an eye out for any changes in their grooming habits. Cats, in particular, are meticulous groomers, so a lack of grooming or excessive attention to it can indicate stress or illness.



On the more explicit end of the scale, physical symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhoea, coughing, sneezing or noticeable weight loss should never be ignored. These often point to more severe conditions that require immediate veterinary attention. Of course, it could just be a passing upset from an unwise pavement snack, but anything lasting more than 24 hours is worth investigating.

Lastly, pay attention to any unusual smells emanating from your pet's mouth (beyond your common garden cat or dog breath), ears, or skin, as these could be signs of infections or other health problems. Regular check-ups with your veterinarian are essential to ensure your pet's well-being and to catch any potential issues early on.

Wildlife

By Paul Trodd

Nightingales & Bluebells

With all the birding excitement centred on Dungeness at this time of year it's easy to neglect our local woodlands which currently are redolent with Bluebells and alive to the sound of bird song.

Bluebells occur along the Atlantic sea-board from Spain to France but nowhere are they as abundant and spectacular as in the British Isles where they are typically associated with ancient wild wood. This botanical herald of spring also provides an important source of nectar for a range of early insects including drone-flies, bumble-bees and butterflies such as the stunning Brimstone and Orange Tip. On a warm May morning the sight and smell of this iconic plant carpeting the old Wealden woodland floor is intoxicating; but once the leaf canopy closes over by the end of the month the show will be over until next spring.

Across the Low Weald migrant Nightingales have recently arrived from their winter quarters in the rain forest band south of the Sahara and can now be heard in the wooded country around Hamstreet and Appledore, as well as various places along the Royal Military Canal where there is suitable scrub cover. Their rich, explosive song is delivered throughout the day and night but it is in the stillness of daybreak within the dawn chorus when it is most evocative, and definitely worth the effort of an early morning alarm call.

With limited leaf cover now is the time to go in search of

this elusive member of the chat family. In shape it resembles a large, chubby Robin with brown and rufous tones and a cocked tail. Nightingales are a challenge to see as they mostly sing low down in thickets and spend long periods feeding on the ground concealed amongst cover; in fact, they would largely go unnoticed if it were not for their distinctive voice.

Nightingales were once a common and numerous summer visitor heard across England as far north as the Yorkshire Wolds, but due to a combination of habitat loss and habitat degradation their range and population has contracted dramatically; indeed, a recent survey has shown a decline of 90% over the past 50 years. Today they number just a few thousand pairs, scattered mainly across south-east England where their preferred haunts of coppiced woodland and river-valley willow scrub still exists; the core areas being in Essex, Sussex and Kent.

However, this famous songster can still be heard locally in all its vocal glory, but don't delay, as singing ceases by early June as the breeding cycle winds down. The adults then undergo a partial moult before slipping away like spectres in the night through late summer, followed by the juveniles a while later. Their epic return journey to the forests of The Gambia in west Africa is often completed in a single flight over the Mediterranean Sea and the ever-expanding Sahara Desert, which is some achievement for a small bundle of feathers weighing in at around 20 grams.



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So what have we got for your viewing delights this issue. Well we've got a three part drama from Disney, a war film from Alex Garland, the latest Tom Hardy action movie from Havoc, the new movie from Steve McQueen, an action movie from Sky about a window cleaner and one of the best music documentaries about one of the most innovative rap groups from the USA.

The Stolen Girl - Disney+ is a 5 part kidnap drama. When air hostess Eliza is late picking up daughter Lucia from school she gets talking to a fellow parent whose daughter Rebecca is friends with Lucia. Despite meeting for the first time they arrange a playdate and Lucia stays with Rebecca. The plan is for Lucia to be dropped off the following but when she doesn't arrive Eliza goes to the home only to find the home unoccupied. So begins the search for Lucia.



Once you get past the stupidity of allowing your child to stay with a complete stranger you will become engulfed in a drama that promises so much but delivers so little. There are the usual plot twists most of which are easy to spot and lines delivered in a melodramatic but methodical manner that attempts to build up the tension but fails to get out of first gear. This may be some peoples cup of tea but not for me.

Alex Garland's Civil War was one of the best films of last year. An interesting insight into a civil war in the US as a rogue President clings onto power against advancing forces. A Dystopian tale of Fiction or Non-Fiction especially relevant with the Tariff touting King of America in power.

His latest film **Warfare - On general** release is based on a true story and co-written with Ex-Navy Seal Ray Mendoza who was part of the Platoon that were providing cover for a US Marines operation when they were attacked by Iraqi fighters. What starts as a support mission soon becomes a rescue mission as they are trapped inside the Iraqi house, they took over, after suffering fatalities in the attack.



As war movies go this is a raw and claustrophobic thriller which due to excellent camerawork takes you alongside the soldiers fighting to stay alive. When the bombs go off it's incredibly loud and you feel as disorientated as the shell-shocked troops. Based on the experiences and accounts of the platoon Warfare captures the intensity of war and takes you deep into the heart of the action. The cast successfully manage to bring their characters to life and in doing so give an understanding of the situation

they are thrown in.

Warfare is a short film but that allows them to stick to scene and after briefly introducing its characters the action is full on and in your face. If I was looking for similarities the excellent Black Hawk Down springs to mind. War is hell and Warfare shows that in a highly realistic manner.

I like Tom Hardy from his first role in Black Hawk Down through to WAZ, Legend, Bronson, Peaky Blinders, Mad Max: Thunder Road Bikeriders and the Venom films he has proved to be a highly versatile actor. His latest role is in **Havoc on Netflix** in which he plays estranged homicide cop Patrick Walker. Walker is also on the payroll Lawrence Beaumont (Forest Whittaker) a wealthy and powerful businessman. Beaumont's son Charlie is part of a crew that has just ripped off a consignment of washing machines that contain a hidden shipment of cocaine. When the group take the cocaine to the Tsui a local Triad, for whom Mia is paying off a debt after stealing a car, they become involved in a violent shoot-out after a rival gang burst in on the deal and kill Tsui. When Beaumont learns that his son is in danger he orders Walker to find and protect his son and so begins a violent and bloody trial of destruction.



When I say this film is violent I mean it, why just shoot someone why not empty a whole round into them and this is the type of violence that follows throughout. As for Hardy he plays the same role he played in WAZ, Bikeriders and Venom a washed up, rough around the edges character with a broad New York accent. As for the plot the aim is to get in as much bar room brawling and gratuitous violence as possible and Havoc certainly delivers on that. Not Hardy's greatest role but like I say everything is secondary to the violence.

Steve McQueen is a well respected director best known for his film 12 Years a Slave. His latest film **Blitz - Amazon Prime** was one of interest for me because it starred one of my music heroes in his film debut none other than the Modfather Mr Paul Weller.



Blitz is set in London during World War 2 and follows a young mixed race boy George who lives with his Mum Rita (Saoirse Ronan) and Grandad Gilbert (Paul Weller) With London under attack from the Luftwaffe George is evacuated with the rest of London's youngsters but George doesn't want to go and leaves on bad terms with his Mum. When on the train George encounters

racism and decides to jump off the train to return to London. The story follows George's attempts to get home while Mum Rita tries to carry on.

McQueen is known for his tackling of racism and Blitz follows in the same vein but it is more than just a film about racism. It perfectly captures the Blitz and acts as a historical drama and a reminder of the war that the civilians of London undertook as they stood up to and defied the constant bombings of the Luftwaffe. The imagery of the attacks on London is both moving and chilling and McQueen perfectly captures the era.

Elliott Heffernan is brilliant as George a boy who has to deal with prejudices and Saoirse Ronan proves again that she is a capable actress with a superb voice to boot. Stephen Graham also features as a World War 2 Fagin exploiting the chaos of London during the Blitz and as for Paul Weller well he spends most of his time playing the piano but it is an accomplished debut.

I really enjoyed Blitz partly because of the performances and partly because of McQueen's dedication to detail but because it is a tribute to the bravery of Londoners during their darkest hour.

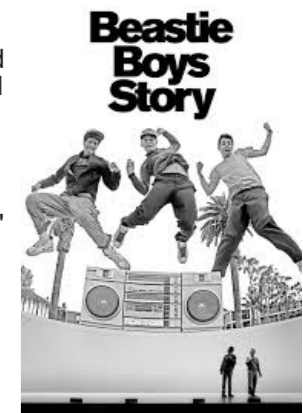
When your energy companies gala is interrupted by environmental activists who are you going to call upon to save the day, The army, the SAS, the Police no the window cleaner.

Cleaner - Sky/Now TV is an action movie about Joanna 'Joey' Locke who witnesses the take over of the canary wharf building and with her autistic brother Michael trapped in the building it's up to her to take on the baddies and rescue Michael. Yes there is an element of Die Hard in here but instead of John McClane in a vest we have Joey Locke with a chammy leather, no I'm joking because Joey is no ordinary window cleaner she is ex-military.



Taz Skylar plays the over the top psychotic baddie Noah and Daisy Ridley is believable as Joey but it is standard fare, it is watchable but it is a subject that has been delivered before and a rehash of a thousand plots. I can't wait for the sequel Cleaner 2 who stole my bucket.

I mentioned earlier that Paul Weller was one of my all-time heroes but another group I loved was The Beastie Boys so when I saw **Beastie Boys Story - Apple TV** I had to give it a watch. From their early days of their juvenile hits 'You Gotta Fight' and 'No Sleep to Brooklyn' to the hit albums Ill Communication and Hello Nasty the Beasties Ad Rock (Adam Horowitz), Mike D (Michael Diamond) and MCA (Adam Yauch) grew up before our very eyes into accomplished musicians and fine songwriters. Sadly the loss of MCA at the age of 47 brought the Beasties to a premature conclusion but the remaining Beasties Ad Rock and Mike D decided to tell their story on stage in front of a live audience.



What follows is a funny, warts 'n' all story of how three young friends became overnight sensations, dramatically fell apart and then reinvented themselves into global superstars. As you would expect Ad Rock and Mike D know how to work a live audience and they certainly entertain but what you are left with is the definitive story of how three friends conquered the music industry by doing it all their own way. Compulsive viewing for Beastie Boy fans.

SPOILER ALERT: I've recently reviewed **The Last of Us - Sky/Now TV and 9-1-1 - Disney+** but recent episodes have left me reeling. Shows are not adverse to killing off main characters, lets face it The Walking Dead would happily send viewers into meltdown as they killed off loved characters such as Glenn but the aforementioned The Last of Us and 9-1-1 have just killed off key characters leaving viewers stunned. I won't tell you who the respective shows have killed off but I will say WHY!



That's your lot for now I was going to review Suspect: The killing of Jean Charles De Menezes but it can wait until next issue because it's still too raw and I'm still fuming. Until then happy viewing readers.

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Checkatrade

Quick Crossword

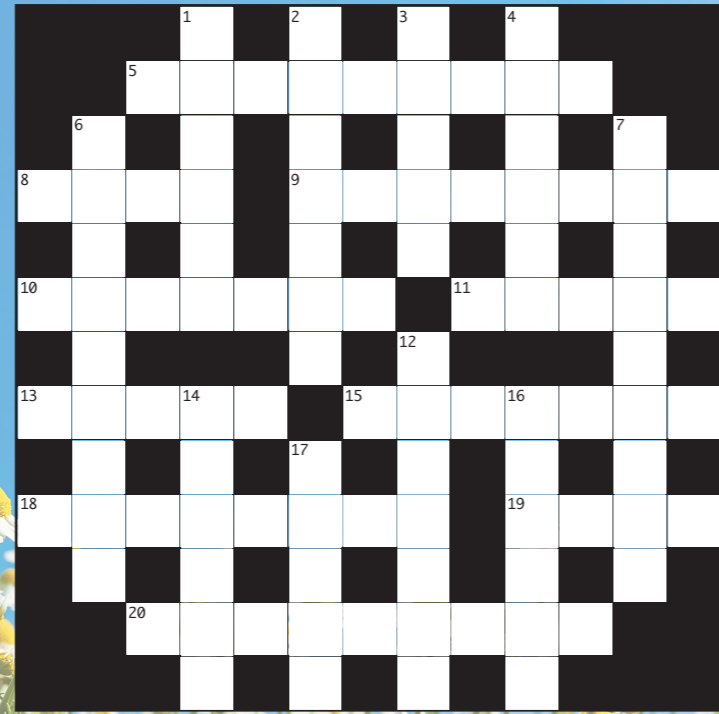
#052

Across Clues:

- 5. Providing or obtaining food (9)
- 8. Plant used for flavouring (4)
- 9. Having the ability to attract (8)
- 10. To extend (7)
- 11. A condition (5)
- 13. Excessive pride (5)
- 15. Those who suffer from harmful event (7)
- 18. To increase (8)
- 19. Without covering, exposed (4)
- 20. Assigned to a lower position (9)

Down Clues:

- 1. A thin film of soapy water (6)
- 2. A facial expression showing discomfort (7)
- 3. Male deer (5)
- 4. Secret (6)
- 6. A luxurious apartment (9)
- 7. A natural, often permanent mark (9)
- 12. Container used for holding burning coals (7)
- 14. Fashioned into a specific form (6)
- 16. A small, flat electronic device (6)
- 17. Cooked by dry heat (5)



Answers:
 Across: 5. Nutrition, 8. Herb, 9. Magnetite, 10. Stretch, 11. State, 13. Boast, 15. Victims, 18. Escalate, 19. Bare, 20. Relegated.
 Down: 1. Bubbles, 2. Grimace, 3. Stag, 6. Penthouse, 7. Birthmark, 12. Firepan, 14. Shapen, 16. Tablet, 17. Baked.

British Villages Wordsearch



- Aberdaron
- Aberfeldy
- Alfriston
- Ballintoy
- Bibury
- Cenarth
- Clovelly
- Gardenstown
- Glenarm
- Groomsport
- Hathersage
- Hawkshead
- Luss
- Pittenweem
- Rhossili
- Tintern

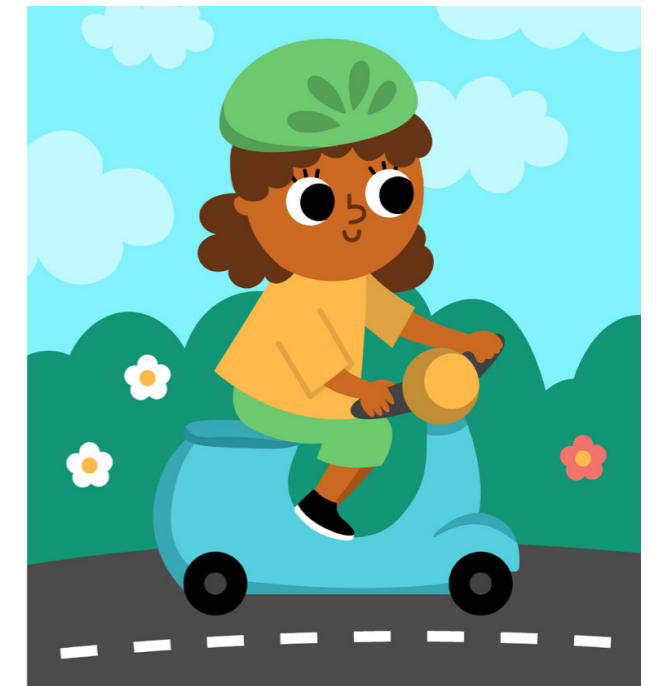
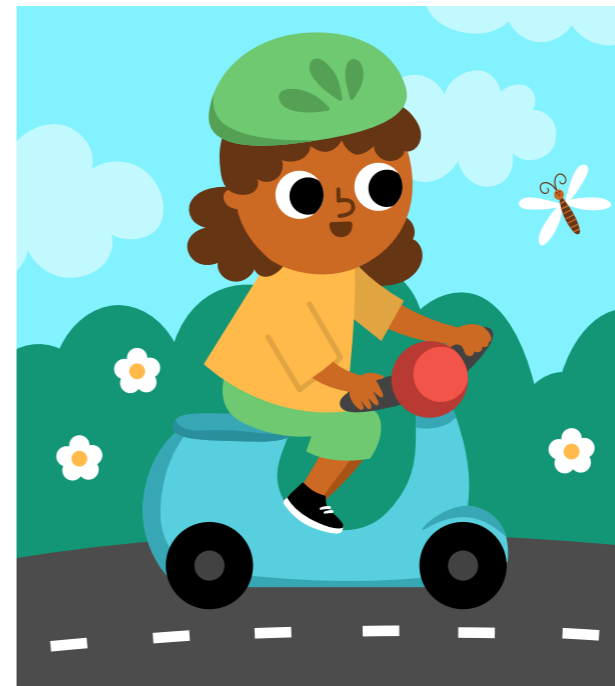
Sudoku

3	4	2			6		8	9
5		9	2					1
	6	7		8	3			
2	3		6	9		5		4
	5	1	4	3		9		
	9			5	2	8		3
	1						9	8
8	2		3		9			7
9				2	1	3	4	

Sudoku

Spot the Difference!

There are 10 differences between the two images below.
 How many can you spot?



Church Update

By June Gooch



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