

## “WELL DONE, STARMER... THE COUNTRY’S ON ITS ARSE”



Landlord Dean Miller said “its actually really sad, this is not what we wanted when we brought the pub 4 years ago”

Pub banner that blasted the Government becomes a grim symbol of the end of pubs as we know them

A banner tied to fencing outside a shuttered country pub has become an unlikely national headline — a blunt, angry slogan that sums up the mood in Britain’s struggling local-boozer trade.

“Well done Starmer.... The Country’s on its arse,” it read.

It appeared as The Plough closed its doors at Christmas, but it could have been hung outside hundreds of pubs across England and Wales now fighting for survival — or simply giving up.

The national picture: pubs vanishing at the rate of one a day

The numbers are stark. Analysis of official business rates data shows the total number of pubs in England and Wales fell to 38,623 by the end of December 2025, down from 38,989 a year earlier — a net loss of 366 pubs in 2025 alone, which works out at roughly one pub every day.

Zoom out slightly and the picture is just as bleak. In the last count before Labour entered Downing Street, the same dataset showed 39,096 pubs at the end of June 2024.

Compare that with 38,623 at the end of December 2025, and the net loss comes to 473 pubs over that period the months spanning Labour’s first year-plus in government.

These are not “temporarily closed” pubs that might reopen after a refit.

Continued on page 4

## High street crackdown: raids, arrests and licence reviews as officials target illegal working



A clampdown on illegal working is gathering pace across Folkestone, Hythe and Romney Marsh, with a spate of enforcement visits, notices and arrests in recent months putting parts of the local high street on alert.

Officers have not identified any single trade as the culprit. But it is understood that checks have increasingly focused on a handful of “high-risk” business types where cash transactions are common, staff can be taken on informally at short notice, and ownership can change hands quickly.

Locally, that has meant particular attention on some takeaways and late-opening food outlets, barbers and vape

Continued on page 5

# Drive Motor Spares

Mon-Fri 9am to 5.30pm  
Saturday 9am to 3.30pm

Car, LCV & Motorcycle  
Parts & Accessories

Bicycle Parts, Accessories  
& Servicing

Leisure, Camping & Gas  
Stockists



NOW AT; 77 High Street, New Romney, TN28 8AZ

Tel: 01797 338600

The data tracks venues that have disappeared for good — commonly demolished or converted into other uses, including housing.

The industry's warning is consistent: pubs are being hit by a pile-on of rising costs, with business rates and employment costs frequently cited as the biggest threats.

And that's the national story — the slow draining away of Britain's social glue.

**The local story: last orders at The Plough**



Here in the Looker patch, the national crisis has a name and an address.

The Plough, a pub locals describe as “part of the furniture of the community”, shut its doors at Christmas. Landlord Dean Miller said the reason wasn't lack of affection — it was the maths.

“It was just impossible to make it a viable option,” he told The Looker.

Dean says he is now taking what he sees as the only realistic route left: converting the historic pub into two houses.

And he isn't shy about why he believes the pub model is breaking.

He told The Looker that business rates, wage costs and National Insurance pressures are driving pubs to the wall — and added: “The government under Labour are doing their best to kill local pubs.”

Dean's argument is familiar across the industry: the public picture of landlords as comfortably-off hosts bears little resemblance to the reality.

“Everyone thinks being a landlord is a cosy fun way of earning a living,” he said. “But the reality is very different. By the time you have paid for the staff, paid electric, gas, rates — plus logs for the fire — you're left working for about half what even the government would regard as the living wage for a husband and wife couple running a business.”

For a couple running a pub, that comparison bites: pub owners often work far beyond “full-time” hours — mornings, late finishes, weekends — but the profit left after bills can be painfully thin, especially once quiet midweek trade becomes the norm rather than the exception.

**The banner: protest, punchline — or prophecy?** The banner outside The Plough became a talking point precisely because it expressed what many in hospitality say privately: that the sector is being asked to carry costs it cannot pass on to customers.

Asked about it, Dean said he knew nothing about who put it there — but added that it “makes a fair point”.

Whether you agree with the politics or not, the wider point is

hard to ignore: the closure of a pub is rarely just the loss of a business. It's the loss of a meeting place, a noticeboard, a warm refuge in winter, a venue for wakes, birthdays and charity raffles — the small, everyday rituals that make a community feel like a community.

And once a pub becomes housing, it almost never comes back.

**Why only food pubs have a fighting chance**

A hard truth is emerging in towns and villages: the wet-led pub — the one that survives mainly on pints — is becoming an endangered species.

Landlords say the pubs with the best chance of survival are those that can sell food consistently, keep tables turning, and run like a restaurant as much as a bar.

But that brings its own problem: the cost of a simple family meal out has risen to the point where many households now think twice.

A typical pub trip for a family of four can easily land in the £70–£100 bracket, even without going wild:

two adult mains (often £16–£20 each), two children's meals (often £7–£9 each), soft drinks (and perhaps a pint or a glass of wine), plus the “little extras” that now come with eating out.

For many families, that isn't a casual midweek treat — it's an occasional event. And fewer visits means less reliable trade for pubs trying to survive.

“Zero tolerance” fears — and the rural squeeze

Rural pubs face another pressure point: driving.

This week, ministers signalled plans within a new road safety strategy that include consulting on lowering the drink-drive limit in England and Wales.

Safety campaigners argue it will save lives. Many landlords fear it will change behaviour overnight — turning “one quick one” into “none at all”, particularly in villages with limited late-night public transport.

Even the prospect of tougher rules can chill trade, landlords argue, because pubs in rural areas are often built around the assumption that customers will drive — responsibly — and that a pint with a meal is part of the draw.

**So... have we seen the end of the country pub?** The warning signs are everywhere: shorter opening hours, fewer staff, kitchens closed midweek, and “temporary” shutdowns that quietly become permanent.

Britain's pub isn't dying because people have stopped loving pubs. It's dying because the old model — community hub, wet-led trade, modest food, long hours, small margins — is being crushed between rising costs and a public that simply has less spare cash.

The banner outside The Plough might have been put up as a protest. Or a joke. Or a dig at Westminster. But for many locals, it read like something else entirely: A final, furious caption on the boarded-up door of a British institution — and a warning that if we don't change course, the pub we grew up with will soon be something you only see in old photographs... or in the name of a housing development.

What do you think? Email : [info@thelooker.co.uk](mailto:info@thelooker.co.uk)

# Romney Marsh water drafted in as major incident declared



Water from Romney Marsh and the Folkestone area has been used to help stabilise supplies across parts of Kent and East Sussex after a weekend of disruption left thousands of households with dry taps or dangerously low pressure.

Kent County Council declared a major incident on Monday as the scale of the outage widened and emergency arrangements were put in place to support vulnerable residents and protect essential services.

South East Water said a mix of problems had hit the system at once, including the impact of Storm Goretti, a power cut at a pumping plant, and faults across the network. By Monday, the company said 14 postcodes were still affected around East Grinstead, Frant and Tunbridge Wells, with some customers told full supply might not return until Tuesday.

While the worst of the disruption was focused outside the Marsh, the knock-on effect has been felt locally because the wider network is interconnected. It is understood that treated water from more resilient parts of the system — including Romney Marsh and Folkestone — has been routed to “top up” pressure in the hardest-

hit areas while engineers locate and repair bursts.

A local water industry source said the freeze–thaw weather has been a key factor. “When temperatures plunge then rise rapidly, older mains and joints are put under intense stress. You can go from a small weakness to a full burst very quickly,” they said.

Across Romney Marsh, residents have watched events with a familiar sense of unease. Communities from New Romney to Lydd have experienced intermittent pressure issues in recent winters, and many are worried that emergency transfers elsewhere highlight just how stretched the system can become in extreme weather.

“It's a strange feeling knowing water from down here is being used to prop up the network when we've had our own pressure problems in the past,” said one Marsh resident. “You just want reassurance the system is robust for everyone.”

In East Grinstead, water was handed out at collection points including East Grinstead Rugby Club, with tankers delivering supplies and extra measures taken to keep services running. Schools and libraries closed in some areas due to the lack of water, and the Queen Victoria Hospital warned some appointments may need to be carried out virtually.

A resident in Tunbridge Wells said the experience had been “unhygienic and exhausting”, adding: “I just want water in the tap. Is that too much to ask?”

South East Water apologised and said teams were working to restore supplies, but warned recovery depended on getting reservoir levels back up and completing repairs safely.

For Romney Marsh, the incident has sharpened an uncomfortable question: if winter freeze–thaw cycles can trigger this level of disruption elsewhere, how prepared is the whole region's ageing network for the next cold snap?

- ✓ **Great Value**  
for trade and DIYers
- ✓ **Free Delivery**  
on eligible local orders
- ✓ **Quality & Service**  
when you **Do It Youngs**







## summer... we're ready for you.

Shop online and in store



**YOUNGS**  
TIMBER & BUILDERS  
MERCHANTS

Your local timber & builders merchant

[doityoungs.com](http://doityoungs.com)





**Dymchurch**  
Hythe Rd, TN29 0LN



**Biddenden**  
Benenden Rd, TN27 8DX



**Folkestone**  
Caesars Way, CT19 4AL

# Next step for disputed 40-home Hythe build

– still no affordable housing in latest plans



A controversial plan to build 40 homes on a green space off Station Road, Hythe has moved a step closer, with the developer now submitting the detailed design application needed before construction can begin.

Kingston Homes – a Hythe-based firm – secured outline planning permission last year, despite strong opposition from residents and Hythe Town Council. The company has now lodged a “reserved matters” application, setting out the proposed layout, appearance and landscaping for the site.

The scheme comprises 12 apartments and 28 family houses, designed by award-winning local architects Holloway Studios. Kingston Homes said the development would deliver “some of the best homes in the area” and that the homes are designed with “leading sustainability”.

The plans remain contentious, not least because they include no affordable housing. Folkestone & Hythe District Council (FHDC) guidance says developments should provide at least 22% affordable housing where viable.

Residents’ concerns have centred on traffic and road safety on Station Road, the scale of the buildings, and the impact on neighbouring properties and privacy.

In total, 85 objections were logged on FHDC’s planning portal – with no comments in support.

One objector said recent design tweaks were not enough, arguing: “Recent alterations to the apartment roof are minor and do not address concerns regarding overdevelopment of the plot and loss of privacy to existing residents.”

The same resident also questioned the number of homes proposed, claiming the developer had not “adequately justified” building 10 more than had been allocated for the site in the district’s Local Plan.

**Road safety fears and speeding figures raised** Concerns about traffic have been repeatedly raised by residents, with one objector pointing to a survey that recorded 34,000 vehicles passing in a single week – with 5,000 allegedly over the speed limit.

They also claimed previous applications for the site had been rejected over road safety grounds.

Hythe Town Council also opposed the plans, saying revisions were “insufficient”.

At the earlier planning meeting, Hythe Mayor Cllr Stephen Bailey told councillors the issues could be reduced by “reversing the design with smaller dwellings, fewer dwellings or both”.

## Affordable housing ‘clawback’ agreed

When the proposals went before FHDC’s planning committee in January last year, councillors deferred the decision to allow a viability assessment on the lack of affordable housing.

That assessment was independently reviewed by the council. Kingston Homes agreed to a clawback mechanism, meaning any additional profit generated by the site would contribute towards affordable housing on other developments elsewhere in the district.

## Apartment block height reduced

Holloway Studios also reduced the height of the apartment building by 0.5 metres ahead of outline approval.

Even so, many residents maintained there were “too many unanswered questions” when outline permission was ultimately granted in March last year.

Local voices: “We need homes” – versus “wrong place, wrong scale”



## Reaction in Hythe remains split.

One resident, supportive of new development in principle, said: “People keep saying we need homes – well, we do. If they’re building them, at least make sure they’re good quality and properly landscaped. Hythe can’t freeze in time.”

But another nearby resident said: “It’s the wrong place and the wrong scale for Station Road. It’s already busy, and anyone who uses it at peak time knows it.”

A third local, who asked not to be named, suggested the debate is also exposing tensions about who gets to live in Hythe: “The Down-from-Londoners won’t like it. They found it alright to move down and take away homes for local people – but now they’re here, they don’t want any others.”

Others pushed back on that sentiment, with one resident commenting: “It’s not about where people are from. It’s about this particular site, the traffic, and the fact there’s no affordable housing included.”

## What happens next

FHDC is expected to make a decision on the reserved matters application later this year. If approved, the scheme would be cleared to proceed to the construction stage, subject to any further conditions.

Continued from Page 1

shops – sectors repeatedly flagged by enforcement bodies nationally as vulnerable to abuse by a minority of operators. Residents say they have noticed a visible shift, with more official visits, more paperwork requests and a tougher stance being taken where rules are found to have been broken.

Officials argue this is not simply about immigration. They say illegal working can undercut honest employers, distort wages and, in the worst cases, enable exploitation and wider criminality. Legitimate business owners, already struggling with higher costs, complain that they cannot compete with those who cut corners on staffing, tax and compliance.

“We’re all paying our bills, wages, insurance and tax,” said Mark H., a café owner in Folkestone. “If someone is using labour they shouldn’t be using, at rates they shouldn’t be paying, it isn’t just unlawful – it’s unfair on everyone who plays by the rules.”

But community voices are also warning against a witch-hunt. Several residents said enforcement must be evidence-led and that the vast majority of independent businesses, including those run by people who moved to Kent from overseas, operate lawfully and contribute to the local economy.

“This has to be about the law, not about someone’s accent or background,” said Tracy W., from Hythe. “We should be tough on offenders, but not tar whole streets or whole sectors because of rumours.”

## Sunshine Bistro: licence under threat after Home Office raid



The most recent high-profile case involves Sunshine Bistro in Sandgate Road, Folkestone, where the business’s premises licence is now under threat following a Home Office visit.

According to a licence review report submitted to Folkestone and Hythe District Council (FHDC), the South East Immigration, Compliance and Enforcement (ICE) team attended the premises on 9 April 2025 after receiving information suggesting illegal workers were being employed there.

The report states officers arrested four individuals who they say had no right to work in the UK. The Home Office document claims each worker told officers they were engaged by Halit Guner, described as the owner and licence holder since 8 April 2008, and that three said he was their uncle. The report says each was either offered employment



or permitted to help.

One individual showed officers an Application Registration Card (ARC), which can allow work in the UK in certain circumstances for some asylum seekers. However, the Home Office report states checks of its records indicated the person’s asylum claim had been withdrawn in December 2024 due to non-compliance, ending their right to work several months before the visit. That individual admitted working at the business for about a month in a full-time role, six days a week, and being paid into a bank account, the report adds.

The Home Office also describes finding a second worker carrying out front-of-house duties who initially provided false identification details.

The Home Office is asking FHDC to revoke the premises licence, arguing that illegal working “clearly failed” the licensing objective to prevent crime and disorder. In the report, the Home Office states it does not believe additional conditions or simply “remediating” the situation would act as a sufficient deterrent.

## A committee hearing date has not yet been set by FHDC.

A Home Office spokesperson said: “Illegal working undermines honest employers, undercuts local wages and fuels organised immigration crime.” The spokesperson added that enforcement action has increased nationally, including a reported rise in arrests linked to illegal working, and said further action would follow.

Trading Standards also step up action on counterfeit tobacco alongside immigration enforcement, Trading Standards teams are gearing up for tougher action on illegal and counterfeit tobacco and vaping products. Officers have repeatedly warned that illicit tobacco can be tied to wider criminal networks, while also undermining responsible retailers who comply with duty, age checks and product safety rules.

Some residents claim certain outlets are “obvious fronts”, though authorities have not publicly confirmed any such allegations in the local area beyond specific cases under investigation.

Nadia A., from Folkestone, added: “If people are working illegally, it can be because they’re being exploited. Go after the bosses who profit – but don’t turn it into a blame game against migrants.”

The message from legitimate traders is clear: enforce the rules firmly, but fairly. For the high street, the stakes are high – not just for those facing investigation, but for the many businesses trying to survive on tight margins while keeping their side of the bargain.

# Editor's Word

David Wimble



Well, that was our first real brush with winter.

Let's face it, we Brits do love a good moan about the weather, but up until last week we'd got off fairly lightly. Then along came the first winter storms – a timely reminder that when a cold snap hits, it pays to be prepared.

I popped into Sainsbury's in New Romney to pick up a few bits and pieces and was amazed to see just how bare some of the shelves were. It's a familiar story: all it takes is the hint of extreme weather and the great British way of life grinds to a shuddering halt.

While we didn't see much snow locally, the ice was a real problem. I was in my shop in Hythe when I witnessed a nasty fall – a lady slipped while carrying her shopping down the steps in the alleyway opposite. We rushed over to help and check she was alright. Thankfully she insisted she was, but it was a hard fall and a worrying reminder of just how dangerous icy conditions can be.

Moments like that really do underline the importance of looking out for one another. Checking in on neighbours, friends and family, or offering to pick up some shopping, can make all the difference. And with the long-range forecast suggesting more cold weather in the coming weeks, it's worth urging everyone to take extra care when out and about.

A quick word of thanks too to those who kept the district moving – council workers, farmers and volunteers who were out gritting roads and pavements, often in difficult conditions.

Talking of volunteers, it's hard not to notice how much cleaner the district feels these days. Elsewhere in this edition you'll find an update from the Romney Marsh litter pickers, and we'd like to publicly thank them for the tireless work they do. Of course, they wouldn't need to exist at all if more people simply took their litter home and disposed of it properly.

Finally, it's always sad to see another pub close its doors. In the 58 years I've been around on the Marsh, we've lost so many – places that once sat at the very heart of our communities. I'm half-tempted to ask my dad to put together an article charting just how many have gone over the past 50 years. I suspect the list would make sobering reading.

Stay warm, stay safe – and look out for one another.

*David*

## Financial Resolutions Mortgage Brokers Limited

The Mortgage and Insurance Specialists for Romney Marsh

- First time buyers
- Remortgages
- Home movers
- 5% deposit schemes
- Shared ownership
- Buy to lets
- Specialist mortgages
- Personal, family and business insurance needs

Call **01797 462810**  
or visit [www.finres.co.uk](http://www.finres.co.uk)  
to book your appointment



Head Office  
Romney Marsh Business Hub  
Mountfield Road  
New Romney  
Kent, TN28 8LH

## Firmager Funeral Service Ltd.

*A friendly voice at a difficult time*



- 24 hour service
- Prepaid funeral plans
- Home Visits
- Eco funerals available
- Private Chapel of Rest
- Monumental Mason

OWEN HOUSE, Fairfield Road,  
New Romney, Kent TN28 8HS  
Plenty of off road parking available

To Speak to Helen or Ashley  
Telephone: **01797 369277**

Email: [firmager@funeralpartners.co.uk](mailto:firmager@funeralpartners.co.uk)

[www.firmagerfuneralservice.co.uk](http://www.firmagerfuneralservice.co.uk)



## T SMITH ROOFING & BUILDING

ALL ASPECTS OF ROOFING RENEWALS & REPAIRS

Slate & Tile Roofs Flat Roofing Systems

Lead Work Chimney Repointing Moss Removal

Guttering Fascias & Soffits uPVC Cladding

PLUS ALL ASPECTS OF BUILDING WORK

Free Quotations Reliable Local Service Fully Insured

**Tel: 07512 697872 or 01303 684121**

Email: [tommy\\_smith73@yahoo.com](mailto:tommy_smith73@yahoo.com)

## Cinemamarsh

### Avatar- Fire and Ash

- Tuesday 30th December 1:00pm 6:00pm
- Wednesday 31st December 10:30am
- Friday 2nd January 2:30pm
- Saturday 3rd January 2:30pm
- Sunday 4th January 11:00am
- Monday 5th January 10:30pm
- Tuesday 6th January 2:30pm
- Wednesday 7th January 2:30pm
- Thursday 8th January 2:30pm

### The Housemaid

- Friday 2nd January 11:00am 7:15pm
- Saturday 3rd January 11:00am 7:15pm
- Sunday 4th January 3:25pm
- Monday 5th January 2:45pm
- Tuesday 6th January 11:00am 7:15pm
- Wednesday 7th January 11:00am 7:15pm
- Thursday 8th January 11:00am 7:15pm

### Song Sung Blue

- Friday 9th January 11:00am 2:30pm 7:15pm
- Saturday 10th January 11:00am 2:30pm 7:15pm
- Sunday 11th January 11:00am 2:30pm
- Monday 12th January 11:00am 2:30pm
- Tuesday 13th January 11:00am 2:30pm
- Wednesday 14th January 11:00am 2:30pm 7:15pm
- Thursday 15th January 11:00am 2:30pm 7:15pm

### Hamlet

- Thursday 22nd January 7:15pm



# Less Taxing Times: Kent Puts the Council Tax Rise on a Diet

Kent residents are being promised something they haven't seen for a while at County Hall: a council tax rise that's smaller than expected, paired with a pledge to protect frontline services and get the council's finances back into shape.

Kent County Council has published its draft budget proposals for 2026, including a proposed 3.99% increase in the county element of council tax — below the 5% level many people had braced themselves for.

And in an era where many authorities are leaning right up against the referendum limit, Kent's move is being positioned as a sign that the authority's finances are finally stabilising — without swinging the axe at the services residents actually use.

## A £2.6bn-a-year organisation — and the bills don't stop coming

Running the county council is not a small-town operation. Kent says it spends over £2.6 billion a year on services (excluding schools) — covering everything from adult social care and children's services to highways, waste disposal and libraries.

That money comes from a mix of income streams, but council tax remains one of the big levers councillors can pull — and it's also the one residents feel most directly.

The political row is familiar: opposition parties shout "chaos", administrations reply "reality", and households just want to know whether they'll still have the services they rely on.

## "Serious financial situation" — and a debt mountain

In a statement released alongside the draft budget, KCC leader Linden Kemkaran said the authority had inherited a tough position, describing a council "saddled with more than £700 million of debt" and spending around £84,000 every day on interest alone.

Those figures echo language used in the council's own decision-making updates, which have referenced £732m debt and £84,000 a day in interest costs as part of the challenge facing the authority.

**What's different now — "efficiencies" without closures** The headline claim from the current Reform-led administration is that it has focused on internal controls and value-for-money — including the much-talked-about DOLGE drive (the Department of Local Government Efficiency) — to squeeze waste before squeezing services.

And the council's published message is clear: the lower-than-expected 3.99% proposal has been achieved, it

says, "while protecting frontline services", with some areas set to see increased spending.

That matters because the threat list is the one residents always worry about first — libraries and household waste sites. In Kent's case, the political claim being made is simple: despite the noise, there are no plans in this draft budget to shut those everyday services.

Why any rise at all? Because council costs don't rise like the average shopping basket

Even with inflation easing, councils argue they face a different kind of pressure: staffing and contracted services.

Official inflation measures show CPI at 3.2% in the year to November 2025 (with CPIH at 3.5%, and RPI at 3.8% often quoted in public debate).

But councils buy care packages, run fleets, commission specialist services and employ large workforces — and Kent notes that employer National Insurance and minimum wage pressures feed directly into what it costs to deliver the same service year-on-year.

That's the core argument behind the 3.99%: not "more for more", but "enough to stand still" — while pushing efficiency savings hard to avoid deeper cuts.

The big "so what?": savings, debt reduction, and the 2026 pledge

Kent's draft budget announcement also points to claimed progress in-year.

According to KCC's own statement, the authority says it is:

on track to deliver £100m of savings and income,

has reprofiled almost £40m of future spending, and

has reduced its debt by £67m.

Those are the kinds of figures finance officers obsess over — because paying down borrowing isn't glamorous, but it's how you stop tomorrow's services being swallowed by yesterday's interest bill.

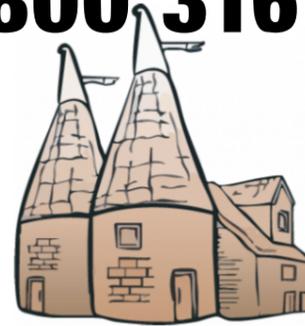
And politically, the next promise is already being made: the administration says its direction of travel is stronger finances, stronger services, and a push to keep next year's rise as low as possible.

## What happens next

This is still a draft. The budget will be discussed at public meetings through January, before the final decision is taken at Full Council on 12 February 2026.

For residents, the argument will come down to trust: whether they believe Kent can keep tightening up County Hall while protecting the services that matter — and whether a 3.99% rise feels like a sensible compromise in a tough national climate for local government.

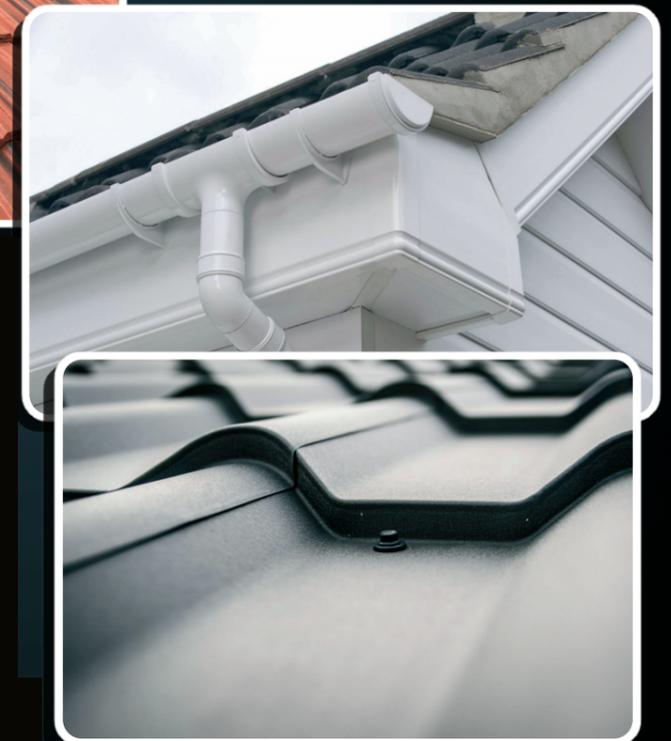
0800 316 9986 / 07311 201527



**COUNTRY**  
STYLE ROOFING LTD  
[www.countrystyleroofing.co.uk](http://www.countrystyleroofing.co.uk)



**Your Trusted Roofing Experts**



**New Roof & Flat Roof Specialist**

**Roof Installations**

**Roof Repairs**

**Moss Removal**

**UPVC Facias & Guttering**

**Spray Foam Insulation Removal**

**Listed Building Surveys**

**Fully Insured**

Email: [info@countrystyleroofingltd.co.uk](mailto:info@countrystyleroofingltd.co.uk)

Scan the QR Code to see our available discounts



Find us on Facebook



Google Guaranteed



Find us on Yell.com

Photos: Stewart Weller

# Lydd Airport hit by £1.6m loss as Bristow air-sea rescue relocates to Hampshire

A Kent airport already haemorrhaging money has suffered a further major blow after air-sea rescue services relocated away from the site.

New figures reported reveal Lydd Airport recorded losses of more than £1.6 million in 2024, adding to accumulated losses now exceeding £30 million.

It is now understood that Bristow Helicopters' air-sea rescue operation has left Lydd and moved to Hampshire, a move seen locally as a significant loss to the airport and a potential blow to jobs on Romney Marsh.

Sources say the relocation followed increased charges for the use of Lydd Airport facilities, with operators concluding the base was no longer financially viable. Airport bosses are reported to have said the fees charged were not covering their operating costs.

The departure removes one of Lydd's most visible and strategically important operations, further weakening the airport's position at a time when its commercial activity remains negligible.

Civil Aviation Authority figures show just five commercial

passengers used the airport in 2024, followed by only 18 in 2025. Despite this, the runway remains busy, with nearly 29,000 take-offs and landings last year, largely involving private light aircraft.

The airport is owned by the Saudi-backed Al Athel family and survives only due to ongoing financial support from its owners, according to documents seen by New Romney Town Council.

Concerns over Lydd's future have been heightened by growing competition from rival airports, with Manston Airport set to reopen as a major cargo hub and Gatwick Airport approved for a second runway.

While airport management has spoken of plans to reinvent Lydd as a "Future of Flight" drone hub, the loss of the Bristow air-sea rescue base is being viewed locally as a stark signal of the challenges facing the airfield.

With heavy losses mounting and key operations leaving the site, questions are growing over Lydd Airport's long-term viability — and what its shrinking role means for the wider Romney Marsh economy.



**MATTERS 2 YOU**

**CARDS – BANNERS  
BALLOONS – CANDLES  
CAKE TOPPERS  
PARTY POPPERS  
BALLOON ARCHES  
TABLE DECOR**

24 HIGH ST, NEW ROMNEY

TEL. **01797 367252**

WORKING IN CONJUNCTION WITH MAGIC MEMORIES

Sympathy Tributes  
Corporate Arrangements  
Events

**MATTERS 2 YOU**

01797 367252 07908 467443  
Email: info@matters2you.co.uk  
24 High St, New Romney, Kent, TN28 8BY

# DISCOUNT TYRE & MOT CENTRE

## New Romney

All leading brands supplied & fitted

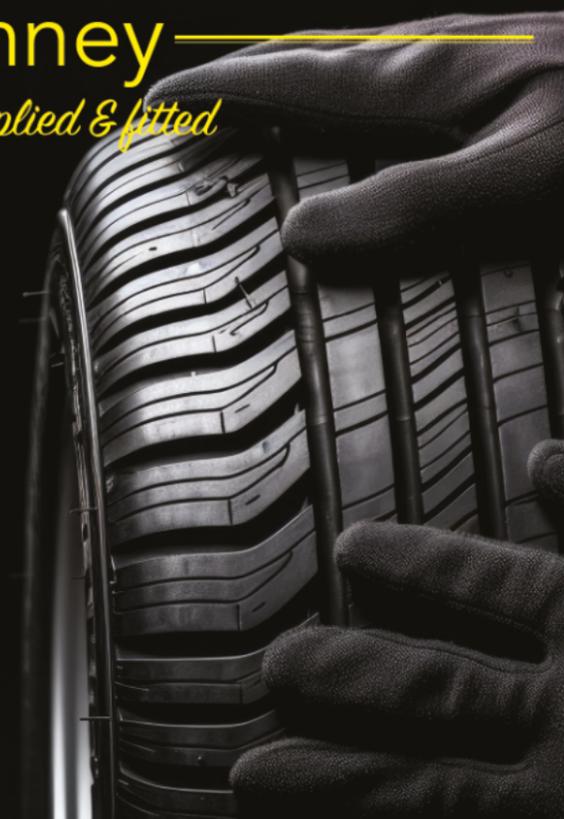
- ❖ TRACKING
- ❖ BALANCING
- ❖ PUNCTURE REPAIRS
- ❖ STEERING
- ❖ BRAKES
- ❖ SUSPENSION
- ❖ BATTERIES
- ❖ SERVICING
- ❖ DISCOUNT ON ALL EXHAUST SYSTEMS

 MOT'S BY APPOINTMENT

*It may not cost as much as you think!*

**T: 01797 363665**

Open Monday-Friday-8.30am-5pm  
Unit 9 Mountfield Road | New Romney | TN28 8LH



## Private GP in Canterbury

- GP Appointments
- Menopause Consultations
- Well Person Health Checks
- Earwax Removal
- Travel Health & Vaccines

Book an appointment at our CQC registered clinic

**AllHealthMatters**  
occupational health and general medical services

💡 Our GPs can write private prescriptions if appropriate

★★★★★  
"A very positive experience"  
"I was made to feel very much at ease."  
"Really lovely staff"

📞 01227 451233 🚗 Free parking  
✉ wellness@allhealthmatters.co.uk  
🌐 www.allhealthmatters.co.uk

A trusted, private clinic in the heart of Canterbury with an excellent reputation



# “Community bunker”

breathes new life into Folkestone’s high street as The Loft opens above Petticoat Emporium



A once-forgotten upper floor in Folkestone town centre has been given a fresh purpose — and a much-needed shot of optimism — after being transformed into a new multi-use events space called The Loft.

Created above Petticoat Emporium on Sandgate Road, the venue is the brainchild of Cairo Woodward, who says the idea truly took shape after becoming a father — a moment that “re-evolved” his life and sharpened his focus on building something lasting for his young family.

What began as a straightforward plan for a photography studio quickly grew into something far bigger. Within five months, The Loft has evolved into a lively venue hosting yoga sessions, cinema evenings, music performances and creative workshops, offering a new place for people to meet, unwind and reconnect.

The project has been entirely self-funded by Cairo and his cousin Nathan Joyce, described by Cairo as the “business head” behind the venture — a grassroots investment in a town they care deeply about.

And in a high street climate where empty units can too easily become permanent scars, Cairo said he was determined to stop another Folkestone building slipping into disuse.

“There are so many empty shops — it would break my heart for another abandoned building to be knocked down,” he said.

KCC Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Special Projects David Wimble praised the venture and said it captured exactly the kind of home-grown enterprise Folkestone needs.

David Wimble said: “I have known Cairo and his family since he was a little boy and seeing him develop this idea is just amazing. I am so proud of what he has done and hope that we can support him with this enterprise.”

Cairo — a former Harvey Grammar School pupil — describes The Loft as having three pillars: wellness, photography and events.

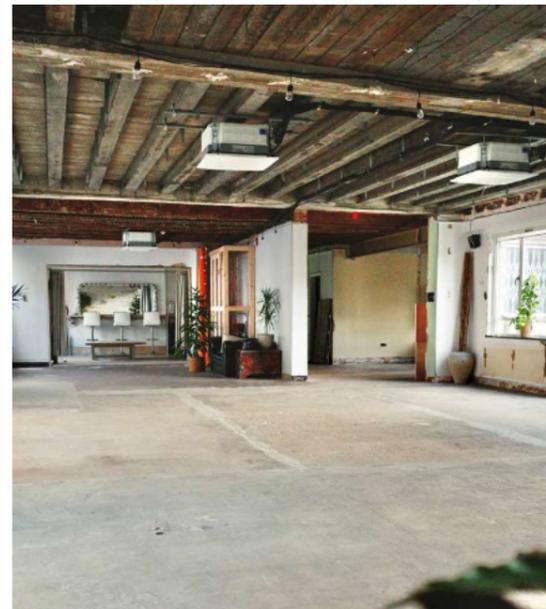
“The Loft has three pillars — wellness, photography and events, which are the things I do,” he said. “This is essentially an extension of myself and is also so important as we’re moving into a creator-fuelled, visual world.”

He added that momentum came quickly once the doors opened.

“Word of mouth caught fire,” he said.

For locals, the appeal is simple: it’s a new shared space in the heart of town — somewhere to actually go together.

One Folkestone resident, Linda Packman, said: “It’s just lovely to see someone take a dusty old



space and turn it into something uplifting. Folkestone needs more places that feel welcoming and positive — and this really does.”

Another local, Mark Evans, who attended one of the early events, added: “You walk in and you can feel the effort that’s gone into it. It’s got that ‘made by Folkestone, for Folkestone’ vibe — and that’s priceless.”

Nearby traders also welcomed the boost to the town centre.

A shopkeeper on Sandgate Road said: “Anything that gets people coming back into town — not just to shop, but to spend time — is good for everyone. It gives the high street a heartbeat.”

Cairo describes The Loft as a “community bunker” — a flexible space where ideas can take shape without unnecessary barriers.

“Where do people go as a community together nowadays?” he said. “Humanity is about community, that’s how we evolve, that’s how we get our sense of love.

“Whatever people want to do, I’m up for it. I don’t want people to feel like there’s restriction on what this place can be.”

But behind the positive buzz is the reality of running a venue on limited resources. Cairo admits funding pressures have been intense, with the workload falling heavily on the small team.

“We’re at the limits of what we’re able to do,” he said. “Each one of our events takes two or three people to run — it’s just me doing everything at the moment.

“I don’t want to let this place go.”

Despite the challenges, the calendar is already filling up. The Loft is preparing to launch a wellness programme called ‘Ritual’ starting on January 12, while another concept — “Aeroplane Mode” — is also in development. The idea would see the venue transformed into a bar-style space, with visitors switching off their phones at the door to properly switch off themselves.

The entrance to The Loft is via the staircase inside Petticoat Emporium — Kent’s largest indoor market — in a building with a long retail history. The wider site was most recently occupied by Wilko, which collapsed in 2023, while Marks & Spencer traded there for 76 years before closing in 2006.

For many locals, The Loft is more than a venue — it’s a sign that Folkestone’s high street still has the ingredients to reinvent itself, one determined local entrepreneur at a time.

## PLUMBING & HEATING SERVICE

**Bathroom Suites**  
Blockages & Burst Pipes  
Taps  
Ball Valves  
Hot & Cold Tanks  
Installations

**Repairs**  
Pumps & Radiators  
Specialist Power Flushing & De-Scaling Service

**NO CALL OUT CHARGES    FREE ESTIMATES**  
**O.A.P. DISCOUNTS    ALL WORK GUARANTEED**

**NO JOB TOO SMALL**  
**Call Noel: 07711 66 66 56**

## Where have all our finches gone?

Sadly, we have lost millions of greenfinches, chaffinches, and bull finches to feeder-based disease.

Finches Friend feeders are designed to combat disease.

We have a complete range of solutions, and our feeders are designed, moulded, and assembled in Kent.

Only available at [finchesfriend.com](https://finchesfriend.com)

Finches Friend is the perfect gift for friends, family, and nature!

# Looking Back

Take a step back in time with us as we look at a series of past events to have occurred in the month of January.

## 1 year ago

Messy by Lola Young becomes the first no.1 record of the year. The song took 11 weeks to make it to the top spot, where it remained for the month. It was still in the top 40 some eight months later.

## 5 years ago

Liverpool defeat Everton by a goal to nil in the FA Cup 3rd round at Anfield. Curtis Jones scores the only goal of the Merseyside derby in the second-half.

## 10 years ago

In an event that shakes the world of music, the iconic David Bowie dies. The 69-year-old's legacy encompassed constant reinvention, groundbreaking artistry and musical innovation.

## 30 years ago

Pokémon is launched. The cartoon-based concept debuts at the start of 1996 with the release of the Pocket Monsters Red and Green Game Boy games.

## 40 years ago

The first computer virus to affect IBM-compatible personal computers appears. Named Brain, it was created by two brothers from Pakistan, and spread via infected floppy disks.

## 100 years ago

George Martin is born. The British record producer, arranger, composer, musician and audio



engineer is best known for producing the Beatles' records, and sometimes referred to as the 'Fifth Beatle'. He passed away in 2016.

## 125 years ago

Queen Victoria dies. She is succeeded by her son, Edward VII.



## Make a Mini Mosaic Bird Bath

Small, colourful, and full of character, this mosaic bird bath is a joy from start to finish. In this relaxed Coffee, Cake, 'n' Craft workshop, you'll play with beautiful glass pieces and create an adorable handmade feature that's just as lovely indoors as it is in the garden.

Friday 13 February 9.30-12.30pm. Price is just £25.00

## Make heart felt hearts

Learn how to create striking handcrafted hearts in this joyful, workshop celebrating colour, tradition, and creativity. One heart is inspired by Denmark, using a classic woven design, while the other draws on the bold, vibrant style of Mexico.

Friday 6 February 10.00am -12.30pm. Price is just £20.00



TEACH ME



3 Cockreed Lane, New Romney  
Kent TN28 8JH T: 07770 347616

[www.teachmecourses.co.uk](http://www.teachmecourses.co.uk)



# Romney Marsh volunteers clock up 7,457 bags of litter in 2025

A volunteer group working to keep Romney Marsh tidy has recorded another busy year, removing thousands of sacks of rubbish from beaches, roadsides and public areas across the district.

Litter Picking Watch Romney Marsh says 2025 saw the team organise 30 public clean-ups and support a range of community events, while also stepping up work with local young people to encourage environmental responsibility.

## A year of clean-ups, events and education

Across the year, the group supported three major public events — Lydd Club Day, New Romney Country Fayre, and Light up New Romney — helping to manage litter levels during and after the gatherings.

Alongside the public work, the group's youth team made 13 visits to local schools and youth clubs, promoting practical habits such as disposing of waste correctly and taking part in litter picks.

The volunteers also supported a fourth young person to achieve their Duke of Edinburgh Award, reflecting the growing role of young people within the organisation's wider programme.

## New bins, local grants and a recycling fundraiser

Practical infrastructure has also expanded. During 2025, the group installed and maintained its 17th litter bin, working in conjunction with New Romney in Bloom and a local business partner.

The team also received several grants from ward members and Lydd Town Council to provide equipment for residents who want to litter pick "around their own patch" — enabling more people to get involved locally, without needing to rely on organised events.

Fundraising has been boosted through recycling, with the group collecting around three tonnes of aluminium cans. Those cans are recycled, raising funds that will go towards refurbishing a second trailer used to transport litter-picking kit.

## Recognition for volunteers

Two volunteers were singled out for recognition during the year.

In July, Paul was presented to HRH King Charles, and in October, the group's founder Eric Brown was presented with the British Empire Medal.

The numbers: 7,457 sacks collected The group's total bag count for 2025 was 7,457 sacks of rubbish. That figure includes 650 sacks removed from

the MOD foreshore, as well as regular beach cleans at Greatstone, the removal of washed-up ghost nets, litter clearance from lay-bys, servicing the group's litter bins, and picking across other public areas throughout the district.

## Next public event: Greatstone beach clean

The group's next event is a beach clean at Greatstone on 14 February 2026. Volunteers say everyone is welcome, and details are available on the group's website.

For information, including meeting times and locations, visit: [litterpickingwatch.weebly.com](http://litterpickingwatch.weebly.com)



## THE MOST COST EFFECTIVE & EFFICIENT FORM OF HEATING

TO FIND OUT HOW WE CAN HELP YOU **SAVE MONEY** ON YOUR HEATING BILL DON'T DELAY-CALL US TODAY!

Call: 01797 214032 | 07855 033877  
email: [contact.coolworx@gmail.com](mailto:contact.coolworx@gmail.com)

We cover:- Ashford | Canterbury | Dover  
Folkestone | Hythe | Tenderden & surrounding areas



INTERNAL & EXTERNAL PAINTER & DECORATOR QUALITY WORKMANSHIP OVER 20 YRS EXPERIENCE

FULLY INSURED AND DBS CHECKED

PLEASE CALL KEN  
YOUR LOCAL ROMNEY MARSH DECORATOR  
TEL: 07767 337844

Keep doing what makes you *happy*



**MARTELLO MANOR**  
BY BOUTIQUE CARE HOMES

Discover A New Career With Martello Manor  
Explore more at [www.boutiquecareers.care](http://www.boutiquecareers.care)

## MP's Brock Blame Game Exposed as Locals Pay the Price



Fresh details emerging over plans to scale back the hated Operation Brock on the M20 have once again exposed a worrying lack of understanding from Ashford's Labour MP about how the controversial scheme actually works – and who is responsible for it.

Operation Brock, the 50mph contraflow system used between Junctions 8 and 9 of the M20, is brought in during periods of high disruption at the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel. It effectively turns a 13-mile stretch of motorway into a managed HGV holding system, closing the coastbound on-slip at Junction 8 near Leeds Castle and forcing local traffic onto already congested A-roads.

Now, The Looker can reveal that National Highways, working with Kent County Council, is actively exploring ways to reduce the footprint of Brock by keeping the Junction 8 coastbound slip road open – a move widely welcomed by residents and businesses in Maidstone and Ashford who have borne the brunt of years of disruption.

But while practical progress is finally being made, Ashford MP Sojan Joseph has once again chosen to play politics rather than engage with the facts.

Mr Joseph has repeatedly blamed Kent County Council's Reform administration for Operation Brock, despite Brock not being a council-controlled scheme. More awkwardly, it recently emerged at a public meeting that the MP appeared unaware that he himself is meant to be part of the very decision-making framework he continues to criticise.

Operation Brock is authorised collectively by the Kent and Medway Resilience Forum (KMRF) – a multi-agency body made up of Kent Police, Kent County Council, National Highways, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, and Kent MPs. In other words, MPs are not bystanders shouting from the sidelines; they are supposed to be in the room.

Cabinet Member for Highways at Kent County Council, Peter Osborne, has been clear and consistent. He has said on numerous occasions that while Brock is deeply unpopular, it remains "the best of a bad situation" until a credible alternative exists.



He has also been keen to stress that the current proposals to keep Junction 8 open are precisely the kind of sensible, locally focused mitigation residents have been asking for.

By contrast, Mr Joseph's ongoing attempts to pin the blame solely on the county council look increasingly hollow – particularly given the eye-watering cost of the system he claims to oppose.

Every time Operation Brock is deployed, it costs taxpayers around £250,000, with ongoing maintenance and servicing adding a further £100,000 per week. Yet despite this, there is still no fully funded, shovel-ready alternative from central government.



There has been speculation about relocating Brock further east, potentially between Junctions 10a and 11 near Hythe, but National Highways has confirmed this has not even been discussed.

Meanwhile, the Department for Transport admits that so-called "long-term solutions" – involving digital queuing systems and off-road HGV holding sites – remain at an early planning stage, despite congestion at the Channel crossings being a problem for years.

The reality is uncomfortable: Operation Brock is not a Kent invention, not a Reform policy, and not something imposed by councillors in County Hall. It is a national failure being managed locally – at huge cost to Kent residents.

Instead of misdirected criticism and public grandstanding, many locals are now asking whether Ashford's MP should focus less on blaming others and more on understanding – and using – the role he already has.

Because while politicians argue, it is Kent drivers, Kent villages and Kent businesses who continue to pay the price every time Brock is rolled out.



# JOHN WILLIAMS & COMPANY

EST. 1870

Your Local Family Business Established for 155 Years

FOR ALL YOUR BUILDING REPAIRS AND IMPROVEMENTS CALL THE EXPERTS



Roofing and Building Maintenance,

Slating, Tiling, Flat Roofing, Lead-Work

Gutters, Fascias and Soffits, Brickwork, Carpentry and Plastering

For Free Quotations and Advice Call: 01303 265198

[www.johnwilliamsroofing.co.uk](http://www.johnwilliamsroofing.co.uk)



## Day Trips This Summer

London Museums – 23rd October, £24.00

Bluewater – 7th November, £18.00

Camden Market- 8th November, £20.00

Ypres on Armistice Day – 11th November, £86.00

Harrods at Christmas Time & London Lights Tour – Various Dates £25.00

Hever Castle Christmas Lunch – Various Dates £68.00

Bruges at Christmas Time – Various Dates from £80.00

Rochester Dickensian Christmas Festival – 7th December, £29.50

ABBA Christmas Party Night with Two-Course Meal – 22nd November, £69.00

Bubbles & Bubl  with Afternoon Tea – 20th December, £69.00



## Short Breaks

### Magical German Christmas Markets

The build up to Christmas is a wonderful time of year and a trip to the most beautiful German Christmas markets is always truly remarkable. Our centrally located Cologne Hotel is perfectly situated to enjoy the most of this exuberant city and its many markets. Our tour also includes a visit to Dusseldorf, a beautiful and somewhat lesser known destination where the whole city is transformed into a festive winter wonderland.

Departing Monday 1st December 2025, 3 Nights from £485.00 per person

### Christmas in Blackpool

It's the most wonderful time of year....The perfect occasion to treat yourself, get away from it all and let us take care of everything. Immerse yourself in Christmas cheer at the historic Imperial Hotel in Blackpool. Renowned for its rich history, stunning coastline and illuminations the festive season brings additional light displays that enhance the town's festive atmosphere. With delicious food, great company, festive entertainment and excursions you are sure to enjoy a magical Christmas.

Departing Tuesday 23rd December 2025, 4 Nights from £605.00 per person

For more information call: 01303 272625 [www.crosskeys.uk.com](http://www.crosskeys.uk.com)

## Dates for your Diary

Email your Dates for your Diary to: [john@thelooker.co.uk](mailto:john@thelooker.co.uk)

### Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> January

Computer Club, Village Hall, St. Mary's Bay, 9.30 a.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 22<sup>nd</sup> January

Lydd Meeting Point, Hardy Hall, 10 a.m.  
Dance Moves with Chris, St. Mary's Bay Village Hall, 10.15 a.m.  
Pebbles Dementia Caf , St. Peter's Hall, Greatstone, 10.30 a.m. (2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Thurs)  
Craft "N" Laughs, St. Peter's Hall, Greatstone, 2 p.m.  
Dymchurch Short Mat Bowls, Village Hall, 6 p.m.

### Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> January

Pilates, Dymchurch Village Hall, 10 a.m.  
Friday Art Group, St Mary's Bay Village Hall, 1 p.m.  
Brookland Meeting Point, Village Hall, 1.30 p.m. (4<sup>th</sup> Fri)  
The Wizard of Oz, Dymchurch Village Hall, 7 p.m.  
Social Ballroom Sequence Dancing, St. Mary's Bay Village Hall, 7 p.m.

### Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> January

Burns Night Supper, St. Mary's Bay Church Hall, 7 p.m. (01797-369464)  
The Wizard of Oz, Dymchurch Village Hall, 7 p.m.

### Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> January

The Wizard of Oz, Dymchurch Village Hall, 2.30 p.m.

### Monday 26<sup>th</sup> January

Dymchurch Meeting Point, Village Hall, 10 a.m.  
Sunflower Memory Caf , Old School, New Romney, 10 a.m. (2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Mon)  
Dance Moves, Burton Hall off Stade Street, Hythe, 11 a.m.

The Games Club, St. Peter's Hall, Greatstone, 2 p.m.  
Bingo, St. Mary's Bay Church Hall, 2.30 p.m.  
New Romney History Society, Old School, 7.30 p.m. (4<sup>th</sup> Mon)

### Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> January

Pilates, St. Mary's Bay Village Hall, 10 a.m.  
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.  
New Romney WI, Scouts Hut, 2.15 p.m. (4<sup>th</sup> Tue)  
Foodbank, New Romney Community Church, 4 p.m.  
Dymchurch Short Mat Bowls, Village Hall, 6 p.m.

### Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> January

Computer Club, Village Hall, St. Mary's Bay, 9.30 a.m.  
Bridge Meeting Point, New Romney Scouts Hut, 10 a.m. (2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wed)  
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 29<sup>th</sup> January

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.

### Friday 30<sup>th</sup> January

Pilates, Dymchurch Village Hall, 10 a.m.  
Friday Art Group, St Mary's Bay Village Hall, 1 p.m.  
The Wizard of Oz, Dymchurch Village Hall, 7 p.m.  
Social Ballroom Sequence Dancing, St. Mary's Bay Village Hall, 7 p.m.

### Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> January

Dungeness RNLI, Car Wash, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
The Wizard of Oz, Dymchurch Village Hall, 7 p.m.

### Sun 1<sup>st</sup> February

Lydd Farmer's Market, Community Hall, 9.30 a.m.



**Derek Linch (Mot & Service) Ltd**  
Sycamore Farm, Old Romney, Kent. TN29 9SY



# SERVICING - REPAIRS - WELDING

## MOT'S on class I, II, IV and VII

### All makes of NEW TYRES:

### free fitting and balancing



## Call: 01797 367717 or 364466

[www.romneymarshtyres.co.uk](http://www.romneymarshtyres.co.uk)



# What we did during the Christmas holidays

As well as helping Santa bring joy across the Marsh during our annual sleigh runs, we were pleased to help Mother Claus when she visited Greatstone Primary School at the end of the Christmas term. As you can see from the picture, Mother Claus proved a great hit with the children. At the moment, Santa's elves are busy counting up all the money generously donated to use during our sleigh runs. Hopefully we will be able to let you know how much we raised due to the work of the Rotarians, volunteer drivers and elves but especially thanks to the generosity and support from the local community.



Talking of the local community, following an inspirational presentation by the Oliver Steeper Foundation, the Rotary Club of Romney Marsh and Women's Institute Brenzett & District branch combined forces to purchase two LifeVac Wall-Mounted anti-choking Units. These will be installed at Romney Marsh Community Hub in New Romney and The Hub on the Beach in Littlestone. Having these units available on site will provide life-saving kits for early years' children at locations where they may be present with parents/grand-parents and family. Commenting on the donation Liz said 'These simple but powerful tools can mean the difference between life and death in a choking emergency and we believe no child should be without that protection.' Pictured at the handover presentation are Romney Marsh Community Hub CEO Liz Taylor with Brenzett WI Secretary Gerry Weston, Romney Marsh Rotary Community Service Lead Barbara Gold and President Colin Norgate. Liz



added, 'We're very grateful for this thoughtful donation which provides protection for another important cross-section of the local community.'

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

## Paint silver birch trees



This workshop is ideal for complete beginners as well as those who already enjoy painting. Sam Scott breaks each stage down clearly, demonstrating techniques. With supportive guidance throughout, you can explore at your own pace.

**Wednesday 4 February 6.00-8.30pm. Price is just £35.00 inc. refreshments**

## Or learn pastels

Step into the world of pastels and discover techniques used by Degas. In this session, Sam Scott will show how pastels can be layered, blended and textured to create light.



**Thursday 5 February 9.30-12.30pm. Price is just £35.00 inc. refreshments**

**TEACH ME**  
 3 Cockreed Lane, New Romney  
 Kent TN28 8JH T: 07770 347616  
[www.teachmecourses.co.uk](http://www.teachmecourses.co.uk)

### Spotlight on Poland – 2027

#### Discover, Explore, Connect: The 26th World Scout Jamboree

In 2027, Poland will proudly host one of the world's largest scouting events—the 26th World Scout Jamboree. This remarkable gathering offers young people from all corners of the globe the chance to unite in a single location, explore new horizons, learn from one another, and forge lasting friendships.

#### About the World Scout Jamboree



**Poland 2027**  
 World Scout 26<sup>th</sup> Jamboree

Organised by the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM), the World Scout Jamboree is held every four years and welcomes tens of thousands of Scouts, typically aged 14 to 17, from around the world. The event aims to encourage cultural exchange, friendship, and adventure. It provides participants with the opportunity to learn from diverse perspectives, develop leadership abilities, and engage in outdoor activities, all while embracing the core Scouting principles of community service, personal growth, and environmental stewardship. The Jamboree's schedule is filled with a broad range of educational, recreational, and community service activities. These include interactive workshops, team-building exercises, and various outdoor pursuits.



Through these experiences, Scouts cultivate a strong sense of global citizenship and gain a deeper appreciation for different cultures. Ultimately, these exchanges contribute to creating a more peaceful and interconnected world.

The inaugural World Scout Jamboree took place in London in 1920. With the exception of breaks during the World War years and the Iranian Revolution, the event has continued every four years in different international locations. For the first time in history, Poland will host the Jamboree in 2027, welcoming more than 50,000 Scouts to Gdańsk. This international adventure is not only a unique life experience but also a chance for participants to gain valuable skills applicable to everyday life and future careers. The programme features workshops, sports activities, environmental projects, social initiatives, and countless opportunities to develop leadership and teamwork abilities. Attendees will meet people from various cultures, fostering tolerance and openness. For many, the Jamboree is the start of international friendships that endure for years. Immersion in a multicultural environment also offers an excellent chance to practise language skills in real-world situations. Participating in the Jamboree is a lifelong adventure—an experience that remains with you forever. It encourages stepping beyond comfort zones, discovering new passions, and embracing the extraordinary. As the host nation, Poland offers not only superb facilities for this large-scale event, but also a rich history, vibrant culture, and stunning landscapes for participants to enjoy.

#### Romney Marsh District Scouts

The Romney Marsh District Scouts are delighted to announce that two young members, Euan and Ben, have been chosen to represent the community, 1st New Romney Scout Group, and the Romney Marsh Scouting District at this prestigious international event. Both are diligently working to raise the £3,700 required to fund their journey.

So far, their fundraising initiatives include a Facebook campaign, quiz nights, a soft toy tombola, race nights, raffles, and contributions from part-time work. Euan and Ben are eagerly anticipating their Jamboree adventure, meeting up with other Kent Scouts during weekend camps, and sharing stories with local Squirrels, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, and Explorers.

Details about their fundraising efforts, as well as opportunities to participate and support their Jamboree journey, will be shared in future updates—keep an eye out in local press and on social media. For further information, please contact the 1st New Romney Scout Group via Facebook.



# advice on protecting pipes from bursts ahead of cold weather

Temperatures across the region are set to plummet over the next few days which can lead to issues across the water network.

When temperatures drop and water freezes and turns into ice it expands by nearly 10%, which stops the flow of water through pipes. This can cause even new pipes to split, often resulting in leaks and bursts which can cause flooding and damage to homes and gardens.

Jenny Rhodes, SES Water's Head of Supply, said: "Every winter, we see a high number of bursts both on our network and on our customers' private pipes due to freezing conditions. When this happens, our teams work hard around the clock to keep the taps flowing for our customers. Alongside these efforts, there are lots of things our customers can do to prepare their homes for cold weather and prevent leaks and bursts from causing

significant damage to their properties."

Great tips to protect your homes from freezing weather

Wrap up your pipes and water tanks with lagging – especially those in unheated areas such as lofts, garages or gardens

Find your inside stop tap (usually under the kitchen sink or where the pipework enters your property) and make sure you can turn it off if you discover a leak or burst

Leave the heating on low if you go away

Check your central heating boiler has been serviced

Bleed your radiators – this will improve efficiency and reduce the risk of radiator pipes freezing

Keep the contact details of a reputable plumber on hand



Check your meter to see if you have a leak. Details of how to do this are on our website here: <https://seswater.co.uk/your-water/noticed-a-problem/leaks>

Although underground, your service pipe may also be affected by the colder temperatures. When the ground freezes it hardens and can cause underground pipes to move, sometimes leading to leaks and bursts.

Here's how to check for leaks underground and what to do when you find one

You may see visible water escaping within your garden or experience lower pressure and maybe even no water, often these leaks are not visible

The service pipe on your property will be private and it is your responsibility to repair and maintain this

For advice on how to carry out a leak test to know if you may have a service pipe leak visit [Check if you have a leak | SES Water](#)

You may find that you are covered by household insurance or have specialist insurance if you do have a leak so do check this first

For a list of private contractors who can carry out repairs, visit [WaterSafe at www.watersafe.org.uk](http://www.watersafe.org.uk) or by calling 0333 207 9030.

What to do if you have frozen pipes

If you don't have any water, check with neighbours. If they still have water, your pipes may be frozen

Check pipes for signs of a split – a leak or burst will not occur until the water has thawed

Turn off the supply using the internal stop tap

If the central heating and other water heating appliances are already on, keep on. However, if they are currently turned off do not be tempted to switch them on to thaw frozen pipes as this could cause damage

Drain the cold water system only by flushing the toilet and opening cold taps over sinks and baths

If you don't find any damage, turn on all the taps and thaw the frozen pipe using a warm towel or hot water bottle wrapped in a towel

When the pipes have thawed and you're sure no damage or leak has occurred, turn off the taps and slowly switch the supply back on using the internal stop tap

Recheck the pipes now that they are under pressure and check again for signs of damage or a leak before switching on water heating appliances. If you discover a leak or burst pipe, call a reputable plumber immediately. SES Water supports approved contractor schemes and a list of approved contractors can be found on the [WaterSafe website](#) or by calling 0333 207 9030.

For more information and advice on preparing for freezing temperatures, including which pipes are your responsibility in and outside the home, visit [www.seswater.co.uk/your-water/saving-water/winterproof-your-home](http://www.seswater.co.uk/your-water/saving-water/winterproof-your-home)

**DEARMAN BARTLETT**  
INDEPENDENT FUNERAL DIRECTORS



Help and support available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year

**01797 290083**

**Dearman Bartlett is a family promise:**

To serve with kindness, respect, and professionalism.

To honour each life entrusted to us with love and integrity.

And to always be here for the people of the Romney Marsh and our neighbouring communities.

[info@dearmanbartlett.co.uk](mailto:info@dearmanbartlett.co.uk) [www.dearmanbartlett.co.uk](http://www.dearmanbartlett.co.uk) 55 High Street New Romney Kent TN28 8AH

## The only Independent Funeral Directors on the Romney Marsh

Looking after families across Kent and East Sussex with care, respect and trust

- Calm and professional support
- Private Chapel of Rest in New Romney
- All our facilities are at the funeral home
- Loved ones will remain in our care at all times
- Tailored funerals to your wishes
- Home visits available for your comfort or needs
- Pre-paid funeral plans for peace of mind
- Memorials and headstones

**Hannah, Jon and Aaron, bring together 50 years of experience, knowledge and care within the funeral profession**

## J Penfold-Driveways & Landscapes Ltd

Commercial & Domestic



T: 01797 208403/07599 242382  
[www.jpenfold.co.uk](http://www.jpenfold.co.uk)

Fast, friendly, and fully functional, our professional landscaping company is well renowned throughout the Romney Marsh area. We only use the highest quality materials, guaranteeing a first-class job!

Driveways | Paths | Patios | Artificial Grass | Turfing  
Fencing | Brickwork | All Work Guaranteed

**Checkatrade.com**  
Where reputation matters

*Striving to deliver an efficient, reliable and prompt service to my customers. We always stand behind our work, with customer satisfaction being our number one priority!*





# You can change a life!

Do you have an hour to spare once a week? If so, you could be a life-changer! Here in the Dover/Folkestone and Hythe area there are many wonderful older people who have lived fascinating and interesting lives but now have no one to talk to. As people are living longer, loneliness is an ever increasing problem with some older people hardly seeing anyone from week to week. Just imagine how isolating this can be after leading a busy and active life.

The **Good Neighbours Service**, run by Kent Coast Volunteering, aims to do something about this. With over 60 volunteers currently supporting older people we regularly hear wonderful stories of how enjoyable and rewarding this volunteering can be for both the client and the volunteer. Our volunteers visit an older person either in their home or perhaps out and about in the community for a walk, coffee or even the occasional lunch. Without these amazing volunteers, isolation can be a huge problem for so



many older people, impacting both their physical and mental health.

Despite having an active group of volunteers making a huge difference, we still urgently need more as we have a long list of older people waiting for a befriender. Our **Good Neighbours Service** receives new referrals every week so we are constantly on the look out for new volunteers. It really is a lovely role and only needs an hour or two of your time once a week. Anyone can be a volunteer, if you enjoy a chat and a cuppa it's the perfect role for you whatever your age, in fact many of our volunteers are in their 80s!

If you think this could be for you, please do get in touch with us, we would love to hear from you. For more info or a friendly chat with the team, please contact Michaela or Sarah using the details below. Thank you.

E-mail- [gns@kcv.org.uk](mailto:gns@kcv.org.uk)

Office-01304 367898 (Tues-Friday 9-4)

Mobile - 07855 209510 / 07816 406339

## Kent Coast Volunteering

Connecting Communities In  
Dover, Thanet, Folkestone & Hythe



**01797 334822**  
**01424 232942**

# AnyTek .co.uk

Home & Business IT  
**we can do that...**  
**Everything Tek!**

### Home & Business Site Visits

Mac, Windows, 121s, CCTV, Smart Tech inc.  
TVs, Alexa, Upgrades, Data Recovery, WiFi  
4G/5G Broadband and so much more...

**Book an appointment today**  
01797 334822 or 01424 232942  
Hello@AnyTek.co.uk

AnyTek Ltd Official Sponsor of Cinque Ports Radio 100.2 FM  
Your Music Your Station For Rye & The Romney Marsh

## ROMNEY FLOORING

CARPETS - LVT - VINYLs - WOOD - ARTIFICIAL GRASS

Mountfield Road  
New Romney  
Kent  
TN28 8LH

2a Cinque Ports St.  
Rye  
East Sussex  
TN31 7AD



**Tel: 01797 364610**

**EMAIL: SALES@ROMNEYFLOORING.COM**

**WWW.ROMNEYFLOORING.CO.UK**

## MARSH ALLOYS

Unit 12 Adams Court Mountfield Road, New Romney, Kent. TN28 8LH  
**'The One Stop Wheel Shop'**

Wheel Straightening  
Wheel Spraying  
Wheel Welding  
Any Style Any Colour

**07581 169516**

Specialists in All Aspects of Hard & Soft Landscaping

### BUSYBEE LANDSCAPES

Driveways • Patio's • Pathways  
Fencing • Turfing • Brickwork • Decking  
Grass Cutting • Weeding • Hedge Cutting  
Pressure Washing

One-Off Cutbacks and Regular  
Maintenance Visits on a Weekly,  
Fortnightly or Monthly Basis.

Bee Happy-Give Busybees a Buzz! T: 07932 564062 / 01797 721420

email: [busybeelandscapes@yahoo.com](mailto:busybeelandscapes@yahoo.com)  
[www.busybeelandscapes.co.uk](http://www.busybeelandscapes.co.uk)

## WOW TOOLS

# MORE THAN TOOLS.

BUILT FOR THE JOB.

**SCAN ME**

TRUSTED BRANDS 
 CLICK & COLLECT 
 VISIT US 
 PRO ADVICE

**Online. In-store. On your side.**

Mountfield Ind Est, New Romney, TN28 8XU  
[www.wowtools.co.uk](http://www.wowtools.co.uk)



# Marsh Memories

Compiled by John Wimble

## Romney Marsh in the 1900s

The Littlestone Water Tower was built in 1890 but didn't function properly because of the sea water. So in 1904 the Littlestone & District Water Company built a brick tower further along the coast, close to the railway line to Dungeness to supply local residents. At the top of the tower was a lined concrete water tank and plans were also proposed to include a service reservoir, but it was never built as water was taken from the nearby wells.

A new train timetable had been brought out with revised times of trains between Appledore, Dungeness and New Romney. There were up to 11 departures from Appledore daily with ten going to New Romney and five to Dungeness as well. The average time taken from Appledore to New Romney was 40 minutes.

The Lydd Lighting Committee advised that arrangements had been made for seven more lamps around The Rype. Also, a lamp should be kept burning all night outside the Fire Station. There were 45 lamps at present in the town and the Gas Company said they had been losing money supplying the gas to them.

A maroon was fired early Friday morning to summon the Brigade to a fire at the George Hotel in Lydd. Mr. Charles Tanner was trying to ease the cock at the meter when it flew out just as he had got a light to help him in his work. The gas rushed out and caught the light and soon there was a large flame from the outlet. Luckily help was soon to hand with the hose pipe from the brewery being used to stop the flames from spreading until the gas could be cut off from the mains.

The Romney Marsh Rural District Council reviewed the estimates for expenses for the district roads for the forthcoming year. The road from Snave to Brenzett which carried a lot of traffic was in a very bad state. It was suggested that the road could be made up with quartzite. Members said that two things against this idea, namely the unfitness of the bed of the road and the cost of the material. The total estimate for all the roads that need repair was £2,500.

The South-Eastern Railway was asked to start a motor bus service between Lydd and Hythe. Also, Mr. Cann had approached Lydd Council for a licence to run two cars to and from Folkestone during the summer months and the Council had no objection.

George Hughes was charged with stealing a quantity of bread and meat value 1s. 3d. (7p), from William Jenner at the Plough Inn, New Romney. Mr. Jenner was living at the Plough, and

Edward Best, landlord of the Plough, said he heard someone searching the cupboards in the lodger's room. He saw Mr. Hughes with the bread in his hand. Mr. Hughes pleaded guilty and was sentenced to one month's hard labour.

A horse and cart with a load of fish bolted down Park Street, Lydd. A man named Cloke was thrown out of the cart and the horse dashed across Coronation Square and narrowly escaped going into the window of Mr. L. Hutchings' shop. Ultimately the animal fell and was secured.

The members of the Brookland and Brenzett Friendly Society recently held their annual dinner at the Royal Oak Hotel. A good spread was provided, and the usual loyal toasts were submitted from the chair. Mr. B. Ames the Treasurer read out the balance sheet which he said was quite satisfactory. Sick pay had amounted to £31 and the credit to the club showed £2,125.

*Regular Deliveries in New Romney, Greatstone, Littlestone, Lydd-on-Sea and surrounding areas*

**ESTABLISHED OVER 20 YEARS**

**W. ALLEN**

*Coal and Coke Merchants*

**WEST RYPE - LYDD - KENT**

# Iconic QUAD-MOTOR RISER RECLINER

*Lasting relaxation, feel the difference*

**Call today 01303 274574**

## Safe Hands is a leading supplier of Mobility Aids & Mobility Scooters.

The Iconic is a Premium Riser Recliner designed by CosiChair which has a unique Tilt-in-Space (TIS) Quad-Motor function featuring the Zero Gravity position which evenly distributes the force & stress across the body, giving supported comfort from head to toe throughout movement offering greater relaxation.

- Fully adjustable powered head & lumbar support
- True footrest extension
- Longest hip to heel seat
- Fitted USB & C charging ports



AVAILABLE TO COMPLEMENT YOUR HOME IN SIX MODERN, STYLISH & SOFT FABRICS



Other designs, upholstery & colourways to suit all tastes are available on request.



Adjustable powered head & lumbar positioning which offers personalised support for the head, neck & lower back

**Home Demonstration**  
Let us come to you



Folkestone Store  
**01303 274574**

Folkestone, Compass House,  
347-349 Cheriton Road, CT19 4BP.  
Also at Birchington.

[folkestone@shmobility.co.uk](mailto:folkestone@shmobility.co.uk)

[www.safehandsmobility.co.uk](http://www.safehandsmobility.co.uk)

# Then & Now



**Dungeness station, c.1930s.**

The train is just about to leave Dungeness for Lydd. The station opened in 1883 and had very limited facilities. It closed to passenger traffic in 1937 and to freight in the 1950s. Very little remains of the station today although the track of the old line can still be seen in some places.



## Travel in style with Alcaline Aviation



*We Can Handle Every Detail!*

**A**lcaline Aviation offers luxury helicopter charters for both business and leisure, with a fleet of advanced helicopters designed to accommodate up to five passengers. Equipped for comfort and convenience, our helicopters can depart from remote locations and operate overnight, providing unparalleled access across the UK and nearby destinations.

Our flexible travel solutions cater to your unique needs, offering quick and luxurious VIP and business trips. Relax with the assurance of safe and reliable service, saving you valuable time. Gift vouchers and sightseeing tours around Kent, London, and the South of England are also available, making them perfect for special occasions.

We operate three AS355 twin-engine Squirrel helicopters, including the latest AS355 NP model. These versatile helicopters provide speed, comfort, and affordability, with seating for up to five passengers or alternative configurations for two pilots and four passengers. Noise-canceling headsets enhance your experience, ensuring a smooth and quiet journey.

### Year-Round Availability & Exclusive Services

**O**ur highly trained pilots are on call throughout the year, ready for last-minute trips, day or night. We specialize in flights to major UK events like Royal Ascot, Silverstone Grand Prix, and Glastonbury. For special occasions, we can arrange luxury vehicle pick-ups and fly you directly to your venue, bypassing traffic and ensuring a stylish arrival.

### Planning a wedding, party, or hotel getaway?

Our experienced team can handle every detail, including chauffeur services featuring Rolls Royce Ghosts or Lamborghini Urus vehicles, available individually or as part of a charter package.

### Additional Offerings

**B**eyond passenger flights, our helicopters are available for cargo services, including emergency part deliveries to keep operations running smoothly.

Established in 1993, Alcaline Group continues to excel in providing Just-in-Time Logistics and bespoke aviation solutions across the UK and Europe.





With all the awful weather, none of us have had much encouragement to go outside, although in the occasional pleasant few hours we have managed to do some tidying up. Especially plants that have suffered in the gales, that should have been pruned earlier, and the task has been forced on us! As always it is encouraging to see the daffs and early spring flowers emerging, and the days lengthening. There is a very silly Christmas song that says "I wish it could be Christmas every day!" But then, of course, it wouldn't be special at all, if we had it every day. I think it is the same with our British seasons. If we never had winter, we would never enjoy our spring and summer in the same way. The abundance of food from all over the world, I think, has dulled our pleasure in seasonal items. Our grandchildren have foreign strawberries and grapes in their homes, but really, if you were blindfolded, you wouldn't know what you were eating! The same with foreign tomatoes, at this time of year, but they add colour to a salad!

We were on the Algarve last January/February, and one strange thing I missed was tides! We take them for granted, but facing the Mediterranean the tides hardly move, they work hard to hardly change at all! More or less always at the same point! I read the UK has the deepest tides in the world, and, like the things that grow in our gardens, we take them for granted, so it is good to be reminded of all the riches in our gardens. When in Portugal, we tried to buy Portuguese, so it was interesting to buy apples, oranges and lemons, all growing in the same country. You don't imagine the same country producing apples AND oranges. Conditions are changing here as well, so maybe we will be able to grow them all one day! In private gardens, there were lemons and oranges lying on the ground, like apples in this country.

The pruning and tidying up never ends, and it is encouraging to see buds on all the trees. This is the ideal time to be planning any changes and big projects in your garden, when everything is bare and dormant. There are plenty of seeds in the shops, so you can begin to stock up, and shortly, onion and shallot sets. As often mentioned, time to tidy your potting shed, and check and clean your tools, and make notes to replace any that have reached the end of the lives. If you are a new gardener and still building up your stock of tools, don't buy cheap, especially items like spades and forks, they are a waste of time. Buy the best you can afford, or 2<sup>nd</sup> hand from boot fairs, or 2<sup>nd</sup> hand sites. Often when older gardeners are down-sizing they don't need their tools any more, and you can get good quality tools quite cheaply.

AND NOW FOR THE VEG

Just when you thought it was safe to go outside and start preparing for sowing and planting, we've had the coldest and wettest late autumn and early winter for some years. The one consolation is that the ground should have plenty of moisture and the water butts are full to overflowing for when we need to start watering!

One indoor job you can do now is to sow tomato seeds. We usually grow three varieties- *Moneymaker*, *Tumbling Tom* and *Gardener's Delight*. Strangely enough, *Tumbling Tom* seeds are the most expensive of the three and you get less seeds in a pack than in the others. An incentive to treat them very carefully! Fill seed trays with a layer of compost and sprinkle the seeds as reasonably apart as you can. Cover with just a fine layer of compost and then soak the trays in a bowl of water for about half an hour to allow the moisture to soak in. Place on a window sill and keep moist to allow germination to take place, which should happen after a couple of weeks.

In the past, we used peat-free compost but although it's environmentally friendly, it dries very quickly and could set back germination. Seed compost tends to dry out quickly, too, and can develop a hard pan on the surface, so we now use ordinary commercial compost or our own garden compost. Whatever you use, keep the compost moist and if the temperature drops during the hours of darkness remove from the window and bring trays into the warmth overnight. Of course, if you have the luxury of an indoor propagator, this won't apply!

If you enjoy pickled onions, or like to use shallots in cooking, then now is the time to start preparing the shallots for sowing. They should be available now for buying as sets, so once purchased spread them out into seed trays or similar, removing any shrivelled -up ones as they can introduce a kind of damp rot if close up to others. Keep in a cool, dry place for a couple of weeks and then plant out in rows about a foot apart and six inches between each bulb. Press firmly into the soil to discourage birds from pecking them out! Ideally choose a mild day when the soil isn't too soggy. Shallots are a hardy veg so plant out from early February.

Maincrop onion sets follow the same procedure as above, but it's a bit early to plant them out yet- early March is usually alright.

Our autumn sown broad beans have taken a beating, they look a sorry sight at the moment but are very resilient and should recover once the weather calms down.

Happy gardening and look forward to a bountiful year!

### Thrift.

Thrift is being carefully with money, and using every means to get the maximum from your money. As the old saying goes, make every penny do the work of 6! Thrift is not something you do at the end of the month, when you are short, it is a lifestyle and a mindset. There are lots of prosperous people who are very thrifty (maybe why they are prosperous.)

So, don't think that being thrifty is a sign of poverty, it isn't, and don't be ashamed of openly using thrifty habits. From the moment you get up in the morning, your thrifty lifestyle kicks in. Do you finish off plastic bottles properly? Like shower lotion, shampoo etc. Give them a squeeze, then let go under clear water, let a small quantity of water in to dilute the last bit, and you can remove it easily. Don't be afraid to use unbranded goods, and don't put up with any nonsense from your family, saying they won't eat anything but 'X' brand. Endless consumer programmes have shown that brand quality is mostly in your head. In blind taste tests the unbranded items often come out as good as the branded item.

Always shop with a list, and have a rough meal plan in your head. If you come across a bargain, or yellow label, feel free to change your plans. But be careful. If your planned meal was going to cost £5, and you see a half price side of salmon that is going to cost £10, that is not an example of thrift! The most important part of shopping is buying food for 3 meals daily for your family. 95% of the choice in supermarkets is really froth, and unnecessary trimmings. Make your list of essentials and basics, and put on blinkers, everything else is quite unnecessary. After 6 choices, psychologists tell us, it only makes us confused and anxious. Do not spec buy for groceries. Don't forget a bag, keep shopping bags handy, and keep some in the car. The nation is still using too many plastic bags.

Please don't waste food. Let people serve themselves so they can put on their plates what they need. This even works with children. I even did this when our children were small. We had a rule you had to eat at least one vegetable, and with 3 or 4 on the go, they found one they liked. This system has the great advantage that anything that is left hasn't been messed up, so can be saved and offered again, maybe in some other form. Cold vegetables and potatoes can be mashed together with some flour to make a dough, rolled out and cut with a cutter to make potato cakes and fried. Always popular. The food specialists tell us the nation is still wasting a vast, shameful amount of food. Some from the supermarkets, but much of it from domestic waste! I am always appalled by the amount of food and drink wasted in cafes and restaurants. Why spend good money ordering food to leave it on your plate? Most places do small and children's portions. With very small children, just ask for an extra plate.

Keep a careful eye on your fridge, and keep checking, especially if more than one person is shopping. I find it useful to take hard things like apples, easy peelers, carrots, swede, etc out of their wrappers in the fresh food drawer, so you can see at a glance, what is actually in there. If you have more than one of the same item, make sure the unused one is marked in some way, so you don't have the two on the go, and finish up wasting some. The same applies to all the items in your cupboards, it is so easy for items to get pushed to the back, and get to be very out of date! We decorated our pantry last year, and found some tins that were years out of date! Now tins have a long shelf life, so when they are three years out of date, they have definitely been there too long!

Talking about thrift, one of the perils of modern life is lifestyle inflation. Whatever your salary or wage, try and live within it, and save something, even if it only a few pounds every month. Lots of previously well-off people have come unstuck in life, and ended up in huge debt, because they have always lived up to and beyond their income, so they are never better off. With higher salaries come a posher car, a bigger house, that trendy kitchen you've been dreaming about, and a more expensive holiday. Like all the other middle managers.... partly funded by an already heavily loaded credit card!

Then your life hits the wall. You are in an accident, and off work for three months. While you are away, your firm has been bought out, restructured and your job no longer exists. Your relationship begins to unravel with the strain of everything. Your mortgage falls behind. And so on. Thousands of people like this contact the debt agencies every week. Many of the homeless have stories like this. The 'have it all' image has melted like snow on a warm day.

We can't stand the Wickes adverts, and don't shop there if we can help it. I like Phil Spencer, but he is demeaning his persona by being a part of the adverts. Since the pandemic, their adverts have stressed doing things for the effect of showing off to other people. Don't ever do or buy anything just to show off to other people. When you do things for your house, it is gratifying when friends say complimentary things about the changes, but it is not really for their benefit, you should be spending money for your own sake. Don't let fashion and the media affect your choices, especially if they encourage you to spend money you haven't got, and get everything on credit!

So, thrift is not only for the poor, but for the wise! Whatever your income, think thrift!

# COUNCIL TAX

The proof really is in the pudding... and Kent's new lot have been eating theirs without making a mess of the carpet

They say the proof is in the pudding. In Kent, the pudding arrived on 1 May last year, when a new political party took control of Kent County Council. The speeches were made, the photos were taken, the ceremonial keys were presumably polished... and then reality walked in wearing steel-toe boots.

Because whatever you think about local politics (and most people think, "Isn't it mainly potholes, parking and people arguing about bins?"), the first year for any new administration is rarely about grand new schemes and shiny announcements. It's about opening the cupboards, finding out what's actually in them, and discovering that half the shelves are held up with Blu Tack and optimism.

And that, in a nutshell, was the new incumbents' starting point.

A "make do and mend" year — not a "splash the cash" year

After nearly two decades of Conservative control, the newcomers didn't arrive to a nice, roomy budget with a little spare change down the back of the sofa. They arrived to what can only be described as a hard, cold slice of truth.

To borrow from June Gooch's "make do and mend" approach in this very publication, Year One wasn't going to be about splashing out on "new stuff". It was going to be about fixing what you've got, paying down what you owe, and trying to keep the wheels on while the engine is still running.

Which is not, to be fair, the most glamorous slogan for a victory leaflet. But it is very often the reality of local government.

## The starting point: not "a bit tight" — properly in the red

When people say an organisation is "in the red", it can mean anything from "we had a spendy month" to "we should stop buying branded teabags." This wasn't that.

Kent County Council, the new leadership say, began this chapter with debt running to £732 million. Not "I'm £16.40 overdrawn because I forgot the direct debit" red. Proper red. The kind of red where the finance team starts speaking in acronyms and nobody sleeps.

On top of that, they inherited an overspend — reported as £21 million — meaning doing nothing wasn't an option. Standing still would still cost money, and the metre was running.

Then there's the interest bill, quoted as £84,000 per day. That number has a particular sting because it's so easy to

picture: you could wake up, have a cup of tea, and by lunchtime you've effectively "spent" the price of a decent family home... purely on interest. It concentrates the mind.

## The quieter part: no trumpet-blowing, just getting on with it

One of the more interesting points in the story isn't just the scale of the challenge — it's the tone in which it was handled.

Did they make a big public song and dance about inheriting a financial headache? Not in the way some administrations might. The line attributed to their leader, Linden Kemkaran, is that they simply "sucked it up".

In politics, where oxygen is usually burned on blame and counter-blame, there's something almost unfashionably practical about that. Not necessarily saintly — just practical. Because whether you blame the last lot or not, the bill still arrives.

## The strategy: tighten belts, but don't cut the cloth to ribbons

Local government has a habit, in tough times, of reaching for the biggest pair of scissors it can find. Cut this service. Merge that team. Close the other thing. Announce a "transformation programme". Hold a consultation. Repeat.

The new Kent administration says it didn't go down the route of large, headline cuts to frontline services. Instead, it talks about belt-tightening through efficiency and control: when staff left, roles weren't automatically refilled; managers were asked to prove the need; and the emphasis was on maintaining service while improving productivity.

That's the theory, anyway — fewer automatic replacements, more scrutiny, and an expectation that the council should run more like a disciplined organisation rather than a machine that keeps adding parts.



It's the sort of approach that sounds simple until you try it. Because every unfilled post has a human knock-on: someone, somewhere, has to absorb the work. Done badly, it becomes a slow-motion collapse. Done well, it becomes leaner without becoming meaner.

The numbers they're putting on the table

The administration's own claimed achievements, in broad strokes, are these:

£100 million in savings delivered in the first year

£39.5 million of future spending re-mapped (in other words, plans revised, reshaped or rescheduled)

£67 million reduction in debt

A balanced budget achieved after what they describe as the largest public consultation in Kent's history

That's the headline version. And it's fair to say these are the sorts of figures that, if accurate, do two things at once: they reassure the cautious and irritate the sceptical. (Often the same people, depending on the day.)

"Chaos" predictions — and the reality residents care about

Much of the political weather this year has been shaped by the predictions made at the start. Critics forecast chaos. Some suggested big cuts would be inevitable. Others implied the council would end up going cap in hand to government.

The administration's response is essentially: we didn't do that. They say they not only maintained core services but increased spending in some key areas — not because money suddenly grew on trees, but because tighter management gave them room to move.

This is where local politics becomes wonderfully unromantic. Most residents don't wake up thinking about "financial remapping." They think about whether the road gets repaired, whether care arrives on time, whether special educational needs provision is stable, whether the bus exists, and whether somebody answers the phone.

Budgets are just the plumbing that decides whether any of that happens.

## Council tax: inherited rise, then a reduction

The council tax line is one that will land hardest with households, because it's the bit you feel.

The administration says the inherited plan was a 4.9% increase, but that they reduced it to 3.9% through what they describe as sound financial management.

That 1% difference might not sound huge in a press release, but across a county it becomes meaningful — and on a household bill it's at least a sign of direction, if not a cause for celebration.

They also add a longer-term message: historic borrowing should be managed down so that future generations aren't still paying for yesterday's decisions. It's a tidy line — and not an unreasonable principle.

## The neighbour comparison: Medway as the cautionary tale

No local political column is complete without a glance over

the fence.

The article's chosen comparison is Medway, described as being "in a right old pickle" under Labour control, reportedly requiring three bailouts in 18 months totalling over £200 million, and still putting council tax up by 5%.

The moral of the story, as presented, is that Kent avoided that path — and that across the South East, Kent stands out as having achieved a significant reduction against its planned budget trajectory (this as a "20% saving on what the planned budget was going to be").

Comparisons are always a bit like comparing two households: one might have a bigger mortgage, the other might have childcare costs, and somebody always has an uncle who "knows for a fact" the neighbour's finances are a scandal. But as a political argument, it's clear: look, we stabilised — they didn't.

## Enter the "DOLGE" team (yes, really)

And then we come to the bit that sounds like a sitcom prop but is, apparently, deadly serious: the DOLGE team — the "Department of Local Government Efficiency".

The name alone is enough to make you smile, and it's easy to see why opponents mocked it. British local government has many traditions, but snappy branding is not its strongest one.

Still, behind the slightly tongue-in-cheek label is a serious claim: that the administration is on track to deliver £100 million of efficiency savings in a year. If that's delivered without degrading services, it's substantial. If it's delivered by quietly shifting pain elsewhere, residents will notice soon enough. Efficiency, like dieting, is impressive until you realise you've been living on rice cakes.

## Verdict: a surprisingly steady first year

So where does that leave "proof in the pudding"?

If you take the administration's numbers at face value, Year One looks less like a victory lap and more like a disciplined clean-up job: debt reduction, savings, budget balancing, and a calmer approach than some predicted.

The more interesting political question is what happens next. Because it's one thing to steady the ship; it's another to decide where you're sailing once it stops rocking.

The claim now is that, having got a grip on the finances, they can start introducing "exciting new revenue generation policies" that could pump additional millions into the council over the next three years.

That's the moment where voters lean in. Because residents don't just want a council that survives — they want a council that improves daily life, fixes the basics, and doesn't treat them like walking wallets.

For now, though, on the evidence presented: they inherited a mess, resisted panic, and focused on the boring but essential work of control and competence.

And in local government, boring is often another word for "working".

Score time? On your scale: 8.99 out of 10.

Which, in Kent terms, is basically a standing ovation — though someone will still email to complain about the parking.

# Running Waters Retirement Park

Lydd Road, New Romney



**Last Two Units Now Available**

**We currently have two of the LATEST Luxury Lodges available on our new development**  
Situated on a quiet retirement park to suit elderly buyers. No Children and No Pets

With painstaking detailing throughout our homes screams quality, sophistication and luxury. The acclaimed layout remains the same with a side entrance to the lounge.

These homes have a beautiful panoramic view over the Romney Marsh and are all ready for you to move in. They feature Warm, sumptuous curtains and blinds with the rich colours and textures of the kitchen units and worktop brought together with rustic beams and stunning fitted carpets.

But don't take our word for it Book an appointment and view for yourself



**Please call for appointments : 01797 458 355 or 07555 274862**

## Sterry Funeral Service



**Proudly serving your local community since 2003**

Sterry Funeral Service are here to support and guide you. We offer a friendly, professional service to families.

Contact Nicky

Contact Heidi & Jen

**Folkestone**

**Hythe**

**01303 272 525**

**01303 264 400**

93 Cheriton High Street,  
CT19 4HE

41 High Street,  
CT21 5AD

- 24-hour service
- Bereavement advice
- Transparent pricing
- Private chapel of rest

- Floral tributes
- Memorial masonry
- Home visits
- Prepaid funeral plans

Call us for immediate support, advice or to arrange a home visit. We are here to help 24 hours a day.



[www.sterryfuneral.co.uk](http://www.sterryfuneral.co.uk)



**12 YEAR**  
Guarantee

New Boiler & Bathroom installation specialist

New Boiler Installation

General Plumbing

New Bathroom Installation

Air Conditioning

**New Worcester boiler**  
From £12.99 per month  
0% finance available

\* T & C's apply • Your quotation will be personalised • finance acceptance required



Scan to get your free boiler quotation



Proud members of  
**Checkatrade.com** 10/10  
Where reputation matters



Worcester  
Accredited Partner

Trust us to look after your family & home!  
[www.ecoheatph.co.uk](http://www.ecoheatph.co.uk)

## Wildlife

By Kerry King

### Kent swans face devastating flu threat

Across East Kent, the avian flu outbreak continues to take a heavy toll, with the Canterbury and Thanet area particularly affected. Dozens of swans have been found sick or dead along rivers and waterways, and confirmed cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza have left wildlife groups deeply concerned. Once-peaceful stretches of water have become places of loss, and the scale of what is unfolding feels unprecedented.

Wildlife experts have been following developments with justified concern as the flu spreads further afield, and attention is now turning to other parts of the county. Here in Hythe, many eyes are on the long-established pair of mute swans on the Royal Military Canal. For over twenty years, mute swans have been a familiar and cherished presence along this stretch of water, bringing pleasure to walkers, wildlife lovers, families, and visitors alike.

This particular pair has been part of local life for more than a decade, quietly shaping the character of the canal. Their story, however, has not been without sadness. In March 2024, they laid nine eggs in their usual nesting spot, yet none hatched for reasons still unknown. Then came 2025 — the first year in living memory when they did not proudly show off cygnets along the canal. Their absence was keenly felt by those who have followed them year after year.

At present, there is some comfort in knowing that the Hythe pair appear healthy and unaffected. Seeing them still gliding together offers reassurance during an otherwise troubling time. But with the virus continuing to affect swans elsewhere in Kent, concern remains high.



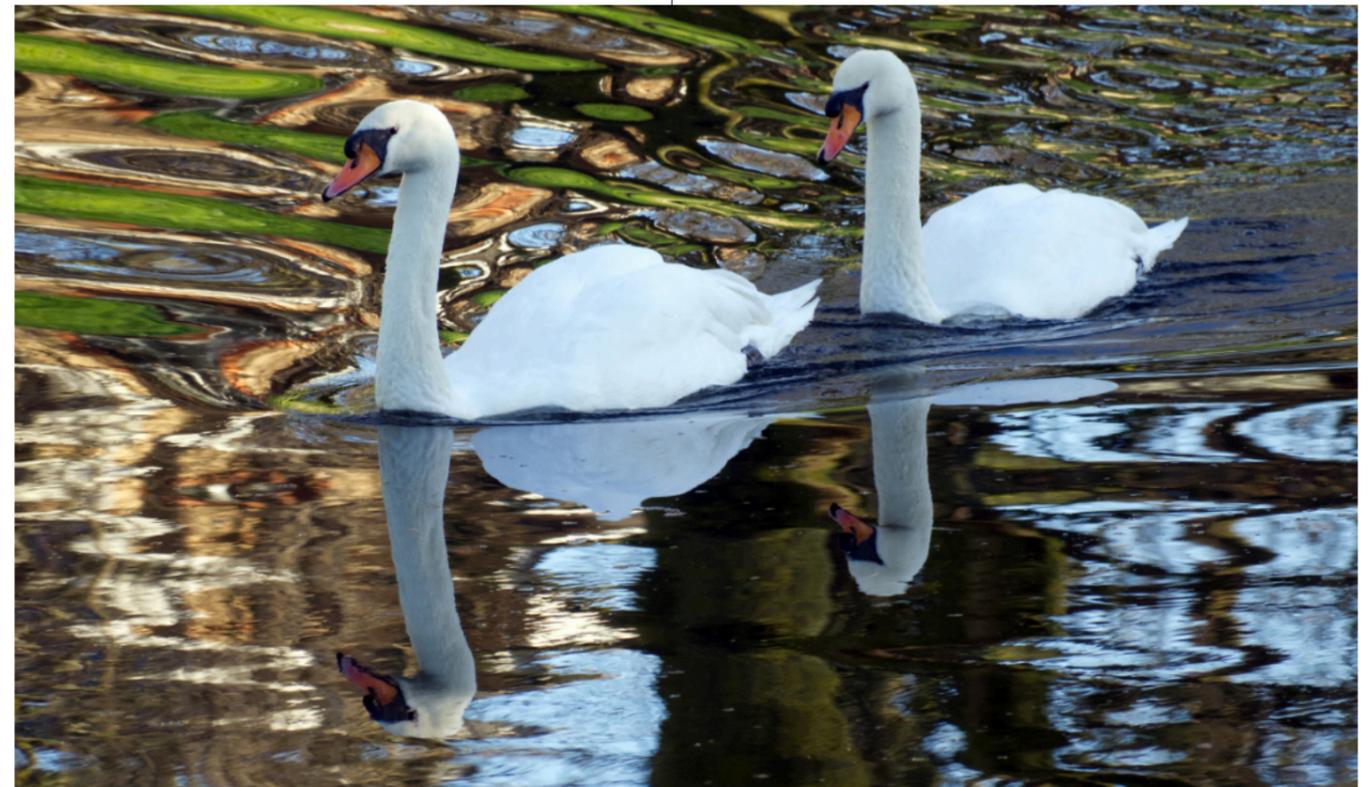
Losing these birds would be more than a blow to wildlife; it would be a loss to the heart of the community itself.

#### Public advice:

Please do not touch or handle sick or dead birds. Report sightings to DEFRA's Animal and Plant Health Agency, keep dogs away from affected areas, and avoid feeding wild birds where illness is suspected.

Picture 1 – The resident pair of mute swans on the Royal Military Canal in Hythe, pictured recently and appearing healthy despite growing concerns over avian flu elsewhere in Kent. Photograph: Kerry King.

Picture 2 – The female mute swan on her nest along the Royal Military Canal in 2023. The pair laid nine eggs in the same area in March 2024, but none hatched. Photograph: Kerry King.





Happy New Year Lookerites and welcome to a new batch of reviews a decent little Christmas movie from Sky, a classy style Western from Amazon Prime, the next instalment of a classic franchise and a decent little thriller hitting the big screens

If you are suffering from a festive hangover why not indulge yourself in **Tinsel Town - Sky/Now TV**. When a washed-up

Hollywood legend Bradley Mack (Kiefer Sutherland) finds the plug pulled on his action franchise and a lack of opportunities forthcoming his agent (Katherine Ryan) sets him up with a gig in England. Mack, who doesn't do his own stunts, finds himself cast as Buttons in a panto, much to his disgust and annoyance. He immediately announces that he will not be doing it only to be told by his agent that if he doesn't then he risks being sued.



Mack accepts that he is in panto land but not before his fellow panto cast mates give his fragile ego a bit of a kick in. Meanwhile Mack's daughter is desperate to reunite with him but his ex-wife tells her not to get her hopes up. Slowly but surely Mack begins to warm to his cast mates especially Jill whose ex-husband is always in the background and accepts the panto as a way of bringing joy to others and more importantly himself.

Tinsel Town is the story of a Hollywood legend endearing himself to a small town and finding happiness and becoming reunited with his daughter. Is it cheesy? Yes but at Christmas you can get away with a bit of cheese.

The all star cast includes theatre legend Derek Jacobi as Albert an-ex performer with a sad backstory who forms a solid bond with Mack. Meera Syal as director Cassandra, Rebel Wilson as choreographer Jill and

the love interest. The panto dames are Jason Manford and Asim (Chabuddy G) Chaudrey and Danny Dyer pops up as a love rival.

It's cheesy but it will make you smile and that's what you need at Christmas.

If you like westerns then you should give **Tornado - Amazon Prime** a go.

This isn't a standard John Wayne/Gary Cooper western as it's set in Scotland in the 1700's where a young Japanese woman (Tornado) is being pursued by Sugarman (Tim Roth) and his henchmen. Tornado hides in a remote mansion but is soon joined by Sugarman and his gang who threaten the occupants. Tornado manages to run off with the gang soon in hot pursuit.



The story goes back to when Tornado and her Father Fujin, a former Saurai swordsman who is now a puppeteer performing with Tornado. Sugarman and his gang, who have just robbed a church of its gold, are watching the show when a young boy steals their gold. Tornado hides the boy and the gold on their wagon but Tornado throws the boy off the wagon. When the gang catch up to the wagon Tornado flees into the woods to hide the gold but back at the wagon Sugarman kills Fujin. This action changes Tornado's destiny as she seeks to take her revenge on the gang.

John MacLean's period thriller is a classy western-style drama that appears minimalist but delivers in full. Tim Roth is another of those good in whatever he does and he doesn't disappoint in Tornado. At times slow paced but that allows the director time to develop his story and I did feel it had the same pace as a Sergio Leone/Clint Eastwood western.

Tornado is well-worth a view and certainly won't disappoint.

The words Daniel-San and 'Wash on, wash off' will surely trigger a cinematic image of Daniel-San (Ralph Macchio) standing on one leg and winning a karate tournament as he defeated of Cobra-Kai.

**Karate Kid: Legends - Sky/Now TV** is the 6th instalment in the franchise and the first not to be produced by Jerry Weintraub who passed away in 2015.



Jackie Chan is back as Mr Han as is the original Karate Kid Ralph Macchio as Daniel LaRusso. The main lead this time is Li Fong as Ben Wang.

Mr Han is now the master of a Kung Fu school in Beijing. Among his pupils is his great-nephew Li Fong. But when Li's mother tells Li and Han that she has accepted a medical post in New York. Li must move to the US. Li's mother tells him he must stop practising Kung Fu in response to Li's brother Bo being stabbed to death by an opponent after he won a tournament.

In New York Li meets Mia, whose Father Victor was a local boxing champion, but now owns a pizza restaurant. As Li and Mia's relationship develops Li attracts the attention of Mia's ex Conor Day who also happens to be a Karate expert. When Conor punches Li in the face Li retaliates but finds out Conor is quicker and stronger. Meanwhile Li witnesses Victor being attacked by local thugs sent by O'Shea who he owes money to. O'Shea also owns the Dojo where Conor trains. With Li's help they fight off the thugs and Victor tells Li his back story.

Victor decides to go back to boxing to pay off his debt and asks Li to train him, Li eventually agrees and begins working in the pizzeria. Victor's fight leads to him being hospitalised after his opponent under O'Sheas instructions lands



several illegal blows. Li decides to enter the Five Boroughs Karate Competition in order to win the prize money for Victor. Mr Han flies to the US to train Li and he then recruits Daniel to help. With Conor also in the tournament it proves to be a tough task.

Karate Kid: Legends is a good action film that brings the memories flooding back. The action scenes are as exciting as the original and you will find yourself smiling throughout. There is also a surprise cameo at the end from Daniel's opponent in the original film who he is now in partnership with.

Karate Kid: Legends is truly legendary

I reluctantly accompanied Mrs S to the cinema to see **The Housemaid - on general release**. My expectations were low but I can honestly say that I really enjoyed it. Based on the book by Freida McFadden The Housemaid is a psychological thriller with numerous twists that will keep you guessing.

Millie Calloway is living in her car and is on parole after being released from jail for a murder she committed while in education. When she applies for a live-in maid position for the Winchester's Mum Nina, Dad Andrew and Daughter Cecelia she is surprised and pleased when she is given the job.

Her desperation for the post outweighs her concerns such as her attic room with a door that locks on the outside. Millie is soon clashing with Nina who is repeatedly belittling and pulling her up on matters. Dad Andrew however seems very supportive and consoles Millie while defending his wives outbursts towards Millie.

When Nina asks Millie to book a weekend away for her and Andrew to see a Broadway musical and stay in a hotel. Millie complies only to be told by Nina why did you do that and it's coming out of your wages. Once again Andrew consoles Millie and suggests that they go away. During the stay they end up in bed and Millie becomes romantically entangled with Andrew. This in turn leads to Andrew throwing Nina out of the house and the mysterious gardener Enzo trying to speak to Millie. Andrew fires Enzo when he catches him speaking to Millie.

I'm not going to tell you anymore because that would spoil the plot twists (yes there are several) The Housemaid really surprised me and had me gripped throughout. The three leads Millie (Sydney Sweeney) Nina (Amanda Seyfried) and Andrew (Brandon Sklenar) were strong throughout and all three show a depth to their characters that we initially don't see.

I thoroughly recommend The Housemaid and cannot wait for the sequel (Mrs S tells me there are three books)

That's your lot for now. With the weather improving I hope to get to the big screen a bit more so until then, happy viewing.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Email: [info@thelooker.co.uk](mailto:info@thelooker.co.uk)

Dear Editor,

I was interested to read about the proposed new cafe behind Capelli's. Is there really room for another cafe in New Romney? We already have 4 pubs doing good food, 4 licenced restaurants, 2 Indians, the Turkish and Italian, and 7 coffee/tea shops. There is the odd little Santa Fe, Costa, the traditional and much loved Debylins, a new one where the Couch Potato used to be, Bakery 64, the one facing the car park, and the Cosy Cafe (which is great!). Will another one just dilute trade for all the rest?

As a retired practice nurse, I am often in despair, about the state of the nation's health. Obesity and junk food is everywhere, despite the many warnings about eating the wrong things. The country doesn't seem to care that they are eating themselves into ill-health and an early grave. Life expectancy is already plateauing and will soon start falling. It was interesting watching 2 TV programme about a commentator lived on a 70's diet for 2 weeks, with, as far as possible, a 70s lifestyle. She didn't lose weight, as she had hoped, but was a lot fitter. Her muscle/fat ratio had improved and her blood counts were healthier.

Every new catering place that opens tempts people away from providing and cooking their own food and drink at home, and signs a death warrant for family meals and healthy home cooked food. Sadly, one of the things the lady found hard was sticking to meal times and not snacking, an important feature of 70's life.

Yours sincerely,  
Mrs June Gooch.

Dear Mr Wimble, Editor of The Looker,  
I write with a sense of growing concern – and no small amount of curiosity – about the sudden and rather eerie silence from your Letters page.

Once a lively forum of complaint, praise, outrage and the occasional wildly creative interpretation of reality, it now resembles a windswept prairie. Not a peep. Not a whinge. Not even a mildly irked resident writing in green ink.

This raises the obvious question: have the good people of Romney Marsh, Folkestone and Hythe been left so utterly dumbfounded by this fantasy publication that they are quite simply lost for words? Is The Looker now so dazzling, so flawless, so perfectly aligned with the cosmic order that there is nothing left to say?

It seems unlikely.  
After all, I distinctly recall you previously publishing letters that were openly critical of the paper, its editor, its tone, its politics, and occasionally its very right to exist. That, I thought, was rather admirable. A sign of confidence. A willingness to let daylight in.  
And yet now... nothing.

So one is left to wonder: is this sudden editorial drought about protecting the Looker "brand"? Or is there a more delicate anxiety at play – perhaps a nervousness about the amount of negative noise that Reform UK might attract if the letters pages were allowed to run free once more?

Or – perish the thought – is it concern that an outpouring of local support for Tony Vaughan, widely regarded as the best MP Folkestone and Hythe has seen in a generation, might upset a carefully curated narrative?

Surely not.  
I can only assume that the letters are piling up somewhere: under a desk, behind a filing cabinet, or perhaps being gently screened for their emotional wellbeing before being released into the wild.

For the sake of transparency – and entertainment – I do hope the Letters page makes a triumphant return soon. Democracy, after all, thrives on argument, disagreement, and the occasional letter that makes everyone tut quietly over their tea.

Yours,

Still waiting to read what people really think Anon

Dear Mr Anon,  
Thank you for your touching concern regarding the apparent stillness of our letters page. I can reassure you that reports of its demise are, as ever, somewhat exaggerated.

The brief absence of letters had far less to do with editorial anxiety, brand protection, or political sensitivities, and rather more to do with that inconvenient annual interruption known as Christmas – combined with the small matter of print deadlines, staff holidays, and the printing press insisting on working to a timetable rather than a sense of drama.

I can also happily confirm that The Looker remains very much in demand. In fact, once again we have had to increase our print run – hardly the usual response to a publication that has allegedly left its readers "lost for words".

As for Reform UK, the popularity of the local MP, and the suggestion that we are nervously tiptoeing around either – I would gently remind readers that copy for the 1 April edition is not due just yet. All in good time.

Rest assured, the letters page will return, opinions will flow, and no doubt I will once again be accused of publishing too much, too little, or entirely the wrong thing – which, experience suggests, is the clearest sign that we are doing something right.

Yours faithfully,

David Wimble

Editor, The Looker



# Great British Furniture Brands



**Alstons**  
Sofas for Living

Made in Colchester, Essex

Sleepeeze | MEMORY ultimate

ULTIMATE 4500

- Soft knitted cover
- Soft polyester comfort layer
- High density polyester support layer
- Double depth graphite memory foam
- Mini comfort springs
- Traditional pocketed springs
- Fully encapsulated side support
- Eco support pad



**Sleepeeze**  
ESTABLISHED 1924

Made in Rochester, Kent



**Parker Knoll**

Made in Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire



**Sherborne**

Made in Clayton, Yorkshire

**WE'LL BEAT ANY PRICE.  
ONLINE OR ANYWHERE ELSE**

**LOWEST PRICE GUARANTEED**



# CASTONS FURNITURE

Since 1895

[WWW.CASTONSFURNITURE.COM](http://WWW.CASTONSFURNITURE.COM)

5 Angel Walk Shopping Centre,  
Tonbridge, TN9 1TJ

01732 351872



**MARSH**  
INSURANCE SERVICES

Marsh Insurance Services, Station Road, New Romney, Kent TN28 8LG

**Car  
Home  
Business**



**Local business, providing  
a personalised service.**

Offering competitive insurance products  
for private individuals and businesses.

For expert and friendly advice,  
pop in today or contact us on:

**01797 362007**  
www.marshinsuranceservices.co.uk

Scan me:



We are Authorised and Regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority under firm reference 474741 to arrange general insurance contracts. Marsh Insurance Services is a trading name of Marsh Insurance Services (Kent) Ltd. Company Registration No 6317784.

# People From The Past

## RICHARD GEORGE AIRETON

Richard George Aireton joined the Kent Police Force in 1935, and his service covered the war years. He served in Tenterden, Folkestone and Maidstone before moving to the Marsh in 1957 where he was appointed Police Sergeant in charge of Dymchurch. He lived in the Police House in Orgarswick Avenue and his wife Evelyn helped in the local library. He had four constables for support in winter and six in summer and in the early days there were only simple ways for police to get in touch with each other. This meant knowing where all the telephone boxes were around the area and being at the right box at the right time. Some of the sadder events he dealt with were around children who had drowned in the sea off Dymchurch. Lost children were cared for by his wife until they were collected. She also dealt with all incoming phone calls when he was on duty away from the station and she also provided meals for some of the people who had been arrested. Richard retired in 1965 after thirty years' service. In his spare time, he bred Labradors and he was a very much-loved father and grandfather.

## RICHARD ELLIMAN AIRETON

Richard Elliman Aireton was born in the Royal Victoria Hospital in Folkestone in 1947

and the family moved to Dymchurch ten years later. He went to Dymchurch Junior School and also Harvey Grammar School in Folkestone. He worked at Williams & Glyn's Bank in London for a couple of years and later joined the Police Force in Maidstone before working at the Labour Exchange in Folkestone. He married Jean Pinder in 1972 and started work as an Insurance Agent for the Britannic Assurance. They moved back to Seabourne Way, Dymchurch in 1978 and in 1980 he had a serious car accident when his car hit a telegraph pole near Newchurch, suffering a major brain haemorrhage. He made a partial recovery and was a doorman at the British Legion, a porter at Lydd Airport before working at the Department of Work & Pensions in Folkestone. He suffered a lot of pain as he got older but never stopped smiling and loved his walks along the sea wall. Richard died in 2017.



Robson & Co Solicitors

**Legal Expertise  
In Hythe & Ashford**

Conveyancing | Wills & Probate | Family Law  
Commercial | Criminal Advice | Mediation

Get legal Advice from a  
team you can trust

Get in touch with Robson & Co Solicitors of  
Hythe and Ashford today.

**Call: 01233 228800 | 01303 264581**



Robson & Co Solicitors, 147 High Street, Hythe, CT21 5J  
e: post@robson-co.co.uk | www.robson-co.co.uk

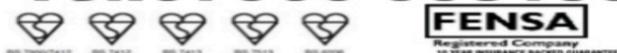
**ABACUS**  
WINDOWS UPVC LTD  
With over 20 years' experience

- ★ WINDOWS
- ★ COLOURED DOORS
- ★ BIFOLD DOORS
- ★ CONSERVATORIES
- ★ FASCIAS & SOFFITS
- ★ COLOURED CLADDING
- ★ SKY PODS

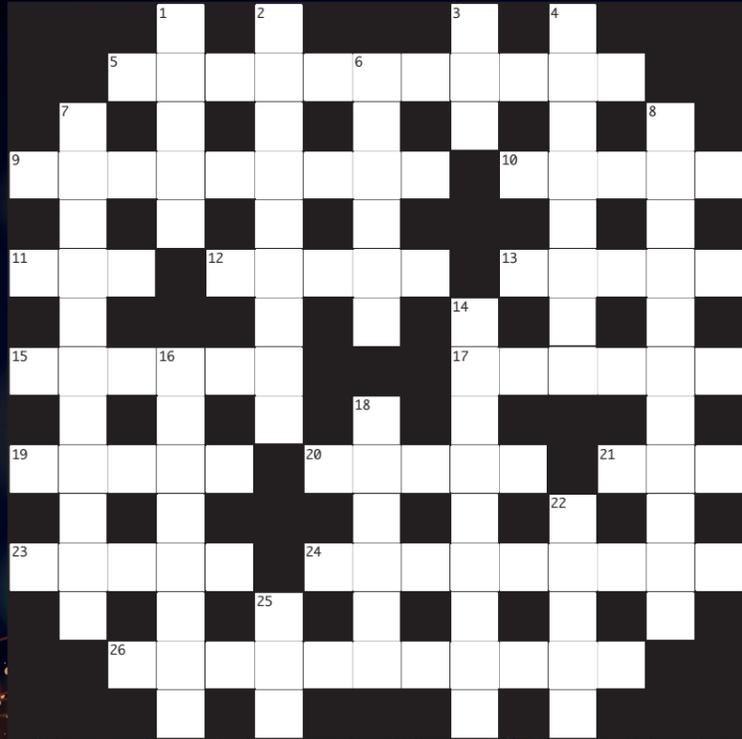


MISTED & BROKEN SEALED UNITS  
REPLACEMENT SERVICE

**Contact Neil**  
**Tel: 07900 958130**



# General Knowledge Crossword



### Across Clues:

1. A common pen (4)
5. Catching wind (4)
7. Red, irritated eyes (9)
9. Military force (4)
11. An inquisitive person (5)
12. Alcoholic beverage (4)
14. The arrival (6)
17. Reveal secrets (6)
19. Apply effort (5)
20. Garlic-flavoured mayonnaise (5)
21. Break or pause (6)
23. Title for a ruler (6)
24. Strip of material (4)
26. A looped rope (5)
28. Type of meat (4)
30. Light from sky (9)
31. Rounded underground storage organ (4)
32. To assess knowledge (4)

### Down Clues:

1. Second letter (4)
2. Follow orders (4)
3. Dessert made from cooked fruit. (6)
4. Small angelic figure (6)
5. Thrust a pointed object (4)
6. A hiding place (4)
8. Opposite of night (3)
10. Crest of a hill or mountain (9)
13. To completely eliminate (9)
15. Force something out (5)
16. To accept or follow (5)
18. Mythical mischief making creature (5)
22. A type of bar (6)
23. Heavy, filling food (6)
24. An explosive device (4)
25. A burial chamber (4)
27. The name of a Martian day (3)
28. To grip with teeth. (4)
29. A place for agricultural production (4)

**Answers:** Across: 1. Biro, 5. Sail, 7. Bloodshot, 9. Army, 11. Payer, 12. Beer, 14. Advent, 17. Betray, 19. Exert, 20. Aioli, 21. Hiatus, 23. Sultan, 24. Belt, 26. Lasso, 28. Beef, 30. Moonlight, 31. Bulb, 32. Examine.  
Down: 1. Beta, 2. Obey, 3. Compost, 4. Cherub, 5. Slab, 6. Lair, 10. Ridgeline, 13. Eradicate, 15. Eject, 16. Abide, 18. Troll, 22. Saloon, 23. Stodge, 24. Bomb, 25. Tomb, 27. Sol, 28. Bite, 29. Farm.

# Hidden Message Wordsearch

E O T H E M E O S T B J Y D E  
A N R U T I A F U L U X I S Y  
S T U B E M R O F P A O T H U  
E S U T I N T P I L R L A R N  
M O O N P T H T A E S T A R E  
T S A N D E E G T C O N M E T  
M E T E O R N S S C U O U E E  
L D O N L Y A N P S R O C P C  
M E R C U R Y U S U N E V O L  
E S E D F R P S O M A C M C I  
O A U N S L R E L A N E D S P  
D T O M U A M I N I T O N E S  
O U A T L F A N I N T E L L E  
L R O O I G E N T A N D P E O  
S N S W E R F U L B E I N T G

### Planets and Celestial Bodies

Once you find all the words. Copy the unused letters starting in the top left corner into the blanks to reveal the hidden message.

- |          |           |
|----------|-----------|
| Asteroid | Neptune   |
| Comet    | Orbit     |
| Earth    | Pluto     |
| Eclipse  | Saturn    |
| Galaxy   | Solar     |
| Jupiter  | Star      |
| Mars     | Sun       |
| Mercury  | Telescope |
| Meteor   | Uranus    |
| Moon     | Venus     |

Write the hidden message here:

*"We walk together, we move together, we think together, we resolve together, and together we take this country forward" - Narendra Modi*

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

# Sudoku Challenge

# Spot the Difference!

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



# THE RANT!!!



## A Grand Night Out (Allegedly)

Drama, trauma and tactical warfare of “getting ready to go out”

I am fortunate. Truly. Blessed, even. I get invited to events. Some because I'm a journalist and must smile politely while balancing a lukewarm vol-au-vent and listening to a councillor explain the thrilling nuance of parking permits. Some because I wear my councillor hat (which is invisible but weighs a ton), and some because, on rare occasions, I actually want a night out.

And these invitations, these glittering evenings, nearly always include a plus one. In my case: Sarah. My wife. My friend. My companion. The love of my life. And, importantly for legal safety, this is not an attack on her — this is an anthropological study of a universal truth: Women need three business days and military resources to get ready, even if the destination is a pub with sticky carpets and a man called Kev who DJ'd at his own divorce.

We know the drill. We decide on a London night out. A show, a dinner, maybe some cultured drinks in a bar where the cheapest glass of wine costs the same as a second-hand Ford Fiesta. But before booking, we must find a hotel. Something reasonable. Something affordable. Something that does not require a mortgage, the sale of a kidney, or the financial backing of the IMF.

After hours scrolling through TravelZoo, hotels.com, secret escapes and offers that “end in 13 minutes” (but have been ending for 13 months), we settle on a delightful establishment described as Boutique Executive Deluxe Chic. Which, when translated from hospitality marketing language, means:

Your room is the square footage of a coffin showroom.

Your “rainfall shower” is a dribble from a tap installed during the Crimean War.

There will be one tiny window that looks directly at the air conditioning unit.

And the entire place will smell faintly of Febreze and regret.

Check-in is 2pm. The event begins at 7. Dinner at 8. Venue half a mile away. So what do I say? What any rational human says:

“We'll leave at 6:30.”

Foolish. Naïve. Idiotic.

First, we go for a stroll. Maybe a coffee. Maybe browse shops we can't afford. Then back to the hotel at 4pm. Why? Because, dear reader, it is time for Sarah to get ready.

This is a process, not an event. This is NASA countdown procedure meets Paris Fashion Week. Now — two and a half hours seems generous to the untrained eye. Two and a half hours is a flight to Rome.

Two and a half hours is a matinee performance of Les Mis. Two and a half hours is an entire Eurovision semi-final with voting.

But two and a half hours for getting ready? Apparently barely enough.

I, in my ignorance, imagine this will involve: a shower some makeup hair that looks exactly like it did before she “did” it

a dress chosen six days earlier after 14 returns and 300 online basket decisions

But no. No no no.

Somewhere between 4pm and 6:29pm, another universe opens inside that hotel bathroom.

I don't know what occurs in there, but based on noises, smells, and hair tools that look like medieval surgical equipment, I believe the following take place:

A full-scale lighting crew are brought in  
A seamstress performs last-minute haute couture alterations  
A makeup artist applies cosmetics with the precision usually reserved for restoring Renaissance frescoes

A hair engineer constructs a structural, wind-resistant architectural piece  
Possibly NASA are involved

When I gently (and wrongly) ask: “Will you be long? I just need the bathroom.”

I am met not with words, but with the energy of a thousand suns.

Something about Rome not being built in a day.  
Something about beauty requiring time.  
Something about me “not understanding anything about anything ever.”

I slink away.  
I do not speak again.  
I watch the digital clock and silently pray.

Then... THE GRAND REVEAL.

She steps out.  
Glorious.  
Radiant.  
Stunning.

Absolutely worth every second of the two and a half hour makeover montage that Disney films would kill for. Hair perfect. Eyes glowing. Dress immaculate. The very definition of effortless beauty — achieved through 11,000 tonnes of effort.

And then I get ready.  
It takes exactly:  
6 minutes and 9 seconds.

Shower.  
Deodorant.  
Shirt.  
Bow tie.  
Tux.  
Cufflinks (the real enemy).  
A rogue attempt at hair that takes 7 seconds because at this age it does what it wants anyway.

I am done.

Together, we look like Hollywood royalty: dashing groom, elegant starlet.

We open the hotel door...

...and walk into horizontal rain powered by 70mph winds and the general rage of the British climate.

By the time we reach the venue (half a mile — remember?), she looks like she's been rescued from a shipwreck and I look like the man who pushed her off the boat.

Hair flattened.  
Dress damp.  
Makeup now impressionism rather than realism.

But she smiles.

Because despite the storm, the sprint, the hotel with a shower that wets everything except the human body, and a marathon of preparation that could have been live-streamed in three parts — she is happy.

And therefore, so am I.

Because that is the secret truth: we endure it not for the event, but for their joy.

And for the moment she looks at me, drenched, mascara drifting south, hair in what can only be described as “post-tsunami styling,” and says:

“Wasn't it worth it?”

Of course it was.

Because going out — especially in the grand, glamorous, utterly chaotic British way — isn't about arriving perfectly.

It's about the ritual.  
The comedy.  
The logistics operation rivaling D-Day.  
The bizarre hotel toiletries.  
The silent waiting.  
The miraculous reveal.  
The rain-destroyed result.

And the simple, essential truth:

She is still the same woman I fell in love with — whether dazzling in a gown or walking two muddy dogs at 7am in sideways sleet.

**Adams Fencing**  
The Fencing Specialist  
Established 1932  
Specialising in all types of fencing and gates  
Domestic, agricultural, commercial and security

- ★ Feather Edge
- ★ Post & Rail
- ★ Waney Panels
- ★ Chain Link
- ★ Stock Proof
- ★ Weld Mesh
- ★ Palisade
- ★ Field Gates
- ★ Garden & Side Gates

Call: 07810445669  
Email: Adamsfencing1@gmail.com

## Country Style Building Services

Specialising in:  
Single/Double Storey Extension  
Landscaping  
Pond Construction

Call us: 07952017544  
& 07944940301  
Find us on Facebook!

We have over 30 years experience, we guarantee all our work and have an extensive portfolio to showcase our work. If you would like a friendly, knowledgeable and fair priced service. Please call for a free quote today!

Email us: [countrystylestoveskent@gmail.com](mailto:countrystylestoveskent@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.countrystyle-stoves.co.uk](http://www.countrystyle-stoves.co.uk)

# A crafting experience that creates memories

This March, Teach Me Courses in New Romney is offering something truly special to celebrate Mother's Day — a thoughtfully curated Creative Escape designed to be enjoyed, remembered and treasured.

Rather than a traditional gift, this unique experience invites participants to spend quality time creating, relaxing and celebrating together in a beautiful creative setting. Choose Your Creative Journey

The Mother's Day Creative Escape offers four inspiring workshops to choose from, allowing participants to tailor the day to their interests. Guests can opt for a half-day experience or enjoy a full-day immersion, making it ideal for both relaxed browsing and dedicated creativity. Each session is guided by experienced tutors, ensuring that everyone — regardless of ability — leaves with something meaningful they've created themselves.

## Indulgence Meets Creativity

A sumptuous cream tea is included, turning the experience into a true treat. Personalised items created during the workshops are a lasting keepsake, while professional photography captures the day, preserving the memories long after the craft pieces are finished. It's a celebration of creativity, care and connection — perfect for mothers,



daughters, sons or anyone wanting to mark the occasion in a thoughtful way.

## A Thoughtful Alternative Gift

Teach Me Courses is a Platinum Award-winning creative studio with deep roots in the Romney Marsh community. This Mother's Day event offers something genuinely different. It's not just a day out, but an experience that combines creativity, indulgence and meaningful moments. Places are limited for this special event. Booking can be completed at [www.teachmecourses.co.uk](http://www.teachmecourses.co.uk)



Learn mosaics, resin dipping, tree of life sculpture or paint a ceramic item at Teach Me's Mother's Day workshops.



KENT MODEL EXCHANGE

[www.kentmodelexchange.co.uk](http://www.kentmodelexchange.co.uk)

## Looking for the perfect addition to your model collection?

The Kent model exchange is your one-stop shop for all things model related. We are proud to be one of the South East's largest pre-loved model shops catering to enthusiasts of all ages and skill levels. We also repair & service models

Exceptional Variety • Friendly Expertise • Quality Pre-loved Models



106 High Street | Hythe | Kent | CT21 5LE  
T: 01303 762 456

KENT MODEL EXCHANGE



Maude Community Centre Station Road,  
New Romney, TN28 8LQ

January.....31st	July.....25th
February....28th	August.....29th
March.....28th	September...26th
April.....25th	October.....31st
May.....30th	November....28th
June.....27th	10am- 2pm
	(stall holders from 9am)

For more information call  
Caroline on 07871702270.

Monthly tombola all profits are donated to New Romney counselling.

## Make a Silver Spinner Ring

Create your own sterling silver spinner ring—a personalised meditation ring designed with a spinning inner band nestled within a beautiful outer ring. This course is perfect for beginners in silversmithing or anyone seeking to make a unique accessory that's not only visually stunning but also offers a stress-relieving effect. By the end, you'll have a beautiful, mindful piece brought to life by your own hands.



Friday 28 February 10.30am -1.00pm.  
Price is just £80.00 inc. refreshments



3 Cockreed Lane, New Romney  
Kent TN28 8JH T: 07770 347616  
[www.teachmecourses.co.uk](http://www.teachmecourses.co.uk)

# LOOKER SHORT STORIES

Submit your short story to: [info@thelooker.co.uk](mailto:info@thelooker.co.uk)

## The Romney Railway Gang

By June Brooks

Ivor first heard the little railway before he ever saw it.

It was a sound that didn't belong to the Marsh—the hiss of a kettle about to sing, the clipped chuff-chuff like a cheerful dog trotting on a lane, and then a bright whistle that seemed to lift clean over the sea wall and skim across the wide, flat fields.

He was kneeling by the dyke behind Mrs Pelling's cottage, trying to coax a stickleback into a jam jar, when the whistle came again. He looked up. On the horizon, where the grass met the sky and the sky met the thin blue line of the Channel, a tiny thread of smoke stitched itself along the edge of the world.

"The little train," he breathed, as if saying it too loudly might scare it away.

"We know," said Nell, who was twelve and as certain of things as a grown-up, even though she still had a gap where her front tooth used to be. "It's the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch. Captain says it's the smallest public railway in the world, only it doesn't feel small, does it?"

She said "Captain" because that was what they called her father, long before the war turned real captains into common sights. Captain Marshall's legs didn't work properly since Dunkirk, and he walked with a stick and a fierce dignity as if the Marsh itself ought to make room for him. He had moved them to New Romney "for the air", though everyone knew it was also for the wide distances and the way secrets could be swallowed by the flatness.

Along with Ivor and Nell there was Pip—Pip Fletcher, who had freckles like spilled pepper and a mind that ran faster than any train—and Suki, whose mother had come from London and who still spoke with an accent the Marsh boys liked to imitate. Suki was the bravest of them all, because she didn't care when they did.

They'd made a gang without meaning to, the way children do when there's too much outside their control and too many grown-up conversations that stop when you enter the room.

That morning, Nell made a decision.

"We're going to the station," she announced. "Dymchurch first, then Hythe. And we're not just going for a ride like babies. We're going to be useful."

Pip's eyes shone. "Useful how?"

Nell looked left and right, though there was no one but a rook in the field and the wind combing the grass. "Soldiers use the railway," she said. "I heard Captain talking to Mr

Harris. The little railway is doing important work. If it can, then we can."

Ivor felt something in his chest flutter, equal parts excitement and fear. "Do you mean... war work?"

"Don't be silly," said Suki, but she smiled. "We're not going to be spies."

Pip grinned. "Unless we have to."

So they set off along the lane that ran between ditches and bent willow trees, past the sheep with their blunt noses, past the old church that seemed to have been dropped like a toy on the vast green carpet of the Marsh. The wind was full of salt and far-off engines and, every so often, that bright little whistle as if the train was calling to them personally.

At Dymchurch station the platform smelled of coal smoke and hot oil. The track, narrow as a ribbon, ran straight as a ruler until it vanished into the shimmering distance. The stationmaster knew Nell—everyone knew Nell—and he lifted a finger to his cap.

"Off on adventures again, are you?" he said, pretending to scold. "Mind you don't bring the war home in your pockets."

A train rolled in, small and proud, like a child dressed as an adult. Its black engine had a face of sorts—the round front, the lamp like an eye, the coupling chain like a grin. Behind it were carriages with polished wood and little doors that snapped shut with authority.

And in those carriages were soldiers.

Not the heroic, storybook kind with shining buttons and clean boots, but tired men with sand-coloured uniforms and faces that looked older than their years. Some had rifles slung. Some had shovels. One had a rolled blanket strapped like a burden to his back. They spoke quietly, as if the sea might be listening.

Ivor's heart beat faster. The war, which lived mostly in newspapers and ration books and the crackle of the wireless, had arrived on a miniature train.

As the gang climbed aboard, a soldier with kind eyes moved his kit bag so Suki could sit. "Afternoon," he said, soft as a hymn.

"Afternoon," Nell replied, as if she spoke to soldiers every day.

The train gave a puff—almost a sigh—and began to move. Dymchurch slid away. The platform shrank. The Marsh opened up, endless and bare and beautiful, criss-crossed by ditches that flashed like mirrors.

Pip leaned out of the window just enough to feel the wind and no more. "See?" he whispered. "It's like riding along the edge of the world."

They passed Martello towers that crouched on the shore like old, watchful dogs. They passed lines of barbed wire

and odd wooden frames that looked like giant's games. The sea beyond the wall was grey and restless.

At one point the train slowed, and the soldier with kind eyes glanced down the line.

"Sand on the rails," he said.

"Sand?" Ivor echoed.

"It drifts," the soldier explained. "Sea and wind. It tries to bury everything out here. That's the Marsh for you. Always swallowing, always keeping."

Nell's gaze sharpened. "Is that why you're here?"

He looked at her for a moment, then nodded. "Partly. And to build. And to watch. And to be ready."

To be ready. The words felt like a stone in Ivor's pocket—heavy, strange, and important.

At Hythe, more men climbed off. Orders were called. Boots clattered. The gang waited on the platform, not sure what to do with themselves now that they'd seen real war close up.

Then a shout went up from the far end of the station.

A small, muffled cry, and then, "Stop that! Come back here!"

A toddler—no more than three—had slipped free of a mother's grasp and toddled, delighted, straight towards the line. His round little legs pumped as if he'd invented running. The rails shone in the afternoon light like two bright snakes.

The engine at the platform hissed, readying to move.

For one frozen second, everyone became a statue.

Then Suki moved.

She darted like a hare, faster than Pip's thoughts, faster than Ivor's breath. She didn't run along the platform. She jumped down onto the cinders and sprinted over the sleepers, her plaits flying. The toddler turned and laughed, as if this were a game made just for them.

Suki scooped him up one-handed—how she managed it, Ivor would never understand—then stumbled, caught herself, and hauled him back onto the platform just as the engine gave its impatient little chuff.

The toddler's mother arrived, white-faced, grabbing him as if she might never let go again. "Oh—oh—" she stammered, and then, "Thank you."

Suki's cheeks were bright with cold and pride and perhaps a little fear. "He nearly got squashed," she said, and it sounded outrageously grown-up coming from her.

The stationmaster exhaled. A soldier laughed shakily.

And then the soldier with kind eyes stepped forward, and beside him came another—older, with a thin moustache and a cap set just so.

"That was quick thinking," the older one said. He looked at the gang, not just at Suki. "All of you. You travel together.

You watch out for one another."

Nell drew herself up. "Yes, sir."

He smiled, just a flicker, as if smiles were rationed too. "Good. We could use more of that."

Pip couldn't keep it in. "Use it how?"

The older soldier studied them, and Ivor felt the weight of his gaze like the weight of the sky.

"There are messages," the soldier said carefully. "Small things. Bits of paper. Packages. Sometimes we need them moved along the line without fuss. The railway is useful because it looks harmless. It isn't, not really."

Nell's eyes shone. "We could help," she said, before any of them could stop her.

The soldier did not say yes. He did not say no. He only said, "There are ways to be helpful that don't involve getting yourselves into trouble."

He looked at Ivor then, and Ivor felt as if he'd been seen properly for the first time since they'd come to the Marsh. "Can you keep a secret?"

Ivor swallowed. "Yes."

The soldier nodded, as if that answered something inside him. Then he reached into his pocket, pulled out a small metal badge—a simple thing, the sort a man might wear on a lapel—and pressed it into Ivor's palm.

"Not official," he said quietly. "Just a reminder. That being useful can be as simple as paying attention. Seeing what needs doing. Helping before you're asked."

Ivor's fingers curled around the badge. It was warm from the soldier's pocket, and it seemed to throb with meaning.

That night, back at the cottage, the gang sat on the low wall by the dyke and watched the sky go bruised purple over the sea. Somewhere far away, the little railway whistled once—high and clear—as if telling the Marsh a bedtime story.

Pip nudged Ivor's shoulder. "We did something," he said.

Suki tilted her head, listening to the wind. "We were brave," she said, as if testing the word.

Nell stared out across the fields that looked empty but weren't, not really—not now. "We're going to have adventures," she said, sure as ever. "Proper ones. And we'll do them the right way."

Ivor looked down at the badge in his hand, catching the last light. He thought about the tiny train carrying tired men along the edge of the world. He thought about sand on the rails, and the sea always trying to swallow.

And he thought, with a thrill that was equal parts enchantment and dread, that the Marsh kept secrets... but it also kept promises.

The little railway whistled again, and somewhere in the darkness it began its patient, determined chuff-chuff into the night—small, yes, but never, ever insignificant.

# Church Update

By June Gooch

**Food Bank.** The main food bank for the area, continues in Romney Marsh Community Church on Tuesdays from 4-5.30pm. If you are struggling to feed yourself or your family, ring for a voucher to the Citizens Advice Bureau on 08082 082138. This will enable you to have 3 days' worth of dried and tinned food adapted for the size of your family. Fresh food is also now being made available.

The food bank relies on donations, which can be left in the foyer of the church on North Street during the morning. Most supermarkets have food bank bins.

The demand, unfortunately is not slowing down, and the following items are in short supply. Cooking oil, female deodorant, ketchup, razors, veggie meals in a tin, and washing up liquid. Fresh food is now being distributed, but depends on availability.

At present they have plenty of tinned soup and potatoes, tinned tuna, pasta and rice.

**The mobile pantry van** calls at All Saints Church in Lydd, on Mondays from 10-11am. You can register as a member by calling 07913 573403 (the Rainbow centre) or CAB, number above. After that you can buy a bag of basics for between £5 and £7 depending on the size of your family.

The Mobile pantry van is also calling at the Sunflower Community Hub on Rolfe Lane, New Romney, on Fridays between 10.30-11.30am. The conditions are the same, as for the Lydd van.

**Village Halls.** Many villages and towns on the Marsh have new village halls, which are always available for one off occasions or regular hire. The high costs we are all facing have affected them as well, so they will be very happy to host your event/s. The contact will be on the notice board outside the hall.

## Brookland, St Augustine.

In January and February, there will not be a Sung evensong on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday, just a short service without the choir in the small room.

Don't forget the pantry table in the church porch, both for donations and those in need.

## Burmarsh, All Saints.

The next service will be an evensong on Sunday, January 25<sup>th</sup> at 3pm.

## Dymchurch, St Peter and Paul.

The church is still in need of help with prayers and intercessions, and an organist to play for the Sunday services. A bible Study group meets at the church on Tuesdays at 10.30am for refreshments and the study starts at 11am and finishes about noon.

Sacristan training (helping with communion) is being offered, so anyone who is interested can let Chris Clark know and your name can be added to the list.

**Dymchurch Catholic church,** St Monica's on Chapel Road, is open for worship. There will be a regular Sunday mass at 9am.

**Methodist church.** This is now part of 'Marsh Methodist Church' with a central administration, and services will be on a rotating pattern.

## Greatstone, St Peter.

The church hall, attached to the church, is very well used for midweek events. There are clubs and societies of all sorts, which include a Wednesday morning drop in, which welcomes pre-school children and their carers. There is wide variety of toys and chances for chats and refreshments.

The parishes of Lydd and Greatstone belong to the same benefice and are looking for a treasurer to look after the church's' money. Although you don't need to be an accountant, knowledge of modern management of finance would be a benefit.

## Ivychurch, St George.

Excellent progress has been made on the internal work of the church, and fortunately the scaffolding is down. With help from the Romney Marsh Churches Trust, the stonework in the south aisle has been restored.

## Lydd, All Saints.

The church hall for all Saints is the Hardy Hall on the Rype. It is, happily, very much used, with events happening nearly day. See the notice board for details. To hire, for one off events, or regular events, ring Maggie Clifton on 07905 433302.

Known as the Cathedral of the Marsh, the church is a very large building, which needs a lot of looking after. The maintenance team always welcome new helpers, even if it only an hour a month. Even if you don't go to church, but feel for the history of the building, contact warden Pat Carter on 01797 320108 or Chris Aubrey on 01797 320890.

A group of people in Lydd, collect items to help in Ukraine. They accept practically everything, in good condition, that would be useful to people in need. Big items like bikes and sewing machines, medical supplies, toiletries, household equipment etc. They don't want general clothing, but hoodies, jog bottoms, T shirts, thick socks, hats and scarves. They buy and convert 4 \* 4s as ambulances. If interested in helping or donating, ring Gina on 07874 399422.

**Methodist Church.** This is now part of Marsh Methodist Church, under one administration, with rotating services.

## New Romney, Marsh Methodist church.

The Marsh Methodist churches have all been gathered together under the one title, Marsh Methodist Church. The congregations will continue to use their own buildings, but administration will be centralised. There will be a service every Sunday at one of the churches, so see the notices for dates. The Meeting Point continues on Thursdays at New Romney, from 10am - midday. The Saturday morning coffee morning will resume on February 7<sup>th</sup>.

## Romney Marsh Community Church.

There is a Sunday service every week at 10.30am, followed by refreshments and fellowship. Youth and Children's teaching available during the service. Come and visit this time of vibrant worship and say hello, you will be very welcome. For any help or advice ring the church office on 01797 366855 during the morning. The church is also the local food bank, so see head of column for details.

There was a Building Block church on Sunday January 11<sup>th</sup>. This was an informal service, based on the story of the 3 Wise Men, and much enjoyed by all ages, with drama and puppets, with buffet breakfast beforehand.

The Toddler Group has resumed. All preschool children and their parents and carers very welcome from 8.45am to 11am on Thursday mornings. Fully equipped, helpers police checked and spaces available. Cost is £3 per family.

The Youth Space sessions on Thursdays have commenced at 3.30pm, after school for years 5,6. And 7.

## Snargate, St Dunstans.

There is usually a Holy Communion service every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday at 9am, followed by refreshments. So, the next service will be on Sunday, January 25<sup>th</sup>.

The PCC was delighted with the turnout for the carol service, and the services around Christmas. Thanks are given to all the ladies and gents, who cleaned and decorated the church for Christmas, especially as it was very dusty from the work being done on internal stonework, and the erection of scaffolding, which was dismantled shortly before Christmas.

## St Mary's Bay, All Saints.

Monday mornings at 10am, "Café Church" informal worship with a difference. All welcome to this informal approach to "church." A housegroup meets on Mondays at 7pm and morning prayer is at 9.30am on Wednesdays, and a "Get together" on Wednesdays from 10.15 to 11.30am. This is Christian led, and discusses various issues. These events have increased in numbers recently for which the church is grateful.

The church has recently been redecorated, with essential maintenance carried out and thanks are given to all who took part, and gave of their time and skills. The next fund - raising event will be a Bingo Session on Monday, January 26<sup>th</sup> at 2.30pm.

## St Mary in the Marsh.

The Haywardians Choir practices every Friday evening in the church at 7.30pm. They raise large amounts for Charity and have regular local concerts. After a busy December they are back to routine practices, and the next advertised concert is in May 26.

## Church Chuckle.

An American farmer with a big acreage was working his land with a massive bit of kit. On one field he was always frustrated by having to work around an old creek bed, full of rocks, rough weeds and brush. His wife had been asking for more of a domestic garden, and the farmer wondered if it would serve as a garden, it was within distance of the house on a quadbike. So, in his free time he worked hard on it, grubbing out all the weeds and brush, removing rocks and dug in lots of organic manure. The planted vegetables and flowers really prospered, so they were both delighted. At church, the minister said he would like to see this lovely garden. So, he came out to see it.

As he walked around the farmer was a bit miffed by the minister giving God all the glory for this marvellous work of creation. At the end he said "I guess you were pleased to join with our Lord in this beautiful work of creation."

"Yep" said the farmer "but you should have seen it when the Lord had it to himself!"

## Wit and Wisdom.

People will forget what you said. People will forget what you did. But they will not forget how you made them feel. Maya Angelou.

## Contact :THE LOOKER

Unit 9 Romney Marsh Business Hub, Mountfield Road, New Romney. TN28 8LH

Telephone: 01797-331935 • email:info@thelooker.co.uk

NEWS or STORY? Contact David Wimble, 07423-562696

TO ADVERTISE call Louise 01797 331935 Email: louise@thelooker.co.uk  
Every effort is made by The LOOKER newspaper to ensure that the information is correct.

THE LOOKER Newspaper Ltd. reserves the right not to publish unsolicited material being sent through to the publication. Personal views expressed in this publication are solely those of the respective contributors and do not reflect those of the publishers or its agents. The LOOKER Newspaper Ltd. is not responsible for services provided by the advertisers. All material supplied to this publication is at the owner's risk. Reproduction in whole or in part of this publication is strictly prohibited without prior consent. Photographic rights remain the property of THE LOOKER Newspaper Ltd.

# Drive Autocentre



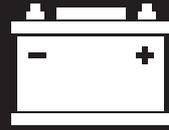
MOTs



Suspension



Servicing



Batteries



Brakes



Exhausts



Clutches



Diagnostics

DVSA Approved MOT Testing Station for Class 4 Vehicles

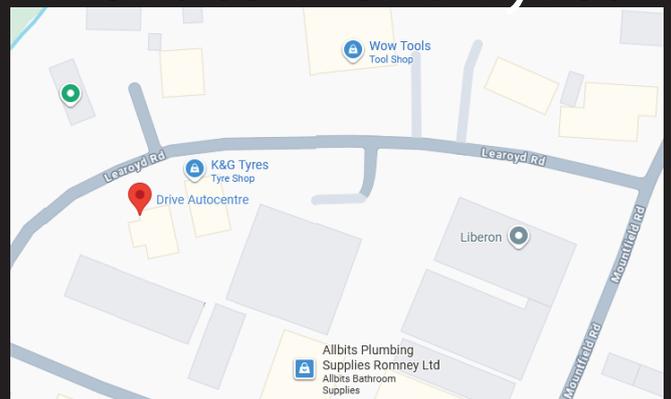
Call Us To Book Now;



01797 331999

Learoyd Road,  
Mountfield Ind Est,  
New Romney,  
TN28 8XU

Next to K & G Tyres



/// What3Words Location

///flanks.noise.overture