

Marsh Madness or Masterstroke? National Park Idea Resurfaces



The idea that Romney Marsh could one day join the ranks of Britain's National Parks has resurfaced quietly, intriguingly, and with just enough mystery to set tongues wagging across the Marsh.

Several local councillors have confirmed they have received an exploratory email asking whether there would be interest in supporting a bid to designate Romney Marsh as a National Park. The message, sent by an unnamed individual acting on behalf of a loose group of supporters, stopped short of a formal proposal but asked a simple question: would you be interested if this were taken to the next stage?

For many on the Marsh, it was a bolt from the blue. But in truth, it is far

from a new idea.

Nearly 15 years ago, the concept was first championed by former mayor and town and district councillor Patricia Rolfe, who argued that the Marsh's distinctive landscape, history and wildlife deserved national recognition and stronger long-term protection. At the time, the proposal gained interest but ultimately stalled, lacking the critical mass of political and institutional backing needed to progress.

Now, it seems, the conversation is stirring once again.

The email points to growing concern over what it describes as "solar sprawl" the creeping

Continued on page 2

Romney Bay House left in ruin after vandals strike iconic seafront hotel



One of Romney Marsh's most striking historic buildings has been left in a shocking state after vandals are thought to have smashed windows and caused extensive damage.

Romney Bay House, the former hotel on Coast Drive in Littlestone, is now surrounded by thousands of shards of glass, with almost every ground-floor and conservatory window broken and the front door boarded up. Once a picturesque seafront landmark, the building has increasingly become a magnet for vandalism as it sits unused.

The hotel has had mixed fortunes over the decades, passing through a number of owners and enjoying periods of real glamour before slipping into decline. Since the Covid pandemic, however, it has

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industrialisation of high-quality agricultural land and stresses the importance of protecting one of the country's most unique and fragile landscapes. It notes that there are currently 15 National Parks across Great Britain: 10 in England, three in Wales and two in Scotland, covering a combined area of around 9,400 square miles.

England's parks include the Broads, Dartmoor, Exmoor, the Lake District, the New Forest, Northumberland, the North York Moors, the Peak District, the South Downs and the Yorkshire Dales. Wales is home to Bannau Brycheiniog (Brecon Beacons), Pembrokeshire Coast and Eryri (Snowdonia), while Scotland's two parks are the Cairngorms and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs.

The first National Park the Peak District was designated in 1951. Today, the largest is the Cairngorms, while the Lake District remains the most visited, attracting more than 19 million visitors each year.



Supporters of the Marsh proposal argue that Romney Marsh has credentials that are every bit as compelling. The area includes Dungeness, home to the world's second-largest shingle desert, internationally recognised for its ecology, stark beauty and biodiversity.

One local business owner said National Park status could be transformational saying: "This place is already extraordinary, but it's never quite had the recognition it deserves," they said. "A National Park designation would put Romney Marsh firmly on the map, boosting tourism, supporting local businesses and helping to safeguard the landscape for future generations."

Another resident welcomed the renewed debate, saying it was time to be bold: "We're always told we need to protect the Marsh and I agree, but protection doesn't have to mean stagnation," they said. "Done properly, National Park status could bring investment, better infrastructure and a stronger visitor economy without ruining what makes this



place special."

But not everyone is convinced.

Some critics worry that such a designation could restrict future development, including the long-discussed prospect of a new nuclear power station at Dungeness, which supporters see as a major economic opportunity for the area and a cornerstone of national energy strategy.



Others point out that applying for National Park status is no small undertaking.

"You can't just decide one day that you fancy being a National Park," David Wimble said. "You would need overwhelming backing from town and parish councils, the district and the county council, plus years of consultation and evidence-gathering. Without that level of support, it simply won't go anywhere."

There are also cultural concerns about change itself.

One long-time Marsh resident summed up the sceptical view bluntly: "I get why people don't want to change things but who wants to live in a museum?"

For now, the proposal remains just that: an idea, floated rather than formally launched. But the fact that it has resurfaced at all suggests a growing unease about how the Marsh is protected, planned and promoted.

Whether Romney Marsh ever joins Britain's National Parks remains uncertain. What is clear is that the question has been asked again and once you ask it, the debate is almost impossible to put back in the bottle.

What do you think ? Email: info@thelooker.co.uk

largely stood empty and unused, accelerating its deterioration.

Over the years, several high-profile figures are understood to have visited Romney Bay House with a view to buying it, including broadcasters Chris Evans, Jonathan Ross and Danny Baker. Despite the interest, no revival ever materialised.

The building has even enjoyed a brush with Hollywood, featuring in films including the horror sci-fi The Lazarus Child, starring Andy Garcia. More recently, its abandoned appearance has prompted darker comparisons. One local newspaper described it as looking "like The Shining", a sentiment echoed by residents.

Margaret Collins, who has lived in Littlestone for more than 30 years, said: "It used to be such a beautiful building – you'd walk past and imagine the stories it could tell. Now it just feels sad. Every time another window gets smashed, it's like losing a little bit more of our history."

Dog-walker Steve Harper added: "You can see the damage from the sea wall Glass everywhere, boards going up instead of repairs. Leave a place empty for long enough and this is what happens – it just invites trouble."

Local business owner Rachel Moore said: "People joke that it looks like something out of a horror film, but for those of us who live here it's no joke. It should be an asset to the area, not an eyesore."

Nearby resident Tom Jenkins said: "Everyone knows it's iconic. You just hope the new owners get going soon before there's nothing left to save. Once vandalism starts, it snowballs."

Posting on social media, locals have likened the scene to the Overlook Hotel from The Shining or even the Bates Motel from Psycho. "It has been vandalised extensively," said one nearby resident. "All the ground-floor windows, all the conservatory



windows have been broken. It's heartbreaking to see."

Romney Bay House was built in 1929 by architect Sir Clough Williams-Ellis and once welcomed notable guests including actor Noel Coward and members of the wealthy Astor family. Rumours also persist that members of the Beatles and Queen visited during its heyday.

In 2023, the property was bought by the team behind the award-winning Gallivant Boutique Hotel in Rye, who announced plans to restore it to its former glory as The Gallivant Littlestone Beach, with 13 bedrooms and landscaped gardens. Progress has been slow, but owner Harry Cragoe has said he hopes work could finally begin next month.

For many locals, that day cannot come soon enough. Once an icon of elegance on the Romney coast, Romney Bay House now stands as a forlorn reminder of what happens when historic buildings are left empty — and a symbol of hope that restoration may yet be possible.

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Tuesday 24th February 11:00am 2:30pm 7:15pm

Wednesday 25th February 11:00am 2:30pm 7:15pm

Thursday 26th February 11:00am 2:30pm

National Theatre Live - The Audience 12a

Thursday 26th February 7:00pm

National Theatre Live- All my Sons 15

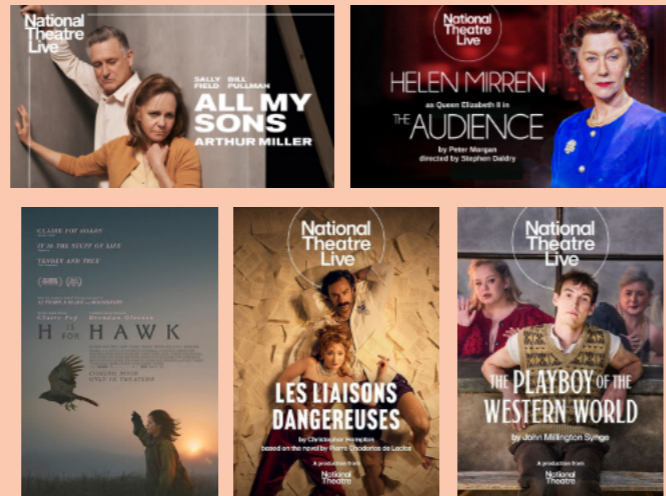
Thursday 16th April 7:00pm

National Theatre Live - The Playboy of the Western World 12a

Thursday 28th May 7:00pm

National Theatre Live - Les Liaisons Dangereuses 15

Thursday 25th June 7:00pm



Relief as Coast Drive car park in Greatstone reopens after nine-month closure

A seafront car park in Greatstone on Romney Marsh has reopened after being closed for nine months, bringing relief to nearby businesses and residents.

Coast Drive car park, which provides around 100 parking spaces, shut in May to allow construction work to take place on a new water sports venue, visitor centre and 93 beach huts as part of a £1.5 million development by Folkestone and Hythe District Council.

The scheme, now known as the Changing Tides Coastal Centre, was originally expected to be completed by October last year. However, the opening has been delayed, with council bosses now saying the development will be open "in the next

few months". Despite the delay to the main project, the car park reopened this week, prompting a positive response from the neighbouring Hub on the Beach café.

Liz Taylor, chief executive of the Romney Marsh Community Hub charity, which operates the café, said the reopening was vital for the business.

"The relief we have felt this week, seeing the car park reopen and our customers able to park again, is hard to put into words," she said.

"It has been a very long nine months and we've only managed to stay open thanks to the incredible support of our loyal local community.

"We're now really looking forward to welcoming both locals and visitors to enjoy our food and drinks once again."

The community hub took on the leasehold of the former restaurant previously known as The Mulberry and, for several years, Sotirios. It has been pointed out that the hub must have been aware of the planned coastal development when it agreed to the lease, as the project had already been approved by the council at that stage.

Throughout the closure, the nearest alternative parking was more than half a mile away, opposite The Jolly Fisherman pub, causing concern for businesses and inconvenience for visitors. In November, residents living close to the site also complained that construction works had created a noisy "nightmare".

Folkestone and Hythe District Council has said all major works on the scheme are now complete.

The beach huts were originally proposed for the shingle ridge overlooking the sea, but are instead located within the car park itself. Demand for the huts has already proved strong, with a waiting list reopening after being temporarily closed last year due to high interest.

Councillor David Wimble, who put forward the beach hut concept as an alternative use for the site when he was cabinet member at the district council, said the development should be seen in context.

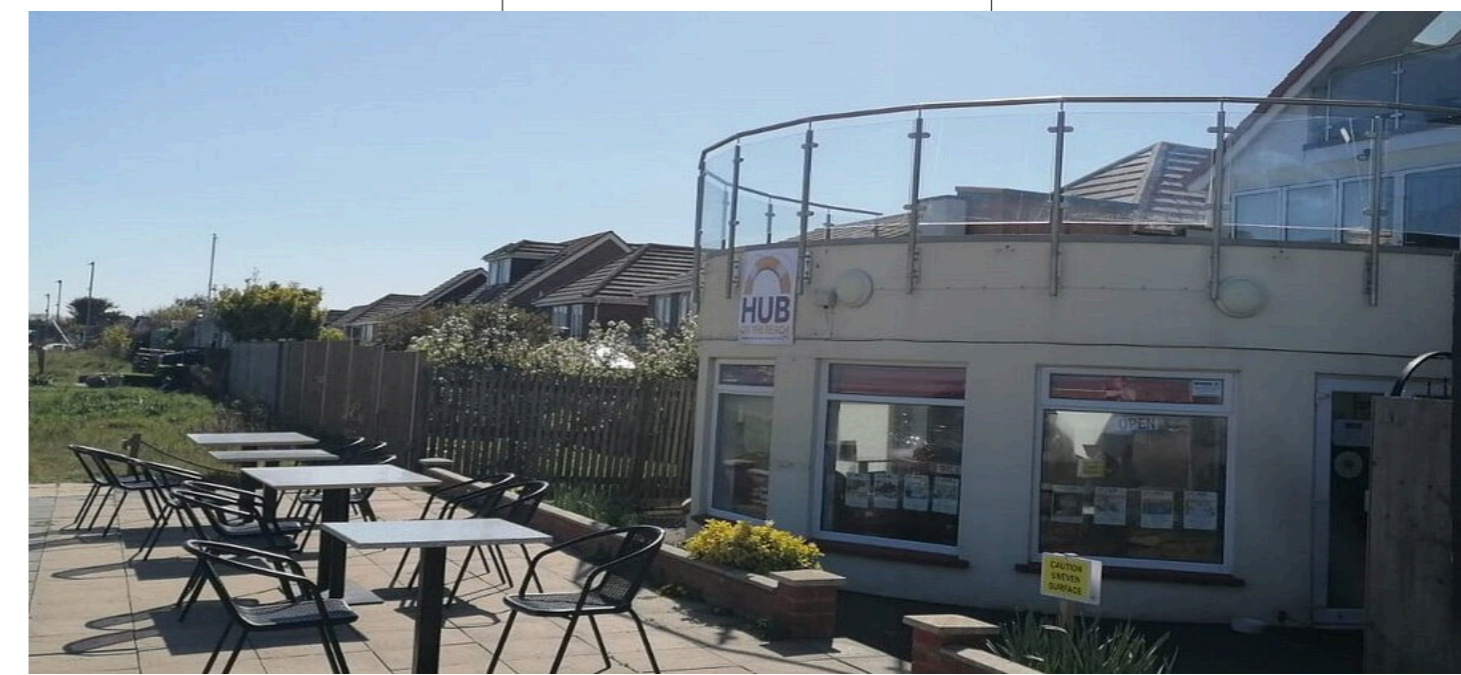
"The reality is that this site was formerly designated for 28 new houses," he said. "The beach hut and visitor centre proposal was put forward as an alternative to housing, and that was a far better outcome for Greatstone."

He added: "The huts and visitor centre look great, but God knows why they are placed in the middle of a car park. Now you can sit there and look at a shingle bank instead of the sea."

Clr Wimble also said the project had faced significant delays.

"This scheme should have been completed nearly two years ago, but it had to battle with organisations such as Natural England, which inevitably slowed progress," he said.

Meanwhile, those interested in operating the café within the new coastal centre are being invited to register their interest through property agents Motis Estates.



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Editor's Word

David Wimble



Anyone who has ever tried their hand at weather forecasting knows it's a fairly safe gig. Say "I think it might rain tomorrow" and you've got a sporting chance of looking like a genius. Push the boat out with "it could rain in the next hour" and you're probably hovering around a solid 50% success rate. Frankly, it's less prediction and more educated shrug.

But here in the UK, we love a bit of weather chat. It oils the wheels of daily conversation. Bus stops, shop queues, village halls – mention the weather and you're halfway to friendship. The problem is, according to the experts (and by experts I mean headlines), we are always living through the wettest, driest, coldest or hottest spell "in living memory".

Which does raise an important question: how old exactly is "living memory"? And are they feeling alright? Or perhaps they've got a touch of selective amnesia.

Last week alone I heard it confidently declared the wettest winter on record, quickly followed by someone insisting it had also been the coldest. Coldest? Really? This winter has been remarkably

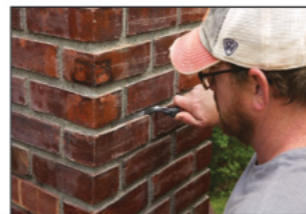
mild. Yes, it's been wet – very wet – but wet winters aren't exactly breaking news. We seem to get them every five or six years, just like heatwaves and the occasional proper winter that makes you question your life choices.

I always remember my grandad saying the UK weather works in cycles – about five years swinging from scorchio summers to damp disappointments, with the odd "real winter" thrown in to keep us on our toes. And you know what? He wasn't far off. The difference now is that every change in the weather seems to come with a dramatic soundtrack, a flashing red warning graphic and a stern reminder to "stay indoors unless absolutely necessary".

So, in the grand tradition of people who confidently talk nonsense about the weather, here is my official forecast for the year ahead: a good spring, a very warm April, hot June and July, August not too bad at all, late September and October above average... early frosts... then November brings a harsh winter. The worst in living memory, obviously – assuming you happen to be about five years old.

Just to be on the safe side, I've already bought a container-load of cheap umbrellas from a bloke down the pub. If nothing else, they'll be handy for the next "once-in-a-generation" downpour, which, judging by recent form, should be along sometime next Tuesday.

David



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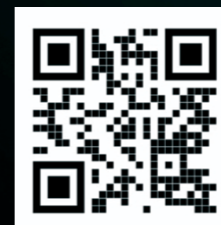
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Pitch Perfect: Romney Marsh Welcomes Its First 3G Surface

Historic sporting boost for Romney Marsh as first 3G pitch opens in New Romney



Romney Marsh has marked a major milestone for grassroots sport with the opening of its first-ever 3G football pitch, following a £1.1 million investment at The Marsh Academy in New Romney.

The state-of-the-art all-weather facility was officially opened this week, bringing a long-awaited modern sports surface to the Marsh and significantly improving access to year-round football for young people and local clubs.

The project was made possible after The Marsh Academy secured a £932,000 grant from the Government-backed Football Foundation, with additional funding from the Premier League and The FA. Construction began in July 2025, with the pitch now fully completed and in use.

The official opening ceremony saw New Romney Mayor John Rivers cut the ribbon, formally welcoming the first 3G pitch ever built on Romney Marsh. Students at The Marsh Academy will use the facility during the school day, while evenings and weekends will be dedicated to local football clubs and community bookings.

Academy principal Shaun Simmons said the new pitch represents a significant step forward for both the school and the wider area.

"We are delighted to open our new 3G pitch, which will significantly enhance sports provision and offer a valuable



facility for the wider community.

This marks an exciting milestone for us, and we extend our sincere thanks to the Football Foundation and all our funding partners whose support has made this possible. We look forward to seeing the positive impact this development will have on our community for years to come."

The new facility adds to an already impressive range of community amenities based at the academy, which includes a leisure centre, theatre and cinema, reinforcing its role as a key community hub for the Marsh.

Representatives from partner organisations joined staff, students and guests at the opening event, which also featured a demonstration from pupils in the school's Football Academy.

Several local clubs will benefit directly from the new pitch, including New Romney Youth FC, Lydd Town Youth FC and Hythe Town Youth FC, all of whom will use the surface for training and competitive matches. The pitch is also available for wider community use, with bookings managed through the school's website.

Robert Sullivan, chief executive of the Football Foundation, said the project highlights the wider benefits of investing in grassroots facilities.

"The Football Foundation is working closely with our partners – the Premier League, The FA and Government – to transform the quality of grassroots facilities in England by delivering projects like this across the country.

Good quality playing facilities have a transformative impact on physical and mental health and play an important role in bringing people together and strengthening local communities. We're delighted that the Romney Marsh community can now enjoy these benefits."

The scheme was further supported by £223,000 of additional funding from The Marsh Academy, the Rural England Prosperity Fund, the Roger De Haan Charitable Trust, New Romney Town Council, Folkestone & Hythe District Council ward grant from David Wimble, and contributions from each of the partner football clubs.

Before the pitch opened, the nearest comparable 3G facility was at Rye Leisure Centre – more than 13 miles away – making this development a significant improvement in access to high-quality sporting infrastructure for Romney Marsh residents.

The new pitch is already being hailed as a game-changer for local sport, providing opportunities for participation, development and community activity well into the future.

Frogs, Fairytales and Half-Term Fun as Local Panto Welcomes Every Family

Families looking for something fun to do this half term are being invited to enjoy a colourful local pantomime with a playful twist, as New Romney Am Dram brings The Princess and The Frog to the Marsh

Academy Theatre, alongside a special relaxed performance and a town-wide frog hunt.

In recent weeks, residents of New Romney, Littlestone and Greatstone may have spotted small toy frogs popping up in unexpected places and sparking excitement among local children. The frogs are part of a light-hearted promotion for the show, and any child who finds one can bring it along to a performance and trade it in for a prize.

Alongside the traditional fun of a pantomime, including a larger-than-life dame, catchy songs, colourful costumes, and a brilliant local cast and crew, The Princess and the Frog celebrates the spirit of community theatre, with many local children taking to the stage alongside fellow performers.

While the show delivers plenty of laughs, audience participation and fairy-tale magic, the production also places a strong focus on accessibility and inclusion, with a relaxed matinee performance taking place on Friday 18th February at 3pm, designed for audiences who may find traditional theatre environments overwhelming.

The relaxed performance will include lower sound levels, house lights remaining on, no loud bangs or flashing lights, a designated chill-out space, and a cast introduction before the show to help set expectations. Audience members are welcome to move around, make noise, or leave and return as needed, creating a welcoming and judgement-free theatre experience.

With fairy-tale fun on stage and friendly frogs hopping around town, New Romney Am Dram hopes to bring families together this half term, whether they're seasoned panto fans or attending the theatre for the first time.

The production runs across six performances at The Marsh Academy Theatre (Station Rd, New Romney TN28 8BB) during half term:

- Wednesday 16th February, 7pm
- Thursday 17th February, 7pm



- Friday 18th February, 3pm (relaxed performance)
- Friday 18th February, 7pm
- Saturday 19th February, 3pm (matinee – SOLD OUT)
- Saturday 19th February, 7pm

Further information about the show, performance times and accessibility can be found at :

Newromneyamdram.uk and tickets can be purchased at : ticketsource.co.uk/nradpanto or by calling the Box Office on 07434 895 113.



Police sting near Hythe uncovers £30,000 cash and large illicit tobacco haul

A police operation in a village near Hythe has led to the seizure of £30,000 in cash and a substantial quantity of suspected illicit tobacco.

Officers stopped a "suspicious" van on the A20 at Newingreen on Tuesday, January 20. Following a search of the vehicle, police discovered around 100kg of tobacco believed to have been brought into the country illegally, along with £30,000 in cash.

The tobacco was subsequently seized by Kent Trading Standards, while the cash was also recovered as part of the investigation.

The vehicle stop formed part of a wider joint operation between Kent Police and Trading Standards to tackle suspected illegal tobacco trading across the district.

During the same week, several businesses on Hythe High Street were searched amid concerns about their trading practices. At one premises, officers discovered a concealed hide beneath a countertop, believed to have been used to store counterfeit or illicit tobacco products.

Inspector Carlo Capozzi, from the Folkestone and Hythe Community Safety Unit, said organised criminal groups often use the profits from illegal tobacco sales to fund wider criminal activity.

He said: "Organised criminal groups can often use the proceeds from the illegal trading of tobacco products to fund other criminal activities."

"My officers have excellent local knowledge and work closely within the communities that they patrol. As a result, we are able to gather the necessary information so that, together with partner agencies, we can target those who would engage in illicit practices such as this, and ensure offenders are dealt with robustly."

Jim Whiddett, operations manager at Kent Trading Standards, said the authority was committed to tackling the illegal supply of tobacco across Kent's high streets.



He said: "We are determined to crack down on the illegal supply of tobacco on Kent's high streets, and working with partners like Kent Police is an effective way to tackle the issue."

"The sale of illicit tobacco undercuts legitimate businesses doing the right thing and puts money into the pockets of organised criminals. The cheap price of illegal tobacco also makes smoking more affordable for those attempting to quit and more accessible for young people."

Mr Whiddett added that members of the public can help by anonymously reporting suspected illegal tobacco sales to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or via the organisation's website.

Police and Trading Standards teams concluded their joint operations on Friday, January 23.

The enforcement activity follows a separate incident in the area in which two Vietnamese nationals were arrested after immigration officers visited Ellie Nails, near Hythe. Police vehicles were seen on Hythe High Street during the visit, and a civil penalty was later issued to the business.

Investigations into the illicit tobacco operation are ongoing.

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Internal critical incident declared at William Harvey Hospital amid exceptional demand



An internal critical incident has been declared at the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford due to what hospital bosses describe as “ongoing and exceptional demand” for services.

East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust said the decision was taken after a sustained surge in the number of patients requiring hospital care, with beds across its hospitals currently full and emergency department attendances “extremely high”.

A spokesperson for the trust said the declaration had “not been taken lightly” and reflected very limited capacity to admit further patients who need urgent hospital treatment. The trust also reported a significant number of patients at the William Harvey Hospital suffering from winter illnesses and respiratory viruses.

As a result, patients attending the emergency department at the William Harvey Hospital for non-life-threatening conditions may face “extremely long waits”. Members of the public are being urged to consider alternative services where appropriate,

including NHS 111, GP practices, local pharmacies and urgent treatment centres. Advice is also available via 111.nhs.uk.

A critical incident is declared when disruption reaches a level that means a trust temporarily or permanently loses its ability to deliver key services.

The trust said it is working closely with partners across the wider health and care system to safely discharge patients who no longer require acute hospital care and to reduce avoidable admissions.

Hospital leaders confirmed they are reviewing patients scheduled for planned procedures and appointments, but stressed that unless patients are contacted directly, they should assume their appointment or procedure will go ahead as planned.

People experiencing winter viruses are being advised to stay at home where possible, rest, drink plenty of fluids and use over-the-counter medication such as paracetamol or ibuprofen to manage symptoms.

Sarah Hayes, chief nursing and midwifery officer at the trust, said staff were continuing to work under intense pressure.

She said: “Our teams continue to work incredibly hard in exceptionally busy conditions to ensure patients receive safe, high-quality and compassionate care.

“The pressure on our urgent and emergency services remains extremely high, and we are focused on supporting patients who need us most.

“Declaring a critical incident enables us to keep patients safe by drawing on additional support from our colleagues across the health system, both in terms of enabling safe discharges and providing support to keep patients out of hospital.”

She added: “It’s important that anyone who needs urgent medical help continues to come forward – using 999 in life-threatening emergencies and 111 for other urgent care.”

East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust is one of the largest hospital trusts in England. It runs the Kent and Canterbury Hospital in Canterbury, the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford, the Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother Hospital in Margate, the Buckland Hospital in Dover and the Royal Victoria Hospital in Folkestone, along with a range of outpatient facilities across East Kent and Medway.

Five homes approved for Blackhouse Hill, Hythe, despite objections



Plans to build five new homes on Blackhouse Hill in Hythe have been approved, despite opposition from local residents who raised concerns over design, parking and the steep nature of the site.

The development, submitted almost a year ago, will see three townhouses and two apartments constructed on a sloping plot close to the town centre. The applicant described the scheme as a modern interpretation of the Victorian terraces that line much of the street.

Planning documents state the design is “inspired by the stepped profile of Victorian housing, reimagined through a contemporary cascading form to reflect the hillside setting”.

Due to the sharp gradient of the site, the buildings will be stepped into the slope, a feature intended to reduce their visual impact when viewed from neighbouring properties.

The three townhouses will each have three bedrooms, while the two apartments will contain two bedrooms apiece. Each townhouse will be provided with two parking spaces, while the apartments will share a separate parking area with one space per flat.

As part of the approval, developers will be required to construct a substantial retaining wall to stabilise the hillside and ensure long-term safety during and after construction.

The application attracted 12 letters of objection, with residents raising a range of concerns including parking pressure, privacy, visual impact and the potential risk of land instability.

One local resident, who lives nearby, said: “Blackhouse Hill is already a difficult road to navigate, and parking is extremely tight. Adding more homes here will inevitably make that worse, no matter how many spaces are included on paper.”

Another objector said they were worried about the site’s steepness. “This land has always been tricky. People are concerned that digging into the slope could have knock-on effects for neighbouring houses.”

However, not all residents were opposed to the scheme, with some welcoming new housing in the area.

A nearby homeowner said:

“It’s an awkward piece of land that has sat unused for years. If it’s done properly and safely, I don’t see why it shouldn’t be developed.”

Another local added:

“Hythe needs a mix of housing, and not every new building has to look the same as the old ones. Modern design can work if it’s well thought through.”

Planning officers concluded that the proposal appropriately reflected the form and pattern of nearby development, and that concerns about the slope had been sufficiently addressed through a detailed stability assessment and engineering requirements.

The decision means construction can now proceed, subject to conditions being met.

Residents can view details of planning applications affecting their area via the Public Notice Portal.

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Supermarket sign in Folkestone sends shoppers on a 140-mile day trip

A supermarket in Folkestone has raised eyebrows after unveiling a new sign promoting “local places to visit” — more than 100 miles away from the town.

The sign, installed at the Asda store in Bouverie Place, was quickly spotted by shoppers who noticed that the listed attractions were not quite as local as advertised.

Among the destinations highlighted were venues in Didcot, Oxfordshire, including a railway centre, arts venue and cinema — roughly 140 miles from the Folkestone store.

Adding to the confusion, the sign also misspelt Foreland Avenue, near Wear Bay Road, which appeared as “Forleand Avenue”.

Photos of the sign soon circulated on social media, where residents were quick to see the funny side.

Mark Ellison commented: “I don’t mind a day out, but a three-hour drive each way feels a bit ambitious for ‘local’.”

Janet Harper added: “I checked Google Maps just in case Folkestone had moved overnight. Sadly not.”



Another shopper, Paul Richards, joked: “Maybe it’s part of a new fitness drive — shop for groceries, then walk to Oxfordshire.”

The mix-up has prompted speculation that the sign template may have been used at multiple locations without being updated for the town.

It is not yet known when the sign will be replaced or corrected.

The error is the latest in a series of minor but memorable public blunders to catch the attention of residents.

In a previous incident, Folkestone was incorrectly labelled as “Foulkestone” on road markings at the Castle Hill interchange, an error that was later corrected following a swift apology.

Despite the mistake, many locals have treated the latest signage slip-up with good humour, with some suggesting it has at least given shoppers something to talk about on their way to the car park.

New CGIs reveal Folkestone’s ‘best design’ for The Crescent development

New computer-generated images have been released showing the final design of The Crescent, a 19-home townhouse development being built on land behind the former Royal Victoria Hospital in Folkestone.

The scheme, which councillors have described as one of the town’s “best designs”, has now secured the final element of its planning permission after revisions were made to address concerns over building heights and the impact on neighbouring homes.



The Crescent forms part of the wider redevelopment of the former hospital site, which was sold by Kent County Council in 2018. Original proposals were first submitted in 2020 by applicant Leo Griggs as an outline scheme for a mix of houses and apartments. Several flats have already been completed, with the remaining parcel of land marketed for £2.4 million in April 2024.

Housebuilder Tolman Homes has since taken on the delivery of the townhouse element, with construction already under way and new CGIs released to showcase the final design.

Final approval was granted by Folkestone and Hythe District Council at a planning meeting on January 20, following changes prompted by an error in the original ground-level measurements. Planning documents were found to have underestimated ground levels by around 500mm once excavation works began, which would have resulted in some properties being up to one metre taller than originally permitted.

As a result, developers were required to redraw parts of the scheme. Sixteen of the homes across the site will be



four storeys high, while three plots – numbers 17, 18 and 19 – have been reduced to three storeys after council officers rejected proposals for increased heights on those plots.

Cllr Jennifer Hollingsbee told the meeting she was pleased with the amendments, despite having opposed the application when it was first submitted six years ago.

“I’m very happy to see that the houses that are being built closest to the residential area have actually been lowered in height now, because I do know the residents have been very concerned,” she said.

Cllr Clive Goddard also backed the development, describing it as an “excellent design” and “one of the best designs in Folkestone”.

Planning officers said they were satisfied the final layout would prevent the new buildings from dominating neighbouring properties, particularly homes in Radnor Park Gardens.

Tolman Homes had initially sought a “modest increase” in height to six plots due to changes in building regulations and ground conditions. While increases were accepted for plots five, six and seven, the council required the remaining three plots to be lowered.

A Tolman Homes spokesperson said: “Following changes to building regulations and unforeseen ground conditions, revised building heights were assessed across the site. The homes in plots 17–19 have been redesigned to remain within the original approved heights, with internal layouts adjusted to deliver three-storey homes that fully comply with planning and building regulations while responding to neighbours’ concerns.”

Despite the revisions, some residents continue to object. Comments submitted to the council’s planning portal describe concerns over loss of light, privacy and the overall scale of the development.

The Crescent was launched in early December while the planning process was still ongoing, with Tolman Homes now accepting early reservations. Developers describe the scheme as a gated collection of four and five-bedroom townhouses set within parkland, offering a “peaceful retreat” close to the centre of Folkestone.

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Ross, The Chat Show Boss

Jonathan Ross is, in many ways, British television personified – quick-witted, endlessly curious, and always ready to draw out stories that audiences want to hear. From the sofa of his iconic chat shows to the microphone of countless radio broadcasts, Ross has built a career that spans decades and generations.

Jonathan Ross has long been a fixture of UK entertainment, and his appeal is as simple as it is enduring. “I’ve always loved chatting to people,” he says. “It doesn’t matter who they are – actors, singers, writers – if you can get them talking, that’s where the magic is. It’s a privilege, really.”

Ross’s career spans radio, television, and live events, with credits ranging from *Friday Night with Jonathan Ross* to *The Jonathan Ross Show* on ITV. Yet despite the

glitz, he maintains a grounded perspective. “People often assume you’re living in some glamorous bubble, but honestly, it’s work. You turn up, prepare, and try to be interesting without being boring. That’s the balance you’re always chasing.”

A lifelong enthusiasm for entertainment and pop culture drives him. “I genuinely love it,” Ross admits. “Music, comedy, theatre, film, I want to know it all. There’s always something new happening, always someone who’s interesting to talk to. That’s what keeps it exciting after all these years.”

He’s not averse to change, either. “I like trying new things, whether that’s live specials, podcasts, or digital projects,” he says. “It’s important to evolve, audiences don’t stand still, so you can’t either.”

Ross also appreciates the lighter side of fame. “I’m lucky people enjoy watching me do my job,” he laughs. “That doesn’t



mean it’s about me. It’s about creating a space where the guests shine, and sometimes I get to add a line or two to keep it fun.”

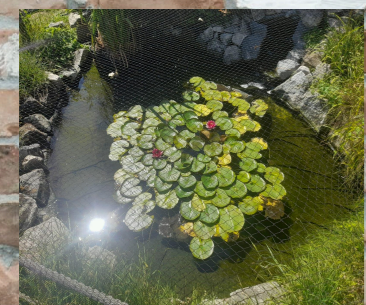
Looking ahead, Ross hints at upcoming projects. “There’s a live series I’m excited about, exploring music and comedy in new ways. Nothing too formal, I like it when things are unpredictable. That’s where the best moments happen.”

And perhaps that’s the key to Jonathan Ross’s appeal: authenticity. “I’m me, and people respond to that,” he shrugs. “I’ve made mistakes, had a few controversies, but I’ve always tried to be honest. At the end of the day, if you’re genuinely interested in people and culture, that translates on screen.”

For Ross, the future is simply more conversation, more discovery, and the same irrepressible enthusiasm that has made him one of the UK’s most beloved presenters.



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Wednesday 18th February

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 19th February

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 Gardening Group, Village Hall, 2 p.m. (3rd Thurs)
Dymchurch Short Mat Bowls, Village Hall, 6 p.m.

Friday 20th February

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

Saturday 21st February

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

Monday 23rd February

Dymchurch Meeting Point, Village Hall, 10 a.m.
Sunflower Memory Café, Old School, New Romney, 10 a.m. (2nd & 4th Mon)
Dance Moves, Burton Hall off Stade Street, Hythe, 11 a.m.
The Games Club, St. Peter's Hall, Greatstone, 2 p.m.
New Romney History Society, Old School, 7.30 p.m. (4th Mon)

Tuesday 24th February

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. (4th Tue)
Foodbank, New Romney Community Church, 4 p.m.
Dymchurch Short Mat Bowls, Village Hall, 6 p.m.

Wednesday 25th February

Computer Club, Village Hall, St. Mary's Bay, 9.30 a.m.
Bridge Meeting Point, New Romney Scouts Hut, 10 a.m. (2nd & 4th 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 26th February

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

Friday 27th February

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. (4th Fri)
Social Ballroom Sequence Dancing, St. Mary's Bay Village Hall, 7 p.m.

Saturday 28th February

Gift & Craft Market, Maude Community Hall, New Romney, 10 a.m. (last Sat)
Lydd Twinning Association Barn Dance, Scouts Hut, 6.30 p.m.

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Latest from the Rotary Club of Romney Marsh

A big thank you - now that the Christmas festivities are all done and a receding memory it has given the Rotary Club a chance to reflect on what was again a very successful series of sleigh runs across the Marsh in the run up to Christmas. Despite some challenging weather conditions on some nights, in and around Dymchurch in particular, which meant we had to reschedule a couple of our nights out, the Club was very pleased to be able to complete all but one of the planned routes. We were also able to fit in a visit to Greatstone Primary School.



The members of the Club were very grateful for the amount of support provided by the local communities in their generous donations as well as all of the volunteers that gave up their time to come along and support or efforts. These included several drivers who towed the sleigh around plus the elves who did the collecting.

The Club was also grateful for the support provided by Santa on each of the runs.

As with previous years, the Rotary Club was pleased to host a 'thank you' evening for the volunteers at Littlestone Warren Golf Club.



The pictures show the volunteers enjoying their evening and we were also joined by Assistant District Governor Brian Portway. Colin Norgate, President, thanked the volunteers for their efforts and recognised that without their support the Club would not have been able to complete the sleigh runs. Colin was pleased to announce that the sleigh runs raised approximately £7,900. The Club will now take time to consider how best the money can be used to support local charities and activities across the Marsh. We will keep you updated.

Burns Night

although the Romney Marsh is a long way from Scotland, the Rotary Club held its annual celebration of the birth of Robert Burns. The evening was held at All Saints Church Hall, St Mary's Bay with the catering provided by members of the Rotary Club. The menu for the evening was a very traditional one: cock-a-leekie soup, haggis with neeps and tatties followed by cranachan.



As can be seen from the photograph the event was well attended and everyone enjoyed the food and fellowship.

The funds raised from the evening will be presented to New Romney in Bloom to support their work in maintaining the flowers and planters in the town. Club President Colin Norgate was very grateful to everyone who supported the event, the raffle and the Roll-a-Pound challenge, especially as we raised £1,000 which was a magnificent achievement.

If you are interested in joining the Rotary Club of Romney Marsh, please contact :

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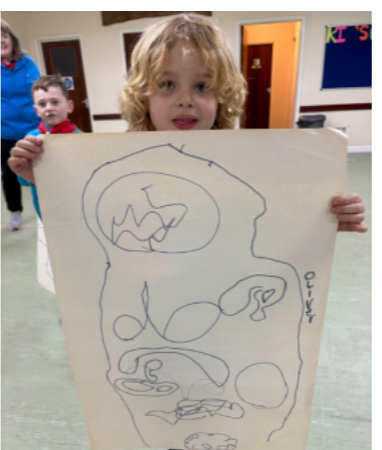
2026 - The Scouting Adventure Continues

Beavers Explore Amazing Machines!!

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Have you ever thought of your body as a super machine? Well, that's exactly what the Beavers did on their latest adventure! Imagine having a skeleton that's like a strong metal frame, a heart that pumps away every second, and skin that's as tough as a knight's armour. The Beavers discovered how every part, from the brain—the ultimate boss!—to the tummy and toes, all work together to help us jump, run, and play. And guess what? They even built their own paper bodies, carefully placing each organ in just the right spot. It was like a giant, scientific jigsaw puzzle—but with more giggles!

But the excitement didn't stop there! Suddenly, there was a buzz in the air because Paul, one of the Beavers' dads, brought in Charlie—the legendary robot dog. Charlie isn't your ordinary pooch; he can walk, run, sit, lie down, and even beg, all with the press of a button. The Beavers took turns



operating Charlie, making him prance about and do tricks, and everyone agreed he was the best-behaved dog they'd ever met. But Charlie isn't just for fun—he's a real hero when the adults need help. Firefighters can send robot dogs into dangerous buildings, and they can even help rescue people after earthquakes. With Charlie around, no challenge is too tough!



After all the mechanical mayhem, the Beavers switched gears to look after their own super-machines—their bodies! They learned all about the importance of washing hands, eating colourful fruits and veggies, and preparing food safely. Some Beavers bravely tried new foods (red peppers and mushrooms, anyone?) and discovered they liked them after all. The kitchen turned into a flurry of chopping, mixing, and nibbling, as wraps and fruit kebabs disappeared faster than you could say "yum!"



So next time you're munching on a crunchy carrot or jumping around the playground, remember—you're in charge of the best machine ever invented: your own amazing body! And if you spot a robot dog out and about, you'll know exactly how clever and helpful they can be. Well done, Beavers—what a brilliant, bonkers, and body-boosting adventure!



Opening Date Confirmed for UK's Largest Beach Spa at Folkestone Harbour Arm



The opening date has been confirmed for what is set to become the UK's largest beach spa, currently under construction at Folkestone Harbour Arm.

The new attraction is being developed through a partnership between Folkestone Harbour and Seafront Development Company and Sea Scrub Sauna, a Kent-based wellness business run by cousins Luke and Robin Bartlett. When it opens in March, the purpose-built facility will add a new wellness-focused offer to one of the county's most popular visitor destinations.

The spa has been designed specifically for its coastal setting and is being constructed directly into the shingle on

the beach. Once complete, it will include a large communal sauna, a wellness café, cold plunge pools, a hot tub, and direct access to the English Channel, allowing visitors to move between heat and sea swimming as part of the experience.

Construction began towards the end of last year following the granting of planning permission by Folkestone and Hythe District Council in December 2025. The approval allows the structure to remain in place for up to eight years. During the planning process, some concerns were raised about the site's exposure to flooding, although the application was ultimately approved.



Sea Scrub Sauna already operates similar experiences at Margate Main Sands, Whitstable Harbour and Macknade in Faversham. The company has built a growing following by offering outdoor sauna and cold-water immersion sessions in coastal and countryside locations across Kent.

Co-founder Luke Bartlett, who is also an RNLI volunteer, said interest in outdoor swimming and sauna culture has increased significantly in recent years. He said Folkestone had been one of the most requested locations from Sea Scrub members and described the new site as the company's largest and most ambitious project to date.

Prices for sessions at the Folkestone site are expected to start from £17 for a one-hour booking, with a programme of special events and themed sessions to be announced closer to the opening.

Paulo Kingston-Correia, general manager of Folkestone Harbour and Seafront Development Company, said the spa would bring a new dimension to the Harbour Arm's existing mix of attractions. He described it as a wellness-focused addition that complements the area's food, drink and events offer, particularly outside the peak summer season.

The Harbour Arm already hosts a wide range of attractions, including an outdoor cinema, independent food traders, restaurants, a market and a mini-golf course, and has become a key driver of tourism in the town.

A previous sauna attraction, Steam Punk Sauna, operated at the Harbour Arm for seven months before leaving the site in June 2023.



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Kent's biggest College Group launches 100 in 100 Campaign

for National Apprenticeships Week



Kent's largest College Group has launched an ambitious campaign designed to inspire employers to take on an apprentice.

To mark the start of National Apprenticeship Week, a nationwide celebration recognising apprentices, the employers who support them, and the education partners who help shape their journey, East Kent Colleges Group (EKC Group) has unveiled its bold 100 in 100 campaign.

Over the next 100 days, EKC Group aims to secure 100 pledges from local employers to take on an apprentice.

The Group hopes the campaign will encourage businesses of all sizes, including SMEs of which there are a huge number in Kent, to take their next step in supporting the region's future workforce.

As the largest further education provider in the county, EKC Group operates six colleges across East Kent and nine adult training centres, offering a wide range of apprenticeship pathways through its specialist EKC Training provision.

A key part of this offer is the Group's Apprenticeship Recruitment Service, a free, tailored support package that guides employers through every stage of recruiting and supporting an apprentice. This service has already helped countless businesses grow their teams, and the 100 in 100 campaign aims to expand that impact even further.



Rhona Williams, who is the Principal of EKC Training, said: "Our Apprenticeship Recruitment Service is a specialist and rarely offered free support for employers. We launched it to ensure businesses feel fully guided throughout the process of hiring an apprentice.

"We understand that taking on an apprentice requires time and commitment, which is why equipping employers with the right support is vital Awards and membership organisations" Creating apprenticeship opportunities is one of the most powerful investments an employer can make. Apprentices bring fresh ideas, enthusiasm, and real potential into the workforce – helping businesses grow, innovate, and remain competitive.

"When employers commit to apprenticeships, they're not just filling roles they're shaping the future of their organisation and their community."



EKC Group is now calling on employers from all sectors to get involved and pledge their interest in helping to shape the next generation of skilled workers.

To find out more about the 100 in 100 campaign, visit ekcgroup.ac.uk.
 • More information and pictures available upon request
 • Please credit all pictures accompanying this release to East Kent Colleges Group
 • To find out more about the 100 in 100 campaign, visit ekcgroup.ac.uk

Scheme Supporting Those Who Need It Most



An improved council tax reduction scheme which will further help working age, low-income households will come into effect in April.

Folkestone & Hythe District Council developed a revised approach – offering up to 100% support – in response to the rise in the cost of living and the withdrawal of incentive funding by Kent County Council.

The following assistance will automatically be introduced for eligible households at the start of the 2026/27 financial year:

Band one: 100% support, increased from 75%

Band two: 75% support, increased from 55%

Band three: 50% support, increased from 35%

Band four: 25% support, increased from 22%

Cllr Tim Prater, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Governance, said: "This improved



council tax reduction scheme will give more help to the residents who need it most. Many of the people who will benefit are already working but still need extra assistance just to survive.

"When we introduced the second homes premium last year, we said we wanted any extra money to support the most vulnerable households in the district – this change does exactly that."

The changes bring these reductions in line with those offered to those of pension age by central government.

Nearly 6,000 working age households in the district currently receive council tax reduction. All will receive correspondence explaining the changes in their annual bill.



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Marsh Memories

Compiled by John Wimble

More memories of the 1980s

The night of the 15th & 16th October 1987 turned into a dark nightmare when an invisible power rampaged across Romney Marsh. Most people slept through it and only saw the consequences when they woke up the next morning, but some remember the night vividly. Most of the damage occurred between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. in the morning and it was the worst storm to hit Romney Marsh since the Great Storm of 1703. Winds of up to 120 mph battered the area and flattened trees and damaged property. (Photo shows a tree blown over in St. Martin's Field, New Romney). Folkestone Police Station took nearly 500 emergency calls and Kent Fire Service answered over 2,500 calls in the three days following the storm. It was estimated that one in three homes locally suffered some sort of damage. Coastguards were on constant alert, and the police were besieged with calls for help and advice. A plane was overturned at Lydd Airport and one of the worst hit areas was Romney Sands Holiday Village where 18 caravans were destroyed. Many of the caravans were occupied by Americans who were visiting for a religious seminar. The Jamaica Bar at the holiday site was also badly damaged. A chimney came down at the Captain Howey pub in Littlestone Road and also at Creedy House in Nether Avenue. Roofs were damaged at the Bahia Bar and the Sands Motel at St. Mary's Bay, the Woolpack at Brookland and all the Marsh schools were closed the following day. Parts of New Romney were without power for up to three days although some parts of the Marsh were without electricity for much longer and it was a miracle that no-one was killed locally.

It was reported that The Romney Marsh Round table, which had raised thousands of pounds for charity, would have to fold unless more members could be found. Member Steve Pluckrose said, "We simply haven't got enough members or people have moved away or lost interest." To join you would have to live or work on the Marsh and be between 18 and 40 years old. The organisation had been running for 12 years and had funded local events like Romney Revels etc.

Local fisherman Mick Sharp fulfilled his life-long ambition to design and build his own boat. Using his brother's yard



at 'Lyddweld', Mick had toiled day and night for the past 16 months and at last his dream had coming true. Named the 'Maid of Iron', his 40ft trawler weighed 29 tons and transporting her from Lydd to the beach proved to be a real challenge. Mick then started putting the finishing touches to the boat in Rye Harbour.

The Romney Marsh Footpath Preservation Society was inaugurated during the decade to foster public interest and to maintain and safeguard public rights on the Romney Marsh. They aimed to work on public footpaths putting up stiles, waymarking routes and clearing undergrowth. Also, guided walks would be arranged for members.

Pleas for some kind of museum/heritage centre in New Romney met with an enthusiastic reception at the Annual Town Meeting. Cllr Rolfe liked the idea of renovating the old school building although this would cost a lot of money. Mark Skilbeck offered congratulations on the new look Town Hall and suggested the council let the public in to make them aware of this very fine building. Cllr Collins said he would like to see a building to exhibit all the memorabilia that the council owned.

A team from New Romney Fire Station triumphed in a first aid competition and were on the verge of national honours. Firemen Trevor Blundred (captain), Fred Bailey and Dick Lowrie recently won the Southern Area Fire Brigade First Aid Championships. Trevor Blundred gained the highest individual score of the day and the team went through to the National Finals in Gloucestershire later in the year.

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Then & Now



Greatstone Sand Dunes, c.1950s

The footbridge over the sand dunes provided an easy access to the sands. This photo was taken by local photographer, Bill King, who had his Palm Beach Studios in New Romney. The sand dunes are more extensive now as a protection against the sea.



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We are having a few dry hours now and again to try and do more tidying and pruning in the garden! So, we have to make the most of the dry hours when we can. We are enjoying the snowdrops, crocuses and occasional daffodil, and it is great to see the days lengthening, both morning and evening. The continuous rain can be depressing. It will nice be go out without spending five minutes layering up and deciding whether it is too windy to bother with the umbrella! But no doubt we shall look back with regret when we have weeks of dry, hot weather in the summer, and are reduced to saving all our grey water to keep the plants alive.

If it is dry, it probably too wet to work in the soil, so the eternal tidying up and pruning can still take place. Don't prune spring flowering shrubs, (forsythia, wegelia etc) they will flower on last years wood, and you will cut of all the flowering shoots. We inherited forsythia in a hedge, and it is the wrong place. My husband wants to keep it tidy and often blitzes it at the wrong time, so we rarely get any flowers! Roses should be pruned now, if you haven't already done it. Climbing and shrub roses have different criteria, so worth looking up exact rules for pruning them. Any perennials that you have left with dead foliage to protect them from the elements can now be trimmed back. The new growth has probably started.

You can plan your seed buying for the season, and also buy and plant summer flowering bulbs like gladiola, liatris etc, for a colourful show in midsummer to autumn. As mentioned last time, it is too early to start seed trays in an unheated greenhouse, but you can make sure you have everything ready, enough compost, seed trays, vermiculite etc. Vermiculite (or perlite) is a mineral, which when added to seed trays greatly enhances drainage. You will also need a very fine small watering can, if you use a bigger one, with larger holes, you can wash the seeds out, while they are still germinating. Contrary to our inclinations, seed trays should be watered with tap water. Water that has been standing in butts all winter could contain disease and kill off your plants. Covers are also available to cover your trays in the early weeks, especially at night, when the temperature drops. I always take them off during the day, otherwise the trays get too hot and dry out.

If you will need supports and new canes, buy them now. Canes do take a lot of hammer, and even if you look as if you have a lot, it is amazing how many you use in a medium sized garden, and how brittle they become, and need to be thrown out. You can also buy caps to stop them poking you, in midsummer when your border is in full growth it is hard to avoid them. I have collected a box of small pop bottles for the purpose. They aren't quite so elegant, but we're not entering gardening competitions.

Garden centres have become quite expensive. I don't blame them; they have to cover their overheads. Ordinary gardeners are often past masters at "make do and mend" using all sorts of bits in their potting sheds to make supports, racks etc. In fact, there are gardeners who

make a virtue of never spending serious money, rescuing bits from skips and other people's chuck outs! Part of the satisfaction of creating a garden without spending a vast amount of money! Smaller outlets often have cheaper plants, grown by amateurs who just want to cover their cost.

AND NOW FOR THE VEG

"To sow or not to sow, that is the question." Seed catalogues come with an increasing amount of vegetable plug plants. We've never used these up until now but for a modest veg patch it could be worth considering. The advantages are that you only buy as many plants as you want (or have space for), and avoids the necessity of pricking out and prolonging the time needed to raise plants. Depending on the size of the plants, you might also be able to plant directly into the soil. It can also avoid wastage of seed. The disadvantages are mainly the cost and finding the exact variety you wish to grow. You may also need to pot on any small plants which are not quite ready to plant out. Plug plants also take away the fun of raising your own!

We recently saw an article about saving cardboard and using it to help keep the weeds down and retain moisture. The cardboard needs to be as plain as possible with all staples and tape removed. Once you have established plants, eg brassicas, beans and salad crops such as lettuce, weed around thoroughly and water generously. Then cut a hole in the cardboard big enough to put round the base of the plant, with a slot enabling you to slide it under. Cover with a couple of inches of manure or compost to weigh down the cardboard and water in the usual way. This should help to suppress weeds and prevent slugs and snails from eating you hard-earned crops! I suppose this is a variation on using black plastic sheeting.

With the weather as it is, it's so frustrating to get outside and work on the veg patch and raised beds. We put shallots in the other day as they don't mind the cold, but hopefully they won't rot. Once we get a dry spell the onion sets can go out but it's really too wet and cold at present. If you like garlic and didn't plant in the autumn, it might be worth planting now as it has a long growing season and can stand the cold. This would be the last chance if you want a crop later in the year.

If you like peas and beans, these can be sown under cover indoors or a cold greenhouse is fine, otherwise a place in a conservatory or window sill. Treat broad beans in the same way. Peas we find are always difficult to transplant as the roots don't like to be disturbed. One method is to sow two or three in a toilet roll tube cut in half, filled with compost and when the soil is ready they can be planted out in rows and the cardboard will gradually deteriorate.

Hopefully by the next edition we might get some warmth and sunshine. In the meantime, happy gardening!

CASH- dosh – brass- dough- filthy lucre!!

Whatever you call it, it is the framework of our lives!! Or is it, these days? I'm old fashioned, in that I use a lot of cash for housekeeping purposes. We are comfortable, but I still find it easier to keep track of spending if I'm dealing in real money! Obviously bigger items are bought by cards, and sometimes a big grocery shop when you haven't been to the bank recently. Some outlets don't take cash, and you are advised to use credit cards for big items, even when you can afford it. In the days when we could hire cars, (we hit the age limit a few years ago!) you had to use a credit card. It never made sense to me, using a debit card means you have the money to back up your purchases!

But the banks don't want us to deal with cash anymore. It has never been so easy to spend money, even money you haven't got, with all the online shopping and contactless. But how are people going to learn any financial responsibility if they don't ever see cash? When the debt organisations try and help people, one of the first lessons is using cash. It is a known truth that spending actual cash (paper and coins) and having a finite amount, leads to much better money management. You can get in the sensible mindset that when the money is gone, it is gone!

I worry especially about children. Every generation until now, earned extra pocket money in cash, doing odd jobs, delivering papers, waiting, walking dogs, washing cars. They learnt to value their money, and spend it wisely, and the terrible truth that you can only spend it once. The openings don't seem to be there anymore, with life having so many layers of officialdom. My brother made a handcart and had a firewood round, in the days when everyone had an open fire. He gathered up spare wood, chopped it and bundled it himself, with dad's help. When our oldest son had his first wages from a part time job, he bought us all a pack of our favourite sweets- lovely!

I was doing a class with children at church, and the lesson was on Christian values to money. But the ignorance of cash was complete and awful. I took my change jar with me and just tipped it out. I asked them to choose the money for x amount. They had no idea where to start. I picked up a 20p and asked them how much change I would need if I spent 13p. I might as well have been talking Russian. There was a 10-year-old and a 12-year-old. When our youngest son was in year 1 of infants, his teacher suggested I let him buy his own penny sweets once a week. He could do money sums on paper, but needed practice with cash. So, we called at the sweet shop for penny sweets every Friday, and I said he could have an odd amount, like 13 or 17p. I just opened my purse and let him organise the money. Later I took out all my small change, and he had to cope with giving a larger coin and getting change, always complicated for children. Especially as size is no guide. 20ps are smaller than 2ps, and £1 coins are smaller than

50ps! I always kept a change jar, there was often some reason to send money to school! School trips, photo money, 50p for charity on non-uniform days, or a teacher's leaving present etc. Now the children never see money, it is all lodged by parents with a card.

We have a baking and preserves stall and we find ourselves giving out change by counting up to the amount given to us, like old fashioned shopkeepers. Modern shop assistants have tills that tell them how much change to give. I also do all the accounting with pen and paper, to keep the old grey cells alive. At least we now have a decimal system, and don't have all the nonsense about working to bases of 12 and 20. People moan about the decimal system, but I can remember when I was 8 years old, and learning all those obscure measurements, thinking "Why can't measurements be like sums, and work to tens and hundreds, it would be much easier?"

I started nurse training in 1964, and we were told the country is going metric, so we learnt everything in metric. Sixty-one years later we are still faffing about with 2 systems. I personally think we should have gone 100% metric on a particular date, like the decimal currency. Life is mostly metric anyway, and like all changes, people will resent it: but if it is "the system" everyone gets used to it. We had a cottage in Ireland while they were going totally metric. Road distance signs changed to kilometres early on, but speed limits were the last to change. (Irish kilometres are as flexible as Irish miles!!) They had a 2-year information campaign, and the new signs were put up, with a sack over them. On a particular New Year's Day, the sacks were all removed and put over the old signs. Authorities were very keen to point out there would be no honeymoon period, people had 2 years to get used to the idea and learn equivalents!

Could anyone under 40 keep a manual balance sheet of their ins and outs with an ongoing balance? Authorities tell us many people have absolutely no idea whether the income matches their outgoings, have no idea of managing money and seeing money as real coins and notes. Just a piece of plastic that enables you to have what you want at any particular moment. There is no concept of budgeting, balancing their income and expenditure, waiting for what you want or saving. The banks love it, of course, but a nation that lives in debt, is not a victimless crime. Debt, with gambling, is the biggest cause of unhappiness, misery, relationship breakdown, leading to homelessness and often suicide.

Perhaps being wise with money is respecting our sterling currency, and making sure our young people know the value and importance of CASH and learn the truth of "take care of the pennies and the pounds will take care of themselves."

A Week in Politics (or at Least It Felt Like One)

I have said it time and time again that a week in politics is a very long time. But last Monday, in the time it took me to drive to work, it felt as though we'd managed to squeeze in a whole parliamentary term.

As I flicked on the radio somewhere between the first roundabout and the second set of temporary traffic lights, more people appeared to be leaving Number 10 than you'd normally expect to see exiting a fire drill. Some were rushing to resign in an apparent attempt to save Sir Keir Starmer. Others, it seemed, were simply keen to get a head start down at the Jobcentre before the queues formed.

Either way, it was not a great morning for Labour.

So, in the spirit of self-preservation, I'm not going to dwell too long on Labour in this edition — largely because, by the time you read this, there's a reasonable chance the leadership situation may have changed again. In modern politics, predicting who will still be in post next week is a bit like guessing the British summer weather: you can try, but you'll almost certainly be wrong.

One thing is certain, however. There is no love lost in politics. The moment someone falls out of favour with their own party, the vultures begin to circle. Former allies suddenly develop excellent memories of your past mistakes, anonymous briefings appear with suspicious speed, and people who were patting you on the back only a week earlier are now measuring it for knife placement.

Politics, of course, has never been a particularly polite business. It's one of the few professions where smiling at someone while sharpening a metaphorical blade behind your back is considered a basic survival skill. Loyalty is often spoken about fondly, usually just before it's abandoned entirely.

And yet, as the old saying goes, be careful what you ask for.

We all know that Sir Keir Starmer appears far more comfortable collecting air miles than collecting allies. His enthusiasm for playing the international statesman has been evident for some time, as he hops between global conferences and overseas summits with the energy of a man who has discovered the executive lounge for the first time.

This diplomatic tour has not gone unnoticed by others — not least Tony Blair, who may be watching nervously from the sidelines. After all, "elder statesman with a global role" was very much his pension plan, and competition in that particular market is already fierce. You can almost imagine Blair peering over his spectacles, muttering: "There's only room for one of us."

Of course, if Labour were genuinely looking for a natural successor, many would point to Andy Burnham. On paper, he ticks an uncomfortable number of boxes. Popular, recognisable, and — perhaps most worryingly for some — capable of winning votes in places Labour can no longer take for granted.

Before Peter Mandelson's latest debacle, Burnham was widely seen as too much of a threat to be allowed anywhere near the leadership conversation. He was also viewed as the only figure who could realistically halt Reform's momentum in Manchester at the upcoming by-election. For some, that alone was reason enough to keep him firmly parked where he was.

But politics has a habit of reshuffling the deck when you least expect it, and Mandelson's problems have blown open doors that were previously bolted shut.

Meanwhile, let us not forget the Liberal Democrats, who have enthusiastically jumped into bed with the Green Party. This may be presented as a progressive alliance, but from the outside it looks more like an awkward morning-after scenario waiting to happen.

Yes, they may currently be ahead in the polls in certain areas, but don't be surprised if the final vote is far closer than many imagine. Shared leaflets and joint slogans are all very well until voters start asking awkward questions about who's actually in charge — and what, precisely, they're signing up for.

And while the national picture continues to resemble a political soap opera written by someone who's had far too much caffeine, the local scene has been quietly producing its own moments of unintended comedy.

Take, for example, the recent revelation that the Green Party had proposed cancelling the next district election. The reasoning? That councillors would be far too busy working night and day with officers on local government reorganisation, and that it therefore "wouldn't be fair" to expect them to campaign.

Now, always keen to check my facts, I asked seven district councillors a very simple question: how much work have you personally been involved in regarding local government reorganisation?

The answer, in every case, was the same.

None.

Not a little. Not "we've had a briefing". Not even "I skimmed an email". Just none.

So the idea that democracy itself should be paused because councillors are allegedly working around the clock is, at best, creative storytelling. At worst, it's an insult to voters who might reasonably expect elections to happen as scheduled, regardless of how inconvenient they may be to those in office.

Thankfully, there is now talk that local elections will be reinstated, with the issue set to become the focus of a public petition. And that, at least, feels like democracy doing what it's supposed to do — citizens pushing back when they feel something isn't quite right.

Which brings us neatly to the final question.

If an election were called tomorrow — county or country — who would you vote for to run your affairs?

It's a question worth asking, particularly at a time when political loyalty is fraying, party labels are losing their grip, and voters are increasingly willing to look beyond the traditional red-blue-yellow options. People want competence. They want honesty. And, perhaps above all, they want politicians who appear to know what they're doing — or at least can convincingly pretend they do.

A week may be a long time in politics. But right now, a single car journey seems more than enough for everything to change.



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Wildlife

By Kerry King

A February Song Signals Spring

From the shingle flats of Dungeness to the hedgerows and gardens around Folkestone, it is often a single moment in nature that sparks a story. Two days ago, I photographed a robin perched on a bare branch, chest glowing, head thrown back as it sang into the winter air. As so often happens, the image prompted reflection, research, and this article.

The European robin (*Erithacus rubecula*) takes its name from a time when what we now call orange was described simply as red. The bird's famous red breast is far more than decorative. It is a territorial signal, warning rivals and deterring predators. Even a reflection in a window can trigger a response, showing just how fiercely protective these tiny birds are.

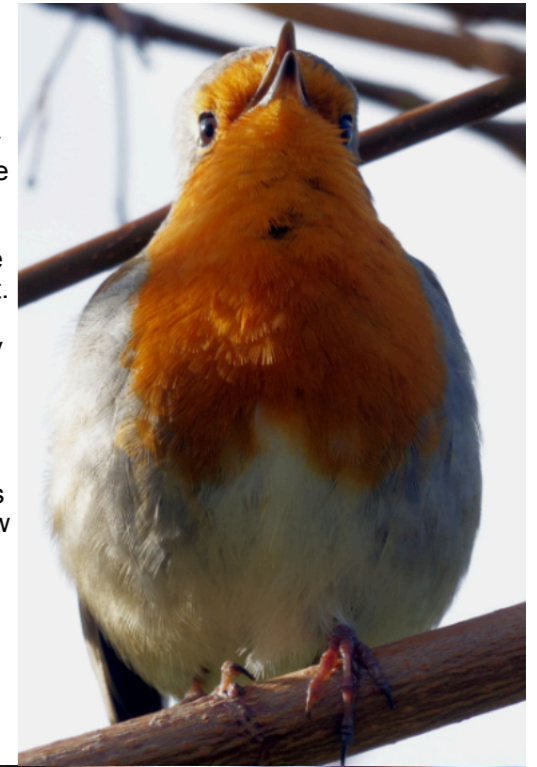
February is a pivotal moment in the robin's year. While winter still lingers, robins are already preparing for spring. Males sing more frequently, reinforcing territory boundaries and advertising fitness to potential mates. Established pairs reconnect, and by the end of the month many birds are scouting nesting sites. Robins are adaptable, choosing ivy-clad banks, sheds, log piles, and other sheltered nooks to raise their young.

Across the exposed landscapes of Dungeness, robins favour scrub and sheltered edges. Around Folkestone, they

thrive in gardens, churchyards, and coastal paths. Their apparent friendliness around people hides a tough, resilient character.

Over the years, this pattern has repeated itself: a photograph leads to learning, and learning to understanding. We live side by side with nature every day, yet modern life often steals the time to notice it. The robin's bright February song tells us that spring is already gathering pace — and perhaps it is time to slow our own pace and enjoy the nature around us.

All pictures by Kerry King





Welcome to another set of reviews for your consideration this issue I've got three intriguing documentaries from Netflix and Channel 5, a creature feature and a war drama from Sky TV and a preview of the latest secret screening from Cineworld.

In 2017 London saw its own version of a towering inferno when a fire broke out in a tower block in Grenfell causing the death of 72 people. **Grenfell: Uncovered - Netflix** is a series of eyewitness accounts of those present, including residents who escaped the tower and the fire fighters present. The accounts from those still traumatised 8 years after the event are difficult to watch alongside the footage of the fire.



As is always it's afterwards and the enquiry that will leave you speechless as we learn that the council decided to spruce up the building using highly flammable cladding purchased from a US aluminium company, who had ignored their own research findings. They obviously ignored the warnings of the 2009 Lakanal House fire in which 6 people lost their lives. The fire brigade also came under scrutiny over their instructions for residents to 'stay put' it was only when they discovered the extent of the fire that instructions were given to evacuate.

But extra contempt falls upon the then housing secretary, the arrogant Eric Pickles, who went on to become a Life Peer. Pickles when addressing the enquiry declared that he didn't have time to answer their questions and spoke about 96 deaths, obviously confusing Hillsborough with Grenfell.

The documentary like the enquiry leaves us with many unanswered questions and the families still seeking justice. Grenfell: Uncovered is a compelling drama that will leave you heartbroken for the victims and families and in contempt for those who sought to cover up the tragedy.

Whilst filming an episode of Motorway cops a separate incident occurred that would lead to the **Channel 5 documentary Twisted Sisters: Madness & Manslaughter**



The documentary follows identical Swedish twins Sabina and Ursula Eriksson. The pair had travelled from Sabina's home in Ireland to Liverpool after Ursula had visited her Sister from her home in the states. The pair had then boarded a coach heading to London. The pair then got off

in Keele claiming to be unwell, but their actions concerned the driver who left them at the services in Keele. The manager of the service station then called the Police, but the pair were already walking down the central reservation of the M6 trying to cross the motorway and causing an accident when Sabina was hit by a car. The incident was attended by motorway Police and a television crew and while Sabina was being treated Ursula suddenly ran into the path of a lorry and was struck. Sabina then suddenly jumped up and followed her sister and was struck by another car.

As if this wasn't bizarre enough Ursula had had her legs crushed by the lorry and Sabina was unconscious for 15 minutes. Ursula began attacking the medical team and Police in attendance. Sabina, now conscious joined and struck a Police Officer attempting to restrain her and ran off before being caught, handcuffed, and sedated. Given the twin's behaviour a suicide pact or drug use was suspected.

The twins were quickly released but while searching for her sister Sabina was taken in by two friends and what was to follow was even more shocking.

This is a documentary that will intrigue and astound as the two sisters completely baffled everyone with their behaviour, sadly their exploits were to end in a senseless killing, but it is still an absorbing look into the minds of two seemingly normal siblings.

The previous documentaries were at times uncomfortable viewing, but this next one was extremely uncomfortable for different reasons.

Taipei 101 is a Taiwanese skyscraper measuring 1,667 feet high. Alex Honnold is a 40-year climber known for his free solo (climbs without ropes) climbs. Honnold became famous for his free solo climb of the El Capitan rock formation which can be found in the Yosemite National Park which was filmed for the Academy Award winning documentary Free Solo.

Skyscraper Live - on Netflix is the story of Honnold's attempt to 'free solo' climb the towering skyscraper in front of his wife, a live TV audience and the occupants of Taiwan and the Taipei 101. Taipei 101 isn't just a bog-standard skyscraper it has numerous ornate sculptures that make the task even more difficult.



Honnold also must contend with the wind and the fact that there have recently been multiple earthquakes in the region. Armed only with a tub of chalk, to help with his

grip, Honnold begins his ascent while the 'panel' try to crank up the tension (as if it is needed) with their roving reporters and suspenseful music.

As the tension and the wind increases Honnold makes the climb, successfully negotiating, the protruding clumps of metal, meanwhile you are holding your breath and asking the question why? Why would a happily married man with kids put his wife through this torturous experience. Honnold is many things and fearless is something that springs to mind as he clings onto the skyscraper with his legs. The sight of Honnold standing atop the building taking selfie made me decidedly queasy.

Skyscraper Live is an interesting documentary that will grip you from the first minute to the last. It will also make you feel uncomfortable at times but is still worth a watch.

Beast of War - Sky/Now TV is an Australian war/creature feature of the bitey variety.

A group of Australian soldiers fresh from boot camp and infighting find themselves cast adrift at sea after their ship is sunk by a Japanese plane. Hostilities are soon forgotten as the survivors are thrown together on a makeshift raft. Wounded and dehydrated they must work together as they are hunted by Japanese planes and a rather hungry shark.



This reminded me of the excellent Nic Cage film USS Indianapolis: Men of Courage which told the story of the sinking of the Indianapolis in which 300 of the crew died during the initial attack and 580 died from dehydration and shark attacks. Like the aforementioned film Beast of War is based on a true story, the HMAS Armidale which was sunk in 1942 leaving Australian soldiers at the mercy of a Great White Shark.

Beast of War is an atmospheric thriller that feeds off the torment of the survivors as they try to avoid being the shark's next feed. Yes, it is low budget, but it is also watchable and while it's no SS Indianapolis: Men of Courage it is still worth a watch.

Sky TV have just delivered a real big hitter in the shape of **Nuremberg - Sky/Now TV** based on the book The Nazi and the Psychiatrist by Jack El-Hai.

Nuremberg follows the uneasy relationship between American Psychiatrist Douglas Kelley (Remi Malek) and Hitler's 2nd in command Hermann Goring (Russell Crowe) with the war over several high-ranking German officers including Rudolph Hess have surrendered to the Allies and placed on trial for war crimes.



Goring and 21 of his fellow Nazi's are held in Luxembourg

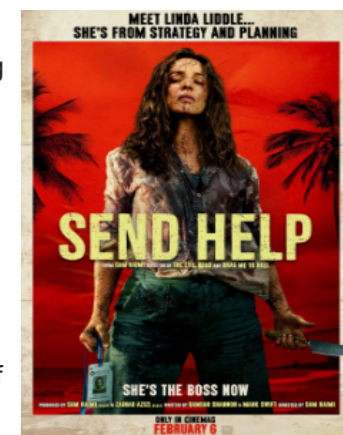
while the Allies come together to prosecute. Kelley is brought in to determine their mental health and the risk of suicide, and he begins a cat and mouse game with the narcissistic Goring who claims he will escape the gallows. The rest as they say is history.

Nuremberg is a heavy hitter and with an all-star cast including Michael Shannon and Richard E Grant as part of the prosecution team. It grips from start to finish. A special mention also for Leo Woodall as Sgt Howie Triest a Jewish American soldier struggling to contain his feelings and emotions while dealing with the Nazi war criminals. Russell Crowe as Goring manages to be both charming and intelligent while having overseen the death of millions. He certainly manages to capture the essence of Goring and the Nazi evil.

As a piece of cinema, it's gripping as a reminder of history it is compelling.

When Sam Raimi burst onto our screens with his 1981 horror flick The Evil Dead, a high-octane film about possession that was not only gory but also very, very, funny, you knew that Raimi had placed a huge imprint on the horror genre. Well Raimi is back and it's a beaut.

Send Help - On general release bears many similarities to Raimi's 1981 classic. Send Help finds mild mannered strategist Linda Liddle waiting for a long overdue promotion promised by her former boss, unfortunately for Linda his son Bradley, the new CEO, has given the promotion to his college and golfing buddy Donovan. Bradley unimpressed with Linda's demeanour and appearance plans to demote her but not before he takes her as part of his team to secure a merger. While on the plane Bradley makes fun of Linda after sharing a video of her audition tape for a survival programme Survivor. The mocking is short-lived as the plane crashes killing all but Linda and Bradley.



The pair are washed up on an island whereby Linda tends the injured Bradley while putting her survival skills to good use. Slowly the tables are turned as the mild and meek Linda becomes the dominant force over the weak Bradley. With Bradley desperate to escape Linda appears happy to set up a new life for her and Bradley.

Send Help is a very funny film that is outrageously over the top in some scenes, Linda vs the pig and Bradleys escape attempt both of which had the audience roaring with laughter. These scenes were very similar to scenes from The Evil Dead and equally hilarious and gory.

Send Help is Raimi at his best and a reminder that Raimi is a great director. Rachel McAdams is superb as Linda and Dylan O'Brien as Bradley provides a perfect foil. The ending was a bit disappointing but mainly because I didn't want the film to end.

If you like horror or black comedies, then you'll love Send Help.

That's your lot for this issue a few juicy morsels to get your teeth into and keep you going until the next issue.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Email: info@thelooker.co.uk

Dear Editor,

I note your announcement of a proposed new medical centre in the Folca building, leading to "increased footfall" in the town centre. Given that the town centre parking is currently at the tightest of margins, this scheme seems likely to create enormous problems.

Additionally, the idea of Folkestone becoming a "culture Town" (Ha!ha!), the extra congestion of such an increasing "hive of activity", would be a sting in the tail.

The obvious answer to this growing and predictable problem would have been to turn the lovely old bus station site into a Car Park, ideally placed for the town centre.

Unfortunately the idea of it becoming a "Dossers Park" is just the sort of cloud cuckoo land nonsense we have come to expect from the Green Party crackpots. Remember the months of huge disruption at the Folkestone Central roundabout reconstruction, which merely resulted in two awkward obstructive green looney cycle lanes - which will certainly hardly ever be used, as the hoards of illusory cyclists it was provided for only exist in the Green Party's fantasy world.

Yours sincerely,

Jim Wright

Dear Editor,

I'm just getting in touch on behalf of theatre company This Is My Theatre as we are due to visit Ivychurch this Spring with our production of Jane Eyre and we would love to be featured in any way by The Looker Newspaper if that is possible at all? The show will run at the beautiful St George's Church (with a portion of proceeds going towards the upkeep of the venue) on Thursday, 26th of March at 7PM. I have put together a press Digital Resources Folder (containing poster images, press releases, company logos, performance photos as well as images and review quotes from some of our previous productions) which can be accessed here.

Following This Is My Theatre's previous productions of Pride & Prejudice ("Rich in detail and a joy to experience!" - In/genue Magazine) and Wuthering Heights ("Utterly gripping!" - Sussex Local Magazine), we are delighted to be back this year with another classic. Our adaptation of Charlotte Bronte's immortal tale - packed with song and suspense - will be sure to grip audiences this Spring.

Members of the cast and creative team would be able to interview should you wish and we would love to invite you (or any of the team!) to come along and see the show in exchange for the coverage if this would interest you at all? Please do let us know if you would like to attend as we would be more than happy to sort out any complimentary tickets for you!

More information can be found at: <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/cuemarketing/1962334>

Kind regards,

Chloe Bond
This Is My Theatre

Dear Looker,

Once again, I find myself writing to congratulate you on producing such an excellent newspaper. As a former local and a member of the Real Marsh Watch group, I always enjoy keeping up to date with what is happening in my old home, and The Looker remains a reliable and engaging way of doing just that.

I was particularly pleased to see that the Reform Group continues to share regular council updates through your pages. For those of us who no longer live locally, this transparency is invaluable, and it is reassuring to see just how much work is being done on behalf of residents. I genuinely don't know how you find the time to fit it all in.

However, I wanted to pick up on a recent comment made by Green Party member Douglas Wade. Political disagreement is, of course, part and parcel of public life, but it does not require launching into personal or unpleasant attacks simply because others hold different views.

I used to watch and listen to Mr Wade in the council chamber before he lost his seat, and it always struck me that a little more courtesy and respect towards colleagues might have gone a long way. Politics works best when debate is robust but civil, and when disagreement is met with argument rather than hostility.

Perhaps if that approach had been taken more often, the outcome at the ballot box might have been rather different.

Yours sincerely,

Don Dawson

A former Marsh resident



What's On In
February 2026



Romney Marsh Community Hub – Rolfe Lane, New Romney

Date	Event	Time	Cost
Mondays	Games Club	1:30 – 3:30 pm	£3.50
	Dance Fit	9:30 am – 10:30 am	£7.00
	Seated exercise	11:00 am – 12:00 pm	£7.00
Tuesdays	Walking Group	10:00 am – 12:00 pm	Free
	Yoga	11:00 am – 12:00 pm	£7
	Pilates	3:00 pm – 4:00 pm	£7
Wednesdays	Seated exercise (for those with Arthritis, Stroke or Parkinsons)	11:00 am – 12:00 pm	£7
	Art Club	10:30 am – 12:00 pm	£3.50
Thursdays	Tai Chi	9:30 am – 11:00 am	£7
	Seated Tai Chi	11:00 am – 12:00 pm	£7
	Line Dancing	4:00 pm – 5:30 pm	£7
	Yoga	4:00 pm – 5:00 pm	£7
	Totally Shredded	6:00 pm – 7:00 pm	£7
Fridays	Legs, Bums & Tums	9:30 am – 10:30 am	£7
	Seated exercise	11:00 am – 12:00 pm	£7
Wednesday 17 th	Creative Writing with Emma Batten	1:30 pm – 3:30 pm	£8
Wednesday 25 th	Digital Support Sessions Drop In	9:30 am – 12:30 pm	Free
Wednesday 25 th	Diabetes Peer Support Group	1:30 pm – 2:30 pm	Free
Friday 27 th	Ex Armed Forces Breakfast Club	9:00 am – 11:00 am	
Friday 27 th	Race Night (doors open at 7) <i>Bring your own drinks, glasses and nibbles</i>	7:30 pm – 10:00 pm	£5 pp

Hub on the Beach – 103 Coast Dr, Greatstone

Mondays	Dance Fit	6:00 pm – 7:00 pm	£7
	Yoga	7:30 pm – 8:30 pm	£7
Tuesdays	Seated Exercise	3:00 pm – 4:00 pm	£7
	Salsa	6:00 pm – 7:00 pm	£7
Wednesdays	Legs, Bums & Tums	9:30 am – 10:30 am	£7
	Pilates	11:00 am – 12:00 pm	£7
	Seated Tai Chi	3:00 pm – 4:00 pm	£7
Thursdays	Zumba	6:30 pm – 7:30 pm	£7
	Yoga	9:30 am – 10:30 am	£7
Saturdays	Seated Exercise	3:00 pm – 4:00 pm	£7
	Washinkai Karate	10:30 am – 12:00 pm	£7 / £5 < 16
Wednesday 18 th	Bereavement Support Group	1:00 pm – 2:00 pm	Free
Tuesday 24 th	Hearing Loss Support Group	1:00 pm – 2:00 pm	Free

SAVE THE DATE! March 28th for the RMCH Spring Fayre, Rolfe Lane 10 am – 2 pm. ALL WELCOME!

For more info please contact us at 01797 36388 (Rolfe Lane) or 01797 458876 for Hub on the Beach.



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People From The Past

EILEEN BOLTON (HARTOP)

Eileen Bolton was born in the Midlands and came to New Romney as a child in 1920 and lived there until she married. Her father was Mr. Hartop who had the forge and the shop in the High Street, close to the Cinque Ports and she had many happy memories from her childhood. There was Mrs. Humphery who ran the corner shop opposite The Cinque Ports. She had an allotment on which she grew gooseberries and black and red currants and, in the summer, they were picked ripe every day and sold her shop. She also made delicious ice cream which she made on the kitchen table in the back room. There were no health and hygiene regulations in those days. Her husband was a painter and decorator and a local bellringer. He also wound the church clock for many years until he was unable to continue.

Mr. and Mrs. King lived opposite and he was a baker. He knocked up the dough in the evening and in those days, all the work had to be done by hand. He used to get up early in the morning and light the fires to get the ovens going. The dough was divided up into the baking tins and when baked, he would take his handcart round the town selling bread. His wife sold the bread in the front shop and on Saturdays, as his ovens cooled down, the local housewives were allowed to take their roast to Mr. King to cook them in his cooling ovens. The lucky families would eat their Sunday roasts on Saturday evenings.

There was a man who repaired boots and shoes on the corner of Rome Road. When mending shoes, he put a handful of brads in his mouth,

picked them out one by one as needed, placed them on the sole of the shoe and then hammered them home. Mrs. Ellis, just along the High Street, ran an ironmonger's shop piled high from floor to ceiling with every conceivable type of equipment. H. G. Wells, who spent some time in New Romney as a tutor to the two young sons of a doctor, set 'Kipps' in this shop. The book was later made into a musical in the 1950s called 'Half a Sixpence'.

Eileen went to school locally and married Ted Bolton in the 1930s. They lived in Dymchurch Road and had three children, Monica, Steve and Cynthia. Her husband was in the New Romney Fire Brigade for many years and after the Second World War, she used to offer bed & breakfast from her house in Dymchurch Road. She was always interested in amateur dramatics and was a member of the New Romney Contrasts in the 1950s and 1960s. She was also Secretary of the local Women's Institute in the 1950s. Eileen was a New Romney councillor for over ten years and was also deputy Mayor. She died in 1999.



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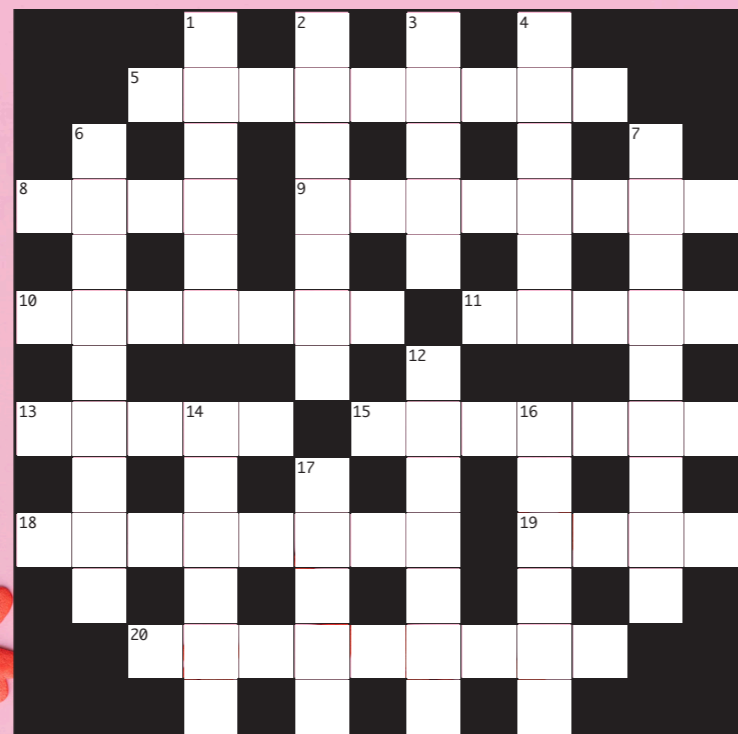
Quick Crossword

Across Clues:

5. Intense admiration (9)
8. Choir part below soprano (4)
9. Showing greater care (8)
10. Suffer mental torment (7)
11. Male toilets, informally (5)
13. Raise by rope (5)
15. Small ear-cleaning implement (7)
18. White sauce with butter and flour (8)
19. Produce musical notes (4)
20. Small, quickly spreading blaze (9)

Down Clues:

1. Share a border (6)
2. Lacking refinement (7)
3. Upright support (5)
4. Form a united whole (6)
6. Drains in sinks or baths (9)
7. Ribbon-shaped pasta (9)
12. Storage space above a stable (7)
14. Round solid shape (6)
16. Dough for pies (6)
17. Cause to laugh (5)



Answers:
 Across: 5. Adoration, 8. Alto, 9. Tenderer, 10. Agonise, 11. Gents, 13. Hoist, 15. Earpick, 18. Bechamel, 19. Sing, 20. Brushfire.
 Down: 1. Adjoin, 2. Brutish, 3. Stand, 4. Cohere, 6. Plugholes, 7. Fettucine, 12. Hayloft, 14. Sphere, 16. Pastry, 17. Amuse.

Hidden Message Wordsearch

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

Coffee Shop

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

- | | | |
|------------|-----------|-----------|
| Affogato | Doppio | Mazagran |
| Americano | Espresso | Mocha |
| Bicerin | Flatwhite | Piccolo |
| Blackeye | Frappe | Qahwa |
| Bombon | Freddo | Raf |
| Breve | Galao | Redeye |
| Cappuccino | Latte | Ristretto |
| Conpanna | Lungo | Romano |
| Cortado | Macchiato | Turka |

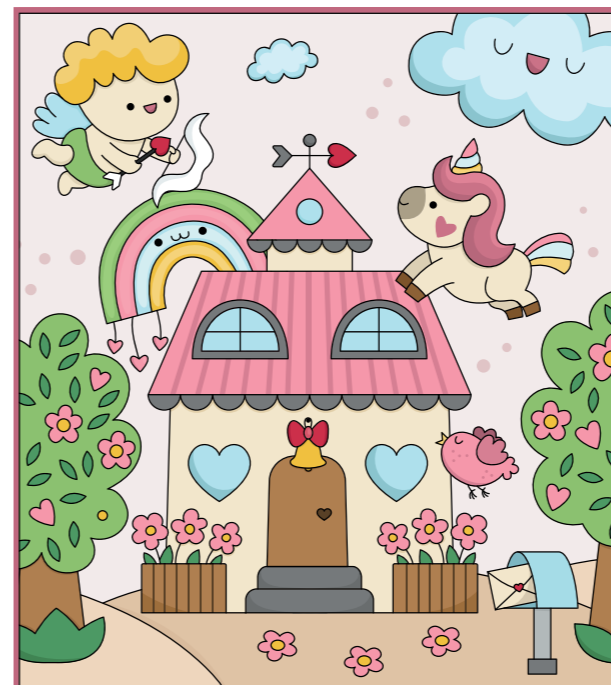
Write the hidden message here:

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

Sudoku Challenge

Spot the Difference!

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



THE RANT!!!



START YOUR ENGINES – AND YOUR COMPLAINTS

I love cars. Always have. It's borderline unhealthy but in a charming, petrol-fumed, wallet-destroying, ear-drum-perforating way. I blame my Uncle Tony entirely. There I was, a fresh-faced lad whisked off to Brands Hatch back when health and safety was just a rumour whispered by clipboard-carrying bureaucrats. It was glorious: cigarette smoke mixing with racing fuel, drivers leaning casually against open fuel fillers like human firelighters. And there, in that mechanical utopia, I met Ronnie Peterson, Jody Scheckter and Ken Tyrrell – and crucially the Tyrrell six-wheeler. Six wheels. One car. No explanation needed. That was it. The disease entered my bloodstream.

Uncle Tony, of course, was the cool uncle. Dark British Racing Green Triumph Spitfire, hair like an extra from Thunderbirds. His neighbour? Only Noel Edmonds – and back then Noel wasn't flogging psychic hair gels on Deal or No Deal, he was the Radio 1 breakfast god driving an actual Ford GT40. The sort of car every small boy had on the wall next to the Cheryl Ladd poster. I got to sit in it. No child therapy required, because frankly life peaked at 10.

My father on the other hand... well, let's just say his automotive choices were more British Leyland Despair Pack. Morris Marinas, Escorts, and a moment of madness topped with flaky pastry: the Fiat Supermirafiori. A car that rusted faster than it drove. Built, it seemed, out of old Ferrero Rocher wrappers and disappointment.

MY OWN EPIC SAGA OF QUESTIONABLE PURCHASES

I started with a Mini 1275 GT from my grandfather. Proper car. Metal dashboard. No airbags. If you crashed you didn't "deploy a safety system", you simply died politely. Grandad, of course, had moved on to the Renault 5 Gordini Turbo, the car that could get you from Folkestone to Ashford in 12 minutes and explode for no reason on the thirteenth. I blew the head gasket on the M20, and it cost £750 forty-five years ago. Adjusted for inflation that now equates to roughly the GDP of Surrey.

Then came the Capris. Oh yes. The Black and Gold 2.8 Injection JPS. At 22 years old, that car

made me feel like a cross between Bond, Bodie and the bloke from Minder. I also had the 3-litre and a Mark 1 that I flogged to Phil Usher for £400 and some welding. That exact model now sells for about £32,000 at auction. That's not a loss. That's trauma.

THE CHRONIC CONDITION: WANTING CARS YOU CAN'T AFFORD

I spent my youth glaring at men in their 50s driving Ferrari and Porsche and thinking: "How has that old codger managed it? That should be ME."

Now, of course, I am that old codger. Naturally my collection matured. Range Rovers, luxurious cruisers, cars with heated seats and buttons labelled "long-wave invigorating lumbar therapy mode", all that nonsense. And yet... the racing itch remained. When Sarah met me, she didn't meet a man – she met a man with seven cars. Perfectly normal. One for weekends, one for racing, one for nostalgia, one that was "a bargain", one that needed welding, one that worked occasionally, and one that was bought because I was hungry and drove past a dealership.

Two MGB GTs, mind you. With the overdrive switch. Press that button and you felt like you were piloting Concorde even though you were doing 46 mph and shaking like a washing machine on spin.

THE JAG F-TYPE: AKA MY APPARENT MID-LIFE CRISIS

Then this year I did it. I sinned gloriously. I bought a Jaguar F-Type. Cue the armchair commentators:

"Mid-life crisis!"

"Overcompensating?"

"Should've got a sensible car!"

Oh yes? Should I? Should I take moral direction from someone who's smoked 20 cigarettes a day for 40 years – spending £150,000 literally setting fire to money – but who now feels entitled to critique my purchase of a finely engineered British V6 symphony on wheels?

Here's the truth: a very close friend was suddenly hit with aggressive cancer. And in that instant I thought:

Life is too short not to drive something that makes you grin like a 5-year-old on Christmas morning.

So I bought it. And when I drive it, I beam.

THE COLLECTION NOW

Let's be clear:
I have the Jag F-Type
A couple of Minis including a rare JCW
Another Jag
Something else sparkly
Something that leaks oil because heritage
Something I race when I'm feeling stupid

If you have a problem with this, kindly take a ticket and queue behind everyone who thinks quinoa is food.

THE SCOREBOARD

I've been driving 40 years.
Most normal humans might own 10–15 cars in that time.
I've owned over 50, not including vans.

That's not excess. That's commitment.

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AND NO, I'M NOT BUYING AN EV

I know, I know – the world is supposedly going electric. But honestly the idea of plugging my car into my house like a phone charger that costs £70,000 and takes 9 hours to reach 38% fills me with dread.

I don't want a silent car.
I want something that shouts.
I want pistons.
I want petrol fumes.
I want neighbours peeking through curtains muttering "he's at it again".

Cars are not just transport. They're memory, passion, joy, heartbreak, smell, noise, stupidity and triumph. They are the soundtrack of a life where you choose exhaust notes over maturity.

So yes – I will continue to acquire ridiculous, beautiful, flawed, roaring machines until the DVLA pries my licence from my cold, petrol-stained hands.

And when they do?

I'll simply buy another one.

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Pig Race night

a fun night for all the family!

Come along and back you favourite little piggy as they race along a specially designed indoor race track.

Saturday 14th March 2026 at St Mary's Bay Village Hall.

Full details are shown on the poster.

If you wish to find out more, please contact Colin Norgate on 07817 890274 or by email colinnorgate@btinternet.com

Charity Golf Day – the Rotary Club is holding its annual Charity Golf Day on Wednesday 13th May 2026 at the Littlestone Warren Golf Club. Entrance fees are £45 non-members, £22 members. For more details please contact Mark Singfield on 01797 367258 or by email: marksingfield123@btinternet.com

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

Rotary Romney Marsh Reg'd charity No 281361.

PIG RACING!!!

A Charity Race Night with a Difference

A fun charity fundraising evening for the whole family

St Mary's Bay Village Hall, Jefferstone Lane TN29 OSW

Saturday 14th March 2026 at 7 for 7.30 pm

Tickets £10
(£5 for accompanied school aged children)

- Bring your own nibbles, drinks & glasses
- Raffle

To Book: Contact Colin Norgate on 07817 890274 or colinnorgate@btinternet.com

All proceeds go to local charities & deserving causes




Getting Parking Policy Right in the District

Feedback on a new joined-up approach to the implementation of Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) across the district is being invited.

A draft policy has been drawn up to address some of the issues caused by the existing framework, introduced in 2015, following feedback from residents.

CPZs are areas where all on-street parking is controlled either by yellow lines or designated parking bays, often with a permit system in place.

Some of the suggested changes are as follows: New requests: To stop considering petitions for individual roads to prevent simply moving an issue to a neighbouring one; to increase the level of support required for a formal consultation to be initiated to 60% of properties likely to be directly affected (currently 50%)

Business permits: A limited number to be made available to education, social/health care and emergency service organisations to provide to staff – the total number would be determined by available parking capacity

Motorcycles: With digital permits now the norm, it is proposed to apply standard resident and business permit charges to motorcycles. This would be in line with neighbouring districts and ensure fairness across all vehicle types

The policy was widely welcomed by members of the council's overview and scrutiny committee, and it is now the turn of the public to make their

comments.

Visit the council's website to complete the questionnaire before the 3pm deadline on Monday 2 March. Paper copies are available on request – email parking.services@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk, call 01303 853000 or visit the Civic Centre in Folkestone during business hours.

Cllr Polly Blakemore – Cabinet Member for Transport, Regulatory Services and Building Control said: "On-street parking controls need to strike a balance between the evolving needs of both local residents and the wider community.

"This new framework aims to avoid some of the difficulties caused by the existing street-by-street approach, as well as ensure that CPZ proposals follow a robust local consultation process and meet approved criteria."

Folkestone & Hythe District Council currently receives up to 40 CPZ applications a year, most of which cover single streets.

Teach Me – Explore. Experiment. Create.



At Teach Me, creativity is for everyone. We are a vibrant, welcoming creative studio in New Romney where people of all ages and abilities are encouraged to explore new crafts, experiment with materials, and discover talents they never knew they had. Whether you are 8 or 80, a complete beginner or an experienced maker, you'll find inspiration, support, and endless possibilities under one roof.

The Magic of Glass

Glass is one of Teach Me's most exciting creative pathways. Our weekly glass classes offer a rare opportunity to explore most major glass techniques in a relaxed, supportive environment. No one arrives as an experienced glass artist – yet many become one. Some have even progressed to supporting classes and mentoring new students, a testament to the confidence and skill these sessions nurture.



In these workshops you can try traditional leaded stained-glass panels, Tiffany-style copper foiling, kiln-fused glass, glass painting, enamelling, etching, screen printing, and glass appliqué (mosaicking on glass). You may follow guided projects or develop your own ideas – always with expert tuition on hand.

A Studio Designed for Creativity

Our purpose-built glass studios are fully equipped for comfort and creativity, with heating in winter, air conditioning in summer, and two dedicated workspaces. A wide selection of coloured and textured glass is always available, alongside state-of-the-art equipment – meaning minimal sharing and maximum making. All materials, tools, and kiln firings are included, so you can simply turn up and create.

More Than Glass – A World of Craft

Glass is just one part of the Teach Me experience. We teach classes over 50 different arts and crafts, including mosaics, felting, jewellery making, sculpture, painting, printmaking, textiles, metalwork, and many more. Sessions range from short tasters and half-day workshops to full-day immersive experiences – making it easy to explore new crafts without investing in expensive equipment or long-term commitment.

For those who love to try something new in a relaxed social setting, our popular Coffee, Cake & Craft sessions every Friday offer creative tasters for under £25. It's the perfect way to discover a new passion – with good company and homemade cake included.



Exceptional Value & Personal Guidance

Our weekly glass sessions cost £27.50 for two hours, offering outstanding value with everything included – professional equipment, quality materials, and expert tuition. Class sizes are kept small, ensuring personal guidance, a friendly atmosphere, and space for each student to grow.

Teach Me – Explore. Experiment. Create.

A creative home where curiosity is celebrated, confidence is nurtured, and everyone is welcome to make something extraordinary.

The Stranger of Mulberry Place

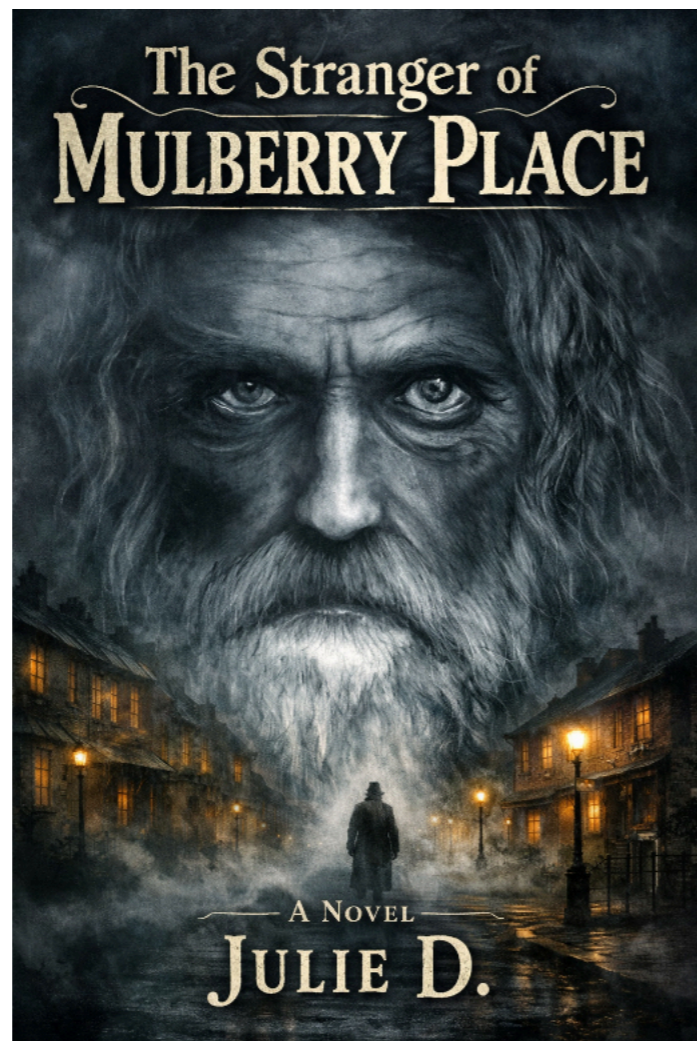
By Julie D

It was two years now since Brenda had moved into Mulberry Place. The gardens are now well established and the bushes and trees are growing thick and robust; shaped trimmed and coffered to suit individual tastes. In the evenings solar lights twinkle amongst scented lavender and roses and the scent of jasmine fills the air.

Decorations mark the passing of the season, Christmas wreaths adorn front doors with festive splendour, followed by eggs and rabbits at Easter, and pumpkins and gourds in the fall.

Autumn is a dramatic month, angry winds batter the houses, morning mists and rain, flood roads, and challenge wrapped up Marshans on their journeys. Dark brooding skies and needle pointed hail, fetters the earth, this land cannot be contained. New Romney is old, formed when the sea retreated to Greatstone and old ports became land locked. Moorings for boats which can be found on places like St Nicholas Church and are viewed with disbelief, how could the sea have been so close, did we have our own King Canute? Old Romney dates back even further; St John's Priory is believed to have been built by Cistercian monks in the 13th century. These monks were known for their rural living, farming the land, using stones from abandoned churches to build its own large complex. The Priory is mostly now lost, stones taken to repurpose other buildings, but each one holds memories, buried in their core. If you find one, place your hand upon it, close your eyes and breathe in and feel its tingling quantum energy.

The Marsh is ancient, a living, breathing mass. Before man excavated the dykes, ponds and rivulets stretched out like quivering, bony,



fingers, retracting in the summer and returning for Heafest...

It was coming towards the end of Haefest month; Brenda loved to use the old mediaeval words for the seasons and also for her herbs and plants which filled her garden. She was returning happily to her home on a Monday night from the History society meeting. She crossed the High street and into Ashford road, where the remains of the priory still stand. The large, playing field to the right was dark and empty, passing here always made her shiver as she believed this was a graveyard for plague victims, or had she got this wrong,? her mind was not so sharp these days and her memory often played tricks on her. Hurrying along the road, there were less street lights and the Rutgern winter fylled moon, shone brightly down upon her. Looking up to this, her thoughts travelled on to the next expected moon, the blotmonarth moon, a winter moon for blood sacrifice. Her year always ended with a killing.

Brenda headed along Burley Way to the pond, the air was still and quiet, doors locked, blinds closed and cars sleeping in driveways. A mist was gathering, swirling and curling around her as she headed closer to the pond. The air was thick and her breathing heavy. "Goose Fayre weather" she used to call it, so thick it was hard to see the path or road.

Peering ahead, she saw a tall dark figure, clad in a thick wool robe that dragged along the ground. A large hood covered his head which was hunched forward, nodding to the rhythm of his gait.

"Who is this" Brenda thought "is it a tramp or a hermit?" She knew no fear, this was her place. She switched on her torch and also her head torch trying to intimidate the figure, but because the fog was so thick it had very little effect.

"Excuse me, excuse me" She shouted "Who are you?"

The black figure turned, she was close enough now to see his face. It was his eyes she noted first, piercing grey, cold as ice, before they clouded over like cataracts. His beard and hair were black and a faded, matted, grey. His nose, was crooked, bent and broken. Brenda froze, she couldn't speak. She closed her eyes and held her breath until she felt the figure

pass by, or was it through her? She felt so cold, breathing in was painful, the air as sharp as a knife.

Finally she opened her eyes and looked around, and then she looked down and found that she was in the pond, her feet were sinking into the mud and the reeds were blocking her way out. Her legs felt heavy, they were sinking into the mud and as she struggled she fell, face first into the water. With an effort, she raised her head slightly. The cloaked figure was standing by the edge of the pond. A small dog was jumping around at his feet, he was trying to bark but his mouth appeared tight shut, stuck together. The figure bent down and tenderly lifted the little dog, turned around and disappeared into the fog.

A week later, some men came to clear out the pond, there had been a report of fly tipping, and that someone had thrown some rags into the middle of the pond. Heaving on their waterproof suits, they stepped gingerly into the deep water. To their horror they found it was a body, her large bottom protruding like an island. Although the residents were shocked, no one had missed her. The ducks were happily using her as a nest, grouped together for warmth and at night, she had lain alone in her watery grave, watched only by the Blotmonarth moon.



Sculpting Hare to Bear

Create an enchanting animal sculpture to add a touch of magic and elegance to your garden or home. In this one-day workshop, you'll sculpt a captivating moon-gazing hare, a wise fox, or another favourite creature. Whether you're inspired by the grace of a bird in flight or the strength of a wild predator, this course will teach you to express the natural world.

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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. Longlife juice, long life milk, cereals, (not porridge), Corned beef, coffee, squash, crisps, sugar, mayonnaise, washing capsules, tampons, washing up liquid and toilet rolls. 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 was no sung evensong on the 2nd Sunday, just a short service without the choir in the small room at 6.30pm. The full sung Evensong will recommence on March 8th, at 6.30pm.

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

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. The World Day of Prayer, an interdenominational and international event, will this year be held in St Peter and Paul church. This year the prayers are written by the women of Nigeria.

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

Dymchurch 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 regular Marsh Makers craft fairs restart in this month, and the next one will be on Saturday, February 21st from 10am to 2pm. All very welcome to come and see what the crafters have been up to during the winter!

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. Contact Joe Butterworth on joebutterworth448@gmail.com

Ivychurch, St George.

The work inside the church, has been completed, and thanks are given to the Romney Marsh Historic Churches Trust for their grant to cover the work. The workmen did a bit of weeding on the path in their breaks, so if anyone felt they wanted to carry on the work, feel free to offer!

The clock is being repaired. During the work, a 200-year-old piece of mechanism has had to be replaced, with additional expense. If anyone would like to help this fund, the account can be accessed online by The Parochial Church Council of Ivychurch. The account number is 59164042 and the sort code is 60.01.21.

There will be a presentation of 'Jane Eyre' on Thursday, March 26th in the church, at 7pm by a travelling theatre company. All very welcome to this traditional story of love, passion and intrigue. Tickets are £16 and can be obtained from 07732 253311. See flyers for more details.

Lydd, All Saints.

There will be a Pancake event on Tuesday, February 17th for children from 10.30am until noon. All welcome, lots of activities and free pancakes!

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. Please note that Chris Aubrey is no longer a church warden, although it says so in the magazine.

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, (provided by other charities) 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. Things are especially grim at the moment because of the bad weather. Imagine living in a tent, with the temperature down to -20dC.

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

New Romney, St Nicholas.

Like Lydd church, St Nicholas' is very large and needs a lot of cleaning and care. If anyone has an hour to spare, the church would be very grateful for any help. Maybe you don't attend regularly, but feel for the history of this ancient church, your help would be much appreciated. Call Ann Rolfe on 362719.

There will be a quiz night at the Scout Hall on Friday, February 27th at 6.30pm for 7pm. Bring your own drinks and nibbles. Cost is £5 person, and there will be a raffle!

New Romney Methodist Church.

The Saturday morning coffee mornings have resumed, and the Meeting Point on Thursday mornings from 10-12md are continuing. All welcome.

The church is now part of 'Marsh Methodist Church' and services are on a rotating basis. See notices for details.

Newchurch, St Peter and Paul.

After 2 years, the boarded up south window has been 'unveiled' and the scaffolding removed to everyone's appreciation. February and March will be quiet months. The Easter Fair will be on Saturday April 4th from 10.30am to 12.30pm. Contact Diana on 01303 311779 if you would like a stall to sell your own goods.

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.

All preschool children and their parents, nans and carers very welcome to the toddler group 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. All children in those year groups welcome. Children must be dropped off and collected by a parent or responsible adult.

An Alpha course will be starting on Friday 30th January for 12 weeks. This is an exploratory course on Christianity, with plenty of chance for discussion and questions. It will run from 1-2.30pm suitable for anyone who has to collect children from school, or prefers to come out in the daytime. There will be a short video, and then discussion notes and space for questions.

St Mary's Bay, All Saints.

The normal fund raisers have resumed, and the Café church, on Mondays and Wednesday morning get togethers continue to flourish, with increasing number, and a tremendous time of fellowship is enjoyed by all.

Lent course. This starts on Wednesday February 18th at heological10.15 for 10.30am and continues for 5 weeks. The theme is prayer, and everyone is welcome to join, not just the theological minded! Lots of time for discussion and questions.

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.

From a Hampshire church magazine.

'We badly need more sinners for the choir.'

Wit and Wisdom.

An Irishman walks into a bar in New York, and orders 3 whiskies. "Why 3?" asks the barman. "One for me and 2 for my brothers back in Ireland." This happened a number of times, and they got to know each other well. One day, the Irishman came in and only ordered 2. The barman was concerned something had happened to one of his brothers. "Oh no" said the Irishman, "They are fine, I've given up the hard stuff!"

Contact :THE LOOKER

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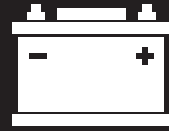
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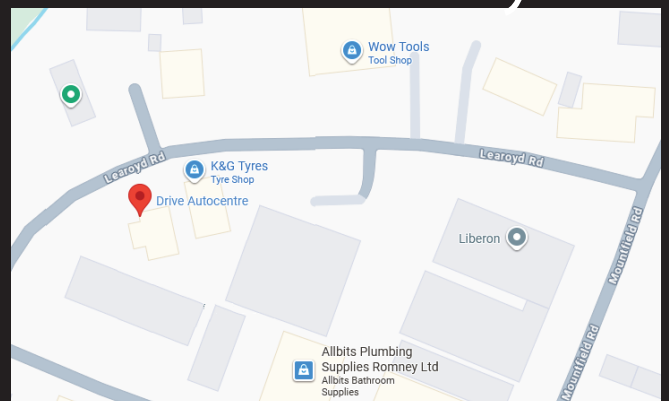
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