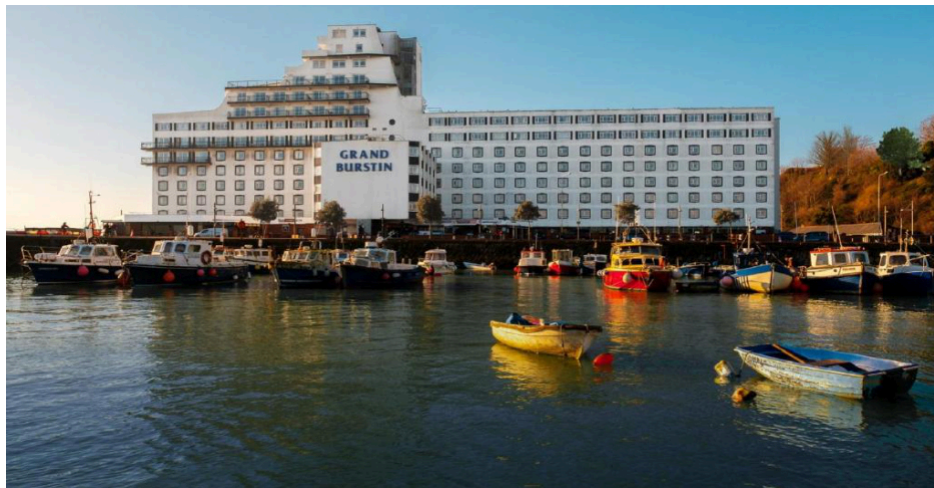


TWO ARRESTED AFTER BURSTIN INFERNO

Hundreds led to safety as 26 fire engines battle suspicious basement blaze at Folkestone landmark



26
fire engines

280
people evacuated

90
neighbours relocated

2
people Arrested

A major fire which tore through Folkestone's Grand Burstin Hotel in the early hours of Saturday morning is being treated as suspicious, after a huge emergency operation brought hundreds of people to safety and prevented a potential catastrophe on the town's seafloor.

At the height of the incident, Kent Fire and Rescue Service sent 26 fire engines, a height vehicle and specialist units to the Marine Parade hotel. Firefighters wearing breathing apparatus fought the blaze, believed to have started in the basement, while police, paramedics, council officers and volunteers worked through the night to evacuate guests, protect neighbouring residents and keep access routes clear.

Around 280 guests and staff left the 550-room hotel. Despite the scale and

intensity of the fire, Kent Fire and Rescue Service reported no fire-related injuries, an outcome that speaks volumes for the speed, courage and professionalism of the crews and everyone involved in the evacuation.

Those responders faced a dangerous and complex incident inside one of Folkestone's largest buildings, in darkness, with smoke spreading from the basement and fears later emerging over the strength of the structure. Their work continued long after the visible flames had been brought under control, with crews damping down and checking for hotspots into Sunday morning.

Arrests as inquiry continues

Kent Police said officers were called at about 1.20am on Saturday 19 September. A 38-year-old man and a

Continued on page 2

Another major blow for Hythe High Street as TG Jones prepares to close



More than 20 premises are now believed to be empty, while a further six businesses may not renew their leases—raising urgent questions over what Folkestone and Hythe District Council can do to reverse the decline

Hythe High Street has suffered another major blow after TG Jones confirmed that its prominent town-centre store will close next month.

The shop, which generations of residents will remember as WH Smith, is expected to shut for the final time on October 13. Large closing-down sale signs have already appeared in its windows.

Its loss will leave another sizeable hole in the heart of the town and add to mounting concern about the number of empty premises along what was once one of the

Continued on page 3

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21-year-old woman, both from the local area, were arrested on Sunday in connection with the fire. Both have since been released while inquiries continue.

The arrests do not establish guilt and police have not announced any charge. Detectives are continuing to investigate how the fire began and have appealed for witnesses and for CCTV or dashcam footage. The fire service said the incident is being treated as suspicious, while police said the blaze may have been caused deliberately.

Structural concerns added a second emergency later on Saturday. Safety inspectors feared the heat from the basement blaze may have weakened the hotel, prompting 90 residents of neighbouring Pavilion Court in Marine Terrace to leave their homes. They were placed with relatives or in alternative accommodation, with council housing officers providing welfare support.

An emergency prohibition notice has since been issued preventing entry to the Pavilion Court buildings. Both the flats and the hotel remain behind a secured perimeter while structural specialists carry out detailed examinations. Road closures and local diversions remain in force.



A remarkable community response

The emergency response extended far beyond the firefighters at the centre of the operation. Kent Police managed traffic and the cordon; South East Coast Ambulance Service and HART paramedics attended; East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service supported the operation; and Kent Fire and Rescue Service's Volunteer Response Team helped those caught up in the incident.

Folkestone and Hythe District Council opened a welfare centre at Three Hills Sports Park. The Salvation Army, Three Hills, Morrisons, council staff, local businesses and residents supplied practical help, food and hot drinks to displaced guests, residents and emergency crews.

Council chief executive Susan Priest said the emergency services, partner organisations and council staff had been 'a real credit to themselves' in exceptionally difficult circumstances. That praise is richly deserved. A fire on this scale, in a heavily occupied hotel beside residential buildings, could have ended in tragedy. Instead, hundreds were moved to safety through calm decisions, disciplined teamwork and

remarkable bravery.

From seafront showpiece to troubled landmark

The Burstin has dominated Folkestone Harbour for half a century, but its history reaches much further back. It occupies the site of the Royal Pavilion Hotel, built in 1843 and once one of the grand establishments serving travellers arriving by cross-Channel steamer. The old hotel was used during wartime and later fell into decline.

Businessman Motyl Burstin bought the site in the 1950s and pursued an ambitious vision of turning Folkestone into a major conference destination. The first section of the new hotel opened in the 1970s, designed by AT Bacon to resemble an ocean liner. Much of the remaining Royal Pavilion was demolished in the early 1980s as the Burstin expanded into the vast building familiar today, although parts of the Victorian hotel survived within the complex.

The result has always divided opinion. To generations of coach-party visitors it offered affordable breaks, harbour views, live entertainment and a base from which to explore Kent and the Continent. It has also provided local employment and has become an unmistakable part of the town's skyline. To many residents, however, its enormous white bulk has long appeared out of scale with the harbour and has come to symbolise missed opportunities on an otherwise regenerating seafront.

Britannia Hotels acquired the property in 2004. Its ownership brought repeated controversy. In 2013 the company was fined £160,000 and ordered to pay more than £40,000 in costs after admitting health and safety breaches linked to asbestos during refurbishment work at the Grand Burstin. The prosecution followed a failure to complete a full asbestos assessment before work began, putting workers and guests at risk of exposure.

The hotel's reputation suffered another blow in 2020 when undercover Which? investigators reported poor cleaning standards during the pandemic. In the consumer group's 2025 hotel survey, Britannia finished last among the large chains for the twelfth consecutive survey, with a customer at the Grand Burstin describing the hotel in damning terms. Britannia has previously said it seeks to provide safe accommodation and continually improve standards.

That troubled record forms part of the Burstin's story, but it should not overshadow what happened this weekend. Whatever views people hold about the hotel, hundreds of lives were placed at risk and hundreds of people needed help. The response demonstrated public service at its best - firefighters entering a hazardous building, police maintaining order, paramedics standing ready, council teams finding beds, and volunteers ensuring frightened people were not left alone.

Britannia Hotels has confirmed the Grand Burstin is closed. It said it was cooperating with the authorities and had established a dedicated email address for guests seeking belongings. The future of the building will depend first on the police and fire investigation and then on the findings of structural engineers.

For now, Folkestone owes an enormous debt of gratitude to every emergency worker, volunteer, council officer and community organisation involved. Their combined effort turned an inferno at one of the town's most contentious landmarks into an extraordinary rescue operation in which, remarkably, no fire-related injuries were reported.

Police appeal

Anyone with information, CCTV or dashcam footage should contact Kent Police on 01622 652006, quoting reference 46/155727/26. Footage can also be uploaded through the force's public portal. Information can be given anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.



district's busiest and most successful shopping streets.

Local estimates suggest that more than 20 businesses have now closed or left premises vacant in and around Hythe High Street. The Looker also understands that at least six more traders are considering not renewing their leases when they expire.

If those businesses leave, the effect on the town could be considerable.

Every closure means fewer reasons for people to visit, less passing trade for neighbouring shops and another darkened window that makes it harder to attract new investment.

TG Jones is closing the Hythe branch as part of a national restructuring programme involving up to 150 stores. The business took over most of WH Smith's traditional high-street estate last year, while WH Smith retained its shops at airports, railway stations and other travel locations.

The restructuring received court approval after the company faced extremely difficult trading conditions and a reported multimillion-pound financial shortfall.

A TG Jones spokesperson said the company's priority was supporting affected employees and thanked the Hythe team for its contribution.

The national difficulties facing the retailer cannot be blamed on Hythe alone. Weak consumer spending, rising employment costs, business rates, high rents and the continuing movement towards online shopping are affecting town centres across Britain.

But TG Jones is not a small unit tucked away in a side street. It occupies a substantial and highly visible High Street building—and finding a business capable of taking it over will be far from easy.

Any incoming retailer would face the cost of rent, business rates, utilities, insurance, staffing and stock before opening its doors. On top of that could come a very substantial bill for fitting out and adapting such a large shop.

Unless the landlord is prepared to offer attractive terms—or public-sector support can help reduce the initial risk—the likelihood of a new business quickly taking over the whole building appears remote.

That raises an important question: what can Folkestone and Hythe District Council do to encourage growth and bring new businesses into Hythe?

Business rates are largely governed by national rules and property values are determined by the Valuation Office Agency, meaning the district council cannot simply abolish every bill. However, local authorities do have powers to offer certain discretionary discounts and hardship relief.

Could FHDC establish a meaningful start-up relief scheme for businesses taking on long-term empty premises? Could it work with landlords to divide large units into smaller, more affordable shops? Could targeted grants be offered towards fitting-out costs, signage and accessibility improvements?

The council could also consider temporary “meanwhile use” agreements, allowing start-ups, artists, community organisations and independent traders to occupy empty units while permanent tenants are sought.

Parking must also be part of the debate. Shoppers frequently compare the cost and convenience of visiting a town centre with retail parks and supermarkets offering free parking. If councils want people to support their high streets, getting into town must be simple and affordable.

FHDC already promotes business-support initiatives, including its High Streets Connect programme, but the growing number of empty premises suggests that something much more ambitious may now be required.

Hythe still has enormous strengths: a loyal local population, independent shops, popular cafés and restaurants, historic character and thousands of visitors every year.

But those advantages cannot be taken for granted.

The closure of TG Jones must be treated as more than the loss of one national retailer. It should be a warning that without urgent action, Hythe could lose still more of the businesses that give the town its character and keep its local economy alive.

Residents and traders now deserve to hear a clear plan from FHDC—not merely for managing decline, but for attracting investment, supporting existing businesses and putting life back into empty shops.

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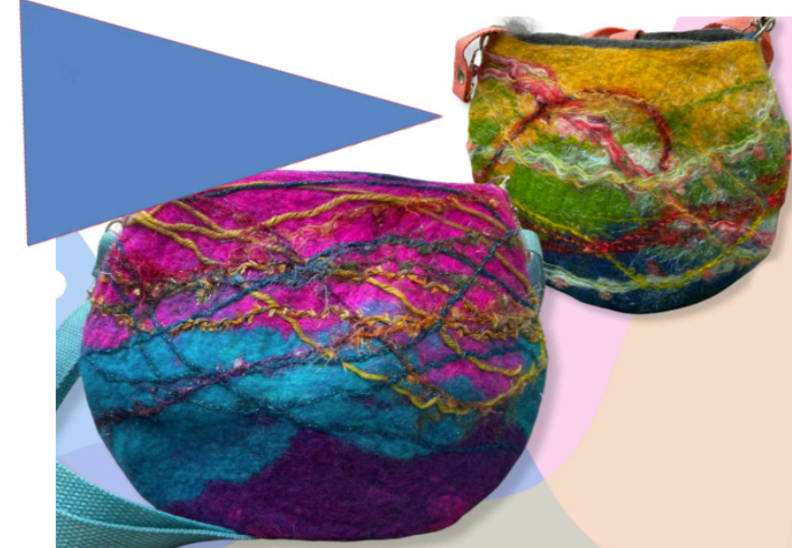
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Thursday	1 st October	11.00, 14.30, 19.15
Friday	2 nd October	11.00, 14.30, 19.15
Saturday	3 rd October	11.00, 14.30, 19.15
Sunday	4 th October	11.00, 14.30
Monday	5 th October	11.00, 14.30
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Editor's Word

David Wimble



The Burstin ... End of an Era?

It was desperately sad to wake last Saturday morning to the news that a major fire had broken out at the Grand Burstin Hotel in Folkestone.

The fact that nobody was seriously hurt is quite remarkable. We must pay tribute to the emergency services, whose swift and professional response ensured that everyone was safely evacuated despite the ferocity of the blaze.

It is testament to the skill and courage of Kent Fire and Rescue Service firefighters, working alongside the South East Coast Ambulance Service and Kent Police, that a far greater disaster was avoided. Their coordinated response under extremely difficult conditions deserves our sincere gratitude.

Attention must now turn to assessing the full extent of the damage to a building with which local residents have long enjoyed something of a love-hate relationship.

The Burstin has certainly received a mixed reception

over the years, but it has also been part of Folkestone's story for generations.

I remember staying there when I was in my early twenties and regularly travelled into Folkestone for evenings at clubs such as Browns and Tofts. Rooms at the Burstin were so inexpensive that it was often easier and sometimes cheaper to stay overnight than to arrange a taxi home.

In later years, particularly after Britannia Hotels took over its operation, the Burstin became the subject of considerable criticism. A perceived lack of investment took its toll, and the hotel repeatedly found itself appearing near the bottom of national hotel rankings. For a time, it gained the unenviable reputation of being described as one of the worst hotels in Britain.

I understand that the Burstin was not to everybody's taste. However, it would be wrong to allow those headlines to erase the many happy memories created within its walls.

There were countless evenings in the ballroom, now reportedly destroyed, when thousands of Wallace Arnold coach-tour passengers enjoyed games of bingo, danced to the resident band or took part in one of the hotel's popular themed breaks.

Country and western weekends, line dancing, soul events and many other forms of entertainment brought visitors to Folkestone from across the country. For many people, the Burstin represented an affordable holiday by the sea and a chance to enjoy themselves with friends.

The hotel's unusual design, often compared to an ocean liner overlooking the harbour, became an unmistakable part of Folkestone's skyline. You might not have considered it beautiful, but you certainly could not ignore it.

As I write, there have been reports of arrests on suspicion of arson. Hotspots have also reportedly reignited, while serious questions remain about the integrity of the building's structure. There is now a very real possibility that the damage could be beyond realistic or economical repair and that demolition may ultimately be required.

If that happens, Folkestone will lose another of its familiar landmarks.

Just as the town was never quite the same after the disappearance of the old switchback roller coaster and the pier, the harbour landscape would undoubtedly feel very different without the Burstin. So, whatever your personal opinion of the hotel, let us hope this is not the complete end of an era.

But if the Grand Burstin cannot be saved, then Folkestone deserves something ambitious in its place a new statement building worthy of its prominent harbour location and capable of becoming a landmark for future generations.

The Burstin may have divided opinion, but its disappearance would leave a very large space in more ways than one.

David

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Leas Lift back on track as restored carriages return to Folkestone



One step closer one of the carriages is hoisted back into position

Folkestone's historic Leas Lift has taken a major step towards reopening after its two refurbished carriages were lifted back onto their tracks.

The return marks a significant milestone in the restoration of the much-loved landmark, which connects the town's seafront with the Leas promenade above. The charity behind the project is working towards welcoming passengers back in spring 2027.

Removed in February 2025, the carriages have undergone an extensive rebuild to improve safety, accessibility and durability while preserving their familiar appearance.

The work proved more complicated than originally hoped. Engineers had planned to restore the timber tops, but detailed inspections revealed they were beyond repair and unsafe to reinstate.

The rebuild includes hardwood window frames within a steel structure, new floors and ceilings, and updated controls and intercom equipment. Original seats have been reused, with some adapted to fold away to create more room for wheelchair users and pushchairs. Source: Leas Lift charity

Cathy Beare, chair of trustees of the Folkestone Leas Lift Company Charity, welcomed the carriages' return: "Seeing the carriages return to Folkestone is a hugely significant moment," she said. "They are such an important part of the Lift's identity and have been carefully rebuilt so they can continue to be enjoyed by future generations. It's wonderful



12 months ago the lift looking like a building site, scaffolding has now gone and one step closer to opening



to see another major piece of this historic landmark back where it belongs."

Each carriage can accommodate approximately 12 passengers. Their restoration received financial support from the Rochester Bridge Trust.

Although the coaches are now back in position, further work is needed before the lift can carry passengers again. The next stage will involve installing a new sheave wheel, followed by further mechanical work, testing and commissioning.

First opened in 1885, the Grade II* listed funicular is a rare surviving example of Victorian engineering. Once restored, it will be one of only three remaining water-balanced lifts in the country.

For residents and visitors awaiting its return, the sight of the carriages back on the tracks offers a visible sign that the restoration is moving forward — and that a new chapter for one of Folkestone's best-known landmarks is drawing closer.

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Work pauses on Hythe seafront development as contracts are finalised



Developer behind The Residence insists the halt is temporary and says the luxury apartment scheme will become a landmark for the town

Construction work has stopped at a major luxury apartment development on Hythe seafront, although the company behind the project insists the interruption will be brief.

The former Pensand House has remained hidden behind white scaffolding sheeting for almost a year while Chelsea Portfolio Ltd prepares to transform the ageing block into a high-end residential development known as The Residence.

Plans for the building include 32 luxury apartments and six penthouses featuring floor-to-ceiling glass. However, the apparent lack of activity at the site has recently attracted attention from residents, beachgoers and Hythe town councillors.

Speaking during a meeting of Hythe Town Council's planning committee, Cllr Ross Carter referred to the stalled development while raising concerns about separate proposals for 291 apartments at Imperial Gardens.

He said: "I don't see that there is a huge demand for another 291 luxury apartments. Pensand House, The Residence, has not sold, and the building works have stopped. I just can't see how any developer can justify building another large number of blocks."

The developers have rejected suggestions that the project is in difficulty, saying the pause has been caused by negotiations over prices and the main construction contract.

Sanjay Sharma, a director of Chelsea Portfolio Ltd, said the company was finalising budget prices and a contract with construction firm P.A. Hollingworth.

He said discussions were taking place daily and that everyone involved was working to get the main construction phase started as soon as possible.

Mr Sharma said: "The building is stripped, the roof is off and it is ready for work to begin. The sooner the better for us, as the scaffold hire is costing us a huge amount every month."

The developer previously maintained that there had been no pause in the project and suggested the scheme would be completed during the summer. Mr Sharma has now described the interruption as a "brief pause" while the remaining contracts are agreed.

He said Chelsea Portfolio Ltd remained committed to completing what it believes will be a landmark development that will benefit Hythe.

According to the company, the enabling and internal strip-out work was completed in July after beginning towards the end of last year. Once the main building contract has been signed and construction resumes, the remaining work is expected to take approximately 13 months.

The Residence forms the second phase of a wider redevelopment of the site.

The first phase, involving Marlborough Court at the rear of Pensand House, has already been completed. Residents were required to leave that building in 2023 before it was converted into 20 flats overlooking South Road Recreation Ground and St Leonard's Church.

The redevelopment has been controversial since it was first announced, particularly because of concerns about the loss of more affordable rented homes and the growing cost of housing in Hythe.

Cllr Stephen Bailey previously warned that the new apartments were likely to be beyond the financial reach of many local residents.

He said house prices in the town were becoming "quite scary" and argued that the development did little to address the need for affordable housing.

The second phase was also delayed by a legal dispute involving the final family remaining at Pensand House.

The family resisted eviction through the courts after raising concerns about the condition of their home. They told The Looker last November that living in the building had become "absolute hell" because of disrepair.

Folkestone and Hythe District Council subsequently issued improvement notices. An out-of-court settlement was later reached, allowing the redevelopment to proceed.

The latest interruption comes as debate continues over the scale and type of new housing being proposed along Hythe's seafront.

Although the developer insists The Residence will be completed, the visible pause has prompted questions about the strength of the local market for premium apartments—particularly as further major developments are being considered.

For now, the scaffolding remains in place and the building awaits the start of its principal construction phase.

Chelsea Portfolio Ltd says the pause is temporary, the project remains fully alive and work will restart once prices and contracts have been finalised.

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Mark Hix's Roast Chicken With Garlic Sauce

Introduction

Culinary legend Mark Hix is a champion for British food and produce. Here, he elevates the humble roast chicken to something really special.

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C. Season the chicken inside and out. Put the herbs into the cavity. Rub butter all over the breast and legs.
2. For the stuffing, melt the butter in a pan. Add the onion, livers and thyme, season and cook over a medium heat for two to three minutes. Off the heat, mix in the breadcrumbs, parsley and seasoning. Either use to stuff your bird or cook separately in an ovenproof dish or wrapped in foil for the last 30-40 minutes' cooking time.
3. Put the chicken in a large roasting tin, wrap the garlic bulbs for the sauce in foil and bake alongside the chicken (remove them after an hour and leave to cool, so you can make the sauce later).
4. Baste the chicken regularly, adding the livers to the roasting tin for the last six minutes or so. Test the chicken after 75 minutes by inserting a skewer into the thickest part of the



- thigh. The juices should run clear, if not roast for a little longer. Lift the chicken on to a warmed platter and rest in a warm place for 15 minutes.
5. Unwrap the cooled roast garlic, then peel away any tough outer skin. Put the garlic in a blender with the parsley, mustard, warm duck fat (or chicken pan juices) and breadcrumbs and blend until smooth. Add enough milk to give the sauce a thick pouring consistency and season with salt and pepper to taste.
 6. Sprinkle the cooked chicken with chopped parsley and serve with the roast livers, stuffing and garlic sauce.



Ingredients

Serves 4

- 1 free-range chicken, 1.5kg, with livers
- A few sprigs each of thyme and rosemary
- A few generous knobs of butter

For the stuffing

- 60g butter
- 1 medium onion, peeled and finely chopped
- 100g chicken livers, chopped
- 2 tsp thyme leaves
- 80-100g fresh white breadcrumbs
- 2 tbsp chopped parsley (and a little extra for serving)

For the garlic sauce

- 4 heads new-season garlic
- A few sprigs of curly parsley
- ½ tbsp Dijon mustard, or more to taste
- 2-3 tbsp duck fat, warmed (or pan juices from a roast chicken)
- 70g fresh white breadcrumbs
- A little milk to mix

New Tactics, New Threat: Migrant Boat Reaches Folkestone Undetected



Five people reportedly fled after landing as concerns grow that smugglers may be turning to faster powerboats

People smugglers appear to be changing tactics once again after a small vessel carrying migrants crossed the Channel and reached the Folkestone coast without being intercepted.

Five people are understood to have run from the vessel shortly after it landed near East Cliff on Monday morning. Police were called to the area and, following searches, five individuals were detained and handed over to Border Security Command officers.

The incident raises serious questions about how the boat managed to cross one of the most closely monitored stretches of water in the world and reach the Kent shoreline without being stopped.

It was the first officially recorded migrant landing on the Kent coast without an escort since September 2025. Most migrant boats are detected while still in the Channel, with those on board subsequently collected and brought ashore by Border Security Command or, where lives are at risk, the RNLI.

However, this latest arrival may represent a potentially significant change in the methods being used by criminal gangs. There are growing concerns that smugglers are moving beyond the large, heavily overloaded inflatable dinghies that have become a familiar sight in the Channel. Smaller and potentially faster motorboats or leisure craft could prove more difficult to detect and intercept, particularly if they are carrying only a handful of people.

There are also suspicions that some of the vessels being used may have been stolen. If confirmed, the use of stolen powerboats would open a troubling new front in the battle against the smuggling gangs.

A fast powerboat carrying four or five people has a very different profile from a large inflatable vessel carrying 50, 100 or even 200 passengers. It could travel more quickly, take a less predictable route and potentially land at one of the numerous beaches, coves or small harbours along the south coast.

In the Folkestone incident, Kent Police said officers were alerted by the Coastguard at 9.26am on Monday to an incident involving a vessel in the Channel.

A police spokesperson said: "Patrols attended and five people were detained and passed to Border Security Command officers."

The Home Office described it as an "isolated and rare incident" and said officers had responded quickly. An investigation is now under way.

However, the fact that those on board were reportedly able to reach land and initially run from the scene will be deeply concerning to residents.

It also raises an obvious question: had the landing not been witnessed or reported, would the authorities have known that the vessel had arrived at all?

Defence minister Luke Pollard insisted the country's borders remained secure, telling LBC: "Our borders are secure, but we want to make them stronger."

He said the Government was investigating how the vessel had managed to get through, adding that all those on board had eventually been detained.

But describing the border as secure will offer little reassurance when a boat has apparently crossed the Channel, reached the Kent coast and discharged its passengers without being intercepted.

Although the number of Channel arrivals recorded so far this year is reportedly lower than during the same period last year, criminal gangs have repeatedly shown that they can adapt their tactics.

When supplies of conventional dinghies have been disrupted, the gangs have found alternative manufacturers and delivery routes. When police increased patrols around the main beaches in northern France, smugglers began launching from more distant locations and using so-called "taxi boats" to collect passengers from different points along the coastline.

This year has also seen the emergence of dangerously overcrowded "mega-dinghies", including one vessel reportedly carrying 230 people.

The possibility that gangs could now be using stolen or illegally obtained powerboats cannot be dismissed. Harbour masters, marina operators and private boat owners on both sides of the Channel may need to be placed on heightened alert, while unexplained thefts of small motorboats and outboard engines must be investigated quickly and shared with border agencies.

There is also a wider security issue. Anyone using an unidentified vessel to land secretly on the British coastline presents a potential threat, regardless of whether those aboard intend to claim asylum. Border security depends not simply upon finding people after they have arrived, but knowing who is entering the country, where they landed and what they may have brought with them.

The five people involved in Monday's incident were found and detained. On this occasion, the system eventually caught up with them.

But the vessel had already reached the beach and its passengers had reportedly dispersed before officers arrived. That cannot be described as a successful interception. If smugglers have begun experimenting with smaller, faster and possibly stolen powerboats, the Government must act before an isolated incident becomes an established new route into Britain.



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Looking Back

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



1 year ago

At the National Television Awards, Gary Lineker breaks Ant & Dec's 23-year winning streak by clinching the Best TV Presenter award.

5 years ago

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (also known as furloughing), which supported millions of jobs during the pandemic, officially ends.

It's estimated that the scheme cost the UK government £70billion in total.

10 years ago

The Bank of England introduces its first polymer £5 note, which is

water- and rip-proof! Meanwhile, the UK experiences its hottest September day since 1911 as temperatures reach 34.4 degrees in Kent.

15 years ago

A tragic accident occurs at the Gleision Colliery in the Swansea valley, as an explosion in a drift mine claims the lives of four miners.

20 years ago

Top Gear host Richard Hammond suffers a serious brain injury after crashing a jet-powered Vampire dragster at Elvington Airfield near York, while filming for the show. Meanwhile, YouTube is launched.

25 years ago

Rap and hip-hop fans the world over are shocked by the drive-by shooting of rapper Tupac Shakur in Las Vegas.

50 years ago

ABBA's iconic hit Dancing Queen tops the UK charts. It will go on to sell over four million copies worldwide.

100 years ago

Over a million coal miners are locked out by pit owners demanding wage cuts and longer hours. In solidarity, the Trades Union Congress (TUC) called Britain's first and only General Strike.

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Wednesday 30th September

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 1st October

Middlemarsh WI, St. Mary's Bay Village Hall, 9.45 a.m. (1st Thur)
Lydd Meeting Point, Hardy Hall, 10 a.m.
Dance Moves with Chris, St. Mary's Bay Village Hall, 10.15 a.m.
Craft "N" Laughs, St. Peter's Hall, Greatstone, 2 p.m.
Dymchurch Short Mat Bowls, Village Hall, 6 p.m.

Friday 2nd October

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 3rd October

Open Morning, Old School Trust, New Romney, 10 a.m. (1st & 3rd Sat)
Coffee Morning, Newchurch Church, 10.30 a.m. (1st Sat)

Monday 5th October

Dymchurch Meeting Point, Village Hall, 10 a.m.
Dance Moves, Burton Hall off Stade Street, Hythe, 11 a.m.
The Games Club, St. Peter's Hall, Greatstone, 2 p.m.

Tuesday 6th October

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

Greatstone Meeting Point, St. Peter's Hall, 10 a.m. (1st & 3rd Tue)

Dance Moves, Burton Hall off Stade Street, Hythe, 10.30 a.m.

Dymchurch Art Society, Village Hall, 1 p.m.
Short Mat Bowling, St. Mary's Bay Village Hall, 2 p.m.
Foodbank, New Romney Community Church, 4 p.m.
Dymchurch Short Mat Bowls, Village Hall, 6 p.m.

Wednesday 7th October

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 8th October

Lydd Meeting Point, Hardy Hall, 10 a.m.
Dymchurch WI, Masonic Hall, 10 a.m. (2nd Thurs)
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 9th October

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 10th October

Coffee Morning & Book Sale, St. Mary-in-the-Marsh Church, 10 a.m. (2nd Sat)
Shepway Brass Academy Concert, St. Nicholas Church, New Romney, 3 p.m.

Piers Morgan charmed by Lympne Castle after night in 'haunted' room



Piers Morgan has praised Lympne Castle after spending the night in one of its reportedly haunted rooms before filming a royal discussion programme at the historic venue.

The broadcaster joined presenters Katie Nicholl and Jo Elvin for an episode of The Royals Uncensored, recorded at the Grade I-listed castle near Hythe.

Despite the room's ghostly reputation, Morgan said he had "slept like a baby" and was clearly taken with his surroundings.

The programme, which had attracted almost 500,000 YouTube views at the time of reporting, featured discussion of the royal family before castle owner Dr Ann Kaplan Mulholland joined the panel.

Morgan praised the castle's whimsical character and decorative touches, taking particular interest in its murals. He said Dr Mulholland had told him the artist responsible had also worked on murals in the Oval Office.

There was also a lighter moment when attention turned to the owner's striking outfit, which featured six decorative hands.

As the presenters asked about her habit of wearing a tiara,

Morgan joked that the unusual additions to her shoulders were surely the more obvious talking point.

Dr Mulholland, who bought Lympne Castle with her husband Stephen for £5.5 million in 2023, spoke about the considerable work involved in looking after the historic property.

She told the panel that buying the castle had cost less than purchasing an apartment in London's Mayfair, although maintaining it was a substantial undertaking.

"I bought myself a job, this is a job," she said. Dr Mulholland explained that the building's history remained central to decisions about its interiors and furnishings.

The appearance also gave her an opportunity to raise the castle's parking difficulties. She appealed to Folkestone and Hythe District Council over proposals for a 200-space car park intended to support weddings and other events.

The council rejected the plans in July following objections from villagers.

Elsewhere, the episode covered King Charles's clarification of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle's status as non-working royals, reports of a new Princess Diana memoir and Prince George's education.

For the castle, however, it was Morgan's enthusiastic verdict — and apparently undisturbed night's sleep — that provided the local talking point.

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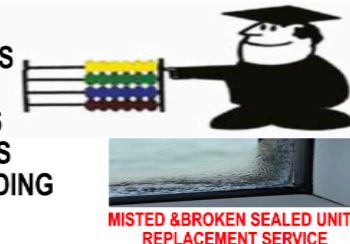
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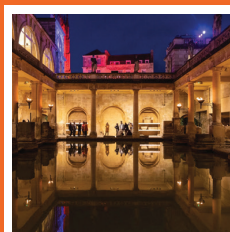
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AI: useful tool or runaway train?

By David Wimble



I was one of the early people to embrace AI. My father-in-law had been following it for about six years before I finally took the plunge and tried the free version of ChatGPT. I couldn't believe how useful it was. Within a couple of weeks, I had signed up for the paid service.

For me, the reason was personal. I'm dyslexic. People used to complain about the spelling and grammar when I wrote The Looker. Putting the paper together could take me eight days. If I went on holiday, the laptop came with me because there was no other way to get everything finished.

Now I can do it in two days.

Some people call that cheating. Fine. They're welcome to spend six extra days checking commas. The stories, information and decisions are still mine. AI helps me get them onto the page. Like most tools, you get out what you put in: give it vague instructions and you get vague results. Give it detail, examples and a clear sense of your style, and it becomes far more useful.

I have watched its progress over the last few months with a mixture of admiration and disbelief. It can work at astonishing speed, including helping me spot errors. But I always check its output. We have all seen AI videos and posts that are not just wrong but spectacularly wrong. Confidence is no substitute for accuracy, whether it comes from a person or a computer.

Chatbots are another example. There was a time when you knew instantly that you were talking to one. Now they can be so convincing that it's difficult to tell. So everything is going brilliantly, then?

Well, perhaps we should take a breath.

Governments know that cyberattacks are a serious threat. At the same time, we seem determined to put more of our businesses and daily lives into connected systems. We're told we must build more data centres or Britain will fall behind. Kent already has data centres. Before we rush to welcome every new proposal, I want to know who benefits locally, how much power and

water it needs, and what happens when the systems it supports go down.

Look at the cyberattack on Jaguar Land Rover. You might say: "So what? I don't own a Jag or a Land Rover." But modern factories rely on parts arriving precisely when they need them. It's called "just in time". Very efficient, right up until everything stops.

A local Kent logistics business bringing parts into that supply chain from all over Europe, employing around 200 people, faced financial disruption running into millions, as I understand it. The work stopped; the bills didn't. Drivers still needed paying. Lorry leases still had to be met. One attack on another company's systems came close to putting local jobs at risk. Those employees could be your friends or neighbours. Suddenly, a cyberattack somewhere else doesn't seem quite so remote.

To be clear, that was a cyberattack, not an AI takeover. My point is about dependence. We build systems around the assumption that the technology will always be there. Then one failure shows how many people and businesses are tied to it.

And AI raises another question: what happens to work?

I know from my own experience that it can make one person dramatically more productive. That's wonderful when it helps someone with dyslexia write a newspaper. But what happens when a company decides it can do the work of ten people with five? We keep hearing about efficiency. We hear rather less about what happens to the other five.

Those workers spend their wages in local shops. They pay tax and National Insurance. If large numbers of jobs disappear, who pays for the benefits and public services people need? Will the companies making the savings contribute more, or will the bill land with everyone else? I'd like to hear a serious answer before we simply applaud every announcement about doing more with fewer staff.

Then there are the questions that sound like science fiction until you consider how much of life is already online. If banking or communications become heavily dependent on automated systems, how do we make sure people remain in control? What backup do we have if an AI system makes a damaging decision, or a cyberattack takes a vital service offline? Could we still run the essentials without it? I don't want to wait until the internet or banking fails to discover the answer.

I use AI every day. It has made a real difference to my life, and I'm not asking people to throw it away. I am asking whether we should slow the rush long enough to put safeguards in place, protect jobs and make sure humans can still take charge when things go wrong.

Look how far AI has come in five years. Where will we be in ten? Are we steering this train, or just enjoying the ride while it picks up speed?

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

Dymchurch's historic defence tower opens as seaside holiday home



A landmark built to defend Dymchurch against Napoleon's forces has opened to holidaymakers after a five-year transformation into a seaside holiday home.

Martello Tower 25, which has stood on the seafront since 1806, now sleeps up to 10 guests, offering visitors a chance to stay inside one of the village's most recognisable buildings.

The Grade II-listed tower has been converted by Gary Mayatt, whose renovation retained its thick masonry walls and a staircase hidden within the outer wall.



Inside are four king-size bedrooms, five shower rooms and a double sofa bed. An open-plan kitchen, dining and living area occupies the upper floor, with views across the Channel.

The change marks a new chapter for a building originally constructed alongside neighbouring Tower 24 to protect the Marshland Sluice, an important part of Romney Marsh's drainage system.

Both formed part of a chain of coastal towers built across Kent and East Sussex amid fears of a French invasion. That invasion never materialised, but the towers became enduring features of the coastline.

Tower 25 later lost its military role and was, at one stage, used as a café. By the 21st century, its interior was unused and in poor condition, described in Historic England's listing as "gutted".

It was put up for auction in 2017,



with planning permission subsequently granted for conversion into a four-storey holiday property.



Mr Mayatt said adapting a military fort into modern accommodation had presented challenges throughout the project. "Martello 25 has been a real passion project for us and getting to this point has taken five years of hard work," he said.

When we first took it on, I don't think we fully appreciated just how much would be involved in bringing a building like this back to life. He said the intention had been to respect the building's history while giving it a practical future. "The aim was never to take away what made the tower special,



but to give it a new life while respecting its history and character."

The property is being managed by independent Kent company The Holiday Cottage Collection.

Director Alexandra Roberts said bookings had come from people with longstanding connections to Dymchurch who had wondered what lay behind the tower's walls.

"We've already taken bookings from guests who have been coming to Dymchurch for years and have told us they've walked past it countless times wondering what was inside," she said. "Now they can actually stay in it."



The pet-friendly accommodation sits beside Dymchurch's sandy beach, close to the village's cafés, amusements and the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway.

It also offers a base for exploring Hythe, the Royal Military Canal, Romney Marsh and Dungeness.

Next door, Tower 24 has been restored to reflect its original military purpose, allowing visitors to see two different approaches to preserving the coast's defensive heritage.

For Tower 25, the contrast is striking: a fortress built to repel arrivals from across the sea is welcoming guests to spend the night within its historic walls, 220 years after construction.

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The garden was a delight to walk round, and it was so good to see so many plants and shrubs in bloom, after such a dry summer. After the raffle had been drawn. Sharon Bryant (our Chairman) presented our President with a hamper. This was in gratitude for giving us such a lovely afternoon, and



to say a big thank you for all the extra ideas and demonstrations she gives to us, to help us with our flower arranging.

Dates for the Diary

- 1. Workshop "Its Nearly Halloween" 14th October
- 2. A Christmas Demonstration by Helen Hare 11th November

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110-home plan puts focus on New Romney's capacity

Campaigners are urging residents to lodge their own planning representations as an outline application for land north of Cockreed Lane enters public consultation.

REPORT Based on the public planning file and information supplied by Cockreed Lane Action Group



The agricultural site seen from Cockreed Lane. Picture: Design and Access Statement / planning application

A PROPOSAL for up to 110 homes on farmland north of Cockreed Lane has placed the pace and location of housing growth in New Romney back at the centre of public debate.

Folkestone & Hythe District Council's live planning register describes application 26/1476/FH as an outline scheme for up to 110 dwellings, public open space, landscaping and associated works. All matters are reserved for later consideration except the means of access into the site.

The application was received on 8 September and validated on 14 September. At the time of publication it remained under consultation, with no decision recorded. The register names St Mary in the Marsh as the parish and Romney Marsh as the ward.

What is an outline application?

Outline permission establishes whether the broad principle of development is acceptable. Detailed matters can be reserved for a later application. In this case, access is the element being put forward for consideration now; appearance, landscaping, layout and scale are listed as reserved matters.

The applicant's Design and Access Statement says the site covers about 4.713 hectares of agricultural land. Its illustrative material shows a mixture of homes, open space, pedestrian routes, landscaping, drainage features and a single vehicular access from Cockreed Lane.

Those drawings are illustrative rather than a final house-by-house approval. If outline permission were granted, reserved-matters submissions would normally provide the detailed design before construction could proceed.

Why campaigners want individual responses

Cockreed Lane Action Group (CLAG) is urging residents not to rely on a petition or assume that other objections will be enough. Planning authorities decide applications against policy and other material planning considerations; they do not determine them simply by counting supporters and objectors.

That means a concise, relevant representation can carry more weight than a long list of signatures without planning reasons. Residents can describe direct knowledge of road conditions, surface water, sewer capacity, pedestrian safety, wildlife, local services or the character of the area, provided the comments are accurate and connected to the proposal.

CLAG says the scheme should not be considered in isolation from homes already built, approved, under construction or proposed around New Romney and the wider Marsh. Its central argument is that the cumulative demand on roads, drainage, utilities, healthcare, education and public transport should be assessed alongside housing numbers.

The applicant's case

The submitted Design and Access Statement presents the site as a logical extension to New Romney and says the proposals would include a range of house sizes and tenures, a play area, connected walking and cycling routes and green space. It also refers to a target of at least 10 per cent biodiversity net gain through new habitats and the retention of existing features.

The planning authority must test those claims against development-plan policy, technical evidence and consultation responses. Documents on the public file include assessments covering transport, flood risk, foul and surface-water drainage, ecology, landscape, noise, utilities, health and air quality.

What the council will have to weigh



Applicant's illustrative masterplan. It is not a final detailed layout. Source: public planning file

Infrastructure and cumulative impact

The strongest representations will identify a planning impact and explain it with local evidence. Traffic generation, access on to Cockreed Lane, road capacity, parking, pedestrian and cycle safety can all be material where they relate directly to the development.

Flood risk, surface-water management, sewer capacity and water supply are also capable of being material. The submitted file contains flood-risk, surface-water and foul-drainage reports, and statutory consultees have begun lodging responses. Residents may comment on the evidence, but allegations should not be stated as fact unless they can be supported.

CLAG has also highlighted concern about holding, attenuation or pumping infrastructure. The relevant questions include capacity, siting, maintenance and emergency arrangements, as well as potential noise, odour, overflow or pollution. These are matters for technical assessment rather than assumption.

Pressure on GP services, dentists, schools and public transport can be raised where a representation explains the likely effect and the evidence for it. Planning officers will also consider whether any mitigation or developer contribution is necessary, lawful and directly related to the scheme.

Countryside, ecology and character

The permanent loss of agricultural land, the effect on the countryside setting and the relationship between the site and nearby settlements are among the landscape issues raised by the campaign. Ecological questions include habitats, watercourses, hedgerows, protected species and whether the claimed biodiversity gain can be delivered and maintained.

Heritage and visual effects may also be material, but they should be tied to identified assets, views or landscape character. General dislike of development, the identity of the applicant, private boundary disputes and possible effects on property values are not normally reasons on which a planning application can be refused.

Housing need is part of the balance

Housing need does not automatically make every site suitable, but neither does the fact that land is greenfield automatically decide an application. The council must apply the development plan and national policy, assess the site's planning status and weigh benefits against harms.

CLAG argues that brownfield land, empty homes, underused buildings and better-connected locations should be examined before agricultural land is developed. The applicant argues that the land is a sustainable and deliverable location. That disagreement will be tested through the planning process.

A representation is most useful when it states clearly whether the writer supports or objects, identifies the relevant planning reasons and gives concise evidence. Separate, genuinely personal submissions can show how an issue is experienced across the community without resorting to copied slogans.

THE APPLICATION

Reference
26/1476/FH
Proposal
Up to 110 homes with public open space, landscaping and associated works.
Status
Under consultation when checked on 23 September 2026.
Official deadline shown
12 October 2026. Check the live register for any change.
Decision target shown
14 December 2026.

HAVE YOUR SAY

A practical guide to a relevant response

1. Read the application
Search the council planning portal for 26/1476/FH. Look at the description, plans and supporting reports before commenting.
2. Make it personal and factual
State clearly whether you object or support. Explain the planning impacts that concern you and add brief first-hand evidence where you have it.
3. Include your details
Give your full name and home address, quote the application reference and sign and date a paper letter. Anonymous comments cannot normally be taken into account.
Submit online
Scan the code or use the council portal.



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planning@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk
POST
Chief Planning Officer
FHDC, Civic Centre
Folkestone CT20 2QY

FREE SUPPORT WORKSHOP
Thu 8 Oct, 3.30pm-7pm | Scout Hall
Church Lane, New Romney TN28 8ER

Sources: FHDC live planning register and submitted documents, checked 23 September 2026; campaign information supplied by CLAG.



Marsh Memories

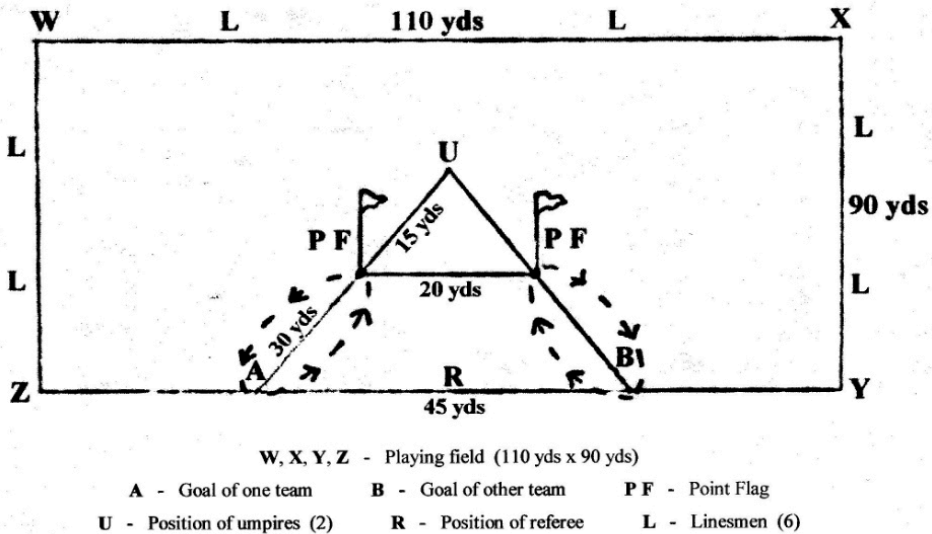
Compiled by John Wimble

GOAL-RUNNING

This sport was last played on the Marsh about seventy years ago and the ancient game, peculiar to Kent and East Sussex, was first played in the 18th Century. There is a report from 1768 of a match at Stodmarsh between the gentlemen of Canterbury and the gentlemen of the Isle of Thanet. 150 years ago, there is a mention of a game between Ashford and Kennington which attracted 3,000 spectators. It became popular in the late 19th century, and its heyday was in the early 20th century when virtually every town and village had a team and there were numerous local leagues. The game became so popular that coaches were hired to transport players and supporters to away matches. Goal Running was normally, but not always, played in bare feet and was based on the simple game of 'Tag', but additional rules made it quite complicated. Usually, around fifteen players formed a team but there was no hard and fast rule regarding numbers. Nor need each side necessarily have equal numbers. Games could last from about 40 minutes to over an hour, so players needed to be fit and there was considerable skill involved. The play was usually in periods of 20 minutes each with a five-minute interval in between. Each team had a large flag that was set up and unfurled near the goal, and they each had a distinctive uniform. The opposing teams were lined up along the boundary line ZA and BY and at a given signal, one man started from each end of the points A and B and ran along the inside of the sides of the triangle towards his own point flag PF. The aim of each man was either to touch one of the opposing team or to run around his opponents point flag. If a player touched an opponent, a "stroke" was scored and if he succeeded in running round his opponents point flag and returned to his own goal, he gained a point for his side. Immediately after the first man had started to run, he was followed by another, and then another, and so on as to form a never-ending succession of

runners who ran round and round in the direction as shown by the arrows. The idea was to keep the point flag well protected by a constant succession of men running near this point. When a player scored a "stroke" he 'whooped' and if the "stroke" was allowed, all play ceased and the players would return to their respective goals and re-start on a given signal by the referee. The only penalty in the game was that the "stroke" went to the opposing side if a player 'whooped' without actually touching his opponent. The game normally needed a referee, two umpires and up to six linesmen. Its beauty was that it required no special equipment or pitch - any level playing field would do. Most of the local villages had teams and the New Romney team used to travel regularly to all parts of the county and also to East Sussex. There was also a local ladies team which played matches from time to time. In the 1940s and 1950s, the President of the New Romney Club was 'Jackie' Wiles, Chairman was Bill Souten, Secretary was Harold Kirkland, Treasurer was Joe Tye and Captain was Bill Gillham. The sport was revived for a few years after World War Two, with women's teams as well as men's. Matches were played on the Sports Field in Station Road on a Saturday evening during the summer months and after the game, everyone retired to one of the local public houses. There was also great rivalry in the matches against Lydd and Dymchurch, especially at Romney Revels and Lydd Club Day. Goal Running Socials were regularly held in the Ship Hotel and the Assembly Rooms in New Romney. I remember playing the game when I was young although all ages took part in the sport. There was generally a large crowd following the match - the visiting teams also brought several supporters.

However, as a spectator sport, it could not compete with more sophisticated games like football and cricket and with more people owning a motor car and travelling further afield on a Saturday evening, it soon faded from popularity and by the end of the 1950s it had disappeared altogether.



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CATAPULT WARNING AFTER TEENAGERS STOPPED IN LYDD



Parents urged to act as growing misuse puts people, pets and wildlife at risk

A catapult seized after three teenage boys were stopped and searched in Lydd has brought a growing concern directly onto Romney Marsh's streets.

Small enough to slip into a pocket, a powerful catapult can inflict devastating injuries. Used to fire hard projectiles at living targets, it can become a lethal weapon. The consequences can be permanent—and animals have already paid with their lives.

Steve Putnam reported that he attended following information from a member of the public.

"We were alerted by a member of the public today about some youths in possession of a catapult, this was in Lydd," he said.

"I attended the area and located three teenage males whereby I carried out a 'stop search' on them all under Section 1 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act and located a catapult which was seized."

His account does not report an attack, injuries or criminal charges against the teenagers. However, the seizure prompted a direct warning to families.

"Parents/Guardians please take note of the attached poster in relation to the carrying of a catapult in public and advise your children if you suspect they might have access to one," he added.

The wider concern is supported by reports of increasing catapult misuse. The Country Land and Business Association says catapult-related wildlife crime has risen in recent years, with social media trends contributing to the

problem. It identifies younger offenders as a particular concern and the South East as a hotspot. CLA report

Swans, geese and ducks are among the animals targeted. Other victims include squirrels and pet cats. For those animals, a projectile can mean a prolonged, painful death or injuries requiring urgent veterinary treatment.

The danger extends to people. Kent Police has highlighted enforcement against catapults being used to harm people and wildlife or cause criminal damage. A projectile fired towards a pedestrian, vehicle or window can turn reckless behaviour into an emergency. Kent Police crackdown

There is an important legal distinction: owning or carrying a catapult is not automatically an offence. But a catapult carried with the intention of injuring someone can constitute an offensive weapon. Carrying an offensive weapon in public without lawful authority or reasonable excuse is a criminal offence. Crown Prosecution Service guidance

For parents, the warning deserves attention now. If a child has access to a catapult, ask where it came from, what they use it for and where they take it. Explain that firing at animals, people or property can have serious consequences.

The Lydd incident also demonstrates the value of residents reporting concerns: information from a member of the public led to a search and seizure.

A moment of cruelty or recklessness can leave another person with a lifelong injury. Parents should have that conversation before police have to knock on their door.

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Gardening

By Michael Gooch

Doesn't the rain make a difference? We came back from holiday to grass going berserk, and the weeds getting a new lease of life! Nothing stops them in their tracks, so the eternal job of weeding needs doing. The experts said that grass would always recover, but we have some bald patches, so, now that it has been cut, we can scarify those areas, weed them, and sew some grass seed. It is worth protecting the seeds with netting or some sort of a string web from sticks, across the area.

Cosmos, dahlias and roses are still doing great giving a lot of colours to the autumn garden. Again, worth dead heading them to keep them flowering. All gardeners are talking about the one big success crop this year, tomatoes! They have loved it. Our outdoors ones have fruited at the same time as the greenhouse ones!

I'm still dealing with them, making soup or stewing them for the freezer. I have mentioned the process in recent articles. Prepare a tea plate, cereal bowl, sharp knife, fork, dessert spoon and a medium plant of boiling water. You boil the pan of water, pierce the tomatoes several times, and put them into the boiling water. The skin will peel away automatically. Lift the tomato out with the dessert spoon onto the tea plate. With the sharp knife and fork, ease the skin away, and put it in the cereal bowl. This will happen easily. Cut up the tomato, and put into a smaller saucepan. When you have a worthwhile amount, stew them for 5-10 minutes, and cool. When cool put into small to med containers and freeze. You can use them for recipes that require a tin of tomatoes.

If you are really keen you can make home made pesto, but I've never felt that inspired, but one of my sisters does! I also make soup, but that is a bit of labour of love, you have to put the pulp through a mouli mill, to get rid of the seeds. It is delicious, but you work for it. I have a friend that just blitzes it in the blender until the seeds disintegrate, and that sounds less work!

The shops are full of spring bulbs, so you can start organising your spring garden. If you wish to bring on prepared hyacinths for the winter buy them now, I will chat about it next time.

AND NOW FOR THE VEG

The veg garden is in a kind of transitional stage. On the one hand much of our produce is coming to an end, on the other there will be the autumn and winter veg which still need looking after. Brassicas are still at risk from caterpillar infestation, as the very warm weather of late has given the small (cabbage) white a new lease of life and are still in egg-laying mode. So, check those brussels in particular for caterpillars and/or eggs, and also for whitefly. Whitefly usually live on the underside of brassicas and unless you have predators which feed on them, such as ladybirds, you can spray the leaves with soapy water.

This is a good time of year to prepare the soil for next year's crops, so as ground becomes available give it a

good weeding and cover with a layer of compost or grass cuttings. This helps to suppress weed growth and puts nutrients back into the soil. We mentioned whether to dig or not to dig in a previous issue, so put into practice what has worked for you in the past.

If you enjoy broad beans, there are several winter varieties which can be sown during October. We usually get a good crop from Aquadulce but high winds and lack of rainfall earlier in the year reduced the cropping. Normally Aquadulce are very hardy and will give a good crop from June onwards, rather than maincrop varieties which need another month or so to mature.

With less daylight and reducing warmth, tomatoes won't ripen so the best thing is either to bring them indoors and ripen on a windowsill or turn into green tomato chutney. Before composting plants, chop them up into smaller pieces before putting them on the compost heap. Have you checked courgettes lately? They soon turn into marrows so pick them when just a few inches long. Outdoor cucumbers have probably reached their maximum growth by now, so harvest them before the colder weather turns them soft and therefore losing their crunchiness.

If you have a greenhouse, this may provide some extra shelter for tomatoes, cucumbers and the squash family. When plants have given their all, this is a good time of year to clean out the greenhouse and give the glass a good clean. Some gardeners use Jeyes fluid or similar to disinfect the inside to reduce risk of infection for next year. Check fastening clips to make sure they are supporting the panes as strong winds cause vibration which gradually work them loose.

Have you kept a record of what you grew this year and where? Crop rotation is important to reduce the risk of disease so as a general rule don't sow and plant next year in the same bed as this year. Like all of us, soil needs a rest as it gets older!

As always, happy gardening!

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Budgeting Tips

By June Gooch

Fads, fancies and fashions.

Why are we so gullible? If social media or someone famous says something or wears something, it instantly becomes a 'must have'. Why? Whether or not we need it, or it would suit us, or can afford it, to be anybody you have to have it!

We generally don't like jingoistic nationalism. But we were guests in someone's house, and they were watching the last half hour of 'Last night of the proms', so we had to endure it! I often think of that line in Rule Britannia, "Britons never, never, never shall be slaves." But it is completely meaningless. We are enslaved to fashion, social media, fads and fancies all the time.

I remember before William and Kate were married, she often wore upmarket high street fashions. Within an hour the line would be sold out! You've got a dress like Kate: so what? Does that suddenly improve your life? When Prince George had his first birthday photo, he had a pair of stripey blue dungarees on. Within a few hours you couldn't buy a pair of stripey blue dungarees in the land. Again, so what? Your baby has a pair of dungarees vaguely like the prince's! Does that make any difference to your finances and lifestyle? Just probably means you've got a bigger credit card bill next month.

The Prime scandal was the ultimate in shopkeepers making a killing out of the people's gullibility. Some celebrity put it on social media, and suddenly you had to have it. People were fighting in the aisles for it, and mothers were getting up at 6am and driving 20miles for it, and paying £20 for a can! More fool them, and good luck to the shopkeepers making a bit of extra cash! Fools and their money are soon parted! It was only a different combination of dangerous chemicals and flavourings. Probably not much different to all the others available. All fizzy drinks are bad for you, and research has proved that people who drink a lot of fizzy drinks over their lifetime are more like to get some forms of cancer. So especially if you are short of money, do try and stay off that 'must have' treadmill. You will never be happy: within 20 minutes, something new will come along. If you have the strength to say "NO," well done you!

The 1970s, when we were bringing up our older children, was a time of industrial strife. Various drivers and workmen were on strike here, there and everywhere. I remember a time, when bread went scarce, and people were fighting in the shops and paying over the odds. I determined I would never pay over the odds. Doing most of my own baking, I always had flour in the house, so I thought I would make a large plain scone round to use as bread, if it came to the crunch. I can't remember ever doing it, so maybe it didn't come to that. We had a corner shop near us, who had contacts with a small bakery, and did a tasty uncut brown loaf. The shop keeper knew we would want one, so they tended to save one for us.

Wellness seems to be the ultimate big con for the gullible. So many fads and fancies, and new products and influencers, telling you what you have to eat, or wear, and slap on your face, or make, or how to clean your house

properly. I heard a sad thing the other day. One of our grandchildren's classes had been asked what they wanted to be when they grew up. Over half of them said "influencers." How pathetic? That is one form of slavery. You are obliged to say what your paymasters insist on, and what the hysteria of the public want with their 'likes'. You can leave any moral values at the door! It remains with the children in refugee camps, with sketchy educations and only the clothes they stand up in, to aspire to be doctors and engineers and lawyers!

Occasionally you read about some child who is a prodigy, youngest member of Mensa, or becoming a world junior chess champion, or giving piano recitals at 6 and half, or top in the country in a Maths test, or qualifying for Oxford at 14. They are nearly always foreign children, who take education very, very seriously. Have we stopped taking education seriously?

Across the pond, there seem to be some nutcases in charge! Of many issues where they have lost their way, they are questioning vaccines. Vaccines have saved the lives of millions of children and grown-ups. I was a practice nurse when 2 London doctors began to say that the MMR caused Autism and chronic colitis. It was completely unfounded and caused so much damage to our vaccine record. At the time 84m doses of the vaccine had been given around the world, if there was a serious problem, it would have arisen by then. Probably double that number now! Not surprisingly, there is a measles outbreak with deaths at present in US, which is being blamed on immigrants (the old chestnut!) and not lack of vaccines!

Some people began to talk about doing them separately, but there is no evidence at all, that would change anything. In their first year, babies have lots of mixed injections, protecting them against about 6 or 8 diseases. We were warned to have nothing to do with separate vaccines. The NHS was only licenced to do the MMR. Autism, and chronic colitis, is not diagnosed until the 2nd year, at the very earliest, when children would have had the MMR, so their logic was very spurious. The doctors were eventually struck off the medical register in this country for malpractice.

The same authorities are encouraging "peptides" supposedly good for well-being, a fact which is totally unproven, and not backed up by science. Apparently, millions of people are on them, because it the "in thing" the latest fad! The US seems to be a nursery for unproven ideas, anti- medical establishment rhetoric and conspiracy theories! My mother lived to be 95, I'm not sure how, without supplements, peptides, probiotics, prebiotics etc etc. She simply cooked all her meals from scratch, lived a wholesome life, kept busy, active and in touch with people.

So, if you want to keep on top of your finances, try and keep out of the demented circus that is fads, fancies and fashions!

Whatever Happened to the Liberal Democrats?

There was a time when a Liberal Party conference looked and sounded like the gathering of a serious political movement. You might not have agreed with them. I frequently didn't. But you could at least recognise politicians who appeared determined to persuade the country through argument, policy and principle.

Watching the Liberal Democrat conference in Brighton this week, it was difficult not to wonder what happened.

The contrast with the party of Paddy Ashdown is particularly striking.

Ashdown was no lightweight. Before entering Parliament he served in the Royal Marines and intelligence, went on to become MP for Yeovil in 1983 and led the Liberal Democrats from 1988 until 1999. Under his leadership, the party increased its Commons representation from 18 seats to 46 at the 1997 election. After Westminster, he went on to serve internationally, most notably as High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Parliament itself described his life as one of public service in the military, politics and Bosnia.

Whatever your politics, Paddy Ashdown had gravitas.

One can only imagine what he would make of the modern conference spectacle.

Sir Ed Davey has made attention-grabbing stunts part of his political identity. Indeed, even some within his own party have reportedly questioned whether it is time to move away from the theatrical approach and concentrate more heavily on substance. The Financial Times reported ahead of this conference that some Liberal Democrat MPs wanted greater emphasis on serious policy communication.

Politics does need humour. Politicians do not have to walk around permanently looking as though somebody has stolen their lunch.

But there comes a point when the joke starts swallowing the politics.

And there is another curious feature of the modern Liberal Democrats: Nigel Farage.

Farage appears to occupy an extraordinary amount of Liberal Democrat political bandwidth.

At the party's spring conference, Davey explicitly presented stopping Reform as a "moral responsibility".



Ahead of Brighton, the Liberal Democrats again framed their strategy around blocking Farage, declaring that his route to Downing Street ran through what they call the "Orange Wall".

At some stage surely a political party has to explain not merely whom it wants to stop, but precisely what it wants to do.

To be fair, there were policies at Brighton. Davey announced plans for £17 billion of income-tax cuts, including raising the personal allowance to £15,000 and increasing the higher-rate threshold. The plan relies substantially on projected economic benefits from Britain rejoining the EU single market and customs union.

And that illustrates the question the Liberal Democrats now have to answer.

How realistic is their ambition?

They achieved an extraordinary parliamentary result in 2024, winning 72 seats despite taking around 12 per cent of the national vote. That was an extremely effective targeting operation. But even within the party there is now debate about whether the Liberal Democrats should attempt to become a genuine first-choice national party or concentrate on being the tactical vehicle for voters wanting to stop Reform in particular constituencies. Party strategists have reportedly discussed ambitions of reaching as many as 140 MPs.

That is quite some ambition.

The Liberal Democrats' problem throughout their modern history has been their political yo-yo.

Up they go as the protest vote.

Down they come when another party captures the public mood.

Then back they appear when voters become dissatisfied with Labour or the Conservatives.

They have experienced spectacular breakthroughs and equally spectacular reversals. That doesn't make them irrelevant. 72 MPs plainly aren't irrelevant, but it does raise a legitimate question about whether their parliamentary strength represents the foundations of a durable national movement or another high point in that familiar cycle.

And that brings us back to Brighton.

Conference halls, slogans, applause and carefully choreographed speeches can create the impression that Number 10 is just around the corner.

The electorate tends to be slightly less accommodating.

There is also something rather strange about constantly presenting Reform and Farage as the great political threat while simultaneously devoting so much conference time and publicity to them.

If your opponent is supposedly politically ridiculous, why spend so much time talking about him?

If he is politically formidable, perhaps constantly reminding everybody of his existence isn't the cleverest strategy either.

Perhaps the Liberal Democrats should rediscover something Paddy Ashdown understood rather well: credibility isn't manufactured by a stunt, a headline or a conference slogan.

It is accumulated.

Ashdown built his through military service, Parliament, international diplomacy and years of political argument. He could be funny, combative and controversial, but there was rarely much doubt that a serious politician was standing behind the microphone.

Modern politics desperately needs more of that seriousness.

Liberalism itself has a proud British tradition. It deserves serious advocates prepared to explain what liberalism means in 2026: economically, constitutionally, internationally and socially.

That debate would be considerably more interesting than another stunt or another speech dominated by Nigel Farage.

Because ultimately the Liberal Democrats cannot define themselves forever by the politicians they oppose.

At some point they have to define themselves by what they are.

And perhaps, after all the conference theatre has been packed away, that is the question they should be asking themselves.

Whatever happened to the Liberal Democrats?

More importantly, what exactly do they want to

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Wildlife

By Kerry King

The Conker Conundrum

There is something wonderfully human about a conker. Every autumn, we seem to become children again – pockets filled with glossy brown treasures, comparing sizes, choosing our champion and remembering the serious business of a good old-fashioned conker battle. But take a closer look at the horse chestnuts and there is a fascinating story unfolding in the leaves.

The photograph shows the tell-tale damage caused by the horse chestnut leaf-mining moth, *Cameraria ohridella*. Its tiny caterpillars feed inside the leaves, creating pale trails and mines between the veins which gradually turn brown. By late summer, an affected tree can look as though autumn has arrived early.

Here is the surprising part: the tree usually isn't dying. Forest Research has found that repeated attacks by the moth have little effect on the tree's growth or general condition. There is, however, a price to pay. Infestation can reduce the weight of the tree's seeds – our beloved conkers – meaning they can be smaller.

For the tree, this may be relatively minor. For the dedicated conker

player, however, it is serious business. A big, heavy conker is exactly what you want when two competitors face each other across that piece of string.

There are other causes of those battered leaves too. Horse chestnut leaf blotch produces irregular brown patches and can look alarming. The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) describes it as unsightly rather than seriously damaging. More serious is bleeding canker, which affects the bark and can cause dark, sticky fluid to ooze from cracks. In some cases it can lead to dieback.

So next time you pick up a conker, look at it differently. Inside that little brown shell is a story about insects, trees, survival – and our own wonderfully British habit of turning nature into a game.

The tree may simply see it as its next generation. We see a champion waiting to be crowned.

Picture 1: Horse chestnut leaves showing extensive browning and leaf damage caused by pests and disease. Credit Kerry King

Picture 2: An artist's impression of a traditional conker match-search for the ultimate conker champion. © Kerry King – licensed for use in *The Looker Magazine*.



Welcome to another batch of movies/shows on streaming and tv. In this issue we have a sequel to a computer game fans favourite, the return of everyone's favourite medical drama, the second series Guy Ritchie's The Gentlemen, a new boxing drama from Sky, a sequel to an acrophobic nightmare Fall and a new creature feature from Sky/Now TV..

When I was younger and a gamer I could only marvel at the gaming skills of far younger gamers who with precise precision could pull off the final move of Mortal Kombat characters such as Johnny Cage, Sub-Zero, Liu-Kang, Scorpion, Raiden and Sonya Blade. Up, down, up, down, down, down, down, up and other combinations before the character delivered the fatal blow. I never masterminded the finishes instead I relied on frantically pressing buttons in no particular order in the hope that I would somehow achieve the desired finish, for the record I never did.

Mortal Kombat like others Streetfighter, Doom, Silent Hill all made the transition from video game to big screen and **Mortal Kombat 2 -Sky/Now TV** is back for another challenge as good continues to fight evil.



The film starts with a flashback as Emperor Shao Kahn kills King Jerrod in the process taking the kingdom of Edenia and Jerrod's wife and daughter Queen Sindel and Princess Kitana.

Twenty years later and with the tenth Mortal Kombat tournament about to commence the two sides recruit their teams for the tournament. On the Earthrealm Lord Raiden and Sonya Blade put together their team Sonya, Jax Briggs, Cole Young and Liu Kang alongside the now washed up actor Johnny Cage, who refuses to take part. In the first round Sonya kills Sindel and Kitana defeats Cage but spares him much to the disgust of the angered Shao Kahn. The tournament continues but the Earthrealm team realise they will need something special to defeat Shao Kahn. Up down, down, up, up, up anyone?

If you've ever played the game, you will know what to expect, lots of sorcery and flashing lights alongside the martial arts. The storyline is secondary to the action but as films go its ok although I still prefer Streetfighter, mainly due to the presence of a certain Kylie Minogue.

For a show to run 40 years it requires good plots, good writing and strong characters and every now and then the Wow factor. The 40th anniversary double header from **Casualty - BBC TV** certainly carried the Wow factor as an explosion at a neighbouring hospital sends the team into overdrive as the casualties come flooding in.

With tensions running high the team are pushed to the brink especially when an ambulance crashes leaving the



crew in danger. When Holby is then put on high alert after it is suspected that the attack on the other hospital was a terrorist attack the team are put under extreme pressure. You can expect a few old faces, most notably Mr Casualty.

This really was two gripping episodes that will leave you gripping the edge of your seat as several favourites face death. The writers once again hit the spot as they produce a hard hitting and topical drama that is as good as anything else on the tv.

Guy Ritchie has often been referred to as the British Quentin Tarantino. Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrels and Snatch introduced us to his work and after a slight break he came roaring back with The Gentlemen a fast-paced and punchy Tarantinoesque crime drama starring Matthew McConaughey, Charlie Hunnam and a deliciously wicked turn from Hugh Grant as a corrupt journalist.

Rather than a sequel Netflix took on the franchise and made an 8-part series with different character Theo James plays Eddie Horniman the 13th Duke of Halstead who inherits the Dukedom and estate much to the disgust of his hedonistic elder brother Freddie who owes £8 million to a local drug dealer.

Eddie decides to sell the estate to pay the debt but then learns that gangster Bobby Glass (Ray Winstone) and his daughter Susie are running a lucrative drugs operation from the estate and are very keen that Edward does not sell. Eddie realises he could be onto a winner and decides to dip his toes into the drugs world.

Season 2 of **The Gentlemen - Netflix** sees Eddie and Susie trying to expand their operations internationally, but when they learn that they must seek permission from the Mafia things get complicated. Meanwhile Freddie is in rehab but not out of the family business.

Whereas the original film was a black comedy this series of The Gentlemen is quite dark



and very violent as rival gangs fight for their slice of the pie. There are lots of double crosses and lots of plot twists as Eddie tries to appease the Mafia, plan his wedding and try to expand his crumbling empire.

The supporting cast are good Daniel Ings as the recovering addict and mad as a box of frogs Freddie. Vinnie Jones as Eddie's loyal gatekeeper Geoff. Ray Winstone as Incarcerated gangster Bobby Glass and Kaya Scodelario as Susie interim head of the Glass criminal syndicate.

The Gentlemen is a decent binge worthy series that chugs only at a decent pace before delivering a tense final two episodes. The acting is good, the plots gripping and I enjoyed it.

Gangsters and boxing have always been a potent mix so it's no surprise the pair have been stirred together to deliver a TV knockout.

Fightland- Sky/Now TV is an 8 part boxing drama focusing on boxer Maduka 'Duke' Kilroy. After winning a title Duke witnesses his brother murdered after he and his brother are attacked. In revenge Duke punches one of the attackers to death and is incarcerated in an American prison. On his release Duke sets about finding out who set him up.



With 50 Cent an executive producer you half know what to expect and Fightland doesn't disappoint. Duke soon learns that the Marshall family, his former management team, Father Kingsley and his son and daughter, the hot headed and ambitious Ezekiel 'Zeke' and the levelheaded but calculated Cebella, may have betrayed him. When Kingsley goes missing Zeke decides to make his play while Duke goes out for revenge.

With Zeke determined to protect and expand the Marshall empire and often coming into conflict with Cebella, his enemies make their own play while Duke slowly goes about his mission.

Expect lots of guns and violence as the rival gangs set about each other. Howard Charles as Duke is a one expression beast as he goes about his business and Charles Babalola as Zeke is a cauldron of uneasy tension as he spirals into a world of violence.

Fightland is an uncompromising venture into the boxing world and sits comfortably alongside The Gentlemen and the upcoming Mobland. As gangster fans get a real treat.

Sticking to the standard cinematic formula if a film is a hit, then get a sequel out asap.

Fall 2 on general release picks up the story after friends Becky and Shiloh climbed a decommissioned tv tower. The climb ended in tragedy after the girls became stuck and Shiloh lost her life. Jax is still mourning the loss of her sister Shiloh when she is visited by an old friend of her sister Luce. Luce talks Jax into honouring her sister's memory by attempting the plank walk on Mount Kwan in Thailand. The plank walk was the next challenge in Shiloh's

challenge book.

The pair soon find out the plank walk has been closed for some time but they manage to find a guide Jon, who agrees to take them on the mountain for \$5000 which Luce agrees to pair. They set off with Jon using the clip-in, clip-out method but not before Jax nearly falls off the ladder. They make it to the Devil's elbow but soon discover part of the walk has collapsed making their safety clips redundant. When an earthquake sends debris crashing down on them, they become separated from Jon and with no option to go backwards or forwards the pair are in a fight to survive against the mountain and the elements.



Fall 2 follows the same pattern as its predecessor but with a couple of nice twists thrown in. Like the original it leaves you feeling unsteady and uneasy and as someone who has worked in a cradle in London cleaning windows, I felt myself curling my toes.

Fall 2 is a good suspense film with stunning scenery and good cinematography work. The twists are well thought out and add to the suspense. I would add that the ending, which I won't give away, leaves it open for the return of Becky at a new location Hell's Chasm.

Creature Features come in many shapes and sizes from sharks to lions to hippos. **Hungry - Sky/Now TV** when a group of tourists go on a riverboat tour to the Louisiana swamplands they are hoping to see alligators but they get more than they bargain for after one of the Dionne pays guide Rodrigo an extra \$300 to go off route so that she can photograph the famous alligator 'Big Ben' The group do find 'Big Ben' but only his carcass having been attacked by a far bigger creature. The group soon learn that the apex is an enormous hippopotamus who attacks and sinks there boat. With no means of calling for help and the hippo picking the group off one by one the survivors are left to fight for their lives.



If the plot sounds ok trust me it gets worse as we discover that the hippo is trying to defend its injured offspring. Hungry is an awful film with an awful plot and despite the presence of some half decent performances it fails to excite or grip.

I was going to not mention the obvious but its too good an opportunity so I'll leave you with this hungry hippo isn't fun.

That's your lot for this issue next issue I'll catch up on a few streaming films I watched recently and there's the return of season two of Mobland and The Walking Dead spin off Dead City. Until then happy viewing

Local campaigner praised for protecting legacy of Folkestone's Road of Remembrance

A local campaigner has been praised for his determination to protect the historic significance of Folkestone's Road of Remembrance and ensure the sacrifices of generations of servicemen are never forgotten.

Bob Mouland, described by supporters as a "local hero", has received backing for his efforts to preserve the importance of one of Folkestone's most poignant links with Britain's wartime past.

The Road of Remembrance, which runs down towards the harbour, has a powerful association with the servicemen who passed through Folkestone on their way to the Western Front during the First World War.

For countless soldiers, the journey through the town and towards the Channel was among their final experiences of England before being transported to France and Belgium.

Many would never return. The route has consequently become an important focal point for remembrance in the town, representing not simply those who travelled through Folkestone but the enormous sacrifice made by servicemen and their families across Britain and the Commonwealth.

Local councillor David Wimble welcomed the latest development and paid tribute to Bob for standing up for the area's heritage.

He said: "This is bloody fantastic news. Bob is a local hero and probably one of the nicest men you could ever wish to meet. What this is really about is remembering the millions of servicemen who passed through Folkestone, with so many of them never returning to their families and friends. They answered the call of their country and many ultimately made the greatest sacrifice anyone can make. It is only right that we remember them and ensure future generations understand exactly what places such as the Road of Remembrance represent."

Mr Wimble said remembrance should ultimately transcend party politics, although he was strongly critical of the Green and Liberal Democrat administration over its handling of the issue.

He added: "Whatever people's politics, surely there are certain parts of our history that we should all be capable of coming together to protect.

"The Road of Remembrance is not about one political party or another. It is about the men who marched down that road and the families they left

behind. "Many mothers, fathers, wives, children, brothers and sisters said goodbye to someone who would never walk back through their front door.

"We owe it to them to protect that history."

Folkestone played a significant role as a gateway to the continent during the First World War, with huge numbers of military personnel passing through the town and its harbour during the conflict.

That history remains visible throughout the area, with the Road of Remembrance forming part of Folkestone's continuing connection with the wartime generation.

Supporters argue that protecting the road's identity and significance is particularly important as the First World War moves increasingly beyond living memory.

Mr Wimble said preserving physical reminders of the past helped ensure younger generations could understand the human stories behind events that might otherwise become little more than pages in a history book.

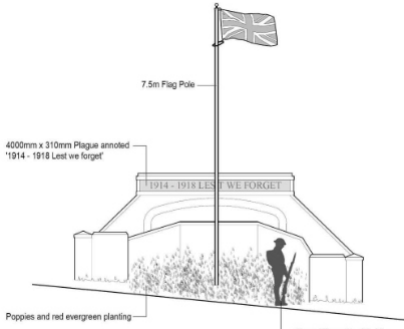
He said: "We enjoy freedoms today because generations before us were prepared to defend them.

"That is why remembrance matters. It is about respect for those who served, respect for those who never returned and respect for the families who carried that loss for the rest of their lives.

"Bob understands that, and he deserves enormous credit for standing his ground and making sure this important part of Folkestone's history continues to be recognised.

"We should never allow their sacrifice simply to fade from our collective memory.

"We will remember them."



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Channel Rotary Welcomes 50 ‘Friends’ as Membership Initiative Flourishes



Channel Rotary is celebrating the success of its “Friends” membership initiative, launched in January 2025. In just 18 months, the club has welcomed 50 people from a wide range of backgrounds, professions and ages—reflecting the strength of the local community and the growing appeal of Rotary’s mission.

Many have already contributed time, skills and energy to club projects and committees, bringing fresh perspectives, specialist knowledge and renewed momentum to Channel Rotary’s service activities.



Channel Rotary’s committees, each with a distinct purpose, remain central to the club’s community impact:

- **Community Service** — supporting vulnerable groups, local initiatives and practical projects that make a visible difference.
- **Youth** — working with schools and young people to inspire confidence, opportunity and ambition through programmes, competitions and support.
- **Fundraising** — creating events, campaigns and ideas that generate funds for the club’s charitable work.
- **Fellowship** — organising gatherings, outings and activities that strengthen friendships and keep members connected.
- **Public Image** — promoting Rotary’s work and encouraging wider community engagement.

Committees report regularly to the club council, helping members and “Friends” feel involved, valued and part of a shared purpose.

One example is Krisztina Milak, an economist whose expertise has strengthened Channel Rotary’s Media & Communications team. Her contribution has improved the club’s social media presence, broadened its community



reach and raised the visibility of Rotary’s work across the district. Her professional experience in HR, Wellbeing and Environmental education also brings valuable skills to the team.

Channel Rotary encourages anyone wishing to support deserving local causes—through professional skills, practical help or creative ideas—to become a “Friend” of Rotary. “Friends” can take part in projects, join committees, attend social events and contribute in ways that suit them.

To express interest, visit www.channelrotary.co.uk, speak to a Channel Rotary member, or contact club secretary Bill Flavell at bill.flavell@channelrotary.org.uk about attending a meeting or social event. The “Friends” pathway offers a flexible, welcoming introduction for people who want to make a difference without the full obligations of traditional membership.

Photos Show
Recent Friends introductory Event



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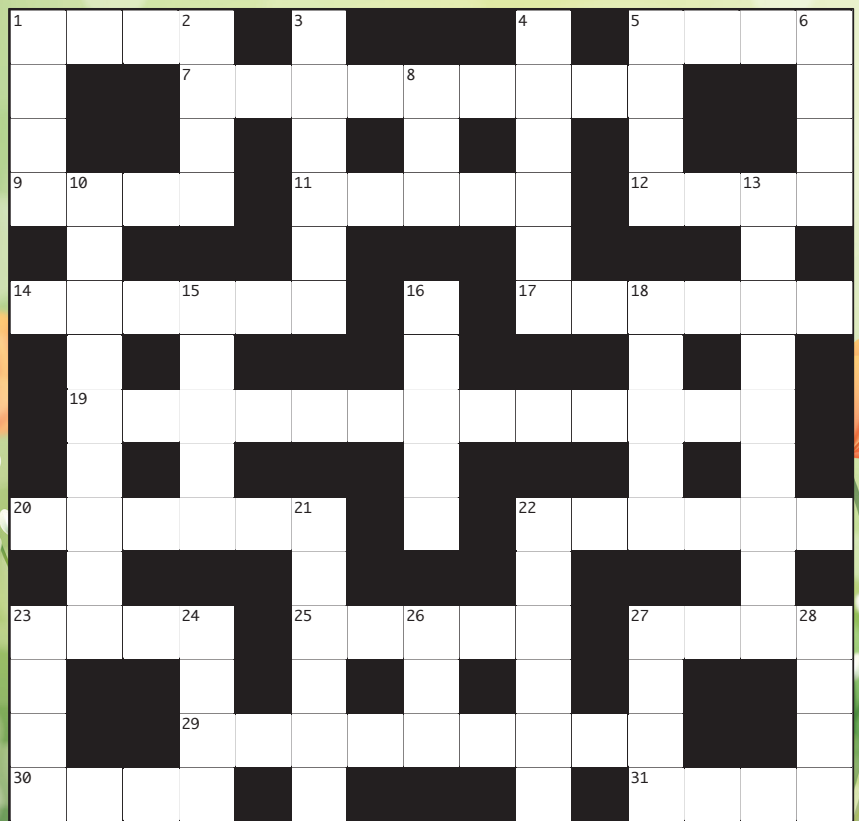




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General Knowledge Crossword #039

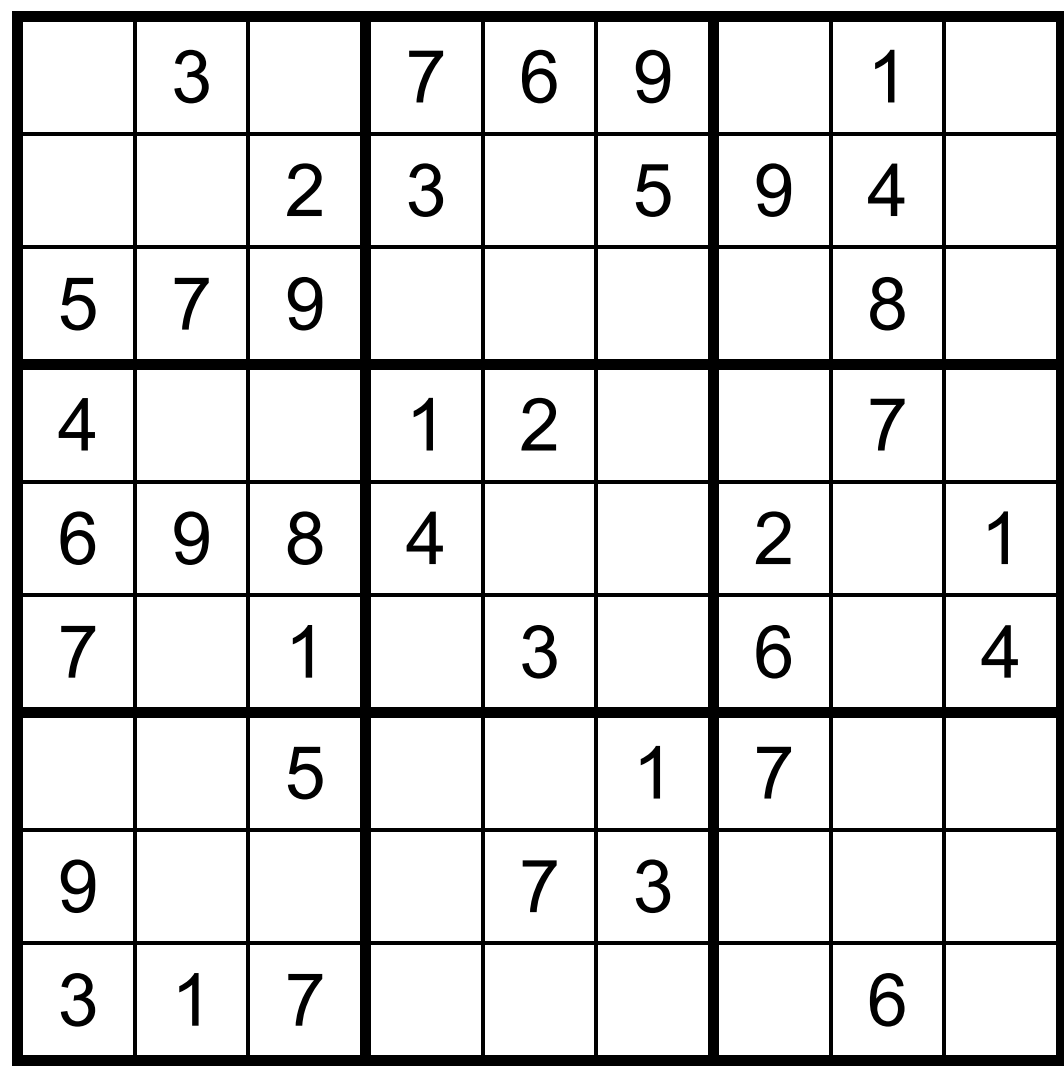


- Across Clues:**
- 1. Cut into pieces (4)
 - 5. Element with atomic number 26 (4)
 - 7. Kept under control (9)
 - 9. Casual aerial movement (4)
 - 11. Live in a place (5)
 - 12. Overhanging roof edge (4)
 - 14. Designed to absorb impact (6)
 - 17. Soft fruit (6)
 - 19. Official recognition (13)
 - 20. Resembling a ball (6)
 - 22. Heart-related exercise (6)
 - 23. Seed of invention (4)
 - 25. Sing softly (5)
 - 27. Off balance (4)
 - 29. Runs a pub (9)
 - 30. Zero (4)
 - 31. Light and breezy (4)
- Down Clues:**
- 1. Musical symbol indicating pitch (4)
 - 2. Support (4)
 - 3. Arachnid (6)
 - 4. Religious songs (6)
 - 5. Inactive (4)
 - 6. Aisle between pews (4)
 - 8. Female sheep (3)
 - 10. Site for takeoffs (9)
 - 13. Love symbol (9)
 - 15. Accessory (5)
 - 16. Farewell, in French (5)
 - 18. Before (5)
 - 21. Repeat performance (6)
 - 22. Small appetiser (6)
 - 23. Emblematic figure (4)
 - 24. Term for 'father' in Aramaic (4)
 - 26. Mining material (3)
 - 27. Invisible energy field (4)
 - 28. Protein-rich dairy byproduct (4)
- Answers:** Across: 1. Chop, 5. Iron, 7. Repressed, 9. Flip, 11. Dwell, 12. Eave, 14. Bumper, 17. Sapple, 19. Certification, 20. Sphere, 22. Cardio, 23. Idea, 25. Croon, 27. Alew, 29. Barkeeper, 30. Nada, 31. Airy. Down: 1. Clef, 2. Prop, 3. Spider, 4. Psalms, 5. Idle, 6. Ewe, 8. Ewe, 10. Launchpad, 13. Valentine, 15. Purse, 16. Adieu, 18. Prior, 21. Encore, 22. Canape, 23. Icon, 24. Abba, 26. Ore, 27. Aura, 28. Whey.

Army Wordsearch



- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| Allq | Honour |
| Ammo | Jeep |
| Ballistic | National |
| Barracks | Security |
| Brigade | Siege |
| Cargo Pants | Tank |
| Colonel | Uniform |
| Combat | Veteran |
| Detonate | Weapon |
| Enemy | Jerrycan |
| Fortification | Munition |
| Garrison | Night Vision |
| | Parachute |



Sudoku Challenge

Spot the Difference!

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





THE RANT!!!

He's Only Being Friendly!

Being a dog owner is apparently one of the hardest jobs in Britain. Harder than brain surgery, running the country or assembling flatpack furniture with your spouse. I know this because certain dog owners behave as though taking a Labrador round the park entitles them to a knighthood and exemption from all human responsibility.

Now, before somebody starts composing an angry email on behalf of their cockapoo, I like dogs. Lovely animals. Loyal, entertaining and generally better company than someone explaining their parking app. But some owners seem to believe buying a dog also buys them ownership of every pavement, beach and public space in the country.

Let us begin with the business end. Your dog eats. Your dog walks. Your dog stops outside somebody's gate and produces something that could qualify for its own postcode. This should not come as a surprise. Yet some owners stare into the distance as though their pet has unexpectedly started manufacturing kitchen extensions.

“Oh! I haven't got a bag!” Really? You remembered the dog. You remembered your phone, headphones, coffee and enormous coat that looks like a sleeping bag with planning permission. But the one item required for the entirely predictable conclusion of breakfast somehow escaped your attention.

What did you expect? That it would evaporate? That woodland creatures would arrive with dustpans? That the council would dispatch a ceremonial collection team because your precious little Barnaby only eats organic salmon?

And then there are the people who DO bag it. Wonderful. Excellent. Progress. Until they hang the bag in a tree....Why?

What is this? A Christmas decoration from the seventh circle of hell? Are we supposed to admire it? “Lovely display this year, Margaret. Particularly like the Labrador collection hanging above the bench.”

You have completed the unpleasant part, then abandoned the package where everyone can enjoy it at eye level. That is like washing your dishes and throwing them through the neighbour's window.

Then we move on to leads. Or, more accurately, the apparent persecution involved in being asked to use one.

Along comes an animal the size of a pit pony, bounding towards you with the enthusiasm of a drunk uncle spotting the wedding buffet. Somewhere behind it, an owner is shouting “Hugo!” in a voice suggesting Hugo has never once responded to his name.

Hugo weighs roughly the same as a washing machine and has the stopping distance of a cross-Channel ferry.

A small child sees him coming and freezes.

Hugo does not. The child ends up horizontal, their ice cream airborne and their afternoon considerably less enjoyable.

And what does the owner say? “He's only being friendly!”

Yes. So is a brass band. I still don't want one charging into my knees.

Apparently friendliness cancels out physics. If your dog loves people, it is perfectly acceptable for it to introduce itself by launching a pensioner into a municipal flowerbed.

“He wouldn't hurt a fly.” Marvellous. Unfortunately, the fly has wings. Doris has a replacement hip and two shopping bags.

“He just wants to play!” Then YOU play with him. You bought him. I came out for a quiet walk, not to participate in Jurassic Park: The Slobbering Years.

There is also the assumption that everybody must adore being approached by a strange dog.

Some people are frightened. Some have been bitten. Some simply prefer their trousers without muddy paw prints extending to the waistband.

This is treated as a personal insult. “Oh, you don't like dogs?” I didn't say that. I don't like unexpectedly becoming a climbing frame.

Then comes the self-righteous lecture. “Dogs need freedom.”

Of course they do. But your freedom to exercise a small dinosaur does not outrank everyone else's freedom to remain upright.

And if your dog's recall consists of you shouting its name eleven times while it disappears towards a picnic, it hasn't got recall. It has an occasional interest in your opinion.

Meanwhile, sensible owners quietly get on with it. They carry bags, use leads when appropriate and apologise if their dog causes trouble. Somehow they manage all this without delivering a TED Talk about canine rights.

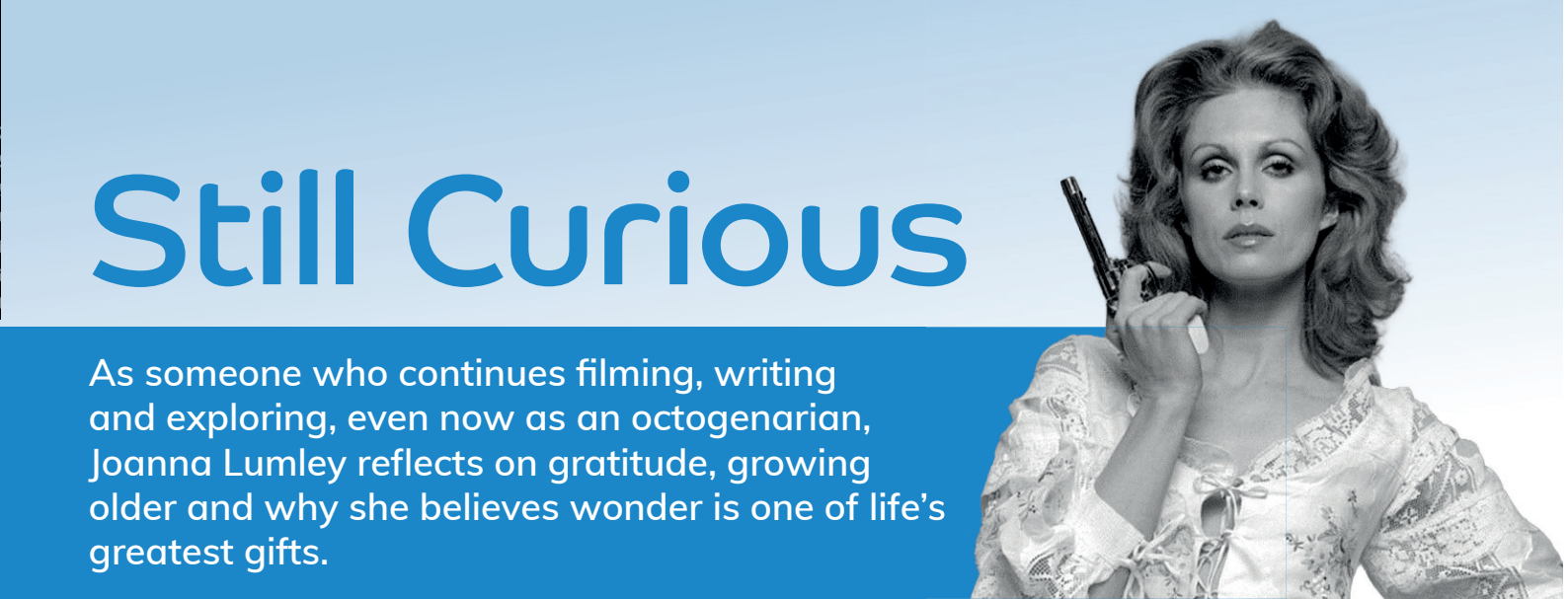
That is the bit that puzzles me. Responsible ownership is possible. Thousands manage it every day.

So pick up the mess. Put the bag in a bin. Keep your dog under control. Accept that “friendly” is a description, not a public liability policy.

And please stop looking offended when somebody objects to your beloved Hercules flattening their toddler.

We understand he's your baby.

But if your baby weighs twelve stone, steals sandwiches and leaves something resembling a collapsed chocolate soufflé on the pavement, perhaps attach a lead before taking him to meet the neighbours.



As someone who continues filming, writing and exploring, even now as an octogenarian, Joanna Lumley reflects on gratitude, growing older and why she believes wonder is one of life's greatest gifts.

Some people collect achievements. Joanna Lumley seems to collect experiences. She has travelled through some of the world's most remarkable places, met presidents and royalty, starred in iconic television series and become one of Britain's most recognisable actresses. Yet she speaks far more readily about the people she's encountered than the accolades she's received.

“I've always thought the world is endlessly interesting,” she says with characteristic warmth. “People often ask where my sense of adventure comes from, but I don't think of it as adventure really. It's simply curiosity. I genuinely want to know how other people live, what makes them laugh, what they eat, how they see the world. Once you start asking questions, life becomes endlessly fascinating.”

It is perhaps no surprise that the 80-year-old star of *The New Avengers*, *Absolutely Fabulous*, *The Wolf of Wall Street*, *Paddington* and countless reality TV narratives has become a true national treasure.

“The places are wonderful, of course, but it's always the

people I remember most. You can stand in front of the most extraordinary landscape, but it's the person who welcomes you into their home or tells you their story that stays with you years later. That's what travelling has always given me.”

There is an infectious optimism about Lumley, although she is quick to distinguish optimism from pretending life is always easy.

“I don't think happiness means ignoring difficult things. We've all experienced sadness, disappointment and loss. Yet I've learnt that gratitude is a remarkably powerful companion. Every single day offers something to be thankful for, even if it's something very small. Once you begin noticing those things, life feels richer.”

Growing older, she believes, has brought unexpected freedoms. “When you're young, you're terribly busy worrying about what people think of you. Then, wonderfully, you reach a point where you realise most people are far too busy worrying about themselves to spend much time judging you. It's incredibly liberating... although

I rather wish someone had told me that decades earlier,” she laughs.

Home, too, has become increasingly precious. For all the remarkable places she has visited, Joanna speaks fondly about ordinary routines, cups of tea, books and quiet evenings.

“I've discovered that excitement doesn't always have to involve getting on an aeroplane. There are days when sitting in the garden, watching the birds and reading a good book feels like the greatest luxury imaginable. I think we've become rather good at overlooking simple pleasures, when actually they're often the ones that sustain us.”



Church Update

By June Gooch

Food Bank. The main food bank for the area, continues in Romney Marsh Community Church in North Street, New Romney 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 summer has left the food bank with a long list of urgent needs. This includes Chocolate spread, gluten free, large tinned ham, washing up liquid, men's deodorant, sanitary pads, shampoo, slower gel, salad cream, pasta in sauce packets, white cook in sauce, mayonnaise, tinned fish, vege meals in a tin, noodles, and corned beef. Many of the local churches are using their harvest festivities, to collect for the foodbank.

At present they have plenty of tinned vegs, (including beans, tomatoes, potatoes), soup, toothpaste and pasta.

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. Check the venue when you register for your voucher.

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 con's ditions 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.

A friend asked me why I don't put down the times of all services. With 14 different churches in the benefice, and 14 different regimes of worships, I'd have to monopolise the Looker more than I do now!! If you would like to know the times of all services, there are always spare copies of the Marsh Message in St Nich's church, and it is usually open during the day. The schedule of services is on the 1st 3 pages.

Brookland, St Augustine.
oDn't forget the pantry table in the church porch, both for donations and those in need.

The next sung evensong will be on October 11th at 6.30pm. There will be a practice for the choir on the previous Thursday at 1.15pm. The Holy Communion service that takes place on alternative Thursday continues. See church magazine for dates.

There will be harvest supper at the Woolpack inn on October 8th at 7pm. A 3- course meal is available at £29 and 2 courses at £25.To book contact Rev Shuna at shunabody@hotmail.com.

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.

There will be a Quiz with fish and chips from beach 48 on Saturday, October 3rd. Teams of no more than 6 and tickets are £12. To book ring 07811 614229 or email elizabethcarnley898@gmail@gmail.com

Dymchurch Catholic church, St Monica's on Chapel Road. 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. See notices for dates.

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. All welcome at any of these events.

Craft Fair. The next Craft Fair will take place on Saturday, October 17th, from 10am-2pm, and everyone is invited to this large and diverse craft fair. Several stalls sell edibles of various kinds, and cater for those with restricted diets. With Christmas creeping up on us, an opportunity to buy some unique gifts.

Ivychurch, St George.
The recent production of The Great Gatsby was a well-received success to a packed church. The 4 actors dad an amazing job, and without benefit of curtains and much in the way of scenery, they brought the story to life. At Christmas they will be producing 'A Christmas Carol'. Be sure to book your seat, it will be worthwhile.

The harvest supper will be in the church on Saturday, October 3rd at 7 for 7.30pm. A superb 3 course meal will be served, and diets can be catered for. Tickets will be £20 for adults.uk and £10 for children, and can be obtained from mlwaite@hotmail.co.uk

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

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

A new type of get together has started for babies and toddlers, parents and carers, on the 2nd Sunday of each month. It starts at 9am, for coffee and croissants, and suitable refreshments for the children. The service itself starts at 9.30am, and is specially geared up to the youngsters and their parents. Several of the helpers have travelled to London for appropriate courses, to give them lots of ideas for activities. For more detail contact Les Carter on 01797 320108 or email bubbleinlydd@btinternet.com The next event will be on Sunday, October 11th.

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.

Lydd Methodist Church.
'This is now part of Marsh Methodist Church flannels under one administration, with rotating services. See notices for dates.

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 01797 362719.

Samaritan's purse, the organisation that oversees the shoebox project, will be collecting soon. Pick up a leaflet in church, and you can pack a shoebox for either a boy or girl, in 3 age categories. It is important to pick up a leaflet, because for various cultural, political and practical reasons there are a number of things that cannot be packed. Some of which have only be specified in recent years. If you cannot do a whole box, any contribution will be welcome, and the organisers can put them together.

When full, cover your box with Christmas paper, with the lid separate, so that the contents can be checked. We are all a bit disgusted at how early all the Christmas tosh is arriving in the shops, but the boxes have to be packed and collected before the 2nd week of November, so worth thinking about what you can do now!

On Saturday, October 10th, there will be a concert by the Shepway Brass Academy at 3pm. Donations on the door.

The next coffee morning is on Saturday, October 17th from 10am to noon. All welcome, cakes for sale. Books, CDs and DVDs available at knock down prices.

New Romney Methodist Church.
The Saturday morning coffee mornings take place from 10am-noon, and all are welcome to this time of fellowship and

refreshment. After some doubt the Thursday morning Meeting Point will continue, much to the delight of all the people for whom it is a highlight of the week. It runs from 10am-noon.

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

Snargate, St Dunstans.
The Holy Communion services on the 2nd and 4th Sundays continue, so the next one will be on Sunday, October 11th followed by refreshments and fellowship.

St Mary's Bay, All Saints.
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.

The All Saints Harvest Supper will be on Saturday October 3rd at 7 for 7.30pm. The cost will be £25 for a delicious 3 course meal, which includes a complimentary drink. To book your place contact Caroline Berry, on 01797 366463 or email carolineberry2612@gmail.com

A new venture is starting in SMB village hall, called "Renew Wellbeing Café" This is a nationwide effort aimed at those who may just need some friendship, activity, and someone to talk to! There will be space for craft, you can take part, or bring your own, and most importantly, a space where it is "ok to be not ok." It takes place on Wednesdays, from 2-4pm. All activities are free, and there are gentle sessions on wellbeing and health, both physically and mentally. All very welcome. For more information, ring Revd Penny Lowe on 07810 717408.

St Mary in theMarsh
The Haywardsians choir, based at the church is a vibrant choir that raises large amounts of money for Charity. The next concert is on October 24th and is a soloist's concert in St Mary's. The choir meets in St Mary's each Friday evening at 7.30pm. New members are always welcome. For more information ring Andrew on 07814 292027.

Church Chuckle.
A certain church had an organist who was also the church handyman, being a joiner by trade. There was a scruffy bench in the church porch which was rarely used, so he sanded and varnished it to look smarter, but didn't warn anyone. The following day was the harvest service, and the church was packed. So, the sidesman saw the nice bench and brought it into the back of the church. With the heat of the church, and the crowds, when they came to rise for the last hymn, the 3 parishioners brought the bench up with them. Afterwards the organists couldn't be found, strangely.

Wit and Wisdom.
Seen on a bookmark that featured a book lover curled up in a library, admitting "I have no shelf control."

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