

Bexhill News

MAY 2023 | ISSUE 11

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IT'S TIME FOR ZERO TOLERANCE



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EDITOR'S WELCOME



IT is important to stress this month that *Bexhill News* does not take a stance either way with regard to the proposed immigration centre at the former Northeye Prison site in Little Common.

We have reported extensively on residents' views with some in favour of supporting refugees and others who are vehemently against it being established.

Bexhill News is, and will remain, politically impartial but when it comes to local issues which affect our town, we will continue to report on them fairly and accurately.

Our main focus this month is on some dog owners not clearing up after their pets when they feel the need to answer the call of nature. It has become an increasing problem in recent months and we back Rother District Council's "zero tolerance" stance on the issue which not only blights our streets but is also a serious health hazard.

It was also a sad day for Brighton and Hove Albion fans, thousands of whom made the trip from Sussex to Wembley to watch their heroes take on the mighty Manchester United.

Those of us who couldn't make it were glued to television screens either at home or in the pub and the team certainly did us proud despite losing out 7-6 in a nail-biting penalty shoot-out.

We should all feel sorry for Hailsham's Solly March who missed the only penalty in the shoot-out. He has had a great season for Albion so let's focus on that rather than one miss from the spot.

On the bright side, one road worker enlivened both his own and our working days by belting out a James Arthur song. Maybe we will see him again in the next series of *The Voice*.

But sadly, it is not all good news as we also report on yet another business being broken into in Bexhill as the Sovereign Light café on the seafront was raided. That kind of behaviour does not reflect well on our town.

Until next month. In the interim please email us with your stories.

Kim Mayo, Editor



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AGONY FOR ALBION AS FA CUP DREAM IS ENDED IN PENALTY SHOOT-OUT

WHAT a cruel disappointment for the thousands of Brighton and Hove Albion fans who packed into Wembley Stadium for the FA Cup Semi-Final against Manchester United.

Ultimately, Albion was beaten 7-6 on penalties by Manchester United after 120 minutes of pulsating football. It was cruel too for Hailsham's Solly March who missed the vital spot-kick in sudden death.

In truth, Albion was the better team and created the better chances to score but they failed to convert any of them, leading to extra time and then the dreaded lottery of a shoot-out.

Brighton, who have been enjoying a stellar season in the Premier League, were so close to reaching their first FA Cup final in 40 years.

Early on World Cup winner Alex Mac Allister sent a free-kick just wide of Manchester United goalkeeper David De Gea's post and the signs continued to look promising as Albion were clearly the better side in the opening 45 minutes.

However, United started the second half with a bang and the Sussex club was indebted to goalkeeper Robert Sanchez for a spectacular one-handed save to keep the match goalless.

Still, Albion pressed and good chances presented themselves for Japanese international Kaoru Mitoma and Danny Welbeck, who sent a header over the crossbar when he probably should have scored.

Substitute Deniz Undav also spurned a glorious chance while Mitoma, a firm favourite with the Albion fans, lost control of the ball when he seemed certain to score.

The Albion fans remained in magnificent voice as the match entered extra-time, often out singing the opposition supporters from the red half of Manchester.

If nerves were jangling during the extra 30 minutes, they were practically shredded when the whistle sounded to bring to an end an enthralling match.



Solly March in a foot race with Diogo Dalot. Photo Paul Hazlewood

But of course, there was still so much more to come in the penalty shoot-out itself.

The 81,000 fans packed into Wembley could only wait with bated breath for the outcome.

Of course penalty shoot-outs are a cruel way to settle a match for the simple reason that ultimately one team has to lose, but it couldn't have been much closer than this one.

Brighton stepped up first with Mac Allister taking responsibility. Cool as a cucumber he scored to put the Sussex club 1-0 up. As Casemiro prepared to take the first one for United, the tension was palpable but he also scored with ease to make it 1-1.

Pascal Groß then converted his penalty to put

Albion back in the driving seat only for Diego Dalot to level things up once more.

And so it went on with Undav, Estupinan and skipper Lewis Dunk scoring for Albion with United replying each time via Sancho, Rashford and Sabitzer.

Cue sudden death. Adam Webster put Albion 6-5 ahead but Weghorst once again levelled. Then it was March's turn. He stepped up and blazed the ball over the crossbar. United knew they would win if Lindelof scored. He did. The dream was over.

However, March and his team-mates must hold their heads high despite defeat. What an effort but in the end it was a case of so close and yet so far.



Steve Hall is a local cartoonist drawing inspiration from Bexhill and the sea. His cards, books and other items can be found in local independents and the Bexhill museum shop. He can be contacted at steve54.hall@gmail.com.

CONTACT US | Telephone: 01424 762128 | Group Editor: Paul Gibson, editor@Bexhill.News | Editor: Kim Mayo, kim@Bexhill.News

Features: Viktoria Cowley, viktoria@Bexhill.News | Publication production: Dean Cook



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COUNCIL IS ABSOLUTELY DETERMINED TO CRACK DOWN ON FOUL PRACTICE

BY EDITOR, KIM MAYO

BEXHILL News is backing Rother District Council's "zero tolerance" approach to dog owners who do not clear up after their pets when taking them for a walk.

Although the majority of dog owners behave responsibly, there is an increasing minority who refuse to do so, thereby leaving a potential health hazard on our pavements, presumably in the misguided belief that someone else will clean it up instead.

Take a walk along any of our streets, whether it be along the seafront or in the town centre and it is patently clear that is an ongoing issue which seems to be getting worse rather than better despite the council's enforcement officers doing everything in their power to curb this disgusting practice by issuing heavy fines when any dog owner is caught not clearing up after their dog.

Enforcement officers have already enjoyed a great deal of success in prosecuting smokers who insisted on dropping cigarette butts on our streets.

As a result, most smokers dispose of cigarette butts responsibly now, knowing full well that failure to do so will result in a hefty fine.

Ditto applies to littering with enforcement officers determined to root out the problem by hitting those who continue to litter in the pocket.

No one who is caught littering can say they haven't been warned. There are notices displayed prominently throughout the town, but still, there are those who persist in offending on a regular basis.

Bexhill also has plenty of bins available throughout the town to dispose of general litter,



cigarette butts and dog waste, but still, problems continue due to some who completely disregard the opportunity to do the decent thing and act responsibly.

Bexhill News editor Kim Mayo said: "The problem with dog fouling in our beautiful town is getting noticeably worse.

"As a community newspaper, we are committed to highlighting issues which blight Bexhill

because there are clearly some who refuse to heed the message.

"There are large numbers of dog owners who like nothing more than taking their prized pooch for an invigorating walk along the seafront or through town but, as invariably happens, there is an increasing minority who simply don't care and that is disgraceful.

"Fortunately Rother District Council is taking

a robust approach when it comes to combating the problem and they certainly deserve praise for that.

"However, with the summer season fast approaching more and more people and their dogs will be out and about on our streets.

"Therefore, we are urging dog owners to act responsibly at all times when they take their pets out in public.

"Most of us take pride in our beautiful seaside town and do all we can to ensure that status quo is maintained for both residents and an increasing influx of visitors to enjoy in a convivial atmosphere.

"Please let's keep it that way and all power to the council in their ongoing mission to punish those who think it is fine not to clear up after their dogs. It is not a lot to ask, is it?"

A Rother District Council spokesperson said: "There is absolutely no excuse for dog owners not to clean up after their dog.

"Apart from being an offence for which people can be prosecuted or receive a £100 fixed penalty, failing to pick up after your dog presents a serious health risk to the public.

"We have a zero tolerance approach to this antisocial behaviour and our enforcement officers will take action against those caught committing the offence.

"Whilst our enforcement officers carry out regular patrols, they cover the whole district and we appreciate information received from the public to help us identify hotspots and take action quickly.

"Reports can be made on our website at www.rother.gov.uk/environmental-health/dog-control/dog-fouling/"

BRANCH OF LEADING FASHION RETAILER HAS CLOSED ITS DOORS FOR THE FINAL TIME

A LEADING Bexhill town centre fashion store has shut down for good, leading to renewed concerns that it is only a matter of time before other struggling retailers follow suit.

M&Co, in Devonshire Road, held a fire sale in its final weeks, selling not only heavily discounted goods but all fixtures and fittings as well.

The branch had large posters on its windows for the past few months promoting a huge sale, but now it has ceased trading, it leaves yet another large retail unit empty.

The writing was on the wall when the company previously announced it had entered administration and now it has been confirmed 170 of its stores across the country will be closed permanently.

A notice on the company's website read: "M&Co online is no longer trading. AK Retail has acquired the M&Co brand with plans to relaunch the web platform in the coming months.

"Some of our high street shops will remain open for a limited time, with everything at least 50 per cent off.

"Thank you to all of our customers from the whole team at M&Co."

The company's branch in Lewes closed earlier this month.

Many have expressed dismay that such a large retailer has succumbed to the harsh economic climate.

Although it doesn't have a branch in Bexhill, restaurant chain Prezzo confirmed recently that it would be closing its Sussex



branches, including one in Hailsham, underlining the downturn in trade for so many retailers across Sussex.

That has set alarm bells ringing, especially as so many commercial properties remain empty despite continued attempts to attract new businesses to set up shop.

Of course, Bexhill is not the only town that is suffering from a lack of new investment to attract major companies to the town, but it is certainly a worrying trend.

The premises vacated by M&Co is huge and the company's decision to shut up shop leaves a gaping hole in the centre often with another large retail unit, almost directly opposite and previously housing Edinburgh Woollen Mill, also remains conspicuously empty with seemingly no takers in the offing.

Several people have expressed fears over the prospect of Bexhill becoming a "ghost town" including Howard Martin, president of Bexhill's Chamber of Commerce and Tourism.

He said: "These are very worrying times for the retail sector. M&Co's closure is another tragedy for our town. It is another loss of a national brand for us.

"We need to turn a negative into a positive, however. This is a chance to create new opportunities for enterprising business people, to encourage them and support them whatever it takes.

"We need to encourage new investment and embrace innovative vision moving forward. Regeneration is key and we fully support that.

"Bexhill is a wonderful town with so much promise but we need to put creative thinking at the forefront in terms of a fully-former plan.

"This is the time for a proactive approach, not procrastination. I encourage everyone to work together to make it happen. Let's move forward with optimism and a clear agenda."



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TOWN COUNCIL MEETING RAMMED AS RESIDENTS EXPRESS VIEWS OVER NORTHEYE

BY EDITOR, KIM MAYO

THE mood was angry yet restrained as hundreds of residents congregated at Bexhill College to debate the controversial plans for an immigration centre at the former Northeye Prison site in Little Common.

Two things were clear from the off. Firstly, the majority are firmly against the Government proposals for the site. Secondly, on a few occasions speakers demanded that Bexhill and Battle Conservative MP Huw Merriman must resign, accused of failing to stand up for his constituents over an issue which is causing bitter discord.

In fact, as each speaker took their turn with the microphone, the message was patently obvious, namely that Mr Merriman has scored a spectacular own goal by not attending any of the three previous meetings and also spurning this one despite being invited by the town council. In essence many want his head on a silver platter.

However, this was the chance for Bexhill residents to express their views in a formal setting rather than on an ad hoc basis and they grabbed the opportunity with considerable gusto.

In fact, prior to the meeting getting underway several people were turned away from the door once the venue had reached its capacity of 300 such was the eagerness to attend.

By 6.45pm the place was rammed, and every single available chair had been filled for Bexhill Town Council's "extraordinary meeting", staged to garner the public's views, which will then be passed onto the Home Office and the Government. One imagines it will make for uncomfortable reading for those in power.

Opening the meeting, chairman Paul Plim said: "Like you, we have been given very little information but, as a town council, we will be passing your views onto the Home Office and our MP Huw Merriman."

The initial question set the tone. "How many extra police will there be on the streets of Bexhill if the proposal becomes reality?" Good question, but no-one had the answer to that one.

Concerns were raised, as they have been at previous meetings, over the "vast number" of asylum seekers reputedly being young single males aged between 20 and 25 who will be, according to one speaker, "loitering around our streets with absolutely nothing to do."



Mayor and Chairman Paul Plim opens the meeting

Another asked for a show of hands from those who disapproved of the plans and the majority of those in the audience duly did so, followed by a round of applause.

By this stage the crowd was becoming restless with many raising their hands in a bid to get their turn with the microphone.

"This is absolutely outrageous," one said. "The site is simply not fit for purpose. We will keep fighting to stop it becoming a reality. This is not going to happen."

Then the focus switched back to Mr Merriman, who was conspicuous by his absence despite a name tag having been prepared for him beforehand.

"Why isn't he here," a visibly angry attendee said. "He was invited but no surprise, he is not here. He should remember that charity begins at home. We are becoming a minority in our own country."

That led to a huge round of applause from those opposed to Northeye, with several sporting black and white T-shirts bearing the motif, "Say no to Northeye".

In stark contrast, one young woman sporting a rather fetching orange hairstyle, stood up for the refugees only to be greeted initially by a chorus of boos when she said: "I am here to represent the Refugee Buddy project.

"We are trying to represent these poor people and to create a welcoming culture. We also don't want this site but that is for humanitarian reasons. It is a former prison site.

"What this community needs to do is to work together and find the right solution. Bexhill is known for being a welcoming town."

That clearly riled the next speaker, however. She said. "As it stands we cannot get an appointment with a GP or a dentist. If this gets the go-ahead maybe we would be better off staying at the camp. At least then we might be able to get an appointment."

Then the unfortunate Mr Merriman found himself back in sharp focus. Another speaker added: "Merriman needs to listen to his constituents, which he is clearly not doing.

"We are being bullied and he is an absolute disgrace. He hasn't attended any of the meetings which have been held so far. He is a career politician and he doesn't care one jot about us and we are the ones who will be casting our votes at the next General Election.

"We are all here to show the Government we will not go down without a fight. Those in power must be held accountable for their actions and that is what we intend to do."

Matters then turned to the potential adverse affect on property prices should Northeye go ahead with one woman brandishing a recent valuation of her home in Little Common. She said: "My property has just been valued and it is shocking. It is now worth less than half of what it was."

Mr Merriman was not out of the woods yet, though, as a man chipped in, adding: "I travel a lot and I worry about the safety of my wife and kids.

"I understand Mr Merriman lives in Burwash so let's move the immigration centre to Burwash instead."

As the meeting drew to a close there was a surreal moment when former councillor Sharon Blagrove was shot down in flames by an irate Mr Plim for "electioneering" and duly had her speech cut brutally short.

It was that sort of night really.

Entertaining certainly with many views well put, but one imagines it has achieved precisely nothing in terms of moving towards a definitive solution.

Following the meeting, Mr Merriman issued a statement which confirmed he had voted in support of the Illegal Migration Bill.

The Bill, which was passed by the House of Commons, is designed to stop criminal gangs sending people on the dangerous journey across the English Channel to reach the UK and claim asylum.

Mr Merriman said he had to be in Parliament to vote on the bill and therefore he was not able to attend the public meeting in Bexhill regarding the proposed asylum centre at Northeye which had been organised by Bexhill Town Council.

The MP said: "The Illegal Migration Bill is an important piece of legislation for our local area and for Bexhill, in particular, where the Home Office has proposed to site an asylum centre.

"The Bill seeks to fulfil the Prime Minister's promise to stop small boat crossings. Importantly, it will make it unlawful to cross the channel via small boat to claim asylum. Those who do will be detained and therefore would not find themselves in the proposed Northeye Asylum Centre.

"When this Bill completes its way through the House of Lords, and we have got through our current asylum processing backlog, it should render the Northeye Asylum Centre redundant.

"As I was required to be in Parliament to vote, I was unable to attend the public meeting in Bexhill regarding the Northeye proposal which had been organised by Bexhill Town Council.

"The meeting had been arranged and advertised before I was invited to attend and I was not consulted as to whether I would be available.

"I did let the Town Council know why I would not be there in the hope that this would be conveyed to those attending the meeting.

"I remain committed to ensuring that information about the Asylum Centre is made available to the public at the earliest opportunity. I also remain committed to holding a public meeting.

"Given that the proposed site is still pending results of contamination and environmental surveys, a public meeting will be best held when we have more certainty and information to discuss."



CAFÉ OWNER IS DEVASTATED BY LATEST BREAK-IN ON SEAFRONT

BY KIM MAYO

A DEVASTATED Bexhill business owner has spoken out after her seafront cafe was broken into for the second time in the space of just months.

Steph Stockton, who owns the Sovereign Light cafe, has once again been targeted by vandals who not only caused significant damage to the property but also stole soft drinks and ice cream worth hundreds of pounds, causing severe disruption to her business as well as an additional financial blow.

She said: "What is wrong with these people? Do they get some kind of kick out of it? We are trying to make a living in what are extremely difficult times, but clearly they don't care what we have to go through.

"I just find it so sad. All we are trying to do is make an honest living and serve the local community. The cafe is a great place for people to gather, enjoy each others' company and relax. But it seems some just think it is cool to cause devastation and disrupt our trade."

The latest break-in occurred in late April and Steph is still counting the cost as, despite the loss of stock, the cafe also had to be temporarily closed while repairs were carried out.

She added: "Basically they used a crowbar to gain access via a side window. It is a massive blow to the business and to be honest with you I just feel violated.

"When I arrived the following day it was just



a scene of devastation and I was absolutely heartbroken. I mean how can anyone do this to us? We are just trying to make an honest living in trying times.

"They stole soft drinks, they took ice cream from the freezer and they wrecked our till which will cost £900 to replace. In total, the stock which was taken will cost an additional £300 to replace."

In recent months petty crime and break-ins have risen significantly in Bexhill with several businesses being targeted.

Steph said: "It is just getting worse and worse and

I am at a stage when I dread the phone ringing.

"As business owners we want to feel safe and protected but it seems some people simply don't care about the impact their actions have on law-abiding citizens.

"It is quite clear this latest break-in was premeditated. They brought trolleys they had taken from Sainsbury's so they could load up the items they stole and were also equipped with tools so they could break in.

"All I want to do is make an honest living. My staff and I work very hard and I know our

customers appreciate our efforts.

"We have a very loyal customer base but when there is a break-in like the latest one we cannot work while repairs are carried out to repair the damage, both the staff and our customers suffer. And for what?

"It is just a mindless act of vandalism, it is as simple as that. It destroys people's lives. Our cafe is relatively out of the way and as a result is quite vulnerable, but we just want to be a social hub for the community.

"I have owned the cafe for the past four years and I love what I do. We are here to provide a service which people enjoy.

"But just when you think everything is going well in these tough economic times some individuals seem to think it is fun to ruin it for the majority.

"I don't understand what they gain out of it. All their actions do is cause pain and anguish and it is really upsetting.

"I have always supported the youngsters in our town. Several have done work experience at the cafe and they have all been lovely.

"They work hard and make a significant contribution to the business. But then there are also those who seem to delight in making things tough for us.

"Of course, we will recover from this because we are determined to bounce back and continue our success story, but when something like this happens you cannot help but feel depressed.

"I know other businesses have been broken into in recent months as well and the impact can be absolutely devastating.

"Bexhill has so much going for it, but incidents like this are so unfortunate. I know the majority of the community support businesses like ours, however, and that is extremely comforting."

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TRIBUTES ARE PAID TO HUGELY-POPULAR COUNTY COUNCILLOR FOLLOWING HIS DEATH

TRIBUTES have been paid following the death of a long-serving county councillor who has died at the age of 70.

Cllr Rupert Simmons, who represented the Heathfield and Mayfield division and served as a Cabinet member responsible for economy, died on Monday, April 17.

Paying tribute to his friend and colleague, Council leader Keith Glazier said: "Rupert was a respected member of this council, who brought a wealth of experience and worked tirelessly to represent his community, as well as the interests of businesses across the county in his role as lead member.

"We were shocked by the news of Rupert's death. He will be greatly missed by councillors and officers alike and, on behalf of everyone at East Sussex County Council, I'd like to send our sincere condolences to his family and friends."

Cllr Simmons graduated from Reading University with an honours degree in Estate Management before embarking on a colourful and varied career which took him around the globe.

His working life began in Surrey where he practised as a chartered surveyor before deciding to travel around Europe.

He eventually settled in Oslo where he worked in an advertising business before moving to Vienna where he set up a music business.

Following his success, he moved to Connecticut in the USA to recreate the business.

Cllr Simmons' interest in politics was sparked when he subsequently worked in the Democrat Presidential campaign team for Vice-Presidential candidate Walter Mondale in 1984.



Returning to the UK, he worked at London Weekend Television before joining the Observer newspaper where he rose to become management executive and became publisher of the Colour Supplement. In 1989 he became a partner and published the Investment Trusts Magazine.

After moving to Waldron in 1990, Cllr Simmons soon became involved in local politics and served his community for a quarter of a century having been elected to Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council in 1997, Wealden District Council in 1999 and East Sussex County Council in 2001.

In his own division, Cllr Simmons chaired the Heathfield Partnership Trust for 20 years and was well known and well-respected among residents.

Outside politics, Cllr Simmons' interests were varied. He was an avid Liverpool Football Club fan and an enthusiastic follower of American Football. He had a love of jazz music and an extensive record collection.

The East Sussex County Council flag was raised and lowered to half-mast in tribute to Cllr Simmons.

BOLD NEW SCULPTURE IS NOW ON DISPLAY OUTSIDE THE DE LA WARR

AN eye-catching new art installation is now on display on the rear lawns behind the rear entrance of the De La Warr Pavilion and you certainly cannot miss it.

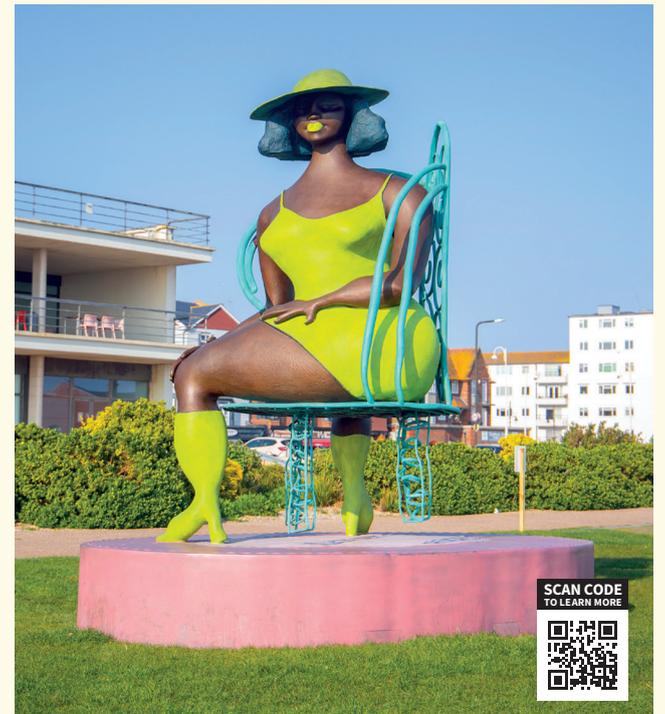
The new public sculpture by American artist Tschabalala Self is entitled "Seated" and is an imposing three metres-high.

It is made from patinated bronze. Using an everyday object — a seat — and is described as an entry point for questions of permission and performance within public space.

According to the De La Warr, its subject — "poised, immaculately dressed, glancing to her left" — emboldens onlookers to sit with confidence and comfort.

The artist said: "Taking a seat is a universal act of leisure and calm.

"I wanted to create a monumental sculpture for the public that spoke to this simple joy. The woman is strong, beautiful and self-possessed.



"She represents all individuals, but women in particular, who understand the power and importance of simple gestures that assert their right to take up space".

You can learn more about the sculpture at: <https://bit.ly/3K06dgb>

The sculpture will be on the lawns until October 29. However, the De La Warr has urged people not to climb on the artwork to ensure it does not get damaged.



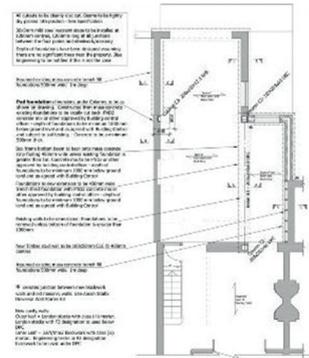
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COLLECTORS FLOCK TO LEADING VINYL STORE FOR RECORD STORE DAY

BY KIM MAYO

FOR those who collect vinyl, Record Store Day requires plenty of dedication and fairly deep pockets and so it proved once more on Saturday, April 22.

The event in Bexhill was once again staged at Music's Not Dead, situated in the foyer of the De La Warr Pavilion, and co-owners Del Querns and Oliver Cherer, had every reason to look happy as the national record-collecting event once again proved to be a resounding success.

The concept of Record Store Day, which is held on an annual basis, is straightforward. A list of highly-collectable limited edition albums and singles are available on a first come, first served basis. In essence, once they are gone, they are gone and that is it.

As and when they turn up on the secondhand market via online auction sites such as Ebay, you can expect to pay through the nose for them.

As for the day itself, even queuing up overnight beforehand doesn't necessarily mean you will bag the cherished record you want if someone is ahead of you waiting for the doors to open.

Del said: "It does take a lot of dedication and perseverance to get the record you want to get your hands on but even then you can still sometimes miss out.

"Our Record Store Day events are always popular and this year was certainly no exception to that rule. There were some people who camped out overnight and by the time we were ready to open the doors there were more than 50 record enthusiasts waiting patiently to get in and check out what was available.

Music's Not Dead is viewed by many as the best record shop dealing in new vinyl in Sussex and it is not difficult to understand why.

Both Del and Ollie are avid record collectors themselves with a



Del and Ollie from Music's Not Dead based at the De La Warr Pavilion

wealth of knowledge accumulated over many years in the trade and they like nothing better than passing that on and discussing music with both seasoned customers and newcomers just embarking on their own personal vinyl journey which invariably lasts a lifetime.

Ollie said: "You always say to yourself 'I'll just buy one more record and then that's it'. But of course it never is, even when room to store them all is running out. Collectors are creatures of habit. They never want to stop because there is always something new and you just have to have it, no matter what."

Pointing at me, he added: "Well you know what it is like. You see the latest releases and somehow you always find the money to pay for it because you feel you have to have it, as otherwise, your collection would be incomplete. The problem is that a record collection is never complete.

All I can say is guilty as charged.

So, what were the top sellers on the big day itself? It is fair to say that Taylor Swift, not my cup of tea admittedly, led the way.

Her double album "Folklore: The Long Pond Studio Sessions" may have cost north of 50 quid for the double vinyl album, but it literally flew off the shelves and there were a few disappointed latecomers who were told: "Sorry, they've all gone."

But there were plenty of other nuggets to get your hands on and the eclectic releases were certainly selected to cater for all tastes.

The 1975 were clearly popular with some of the younger clientele while those who remember Blur in their Britpop pomp made a beeline for "Present the Special Collectors Edition", a lavish package incorporating many of their lesser-known 'B' sides.

Crawley's very own The Cure was another popular choice with their double album "Show" while another Sussex band, Bevis Frond, also saw good sales of their "Hit Squad" double LP.

In a nutshell, there was something for everyone, whether into prog rock, punk, Afrobeat and so forth. There was even a release of "When Will I Be Famous" by Eighties pop duo Bros.

"That is what Record Store Day is all about, Del said with a grin. "We have been lucky this year. First and foremost the sun came out which always helps and we also have a very loyal customer base.

"They come back year after year and they know they are always assured of a warm welcome. More and more people are getting into collecting vinyl records which is great news.

"But it is not just about Record Store Day, as popular as it is. We want to promote music and encourage people to buy records regularly.

"It is clear that buying vinyl records is not a flash in the pan. It is growing all the time and that is good news for businesses like ours. Long may it continue."

DON'T MISS THE BEXHILL BAVARD BAR!

FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY, ON WEDNESDAY 7 JUNE AT THE MANOR BARN, THE BAVARD BAR IS COMING TO BEXHILL

"The Bavard Bar really is the most amazing event." So said audience member David Knight after his visit to the show. But don't just take his word for it. Come along and see for yourself.

Billed as 'A delightful blend of TED, comedy and Radio 4', the Bavard Bar is a unique night of entertainment.

WHAT TO EXPECT...

Expect the unexpected as aside from Tim B'vard and Piano Man Dan, no-one knows the subjects of the night's passions until the night!

Three pre-booked speakers take the stage and share something



they're passionate about for around 15 minutes each. Over the years the show has been running (it's a regular monthly feature at Kino-teatr in St Leonards and Towner in Eastbourne), there have been an enormous variety of passions. From Star Trek to Crop Circles, Klivan to Wassailing, and Secret Stones to Secret Nuclear Bunkers... every show is always a joyful surprise!

NOT ONLY THAT...

On top of the passions shared by the night's bavarders, there are a number of comedy style improv games, such as the 'Oojah Kappivvy' and 'KP Lite'. Not to mention 'Make it Stop' and the Caption Competition. So you're guaranteed a night of fun, as well as passion!



For more info and to book tickets to the one-off Bexhill Bavard, visit www.bavardbar.co.uk or www.ticketsource.co.uk

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Surf & Earth Evening!
Wednesday 19th April 6.30pm £46pp

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- Roasted Fillet of Hake. Jerusalem Artichokes, Baby Herbs & Nage Broth Rallo Vicoletto Catarratto Orange Wine ****
- Pan Fried Fillet of Gurnard. Curried Celeriac Puree, Spiced Peas, Celeriac & Apple Bhaji Araldica Cortese ****
- "The Broken Easter Egg" filled with Carrot Cake Cheesecake, Walnuts & Candied Carrots Mozart Belgian Chocolate Liqueur

SUPERMARKET GIANT UNVEILS MAJOR PLANS TO OPEN STORES AT MORE THAN 30 SITES ACROSS SUSSEX



Bexhill has been identified as one of the prime targets as Lidl aims for rapid expansion across Sussex.

This announcement comes after a record 1.4 million new shoppers switching over to the German-owned giant in 2022.

Kantar has also listed the discount retailer as the fastest growing supermarket, with sales up nearly 26 per cent and opening more than 50 stores last year.

There are more than 950 stores across the country and Lidl opened another 15 new stores in the past three months.

The company has ambitious plans to have more than 1,100 stores in the UK.

The following Sussex areas have been sited: Battle, Bexhill South and Bexhill North (relocation), Brighton City Centre, Hollingbury, Kempton, London Road, Moulsecoomb and Portslade, Burgess Hill South, Crawley North and South, relocation to Three Bridges, and Eastbourne Old Town and Willingdon.

Also, Goring, Hailsham, Hastings East and West, Haywards Heath, Heathfield, Horsham

North and West, and Central (relocation), Lancing, Lewes, Midhurst, Newhaven (relocation), Pagham, Peacehaven, Rustington, Rye, Seaford, Uckfield and Worthing (relocation).

Ryan McDonnell, Lidl GB CEO, commented: "The last few years have been challenging for everyone, but we've made it clear that we're more committed than ever to ensuring that every single household has access to a Lidl store.

"That's why our focus is firmly on the future as we continue to grow and invest in our infrastructure, while keeping a lookout for more sites and locations across the country. We had over 1.4 million new shoppers coming to us from our competitors over the course of last year. This alone shows the potential for continued growth as customers refuse to pay a premium for their shopping, when they know they can get the same, if not better quality at Lidl.

"As we progress further into 2023, we know that more shoppers will make the switch, and whichever of our stores they choose, they know they're getting the best value."

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BexhillEvents

ARE YOU HOLDING A CHARITY OR NON-PROFIT EVENT?
For a **FREE LISTING**, email your details to: events@Bexhill.News

BEXHILL FARMERS' MARKET

Devonshire Square, Bexhill. Every Friday, 9am-1pm

Pop by to visit and select local quality traceable produce and crafts, including freshly baked bread and sweet treats, fresh and cured meats and cheeses, fruit and vegetables, plants, honey, chutneys, plus lots more. Stalls offer quality locally produced or sourced foods and goods.

EAST SUSSEX VISION SUPPORT BEXHILL SOCIAL GROUP

St Augustine's Church Hall, Bexhill. First Friday of the month

We provide a social atmosphere for blind and partially sighted people including the opportunity to meet and make new friends. We can provide transport to St Augustine's and the afternoon includes refreshments, entertainment and a raffle and we also arrange lunch outings. If you are interested in joining, please contact Christine on 01323 482407 or East Sussex Vision Support Head Office on 01323 832252.

GOLDEN ACTIVITIES - GENTLE CHAIR EXERCISES

The Bagnall Room, 25 Sackville Road, Bexhill, TN39 3JD
Every Monday Morning, 10.30am-11.30am

We are a friendly group and welcome everyone. £6 each (carers are free) includes refreshments. At The Bagnall Room (next to Bexhill Caring Community). For more information contact Anna 07961 349956

KIDS STORYTELLING & CRAFT WORKSHOP

Eco Hub, The Mall, Western Road, Bexhill, TN40 1DX
Saturday 4 February, 11am-3pm

Come along and meet our storyteller and enjoy some fun and simple crafts ideas. This event is free to attend.

INDOOR CAR BOOT SALE

9th Bexhill Scout Hall, Wainwright Road, Bexhill, TN39 3UR
Every Sunday, 9am-12 noon

All the usual items you would expect to find at an Indoor Car Boot Sale - but maybe find that surprising item - you never know what you may find!

SIDLEY FRIENDSHIP CLUB

Freedom Church, Sidley Street entrance (behind Lidl)
Every third Monday of the month, 2pm-4pm

A social club for ladies and gents over 50 years old. Speakers, Games, Bingo, Coach Trips etc. No Annual fees, Just £2 each meeting which includes refreshments. New Members welcomed.

BEXHILL SEASIDE LADIES' GROUP

St Michael's Church Small Hall, Glassenbury Drive,
Every 4th Wednesday of the month, 7.30pm

A social club for ladies 50+ years old with speakers, quizzes, etc

TEA AND TODDLERS

St Augustine's Church, Cooden Drive, Bexhill-on-Sea TN39 3AZ
Every Thursday, 9am-10.30am

Free friendly Toddler group. Come and join us for play, chat and refreshments. Donations are gratefully received. For more information contact Daisy at st.augustines288@outlook.com or 07544326059

BEXHILL TUESDAY FOR THE BLIND AND PARTIALLY SIGHTED

St Mark's Church, Little Common. Every Tuesday afternoon.

Are you feeling isolated and want to make new friends? Then come and join in with lunches, cream teas, quizzes and entertainment. We can even pick you up and take you home. Call Jane on 01424 729323.

BEXHILL DEMENTIA ACTION ALLIANCE (BDAA)

St Mark's Church Hall, Little Common, Bexhill TN39 4BZ
11 May 2023, 11am-1pm

BDAA are hosting a social information and advice event for everyone involved with dementia in the local area. Come along and find out about BDAA, and what is available to support people with dementia to live well. Representatives from services, including homecare, residential, health, solicitors, and hospital care, as well as voluntary organisations will be available with information. There will be a free raffle, as well as teas, coffees and light refreshments available. Carers, relatives, friends and people with dementia, or memory problems all welcome! For further information, please see our website www.bexhilldementiaactionalliance.co.uk, our Facebook page, or ring 07749 037 257

THE BEXHILL & DISTRICT VETERANS ASSOCIATION

The Town Square Social Club, London Road, Bexhill
Every First Thursday of the month, 1pm - Meeting
Second Thursday of every month - Lunch, various locations

We are an Association for Navy, Army and Airforce Veterans and their wives and partners. On the 2nd Thursday of each month we go for a lunch at various restaurants in the town and sometimes just outside. We support a number of our local Charities including Sidley Food Bank (The Market Place) plus Veterans Growth, British Legion Home and the British Legion Poppy Appeal. We do Honour Guards for Veterans funerals. We also have day trips out by coach. Any ex-service personnel that would like to find out more, either attend one of our meetings or contact the Chairman, John Collins on 07922 529904 or johncollins4664@aol.com.

BEXHILL CHORAL SOCIETY

St Peter's Church, Church Street, Bexhill. TN40 2HE
Saturday 13th May, 7.30

We are pleased to present a Choral Celebration with a range of superb music - something for everyone! The concert moves from favourite 'classical' items from composers such as Vivaldi, Bach, Mozart and Handel (including the Hallelujah Chorus), through pieces by Verdi, Elgar and Faure to the more recent classics such as Howard Goodall's The Lord is my Shepherd, favourite Beatles songs and finishing with Gershwin Greats including the much-loved Summertime.

Tickets available £14 in advance or £16 on the door. In advance from Second Spin, Sackville Road, Bexhill (cash only), choir members or 01424 272948 or Online from ticketsource.co.uk/bcs. (Booking fees apply)

FREE GIVEAWAY TO SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY.

At Living Word Church, side entrance, Eastwood Rd TN39 3PS
On Saturday 20th May 9am-12. (Held every 3rd Saturday of each month)

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**KING CHARLES III
&
QUEEN CAMILLA**
6th MAY 2023



ROTARIAN VERNON VOLUNTEERS SKILLS TO HELP WITH BANDSTAND RESTORATION



Vernon Findlay

BEXHILL Rotarian Vernon Findlay has been putting his woodworking skills to work to help Bexhill Heritage renovate the bandstand on the town's seafront.

The Bandstand was completed back in 1895 and purchased by Earl De La Warr who surrounded the stand with an enclosure to add comfort for the public attending band performances.

In 1904 the Earl decided, after complaints from visitors of the discomfort caused by traffic and strong winds, to convert the bandstand to a shelter.

Sadly by the late 20th century the bandstand was in a sorry state so it was leased to Bexhill Heritage in 2021 which led to the start of the long restoration process, which involved many volunteers, including Bexhill Rotarian Vernon.

Mr Findlay said: "My involvement with the bandstand was mainly applying my woodworking skills to make new ventilation panels as well as repairs to old timbers."

He added: "I had to make a special jig to cut the trefoil shapes in the timber."

Vernon is now busy making coasters using some of the mahogany reclaimed from the bandstand window sills.

He has already sold 20 of them with all the proceeds being passed on to a range of charitable causes including Bexhill Foodbank and Warming Up The Homeless.

Thanks to Vernon's hard work, along with all the other volunteers involved, the bandstand has been completely restored to its former glory and it had its official reopening on Saturday April 1 this year.

In its centenary year Bexhill Rotary Club is welcoming prospective new members to take part in our numerous community activities and looking to join an enthusiastic, busy and fun-loving club.

To find out more, email Honorary Secretary Stephen White at stephanandlaura98@yahoo.co.uk

READERS' LETTERS

Write to the editor: Letters@Bexhill.News



BANDSTAND SUCCESS

Dear Editor, I would like to commend the work that Bexhill Heritage, Bexhill Town Council and Rother District Council have done together to see the Bandstand in Bexhill restored to its former glory.

The official launch weekend was brilliant and a joy to be a part of. I was amazed as the gentleman that introduced Sussex Brass, said that it was the first time a brass band had played in the bandstand for over 100 years. What an amazing feat it was to get the bandstand restored, and a fantastic feat to organise for over 10 different people and groups to take a turn in the bandstand.

There is so many awful things going on around us, it is such a joy for something encouraging and uplifting to happen.

I stayed at the bandstand for the whole of Saturday morning and it was lovely to see some of the different people and groups participating in this auspicious occasion. I am looking forward to the Coronation Celebration Weekend, which promises more of the same.

I hope the newly preserved and conserved bandstand will last long into the future, and get much use from local groups using this wonderful addition to our seafront.

Andrew Moore

Dear Editor, I have to agree with the letter from G Davies and B Grist regarding the proposed car parking changes in Bexhill.

However, my main concern with the parking scheme in general is the two-hour time limit in the town centre.

This is just not sufficient time to do some shopping call at a bank, have a cup of coffee or something to eat let alone visit the opticians or dentist.

Not everyone can walk in from halfway along West Parade or from close to Galley Hill. As Alice Griffin said in the same issue, we are watching Bexhill die.

Our M.P Huw Merriman has said it is his vision for Bexhill to become a 'go to destination'. I am afraid it is now well on the way to becoming a DON'T GO TO DESTINATION.

R. Holden.

Dear Editor, Our future councillors need to prioritise improving our streets in their upcoming term to help people choose cleaner and healthier ways to travel.

The benefits of people walking more are plentiful, from increased physical activity and better health to reduced congestion and cleaner air.

Ahead of local elections and National Walking Month this May, walking charity Living Streets has set out seven steps to create better places for walking in their 'Blueprint for Change'. Steps include maintaining pavements, improving pedestrian crossings, and investing in public transport. You can read more about this at livingstreets.org.uk/blueprint.

All these measures can make walking a safer and more attractive option and help bring our communities and streets to life.

It's time to give walking the priority it deserves.

Mike Cope.

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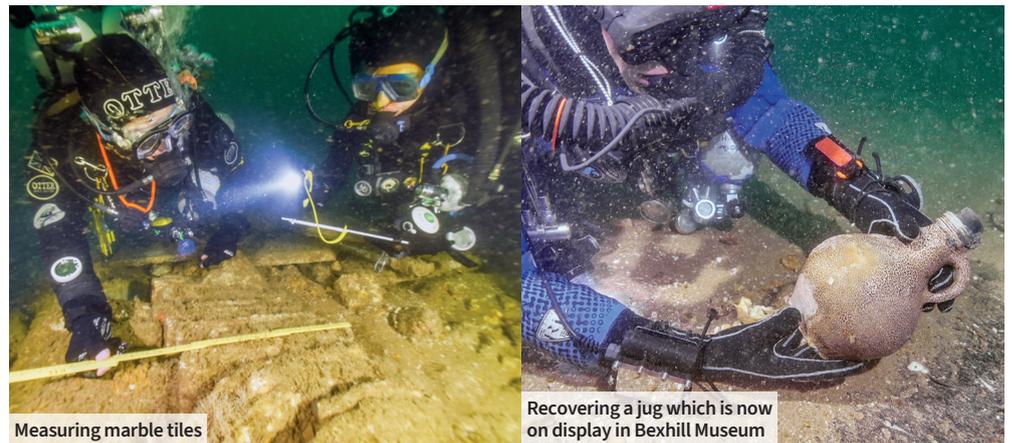
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A BEXHILL LANDMARK SINCE 1902

SHIPWRECK – THE SINKING THAT SPARKED A WAR



Measuring marble tiles

Recovering a jug which is now
on display in Bexhill Museum

THE sinking of a ship off the coast of Bexhill led to a two-year war with the Dutch – and now residents can see items found at the wreck.

Objects recovered from the wreck form a new exhibition at Bexhill Museum which opened on 27th April.

The ship was the Klein Hollandia, a Dutch warship which had been escorting a convoy of merchant ships in the Mediterranean in 1672. On its journey home the fleet was attacked by English ships off the Isle of Wight.

The two countries were not at war at the time – but they were two weeks later. This was the Third Anglo-Dutch War which lasted two years.

The Klein Hollandia was badly damaged and surrendered. A boarding party of English sailors were sent aboard to bring it back to an English port. The damage proved to be too great and it sank off Bexhill.

The wreck was first dived on in 2019. The exhibition explains how the ship was identified from markings on one of the cannons.

The story was also told in the BBC2 *Digging for Britain* series, which was shown in January this year.

Museum volunteers are happy to explain the story to visitors to the museum as you see some of the items which have been brought to the surface and you can watch a video of the divers in action.

The museum is open Tuesdays to Sundays from 11am to 4pm (closed on Mondays). Admission is £4 for adults, £3 concessions and £2 for children aged 5-16. Under fives are free.

There are four main galleries covering natural history, costume and social history, Bexhill's motoring heritage and the town in World War II. For younger visitors there are quizzes, a dressing-up area and interactive displays.



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Victorian Heyday Events

St Barnabas Church, Bexhill has planned a programme of fun and entertainment — come and join them in celebrating their rich Victorian Heritage.

SATURDAY 10TH JUNE 10AM — 3.30 PM
Craft Fair with a Victorian flavour and traditional crafts demonstrations.

SATURDAY 10TH JUNE 7PM
Trinity College of London Harp Students. The students harpists, including two from Ukraine, will be performing a showcase of repertoire both old and new. Admission: retiring collection.

FRIDAY 16TH JUNE 11AM
Sussex Day Charter read by Paul Lendon, Sussex Day Lead.
Music and refreshments and fun!
Admission free — donations welcomed.

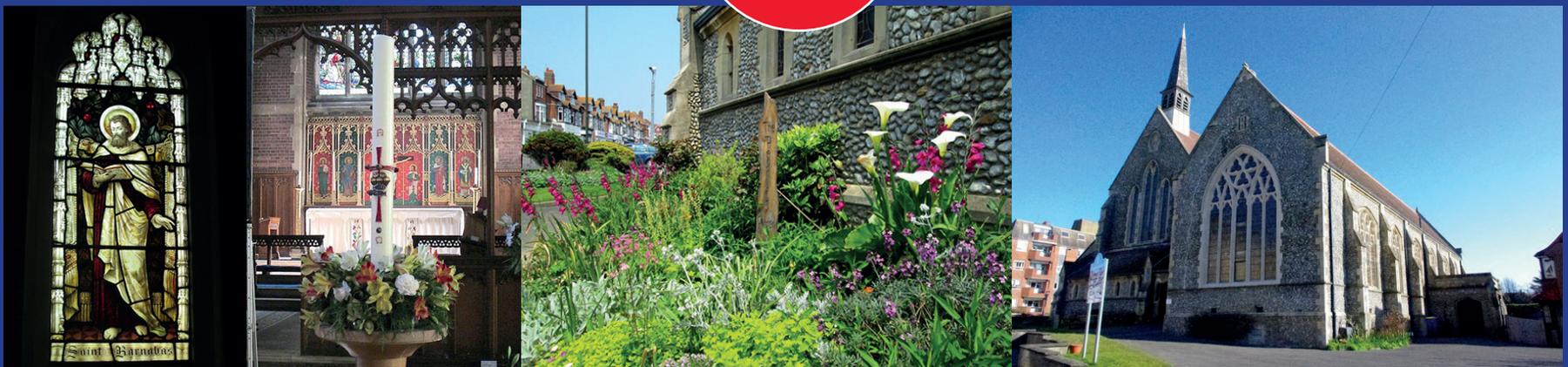
SATURDAY 17TH JUNE 7.30PM
'Piano in the Parlour' — Kenneth Roberts
Come and enjoy an evening of music and talk in the Victorian Parlour.
Admission: Ticket £12 from Second Spin (cash), Bexhill Choral Society or on the door.

SATURDAY 24TH JUNE 8 PM
Music from the West End Shows —
Lizzii Hills

Lizzii is well known for her part as the Witch in the Palladium show Wizard of Oz. Also for her generous gift of entertaining Bexhill residents throughout the pandemic. Admission: retiring collection.

WEDNESDAY 28TH JUNE 10AM
A Living Museum — St Peter and St Paul Primary School. Come and talk to famous Victorian characters. The children in Year 4 will be presenting their 'Victorian Living Museum' where they will be making famous historical figures from the Victorian Period 'come alive'. Admission free — donation welcomed.

ST BARNABAS PARISH CHURCH
Cantelupe Road (corner with Sea Road),
Bexhill-on-Sea TN40 1JG
Registered Charity No 1201059





**BEXHILL CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE**
**OFFICIAL
CORONATION
CELEBRATIONS**

May 6th 2023
9am - 9pm

Seafront Lawns & De La Warr Pavilion Terrace
Bexhill-on-Sea. TN40 1DP



**LIVE
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**FREE TO
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**THANKS TO ALL FOR MAKING BEXHILL SUCH A
SPECIAL PLACE TO LIVE, WORK AND PLAY**

**BEXHILL BUSINESSES
BACK OFFICIAL CORONATION
CELEBRATIONS**

Bexhill Chamber of Commerce have been recognised by Buckingham Palace as the official Bexhill King Charles III Coronation event promoters.

This fantastic news means that Bexhill will be at the heart of the biggest Coronation Celebrations in our area on May 6th. From 9am there will be a BIG SCREEN on Bexhill seafront showing LIVE coverage of all the pomp and circumstance of the Coronation processions, ceremony, balcony waves and Red Arrow flypast. This will be followed at 4pm by a spectacular special Bexhill Coronation Concert that brings together the very best of local musical talent.

All this is thanks to the support of Bexhill on Sea Town Council and RDC and the INCREDIBLE generosity of so many local businesses who have pulled together to cover the costs of the event.

Bexhill Coronation Celebrations are FREE TO ATTEND. Bring your own chairs and picnic blankets to have a fantastic day out by the seaside. Great food, drink and family friendly entertainment will be also available.

A Charity fundraising event for Bexhill Lions.



Bexhill News

MAY 6th CORONATION DAY (APPROX) TIMETABLE

0900 BIG SCREEN ON DLWP LAWNS sponsored by MAYBUGS starts LIVE COVERAGE OF THE DAY

HISTORIC EVENTS

1000 King Charles and Queen Camilla Royal Procession from Buckingham Palace to Westminster Abbey
1100 THE HISTORIC CORONATION OF KING CHARLES and QUEEN CAMILLA
1400 Royal Procession from Westminster Abbey to Buckingham Palace
1500 King and Queen on Buckingham Palace Balcony SALUTE OF ROYAL AIR FORCE RED ARROWS FLYPAST

BEXHILL SPECIAL CORONATION CONCERT

On the De La Warr Pavilion Terrace.
Some of the greatest music from the finest musicians of all genres in our area.

1600 ROTHER COMMUNITY CHOIR
The award winning choir of forty voices performing the very best of Last Night of the Proms
1700 Lea Goddard
The stunning vocal soloist sings songs from the 40s/50s and 60s in a unique Rat Pack style
1810 Sound Syndicate
The biggest and best party band smashes the hits from the 70s to 2000s
1930 HEADLINE: The Rockitmen
The biggest stadium rocking covers band on the South Coast stomp into the evening with their legendary Queen, U2, Elton John and many more party anthems

FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT FUNFAIR with



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EASTER DISPLAY SUCCESS FOR BEXHILL 100

The Bexhill 100 motoring club held its Easter Bonnet display on the promenade last month. The cold sea mists didn't stop almost sixty vehicles turning up for the display. The area became extremely busy with people enjoying looking at the cars and chatting to the owners. It hailed the start of the car display season for the group with many planned over the coming summer months, all of which can be found at www.bexhill100mc.co.uk.

FIRE BREAKS OUT IN RESIDENTIAL GARAGE

EMERGENCY services were in attendance as a fire broke out in a garage at a property in Bexhill.

East Sussex Fire and Rescue was called at 8pm on Sunday April 2 to reports of a domestic garage fire in the town.

Forty minutes later four fire engines and officers were at the scene on Galley Hill View. There were no reports of injuries.

An hour later, crews remained to dampen down the scene and by 10pm everything was under control.

Although still under investigation, the blaze is believed to have started in a tumble drier.



THREE TEENAGERS ARRESTED AFTER BUST-UP AT RESTAURANT

THREE teenagers were arrested by police after an altercation at a restaurant on Monday, April 3.

Officers were called to Devonshire Road at approximately 6.40pm to reports of a group of youths threatening a boy in a restaurant.

As police arrived the group dispersed but several suspects were found on the seafront nearby. They were searched by officers and a 16-year-old from Bexhill was arrested on suspicion of affray, making threats to kill, attempted robbery, possession of cannabis and being concerned in the supply of Class B drugs.

Two 14-year-old boys from Bexhill were arrested on suspicion of affray, as well as attempted robbery and grievous bodily harm without intent in relation to a separate matter.

Inspector Olivia Carroll said: "We understand this incident has caused concern among the community, particularly having taken place in a popular area of the town at a busy time.

"Thankfully there were no injuries reported and, thanks to the swift response of our officers, we very quickly had a number of suspects in custody.

Enquiries are ongoing to identify and detain any other individuals who may have been involved.

Anyone who saw the incident, the events leading up to it or has any relevant footage is asked to contact police online or via 101 quoting serial 1189 of 03/04."



RESIDENTS TAKE TO THE STREETS TO SAY GOODBYE TO TOMMY LAKE

WELL-KNOWN Bexhill character Tommy Lake made his final journey from Bexhill as many residents gathered to say a final farewell.

Tommy, who died aged 53, was transported from Mummery Funeralcare in Devonshire Road in a brightly-coloured psychedelic coffin as local residents lined the streets to bid him goodbye.

His family, including his sister, three children and ex-wife, had expressed the wish that the funeral cortege travel along Sea Road, where he had been walked in a pram as a baby by his mum.

And so it came to pass with



ripples of applause breaking out as residents and mourners lined the pavements to send him off in style.

Floral tributes and a teddy bear had been left on his favourite bench in Bexhill ever since the news broke that he had passed away, along with many touching messages from the people who knew him so well.

Following the service at Hastings Crematorium on Monday April 3, a wake was due to take place at the Royal British Legion in Bexhill.

BEXHILL-ON-SEA TOWN COUNCIL UPDATE



ONE BIG STEP FORWARD IN PRESERVING OUR UNIQUE BEXHILL ENVIRONMENT

The Town Council is making a start on the Bexhill Wild Domesday Project. The project centres on involving the population of Bexhill, especially young people, in an assessment of our wild and natural treasures, how to conserve them and how, in the end, to enhance their habitats for the greater benefit of the town's population and its natural assets.

Fortunately, Bexhill has access to a host of local naturalists, wildlife organizations and enthusiasts backed up by voluntary and professional organisations, and experts on environments and species ranging from beetles and butterflies to soil erosion, bird migration and sea defences, who want to make sure that our natural environment is logged, monitored, and rescued before it is too late.

In 1971, L. J. Bartley, the Editor of the Bexhill-on-Sea Observer, wrote a book entitled The Story of Bexhill. In its 200 pages describing the history of Bexhill from the founding by King Offa



in 772 through to the 20th Century, there was no mention of the landscape or coastal assets, fens, marshes, woodland, or meadows. There was no mention of wildlife, climate, weather patterns or anything to do with Bexhill's natural environment. Yet Bexhill has some of the finest wildlife in Britain, treasured woodlands, a wide variety of wet and dry landscapes including marsh and rare fen and beach plant environments, parklands, public and private gardens, allotments, some good farming country and miles of footpaths and hedgerows.

Bexhill is an important landing point for migratory birds and insects. It also has a beautiful sea environment, with rocks, cliffs, and vast areas of low-tide sand. Our existence depends on plants and animals. The food chain needs to be intact for a healthy biosphere. But all this is under threat from climate change.

Bexhill-on-Sea Town Council has already developed a Climate Change Action Plan which reflects the areas to be addressed by 2030. We

cannot escape from the implications of climate change and sea level rises, and this project is all about identifying what wild and natural treasures Bexhill has, to make sure they survive and thrive. This Wild Domesday Project will be a major contribution from our town towards the national and global efforts being made to slow, mitigate, and adapt to the runaway climate.

The first stage of The Wild Domesday Plan will conform to the East Sussex County Council (ESCC) Responsible Authority Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), and will be developed in consultation with other bodies such as Rother District Council.

We will conduct a comprehensive scientific evaluation phase to identify the types of landscape and ecology we have within the nine Town Wards: Central, Collington, Kewhurst, Old Town, Sackville, St Mark's, St Michael's, St Stephen's, and Sidley. The assessment of Bexhill's plant and wildlife and natural environment will be undertaken in collaboration with a range of experts, amateur and professional, who work to the highest standard.

Using the data obtained from the multiple sources, a team of 18 volunteers (two per ward) would be recruited from interested residents including young people, involving the schools where possible. Trained and guided by naturalist experts, the team would then conduct street-by-street and landscape surveys looking for problems in trees, plant types, wildlife, coastal areas, streams, water courses and pollution of the environment.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer for this unique project, please contact town.clerk@bexhilltowncouncil.gov.uk to express an interest.

ELECTION UPDATE

Election Day is upon us, and the Town Council finds itself with some councillor vacancies for the next four-year term. These vacancies will be filled at the first meeting of the council on Wednesday 24th May 2023.

Are you passionate about your community? Do you want to help make a long-lasting change? Do you have innovative ideas for the council? Do you have concerns about a specific issue and want to do something about it? If this is you, then we need you. We need people from all backgrounds and experiences who reflect their community to put themselves forward for election. Make a change and become a councillor.

You can apply to be a councillor by emailing the Town Clerk. Please give your name, address, and a short summary of why you want to be a councillor. Candidates will then be invited to the meeting on 24th May to present their reasons to the council. The final decision will be taken by a majority vote on the night. Please ensure you have applied by Friday 19th May to be considered.

Contact us at town.clerk@bexhilltowncouncil.gov.uk

VACANCIES

Pebsham and St Michaels Ward (One vacancy)
Old Town Ward (Two vacancies)
Kewhurst Ward (One vacancy)
St Stephen's Ward (One vacancy)

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Wed. 24 May, 6.30pm Annual General Meeting

Please check our website for the agenda as venues and times can be subject to change.

BEXHILL-ON-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

35 Western Road, Bexhill-on-Sea TN40 1DU

Open: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 10am-12pm, and 12:30pm-2:30pm

Contact: town.clerk@bexhilltowncouncil.gov.uk • www.bexhilltowncouncil.gov.uk





KNOW YOUR GARDEN

By Emma Reece, Head Gardener at Bates Green Garden

Bates Green Garden, an RHS Partner Garden, is open every Wednesday until 25th October 2023. For details please go to the website www.batesgreengarden.co.uk and follow the garden on Instagram @batesgreengarden



May is a magical month indeed and one that we gardeners eagerly await. We awake to the glorious sound of birdsong and can now garden for longer periods in the evening.

Which is just as well, as there is a lot to do!

Rather than making you feel overwhelmed, I thought that I would mention a couple of tasks that we should **NOT** do.

Firstly lock up your mower, liberate your lawn and join the brilliant “No Mow May” campaign which is run by the wild plant conservation charity Plantlife. www.plantlife.org.uk

The idea is, that if we all commit to leaving all or at least a part of our lawn alone at least for this month then that will result in a huge impact on the biodiversity of our gardens. It really doesn't matter if you have a tiny lawn or a vast space, the effect nationally will be immense.

The early wildflowers such as dandelions and clover are such an important source of pollen and nectar for bees and butterflies and so often their flowers are chopped off every week by a zealous mower. Leave them be and enjoy the sights and sounds that Nature has to offer.

Here at Bates Green, we are fortunate to have a six-acre Wildflower Meadow which has been managed under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme for many years. It is a feast for all the senses, although we do prefer our visitors not to actually eat the plants!

We are keen to use this meadow as an educational resource in order to promote conservation and a more ‘natural’ way of gardening.

With this in mind, on Thursday 25th May we have invited Colin Reader as our guest speaker for the inaugural Bates Green Study Morning. Colin is the owner of Wild Flower Lawns and Meadows Ltd and he plans to show our attendees how to create spectacular wildflower areas using seeds, plants and wildflower turf.

There will also be the opportunity to visit the Bates Green Garden Wildflower Meadow and identify some of the various wildflower species we have growing in our heavy Wealden clay soil.



Meadow sheep



New smart hedge



Harriet dividing daffodils

Please find the details on our website www.batesgreengarden.co.uk and follow the link to Study Mornings.

My second ‘Not To Do’ task refers to hedges. These are veritable havens for a myriad of flora and fauna. Their presence, particularly in urban gardens, is vital to create corridors for wildlife and they are to be recommended over rigid fences both visually and environmentally.

At the moment they are growing away at speed but they are also highly likely to contain active birds nests, most of which cannot be spotted. The RSPB advises us to avoid any hedge cutting between March to August in order to protect the eggs.

So, be proud of your wayward boundaries and take full advantage of the voracious appetites that garden birds such as blue tits have for aphids and caterpillars. It is said that the hatching of their chicks is perfectly timed with the emergence of aphids, which are the most common pest to be found in our UK hedges. Relax and take advantage of the natural balance of pest and predator.

Millennium Avenue in Beaton's Wood is a joy to behold in the spring, when the native daffodil, *Narcissus pseudonarcissus* is in full flower.

The late Carolyn McCutchan sowed this large swathe over many years and now they make a spectacular show. If you have had any

groups of daffodils that have not flowered then this is the time to lift and divide them.

Use a sharp border spade, lift the whole clump and then replant in smaller groups of 3-5 bulbs. Harriet and Alex bravely carried out this task in the rain last week, providing extra entertainment for the Arlington Bluebell Walk visitors.

A useful May activity is the “Chelsea Chop” which is a useful and straightforward technique to increase the flowering period of your perennials, it also prevents them from growing too tall and floppy.

Take a late summer flowering perennial such as *Helium* or *Phlox* and cut the current growth back by one third to a half, if you have several groups then try cutting back a few but leaving others. Once you have mastered this, you can do the “Hampton Hack” in July. This involves cutting back early summer flowering perennials such as *Alchemilla* and *Geranium* to just above ground level after flowering. This will produce a new flush of fresh foliage and often a second flowering too. Both jobs are easy to remember if you are a fan of the respective RHS Flower Shows.

Enjoy your gardens or outdoor spaces and remember, “all things seem possible in May” (Edwin Way Teal).

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There's only 4 spaces in every class, so every owner gets the personalised help they need. My classes are very popular, so you need to apply for a space visit: pawtastic Gundog Adventures.co.uk/training-classes or scan the QR Code below.



OPINION

FREEDOM OF SPEECH IS A VITAL CORNERSTONE OF OUR DEMOCRACY

BY KIM MAYO

EVER since I started in journalism in South Africa more than 40 years ago, I have always fervently believed in the freedom of the Press.

During the Apartheid era, South African newspapers were heavily monitored and censored. If you criticised the government you could expect a knock on the door from the security police and warned there would be 'repercussions' if you persisted in a similar vein.

There certainly were. My flat was raided while I was out, all my possessions were piled up in the backyard and burnt. It was a warning shot, followed weeks later with a letter informing me that, as a British citizen, I had precisely one month to leave the country for good.

Hence, I returned to Britain, the land of freedom and democracy. That was back in 1981, so why bring it up now?

The reason is quite simple, press freedom in this country is also under threat due to so-called snowflakes who seem hell-bent on being offended by practically everything, no matter how mundane.

First and foremost, the British Press is quite rightly monitored by the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) to ensure there are no major transgressions of its code of conduct. In theory, this is a good thing but it is vitally important that newspapers and other media are not subjected to



ever more draconian rules due to public pressure.

Of course, it was right that the phone hacking scandal was exposed which ultimately led to the News of the World being closed down. It was a dreadful abuse of media power.

But ever since the advent of social media platforms such as Twitter, newspapers and journalists are now subjected to torrents of abuse, much of it unjustified. This is the new era of cancel culture.

That brings us neatly to two giants of the British media; namely Jeremy Clarkson and Piers Morgan.



Both are combustible characters whose outspoken views inevitably provoke a Twitter frenzy regardless of the topics involved.

Despite the fact they were once involved in a bout of fisticuffs at an awards ceremony and have also indulged in various bouts of verbal jousting, they are in fact remarkably similar.

Both outspoken and unafraid to voice their views vociferously. But they have been cancelled in certain sectors of social media for daring to criticise a certain Meghan Markle, wife of Prince Harry.

Now, admittedly, what Clarkson wrote about Meghan Markle in his column for *The Sun* newspaper was ill-advised and misogynistic. He subsequently realised the error of his ways and apologised profusely, but clearly, that wasn't enough.

His detractors wanted his head on a silver platter and Morgan's too after he had called Meghan Markle a liar on *Good Morning Britain* before storming off set following a row with the programme's weather presenter Alex Beresford.

Clarkson and Morgan are in fact cut from very similar cloth. But they are like Marmite. You either love them or hate them and that is your democratic choice.

For a while, the storm abated until the second series of the quite excellent *Clarkson's Farm* aired on Amazon Prime and we were confronted by the presence of, er, cuddly and loveable Jeremy who even saved one of his cows from slaughter after it had been unable to conceive.

As he tearfully explained to his partner, "Lisa, we have now got a pet cow." You would need a heart of stone not to be moved by that.

But even that touching scene was not enough to deter the Twitter brigade from calling for his dismissal from our television screens. Fortunately, common sense prevailed in the end.

Remember, at the end of the day, snowflakes always melt away.



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TWO GREAT GARDEN EVENTS THIS MONTH (BRITISH WEATHER PERMITTING)!

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All our regular events (plus more) will take place as usual. See our Facebook page for details or contact us directly.

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Downstairs a large function room with a bar is available to hire along with a smaller room adjacent to the main upstairs bar.

Please feel free to pop in & have a look around next time you are passing. New members are always welcome and application forms are available from the bar.

Non-members, Campaign For Real Ale (CAMRA) members and guests of members are able to enter the club by signing in at the bar and paying £1.

A MATTER OF TASTE

A brand-new feature where we send anonymous members of the team to check out local pubs, cafes and restaurants to give you an honest review. These visits are not pre-arranged, and the venues do not know they are reviewing the food and drink!

THE CUSTOM CAFÉ



The Custom Café is on the main arterial route, it's difficult not to notice it. Having driven past so many times, we've only visited once in all the years, but it has changed hands since so we decided to give them a visit.

I remember some four or five years ago, when it first changed hands, it had undergone quite extensive renovation to get it to how it is now. It spent some long months shrouded in plastic as the secrets of the building works was, quite literally, kept under wraps.

From a modest café to a modern American-style ranch which always attracted motorists — especially motorcyclists — in their droves, there's now a lot more to get excited about when visiting the Custom Café, which is located on the Marsh Road between Pevensey and Cooden,

With a classic American car as part of the exterior memorabilia, it's a real treat to look at. But that's just the beginning. There's a generous amount of subtly-lit outside seating for the upcoming long summer nights.

From the moment you step inside, you're transported to a world of rustic charm and hidden gems. The wooden-clad interior of the restaurant is divided into two distinct areas. At the front, a dynamic setup with a small stage and presentation area dominates, perfect for hosting events. The main bar is the centrepiece, surrounded by a vibrant atmosphere that's sure to excite.

Meanwhile, at the back of the restaurant, a more intimate dining area offers a peaceful escape from the hustle and bustle. No matter where you look, there's always something interesting to see - the walls are covered in lively American memorabilia that sparks conversation and adds to the restaurant's unique character.

The menu was interesting. Typically American, as you would expect given that it was an American-style diner. Reading the menu is always a refreshing insight into the type of produce they



offer. It's heartening to see that they're committed to using locally sourced produce.

From all the usual suspects to something a little different, larger portions or light bites, there's bound to be something that suits your appetite.

We went for the Lamb Stew on the Specials Board and the 'Trailer Trash Pie' — Beef (or veggie) chilli, topped with mac & cheese with a crunchy smoked cheese topping. At first, the idea of chilli con carne with pasta on the top sounded very strange (hence the name Trailer Trash), however, the taste test came back extremely positively — so much so that it's a recipe we've decided to include in our own repertoire at home. It was served in quite a small tin plate, but it was really deep and extremely filling!

The Lamb Stew was excellent. I would've liked a few more pieces of meat, as I think I only had three; however, the gravy was so thick and tasty it included all the usual root vegetables and served with mashed swede and spinach.

Overall, it was a very reasonably priced meal out. The total bill coming to just over £50 for two alcoholic drinks, two mains and a shared desert.

Shortly after finishing our meal, the jammin' was ramping up on the other side of the restaurant and it was starting to fill up.

We left the restaurant in such a buzz with all the music and positivity, satisfied with a belly-full of great tucker and wonderful customer service — we definitely won't take so long to return next time!



The Trailer Trash Beef Chilli topped with Mac & Cheese



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| <p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">WEDNESDAY Total Body Conditioning 10-11am</p> | |
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BEXHILL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND TOURISM UPDATE

CHAMBER ECHOES

Bexhill Chamber
of Commerce
and Tourism

BUSINESS • PROSPERITY • COMMUNITY

NORTHEYE – THE MISSED OPPORTUNITY?

The Northeye prison site asylum centre plan has raised many serious concerns amongst our local community and Bexhill Chamber's nearly 150 members. Bexhill Chamber oppose this use of such a valuable sustainable development site as completely inappropriate for our area. Bexhill Chamber is politically neutral and neither our president nor any executive board member is standing for election.

The Northeye site has stood empty for over a decade, it was previously owned by the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Since 2020 Bexhill Chamber has been working hard with our Eastbourne and Newhaven colleagues to bring a major £40m destination eco-education project to the area.

We feel the Northeye site is ideal for an environmental research centre – on the edge of the ecologically important Pevensey Levels, the Eastbourne/ Hastings marine conservation area and encompassing the historically important

medieval Northeye village. This is backed not only by conservation experts and regional business development agencies but also a senior peer.

However, we had no support locally from either the council nor Government to help open negotiations with the UAE. The door was slammed in our face. This is still a live project and we are still in ongoing discussions to try and bring some of its jobs and regeneration benefits to Bexhill.

As the Government now re-own Northeye there is an opportunity. Our councils should seek an injunction against its use as an asylum centre. The site should be bulldozed to become a special environmental protection area.

There should be a task force approach to consultation with the local community about sustainable regeneration of the land beyond it just being another massive sewage outflow housing estate. If the asylum centre goes ahead we immediately need Government funding to support our town dealing with an influx of 4,800



military age males per year, over 1,500 of whom will not be genuine asylum seekers (based on the Home Office figures).

We need real capital investment in such things as independent town centre management to help fight rising crime with Shopwatch, CCTV and private security support for the police. We need guarantees that local jobs and training opportunities will be created and local firms given the lucrative contracts to run and service the centre.

Our politicians at all levels have failed us over Northeye as they have consistently failed local businesses over the sewage crisis and by using planning policies to deter investment in jobs,

new businesses and refurbishment of the town centre.

They have cancelled hotel developments and are running down leisure facilities while paying consultants millions, raising council tax, business rates and commercial rents. These are challenges Bexhill Chamber has battled for many years at all levels regardless of which administration is in charge.

But now, it seems that our backs are against the wall. Today we must decide for our children's tomorrow if Bexhill is to become a ghost town haunted by the spectres of sewage and asylum seekers or be the proud and prosperous town our communities deserve it to be.

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MISSION TO CAPTURE BLUEBELL WALK'S KINGFISHER RESIDENT

BY GROUP EDITOR, PAUL GIBSON
editor@bexhill.news

I've been visiting The Bluebell Walk and Bates Green Gardens in Arlington for a few years now and been lucky enough to work with owner, John McCutchan, on a number of promotional films and spend a great deal of precious time in woods.

In the preparations to open the woods for this season, John happened to tell me a Kingfisher had been spotted at the Lower Lake, so as a keen photographer, I couldn't let the opportunity go to photograph this stunning bird, which in fact, has always been a dream of mine to even see a Kingfisher!

With the mission set, I had just ten days to capture my dream image, so I didn't waste any time in getting down to the lake to firstly see if the residents were active, if they live and hunt there and to see if they had a routine.

Kingfishers are notoriously shy and difficult to spot. If you're walking near a lake, you may be lucky enough to see a bright blue and red flash as they find their next perch to hunt from. Seeing them perched up is an incredibly rare sight.

So, with a flask of tea and a bag of food, I set up camp on one of the beautiful seating areas at the lake. It didn't take long for the Kingfisher to show itself. On the first day of monitoring, it was difficult to see a pattern, or where it hunts from, although, I did see it land on a ladder that John had laid across to the Island, so at least I knew, it was interested in the lake.

On the second day I went there, I took along my camera equipment which comprised of a Canon 5D DSLR camera, tripod and long 600mm lens, specifically designed for wildlife photography.

Without confirming a regular perching spot, it's almost impossible to get a photograph of a Kingfisher, as you can't simply just swing the lens around wherever you see the bird. The key is to set the camera on the exact spot you know it will land. However, on this visit, I captured a photo of a male Kingfisher sitting in the bushes on the other side of the lake, but it wasn't an image I was happy with.

It was time to get serious. I decided to hire one of the best wildlife photography lenses on the market to make sure I made the most of this opportunity. I got hold of a Canon 800mm lens from HireaCamera based in Mayfield. So, with the best equipment available, all I needed was a bit of luck and more skill to get what I needed.

By the fourth day of going to the lake, I was confident we had a pair after seeing a female Kingfisher on the ladder looking to hunt.

The female is recognisable by a lower red flash on her bill.

On this day, I had a total of nine encounters with the bird, but I simply wasn't quick enough to photograph it, as they only spend a second or two in one place. It's so difficult when waiting still and silent for it to arrive, not to be distracted by the Red Kites and Buzzards soaring above the tree line and other birds that visit the lake. I had a mission, and I had to stay as focused as physically possible on the task in hand — although I couldn't resist in swinging the camera round to capture some other wildlife shots.

Little did I know, but my fifth visit was going to be the day I walk away with the photograph I dreamed of. I actually started the day with not much hope, the sky was patchy, the lake felt very quiet with not much action from anything.

I almost felt time was running out and because the Kingfisher had not had a successful hunt from the ladder perch, I started to feel it wasn't returning, as they easily give up on spots that don't provide much food.



The Canon 800mm lens with £15,000 new from HireaCamera

I was literally about to give up for the day after not one sighting and was minutes from packing up and leaving. Suddenly, the iconic red and blue flash appeared to my left and landed on part of the ladder it hadn't done before — almost like an invitation to stay longer.

As I slowly moved the camera towards this position, the Kingfisher flew to a higher branch where it sat for a total of two seconds. But, thanks to a fast finger, excellent light and superb camera equipment, I got the shot!

I'm delighted with this photograph of the male Kingfisher in all his glory and share it with the visitors of The Bluebell Walk. Do keep your eyes very peeled if you want to get a glimpse of these beautiful birds — you will need to be very patient indeed!



The hero shot of a male Kingfisher at Lower Lake



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- M Keen



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We are delighted to announce our next Landlords Evening.

It will be a great opportunity to network with like minded landlords, speak to our Lettings and Sales teams, and of course hear from our guest speaker for the evening, Mark Weeks-Pearson FCCA ACA who is a Director at Ash-down Hurrey Chartered Accountants.

Mark will be sharing advice on how to make your property assets tax efficient and will be covering areas such as:

Ways to structure your property investments - in your own name, partnerships and Limited companies.

Pros and cons of each for raising finance and tax

MTD for landlords and software to assist

What is a property business vs property investment

Tips on maximising what you can claim against rental income for tax purposes

Selling your investment property and what HMRC expect you to file and pay

THURSDAY 4TH MAY 2023 6:00pm – 8:00pm

Welcome drinks and nibbles on arrival. New and existing Landlords are welcome.

Spaces may be limited so please contact us to confirm your place by emailing: bill@abbottandabbott.co.uk

Our previous Landlords Evening was well attended and enjoyed by all those who came along!

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PUBLIC NOTICE

DEATH NOTICE
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Died peacefully in hospital on 22nd January aged 82 years.

Father to Emma, Sarah and Dale.

A true gentleman with a "wicked" sense of humour. "Slez was always with a ready laugh and quiet kindness."

He is deeply missed by his close family and friends.

His ashes will be scattered at sea on Thursday 4th May with send off drinks at The Dolphin Inn, Rock-a-Nore Road, Hastings from 12:30pm.

All very welcome.



SALES REPRESENTATIVE

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Regional Media Group Ltd is the publisher of both Bexhill and Hailsham News and is rapidly expanding across East and West Sussex. We're looking for a skilled professional advertisement sales representative to develop our current publications as well as our new opportunities in other towns locally.

This is initially a part-time role and would suit a freelance / self-employed person. The role would be working with local businesses over the phone and face-to-face to introduce them to print advertising and working to monthly targets. Applicants must be organised, polite, have access to a computer and email and be able to work on their own initiative to tight deadlines.

To apply, please send your CV, details of your availability and covering letter via email to: paul@regionalmediagroup.co.uk.

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TWO NEW EXCITING VEHICLES TO BE LAUNCHED AT LOCAL DEALERSHIP WITH FAMILY VALUES

Yeomans Honda, which was previously known as Collins Honda moved from its popular location in Herstmonceux into Eastbourne 3 and a half Years ago.

Since then, they've welcomed back many customers who return to the dealer for its renowned customer service from most same team who worked from the old location.

Based in Willingdon Drive, next to Morrisons in Eastbourne, the team are excited to be welcoming two new models into the Honda line-up this year - bringing an extended range of vehicles and embracing exciting electric technology.

The manufacturer is increasing the appeal of its Jazz line-up with revisions across all grades and the addition of a new Advance Sport grade; offered with exclusive styling details inside and out.

The refreshed Jazz range also features a revised e:HEV hybrid powertrain that improves driveability, adds power and a towing capacity, without impacting CO2 or fuel efficiency.

The Jazz range features several exterior revisions that heighten its tougher, more adventurous appearance. The more defined grille features a pronounced honeycomb design and is paired with revised bumpers, which feature silver inserts designed to look like underbody protection, and new, matching side skirts.

The refreshed Jazz e:HEV retains Honda's responsive and highly



The friendly team at Yeomans Honda

efficient advanced hybrid technology. The latest generation e:HEV powertrain comprises two electric motors, an economical petrol engine, automatic transmission and three intelligent driving modes to deliver high levels of real-world efficiency and refinement.

Revisions to all aspects of the e:HEV system have seen efficiency, driveability and output increased. The electric drive motor has



seen a 10 kW (14 PS) increase, taking its total output to 90 kW, and the generator motor has also seen an 8 kW increase in power, taking it to a peak of 78 kW. The 1.5-litre port-injection petrol engine has gained 7 kW to now produce a maximum of 79 kW. Torque remains at 131 Nm.

New Jazz retains class-leading levels of interior space that have proven to be the hallmark of previous generations.

The Traffic Jam Assist function, now upgraded to feature steering support from 0 km/h, reduces the burden on the driver when driving in traffic and heightens its already impressive crash protection.

These advanced driver assistance systems compliment the standard ten airbags, including front occupant knee and front centre airbags.

Also, 2023 will welcome the e:Ny1 which is the all-electric version of the popular HR-V sized SUV.

That car I expected to use 53.6 kWh or 68.8kWh battery packs with 261 or 311 miles of range. That would make the larger-battered model comfortably beat rivals such as the Hyundai Kona and the new Kia Niro EV.

The team at Yeomans Honda understand the distance can be an issue for some customers, so they're happy to arrange collection and delivery for both servicing and parts. They're also happy to come to you for test drives and part exchange valuations.

Customers visiting the dealership can enjoy relaxing waiting areas with soft chairs, bean-to-cup coffee machine and magazines.

There's more than 40 pre-owned vehicles for a greater selection and the whole range of demonstrators to help you decide on your next Honda.

Contact Yeomans Honda on 01323 832211 or visit www.yeomans.co.uk/honda

SUSSEX ELECTRIC VEHICLE BUILDER SUPPORTS FOODBANK

Local electric vehicle supplier, JLC EV's Limited, has loaned the Hailsham Foodbank one of their electric vehicles to help with stock collections and deliveries, whilst their usual vehicle is out of action.

The EV in question is a fully electric Orca van, which you will see nipping around the local area. The van will be used to collect donations from various sources, including local businesses and supermarkets, and is a vital part of their day-to-day operations.

The Orca van is capable of up to 125-mile range, carries a 1 tonne payload, and does a top speed of 52mph. It is a perfect zero emissions solution for tradespeople and commercial environments such as airports, seaports, local authorities, distribution centres and warehouses.

Nathalie Hayes, Director of JLC EV's said: "As a Company, we are committed to supporting the local community, and this is one way we can help to make a difference. This is an important partnership that will help to ensure that those in need have access to the food and supplies that they need".

The Foodbank is a local project founded by the Crosslink Trust, churches together in Hailsham, and is working towards stopping hunger in our local area. On average the foodbank is giving out more than 600 emergency food parcels each month. They have three members of staff, over 50 volunteers and a funded Debt Advisor and Citizens Advice Advisor who can support people using the foodbank. Did you know, they give out almost 5000kg of food and toiletries etc. each month!

The foodbank is not funded, meaning all food and donations come in from members of the local community and grants that they are able to access. The need has increased dramatically over the last year, and particularly the last 6 months or so, with the increase in utility bills and general cost of living.

Julie Coates, Manager of the Hailsham Foodbank said: "The van is vital for our work, collecting food from supermarkets and bringing from our warehouse to our distribution centre. We are incredibly grateful for the loan of this vehicle, which is enabling us to keep feeding local people in crisis."



Julie Coates, Philip Coates from Hailsham Foodbank with Nathalie and Tony Hayes

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CUP RUNS BRING LATE SEASON CHEER FOR RUGBY CLUB

HASTINGS and Bexhill RFC stormed into the Papa John's Community Cup semi-finals with a resounding 63-32 win over Burgess Hill, writes Peter Knight.

The victory (April 22) also secured a Bob Rogers Cup semi-final against Horsham as the game was a double header.

H&B scored five tries in each half to set up a clash with Vigo (April 29) in the RFU competition.

The visitors presented some difficulties with tough tackles and a solid defence early on. Man of the Match Calvin Crosby-Clark opened the scoring with a fine forwards driving try from a 5m lineout, captain Bruce Steadman converted with a good kick.

The Hastings pack dominated the scrum and lineout where Jacob McDonagh, Mike Woodrow and Quin McManus all put in great performances. By half-time Laurence Maynard had scored a hat-trick, the third a result of a tremendous break from Harry Walker to put the flanker clear.

Crosby-Clark added another try and Steadman was successful with another conversion and a penalty to make the score 32-10 at the interval.

The second half was almost a carbon copy of the first as H&B totally outclassed the West Sussex side. The visitors did score four tries of their own, but these came during the period when H&B had two players sin-binned.

Joe Field capitalised on great backs play to score two tries, while Louis Sealy, Dan Suggitt and Crosby-Clark all added to the total as Steadman completed the rout with two more conversions.

H&B seized a last-gasp 27-25 victory over Old Blues in the Cup's second round the previous weekend. Tries from Walker, McDonagh, Steadman and Tom Hirst, coupled with some excellent kicking from Steadman, set up the dying seconds victory at Motpur Park in south west London.

H&B had started the month with a 24-3 triumph over Seaford in the opening round. That win followed a resounding 39-0 victory over Uckfield in the Bob Rogers Cup at the end of March.

Hastings fielded a strong XV supported by a good solid bench consisting of Chris Geary, Mike Woodrow and Sam Surridge against Seaford. Injury to Jake Stinson meant the back line was shuffled with Harry Stanley moving to full-back and Walker coming into the centre alongside Joe Field.

H&B dominated from the kick-off with the visitors' defence pinned in their own twenty-two. Although the Seaford pack contained some big men, they were no match for the Hastings eight and Crosby-Clark surged over from the base of the scrum to open the scoring. Skipper Steadman converted.

A penalty to Seaford reduced the lead, but Hastings hit back with



Calvin Crosby-Clark crashes over the line for his second try

two terrific tries. The first from McManus was the result of more forward domination. A backs move across the pitch ended with winger Hirst passing outside for full-back Stanley to cross and open a 17-3 half-time lead of 17-3.

Coach Steve McManus rotated his squad during the interval, Geary came on for Jack Hardy, who had played well, Steadman made way for Surridge at scrum-half and the fit-again Woodrow replaced Mike Clifford in the pack.

Both sides had players sin-binned, with McDonagh receiving his ten-minute rest for retaliation.

Walker scored the fourth try following his penalty into touch and an ensuing lineout. Surridge completed the scoring with a well taken conversion.

Hastings and Bexhill II lost 31-15 to Eastbourne II in the Sussex Vase final at Crawley.

H&B's squad contained an excellent combination of youth and experience and were still in the game at 15-17 in the second half.

No 8 Chris Butler scored two pushover tries at the base of the scrum and John Hannagarth notched the third after coming on as a second-half replacement.

Eastbourne exposed the inexperience of the H&B defence and capitalised on breakaways to score their four converted tries, often against the run of play.

The Hastings management gave their whole squad match time. Tom Waring, Jimmy Adams, Chris Stern and Ben Campbell all produced great performances.

Hopefully, the positive end to the campaign will carry over to next season and more second fifteen success can be enjoyed.

BRT'S DAN THE LEADING MAN AT HASTINGS HALF MARATHON

BY JACKIE KNIGHT

Bexhill Runners & Triathletes club runners celebrated the 39th Hastings Half Marathon with plenty of supporters to make sure the race was a success. Despite rainy weather conditions, there was no stopping Dan Marsham with a time of 01hr:41min:35sec, Carol Crathern on 01:46:34, and Neil Smith with 01:46:57.

Jo Swap clocked another half marathon PB, her second this month and absolutely loved the challenge.

A huge hurrah for barefoot runner James Graham, who ran for Butterflies Child and Adolescent Counselling Service. BRT Juniors and seniors should all be proud of their achievements.

Other early bird runners Cathy Bate, Malcolm Jones, Jackie Knight, Richard Paine, John Syddall and John Wilkinson were out taking on the challenge



(L-R): Grant Docksey, Geoff Tondeur, Antonio Serano, Rafael Serano, Ellie Docksey, Amanda Tondeur, Catherine Crombie and Dan Marsham.

of two laps of the Gunpowder fields with a finish in front of Battle Abbey. A few gun shots helped Malcolm Jones through the muddy tracks to seize first in his age group with a successful time of 00:50:49. Michael Pain chose to take on a 10-mile run for BRT at Folkestone completing in 1:06:10.

The overwhelming final challenge took place on Easter Saturday. Zak Overfield and Geoff Tondeur, two quality ultra-runners, entered the Centurion South Downs Way 50 miles race. Starting at Worthing, both raced through the stunning South Downs National Park and beat the clock to successfully finish at Eastbourne to achieve classic ultra-distances. Superb performances.

If you have ever thought about running with a friendly group of like-minded people, please go to the BRT webpage for more information.

www.bexhillrunnerstriathletes.co.uk



Zak Overfield and Geoff Tondeur at the Centurion South Downs Way 50 miles race



BRATTON HAS A BLAST IN SPRING SERIES

Bexhill Sailing Club members have been toughing it out in all types of conditions since the start of the new season.

The month started with the Spring Series action on Saturday cancelled due to serious beach surf and a lack of wind.

Two boats bravely took to the water the following day in gusting force 5 winds. Richard Bratton in his Europe coped magnificently, hanging on when gusts sprung from know where, to complete the race ahead of Flo' Wright and Arne Lovius, sailing a Dart 16A Cat.

Normally storming round the course, the strong North Westerly caught them out twice, leading to capsizes. Much lost time, and very cold fingers, left Bratton to make it home first. A great demonstration of seamanship by the Europe sailor.

The Easter Egg series started slowly, albeit supported on Friday by the competitive Laser Radials of Burchell, Rick Parker, John Stebbing and Bob Palmer.

Palmer's experience showed as he won both race 1 and 2 as Tim Murray was again thwarted by the handicap his strange Vortex craft carries.

Richard Eagleton gave his go-faster Euro a blast to win race one from Bratton and Lee Roberts in the slow fleet in these first two races.

On Friday, the cadets saw the Adams, Bolton and Good family competing and having fun. Matthew Bolton (Topper) won race 1, while on Saturday Logan Adams (Topper) took the honours from Eve Fifield (Topper).

Flo Wright dusted off his Aero dinghy on Saturday for race 3 and won the fast fleet ahead of Bob Palmer and Colin Coard (Lasers). Malcolm Brookes (Comet) struggled to get ahead of Eagleton (Europe) but put Bratton's Europe behind him in the slow fleet.

Saturday's conditions assisted the 15-boat fleet and Tony Witham's Supernova repeated his performance of last year in leading the four following Laser Radials and Murray's Vortex, in the fast fleet.

Wright's Dart 16A Cat beat Brookes' Dart 18B. Oliver Brookes, back from training in Brighton, chased Eagleton in the slow fleet but came in second.

Max Dory and Etain Vero shook down a Hartley to register a Novice performance.

Again, Cadets joined the race with the RS Feva of Adams and Good winning ahead of Hanna Bolton, (Topper) and brother Matthew with Oliver Good (Hartley). Monday's racing was rained off.

Tides meant early starts over the weekend of April 15-16 and Eagleton led home Lee Roberts and Richard Bratton on Saturday in a three-boat chase of Europes in a modest fleet also featuring Ken Edwards (Laser Radial), cadet Hanna Bolton (Topper) and Max Dooley with Michael Carrara (Laser 2000).

Sunday's race commenced even earlier, hence the 'Early Worm' tag. Light winds plagued the fleet but the bigger sails of Dusty Miller and Andy Bullen (RS400 Asymmetric) saw it competently lead the pack ahead of the three Lasers of Bob Palmer, Zac Horsley and Rick Parker in the fast fleet.

The slow fleet again had Eagleton ahead, followed by Dave Kerr (Lightning) and Christina Terrazas' (Byte). The cadets were represented by Eve Fifield (Topper) and Novices by Michael Carrara (Laser).



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SPORT



BRIGHT FUTURE DESPITE LIGHT GOING OUT



Ryan Light with Bexhill players after final home game

BY SPORTS REPORTER, MIKE LEGG

IMAGES BY JOE KNIGHT/SEASIDE PHOTOGRAPHY

Departing boss Ryan Light says he can leave Bexhill United safe in the knowledge it is now a well-established Southern Combination League premier division side.

The club announced Light and No2 John Masters would leave their roles at the end of the season on April 11, although the Pirates' hierarchy had been aware it would be the duo's last at the helm before the campaign started.

Bexhill has announced John Wright as Light's successor. Shane Lovell will be first team coach.

The Pirates finished with a record-equalling 22nd win of the season at Crowborough. Jack Shonk and Aaron Cook got the goals while Alex Zamani saved a last-minute penalty.

Managers often say they hope to leave a club in a better position than they found it and Light has undoubtedly done that.

In fact, due to ground grading requirements and its current facilities, he has taken the club as far as it can go in the football pyramid.

And Light sees this season's seventh-place finish as another example of just how far the club has come since he joined seven years ago as a 36-year-old manager.

He told the Bexhill News: "People must appreciate that this is only our second season back at step five.

"When I walked in seven years ago, it was a carcass of a football club. There was there was nothing there - two rusty goalposts and that's about it. They had just escaped relegation out of senior football. It was the biggest blank canvas you've ever walked into.

"It was it was creating something from nothing. There was no budget, so we just got a group of youngsters in and said we will work with them and a few of those youngsters are still with us today. They were teenagers then but players like Kyle Holden and Connor Robertson have got nearly 300 games under their belt now. They are proper step five footballers.

"We're an established step five premier division side now. I said

last summer that there are no easy games at this level, but we won't be an easy game for anybody. And I think I think we've proved that week in, week out we are never a soft touch and never an easy game for anyone."

Light gave the club a season's notice of his intention to move on, allowing chairman Graham Cox to plan ahead.

He explained: "With the FA bringing in the play-offs next year, it hit home to me that if we got into the top five - and the likelihood is we could do that - we would have to step aside (because of the ground grading requirements) and all that work would be for nothing.

"With that announcement, we realised we had hit the ceiling and couldn't take it any further than we had."

As for Light's future, he plans a break in the short term after 26 consecutive seasons at various levels but added: "I don't think for one minute I can pick and choose when I can come back into management. If a job came a long not long after the season finished, I would have to consider it."

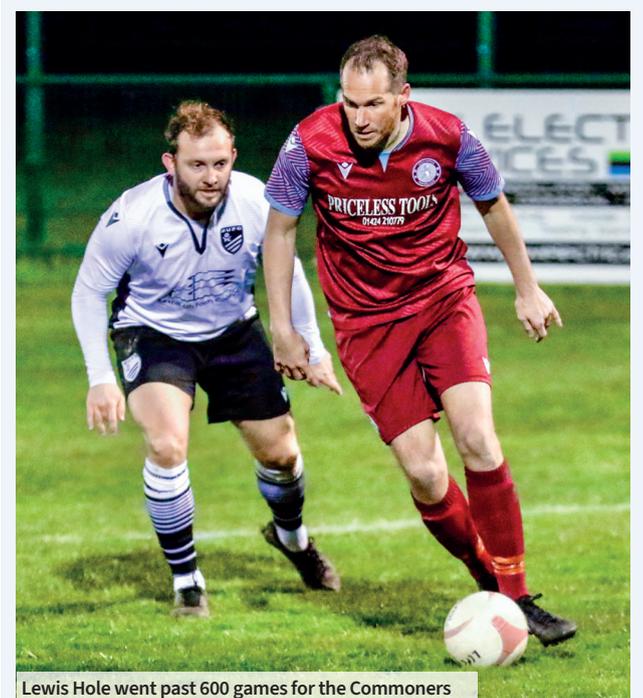
The Pirates closed out March with a 3-1 loss at then leaders Broadbridge Heath, with Cook getting the consolation, before a 6-0 home romp against Loxwood in which Tom Vickers (three), Corey Wheeler (two) and Dom Whittaker struck.

Joe Summerbell scored a 90th-minute winner at The Polegrove as United ground out a 2-1 win over Hassocks on April 1. Evan Archibald had earlier cancelled out Joe Bull's opener for the Robins.

A dramatic 2-1 shock home loss to bottom side Roffey followed on Good Friday, with Vickers scoring inside 60 seconds then missing a last-minute penalty before the visitors snatched a 2-1 win with a stoppage-time goal.

With the Easter Monday derby at Little Common postponed, action returned with Light able to sign off the home campaign with a 2-1 win over Horsham YMCA courtesy of an Archibald brace.

A 0-0 draw at local rivals Little Common (April 18) followed before the closing Saturday's 2-1 win at the Crows.



Lewis Hole went past 600 games for the Commoners

ELDRIDGE KEEN TO PUSH COMMON TO NEXT LEVEL

BY SPORTS REPORTER, MIKE LEGG

IMAGES BY JOE KNIGHT/SEASIDE PHOTOGRAPHY.

Russell Eldridge is happy with Little Common's progress this season - but still wants more.

The Commoners finished 11th after a last-day 2-1 win against Uckfield at the Rec in the SCFL premier division. Jamie Bunn and JJ Walker got the goals as Common achieved their highest ever points total.

Boss Eldridge said: "This season has been good. We have achieved our highest points total, which was set last year, and we made the last 64 of the FA Vase where we went out finalists Ascot United, so that's no mean feat.

"Obviously, you always want more though. There has been inconsistency at times and losing a large chunk of the season to the weather meant we had to play catch up, which took its toll. "It's been an OK season, but we are looking to progress year on year."

Eldridge will continue as manager at Common next season.

He told the Bexhill News: "I'm not going anywhere. We want to push on as best we can as a club and a group and maybe try to break into that next region of the table. That will be our aim.

"Once we have had a rest, we shall regroup and put a plan in place for that to try to happen."

The season closed with other notable achievements on the pitch.

Striker Lewis Hole made his 600th appearance for the club in the 4-1 home win over a ten-man Midhurst & Easebourne on March 25, scoring twice for good measure as Lewis Parsons and Sam Ellis also notched.

Hole was on target in the 1-1 draw at Steyning on April 1 - a point which saw Common surpass last season's tally. Common had Paul Feakins sent off and conceded in the 90th minute.

A 2-0 defeat at Horsham YMCA followed on Good Friday but Bunn got the winner in a 1-0 victory at Alfold on April 13 in a game pushed back 24 hours after Wednesday's postponement.

Two days later, Common headed back to Horsham FC's ground to take on Roffey, coming away with a 2-2 draw against the relegation fighters. A Sam Cruttwell penalty and Ellis near-post strike put the visitors up, but Roffey levelled from a corner.

The rearranged Easter derby with Bexhill finished in a 0-0 stalemate at Green Lane on April 18.

BOXING SHOW

Bexhill Amateur Boxing Club is holding its big show this month. There will be plenty of action as Bexhill boxers take on rivals from across the country at Pebsham Community Centre on May 20. Doors open at 6.30pm with the bouts scheduled from 7pm with prices on the door at £15 for over 16s and £10 under-16s. Tickets can be ordered in advance on tktp.as/EUNIDL.