

Mail Opinion

We need to do more to stop pub closures

PUBS in the UK are closing at a faster rate than ever before, so it is great news that one popular Beverley watering hole will soon reopen. Regulars were outraged when The Game Bird closed in October but they can breathe a sigh of relief at the news it will reopen in the new year after a Lincolnshire brewery stepped in to save it. The pub was due to be demolished to make way for new houses, but it was good to see local councillors voicing their concerns and helping to get the pub back open. Campaigners have warned that the rate of pub



New owners set to save pub from demolition See page 6

closures has risen in the past six months and there are now fewer than 55,000 pubs left in the UK. There has been a sharp rise in the number of pubs being converted into supermarkets and convenience stores in recent years. And locals are losing out. The Campaign for Real Ale is now calling for an urgent change in the law to make it harder for pubs to be demolished or converted into shops. Pubs, like post offices and village halls, are the lifeblood of rural communities and it is important people have somewhere to relax and socialise. It is time we did something to stop the mass closure of this beloved British institution.

Hats off to ...

... the family of Ethel "Betty" Stonehouse, who have revealed her secretive work in the First World War. Mrs Stonehouse, of Cottingham, worked for MI5. She was forced to keep quiet about her work and took her secret to the grave. It is only right that her efforts are recognised now. We often think of the Great War as men in trenches, but there are many forgotten heroes, like Mrs Stonehouse.



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Local & Trusted

THE Mail has been at the heart of all things local in Hull and the East Riding since 1885. We are committed to championing our communities' aspirations and bringing profound and lasting benefits to local life. We believe in celebrating and giving voice to local people, enriching lives and encouraging vibrant community spirit.

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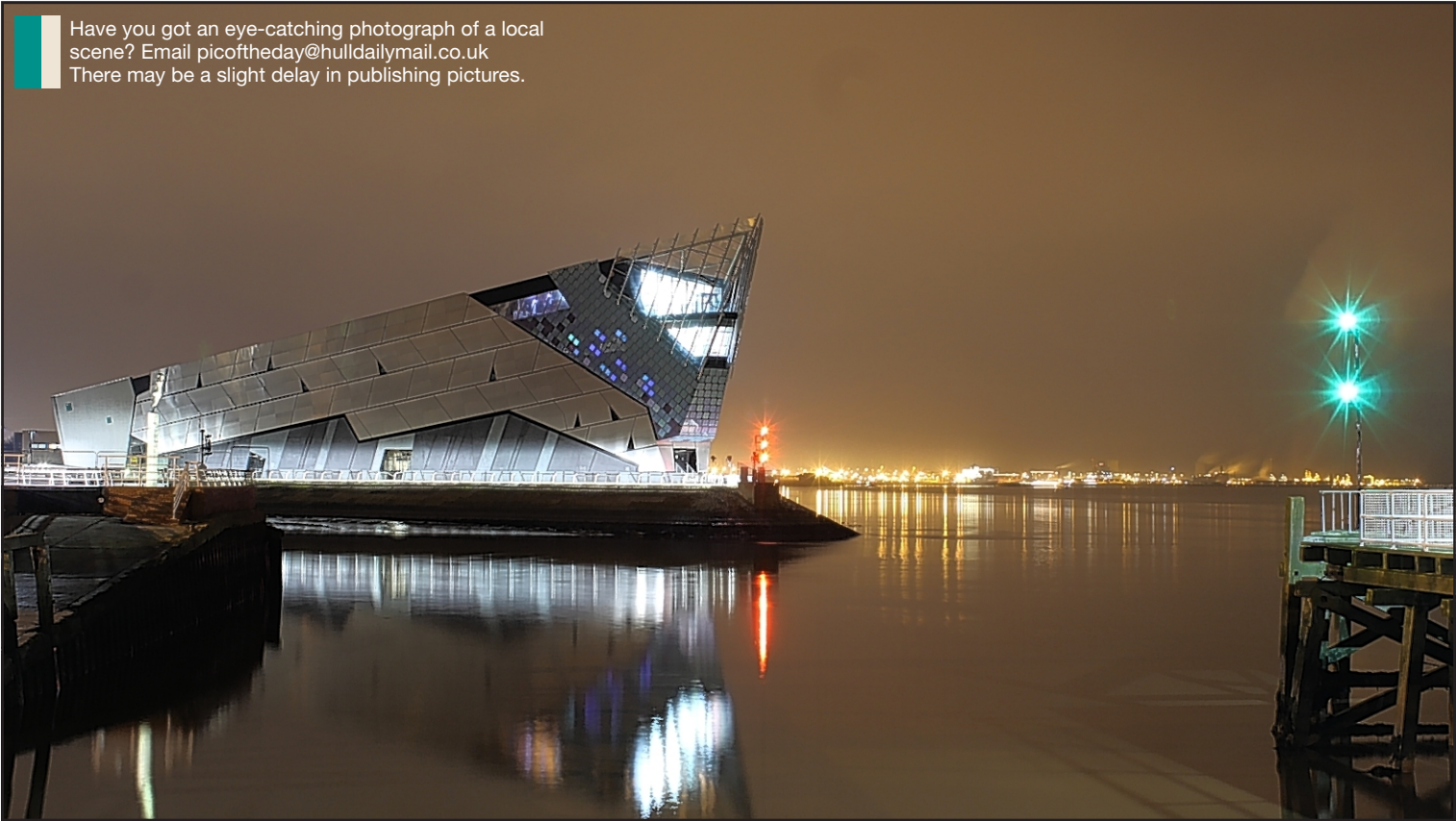
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Picture Of The Day by Paul Snaith



Have you got an eye-catching photograph of a local scene? Email picoftheday@hulldaily.co.uk There may be a slight delay in publishing pictures.

Priorities of village's council are all wrong

REGARDING the article "village volunteers spring into action" in the Mail on December 11. I wonder if your readers would be interested to know that, despite parts of Cottingham being in the top 20 per cent deprived areas in the country, at the same parish council meeting that £450 was allocated for spring bulbs, the Cottingham council of Churches supported Food Bank was refused any financial support. One wonders at the priorities of the Cottingham Parish council. G Trevor Holborn, Crescent Street, Cottingham.

Keep guards on trains

Why, when things go wrong at Gilberdyke, does Northern Rail stop providing information? After waiting for more than 30 minutes, I was advised by the local rail enthusiast that the line had been closed at Brough due to a disabled freight train. Why doesn't the announcer work effectively when things are not as they should be? I had to make my own way to Goole to catch a train. However, I would like to draw your attention to the Hull-based guard working the 12.22 Goole to Sheffield train (which was about 30 minutes late leaving) as she was doing an extemporary job in assisting passengers inconvenienced by that freight train with the seized wheels at Brough. Nothing was too much trouble for her. Her name badge said Sammie and she was sorting out revised connections, offering advice and generally reassuring passengers, grabbing a member of station staff at Doncaster (rarely do you see them) to assist a less mobile person to their next train, and making a personal apology to us about the problems. I understand that one of the proposals from the Government is to withdraw guards from trains. Based on my experience, I think that Northern Rail should do everything in their power to keep Sammie and her colleagues on the trains. It is at times when things go wrong that they come into their own. Godfrey.

Spare a thought for those less fortunate this festive season

First Person



Rob Milner, of Hedon, on Christmas

tive of three ten-year-old children. You would have to have had a heart of stone not to feel a sense of sorrow and shame when looking at the circumstances these kids and their siblings had to live in, through no fault of their own. Immediately prior to this programme was another one of those benefits type of documentaries, this time set in Liverpool. When analysing the two programmes together, it was easy to develop a train

of thought that castigated the "low-life, scroungers" on Merseyside, while feeling a sense of injustice over the innocent youngsters caught in the poverty trap. This thinking was made more intense only a few days later, watching the opening episode of the latest series of Skint, now set in Grimsby. Once again, this was the sort of programme that would have most people gritting their teeth with a mixture of anger and amazement at the sort of antisocial lifestyle that was generally featured. Then, a week later, during the second episode, the viewer was made aware of the awful childhood that one of the main characters had endured and it made me realise that, if society as a whole could remove child

suffering and poverty, then it is less likely that there would be so many problems and issues to be dealt with in later years, as people enter adulthood. Now this may sound like fanciful thinking, but it's not many years ago I can recall a former prime minister promising to eradicate child poverty by about now, I think. That pledge has more-or-less been repeated recently by the present administration, with the timescale extended to something like 2019-20. Will politicians ever have the wit and will to see this policy through, and get the

UK closer to being in a position where we can honestly say that all kids will be given some sort of chance to make good in life? There will always be rich people and poor people, as well as those in between. Recent surveys have shown that the combined wealth of the super rich has trebled since 2008, despite all the world finance and slow-growth problems since then. So have a great Christmas and wonderful 2015, whatever your lot in life – and spare a thought for those less fortunate, especially underprivileged children.

Do you have an opinion to share in our First Person feature? If so, email a 400 to 500-word article, with a paragraph explaining your connection to the subject matter, to firstperson@hulldaily.co.uk We also need a head and shoulders picture and a daytime contact number.

Write

The People's Voice, Hull Daily Mail, Blundell's Corner, Beverley Road, HU3 1XS - names and addresses (not necessarily for publication) MUST be included with ALL letters.

Email

letters@hulldaily.co.uk (letters by email MUST include a full name and address)

Include your name and address

Letters must be signed with the name, full address (including house number) and phone number of the writer. We will grant anonymity, if requested.

Experiments continue for wealth, not health

I AM saddened but not surprised that Chris Magee continues misinforming the public and pretending to care about the welfare of dogs shipped into the UK for ineffective animal experiments. ("Offshoring animal research doesn't stop it occurring", Mail letters, November 27). Mr Magee's tactic is to promote the false claims of his clients that animals are effective when testing effects of drugs for humans. I call these false because there's no scientific testable evidence for their claims. Furthermore, the serious implications this has for public health has attracted Parliamentary attention with more than 50 cross-party MPs requesting experimenters to provide scientific evidence to justify their use of animals as predictive models in medical research. Patients Campaigning For Cures asserts that cures and effective treatments are delayed indefinitely due to the continuation of ineffective experiments on animals. Without such scientific evidence, and despite Parliamentary pressure to provide it and the request by patients suffering crippling diseases, it's safe to conclude these experiments continue for financial gain and not for medical progress therefore, wealth not health. Deborah Minns, Oppose B&K Universal, Hull.

No reason for children to suffer or go without

I must strongly disagree with the views of the anonymous writer in the Mail ("Why should children suffer?", letters, December 16).

They seem happy to assume that this person resorted to stealing due to circumstances involving children of poverty, so, in that case, that would be acceptable. However, in my opinion, it seems these days that some folk are far too quick to assume that poverty or lack of benefits are to blame. This affords some parents the opportunity to use children as an excuse or bargaining tool, benefits commodity, or simply a sympathy vote in order to get what they want or feel they are entitled to without having to put too much work into it. In this modern world of benefits and working tax credits, children should have no reason to suffer or go without if, for the best part, their parents got their priorities right. Typically, smoking, drinking, drug-taking and a multitude of



CRIME: Shoplifting.

other adult pleasures simply seem to come first, and these are the reasons that kids go without, not the lack of benefits. If you can afford to smoke, drink, or take drugs, then you can afford to feed your family without resorting to stealing. I work full-time, have done all my life, and, trust me, a lot of families (whether they be single parent or two-parent families) receive benefits they are entitled

to and see a better social life than me. I am not suggesting by any means that all parents put their own needs first or that some families don't struggle, far from it, most decent people live within their means. I worked in retail for years previous to the job I have now, so I can speak from experience about the amount of arrogance, verbal and physical abuse that has been afforded to me by shoplifters over the years. It is disgusting and unacceptable, and although they have unashamedly played the "I need to feed my children card", it has always been in the name of drug or alcohol abuse. In my opinion, and I am entitled to one, as all the time I am paying taxes it is I and a million others that pay for their pleasures, if they really do need to fill their cupboards in order to feed their starving children, could I suggest they sell some of their pleasures in order to fulfil their children's basic needs? Name and address supplied.

Web Bites

Your views on the latest news from...



Thug jailed for 'chilling' stamp attack

THIS is the "chilling" moment a violent thug stamps on a man's head before leaving him lying motionless in a Hull street. Liam Sewell, 21, was caught on CCTV repeatedly kicking and stamping on his victim, Kenneth Burton, in a "drink-fuelled" attack. GarethC2010 says: Earlier this year a clown got three months in jail for using the "N" word on Twitter. This guy gets ten months for what really amounts to attempted murder. Especially as this idiot went back to the victim a number of times to repeat the offence. Dangerous people like this need to be in prison for a very long time. I personally have no problem if the Government stick another 1 per cent

on income tax and use the money to build more prisons. The "justice" system in this country is so warped it is unbelievable. Far harsher sentences are given out to non politically correct "comments" or "verbal abuse" than to crazy violent criminals and this has to stop. E. Badger says: Stamping on anyone's head/neck should automatically be categorised as premeditated attempted murder and should carry suitable sentence as such. ripnelson says: He was willing to put a person's life in danger. He should have been given at least six years. The reason for the attack is irrelevant, the ferocity of the stamping is life-threatening.

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