



Do you know this bogus gas worker?

THIS is the face of a man who claimed to be from a gas company while an accomplice sneaked upstairs and searched a house.

He persuaded the woman, who is in her 70s, to let him into her kitchen, while another man crept in and rifled through her belongings upstairs.

The two men fled when the woman became suspicious and phoned a neighbour for help.

Police said it was unclear whether anything was taken in the distraction burglary, which took place in Horsham Road, Pease Pottage, at about 9.40am on Wednesday, August 8.

Both men were between 5ft 11in and 6ft. They were wearing dark trousers and jumpers

Anyone who recognises the man or saw anything suspicious is asked to call Sussex Police on **0845 6070999**, quoting serial 447 of September 8.

St Catherine's lottery results

THE results of the latest St Catherine's Hospice lottery draw, made yesterday are as follows:

First prize of £1,000 goes to ticket number 523692, belonging to someone from Crawley.

The second prize of £200 goes to ticket number 548257, from Ansty/

The third prize of £150 goes to ticket number 241275, from Cophorne.

The fourth prize of £50 goes to ticket number 774808, from Crawley.

The following ten ticket holders each win £20: 894525, 145580, 201515 162400, 149778, 223909, 625451, 599851 541402, 784219

The following 20 ticket holders each win £10: 439415, 366380, 331629, 508391, 221125, 519030, 433852, 170038, 425823, 533024, 737996, 535814, 672269, 345849, 400570, 892162, 497321, 254471, 573134, 661454

Tigers welcome new command

TERRITORIAL soldiers in Brighton have welcomed a new commanding officer.

Lieutenant Colonel Geoff Minton, 40, has assumed command of the 3rd Battalion, Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (3 PWRR) including B Company 3 PWRR, the TA unit based in Dyke Road, Brighton.

The battalion, known as The Tigers, is the local infantry regiment for Sussex.

Brighton and Hove has the second-highest suicide rate in England. The Argus meets those who are learning to spot the signs

PICTURES: SAM STEPHENSON

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LEARNING CURVE: An ASIST course run by Grassroots Training in Whitehawk and, below, students

SS100910F-2

SS100910F-10



CO-DIRECTORS: From left, Miranda Frost, Chris Brown and Suzie Marriott



SCENE OF TRAGEDY: Beachy Head, near Eastbourne, is a notorious suicide spot



Taking part in an ASIST course

PAULA HEARSUM, 42, has been a media studies lecturer at University of Brighton for the past eight years.

She said: "University students are at a vulnerable age.

"Students can come into all kinds of difficulties, financial responsibility, living away from home – it affects everyone in some way.

"Part of our duties as lecturers is pastoral care. The signs that we might have to look out for, and that I have seen on my course, are students who stop turning up for lectures, somebody who changes their personality or someone who was once chatty becoming very quiet.

"After coming on this course I am a point of contact for any pupil on the campus, not just on my course. But I am only a first point of contact and we work with the support services in Brighton and Hove. I am not a trained counsellor and I won't come out of this course being a trained counsellor."



CAROLINE SHERRARD, 46, a self-employed careers and skills coach from Hastings, said: "Most people have come to this course through their work."

"This course will help my work but it's also personal because I've lost close acquaintances and family through suicide.

"My father committed suicide in 1990. He didn't have a history of previous attempts but he did have some classic signs, cutting himself off from the outside world. He'd not been working for a long time.

"In 2003, I also lost a close personal friend. She was a slightly different case, I later found out she had a history of mental health issues but when I met her there were no signs.

"I think my dad's death has a stronger impact on me now because I didn't deal with it then. I just shut down for ten years."

ROSE HAWKINS, 28, works at Brighton and Hove refuge for Rise, a Sussex-based domestic violence charity.

She said: "We offer support to women, children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse.

"A lot of people who have suffered domestic abuse are prone to depression or have mental health issues and may be considering taking their own lives. This course is invaluable advice for us on how we can best support these people."



BACK FROM THE BRINK



SUICIDE is one of society's last taboos.

It is spoken about in hushed tones if spoken about at all. A sense of shame surrounds the subject.

However, one Brighton company is trying to change that and help turn around the city's reputation as one of England's suicide hot spots.

The two-day suicide intervention ASIST courses run by Grassroots Training aim to teach people how to identify those harbouring suicidal thoughts – plus the skills to talk them out of committing the act.

Last week, 24 healthcare and charity workers undertook the training, which coincided with World Suicide Prevention Day.

Organiser Chris Warren Brown said: "Many people want to learn physical first aid skills such as CPR, to keep people alive long enough for the professional services to arrive but people are far more likely to have thoughts about suicide than have a heart attack, so the need is much greater than first aid.

Grassroots' approach is vital in Brighton and Hove, which has the second highest suicide rate in England. An average of 18 in every 100,000 city residents took their own lives between 2005 and 2008. Only Blackpool had a higher rate.

BRIGHTON and Hove has one of the highest suicide rates in the country but one company is trying to remove the stigma attached to it. NEIL VOWLES sat in on a training course which could really be the difference between life and death.

"In any 12 month period, one in 20 will have thoughts about suicide, it's for this 5% in particular that we train participants who are ready, willing and able to help."

The community interest company was formed by four women who have worked in mental health services for more than 15 years and who all have personal experience of suicide.

The group strongly believe people seeking suicide can be helped with direct and honest talk.

Chris, 35, said: "The course will help people to check for signs and to have a conversation about suicide when the instinct is not to talk about it."

"We look at understanding people's reasons for dying as well as for living and through that try to establish some kind of doubt in that person's mind towards suicide.

"We know people who would have killed themselves but for suicide intervention."

Grassroots' approach is vital in Brighton and Hove, which has the second highest suicide rate in England.

An average of 18 in every 100,000 city residents took their own lives between 2005 and 2008. Only Blackpool had a higher rate.

Chris says there are many theories about why this is the case. She said: "One significant factor is because of high levels of substance abuse.

"Many people commit suicide while intoxicated but having an addiction can also be a reason for somebody to kill themselves.

Responsive

"The area also has quite high levels of poverty and mental health issues.

"Research has also shown suicide is more prevalent in an LGBT community, possibly because they feel more discriminated against and because they feel health services are less responsive to their needs. Obviously, Brighton has a high LGBT population.

"Finally, Brighton has the means of suicide, most significantly Beachy Head but also other hot spots such as railway bridges and tall buildings."

The Beachy Head beauty spot is sadly synonymous with suicide and the chalky cliffs are lined with crosses and bouquets remembering loved ones.

There are many heart-breaking tales attached to the site.

Neil and Kazumi Puttick travelled from their Wiltshire home in June last year to end their lives after the loss of their five-year-old son Samuel Puttick.

The couple jumped off the cliffs with Samuel's body and toys in rucksacks. But even in extreme cases of grief such as these, Chris believes there is hope of prevention.

She said: "We believe it's never too late to save a life.

"Research into people who jumped off Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco but survived showed a significant majority of them – in the moment of falling over the edge – realised some part of them didn't want to die. There's always hope."

Keith Lane was given a bravery award for his last-minute interventions after stopping 29 people committing suicide at Beachy Head.

He was inspired to stand vigil at the cliffs for three years by the death of his wife Maggie there in 2004.

Grassroots are hoping to train similar last-minute interventionists in the hope they can save lives.

The group are applying for funding from the Big Lottery Fund for frontline staff who might encounter suicide risks.

Chris said: "This is people such as

bar staff who can learn to spot the signs of people who have gone in to drink their last drink before committing suicide.

"We've all seen the type of person who just drinks and is in a world of their own.

"We'd also train taxi drivers who might be driving people to Beachy Head and car park attendants at multi-storey car parks who might be the last person somebody attempting suicide might see."

Samaritans

During Suicide Prevention Week, former Brighton and Hove Albion player Warren Spinnall helped to launch a Samaritans campaign aimed at men, who are three times more likely to kill themselves than women.

The retired footballer admitted he was seconds away from taking his own life after gambling away £1 million but he is now looking to help men who feel they cannot speak about their problems by helping to launch the Men On The Ropes campaign.

Chris Brown says there is a "contagion effect" with suicide which means people who have lost friends and family to suicide are more likely to attempt to take their own lives.

She said: "Research suggests if somebody has been bereaved by suicide

that person is more likely to have thoughts of suicide and go on to take their own life.

"Having that pattern of behaviour makes it more acceptable so if someone commits suicide there is a ripple effect on to that person's friends and families, which can be very damaging.

"Sadly, they are more likely to know what to do, whether that's how not to be interrupted or how many pills you need to take to have a fatal overdose."

Health officials fund many places on the course for workers who liaise with groups of people where suicide is prevalent such as the homeless, unemployed, victims of domestic and sexual abuse, ex-forces and prison leavers.

Ian Watling, of Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, which funds mental health schemes in the county, said: "Our trust carries a great responsibility to ensure frontline staff are equipped with the most up to date approaches and skills to minimise suicide risk.

"ASIST is an internationally acclaimed programme, which has been adopted with great success in many countries. We are fortunate to have this opportunity to develop it locally."

For help dealing with suicidal thoughts, call Samaritans on **0845 7909090**.

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'Dissident' painting a poignant gift to town

AN INTRIGUING work of art is being offered as a poignant gift to a town.

Widow Jennifer Shelley wants to make the gesture in memory of her late husband Alan.

The oil painting is of particular significance because it was painted by distinguished Lewes artist Julian Bell.

Entitled Lewes Listens, it is an oil painting more than 7ft wide and was bought by Mrs Shelley expressly to be enjoyed by the town's residents.

She paid more than £10,000 for the work.

Her husband died in November at the age of 68. Together they had run the Bow Windows Bookshop in High Street, Lewes, for 25 years.

Recognisable

She said: "I want to donate the painting because Alan was so well-known and loved Lewes so much."

The couple both feature in the work, which took two years to complete, along with more than 60 other recognisable local residents who were invited to participate by the artist.

They are depicted as if attending a public meeting over a controversial planning application.

Mrs Shelley said: "Julian had this idea that Lewes was a town of dissent. It portrays an imaginary protest meeting, which could be about plans to demolish the castle and replace it with flats but the scenario can be anything you want it to be.

"Lewes people have never been afraid to stand up for the town and protest if they have to."

Mrs Shelley plans to formally offer the painting to Lewes Town Council later this month and would like it to be displayed in the town hall.

Time for tea – and to battle meningitis

A TEA company is supporting a national fundraising initiative to get people brewing for a good cause.

Toppers Tea, based in Lindfield, near Haywards Heath, is backing Meningitis UK's latest event – Time 4 Tea.

Founder Daniel Abadi has good reason to get involved with the charity after his mother almost died from the disease in 1978.

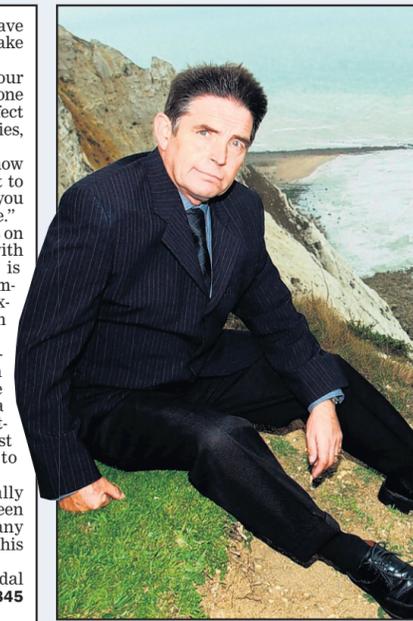
Mr Abadi said: "My mum fell ill with meningitis while travelling through the Texas desert.

"She had a lumbar puncture and lots of treatment. I think it was touch and go whether she would pull through so it's obviously a cause close to my heart.

"Tea is my passion so it's nice to be able to use the business to do something positive and help Meningitis UK."

People are being encouraged to put the kettle on and get baking to raise money.

For more details, visit www.meningitisuk.org/time4tea.



CLIFFTOP VIGIL: Keith Lane has stopped 29 people committing suicide at Beachy Head