



**A-LEVEL RESULTS 2009: Don't miss our five-page picture special**

Starts Page 18

**INSIDE ...**



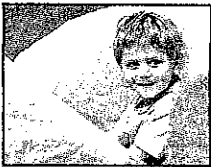
**Puddleduck pre-schoolers' new home joy**

Page 5



**Villagers are opening up swap shop**

Page 16



**Seaside Rock is to youngsters' taste**

Page 9

Uncompensated store owner calls for change in law

## Shopkeeper is a victim twice over

By Oliver Frankham  
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AN aggrieved Hawkhurst shopkeeper is calling for a change in the law after a court denied him compensation for a £10,000 burglary.

Colin Brown, owner of the Hawkhurst Tackle Shop, lost fishing equipment worth £7,000 in a night-time raid on August 7 which also saw £3,000-worth of damage caused to the Highgate Hill store.

Police swiftly arrested 20-year-old Harley Webb, of Flinwell, in connection with the crime.

Webb, who was already serving a suspended sentence, was jailed for 133 days after pleading guilty to the burglary, two thefts and a driving offence on August 11.

The public prosecutor made an application for compensation, which was refused by the magistrate. As the case has been dealt with, Mr Brown will receive no damages.

**Furious**

The furious 27-year-old is now writing to Maidstone and the Weald MP Ann Widdecombe in the hope she can take his case to Justice Secretary Jack Straw.

Mr Brown said: "Because he pleaded guilty and I wasn't physically harmed, there is a loophole which says I am not entitled to anything whatsoever.

"I have no complaints about the police. They did their job - they caught him and enforced the law. It's the court of law who have cocked it all up."

Mr Brown, 27, opened the shop at Easter this year and was already struggling financially before the robbery.

His solicitor Donal Blaney said it made Mr Brown a victim twice over.

Mr Blaney said: "My client feels that the justice system has let him down.

"He is possibly going to be put



**BROWNE OFF:** Colin Brown, owner of Hawkhurst Tackle Shop

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out of business because of the actions of a thief. It is not unreasonable that society should help. But this was rushed

through by a bench that failed to take any heed of his losses."

A Crown Prosecution Service spokesman said: "The CPS made

an application for compensation and the court exercised their discretion and refused the application."

## Carnival procession cancelled because of insurance

HAWKHURST'S Carnival procession has been cancelled at the last minute due to escalating insurance costs - but organisers have promised the fête is still running and will be bigger and better than ever before.

The procession was due to snake its way from Hawkhurst Primary School to The Moor at 1pm before kicking off the fête on Sunday afternoon.

But carnival committee members were forced to cancel the parade earlier this week when they realised the cost of insuring the event would have been more than the money they could have raised.

Fête secretary Freda Cross said: "If something like a vintage car ran off the road and hit somebody, then we would be found negligent and that would cost us thousands.

**Killed off**

"Carnivals are being killed off across the country, I don't think it's just us.

"We're not profit-making and it would hit us for six."

The carnival, which happens every two years, has also been the victim of changes in the law which states processions must be patrolled by police officers, not volunteer marshalls.

Mrs Cross added: "It's a nightmare.

"We had to weigh up the cost of running it versus the insurance cost and it was just not worth it."

Although the procession has been cancelled, the fête on The Moor is still taking place on Sunday from 2pm to 5pm.

Committee member Mike Appelbe said: "It will be a huge event.

"We start with Hawkhurst Amateur Dramatics Society performing the Mad Hatters' Tea Party from Alice in Wonderland.

"We've got 50 stalls, the air ambulance will land and take-off, live music, majorettes, children's races, bouncy castles, archery, tug-of-war, food and drink.

"An old London bus will also run throughout the afternoon on a circular route."