

# Hawk makes a meal of hunt for sparrows

A sparrowhawk trapped in a lobster pot for the fourth time does not seem to learn from the relentless hunting of his namesake meal.

Sparrowhawks love to catch and eat sparrows and it seems his favourite meal could have been the meal that killed him – not once but three times.

Assistant Lyme Regis harbourmaster Michael Higgs has discovered and rescued the hawk three or four times in the past 18 months and says the bird is lucky he was noticed.

The fishermen’s lobster pots are stored on the harbour side on the famous Cobb at Lyme Regis.

The resident sparrows use the pots as their safe haven which obviously works when chased inside followed by the hawk who immediately gets stuck and disorientated.

Michael said: “He never seems to learn.

“One day we won’t see or hear him flapping his wings and he will die of hunger.

“I’m sure it’s the same hawk but he never seems to learn. I had another bit of drama when the Cobb cat Beasley turned up and wanted to have a go at the hawk.

“Beasley may have been miffed because the hawk was on his favourite sparrow catching patch.”

A previous trapping of the hawk and sparrows on the stack of lobster pots where they hide from the sparrowhawk

PICTURES: RICHARD AUSTIN



# ‘Thinking Schools only way to save jobs from AI’

BY MARTIN FREEMAN

A generation of fact-cramming school children are having their skills devalued by the rise of Artificial Intelligence, a leading educationalist has warned.

Under pressure from the Government and Ofsted, schools were returning to rote learning in an education system that is an “exam machine”, warns Dr Dave Walters, a South West academic and teacher.

As well as producing students with skills that are already being outmoded by AI, the system is causing unprecedented harm to health, he says.

“This is a real issue for the education system as pupils and teachers are exhibiting levels of mental health issues never before imagined,” said Dr Walters, an honorary fellow at the University of Exeter and the deputy-head of a Devon secondary school.

His warning comes as children across the UK pick up the results of their GCSEs, the first full year of a new grading system with an increased emphasis on final examinations, not course assessment.

He said that the more rigorous GCSEs themselves were not to blame, but that some schools focused only on the outcome, concentrating on ‘hot housing’ in the final two years.

He advocates the ‘Thinking School’ model where the emphasis is on cognitive, or thinking, skills. This put the focus on skills that computers did not have and which would help pro-

tect jobs from AI, which was set to transform even professions such as the law and medicine, he said.

“This has to be a whole-school approach, where children are taught how to think, monitor their thinking and self-regulate their learning habits,” said Dr Walters, deputy head of Clyst Vale Community College in Broadclyst, near Exeter, and a research director of Thinking Matters, an education consultancy.

This involved teachers stepping in as mediators, not standing back as facilitators, he said, and was based on decades of

‘This has to be a whole-school approach’

Dr Dave Walters

research. His own research showed that the Thinking School model could improve GCSE results by as much as a grade, he said.

Dr Walters said the Government had taken a backward step in emphasising the importance of fact learning, based on worries that the UK was falling behind in international education league tables, such as Pisa. But that move was made based on a narrow interpretation and that successful nations were moving in the opposite direction, putting the UK at risk of falling further behind.

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## Store puts St Piran flag on cheese line

Waitrose has caved in to pressure from campaigners and agreed to put the flag of St Piran on a Cornish cheese line, instead of the St George flag.

The supermarket chain has been selling popular Cornish Yarg with the English flag on the packaging. But this cause consternation among objectors from Cornwall who raised the issue with Waitrose bosses.

Now the company, which has outlets in Truro and Saltash, has agreed to alter the labelling. Originally Waitrose argued that the use of a national rather than a regional flag was more easily recognised by their customers.

After campaigners insisted the Cornish flag was a national flag, making the point Waitrose “would have the approval of the Cornish people in using it to promote Cornish products,” the store relented.

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