

The Lenham Focus

FREE DRAW INSIDE.
Win a wine-tasting experience
and tour of Westwell Winery
for two, worth £50!

See inside for details.

Contact Details For Local Groups

Badminton	Alan Williamson	01622-858763
Badminton Club Feathers	Neil Rouse	01622-840207
Borough Councillors	Tom & Janetta Sams	01622-859412 / 0789-1901831
Bowling Club	Lyn Fuller	01622-851538
Bridge Club	Keith Rylands	01622-891964
Brownies (2nd Lenham)	Andrea French	01622-851646
Cat Protection	Mid-Kent Branch	0345-3712758
Church Office	Sarah Hills	01622-850604
Dog Warden (Louise Duke)	Community Protection	01622-602117
Drama	Gail Kelly	01622-850671
Drugs Helpline	Free Call	0800-776600
Friends of St Mary's Church	Andrew Barr	enquiries@friendsofstmaryslenham.org
Gardening Society	Margaret Baines	01622-431649
Guides (1st Lenham)	Jo Homes	07887-877814
HAMS productions	David Penny	07731-455677
Harrietsham & Lenham Beavers	Duncan Keenan	07768-926654
Harrietsham & Lenham Cubs	Mrs A Seales	01622-859829
Hub Club	Jenny Lloyd/Nina Kent	01622-859208 / 01622-851970
KCC for Maidstone Rural East	Shellina Prendergast	Shellina.Prendergast@kent.gov.uk
Kent Highway Services	Roads, pavements etc.	03000-418181
Kent Wildlife Trust		01622-662012
Lenham Country Market	Sandra Woodfall	07775-736116
Lenham Community Centre	Carol Higgins	01622-853800 (am)
Lenham Film Club	Danny Coorsh	lenhamfilmclub@gmail.com
Lenham Heath Memorial Hall	Rosemarie Pomeroy	01622-858296
Lenham Heritage Society	Henny Shotter	01622-851355
Lenham Lifts scheme	Phil Hollier	01622-859154 / 07542 625277
Lenham Meadows Trust	Danny Matthews	enquiries@lenhammeadowstrust.org
Lenham Nursery	Sarah Siddens	07967 128056
Lenham Parish Council	Lisa Westcott	01622-829034 (M-F 9am-1pm) clerk@lenhamparishcouncil.org.uk
Lenham Quilters & Stitchers	Pamela Gillard	01233-879507
Lenham Social Club	Jo Gregory	01622-858890
Lenham Toddlers Group	Irene Hine	01622-858919
Lenham Wanderers FC	Russell Young	07594-206818
Len Valley FC	Paul Hewish	07795-324062
Len Valley Health Walks	Jan Enever	01622-851623
Len Valley Practice	GP surgery	01622-858341 / 859204
Member of Parliament	Helen Whately	helen.whately.mp@parliament.uk
Mothers' Union	Mrs J Thomsett	01622-859009
Patient Participation Group	Teresa New	01622-858341
Pilates Classes	Vivien Elcomb	01622-853887
Redback Explorer Scouts	Mark Horlock	redbackesu@hotmail.com
Rural Community Warden	Martin Sherwood	07977-981993
St Edmunds; Platts Heath	Kate Stansfield	07500-895831
Save Our Heathlands (SOHL)	Kate Hammond	07925-606236
Sing & Shake / Make & Shake	Steph Richardson	07894-160906
Vicar	Rev Dr. John Huggins	01622-850280
Women's Institute	Carole Toner	01622-850048

Editorial

Another month and another **FREE TO ENTER** draw from your *Focus* team!

This time, we're giving away a wine tasting and tour of the vineyards at Westwell Winery, just a couple of miles down the A20 from Lenham. You can use the voucher – **worth £50!** – any time this year, whenever it suits you.

To enter the draw, all you have to do is send an email to the Editor, using either the editorial email **editorialslf@outlook.com** or by sending a text to **07714 311008** with your name and contact details. The winner will be notified direct. The deadline for your entry is 24 March 2024, so get entering and good luck! More details are inside this issue on page 5.

FOCUS is also online at www.lenhamparish.org.uk (Click on 'Lenham Focus')

Also featured this month, on the front page and inside, is the chainsaw work-of-art carried out by Lenham's Les Langley. I think we can all agree this adds charm to our lovely Glebe Pond, situated along the Old Ashford Road.

The Len Valley surgery reports the results of their recent survey and is asking for you to participate in the next (3rd) survey now underway. See inside for details.

And this March is World Book Day – to encourage children to get reading. The article inside explains more and how our Lenham Library can help encourage families to participate.

David Jackson
Editor

HELPERS ARE NEEDED for delivering your magazines. Lead distributor urgently needed to deliver magazines to our team of helpers each month – approx 1 hour a month. Email me at **editorialslf@outlook.com** and we'll explain.

*We welcome your input and comments please email me at **editorialslf@outlook.com***

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By 1st of the preceding month to **editorialslf@outlook.com** or by phone/text on **07714 311008**. Photos of the village and local events are welcome.

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A Story about 'Puritan Troublemakers and President F. D. Roosevelt' ¹ (part 1)

Thomas Reader from Lenham and Robert Couchman from Rolvenden were sent to West Gate Prison in Canterbury for libel. This was in 1603 and their libel had not been of famous people but of the church. The two friends and Thomas' brother Helchea had pinned libelous corruptions of the phrase, "God have mercy", on various church doors in Canterbury. Robert Couchman wrote later about prison: "many lie there and are poisoned by the ill ayre and usage, and besides one knoweth not whether they will hang one or not, they are so violent and mercilesse to al opposites..." Helchea got away very lightly because this was possibly his first offence. Thomas and Robert, however, had been in conflict with the authorities for quite a while. As early as 1597 they were accused of 'refusing to receive the holy sacrament at our ministers hand being contrary to her majesties laws'. Thomas Reader and Robert Couchman were both apprenticed to a candlemaker. Cheap candles in those days were made of

tallow (animal fat) and therefore it was convenient to run such a business near the cattle market and the butchers' shambles (slaughter houses) in the Parish of St. George, The Martyr in Canterbury.

The area was not one of the best because of the stench of animal dung and blood which hung in the air. Being apprenticed in Canterbury would have given the young men good prospects of eventually becoming Freemen of the city of Canterbury. So why did the Reader brothers, scions of a wealthy Lenham family, seemingly decide to throw their future away? (more in next *Focus*).



The Westgate, scenic today; not so scenic then!

¹ The story is based on outstanding research by two American researchers, Michael Paulick and Robert Couchman published in various books.

GOING TO CHURCH IN KENT IN THE MIDDLE AGES

A TALK BY

DR SHEILA SWEETINBURGH

THURSDAY 28 MARCH 2024

AT 7.30 PM

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a wine-tasting and tour for 2, worth £50!**

The winner will be able to redeem the voucher for the wine-tasting and tour any time this year.

To enter, simply email the *FOCUS* editor on editorialsf@outlook.com or send a text to **07714 311008** giving your name and contact details by **24th MARCH 2024** and you will be entered into the free draw. The winner will be notified at the end of March. Good luck!

Galia Pike will welcome you to Westwell – an award-winning small, family run estate winery located just beneath the Pilgrims Way; a route used for centuries by Pilgrims travelling to Canterbury, and just 12 minutes drive from Lenham.

Galia says: 'We're committed to creating authentic still and sparkling wines which tell the story of the land. We strive to make wines with as little intervention

as possible. Our small scale production means we're present at every stage: from grape to glass.'

'Our picking dates do not coincide with tour dates but the intensity of harvest will be very visible to our visitors – we may be pressing or processing fruit, and the magical smell of early ferments will be all-pervasive across the site.'

Westwell is open for tours, tastings, picnics, self-guided tours and food **every Thursday, Friday and Saturday**. Dogs are welcome, and parking is plentiful.

Visit their website www.westwellwines.com to find out more and to sign up to their newsletter.



ANOTHER GREAT INITIATIVE FROM YOUR LENHAM FOCUS

Lenham Nursery – an update report from Sally Barr for Focus readers

Readers may be aware that the government continues to promote its “free” places for 3-4 year olds and has recently introduced “free” places for 2 year olds. In the media we hear about the millions of pounds being allocated to the Early Years Sector, which sounds wonderful (in theory). The reality, however, is that this actually equates to £4:55 an hour per 3 year old and £5.65 an hour per 2 year old. This amount is estimated to have fallen by 12% in the last 10 years and, as you will be aware, costs in our rent, utilities, staffing and resources have risen hugely above the rates we currently get per child.

This is the same for all nurseries and in fact, according to OFSTED, almost 250 nurseries across the South East closed down between March and August 2023. What the government should be saying is that they are offering “funded” places, not “free” places, as it is impossible for most nurseries to provide their services at a loss, as highlighted in the national press recently.

Our main aim at Lenham Nursery has always been to provide high quality, age-appropriate education for our young children. We do not want to compromise on our staff-to-children ratios; we also need an extra member of staff as we have the added complication of the children's toilets not being within the nursery room. We are determined to stay open and to keep providing stimulating learning

experiences for the children of Lenham. This involves a lot of hard work from the staff and trustees, so we owe them a huge thank you!

Some good news... On a brighter note, another group we need to say ‘thank you’ to is Lenham Parish Council! (LPC) Many will be aware of our ongoing plans to build a new nursery and finally, thanks to the amazing support from LPC, it looks like our dreams will be coming true this year! It was always within the Lenham Neighbourhood plan to provide enough nursery places for the increasing population of Lenham. We are delighted to share with everyone that LPC have agreed to use monies gained from development contributions in Lenham to work as match-funding within a grant application to the Borough Council. We are hoping that with the match-funding in place, the nursery build will start later this year.

As a charity run nursery, we will still be responsible for furnishing and equipping the nursery so our fundraising efforts within the local community will continue. **Our next event is being hosted by ‘The Wishful Thinker’, where we will be running an Easter Egg Hunt on Sunday March 24th – all are welcome!**

Lenham Nursery has been supported by the Co-op during the last year by having a collection point at their tills. In December, we found out that we had received £1,000 to spend on new outside play equipment, which we will be able to use on our present site and take to the new nursery, so many thanks to the Co-op!

Finally, a special thank you goes to Philip Jarvis who kindly supported our Santa's Grotto event back in December. The children had a lovely time chatting with Santa and receiving their gifts – seen in the photograph here. It resulted in us raising £180 for the nursery funds.





Easter Egg Hunt

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Countryways Quilters and Stitchers

Pamela Gillard's update



2024 seems for me to be stumbling a bit. It started out on a high with fun things happening, then between various ailments and freezing weather, it seemed to go downhill. Maybe just winter blues? But we organised our unfinished projects in January, then made a wall hung organiser in February and talked about how best to design a sewing/craft room so that you know just where to find things.

So we are all set now to start work on the first quilt of the season in March.

It will be a star quilt to remind you of all the stars in your life. A star for family members or friends, or maybe even a reminder of a special event or period in your life.

This will continue through March and into April. We meet on March 5th and 19th.

Come and learn more about our group and spend some quiet time stitching. Learn new skills and share old ones.

We have our meetings on the first and third Tuesdays of every month except December and would love to see you. We usually meet in the Appleton room at Lenham Community Centre from 1:30 to 4:30pm.

If you would like more information on our group or would like a copy of our 2024 programme please contact me at **01233-877453** or email **moonbeamspinner@gmail.com**

We meet on the first and third Tuesdays of every month except December and would love to see you. We meet in the Appleton room, Lenham Community Centre 1:30 to 4:30.

If you'd like more information on our group or a copy of our 2024 programme, please contact me on 01233 877453, or email moonbeamspinner@gmail.com

Lenham Family Festival – 2024

The Lenham festival group are planning to organise an event on the June 1st 2024 at Lenham Community Centre during the day and early evening.

This would be in the form of showcasing Lenham's organisations along with musical and artistic talents, which we know this community has in plentiful supply.

We would like to invite your group to have a display-type stall to show what you do and perhaps an activity linked to your group, and/or to use the stage to put on a performance around their own organisation if they wish.

We would also like to extend the invitation to individuals/bands/dancers to perform throughout the day.

Please contact us and let us know how you wish to be involved.

Thank you
Kind regards
Janetta Sams on behalf of the
Lenham family Festival Team

Tel: 01622 859412

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Chainsaw Carver Les Langley

Here's an unusual and specialist craft! What started out as a hobby some 14 years ago became a full-time business a couple of years later. Seen here together with partner Hannah and their dog, they have worked all over the country showing their wares with Les performing demonstrations of his self-taught skills.

You may well have seen Les at the Kent County Show and seen his work at Leeds Castle, Biddenden Tractorfest and the Heathfield Country Show.

Born in Johannesburg in South Africa, Les now lives here in Lenham. He completed 23 years military service with the UK Armed Forces, serving all over the world; he now enjoys the peace and tranquillity of life in Kent.

Les says: 'I am based at Chegworth Court near Harrietsham and have a fully kitted out workshop where I make a variety of products, including traditional chainsaw



Les at work at the Lenham Meadows Trust Glebe Pond

carvings, hand engraved signs, bowls & platters and benches and garden tables. I also do carvings in-situ and attend shows throughout the summer months. All my timber is locally sourced from tree surgeons and storm damage trees. I am very careful not to fell healthy trees for any of my products.'

'I also support various charities and many of the items you'll see displayed on my website have been made and donated for free. Whilst we support both military and civilian causes our chosen charity is The Veterans Charity www.veteranscharity.org.uk. We have also made many items for friends as gifts; usually to lighten the way after the loss of a pet or to celebrate a new garden bar!

Small local fundraisers are close to our hearts and we will donate approximately 10-15 pieces a year as raffle/draw prizes.'





The most recent of these generous free works is in progress at the Lenham Meadows Trust's Glebe Pond where you can see the amazing work in transforming old tree stumps to works of art. The front page of this month's *FOCUS* shows the fabulous carving donated by Les, which we can all enjoy in the peace and tranquillity of the Glebe Pond.



LES LANGLEY CHAINSAW CARVER

If you're interested in a commission or bespoke carving, you can contact Les on **07885 226234**, or email **chainsawcarvingwizard@hotmail.com** and check his website **www.leslingleychainsawcarver.com** to see more examples of his work.



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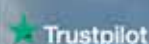
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The Lenham Osteopath

A day in the Osteopath Clinic – Chris Tempest

Welcome to this addition of 'a day in the clinic with the Lenham Osteopath'.

It's been a few weeks since I last spoke to you all about various health issues and this month I have a new one for you. Recently I have found a number of patients coming to see me with lower back issues - thankfully most will resolve within weeks/months but unfortunately we have seen that Discogenic issues are on the rise! Be careful when lifting!

DISCOGENIC SPINAL PAIN

Discogenic pain involves degenerative changes of the intervertebral disc (the squidgy part in between the bones of the spine) including structural defects that can result in bio-mechanical instability and inflammation.

What are the symptoms of discogenic pain? Pain on bending forward, sitting, sneezing, coughing (you may find relief when you lay down). Pain in the back of your thigh or buttocks especially when sitting down. Neck pain when you try to tilt your head into flexion (dropping your chin to chest). Muscle spasms in the neck or arms when you do some upper or lower body movements.

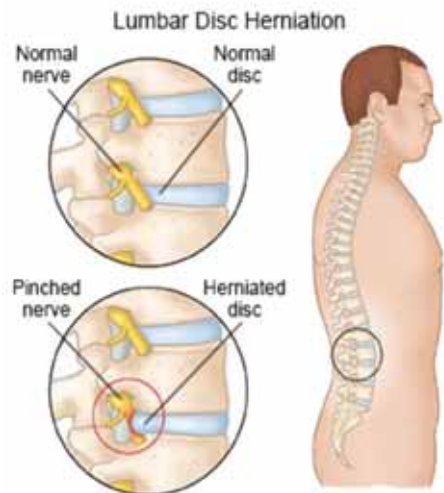
How long can it last? Unfortunately if you cause inflammation to a disc, it can take months not weeks to recover. That being a radical injury arising from lifting a heavy cement mixer on a building site, lifting far too heavy in a gym environment (squats/dead lifts) or overloading our spine by trauma-induced pressure. The dull diffuse pain may last for months, but any associated pain pins & needles/parasthesia hopefully should be able to be treated and therefore resolved faster.

How can it be treated? There are various techniques in practice that we use to resolve and speed up the symptoms/process of

discogenic pain. The main ones would be decompressive manual therapy followed by and complimented with exercises, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs and painkillers if needed. Medical acupuncture can also really excel in this condition - we've had some incredible results in practice using this method. All of the above aim to reduce inflammation and improve mobility.

What about long term effects? Most patients will make a full recovery within the timescales discussed. However, there may be some patients who may not reach 100%, but these are very rare cases.

How do I avoid getting it? In short, the most common age-range for a disc injury is male 20-40 yrs of age. If you're within that group, be very cautious when lifting heavy objects and be sure not to overdo it! Keep the spine strong but also supple - flexibility/stretches will help tremendously and obviously regular osteopathic treatment will help to achieve this.



For more help or to book a consultation call 07749980096 @christempestosteopath
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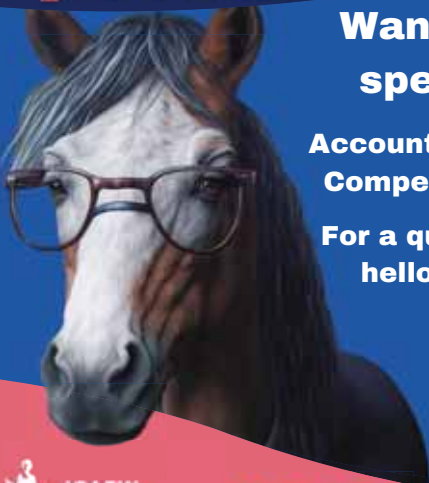


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Lenham Meadows Trust

Countryside and community

A new arrival at Glebe Pond!

Lenham Parish Council recently asked a specialist tree company, Invicta Arboriculture, to carry out a comprehensive inspection at a number of locations around the Parish, one of which was Glebe Pond. We were provided with a detailed report on the health of the trees at the pond and were pleased to find out that many are in good health.

However, the report contained a number of recommendations. Unfortunately, six trees (two ash trees, two cherry trees, a hawthorne and a willow) had to be felled as they were in extremely poor condition. All six were either already predominantly dead or showed significant irreversible decay and/or disease, including Ash Die Back. It is always such a shame when a tree has to be felled but we must of course act on the recommendations of experts; our priority is to best care for the land around the pond and ensure the safety of our visitors.

Of the six, the stumps of two of them, a hawthorne and a willow, will be left to regenerate. We'll assess whether there are opportunities to plant new native trees at the pond and will update on this in the autumn.

Meanwhile, one of the trunks has had a new lease of life having been carved into a wonderful fish – see the cover picture of this month's issue! The fish was created





by Les Langley, who very kindly donated the carving to the Trust; thank you Les. He uses a chainsaw to produce his fabulous creations and is certainly very skilled. Les undertakes commissions



and bespoke carvings, and you can contact him on **07885 226234** or via email at **chainsawcarvingwizard@hotmail.com** and see more on his website **www.leslangleychainsawcarver.com**. We hope you agree that the carving is a great addition to Glebe Pond. You can find out more about Les on page 14 of this issue of the *Focus*.

We're currently looking to expand our management team and are looking for people to help us manage the Trust, particularly in the areas of communications and social media. Please do get in touch with us if you would like to join our management team, have time to take part in running our local charity and would like to help us conserve the green spaces around Lenham and the surrounding area.

Please email us if you'd like to know more about the Trust or to join our mailing list. Follow us on social media for the latest news, details of events and photos of our projects

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Friday 26th April 2024

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Pick up points: 08.30 Carrs Yard, 08.45 Dog & Bear Lenham,
09.00 The Rose Bearsted

BOOKING FORM—ARUNDEL CASTLE TULIPS— 26th April 2024

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Recipe of the Month

Italian Stuffed Aubergines

This is such a lovely recipe when remembering blissful days in the Italian sun. Serves 6 as a first course or 3 for lunch.

Ingredients:

3 Medium Aubergines
Olive Oil
1 Onion, chopped
1 large Garlic clove, crushed
2 tsps Fresh Basil or 1 tsp dried
6 drained Anchovy fillets, chopped
(6oz) Italian Mozzarella Cheese cut into thin slices
3 large tomatoes, sliced
1½ tbsp drained capers, lightly chopped
Salt and freshly milled black pepper

Method:

Trim the green stalks from the aubergines and slice the aubergines in half lengthwise. Remove the centre of the aubergines using a teaspoon, leaving not less than 5mm (1/4") thick. Sprinkle the shells liberally with salt and leave upside down to drain for 45 minutes. Meanwhile chop the pulp.

Heat 2 tbsp of the oil in a saucepan and gently fry the onions until softened. Stir in the chopped pulp, crushed garlic and half



the basil. Season with salt and pepper and cook over a low heat for about 10 minutes, stirring now and then. After this stir in the chopped anchovies.

Wipe the drained aubergine shells with kitchen paper and arrange in small oiled roasting tin or baking dish. Spoon the pulp mixture into the shells, then arrange alternate slices of cheese and tomato on top of each aubergine half and sprinkle with the chopped capers.

Finally sprinkle over the remaining basil and dribble a little oil over each. Season and bake (uncovered) at 180C for about 40 minutes. Note that if using an air-fryer reduce the temperature and check after each 20 minutes.



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^£500 credit will be placed on the owner's Loyalty Card at parks with food and beverage facilities. £500 credit will be placed on owner's account at parks without food and beverage facilities. General terms: Subject to further terms and conditions available on request. Offers are valid on selected models. Minimum purchase price applies. This offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. We reserve the right to withdraw this offer at any time without notice. A holiday home cannot be used as your only or main residence.

Lenham WI

The latest news from Chris Godden



Following on from my report last month, the WI is arranging a “Keep Britain Tidy: The Great British Spring Clean” event to take place between 15th and 31st March.

Keep Britain Tidy was originally set up by a conference of 26 organisations in 1955. The conference was initiated by the British Women’s Institute after a resolution was passed at its 1954 AGM to start a national anti-litter campaign. In 1987, Keep Britain Tidy changed its name to Tidy Britain Group.

Litter is still a problem now with the increase in fly tipping being reported. This is a multi-organisational problem. The councils need to make the disposal of rubbish easier and more accessible; businesses producing everything we use, including our food, need to look closely at how they package their items; and we, as a society, need to ensure we do not leave a trail of litter behind us wherever we go. It is so easy to take our rubbish home with us and put it in our own bins. Personally I look at how everything is packaged now and try to buy either loose fruit and veg or packaging that can be easily recycled.

I am looking forward to our Annual General Meeting which is held in Tunbridge Wells. W.I.s from across the West Kent area

meet to vote on the resolutions for this year and we have some interesting speakers – Dr Annie Gray, who is one of Britain’s leading food historians and Lindsey Barrell (aka Cherry Bombe) talking about

“Burlesque, Me and the WI”. Lindsey does a fabulously funny and heart-warming talk that covers how she discovered burlesque, then the WI, and brought the two worlds together.

From empty nest to huge success, and via dance classes and craft sessions, Lindsey will take you on a journey that a lot of us can relate to. Never a dull moment!

At our January meeting we had a very enjoyable games evening with a quiz and a Beetle Drive. It was good fun and lovely to catch up with friends after the Christmas holidays.

This month we are welcoming Adam Taylor who uses historical sources, photos, personal experience and maps from 1500’s to present day to show us the once inhabited islands of the Medway Estuary, the shipwreck of a First World War German submarine, inside the abandoned forts which once defended Chatham Dockyard and some of the stunning natural beauty of this vast wilderness.



We meet at Lenham Community Centre on the second Thursday of the month at 7.30pm. If you’d like to join us please contact me on 01622 858658 or email rrgodden@btinternet.com

Book Review

From the Lenham Library

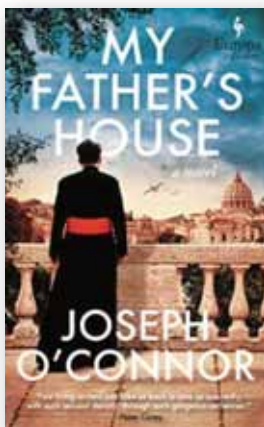
This is one of those books I wanted to race through because the plot is so gripping and yet wanted to slow down and read passages twice because they are so beautifully descriptive.

The tension is almost unbearable in parts. There is also humour. Who knew that bored hidden servicemen had to be reprimanded for throwing balls from house to house and giving away their locations!

The book is based on the true story of the fragile safety that the Vatican City provided for those resisting the Nazis in occupied Rome in 1943.

In reality the network of Hugh O'Flaherty, the priest at the heart of the book, was responsible for saving nearly 7,000 lives. In a desperate bid to break the network and assert control, Berlin sends a new Gestapo Head, Paul Hauptmann, to terrify the city into obedience. The two men are set up as rivals.

The plot builds towards the "Rendimento", which is the movement of a large number of hidden refugees and resistance fighters



out of Nazi-held Rome. On Christmas Eve O'Flaherty has to distribute large sums of money to people in hiding and organise their escape from the city. The plan relies on knowledge of secret passages, backstreets and tunnels and the competence and integrity of the agents working across Rome.

The mission is chaotic and confusing. It draws you in because of the danger that could lie round the next

corner. The sense of peril is immense.

I was almost holding my breath at certain points. One of the best books I have read in ages. I cannot recommend this book highly enough.

Normally I review a book that is in stock at Lenham Library, but you will have to request this one. I have no hesitation in saying it is well worth the £1 fee.

Or you could get it for free on the excellent Libby App as either an eBook or an eAudiobook. (If you haven't looked at Libby yet then you are missing out. You can also read newspapers and magazines on the free apps with your library membership.)

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World Book Day

Thursday 7th March 2024



World Book Day will be taking place on Thursday 7 March 2024. This is an annual celebration of authors, illustrators, books and the joy of reading.

The aim of World Book Day is to encourage children to explore the pleasures of books and reading by providing every primary age child with the opportunity to have a book of their own.

The day will consist of the usual celebration of books and reading, and children will be encouraged to dress up as their favourite characters from literature.

Each year a collection of special books priced at just £1 are published to encourage children of all ages to get reading and have a book of their own.

Children in primary schools across the UK are then given a £1 or book voucher to buy one of the £1 books, or to put towards the cost of any other book.

Many major supermarkets in the UK, large bookshop chains and hundreds of independent booksellers are participating, so check out your local bookshop to see if you can use your voucher.

How Is World Book Day Celebrated?

World Book Day was created to encourage children from all around the world to get

reading. The campaign has expanded in recent years from its focus on younger children to include young adults and those people who struggle with literacy issues.

Most schools in the UK take part by holding lots of fun literary themed activities and encourage children to dress up as characters from their favourite book.

For more exciting educational book-themed activities visit the World Book Day Website which includes games, apps and activities for World Book Day books as well as information about events in your area.

Here in Lenham, why not encourage your children to get involved by visiting our local library in the village square?

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The Maidstone Apprenticeship Fair

8th March 2024

From Helen Whately, MP

Education is the closest thing we have to a silver bullet. It might be a cliché in politics, but it's one which still holds true. Investing in people is the single best thing we can do to improve the world around us. It spawns the doctors, engineers, and business people of tomorrow. It lights a spark in people who go on to change our lives for the better. And it gives people lots of the tools they need to navigate life.

That's why of all the things we've achieved in government since I became an MP, our record on education is the thing I'm most proud of. At the last Budget school spending increased to its highest real terms ever – across both primary and secondary education. This is great news for schools and pupils, but it's only half of the equation. What matters most isn't what you're putting in; it's what you're getting out.

The fairest way to measure this is generally through international comparison. Grade inflation makes it tricky to compare UK figures year-on-year, but how we match up globally can't be fudged. Since 2010 England has flown up every international league table – for science, for maths, for reading. Children in England are now the most literate in Europe, and the fourth most literate in the world. That hasn't happened by accident. It's thanks to a huge programme of reform – giving schools greater freedom but also holding them more accountable for their actions. And the numbers speak for themselves.

The proportion of children in good or outstanding schools has risen from 66%

in 2010, to nearly 90% today. Only 58% of six-year-olds were able to read words fluently in 2012. By 2019, the figure had risen to 82%.

I've made it one of my five priorities to help students get the most from their education locally. Whether that's helping our local schools win investment – like **The Lenham School** to get more classroom space through the School Rebuilding Programme, or Queen Elizabeth Grammar, Sheldwich and Graveney Primaries to get improvements through the Condition Improvement Fund. Whether that's supporting better standards locally – like the brilliant Snowfields Academy in Bearsted which caters for students on the autistic spectrum and was recently rated Outstanding by Ofsted. Or whether it's bringing opportunities to students thinking about the next step – like my **Maidstone Apprenticeship Fair**.

As a government we're working hard to put technical and vocational education on an equal footing with traditional academic routes. While university can be a good option it's far from the only one, and apprenticeships are a fast-track to develop skills while working and earning.

The Fair is taking place this year on **Friday 8th March at Maidstone Leisure Centre**, and we've got over 1,600 students coming to meet companies from Amazon to Shepherd Neame.

Please do mention it to anyone you think might be interested. There's information about all of this on my website, and please do get in touch with me if I can do anything to support local students and schools.'

The latest update from Janetta & Tom Sams, your Borough Councillors.

Please contact us on 01622 859412 or 07891901831

Email: tomsamscllr7@gmail.com

You may have read that Kent County Council has warned that pressure on its budget means many road repair and maintenance schemes will be suspended. We are continuing to report and monitor potholes in spite of KCC's position as it allows a claim to be made.

Whilst driving and walking we also report damaged signs, fly-tipping, over hanging trees, and other issues that may cause problems for residents whether walking, running, cycling, horse riding or driving. Over the last year we reported nearly 400 issues.

Many villagers are aware that the Harrietsham & Lenham ward has been significantly increased in size and now takes in Hollingbourne and the surrounding North Downs parishes. It will become a 3 member ward (represented by 3 Borough Councillors). For more details and maps showing the area go to **www.hl-nd.co.uk**

The website also includes information on the work we are carrying out in the area, and useful contact details for various agencies



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Lenham Gardening Society From Margaret Baines

The next meeting of the society is on **Thursday March 21st at 7.30pm** in the Community Centre.

Our speaker this month will be Rachael Castle whose talk will be on 'Auriculas – their history and cultivation.' See the picture above for a colourful selection of these. The competition will be for 5 dwarf daffodils and/or 3 Easter cupcakes.

Future activities are as follows:

The annual holiday is to Scarborough from 11th to 15th May.

The outings this year will be to Walmer Castle on **Tuesday 25th June** and to Kew Gardens on **Tuesday 10th September**. Coaches will leave from the Dog & Bear Hotel at 9.30am (to be confirmed).

Thursday 18th July – Pimms and Strawberries (members only).

Thursday 21st November – AGM followed by Cheese and Wine (members only).

All are welcome to the meetings except for July and November which are for members only. Members pay £1 entrance with non-members paying £1.50. Annual subscription is £7 per person. Tea/coffee and biscuits are available in the interval and a raffle held before the evenings close.

For further information: Please email me at: **gardenlenham@gmail.com**



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Nature Watch

SPRING IS SPRINGING!

From Darren Hammond

It's that time of year when spring is in the air and nature bursts forth in an amazing display of colour and life. When you are out and about you might be lucky enough to see some of the younger generation of the local wildlife out and about too.

Foxes are one of the more common bigger mammals we will see in the British countryside. They live in burrows called "earths" and have scent glands on their feet to help them find their way at night. Normally foxes will have 4 to 5 young and you may be lucky enough to see fox cubs when you are walking through the fields around Lenham.

If you are lucky enough to see fox cubs, you could see them frolicking in play and wrestling with each other in the sun near some shelter or a safe area. Learning important skills that will help them when they are adults.

Foxes not only live in the fields and forests but are becoming increasingly urbanised and live in our villages, towns and cities. You may hear them from time to time; the male has a bark while the female makes a more chilling scream sound.



© DPH Nature Photography

One of the more common sights you might see when out walking in the countryside is rabbits. In spring it will seem like they will be breeding like, well, rabbits and you may see many young ones around the fields nibbling on the grass, but the truth is they can and do breed any time during the year.





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Baby rabbits are born with no fur and cannot see and the mother rabbits don't really take that much care of their babies. In fact rabbit milk has developed to be very nutritious because of this. However after only three weeks they can look after themselves.

Of course you will also see many species of baby bird around Lenham and the surrounding fields and woods. In the ponds you might see some ducklings or if very lucky baby swans or cygnets. The parents will be extremely busy at this time gathering food for their young.

One of the things you might notice particularly with birds is that the young



© DPH Nature Photography

often do not look like the parents. The baby robin you see pictured here is a great example of that. Often they appear different as a form of camouflage so that they are not seen very easily and escape the notice of a predator.

However there are some young birds that look nearly the same as their parents and here is one example, the young greater spotted woodpecker. The young woodpecker has a big red patch on its head and as it matures the red patch will either disappear on the female or 'move' to the back of its head/neck if it's male.



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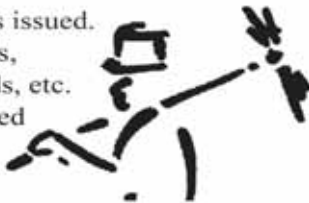
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Don't let Maidstone Council ruin Lenham!

After nearly two years of the Planning Inspector examining the draft Maidstone Local Plan, we are expecting him to make a decision on whether the Plan can be considered sound. The draft Plan still contains a proposed new Garden Town east of Lenham. 5,000 houses will destroy the character and rural nature of Lenham village.

We understand the need for new homes and we believe that Lenham is doing more than its fair share through the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan over the next ten years. The cost to deliver the new Garden Town will ultimately make the cost of the new homes unaffordable to local people.

ALERT: Three main concerns if the plan goes through:

1) Lenham will be living next to a new man-made wetland which will be "cleaning" raw sewage in our open countryside.

2) Lenham rail station will be at risk of closing if the new Heathlands rail station is built.

3) Promised infrastructure including schools and doctors surgeries will never be built because Maidstone Council has underestimated their costs and viability.

Maidstone Council's plan will devastate our community for decades to come. Are we going to stand by and let this happen?

Please help us by donating as much as you can to our fighting fund which is being used to cover professional fees of lawyers and planning specialists.

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By Rich Nairn

28TH JANUARY 2024

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AT TWO BIRTHDAY PARTIES, I WORKED WITH SPENCER WOOD, WHO WAS AS POLISHED & CONFIDENT AS EVER.

NOW, LADIES & GENTS, WATCH AS THIS FORK BENDS ALL ON ITS OWN...

AND I WILL DRAW YOU... ONCE I CAN STAND UP STRAIGHT.



THEN TODAY, I ATTENDED A BIG WEDDING SHOW. AS I ARRIVED, ADAM SMITH SAID HELLO IN HIS USUAL FRESH & ENERGETIC MANNER.

READY FOR A GREAT SHOW, RICH?!

YEAH, I THINK SO... WHERE'S THE TOILET?



ARRIVING AT MY PITCH, I SAW CHRIS HARDING ON THE PITCH NEXT TO ME. AFTER A YEAR'S BREAK, HE WAS LOOKING WELL.

THE WAY I'VE BEEN FEELING, I'D NEED A MAGICIAN OF GANDALF PROPORTIONS TO MAKE ME FEEL BETTER.

JESUS, MAN! YOU LOOK 20 YEARS YOUNGER!

AH, STOP IT. YOU LOOK, ER... WELL?



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Information on page 3



The Council meet on the first Wednesday of
each month

Finance and General Purpose Committee
meetings are the third Wednesday of
each month

All meetings are held at the Lenham
Community Centre at 7:30pm (or via Zoom)

Parishioners may attend all meetings

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The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry

Friday March 8th

**Performance begins 19.30,
doors open 19.00**

Running time 1hr 48 mins

We apologise for having to cancel February's performance and the inconvenience this may have caused. We are delighted to be back up and running on March 8th with **The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry** (12A, 2023), based on the novel by Rachel Joyce. Academy Award winner Jim Broadbent plays Harold and Penelope Wilton his wife Maureen. Both give magnificent performances. An ageing couple, Harold sets out one day to post a letter to his dying friend Queenie... but he changes his mind. Realising that a letter is not enough, instead of posting it he decides to walk the 450 miles to see



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her in person. The journey is significant for both Harold and Maureen – Harold reflects on the twists and turns of life whilst Maureen, who has no idea what has happened, agonises over the way she has treated him. Do come along and share this wonderful film. The director is Hettie Macdonald.

As well as showing a great film on March 8th, we'll also be revealing the fabulous line up of films that we'll be showing as part of our Spring and Summer 2024 programme. There'll be more about future films in the April issue of *Focus*. Please get in touch for more information or to join our mailing list.

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Len Valley Practice

Patient Participation Group

SURVEY 2 - NOVEMBER 2023 – 127 patients completed the survey during the month of November. The results are listed below: –

When was your most recent general practice appointment?

71% in the past 3 months
17% between 3 and 6 months ago
12% between 6 and 12 months ago

What type of appointment was it?

37% telephone appointment
62% face to face appointment
1% online or text message

Who was your most recent appointment with?

52% GP
35% nurse
1% practice pharmacist
1% paramedic
10% another healthcare professional
1% don't know - not sure who I saw or spoke to

At your last appointment, how good was the healthcare professional at giving you enough time?

75% good
21% okay
3% poor
1% very poor

How good was the healthcare professional at listening and, if appropriate, making eye contact with you?

69% good
24% okay
2% poor
5% very poor

How good was the healthcare professional at treating you with care and concern?

73% good
21% okay
4% poor
2% very poor

Were you involved as much as you wanted in decisions about your care and treatment?

61% yes, definitely
21% yes, to some extent
15% not as much as I would have liked
3% no, not at all

Thinking about the reason for your last appointment, were your needs met?

65% yes, definitely
15% yes, to some extent
11% not as much as I would have liked
9% no, not at all

As a result of your appointment, were you referred to another service, eg hospital consultant, physiotherapy or another service?

32% yes
68% no

Overall, how would you describe your experience of your most recent appointment?

65% good
21% okay
9% poor
5% very poor

If your appointment took place at the surgery, how satisfied were you with the premises, eg cleanliness and tidiness of internal and external areas, availability and comfort of seating in the waiting area?

40% very satisfied
51% satisfied
8% dissatisfied
1% didn't notice

And how satisfied were you with the information provided by Len Valley Practice, eg website, patient call system, leaflets, information about health-related matters?

25% very satisfied
47% satisfied
15% dissatisfied
13% didn't notice

To help us make sure we are receiving responses from all age groups, could you kindly indicate if you are aged

7% 18-30
24% 31-50
44% 51-70
21% 71-80
3% over 80
1% prefer not to say

Len Valley Practice

Patient Participation Group's Third Survey is Ready For Completion

Following on from our first survey about appointments and our second survey about the standard of care provided by Len Valley Practice (LVP), our third survey covers usage of Urgent Treatment Centres and NHS 111/999.

This completes our 3-survey cycle. Our appointments survey will be repeated in July 2024 and we will be able to compare it to responses received in August 2023. This will help to identify areas that are working well and highlight processes that need reviewing.

A number of questions in this third survey were requested by several participants last August - thank you to them for their helpful suggestions!

You can access the survey using this link: <https://s.surveyplanet.com/r21fymh8> or you can use this QR code.

Thank you in advance for your participation and a reminder that you can contact us by email ppglenham@gmail.com if you have points you would like us to cover in future surveys.



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You will see regular updates on all the parish council's activities in the *Focus*, our website and social media.

VOLUNTEERING AND LENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Like all parish councillors, the 11 of us who currently make up Lenham Parish Council are volunteers. There should be 13 councillors, so we are currently two people short.

Lenham has been lucky over the years. Historically, enough people have come forward to engage with the work to allow us to continue to deliver services for the whole parish. But we cannot assume this will continue, especially in times when people are, rightly, looking to their own needs. Anyway, exactly what does being a parish councillor mean?

According to the 2021 census, Lenham is a large and diverse parish, with a population of around 4,700. Inevitably because nothing ever stands still (much as we would like it to) this number is growing, and, as it does, so the amount of activity the parish council needs to do increases.

The parish council has two main work streams: planning and everything else not related to planning.

In terms of planning, there is the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan (LNP) to deliver. The LNP sets out how 1000 new homes will be delivered up to 2031. It describes where the new homes will be, what infrastructure will be needed and how it will be delivered. The plan also includes policies to protect the countryside from additional unwanted and/or unsustainable development.

This is important because the Neighbourhood Plan has been used successfully to protect

the countryside and deal with several opportunistic developments which have come forward in the last 18 months or so. The plan sets out the agreed "development footprint" and, so far, we have successfully managed to defend this.

The parish also has a responsibility as a statutory consultee on planning applications. This takes up a significant amount of time as some of these are quite detailed and a response is often needed at short notice. There is also a "Highways Improvement Plan" which is discussed and agreed with KCC, in its role as the Highways Authority.

The "Everything else" tag includes: Maintaining green spaces (like the picnic site at Rayners Hill and William Pitt Field); making sure the three play/recreation areas are safe to use; ensuring the Lenham Cemetery is suitably maintained; looking after the trees that the parish "owns"; responding to national and local occasions - in 2022 we dealt with the Platinum Anniversary of the late Queen then worked with others to mark both her passing and the accession of King Charles in 2023.

All these things must be paid for, so the parish council sets a parish precept to cover the (ever increasing) cost of the services people expect. Whilst our precept seems relatively large, the parish sits in the middle of Kent parishes in that respect. To ensure both the money and the things it pays for are kept in order Lenham employs two staff; a Parish Clerk and a Responsible Financial

Officer. This may need to be revisited in the future as the workload grows.

This May the parish council is up for election and we would really welcome some new people to come forward to get stuck into parish affairs. When I joined (back in 2018) a friend of mine had visions of the parish council meetings along the lines of those portrayed in the Vicar of Dibley (No, no, no... yes!). She couldn't have been more wrong!

Lenham, like all the parish councils I have come across over the last few years, is an extremely efficient and professional group which has the best intentions of the parishioners we serve. Everything is done in

public, with all actions and resolutions publicly recorded. We don't always agree - what group of people ever do? But when we disagree, we agree to disagree and mostly we come to a common place and move forward.

All this, though, relies on people coming forward to offer their time and opinions for it to continue. Why don't you get in touch to find out whether you'd like to join us? We would really like to hear from you.

To talk it over, please contact me, John Britt, on **07973 207521**, or email me at **john@lenhamparishcouncil.org.uk** or pop into the parish office in the High Street and speak with Lisa our Parish Clerk.

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Monday 25th – Wednesday 27th March

The mustard seed is the smallest of seeds

Jonathan Arnold

Monday 7.30pm at St Nicholas, Boughton Malherbe

What seeds do we sow for growth

Ben Doggett

Tuesday 7.30pm at St Mary's, Lenham

The birds that sit in the branches

John Huggins

Wednesday 7.30pm at All Saints, Ulcombe



Simple Well-being. Practical tips on loving others

From Vladimir Barkanov

First of all, is it easy to love someone? I mean, in any form, be it romantic love, friendship or charity; is it easy? We are not talking here, of course, about our feelings towards someone. We are talking about actions, directed to make someone's life better. The question is rhetorical. It is not easy at all. And what makes it so difficult? The fact that most of us have no idea what can improve our own lives. How much harder it would be to figure out what will be good for others?

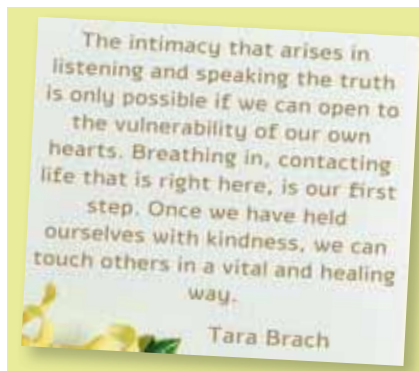
However, there is a reason why most of my previous articles were connected to loving yourself. By progressing in that department we can obtain a better understanding of how to love others. For example, knowing yourself is a big step towards the ability to understand another person. So, if you have followed my previous articles you already have a fair idea about how to improve your ability to love others. But here are some small practical tips that can be helpful.

1. Savour. Fred B. Bryant, one of the leading researchers on savouring says:

"Savouring is the glue that bonds people together, and it is essential to prolonging relationships. People who savour together stay together."

2. Listen.

Often listening might be all that is needed to help someone. Thomas Edison had pointed out:



"We have but two ears and one mouth so that we may listen twice as much as we speak."


3. Believe. We must believe in the good in people and look for the good in them. It does not, by any means, mean that we must ignore negative traits people may have. But sometimes a simple acknowledgement of the presence of good in a person can help that person to step above their negativity and to begin nurturing their positive traits.

"If you treat an individual as he is, he will remain how he is. But if you treat him as if he were what he ought to be and could be, he will become what he ought to be and could be." Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.

4. Make it a habit. We have no idea what impact we may have on the lives of other people. Every time we meet someone, we influence them in some way. Why not make it a positive one? And here is another quote:

"Since you cannot do good to all, you are to pay special attention to those who, by the accidents of time, or place, or circumstances, are brought into closer connection with you." Saint Augustin.



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MOTHER'S DAY

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Nick Alford

The English Channel Swimmer

This term's focus is all about our pride values. We are focusing on Inspiration, so we had a visit from a gentleman named Nick Alford who had swum the English Channel.

Swimming The English Channel

Swimming the English Channel took Nick 14 hours to swim 23 miles. He told us that it took forty-six thousand front crawl strokes and that the water was 14°C. He didn't even use his legs because he said his legs burn lots of calories and that would make him tired.

Nick ate two cans of tinned peaches, 12 bananas, Jelly Babies, lots of protein gels, protein and honey in his tea, carbohydrate powder and lots and lots of water.

Whilst Nick was swimming he got stung by six jellyfish and even saw dolphins. Did you know that only 4,133 people have swum the English Channel? He started at 1am and then finished at 3pm. When he had finished he was full of pride and couldn't feel his legs so he could barely walk.

Message from Mrs McCluskey, the Headteacher

As we approach the end of another exciting term, we want to take a moment to reflect on the wonderful journey we've had together. It has been a term filled with achievements, memorable experiences, and valuable learning opportunities for our children.

We were thrilled to share the fantastic news that our recent Ofsted inspection has resulted in a great report for Lenham Primary School. This achievement is a testament to the dedication of our teachers, the hard work of our children, and the continuous support from our parents.



By Molly D Root-Hicks and Poppy A Streeter

It affirms the high standards of education and the nurturing environment we strive to provide for each child.

The recent PTA-organised farm visit was a tremendous success, providing our children with a unique opportunity to connect with nature and learn about farm life. The smiles on their faces and the excitement in their voices echoed the enjoyment they experienced during this hands-on educational experience.

This term, we've also dedicated time to discuss crucial topics such as mental health and online safety. Our aim is to equip our children with the necessary tools to navigate the complexities of the digital world while fostering a supportive environment for their mental well-being. There is lots of guidance on our website <https://lenham.kent.sch.uk/about-us/online-safety/>





Swim Relay

MAIDSTONE 2024

Sunday 17th March 2024

12.00 - 5.00pm Maidstone Leisure Centre



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Christian Message

Spring is on its way!

From Rev. Canon Lorraine Apps – Huggins

March is the month in nature of renewed hope as spring really takes shape before our eyes.

The weather affects the new growth and, if adverse, sometimes spoiling the first show of daffodils or blossom, but in general the warmth filtering through and increased light makes us all feel good.

This year with Easter so early (Sunday 31st March) we are already well into Lent having begun that back on February 14th – bit tricky – chocs and romance versus giving up chocolate for Lent??!

The year often seems to fly past. There are occasions when many of us are glad that it has gone quickly, especially if it's been a hard year for some personal reason. And of course, conversely, some want to savour the days and exclaim 'what happened, we are already a quarter of the way through the year – where has it gone too?'

Living for the moment, appreciating the now is something that small children are often better at than adults. They ponder, they experience, they wonder, they explore...and when we are with them we are drawn to do the same.

In the Christian faith believers are often referred to as 'children' of God, and we

give God in heaven the name of 'Father' as Jesus encouraged us to do. As God's children we get that same permission that we give our young friends to be curious, to be open, inquisitive. This means that we can be child-like (not childish, that is different), even when we have no children around us to lead the way.

We can stop and watch the ant edge along the garden wall; we can notice the ladybird catching the first rays of sun; we can smile inwardly as we hear the birdsong and see them flitting about busily building nests... we can smile at the eggs cooking in the pan that look like a pair of eyes looking back at us, the rasher of bacon forming a smile – there are always ways to be child-like and to love the world we live in and not miss out on the wonder of God's creation and presence among us.

This sort of simple discovery, awareness and meditation lifts my heart, renews my hope, amuses my spirit, keeps me going...what supports you and keeps you going?

The resurrected Jesus shows us that life in all its fullness comes again, and again, and again.

Have a blessed Easter when the month comes to a close.

Len Valley Benefice

Everybody is welcome

The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches. *Matthew 13:31-32*

Sunday 3 March

9.30am Lenham: Breakfast Church

11.00am Lenham: Holy Communion

Wednesday 6 March

9.30am Lenham: Holy Communion (BCP)

Sunday 10 March – Mothering

Sunday 9.30am Lenham: Breakfast Church

11.00am Lenham: Holy Communion

Sunday 17 March

8.00am Lenham: Holy Communion (BCP)

9.30am Lenham: Breakfast Church

Sunday 24 March – Palm Sunday

10.30am Benefice Holy Communion at St Mary's, Lenham 'The King who came in peace'

Monday 25 – Wednesday 27 March

Series of Holy Week evening talks followed by Night Prayer

Monday 7.30pm at St Nicholas, Boughton Malherbe

The mustard seed is the smallest of seeds – Jonathan Arnold

Tuesday 7.30pm at St Mary's, Lenham

What seeds do we sow for growth – Ben Doggett

Wednesday 7.30pm at All Saints, Ulcombe

The birds that sit in the branches – John Huggins

Friday 29 March – Good Friday

2.00pm Services in all four churches 'An hour at The Cross'

Saturday 30 March

3.00pm Lenham: Messy Church – Messy Easter

Sunday 31 March – Easter Sunday

11.00am Lenham: Easter Holy Communion

Check notice boards nearer the time.

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An update on our work & dates for 2024



The Friends of
St Mary's Church, Lenham

The Friends of St Mary's team have had a busy start to the year. In January, we completed some minor repairs to the lighting in the church porch and arranged for a new exterior porch light to be fitted, with the intention of improving visibility at the entrance to the church.

The planned repairs to the damaged parquet flooring have also been carried out. The flooring experts who carried out the work advised us that the parquet was originally laid in the late 17th/early 18th century, which is significantly earlier than originally thought. The blocks are 4 cm thick, and nowadays 2cm are the thickest you can get. The blocks were all carefully taken up, repaired where necessary then re-laid, sanded and varnished. The floor looks beautiful once more and will hopefully continue to do so for a very long time.

We hope it won't be too long before work begins on the replacement of the stonework around the West Door. The necessary permissions for the work have been obtained, the stonemason has received the

stone and has begun to work on it in his studio; we just need some kinder weather in order for work to begin.

We've also been busy planning events for 2024. We'll be holding a Safari Lunch on Sunday 2nd June and The Annual Village Barn Dance on Saturday 21st September.

You may remember our last Safari Lunch in 2018, which was great fun and we're looking forward to holding this event once again this year. Ten local hosts will each welcome four guests for a starter course and four different guests for a main course, with the guests moving to a new location for their second course; we'll then all meet up in The Tithe Barn for a fabulous dessert buffet! Tickets will be limited and information about sales will be available in due course. And if you would like to support The Friends of St Mary's by offering to be a host for the Safari Lunch, we'd love to hear from you: you can get in touch with us via email at the address below. All proceeds from the Safari Lunch will go towards our work to preserve Lenham's listed church building.

 www.friendsofstmaryslenham.org  [@FriendsOfStMarysLenham](https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfStMarysLenham)
 enquiries@friendsofstmaryslenham.org

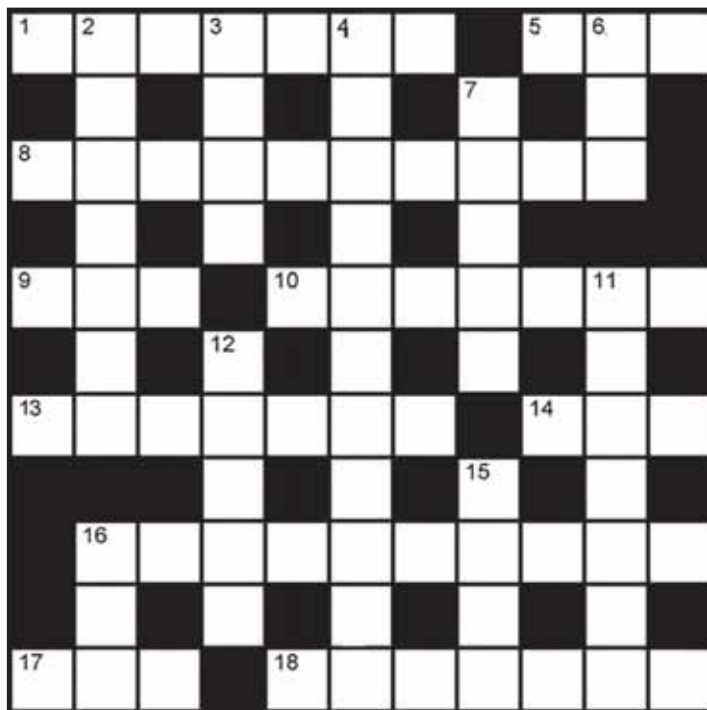
Lenham Community Centre's 20th Anniversary Celebration - 20th April 2024



Amazingly, Lenham Community Centre is celebrating its 20th anniversary in April this year. We thought we had to mark this special date with a celebration. We are planning an evening of entertainment from The King of Swing Ian Gallagher. Ian has performed for us before and was a huge hit, authentically sounding just like Frank Sinatra, Matt Munro and Michael Bublé. So please save the date - 20th April. There will be full details in next month's *Focus*.

Focus PRIZE Crossword March 2024

The January 2024 winner was Monty Finch of Lenham – well done!



Answers for February
2024 *Focus* Crossword



Across clues

1. King Charles III's wife, the Queen. (7)
5. Movement of the tide out to sea. (3)
8. Name for a squeeze box. (10)
9. Slang word for tea. (3)
10. Sea eagles. (7)
13. They make beer. (7)
14. Chemical used in the making of creosote. (3)
16. Newlyweds first holidays. (10)
17. An 'extra' run in cricket. (3)
18. Financial agents. (7)

Down clues

2. An extra one. (7)
3. One twelfth of a foot. (4)
4. The commonest set of words that Christians say. (5,6)
6. Snake that kills by constriction. (3)
7. A small crown worn by, say, a Princess. (5)
11. Someone who longs for something. (7)
12. They produce cygnets (5)
15. It needs a key or code to open it. (4)
16. Dried grass used for feeding horses. (3)

A £10 voucher, donated by your crossword compiler, will go to the first correctly completed crossword picked from your entries. Please complete the box below and hand your entries into the Lenham Parish Council offices at 1a High Street Lenham or into the Lenham library by **no later than 20 March** where they'll be placed in an envelope. The winner will be notified direct and announced in a future issue of *Focus*.

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