

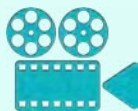
# The Lenham Focus

APRIL 2025 issue



Lenham Country Market wins  
2025 national award *p7*  
Lenham Cricket Club *p4-5*

Public exhibition – Chapel Farm *p9*  
Easter trail & craft fair *p19*  
Lenham Film Club *p2 & p16*



# LENHAM FILM CLUB

## Spring & Summer 2025

**April: Friday 11<sup>th</sup>**

**The Way**

**May: Friday 9<sup>th</sup>**

**The Critic**

**June: Friday 13<sup>th</sup>**

**Wicked**

**July: Friday 11<sup>th</sup>**

**Maria**

**August: Friday 8<sup>th</sup>**

**Bridget Jones: Mad About the Boy**

**September: Friday 12<sup>th</sup>**

**California Suite**

**Admission: adults £5, under 16s £2**

**Cash only, on the door**

**Doors open 19:00, performance begins 19:30**

**Lenham Community Centre  
Groom Way, Lenham ME17 2QT**



**@LenhamFilmClub**



**www.lenhamfilmclub.org**



**lenhamfilmclub@gmail.com**

# Editorial

**S**uccess! Our Lenham country market has **WON** the national 2025 award for best farmer's market. See inside for more details.

As we approach spring and, hopefully, warmer weather and brighter skies, the village calendar is gathering pace.

Take a look inside at the opportunities to get involved in, and enjoy a wide range of sporting activities. We have our own **Lenham Cricket Club**, the **Bowling Club**, **badminton**, **petanque**, **indoor bowls** and various **football clubs** to choose from. Also in nearby Harrietsham we have **lawn tennis**, **walking tennis** and **Pickleball** to consider – all the contact numbers and details are inside this issue, so regardless of your age or current fitness, there is no excuse!

**Events** inside include the **Demelza Easter Trail and Craft Fair** – a great fundraising day in nearby Sittingbourne

– together with advance notice of the very popular **Pilgrims Way Art Exhibition** in the Tithe Barn and the **Village Fete** in Charing.

You will also see **opportunities** to help maintain important features of the village, such as the Lenham Cross and the various parcels of land managed and maintained by Lenham Meadows Trust. These and other groups and societies cannot manage without willing volunteers from local villagers.

Inside we repeat details of the Lenham nursery lottery as part of their efforts to raise funds, with weekly prizes of up to **£25,000**. Details of how to take part are inside this issue.

**David Jackson** | Editor

**FOCUS is also online (Click on 'Lenham Focus') [www.lenhamparish.org.uk](http://www.lenhamparish.org.uk)**

## Volume 32 Edition 4 (April 2025)

Circulation 2,200 to Lenham Village (plus shops, library, pubs etc.), Lenham Heath, Platts Heath, Sandway, West Street, Woodside Green, Warren Street and to various Harrietsham outlets.

### Copy Deadline:

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

### Published by Lenham Focus

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## Advertising Rates and Sizes (H x W) (approx including borders). PDF format (300dpi) preferred.

1/8 Page (45x61mm) <i>Landscape</i>	£13
1/4 Page (92x61mm) <i>Portrait</i>	£21
1/2 Page (92x123mm) <i>Landscape</i>	£38
Full Page (185x123mm) <i>Portrait</i>	£69
Special requests/inserted leaflets	POA

### Editorial and Advertising: David Jackson

editorialslf@outlook.com or 07714 311008

### Finance: Sue Summers

lenhamfocusinvoices@gmail.com

### Proofing: Jayne Hewish

### Special Interests: Danny Coorsh

### Director: Russell Smith

### Distribution: Jon Sneath 07971 249137

### Designed & Printed by: [www.fuzzmedia.co.uk](http://www.fuzzmedia.co.uk)

**We welcome your input and comments please email me at [editorialslf@outlook.com](mailto:editorialslf@outlook.com)**

# Lenham Cricket Club

## A New Season Beckons!

### Club Officers:

- **President:** Andrew Barr
- **Chairman:** Alex Gray
- **Treasurer:** Sally Lane
- **Fixture Secretary:** Dan Russell

With the new season approaching fast, **Lenham Cricket Club** is looking for players of all abilities. Whether you are a seasoned veteran, returning to the sport, or wanting to take your first steps on the cricket field, we welcome you to play at your own pace in a safe and friendly environment. From league matches to friendly Sunday league games, there is always something for you to enjoy

### Junior Cricket – developing our youngsters

We are proud to support the development of young cricketers through our **All-Stars programme** (ages 5-8). This fun programme introduces children to the sport in an enjoyable way, with weekly sessions on Thursdays to teach basic skills. As they advance, young players can move up to our U/11, U/13, and U/15 teams, where they play in competitive matches and further develop their skills. Younger players train on Mondays in a more structured environment, preparing for more competitive games.

### Open Age Cricket – for the social or competitive player

Our **Saturday side** has recently been promoted and will face a higher level of competition this season. This side is perfect for those who want to play in a competitive league environment. For a more relaxed yet still competitive side of the game, our **Sunday team** plays weekly fixtures. Our Sunday team is an excellent opportunity for our Colts players to be integrated into the senior team.



### Upcoming Open Age Fixtures:

- April 26 – Otterden (Away)
- May 3 – Town Malling (Away)
- May 4 – East Sutton (Away)
- May 10 – West Farleigh (Home)
- May 11 – TBC (Home)
- May 17 – Penshurst (Away)
- May 18 – Sissinghurst (Away)
- May 24 – Pembury (Away)
- May 25 – Newington (Away)
- May 31 – Plaxtol (Home)

Our **Friday evening pre-season training** runs from **7:30 pm - 9:00 pm at Cornwallis Academy**. Whether you're looking to improve your game or just get back into the swing of things, now is the perfect time to join!

### Women's Cricket – a team on the rise

Our **women's team** has grown rapidly in recent years, competing in league games and tournaments. Just like the men's team, our women's team has had a very successful previous season having won their league. However due to poor weather their league final has been rescheduled for early this year. Despite their high-level performances this is still an extremely friendly and welcoming group.

**'Lenham Cricket Club is  
more than just a team –  
it is a family.'**



### Upcoming Women's Fixtures:

- April 27 - Away Town Malling (rescheduled final)
- May 11 - Home (Opposition TBC)
- May 18 - Away Tournament at Hythe

### Be a part of the club (off the field)

We are also looking for a **Club Secretary** to assist in managing the club's operations. This role is perfect for anyone who wants to be an integral part of the club and help with the administrative side of things.

### Join Today!

Whether you're looking to play on the field, train, or assist off the field, **Lenham Cricket**

**Club** is the perfect place to be a cricketer and make lasting friendships. Come along to a training session or get in touch today!

### Contact Us:

- Andy (Open Age): 07584 052846
- Alex (Youth & Women's Teams): 07760 132803
- Sally (General Enquiries): 07887 844875

**Lenham Cricket Club** is more than just a team – it's a family. We look forward to having you as a member!

## 'Spring is in the Air....'

It was once celebrated with.... a hop and a skip in Lenham square.'



**W**e think that the photo was taken at the May Day celebrations before WWI. The gentleman leading the ceremony is the headmaster Mr Underdown.

Our next talk:

### THE BUTCHER, THE BAKER, THE CANDLESTICKMAKER WHO LIVED IN CANTERBURY IN 1641?

A TALK BY PROF. JACKIE EALES

Thursday 24 April at 7.30, at Lenham Community Centre

**Guests £4, Members free**

# Taizé Service

**Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> March**

**11.00am**

**Mothering Sunday**

**St Mary's Church, Lenham**

**Taizé** – a service of songs,  
prayer and quiet meditation

All are welcome followed by tea, coffee and cake



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# Congratulations to our very own Country Market national award winners!



**S**andra Woodfall, Lenham market manager says: 'It is with great pride that we can announce our success at this year's national Farm Retail Association Awards.

At the ceremony in Birmingham on 12<sup>th</sup> March, Lenham Country Market were placed **National Winner of the Farmers Market Category by the independent assessors from the Farm Retail Association.**<sup>\*</sup>

Lenham Country Market also celebrates its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. We pride ourselves on having a lovely selection of variety of local, seasonal food and drink products and some craft stalls ranging from seasonal fruit and vegetables, fresh meats, fish and bread to cheeses, honey and garden plants.

Every 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month you'll find us in the wonderful

village square ready to serve our valued customers. We are incredibly proud of achieving this prestigious award and hope that it demonstrates our commitment to top value and choice for our valued Lenham village customers.'

The next **Lenham market is on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> April from 9am to 1pm** in the village square. To contact the market manager, **Sandra Woodfall**, ring her on **07775-736116** or email her on **lenhamcountrymarket@gmail.com**

<sup>\*</sup> The Farm Retail Awards celebrate the cream of the crop in the industry, showcasing an incredible array of farm retailers from the length and breadth of the UK. They are the only awards judged by fellow farm retailers and celebrate the best farm shops, farm cafés and restaurants, farmers' markets and trade suppliers in the country.





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# **PUBLIC NOTICE**

**CHAPEL FARM**

**PUBLIC EXHIBITION**

**At The  
LENHAM COMMUNITY CENTRE  
12 Groom Way, Lenham, ME17 2QT**

**4.30pm – 8pm Thursday 3 April 2025**

Brett Aggregates Ltd is holding a public exhibition of its planning application proposals to extract building sand and to restore to agricultural after use, at a site between Lenham and Charing Heath, and adjacent Chapel Farm, off Lenham Heath Road, Kent.

The exhibition is to be held at the Lenham Heath Community Centre in Lenham on the above date.

The exhibition is open to all members of the public who wish to see the details of the proposals.

For further information about this event please contact:

Richard Ford – Brett Group  
Tel: 01227 829000  
Email: [planningdepartment@brett.co.uk](mailto:planningdepartment@brett.co.uk)



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

## Sand extraction off Lenham Heath Road

You may have read in the local press recently that Kent County Council (KCC) is consulting on an aspect of the Kent Minerals Plan at a site in Lenham adjacent to Lenham Heath Road, south of the railway and between the solar park and the water treatment works. This site has long been earmarked for the extraction of fine sand once the existing sites in Charing and off Lenham Forstal Road are finished. That time has now come and KCC is formalising the details relating to the site ahead of works which are expected to begin in 2027.

This date has slipped somewhat, so the impact of this slippage on the proposals by Homes England and Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) to create a so-called "Garden Community" at this site and others adjacent to it around Lenham Heath is currently unknown.

Actually, much of the necessary detail relating to the "Heathlands" proposal remains unknown, in spite of MBC setting up "Stakeholder" groups to oversee getting to grips with the required elements – almost all of which are unavailable at the moment – but that's a whole other article!

The plan for the new extraction site is that all the traffic will be directed over the existing railway bridge, in the northeast corner of the site, and then eastwards around a new road constructed in the adjacent field and out onto the A20 via a new exit close to Lenham Forstal Road.

Lenham Parish Council sent its view to KCC emphasising that no HGV traffic should be directed along Lenham Heath Road or through the village. We are also concerned that, once completed, there are no plans to infill the space created by the extraction activity. The arrangement at the site off Lenham Forstal Road, operated by Brett's, was supposed to return that area to a public country park. We understand due to the Heathlands proposal this reparation has now been abandoned.

## East Lenham Farm, Old Ashford Road

East Lenham Farm, identified as Strategic Site 1 in the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan (LNP), will provide up to 100 houses, 40% of which will need to be designated as affordable under the current National Planning Policy Framework and confirmed during the review of the MBC Local Plan last year.

The development will also provide an updated and much larger recreation area for use as football and other sports facilities as part of the agreement.

This development, like many others across east Kent, has been held up by the issues identified as increasing the levels of pollution at the Stodmarsh nature reserve. Mitigation to address this is presently being discussed between the proposers and the Local Planning Authority in conjunction with Natural England.

As set out in the LNP, this enlarged and better equipped recreation facility will release the land at William Pitt Field for housing (identified

**'East Lenham Farm  
... will provide up to  
100 houses'**

as Strategic Site 6 in the LNP). After the new recreation ground adjacent to the new development at East Lenham is up and running, the parish council will hold a consultation regarding the best ideas to take forward development at William Pitt Field. This will accommodate around 60 homes, although the parish council, which owns the site, has not yet decided on the type of dwellings it would prefer to see there.

All the areas identified for housing within the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan are scheduled for delivery by the end of 2031.

### ... and finally

A brief update on the big projects we will be working on this year.

- Discussions continue with MBC to secure the additional funding from the pot it holds from CIL and S106 contributions for the new nursery;
- preliminary assessments are underway to provide the information that will be required to extend the car park at Maidstone Road ahead of a planning application later this year;
- you may have noticed work has been going on at the toilets in Maidstone Road. This is progressing well and the aim is to reopen these very soon.



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To find out more please visit: [www.theartsocietyegerton.org.uk](http://www.theartsocietyegerton.org.uk) or contact our Membership Secretary, Christine on [cmwillis75@gmail.com](mailto:cmwillis75@gmail.com) or 01233 756377



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Further dates for 2025 will be released soon.

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# The Way



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**Friday April 11<sup>th</sup>**

**Performance begins 19.30,  
doors open 19.00**

***Running time 2hrs 3 mins***

The award-winning **The Way** (PG 13, 2010) kicks off our Spring and Summer programme. It is the remarkable and powerful story of a father who sets out on a mission that turns into a life changing experience. The excellent Martin Sheen plays Thomas Avery, who had set out to recover the body of his estranged son who had died on the ancient Camino de Santiago, but when he arrives, he comes to an enormous decision. Inexperienced walker though he is, he decides to make the same pilgrimage himself – and finish what his

son had begun. There he meets other pilgrims with heartrending stories of their own; they are all seeking greater meaning to their lives. Martin Sheen's real-life son Emilio Estevez wrote the film, directed and also plays the role of Avery's son. The result is a truly memorable and moving film as we see how the pilgrimage is a life-changing experience for Thomas.

**Director:** Emilio Estevez.

Our film on 9<sup>th</sup> May is **The Critic**, which stars the wonderful Ian McKellen as vitriolic theatre reporter Jimmy Erskine in this brilliant thriller set in 1934.

**Admission:** Adults £5, under 16s £2; cash only, card payments not accepted.



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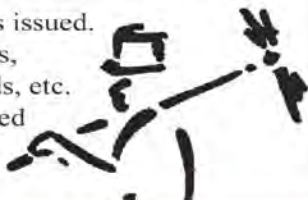
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# An update from your local MP, Helen Whately

**F**aversham and Mid Kent is under siege from development. This is the number one topic people raise with me at the moment.

There are currently five large developments in the pipeline across Faversham and Mid Kent. If they all go ahead the number of people living here will increase by more than the population of Faversham. I don't need to tell you that this will completely change the rural character of our area.

Before the General Election I lobbied successfully to change national planning policy to focus development in cities and urban areas. The plan was to raise density levels in inner London to those of European cities like Paris and Barcelona, build more homes on brownfield land in urban areas and regenerate parts of Leeds, Liverpool and York. The new Government is reversing this. They have cut London's housing targets, and they are pushing more housing into rural parts of the South East like Kent.

I've always said I understand the need for more housing, and I know people need a roof over their head, but this scale of development in our countryside is something else altogether. Before Christmas I introduced a new Bill in Parliament which aims to protect high quality land for farming. It's very hard for a Private Members Bill to become law, but if I succeed, it will stop large developments being built on Grade 1 agricultural land. We need our best farmland to be used for growing food, not houses.

In November, I was shocked when the Deputy Prime Minister took away Swale Borough Council's power to decide whether the Highsted Park development



(8,400 new homes) should go ahead. That happened literally hours before a meeting when local councillors intended to reject the application; instead, the decision will be made in Whitehall.

It's hard to turn around the juggernaut of the UK Government, but there's still a fight to be fought. We are lucky to have committed campaigners who have set up groups to do just that. Four of the local groups are: Against Lidsing Garden Development, Save Our Heath Lands, Stop Winterbourne Fields and Stop Highsted Park Action Group. Apologies if I have missed campaign groups off this list – if so please do let me know.

With so much development coming locally, everyone is going to be affected. Even if there's no new housing planned in your parish, all the roads are going to get busier, along with more demand for local public services like doctors and dentists.

So can I urge you to get involved and support one of the local campaigns fighting these massive developments? You can find out more about them by searching online or check my website – **[www.helenwhately.org.uk](http://www.helenwhately.org.uk)** for links.

Best wishes, Helen

**e:** [helen.whately.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:helen.whately.mp@parliament.uk)

**t:** 0207 219 6472

## Helen Whately MP



Member of Parliament for  
Faversham and Mid Kent.

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The Council meet on the first Wednesday of each month.

Our committees also meet once a month.

These are:-  
*Finance & General Purposes  
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Please see the notice boards and website for the dates of these.

All meetings are held at the Lenham Community Centre at 7:30pm.

Parishioners may attend all meetings.

Contact details: Lisa Westcott  
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# The newly forgotten pursuit of an 'elitist subject'

By Sophie Racz, The Lenham School

Outrage is forecasted over the government's decision to axe the 'Latin Excellence Programme' (LEP) from non-selective state schools, leaving year 10 and year 11 students stranded midway through their GCSE course. The decision to abort funding is a disturbance to students, teachers and critics, with critics claiming Latin has now become 'exclusionary'. Although Latin has a certain reputation for being an 'elitist subject', it offers advantages. The Latin Excellence Programme gave state school students the opportunity to write, read and learn Latin in preparation for a GCSE qualification highly regarded by universities.

**'Latin teachers will be unable to receive financial support'**

## A lost opportunity

Statistically, the funding supports 8,000 pupils at 40 non-selective state schools. The lack of funding means Latin teachers will be unable to receive financial support and could be threatened with redundancy. Although the axe of the LEP is meant to plug a "£22 billion black hole in public finances", the government's effort overlooks the effects on England's educational history and culture. The money will generate support in sectors such as the healthcare service, improving literacy and numeracy rates in underperforming schools, but will this money make a better difference, or an enormous loss? 60% of words in English stem from Latin. Latin helps us understand multiple subjects, including History, Classics, and the English Language; learning how Latin has influenced our culture, history, spoken and written word.



## Not all hope is futile

Hope is not completely lost for non-selective state schools. Notable figures have come forward to express their concern at the government's 'short-sighted decision'. Amongst them is award-winning historian Tom Holland, who is quoted as saying: "It cannot be right that Latin is taught in just 2.7 percent of state schools, when it is taught in 4.9 percent of private schools". Some view this decision as an educational injustice. Petitions have sprung up online, urging the government to prevent disruption for pupils who are ready to sit their GCSE exams in just a few months.

## Our community

The government's decision does not yet impact the Lenham School; our curriculum consists of two modern foreign languages, French and German. However, Latin contributes to form the French language with many words in French being traced to their Latin origins. One student from the Lenham School said: "I haven't had much experience with Latin, but it sounds like a really interesting language. I like history, and I think Latin will engage my interest". It is saddening to hear state schools like ours may never get the opportunity to learn Latin, but if events like this continue, then it must be asked if we are sacrificing our education just to help string together financial stability.

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*He who wants everything loses everything."*



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# Lenham Meadows Trust

## Countryside and community

### Lenham Meadows Trust needs your help!

**T**he Trust carries out vital work in the community to protect, preserve and maintain the open land in and around Lenham. The Trust is run by volunteers and we need your help to fill a number of roles currently available. These include:

#### Events Manager

Arranging and coordinating fund raising events, talks, walks and open days, etc.

#### Volunteer Coordinator

To liaise closely with the team and to make contact with those on our volunteer list to ensure maximum turn out for events.

#### Trust Secretary

This role would include taking minutes for both the management team and trustees meetings, confirming times, distributing agendas and copying minutes containing action and decisions to the Trust team.

#### Membership Secretary

To manage and maintain the Trust's membership list (i.e. 'Friends of Lenham Meadows Trust') - including issuing renewal notices and new membership packs, liaising with the finance secretary as necessary. Also to consider options and initiatives to encourage an expanded membership.

#### Social Media Administrator

Role would include monitoring and updating social media outlets and posting regular newsworthy items relevant to the trust.

All appointed volunteers would ideally attend the monthly management meetings and participate in the Trust's discussions and decisions.

For a 'without commitment' more detailed explanation of the various roles, including the approximate time likely to be needed for each of the posts, please contact the Trust's Chairman, **Danny Matthews**, either by phone on **07831-308267** or by email at **chairman@lenhammeadowstrust.org**.

**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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# Book Review from the Lenham Library:

**'Absent in the Spring' by Mary Westmacott**

Many people, both young and old, give up their free time to work on projects that benefit the community or support a local charity. The book this month, *The Volunteers* by Carol Donaldson, celebrates the work of these unsung heroes. This book describes how Carol, suddenly single and jobless in her thirties, stumbles upon an unexpected opportunity to lead a team of countryside conservation volunteers ranging from twenty somethings with

Community Service Orders to seventy-year-olds with a wealth of practical experience.

At first Carol relishes the prospect of nurturing Britain's wildlife with like-minded people; but the reality is a tumbledown office overrun with vermin, mould and a collapsing leaky roof, a belligerent boss and a long commute to work. To cap it all, the volunteers are far from impressed with their leader's lack of practical skills in erecting a kissing gate, but despite a rocky start the author gradually earns the respect of the group and a possible romance even develops along the riverbank amidst the brambles and nettles with a Community Service volunteer.

The diverse group hopes to get something out of volunteering, whether it's a sense of purpose, giving back to the community or just a fresh start in life. A report by the Joseph Rowntree foundation in 2005 advocated for phased retirement schemes, in which people approaching retirement took



time off during the working week to try out different forms of volunteering with a wide range of organisations. Often many people would have liked a job outside and using their practical skills, but were constrained by the need to earn higher salaries. The group bonds over their love of nature amidst illness, mental health issues and the desire for acceptance and companionship. There is growing evidence that social prescribing in the form of gardening,

singing and community work

can have a positive impact on people's mental health and reduce the amount of time spent at the doctors. Carol herself begins to find solace with her diverse group and can move on with her life and eventually write her first book.

This is a heart-warming book about the healing effects of nature and working together for a common cause. As Carol states "We all need something, don't we? Whether you are 21 or 79 we all need the same things. Friends, support, acceptance, a sense of belonging, a feeling of purpose."

Carol Donaldson is a writer and conservationist originally from Essex. She has worked for many of Britain's wildlife charities. Her love of nature shines through in her books with her descriptions of leafy lanes and meadows covered in flowers and a hot mass of butterflies. The author now lives in Kent and enjoys wild swimming and cycling as well as volunteering.



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# Climate Change is Happening

Pat Crawford provides the rural focus press group comment and advice column

**S**imultaneous to increasing concern about climate change, many governments around the world are making worryingly negative decisions. Despite the horrifying fires that tore through Los Angeles last year, thousands of fire-fighters employed by the USA Forest Service have been given termination letters as part of Mr Trump's cost-cutting exercise.



same time imposing carbon-reduction policies.

The UK's Change Committee, set up in 2008 under the Climate Change Act, advises by 2040 we must reduce carbon emissions by

87% compared to 1990 levels. The University of Sussex is introducing a climate-related degree course that will commence in 2026.

The numbers of 'extreme weather' events, including heatwaves and storms, are increasing globally as a result of which farmers around the world can no longer rely on regular weather patterns. It's easy to take our own farmers for granted but we need to pause and reflect on their importance to UK food security. Currently they produce a little over 60% of the food consumed in this country; the remainder is imported including a substantial proportion from countries already suffering serious issues related to climate change. We need to value the work of our farmers now, *not leave support until we have a food crisis.*

*Seven trillion tons* of ice has been lost in the world's glaciers since the year 2000. The loss continues at an alarming rate.

The UK government has announced it will grant new licences for oil and gas exploration in the North Sea with the intentions of safeguarding energy supplies. At the same time the government emphasises the need for low carbon technologies. Governments around the world are challenged by balancing the nation's economy while at the

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and the Department Of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) are investing £15million as part of the Maximising UK Adaptation to Climate Change programme which consists of two strands; a climate change adaptation hub, coordination and translation plus six research projects delivering new transdisciplinary knowledge for UK climate adaptation.

The UK Met Office sums up the ways in which climate change can influence systems (colloquially 'the weather') as follows; changes in the hydrological cycle; warmer land and air; warming oceans; melting sea ice and glaciers; rising sea levels; ocean acidification; global greening; changes in ocean currents; more extreme weather; risk to water supplies.

The Met lists potential impacts (some of which we are already experiencing): conflict and climate migrants; localised flooding; flooding of coastal regions; damage to marine ecosystems; fisheries failing; loss of

biodiversity; change in seasonality; heat stress; expansion of habitable region of pests; forest mortality and increased risk of fires; damage to infrastructure; food insecurity.

*'Seven trillion tons of ice has been lost in the world's glaciers since the year 2000.'*



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# Pilgrims Way Artists

The Pilgrims Way Art group are preparing for their annual summer exhibition in May, to be held in the Tithe Barn. As a 'taster', here are just a few of the spectacular examples from the artists who will be showing their work.

More details and further illustrations will follow in next month's *Focus*.





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# Lenham Gardening Society

From Margaret Baines

## This month's meeting is on 17<sup>th</sup> April at 7.30pm in the Community Centre

Nigel Gibson is coming to talk on '*Late Flowering Perennials/Grasses*'.

The competition will be for 3 tulips and/or 3 Easter cup cakes.

All are welcome to the meetings except in February, 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 evening's close.



**For further information: Email: [gardenlenham@gmail.com](mailto:gardenlenham@gmail.com) Tel: 07917401228**



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# Contact Details For Local Groups

Badminton	Alan Williamson	01622-858763
Badminton Club Feathers	Geoff Lord	07794-488331
Borough Councillors	Tom & Janetta Sams	01622-859412 / 0789-1901831
Bowling Club	Lynn 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 Protec'n	01622-602117
Drama	Gail Kelly	01622-850671
Friends of St Mary's Church	Andrew Barr	enquiries@friendsofstmaryslenham.org
Gardening Society	Margaret Baines	01622-431649
Guides (1st Lenham)	Jo Homes	07887-877814
Ham Lane Allotment Association	Doug Matthews	01622-297692
HAMS Productions	David Penny	07731-455677
Harrietsham & Lenham Beavers	Duncan Keenan	07768-926654
Harrietsham & Lenham Cubs	Mrs A Seales	01622-859829
Hub Club	Nina Kent	01622-851970
KCC for Maidstone Rural East	Shellina Prendergast	Shellina.Prendergast@kent.gov.uk
Kent Highway Services	Roads, paths etc.	03000-418181
Kent Wildlife Trust		01622-662012
Lenham Country Market	Sandra Woodfall	07775-736116
Lenham Community Centre	Carol Higgins	01622-853800 (am)
Lenham Cricket Club	Alex Gray	07760-132803
Lenham Film Club	Danny Coorsh	lenhamfilmclub@gmail.com
Lenham Heath Memorial Hall	Rosemarie Pomeroy	07572-911396
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	Sue Neaves	01622-532409
Lenham Toddlers Group	Irene Hine	01622-858919
Lenham Wanderers FC	Anna Russell	07747-844785
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	01622-947938
Patient Participation Group	Teresa New	01622-858341
Pilates Classes	Vivien Elcomb	01622-853887
Redback Explorer Scouts	Mark Horlock	redbackesu@hotmail.com
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
Wellbeing Community Group	Ellie Stevens	07952-594655 / (Vladimir 07877-143088)
Women's Institute	Chris Godden	01622-858658

# Lenham Community Centre – Regular Clubs/Classes/Societies – April 2025

ACTIVITY	TIME	DAY	CONTACT NO
Abundant Energy Tai Chi weekly	0930-1030	Monday	07985 001782
<b>Abundant Energy Qigong weekly</b>	<b>1045-1145</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>07985 001782</b>
Country Ways Knitting 2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday	1330-1630	Monday	01622 858658
<b>Country Ways Quilting 1<sup>st</sup> &amp; 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday</b>	<b>1330-1630</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>01233 879507</b>
Country Ways Rugmaking 2 <sup>nd</sup> & last Wednesday	0900-1300	Wednesday	07784 892160
<b>Feathers Badminton weekly</b>	<b>2000-2200</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>07984 948524</b>
Gardening Society 3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday	1845-2200	Thursday	01622 430649
<b>Hatha Yoga weekly</b>	<b>1815-1945</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>07850 355918</b>
Kent School of Bridge weekly	1330-1730	Thursday	01622 891964
<b>LenARA Bowling weekly</b>	<b>1330-1700</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>01622 858439</b>
LenARA Line Dancing weekly	1900-2115	Wednesday	01622 859725
<b>LenARA Members 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday</b>	<b>1230-1700</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>01622 851763</b>
LenARA Petanque – weather permitting	0900-1300	Thursday	01622 858439
<b>LenARA Zumba Gold weekly</b>	<b>0900-1030</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>01622 850228</b>
Lenham Art Group weekly	1000-1300	Thursday	01622 858238
<b>Lenham Badminton weekly</b>	<b>2000-2200</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>01622 858561</b>
Lenham Ballet School weekly	1700-2030	Monday	07866 316056
<b>Lenham Ballet School weekly</b>	<b>1700-2030</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>07866 316056</b>
Lenham Ballet School weekly	1630-2100	Thursday	07866 316056
<b>Lenham Ballet School weekly</b>	<b>0930-2130</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>07866 316056</b>
Lenham Ballet School weekly	0900-1530	Saturday	07866 316056
<b>Lenham Heritage 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday</b>	<b>1900-2130</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>01622 850228</b>
Lenham Meadows Trust 4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday	1800-2300	Thursday	01622 851291
<b>Lenham Toddlers (Pre-school) weekly</b>	<b>0930-1130</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>01622 858919</b>
Lenham WI 2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday	1845-2200	Thursday	01622 858658
<b>Make &amp; Shake (Pre-school) weekly</b>	<b>1030-1300</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>07894 160906</b>
Parish Council 1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday	1930-2230	Wednesday	01622 829034
<b>Parish Council F &amp; G P 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday</b>	<b>1930-2200</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>01622 829034</b>
Parish Council Planning 1 <sup>st</sup> Monday	930-2200	Monday	01622 829034
<b>Pathways Church 1<sup>st</sup> &amp; 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday</b>	<b>0830-1330</b>	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>01622 850266</b>
Pilates weekly	0900-1100	Tuesday	07495 481726
<b>Sing &amp; Shake (Pre school) weekly</b>	<b>0930-1300</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>07894 160906</b>
Telisa Tai Chi weekly	1730-1830	Wednesday	07734 108683
<b>Zumba with Rosie weekly</b>	<b>1830-1930</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>07809 490982</b>

PLEASE CONTACT ORGANISERS DIRECT FOR UP-TO-DATE TIMES/DATES AND INFORMATION



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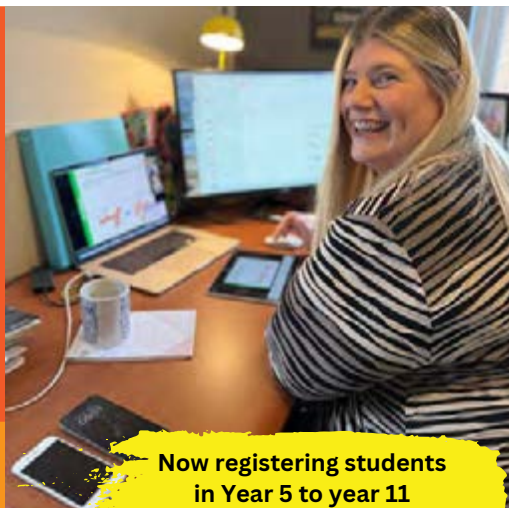
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# The Hambly family of Lenham

## – Part 4

**The final episode covering the generations of the Hamblys;  
serialised for *Focus* by Chris Allen**



*Chris & Julia's wedding*

**Chris shares his  
experiences of living  
in Lenham**

**C**hris Allen, son of Marguerite (nee Hambly), was born in Lenham at the closing stages of World War II. He has lived all his life in Lenham and during those 80 years has seen many changes to the village.

'We lived at 68 High Street and I remember very well when Honywood Road was under construction, the trench for the main drainage collapsed burying three men. They managed to get two of them out alive but unfortunately the third died. The grief-stricken relatives walked past our house. I also remember the milkman, Bob Ambrose, who would walk round the village with a milk churn, ladling the milk into jugs and leaving them at the front doors.

In these early days following the war the mind of every person was very much

occupied in finding enough food to feed the family. People would take any job to earn a few shillings to buy the essentials and any second-hand furniture was very sought after. Shopping was not a case of choosing what you wanted but being pleased to have whatever was available and within budget. Just about everything was rationed.

My mother worked mainly on the land. I remember her picking up potatoes at Court Lodge Farm and loading them onto a horse and cart. She later became a school dinner lady and finally a shop assistant in the chemists. It is difficult to believe today but people would go to her with their symptoms and she would advise on what to take based totally on what was written on the package. Even today there are people who remember her advice.



I became an apprentice instrument mechanic at Aylesford Paper Mills and, although the UK Paper Industry collapsed, it set me on a sound footing for the rest of my working life. It was at work where I met my wife Julia and we bought a house in Lenham Square which we renovated before marrying the following year.

Our first daughter Louise was born in the Square; we then moved to Lenham Heath where our second daughter Catherine was born.

She read maths at St Andrews University where she won a place on the "Deans List". She is married to John Tait and they have one daughter Chloe. Catherine works in Edinburgh for the Standard Life Group.

The life of Louise was featured in *Focus* November 2024: 'Gold Medals for Lenham's Rowing Champion.'



Julia was deeply involved in building the Community Centre and continues with the day-to-day running where she serves as the deputy chair. With the children gone, we moved back to the centre of Lenham in 2021 and hopefully will remain here for the rest of our lives.

There is one last member of the family who is the most widely known in Lenham, Timmy the dog.



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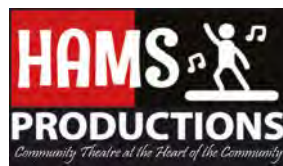
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# Simple Wellbeing: Processing Emotions

By Vladimir Barkanov

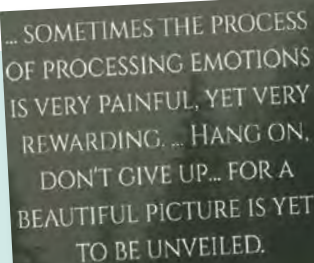
In the previous article, I raised the question of the importance of emotions and promised to discuss the topic of processing emotions. But what does that mean?

*“Processing emotions is about learning to understand, make sense of, and deal with emotions in healthy, productive ways.”*  
(Counselling and Therapy Online.)

The truth is that feeling emotions is not easy and we often try to avoid doing so. We may even suppress positive emotions, which can feel overwhelming. As for negative emotions... who in their right mind would want to feel those? But it is important. Why?

Recently, I had the pleasure of seeing a performance by Jasmin Vardimon Dance Theatre called *“Pinocchio”*. In it, the narrator said something interesting: *“Finally, Pinocchio understood that to be human means to FEEL. To feel joy, to feel happiness, to feel fear, to feel pain...”*

I found these words very profound. Feeling the full range of emotions, understanding them, makes us human, makes us feel alive, and makes our lives worth living. The deeper we can feel, the deeper our life will be.



... SOMETIMES THE PROCESS  
OF PROCESSING EMOTIONS  
IS VERY PAINFUL, YET VERY  
REWARDING. ... HANG ON.  
DON'T GIVE UP... FOR A  
BEAUTIFUL PICTURE IS YET  
TO BE UNVEILED.

Audri Yachne

## How do we process emotions?

Processing emotions helps our emotional growth and can completely transform our lives. So, how do we process emotions?

**First step** – allow yourself to feel. Even if an emotion is strong and threatens to overwhelm you, let yourself feel it fully. Do not shrink away or pull back. Then, allow it to run its course. Do not rush it, but also don't try to “stretch” it. Emotions often come in waves. They crash into you, roll over you, and then roll away. There is something wonderful in every part of this process, which can be missed if you try to apply any force to it.

When an emotion is positive, we may want it to last forever, but it won't, and that's okay. There is so much to feel that we don't need to cling to every positive feeling as if it is our last. Once an emotion has run its course, we may experience inner renewal, a deeper understanding of what life means, and a better, albeit not intellectualized, understanding of ourselves.

As I mentioned above, it is not easy to feel and process emotions, even positive ones. Why might we try to shrink away from it? Because it can make us laugh, gasp, exclaim, or even cry with happiness in public, which, for some reason, we may find embarrassing. But negative emotions bring an even harder challenge. We will talk about that next time.



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## Recipe of the Month

### Ham Rosnaree – An Irish Recipe

#### Ingredients:

2oz butter  
flour  
2 tbspsn honey  
1 glass whiskey  
½ cup cream  
1 egg yolk  
1 diced cooking apple  
4 slices of raw ham  
½ cup of brown sauce  
dry mashed potato



#### Method:

Cook the potatoes in salted water until soft, drain and keep warm. Flour the ham slices and cook in the butter, when cooked pour in the whiskey and allow the latter to flame. Remove the ham and cook the diced apple. Add the honey and brown sauce and blend in cream, return the ham to this sauce. Mash the potatoes and beat the egg yolk into them. Put the potatoes into a flameproof dish and colour under the grill. Put the ham in a dish and cover with the sauce.

**NB.** It should be explained that an Irish glass of whiskey is more than the quantity of an English double measure. Professor Harrison found that the recipe is improved if the ham is allowed to soak in water for several hours before cooking and dried before use. No salt is needed and so the recipe does not mention it. The kind of potato described goes admirably with the ham and its sauce and he serves it separately after browning the top.

Professor W. Harrison



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## The latest news from Chris Godden



In February **Kim White, OBE**, came to give us a talk about the Gypsy Traveller culture. The Romany Gypsies originally came from India and brought with them the bright coloured clothing and the gold and silver jewellery that they still identify with today.

They travelled from India through Asia and Europe selling their wares, holding horse races and markets. From the cradle to the grave the father is the dominant figure in the family. The men do not do women's work or take any interest in childbirth. When a child is born the boys are very often given the same name while the girls take their grandmother's name. Consequently there could be quite a few Johns in the same family.

Some boys will change their surname to their mother's maiden name to keep that name going and very few travellers have birth certificates. They are unable to read or write so many babies are not registered and the families do not claim benefits.



Boys go out to work with their fathers from the age of 15 or even younger whilst the girls learn about the cleanliness of the home. From the age of 8 they help with the babies and the younger children and they learn to cook. Whilst travelling, they used to be able to stop on common land but since 1968 all common land now belongs to the crown.

The second largest traveller community in the country is a council owned gypsy site in Kent, one of only 12, although there are 261 actual sites. Wedding invitations are by word of mouth and now, with social media, people come from miles around to attend. When a traveller dies a cordon is placed around the place of death to ward off evil spirits.

Kim has experienced a gathering in hospital where vehicles were parked around the public car park causing chaos and the visiting family were all crowded around the bed. The nurse in charge tried to speak to the next of kin, who was the wife, to tell her that only two visitors at a time were allowed. She did nothing about it because she was a woman and the men would have taken no notice of her.



**If you want to join us, we meet at Lenham Community Centre on the second Thursday of the month at 7.30pm. Please come along and see what we get up to.**

**To find out more please contact [rrgodden@btinternet.com](mailto:rrgodden@btinternet.com)**

The nurse should have spoken to the head of the family, the father, the son or brother who would then tell the family that they would have to leave. Every gypsy family must be represented at the funeral and that is why so many women and children also attend.

This month we have **Pamela Gillard** who will be giving us a talk on Patchwork and Quilting. The WI was originally started to help women and girls to learn about the skills they need to run a home – cooking and sewing. Education has been a continued aim of the WI and still forms the basis of all the events and workshops.



## Harrietsham Lawn Tennis Club (Est. 1924)

From Andrew Rogers, Tennis Club Chairman

**Your Harrietsham Club received two awards at the LTA Kent Tennis Awards evening in February.**



**The “Club of the Year (1-4 courts)” award and the “Lifetime Achievement” award went to Sue Greenwood for her contribution to the Club for over 60 years as Committee Member & Club Volunteer. Many congratulations to Sue on this very special achievement.**



## Coming soon.... Walking Tennis

In May we plan to introduce Walking Tennis – an LTA approved version of tennis played on a standard sized court where the ball can bounce twice and no running or jumping is permitted. The game is ideally suited to those who are less mobile or recovering from an injury where more gentle exercise is necessary. Look out for further details next month.

Pickleball – the Tennis Club now has a regular booking on Sunday afternoons from 2-4pm to play Pickleball in the Harrietsham Village Hall – do come along, no membership is necessary, just “pay as you play” at £3 per 2 hour session.

For any further details please ring Andrew on **079000 23399** or visit: **[www.harrietshamlawntennisclub.weebly.com](http://www.harrietshamlawntennisclub.weebly.com)** for the latest news.



## Commonwealth Day: The UK's Union Jack and Canada's Maple Leaf flags



### Commonwealth Day

The 56 member countries of the Commonwealth, including Canada, celebrate Commonwealth Day every year in March. This year it was on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

#### History of Commonwealth Day in Canada (courtesy Heritage Canada)

In 1973, the National Council in Canada of the Royal Commonwealth Society suggested in a letter to Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau that the idea of Commonwealth Day to be observed simultaneously throughout the Commonwealth be included on the agenda for the Heads of Government Meeting to be held in Ottawa that year.

The proposal was not included in the agenda of that meeting but did appear as a Canadian item on the agenda of the 1975 meeting.

At that time, the heads of Government agreed that the Commonwealth Secretariat be asked to select a date for such an observance that would not have any untoward historical connotations. At the meeting of senior officials in Canberra in May 1976, the Canadian proposal that the second Monday in March be set as Commonwealth Day was adopted.

#### Precedence for Flags

When representing the United Kingdom as a sovereign nation, the Union Jack takes precedence over a Canadian provincial or territorial flag, as established in the order of precedence.

The Union Jack is flown along with the National Flag of Canada at federal buildings, airports, military bases and other appropriate establishments within Canada, from sunrise to sunset, on the following occasions annually:

- The date of the official observance of the Sovereign's birthday (Victoria Day, the Monday preceding 25<sup>th</sup> May);
- The anniversary of the adoption of the Statute of Westminster (11<sup>th</sup> December); and;
- The date of the official observance of Commonwealth Day (2<sup>nd</sup> Monday in March).

Conversely, when representing Canada's membership in the Commonwealth or allegiance to the Crown (for example during a royal visit) Canadian provincial and territorial flags take precedence over the Union Jack when physical arrangements allow.



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# Countryways Quilters and Stitchers

From Pamela Gillard

**W**e had to cancel a meeting back in February due to Flu cases and have been running a little behind. So if we have managed to get caught up by April, we are scheduled to work on a very colourful star quilted cushion. We'll have to see how it goes.

I hope you'll come and join us and try your hand at something new or just enjoy the company, have a chat and a cup of tea. An enjoyable way to spend an afternoon.

We have our meetings on the first and third Tuesdays of every month except December and would love to see you. We meet in the Osborne room in the Lenham Community Centre from 1:30 to 4:30. If you would like more information on our group or would like a copy of our 2025 programme, please contact me, Pamela Gillard at 07914 809946 or email [moonbeamspinner@gmail.com](mailto:moonbeamspinner@gmail.com)



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# Obituary – Peter Beer

10 March 1939 – 14 February 2025

**M**ark Beer, Peter's son, says: 'A celebration of Peter Beer and his life will be held on the 4<sup>th</sup> April 2025 in The Red Lion Pub Lenham Square at 3.30pm to raise a glass or two with family and friends.

Anyone who wishes to pay their respects is more than welcome to join us.'

The poem by Peter reflects his time when on a horse and cart, as shown in the photograph below:

## THE BOY WITH HOLES IN HIS CLOTHES

The oat sheafs had sharp thistles bound  
in by the string.

I cried as they drew blood from  
my soft skin.

'Do not make so much fuss',  
my uncle cried out,

'just lay them on the wagon;  
stop messing about'.

But they're hurting my fingers and  
scratching my legs,

I am but a small boy. Is this a test?



'Hurry up Peter' - the shouting  
came strong,

'We all want to go home so this  
won't take long'.

I fight back my tears and stack  
them in order,

my pain and fears on hold  
as it might rain.

The last sheafs are pitched to me, the  
load now quite high,

I hold back my tears as I climb down  
from the sky.

Back on the ground my uncle said,

'What was all the crying for?' so I  
showed him the blood streaks on my  
legs.

As I grew up, tasks like this were many,  
and for my tears and pain I would receive  
a few pennies.

As the years passed by, I promised that I  
would rid myself of the poverty tie

So I worked hard and long;  
the holes on my clothes now are all gone.



# The first Mill on the Stour

From Lesley Feakes

On the Heritage Lenham website ([www.heritagelenham.co.uk/](http://www.heritagelenham.co.uk/)) it says that Tanyards had a mill that was likely owned by the St Augustine monks. How can this be?

Firstly, Tanyards building was not a mill; a leat ran right through the relatively modern building presumably for washing the hides. I have photographs; there was no hint of a mill stone. I understood Tanyards was essentially a modern age industry together with the Bonemill. Before the use as a tanyard the leat could have been connected to watercress beds in Court Meadow.

Secondly, why should the 'mill' (if there was one there) have been owned by the Abbey? The Glebe of the church extends down to that point and the church had been given to the Archbishop by Queen Ediva in 961 AD as part of Lenham.



Standing very close to Tanyards was the 37m long Saxon hall located in 2019. William Thorne made up the history of the St. Augustine's in the 14<sup>th</sup> century because records had been lost; that is 350 years after the event and I reckon he got it wrong. The Abbey could not have owned the church because Queen Ediva obviously did (even though it is not mentioned).

The important commodity (even in Roman times) was watercress.

There was likely a post-medieval mill much later at Sutton Field (near Tanyards), where there is a straight cut mill race and sluices that LAS investigated. I understood the post-medieval millstone found came from Stream Field, the southern end of Tanyards; it's likely been moved.

No - my supposition that the mills owned by the Abbey were on the River Len at Biggon Heath makes much more sense, (see my booklet on Lenham).

It is a pity that people make up "history" to fit the facts as they see them.

But then that is much of history in the present day, as sleuths like Lucy Worsley have found out!



**Millstone found near new construction at Tanyards**

The accepted 1<sup>st</sup> mill on the Stour is the Corn Mill now known as the Bone Mill. Further excavation is needed as I think it is Roman, judging by a stone on site with a Lewis hole. The Lenham centre of the parish was Queen Ediva's village. Legend has it that there were 5 barns. A Saxon barn has been found near the Community Centre complete with cobbled forecourt 37m in length, possibly the largest in Kent.

Measuring with Google Earth the so called 'tithe barn' is 37m (more with addition of the cart shed). The burnt barn was 37m, the rooves of Dog & Bear + Red Lion = 37m. Were they all once Saxon Barns? Quite likely.

These barns were communal, people and animals housed in the same building. In other words the origin of our Saxon Village. It is common to rebuild on the same footprint so they could even be older than that. Confirmation could be in digging the foundations of the burnt barn (but that would perhaps be imposing and impossible.)

It is rare to be able to work out the true history of a village without archaeology and Lenham is still in a muddle to say the least.



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# Well News

## From the Wellbeing Community Group

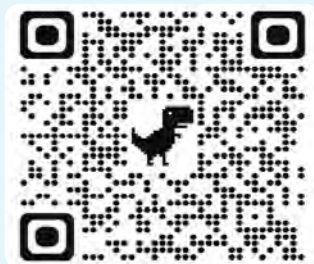
You may not have heard of the *Wellbeing Community Group* that meets on Tuesdays in the Dog & Bear Hotel in Lenham, but this month our group's celebrating its one-year anniversary!

It all started with two people passionate about wellbeing and mindfulness meeting for a chat and sharing their hopes and ideas. Now, we have a dozen regular members who are moved to share wellbeing tips and inspirations.

Over the past year, we've had a variety of talks on topics such as simple wellbeing and mindfulness, human givens, wild gardening and RSPB. We've also hosted practical sessions that are both useful and fun, including yoga, art sessions, crafts and even singing. And there's definitely more to come!

The idea of our group is to be a place where we can all learn from each other. If you wish to learn or share wellbeing tips, do not hesitate to join us.

For more information, visit our website <https://wellbeingcg.wixsite.com/wellbeing-community> or contact Ellie 07952594655 or Vladimir 07877143088.



↩

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# Nature Watch

From Darren Hammond

## Woodpeckers

**A**s we move into the new season and nature starts to wake up into spring, you might notice, as you walk by tall trees in particular, the sound of something hammering on wood. More than likely this will be a woodpecker and, in all probability, it will be a great spotted woodpecker.

Around the Lenham area I have seen two types of woodpecker out of the three that are in the UK. The great spotted woodpecker and the green woodpecker. One is easily enticed into the garden but the other tends to be more elusive.

### The great spotted woodpecker



The great spotted woodpecker will happily come into the garden to find titbits of food. Usually goes for things like nuts but will also go for sunflower hearts. If you are lucky you will see it prepare a little nook in a hollow of a tree branch (showing why it's named the woodpecker) and then

break apart the nut by repeatedly hitting it with its beak.

Here (above) we see a male (distinguished by the red spot on the back of the head) just after it has finished eating a peanut.

**How much wood  
could a woodpecker  
peck?**



Drumming on wood is not just about food. The female great spotted woodpecker hides under a branch as a magpie lands in the tree above. The female has no red spot on the back of the neck.

This time of year you can hear a loud rat-tat-tat as you walk through wooded areas or have tall trees around.

And this is not just the males trying to impress the ladies, but it's been shown that both the male and the female will hammer on trees (usually) as a warning to stay out of their territory as well. Surely that's gotta hurt!

When they are looking for a mate or scaring off others from their area, the great spotted woodpecker will hit the tree (or even sometimes a man-made thing like a metal pole) up to 40 times a second!

And what's more they are quite picky as they choose which branch or part of the tree that makes the best sound. Even better is that each species of







woodpecker has its own accent!

This is a baby great spotted woodpecker with its tell-tale red crown that will either disappear (if female) or slowly move to the back of the neck (if male).

### **The mighty green woodpecker**

The other UK woodpecker you are likely to hear rather than see is the green woodpecker. This

bird is quite large and also a lot louder than its black and white cousin. Instead of hammering on trees it will let out a very loud laughing sound that's called a yaffle.

This is a bird I have had a lot of trouble photographing. The one here is a young one not yet experienced enough to stay out of sight after teasing me with its laughter.

It is the largest of UK woodpeckers and the way to tell the male and female apart with this bird is by the colouring around its face.

The female has a black mask on the front of its face and around its beak. The male has a similar black mask but will have a line of red at the bottom part (you can just see that forming on this young woodpecker).

Another major difference between these two is the food they will go after. Green woodpeckers like ants mainly, although they will go for other small insects and even small reptiles. So

instead of seeing them in trees you are more likely to see them on the ground hunting. They also have weaker beaks than the smaller great spotted version.

A final note and request if I may. If there is a particular part of nature you would like me to photograph and explore please email me at [dphnaturephotography@yahoo.com](mailto:dphnaturephotography@yahoo.com) and I will do my best to track it down and feature it in future articles.



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# Obituary – Ian George

1952 – 2025 by Danny Coorsch

It is with profound sadness that I write about the sudden passing of Ian George, a beloved resident and true son of Lenham. A cherished figure in the village, Ian passed away on 4<sup>th</sup> February and he will be sorely missed.

Born in 1952, Ian attended both Lenham Primary School and The Lenham School (Swadlands School as it was known then). He lived in a cottage on the High Street with his parents; the family then moved to Honywood Road before Ian moved to Frogmore Walk after his parents passed away. On leaving school, Ian began working as an office boy at a large commercial building services company; memories of Ian from back then are of him rushing around the typing pool delivering supplies to all of the secretaries. He worked for the same company for over 50 years, eventually being promoted to chief cashier.

Even whilst working full time, Ian devoted much of his time to supporting local groups and organisations. His love of Lenham and our community shone through everything he did and his tireless work for our village will be much missed. Ian brought his great attention to detail and financial acumen to many local groups over the years, such as the



Lenham Players and the Parish Hall Committee, where he served as Treasurer.

Treasurer of Lenham Country Market for nearly 25 years, Ian supported the market tirelessly; he could be found walking around the market every month, ensuring that all was well. He was thrilled with every success the market experienced – being featured in an episode of the BBC Farmers' Country Showdown and winning gold in the Taste of Kent Award food and drink category in 2023.

Ian was an integral part of the team that worked to get Lenham Community Centre built in 2004 and was a Trustee and the Treasurer of the centre for over 20 years. He was a true advocate of the centre and cared deeply about doing his bit to make sure that it ran smoothly as a community amenity. As a founder member and Treasurer of Lenham Film Club, Ian could be found on the ticket desk at every film performance. He took great pleasure in helping the committee select the films to be shown and was a much-valued member of the team, whether it was updating on finances or spotting typos when it was time to produce new programmes.

Ian's dedication to Lenham didn't end with the organisations he was a part of. Although not a council member, he was a regular attendee at public Parish Council meetings for over 20 years and could always be relied upon to raise pertinent issues. He would make a point

of speaking to our borough councillors at the market – about potholes, streetlights, buses – always with concerns he thought they should address to improve our community.

As one of the parishioners who got together in advance of the Centenary of the Cross in 2022, Ian undertook to bring together his existing knowledge and the Parish records into a small publication detailing the concise history of the Cross. Copies of the book are available from the community centre and the Lenham Parish Council office. As a member of Lenham Heritage Society, Ian was known for his extensive local knowledge; he was always prepared to share his expertise and local insight.

Although quite a private man, Ian's love for Lenham and his community was unmistakable. In 2018, he was honoured

with a Local Hero Award (as nominated by Lenham Country Market), a testament to his unwavering commitment to our village. Those who knew him have said he was one of life's good guys, truly one in a million, and others have mentioned his very dry sense of humour. I will miss Ian very much – our conversations, his puns, his jokes, how he always tried to make me laugh and his monthly visits to drop off film club payments.

Ian's absence will be profoundly felt by those who had the great privilege of knowing him and by the organisations he so ably supported. May his memory live on in Lenham and may his dear soul rest in peace.

**Ian's funeral will take place at 11.30 on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> April at Charing Crematorium, with refreshments at Lenham Community Centre afterwards.**



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# Christian Message for Easter:

## Hope, Expectation and Joy

I was thrilled to see that this year I have been asked to write the Easter Christian Message – thrilled and a little overwhelmed at where to start and how best to talk about this important Christian festival.

In December my daughter sent me a photograph of a shelf in her local supermarket. “Outrageous!” I exclaimed when I saw that they were selling crème eggs before we had even celebrated Christ’s birth. “Yes indeed,” she replied, “they have more than doubled in price this year!” Hey ho, I suppose everything depends on our own perspective.

As I sit here on a cold, wet, misty February morning, I feel a glimmer of hope as I think about April, sunny spring weather, daffodils and bird song. From the perspective of a nature lover, April is full of hope, expectation and joy.

By 1<sup>st</sup> April, we will be half way through Lent. Many of us will have given something up or taken challenges on and will have failed, excelled, or a bit of both. Most of us will be looking forward to 20<sup>th</sup> April and the chance to relax and indulge in at least one ‘over-priced’ chocolate item. More hope, expectation and joy.

For Christians, Lent is important. It is a time of reflecting on our own faith, the amazing example set by Jesus when he lived here on Earth, the incredible sacrifice he made for us all by dying to save us from sin and his resurrection to show he had conquered death and was returning to his father in heaven. Yes, you guessed it, even more

hope, expectation and joy, but let’s explore this a little more:

During this time, we have a chance to think about God’s love for each of us, the chance to meet him, through Jesus, in this life, and the certainty of meeting him in the next. Jesus’s ministry was very short but in about three years he packed in more teaching, healing and, ultimately, suffering, than many of us experience in a lifetime. His greatest message was one of Love. Love your family, friends, neighbours and even your enemies. That’s a real challenge: It’s hard enough for us to forgive those who hurt us, lie to us or betray us, but for those experiencing a war-torn environment with serious injury, multiple bereavements or continuing hunger, it must at times seem an unfathomable trial. Those who do manage to carry on and still show love are heroes indeed and reflect the love Christ had for us all.

Everywhere Jesus went he banished suffering and gave hope. As the time of his death drew near, he tried to prepare his disciples with expectation for his sacrifice of dying on the cross. If we ask Jesus into our lives and ask for forgiveness for all our wrong doing, we can enjoy a personal relationship with him where he will guide and protect us, and we can live in the knowledge that we have a place in heaven without fear of judgement. Jesus’ resurrection proved his victory over sin and death and left a legacy of joy for us all. This offer hasn’t doubled in price in over 2,000 years. It is still free to us today. We only have to ask.

*Happy Easter! Pamela Cuerden*



# Len Valley Benefice

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For I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand  
and says to you, do not fear; I will help you. *Isaiah 41:13*

## Wednesday 2 April

9.30am Lenham: Holy Communion

Followed by **Maundy Thursday**  
washing of feet

## Sunday 6 April

9.30am Lenham: Breakfast Church

11.00am Lenham: Holy Communion

## Friday 18 April – Good Friday

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

## Sunday 13 April – Palm Sunday

9.30am Lenham: Breakfast Church

11.00am Lenham: Holy Communion

## Saturday 19 April

3.00pm Lenham: Messy Church – Messy  
Easter

## Monday 14 – Thursday 17 April – Series of Holy Week evening sessions

**Monday 7.30pm** at St Nicholas,  
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**Tuesday 7.30pm** at All Saints, Ulcombe  
*Finding God in art*, Canon Lorraine Apps-  
Huggins

**Wednesday 7.30pm** at St Mary, Lenham  
*Finding God in music*, Lis Bayford

**Thursday 7.30pm** at St John the Baptist,  
Harrietsham

*Finding God in helping others*,  
Revd. David Bates

**Sunday 20 April – Easter Sunday**  
6.30am Boughton Malherbe: Benefice  
Daybreak Easter Celebration

9.30am Lenham: Breakfast Church

11.00am Lenham: Morning Worship

## Sunday 27th April

11.00am Benefice Holy Communion at St  
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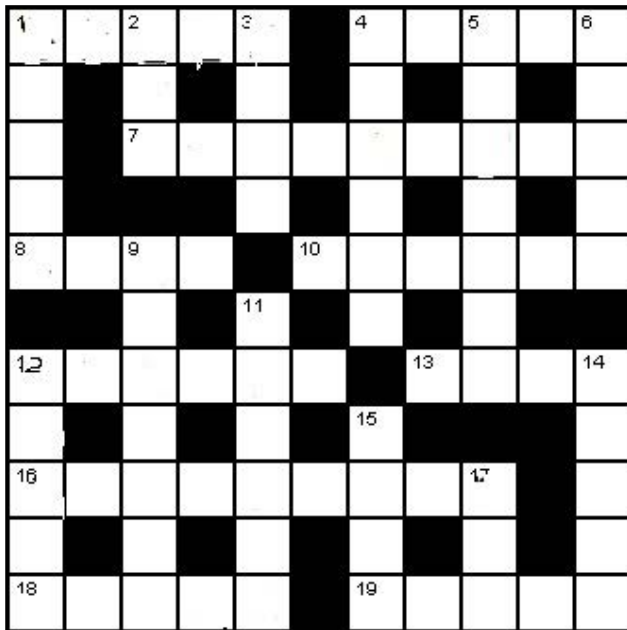
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# Focus PRIZE Crossword April 2025

The February Winner was Andrew Barr of Lenham. Well done!



## Across clues

1. Use this to brush up rubbish. (5)
4. A tortilla. (5)
7. These runners will never win! (9)
8. Look at a book. (4)
10. They fly in the sky. (6)
12. The capital of Greece. (6)
13. Push a baby in this. (4)
16. Where to put discarded rubbish. (9)
18. Cut a sheep's coat. (5)
19. Your dentist looks at them. (5)

## Down clues

1. Is it a dog that likes a fight? (5)
2. A light will not work if it is this! (3)
3. What a calf likes to drink. (4)
4. Slang for a stupid person. (6)
5. Someone who keeps a building presentable. (7)
6. Where Liam and Noel might have held their performances in the desert! (5)
9. A well-known British leafy plant that is now threatened with extinction. (3,4)
11. A soldier who shoots from somewhere hidden. (6)
12. Animals of the horse family, with long ears. (5)
14. What soldiers do on parade. (5)
15. You are this if you win. (4)
17. A cooked dish with pastry on top. (3)

## Answers for March 2025 Focus Crossword



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 22 April** where they'll be placed in an envelope. The winner will be notified direct and announced in a future issue of *Focus*.

Name ..... Phone No .....

Address .....

# Maidstone's Big Day Out

**M**aidstone Borough Council (MBC) is inviting everyone to get out and enjoy amazing parks and open spaces to be part of the first community 'Big Day Out.'

Being held on **Saturday 14 June 2025**, the inaugural one-day festival is celebrating the outdoor areas found across the borough of Maidstone.

MBC is partnering with 'Maidstone's Big Day Out' to encourage as many people as possible to discover the council's 60 parks and open spaces, take part in the event and organise their own event as part of the day.

Teaming up with Maidstone CAN (Climate Action Network), 'Maidstone's Big Day Out' is being held to celebrate all that the green spaces of the borough have to offer, and to enjoy some local hospitality in the same evening.

The one-day festival, which takes place during the national 'Great Big Green Week' project, is being held so that everyone can experience and enjoy the natural beauty across the borough of Maidstone.

Cllr Stephen Thompson, MBC Cabinet Member for Healthier Stronger Communities said: "We are delighted to support this community led project. It is great to see local people and organisations coordinating the efforts of the large number of volunteers who work all year round to make our green spaces such a precious asset in our borough, in partnership with MBC's Parks Team. "We are ordering the best weather and hope people in all our communities will go out to appreciate their local green spaces- as well as local food and drink!"



Organisations, local businesses, communities and all the residents of Maidstone are invited to take part in the 2025 festival and register their interest by emailing: **Maidstone@BigDayOut.info**

The main organiser behind the Maidstone Big Day Out Richard Conyard added:

"Natural beauty is abundant in Maidstone, found from tiny pieces of woodland, the streams and rivers running through the borough, to the majestic vistas from the North Downs and the Greensand Ridge that look far to the horizon. These are often maintained by hardworking volunteer groups.

We hope the Big Day Out on the 14<sup>th</sup> of June will not only be a fun day out for borough residents, but also an opportunity for those groups to showcase their special patch to their local community."

To find out more about the 'Maidstone Big Day Out', register your event as part of the day and how to take part please visit the website: Maidstone's Big Day Out (<https://bigdayout.info/>).

To discover more about the MBC Parks & Open Spaces, please go to the Council's webpage: <https://maidstone.gov.uk/home/other-services/parks-and-play-areas/primary-areas/parks>.



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